



*Doing robust hermeneutic phenomenology:  
Reflexive engagement within circles of  
understanding*

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# AUCKLAND



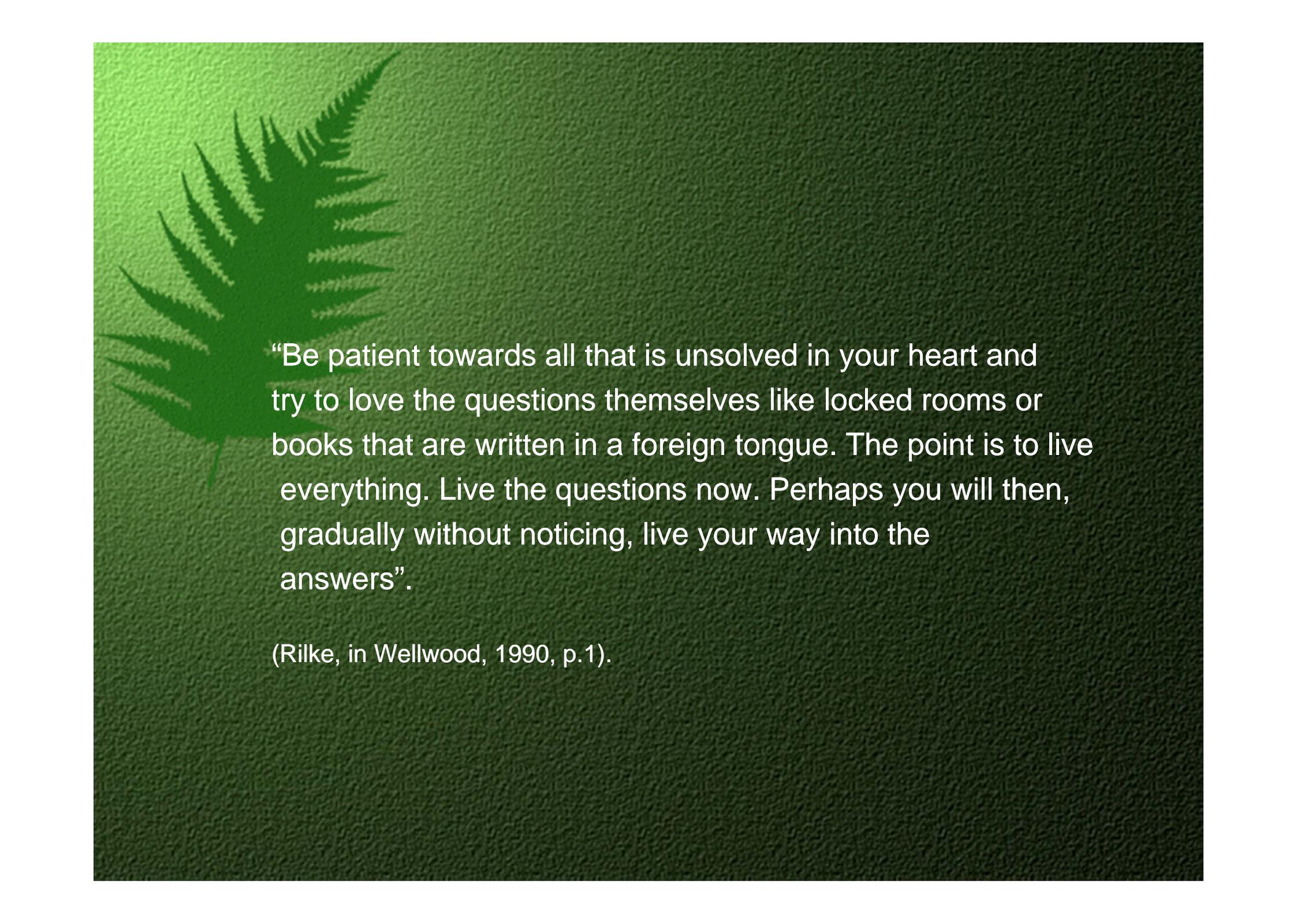


# Overview

- Context: supervision of research students
- Guiding tenets
- Surfacing and engaging with pre-understandings
- Attentiveness to language and meanings
- Supervisory practices

# Context

- Bringing self to the situation
- Insights gained through experience -- [Quote](#)
- Rilke's words of wisdom



“Be patient towards all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves like locked rooms or books that are written in a foreign tongue. The point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then, gradually without noticing, live your way into the answers”.

