



**Center for Leadership & Educational Equity**

## Creating Metaphors

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*Adapted from The Courage to Teach, Parker Palmer, pp. 148-150, by Gene Thompson-Grove.*

### **Purpose**

To use metaphors as a reflection tool and build community among participants through sharing professional metaphors.

### **Time**

65 minutes

### **Process**

1. Fill in the blank: When I am at my best as a (teacher, administrator, librarian, counselor), I am \_\_\_\_\_. Write your metaphor on an index card.
2. (Optional) Underneath the written description, draw a picture, symbol, or some other graphic representation of your metaphor.
3. Respond in your journal: What guidance might this metaphor offer me in tough or sticky situations? What are the “shadows” of this metaphor? (10 minutes for Steps 1-3)
4. In triads, the colleagues discuss each of their metaphors in turn. The first presenter explains their metaphor (using the journal writing), and answers *just a few* clarifying questions from the rest of the group.

Then the presenter is silent and listens to the group members discuss what they heard. What did we hear? What are some additional strengths of this metaphor? What might be some additional shadows of this metaphor?

The presenter then comes back into the discussion, and talks with their colleagues about what especially resonated for them while listening to their colleague’s discussion.

Then, the next person presents.

(Each of the 3 presentation/discussion “rounds” takes about 15 minutes.)

5. Once all of the group members’ metaphors have been discussed, they may want to return once again to their journal writing in response to the following prompt:

Parker Palmer says he uses his metaphor to “...return me in imagination to the inner landscape of identity and integrity where my deepest guidance is to be found” (page 150). How might your metaphor impact your future practice in a similar way? (5 minutes)

6. Debrief about the process as a group. What did we learn? What should we do differently next time? (5 minutes)