

ANASTASIA P. SAMARAS, PH.D. ~ AUTHOR REFLECTIONS

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The New Year had finally come. Following the tradition that had been passed down to me by my mother, I grabbed the broom and ran to the front door to sweep out the old and bring in the new. Then I took a pot and wooden spoon and banged the pot loudly at my front door to celebrate the newness and opportunity for renewal in a new year. “Happy New Year!” I shouted again and again. As I did, I heard my 80-year-old mother, who lives down the street, banging her pot and shouting and laughing out loud like a madwoman to whomever could hear her, “Happy New Year! Happy New Year!” I laughed at our mutual silliness yet rejoiced for the opportunity to hear her cheery voice and happiness for another year. I placed this vision safely in my memory for the day I knew that would inevitably come when I would hear her voice only in my thoughts.

What a beautiful life and how beautiful tradition can make it. Yet I both loved and hated traditions in my life. I saw “traditional” as being or doing what was the given thing to do, and I eschewed being typical. Getting married when one graduated from college was so typical for women in my time. I married during college. My mother worried that I would never graduate. My father wondered why I didn’t have children right away.

Nevertheless, I became a teacher, which was such a traditional and typical profession for women. I constantly tried to move away from the norm in my teaching. Whenever I had the courage to step outside the given realm of teaching, I could feel that I mattered to my students, which constantly renewed my life work as an educator. Like shifting to a high note in a predictable melody, I felt vibrant when I altered my typical stance to see the possible. When I became a teacher educator, I observed how teachers were being taught—the methods were so traditional and ineffective. Would I change or reshape any of that tradition as a teacher educator?

[Excerpt from: Samaras, A. P. (2002). *Self-Study for Teacher Educators: Crafting a Pedagogy for Educational Change*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishers.]