(Rilke, in Wellwood, 1990, p.1).

# Guiding tenets

- Gadamer (1975)
  - Prejudice
  - Historically effected consciousness
  - Fusion of horizons
  - Play
- Taylor (1985)
  - Strong evaluations
- Lampert (1997)
  - Contact/conflict



# Surfacing and engaging with pre-understandings

Presuppositions interviewing - [Quote 3](#) - [Pre-understandings](#)

Keeping a reflective journal - [Quote 4](#) - [Quote 5](#)

'Warm' and 'cool' spots - [Quote 6](#)

The importance of questioning and engaging in dialectical processes -  
[Questions](#)

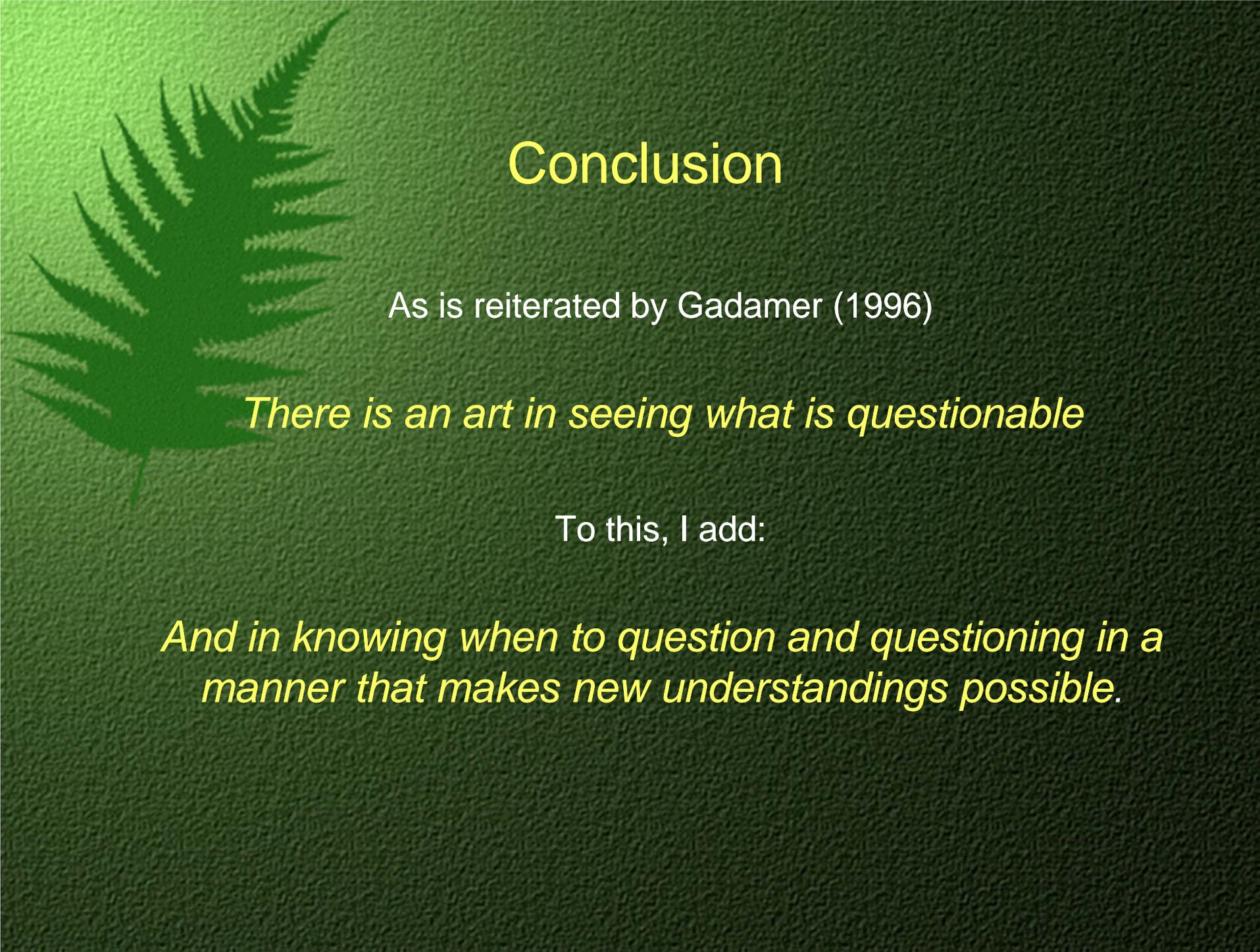


# Attentiveness to language

- Etymology
- Gerunds
- Avoid absolutes and dichotomies - [Prompts](#)
- Writing to reveal tensions and paradox
- Show and tell

# Supervisory practices

- Encourage commitment to a cyclical journey of thinking, questioning and writing
- Recognise the historically and culturally situated nature of all understanding
- Embody attitudes and behaviours that keep open the play and support the continued playing out of possibilities
- Explicate one's moral position vis-à-vis the phenomenon and incorporate reflective accounts
- Encourage not only the asking of questions but the 'listening' critically to questions arising from interpreting the texts
- Explore possibilities and contradictions
- Pay careful attention to meanings and selection of words



# Conclusion

As is reiterated by Gadamer (1996)

*There is an art in seeing what is questionable*

To this, I add:

*And in knowing when to question and questioning in a manner that makes new understandings possible.*

