



# EREMOS CONSULTING GROUP

*Facilitating Transformation for Clergy,  
Congregations, Nonprofits and their  
Leaders*

Serving Colorado and the Rocky  
Mountain Region

## Nope, I Really Don't Want to Do That

**"No."** This is a phrase that I have found myself using quite frequently this summer. More than I'd like to admit. The voice inside my head would whisper "You should be writing your newsletter article" or "You should be cleaning up your desk" or "You should be checking back in with consulting inquiries" or "You should be entering your billing and accounts receivables" or you should be ... well you get the picture. And although I would agree that those things should be done, needed to be done, were problematic to me when they were left undone, I found myself backing away from these responsibilities (unless I just HAD to do them) and instead heard myself saying out loud, "Nope, I really don't want to do that right now."

**So instead I would continue to flip through my phone perusing Facebook**, or pad around dead-heading the flowers along my back porch, or read a novel in the 7-book fiction series I had started, or would just sit on my back porch listening to the birds and grasshoppers and kids next door, or flip through a cooking magazine, or would stare out at the yard thinking of all the things I should be doing or was glad that I wasn't doing, or ... well you get the picture.



**Occasionally I would rise to the level of semi-productivity such as bringing my computer onto the back porch with me** to sort through, respond to, and send emails, or I'd sweep the leaves, or fix dinner, or talk with my adult children telling them what they should be doing and attempting to hold them

### In This Issue

Theology of Disappointment - saying "no"

Three Upcoming Fall 2013 Events

**TAKE ADVANTAGE  
OF *THREE (3)*  
UPCOMING  
Fall 2013 Events!**

### **Event #1**

The Role of Faith Leaders in  
Suicide Prevention  
Join us for a FREE Webinar  
on  
September 17, 2013

Space is limited.

Reserve your Webinar seat now  
at:

<https://www4.gotomeeting.com/register/828816927>

Faith leaders are often on the front line for people (and their families) dealing with spiritual, mental, or emotional distress or illness. Studies show that persons in need are more likely to go to a faith leader than a therapist, at least initially. Moreover, faith communities, through their traditions and

accountable for moving through their particular malaise-of-the-day. (Since I wasn't heeding my own advice, maybe they would?)

**However, to give myself some credit, I had a busy spring** as a guest presenter for the Nebraska Academy of Spiritual Formation and serving as an interim Sabbatical Minister, on top of my regular Eremos Consulting Group work.



**And this summer I always went to the meetings I was supposed to attend.** I generally sent out emails, bills and materials as needed, I scheduled new meetings as appropriate, and I was always present and responsive and hopefully insightful with clients and the clergy groups that I facilitate.  
**I wasn't a total slouch!**

**But as the summer wore on I kept finding myself feeling and wanting and needing the space that was prefaced by the thought, "Nope, I really don't want to do that."** I knew I wasn't unique in this desire, but I have been a bit amazed in the past couple of weeks by seeing four different articles or blogs that all deal with the need and desire to slow down, to take a breath, to get out of the rat race for awhile. Maybe it is because we are coming to the end of summer and are gearing up for fall. Maybe we are regretting the time we didn't take this summer to just "be" or maybe we are grateful for the time we did take but wish we could have had more of it.

**Maybe we just get so overwhelmed by our competent computers and cell-phones-that-let-us-do-everything-almost-anywhere,** but which mean we can almost never be out of touch. Others expect us to be immediately accessible to them, and most of the time we expect it of ourselves. And if we are honest, we expect it of others as well. We all seem so damned indispensable!



**We (older folks) remember fondly the days when we used to play or read or bike or wander and wonder for hours as children without much supervision or expectations for being "productive."** But don't get me wrong, this is not an essay on nostalgia. I'm really clear that things weren't necessarily easier or better "back then," although I do think there was less competition for our time and energy and attention. We did have to make choices, but the number of choices were not so overwhelming. Whether that was better than now or worse may depend on what choices you have

teachings and also their commitment to care for one another, are resources for people (and their families) dealing with distress or illness.

This webinar will provide information that faith leaders need to know in suicide prevention (e.g. warning signs, how to help). It will also offer ways faith leaders can help educate their communities about suicide and mental health issues and provide support for persons whose loved ones have completed or attempted suicide. In addition, it will help faith leaders understand and strengthen the resources they have in their own faith tradition that promote mental and spiritual health and/or can help in suicide prevention

**Tuesday, September 17, 2013**  
**4 PM - 5 PM Eastern DT**  
*(2-3 pm Mountain DT)*

After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Webinar.

Sponsored by:  
AAPC & The Partnership Center



## **EVENT #2**

**Spiritual Care Praxis:  
Spiritual Practices, Values  
and Beliefs in the  
Aftermath of Trauma**

**Fri, Sept. 20, 2013**  
**9 am - 4:30 pm**  
**&**

**Sat, Sept. 21, 2013**  
**9 am - 12:30 pm**

**Iliff School of Theology**

Traumatic experiences have an immediate

these days versus what you remember having "back then." And tough times are tough, and good times are good, no matter when they occur. So no, this is not an essay on nostalgia.

**Instead this is an essay on saying "no" - on slowing down and doing nothing, even when there are lots of "shoulds" that are crowding around us.** And it is a stab at an essay on the theology of disappointment, something I've been thinking about a lot recently although I have to admit I'm not quite sure where to go with it. There are writers and theologians who have written about the theology of despair, but what about the milieu of disappointment? The expectations that aren't quite realized that get us into a funk, but which we know really aren't that big a deal either. The disenchantments that come from unrealized dreams, from life that goes left instead of going right, or down the center.

