

November 3, 2017

Comments at the Memorial for Will Moore
Peace Science Society conference, Arizona State

Dear Will,

I can't believe I am standing here speaking at a memorial in your honor at Peace Science. This feels like some sick joke that will soon be revealed as a prank, but unfortunately for all of us, it is not. Let me begin by saying that you are the most important mentor in my entire academic career beyond my PhD advisors. Our time together as colleagues at Florida State University from 1997-2004 were some of the best academic years of my life. I love you as a friend, a colleague, a coauthor, and a model for the kind of person I want to be. I am sad every day since you ended your life because I can't reach out to you for the advice and friendship I so desperately need. I am sad that future generations of Peace Scientists will not have access to your incredible mentorship.

But it's your memorial, so let me do the socially acceptable thing and start with the positives. I learned so much about being a good teacher from you. I adapted your Socratic methods for class participation and I also had the privilege of sitting in on two of your graduate courses as an assistant professor. I complained about the lack of participation in my undergraduate classes and you said that was ON ME, that I needed to change the way I taught. I started using your approach with the poker chips that seemed very foreign, but soon that came to define how I would teach all of my classes. I saw you challenge students when they were unprepared or not interested in the material, and I hoped I could be as courageous as you in responding to those students. I asked my grad students if we should cancel class because they were "fucking unprepared" and heard your voice in my head. I learned how to challenge my students' assumptions after observing you in the classroom. I liked how you were willing to wear dresses to class to teach students about norms and violating them.

You taught me how to have a productive research program, how to cultivate it, how to let it evolve over time, and how to continue improving methodologically. Coauthoring with you was such a valuable experience because you showed me that coauthors should respect each other's ideas and writing, that splitting up tasks could be effective, but that direct communications between authors was essential for success. You taught me how to give detailed and critical feedback on other scholars' work. You taught me to celebrate success in publishing by toasting my solo-authored AJPS. Your work on action-reaction processes in interstate and intrastate conflict influenced how I study conflict and how I taught it to my students. I aspired to publish as frequently as you, to be as respected as you in IR and Peace Science, to get grants like you could, to mentor students like you did, to be as goddamned popular as you were. I spent so many years as an assistant professor wanting to be you. I was so honored to become president of this association the year after you. And you took me out to dinner to celebrate my presidency the night before my presidential address, because you were always there to lift me up. You became so much a part of my identity that I could not go one week after your death without describing a situation that involved you. I filled out a form last week at a conference listing mentors in our lives and I just about burst into tears because you would be the one listed in so many of those lines on my form and yet I left them blank.

When I became a tenured professor, those tight bonds between us loosened a bit. You started to believe that I was "normal" and didn't need your mentoring in a way that others needed it. You developed close ties to other junior scholars and I felt myself being jealous, wanting to reclaim the Will Moore that was mine. I watched as you had dinners with your students and wished I could be involved. I saw you working with new scholars and wished we still had coauthored projects together. I started

developing my own networks, my own space, and still felt emptiness when you were not part of it. I watched you with Ashley, always being so close from day one, and yearned for the kind of connection you had. I felt bad about being jealous in these moments. I had so much to be grateful for and yet I focused on these petty emotions. Then you would email me about some academic issue or ask me to catch up a conference and I was whole again, feeling like I mattered to you. It was frustrating that you meant so much to me, almost everything in my academic career, and I wasn't always sure what I meant to you. When you ended your life and posted that stupid fucking blog post, I felt betrayed, abandoned, alone. I had just seen you on St. Patrick's Day when I gave a talk at ASU, and we spent 2 happy hours together having breakfast and chatting about our lives. It was one of the most normal interactions we had, which of course made me think later that you had already made the decision to commit suicide. Getting the call about your blog post from our friends was jarring. I took so much from you but wanted to give you something in return and yet you never created a space for me to do that. I feel like I failed you as a friend.

I was also angry about your blog post because you used your beloved rational choice approach to justify the costs and benefits of living. Honestly you have written some arguments that suck, but this one is the worst. It's obvious to everyone but you that your benefits to our lives and our research community far exceed the costs. My 16 year-old daughter read your post and connected with it, understood why it would be rational to end one's life. A mutual friend of ours told me that they could see taking the same path as you in the future, ending their life, and I was fucking pissed. How could people around me find reason in your choice, think it was okay? In addition to ending your life, how could you create a blog post that would be admired, emulated, and copied by others? Didn't you see that what you most created that we should emulate was a passion for research and teaching? A passion for helping colleagues and students in our profession? A passion for studying questions that really mattered and connecting our research to policy decision-making? A willingness to question everything about the assumptions of our research? A passion for working with students? You inspired me in ways I cannot begin to describe and yet the final act of your life felt like a betrayal, a joke in which your true reasons for suicide were not posted on that damn blog post. Many days I wake up wishing that, like the Trump presidency, your suicide was a hoax and that I will wake up from the upside-down world.

Yet even though I am still angry every day at the decision you made, I choose to live. I choose to work with colleagues and students, to help make their work better, to inspire them to answer tough and important questions, to think about the tedious aspects of measurement and research design, because I know that is what you would do. I question the connections between the concepts in their theories and the missing causal mechanisms, because that is what you would do. I sometimes deliver harsh criticism of their research, because that is what you would do. That is the legacy you leave with me. I am so infiltrated by you that I cannot get past you. But what I can do is take all the love, compassion, craziness, energy, toughness, and broad vision that you created and hope that the future of Peace Science looks even 50% as bright without you there. You once described the dark side of COW in a talk at this conference. Perhaps dark side was a metaphor for many feelings you had that we could not understand. I am sorry my friend that I failed to be there for you in your darkest hour. If I could have pulled you from the abyss, I would have done everything in my power to do so. Because a world without Will Moore is a very lonely place.

But your damn blog post and suicide are not the end. We as a community will create a space for people to talk about mental and depression issues. We will create a space where people who feel excluded can find allies to feel more included. We will listen to junior scholars talk about their research and encourage them to publish it. We will be truth speakers when talking with each other like you. We will mentor our

male students to be feminists like you. We need to regularly thank our mentors for everything they have done for us and because so many of mine are in this room today, I say thank you for believing in me, giving me feedback on my work, giving me career advice, and helping me walk this academic path. We will inspire future generations of Peace Science scholars to be better than us. We WILL MOORE.