## References

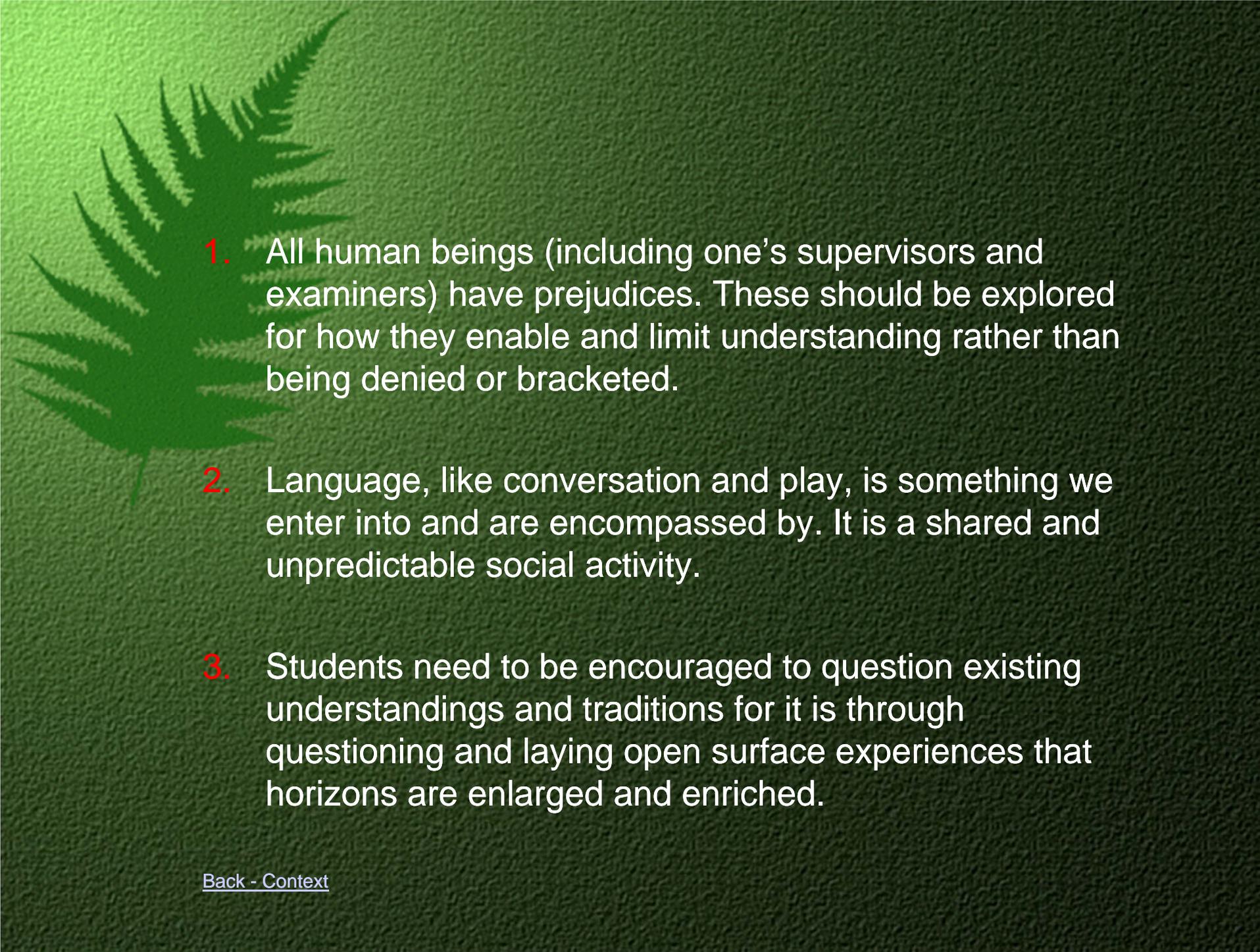