**A theology of disappointment ...is it okay to disappoint others?** Can we forgive ourselves for not being perfect? Is there a place for a theology of little disillusionments or even medium-sized ones? I'm not talking about the super-sized, outright, full-on moments of despair that bring us to our knees, there are books out there about that. I'm talking about the ones that leave us feeling just a little empty, or wishing that someone could have done something differently. The feeling of "meh" that is the phrase I've heard people use when they are feeling a bit out of sorts. Or recognizing that things are "just okay" or maybe even a little bit "less than okay". Is this a funk that we need to "snap out of" or is it okay to just be in a bit of a funk every once in a while, to just not want to be productive today, to not move quite as fast as the rest of the world expects of us?



**I suspect that we actually learn something from this kind of experience, something that is different from what we learn when we break through and are successful.** If we learn confidence when we push through and succeed, or learn perseverance from our failures, then I wonder what do we learn from the subtlety of disappointment? Humility? Patience?

and long-lasting impact on the ultimate beliefs and core values of survivors. Religion and spirituality can be a resource or a roadblock for survivors, in complex and multifaceted ways. This praxis demonstrates a multi-disciplinary team approach to spiritually-integrated care that draws upon an empirically-based applied psychology of religion and an intercultural approach to spiritual and pastoral care.

Join Iliff students for a one and a half day praxis course taught by Ken Pargament, PhD, and Annette Mahoney, PhD, professors of psychology of religion, Bowling Green State University, and Iliff professors Carrie Doehring and Larry Kent Graham.



This series is offered in honor of Dr. Larry Kent Graham.

For more information go to: <http://www.iliff.edu/index/calendar/event-description/spirituality-as-a-resource-for-trauma-professionals-community-reception>

Weekend learners are welcome to take the course as non-credit.

**\$150/Friday only**

**\$200/Friday & Saturday**

Participants must register through the dean's office by Sept. 16:  
Leslie Inman - linman@iliff.edu  
or 303-765-3183

## **Event #3**



AAPC - Rocky Mt Plains Region  
presents a

*Two-Day Workshop*  
for Spiritual Caregivers,  
Chaplains and Counselors

featuring



**Do we learn acceptance of ourselves and hopefully of others while wandering around in a malaise?** Maybe we actually become a bit more mature when we acknowledge, without judging, our disappointments, and our own spirit's reluctance to follow through on the "shoulds" that are awaiting us. Maybe we learn to be more gracious in general when things just don't work out. Maybe we learn that time is a friend, not an enemy that

must be wrestled and controlled. Maybe we really do learn to "stop and smell the roses"?

**Maybe I'm just trying to justify my own behaviors this summer or the lack of them, but I hope not.** I believe that disappointment and reluctance and stepping out of the stream for a time are part of life, too. We can't always be successful. Nor, thankfully, do we always spectacularly fail. Sometimes we do just enough and that's good enough. And sometimes we are disappointed - or disappoint others - and that's life, too.

**Sometimes we end up learning something even from the times when we are avoiding doing things.** What we may be choosing to say "yes" too is life giving in and of itself. Case in point - this is where I have to admit that I saw the articles on slowing down while I was perusing Facebook--while I was avoiding working. Yes, there are gifts even in the "meh" moments of life. Maybe that is a toe in the water of the theology of disappointment?



**And by moving outside to work on my computer, I experienced a hummingbird who had discovered the flowers that continue to bloom because of my periodic deadheading.**

**Small gifts of grace buzzing past us, there to be noticed when we stop and say "No". Which then gives us the energy to say "yes" to life.** So as the weather begins to cool, and we ramp back up with fall activities and program year kick-offs, pay attention to how often you say "no" as well as "yes", and to what. I'm aware that ironically alongside this article about backing away is a list of workshops that would be great to step into. As we move into fall, we all have choices to make. And

Ronald W. Richardson, D.  
Min



## Friday & Saturday Nov. 15-16, 2013

\$75 for both days

\$45 for students

Location - Denver Seminary  
6399 S. Santa Fe Dr.  
Littleton, CO 80120

Co-sponsored by:

Academy of Spiritual Formation  
Association of Professional Chaplains  
Denver Seminary  
Iliff School of Theology's Department  
of Pastoral & Spiritual Care

### Day 1: Fri, Nov. 15

#### Polarization in Society and in Congregations

Polarization continues to be a growing phenomenon in our society and in our churches.

A symptom of emotional process in society, we have to understand it in a larger context.

### Day 2: Sat, Nov. 16

#### Committed Relationships as a Crucible for Spiritual Growth

Spirituality is central to our life and our practice of pastoral counseling. We all have our own ways of thinking about how the counseling process and faith relate to one another. This workshop will be an opportunity to further explore our thinking about these critical issues.

For more information or to register contact:

Elizabeth Thompson at  
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as I do the same, picking back up on the things I "should" be doing, I promise that I'll get to them, at some point, before too long, when I have the time, or am sitting in front of my computer with the information in front of me, or when it turns cold again and I have to give up sitting on the back porch, or ... well you get the picture.

Peace,  
*Elizabeth*

Rev. Elizabeth Denham Thompson  
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Make Plans NOW to  
join us!



Blessings on all those who are entering into and celebrating the Jewish High Holy Days during this season.

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