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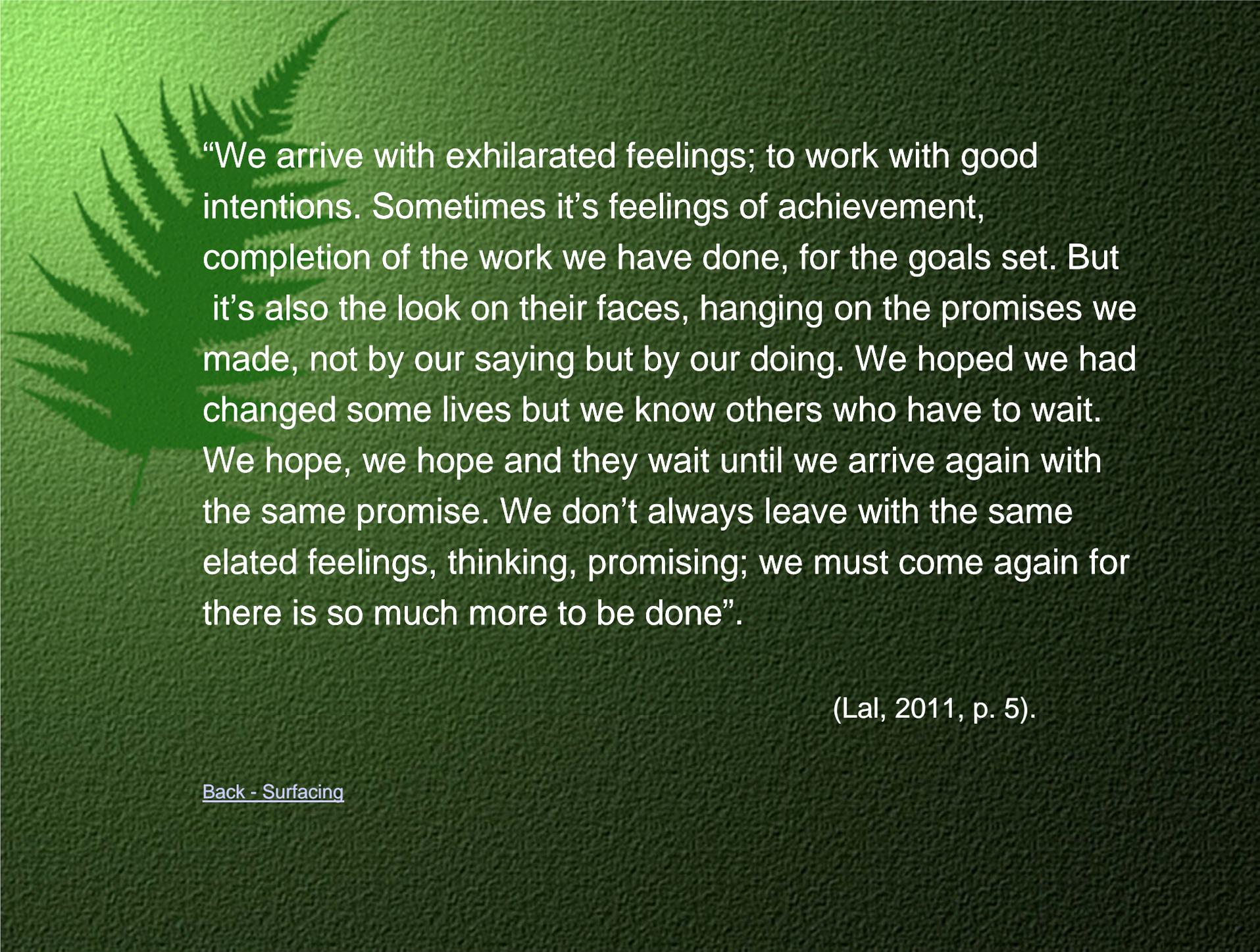


Kia ora

Thank you

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1. All human beings (including one's supervisors and examiners) have prejudices. These should be explored for how they enable and limit understanding rather than being denied or bracketed.
  2. Language, like conversation and play, is something we enter into and are encompassed by. It is a shared and unpredictable social activity.
  3. Students need to be encouraged to question existing understandings and traditions for it is through questioning and laying open surface experiences that horizons are enlarged and enriched.



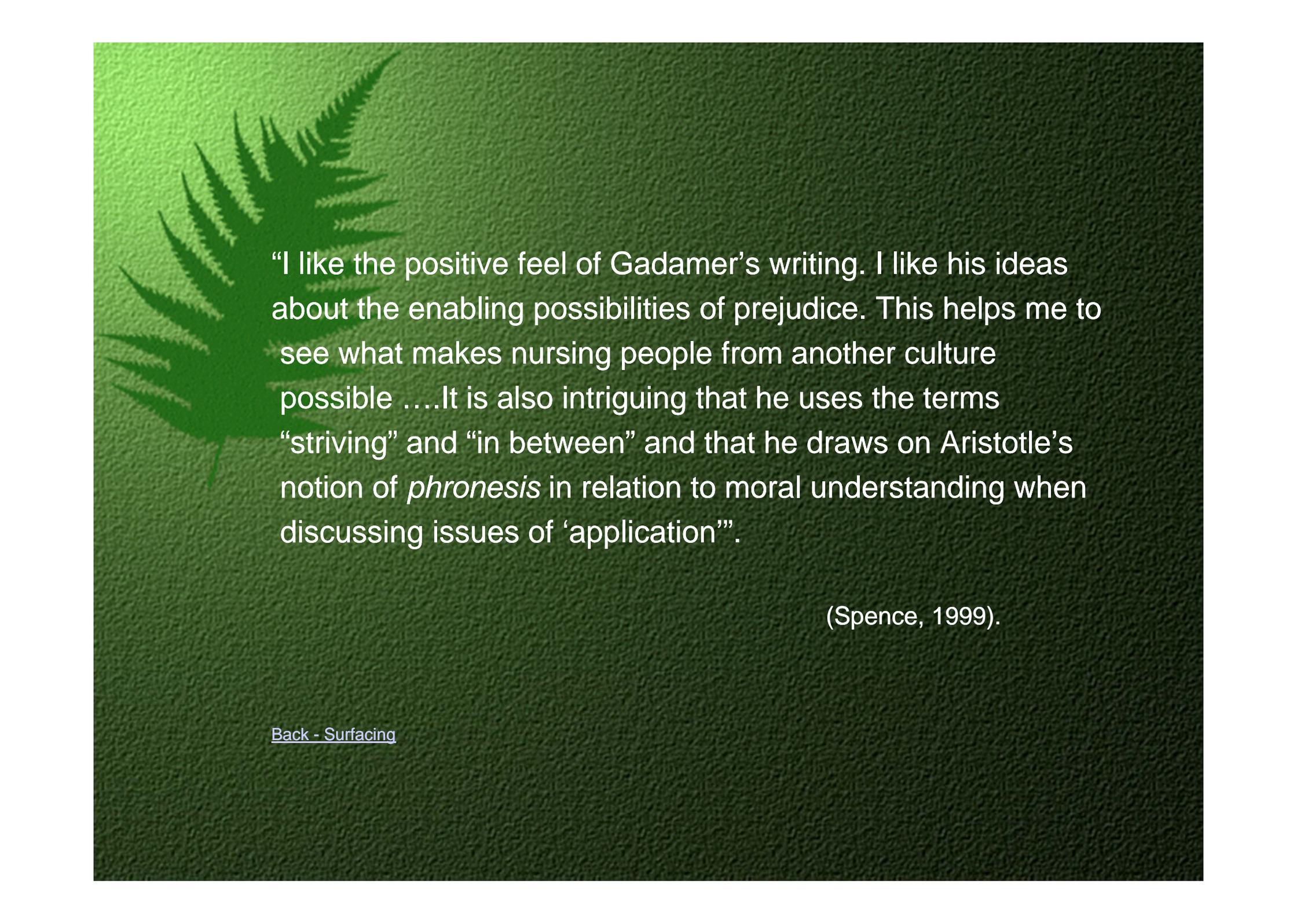
“We arrive with exhilarated feelings; to work with good intentions. Sometimes it’s feelings of achievement, completion of the work we have done, for the goals set. But it’s also the look on their faces, hanging on the promises we made, not by our saying but by our doing. We hoped we had changed some lives but we know others who have to wait. We hope, we hope and they wait until we arrive again with the same promise. We don’t always leave with the same elated feelings, thinking, promising; we must come again for there is so much more to be done”.

(Lal, 2011, p. 5).

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1. Empathy for and a strong desire to care for people with limited access to health care and resources
  1. Willingness to contribute specialist knowledge and expertise
  2. A wish to make a positive difference to people in the country of her birth
  3. Strong affiliation with the humanitarian health care team
  4. Knowing that needs always outstrip the team's capacity to deliver

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“I like the positive feel of Gadamer’s writing. I like his ideas about the enabling possibilities of prejudice. This helps me to see what makes nursing people from another culture possible ....It is also intriguing that he uses the terms “striving” and “in between” and that he draws on Aristotle’s notion of *phronesis* in relation to moral understanding when discussing issues of ‘application’”.

(Spence, 1999).

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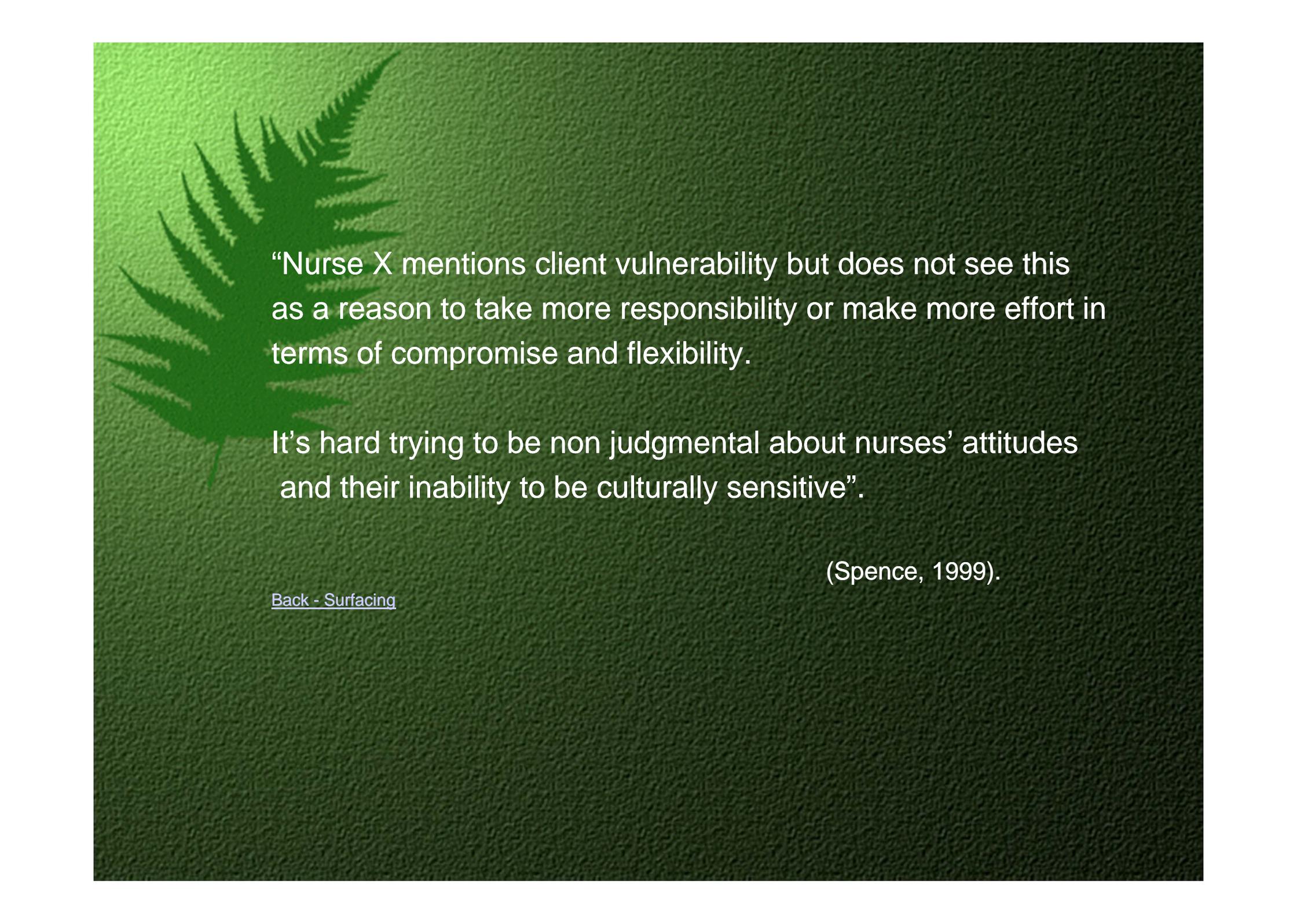
“Is being open the way forward? Jane [2.2] states:

*Is it more important to be open as a person than to go into a situation with your only mantle being, “I’m from your ethnic group”.*

This seems congruent with Gadamer and Lampert. I need to re-read Leininger with this in mind”.

(Spence, 1999).

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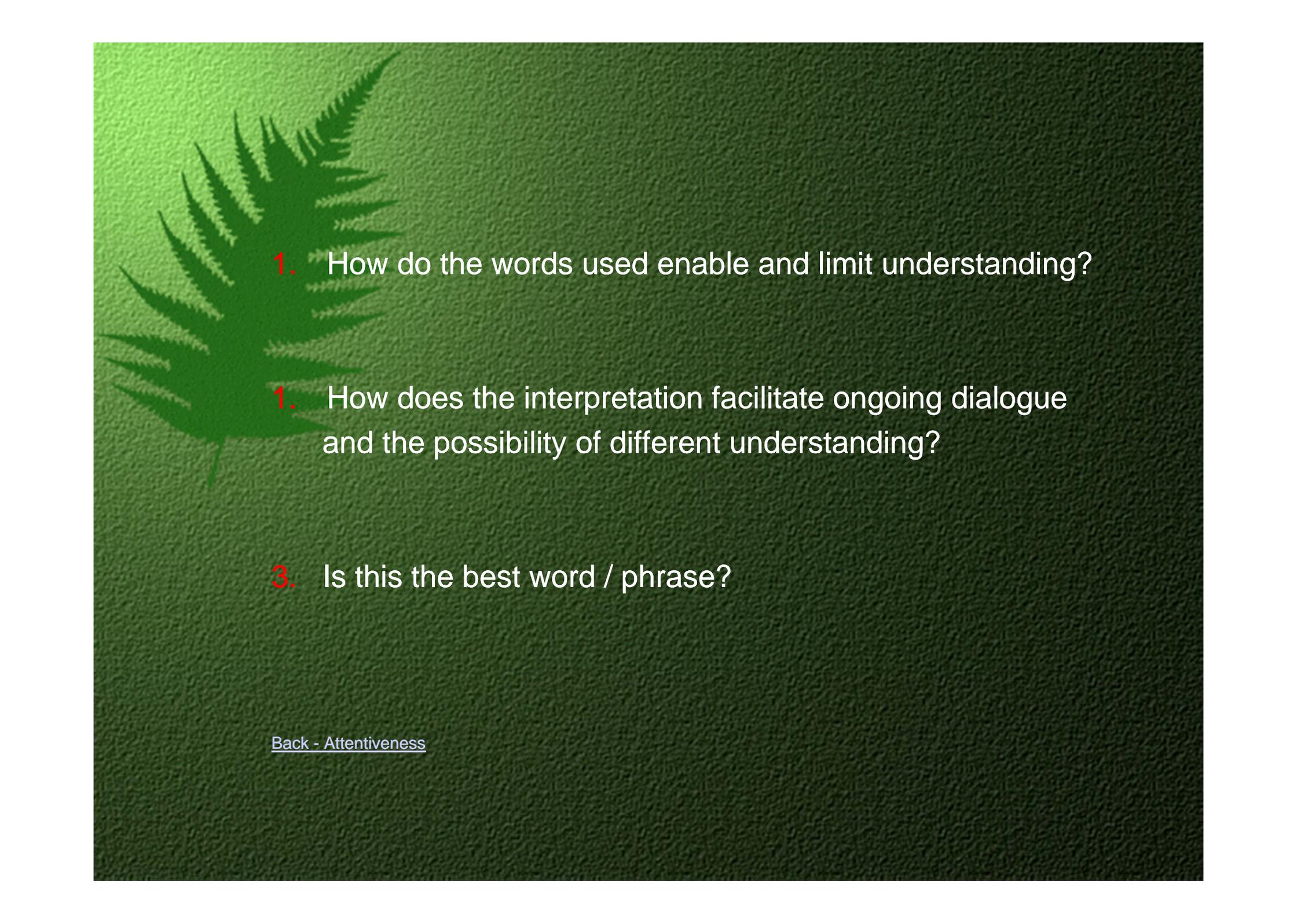
“Nurse X mentions client vulnerability but does not see this as a reason to take more responsibility or make more effort in terms of compromise and flexibility.

It’s hard trying to be non judgmental about nurses’ attitudes and their inability to be culturally sensitive”.

(Spence, 1999).

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1. What pre-understandings do I bring to the research process?
  2. How are my understandings fusing with those of the participants' texts and other literature?
  3. Where are my emotional responses signalling what matters?
  4. What am I not seeing or responding to?
  5. Are certain interpretations being privileged over others?



1. How do the words used enable and limit understanding?

1. How does the interpretation facilitate ongoing dialogue and the possibility of different understanding?

3. Is this the best word / phrase?

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