

Career Development Autobiography

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I was born into a loving, articulate, fairly democratically run family in 1946. My environment was ~~the~~ always packed with ~~creative~~ opportunities to be creative. Expeditions were held to facilitate leaf and rock collections, resources and cooperation were made available when I began to collect coins and stamps. Pencils and crayons always sat on a shelf next to a stack of scrap paper which was provided for the artistic expression of myself, my brother and my sister. My early environment was relatively permissive ~~but sometimes firm~~ ~~generally~~ and generally warm but ~~the~~ I felt little indecisiveness or vacillation. There was enough firmness and adherence to core values for me not to feel any crisis in orienting myself to a basic ethical dimension.

I said before that my childhood was relatively democratic. By this I mean that I almost always felt that what I said would be taken into account in household decisionmaking. I was given the idea that I should think through situations as carefully as possible and stick to the position that I developed. If my position differed from that of my parents my human autonomy was often respected, thus reinforcing my desire to make my reasoning sound and my arguments clear. For instance I decided at the age of six that there was no grounds for ~~being~~ ~~the~~ Christian and later at the age of 12 refused to join the church entrance classes my father was teaching. He was upset but after ~~and~~ I had demonstrated to him that I had thought through the question he allowed me to do what I wished.

Possibly because of this home environment I was a rebel from the beginning. I always refused to acquiesce to any authority that I perceived to be legitimate.

Many furious arguments with teachers and principals further developed my verbal skills.

My earliest recollection of a vocational objective is my desire to be a lawyer at the age of eleven. An uncanny number of people began to comment that I could speak logically and thus should be a lawyer someday. It was not long before I began to take a liking to the idea myself. I knew that I was better at talking than, say, arithmetic problems. I also knew that lawyers made a satisfactory amount of money. In those days, and throughout my teens it was very important to me that I should someday make a far above average salary. ~~My father had said~~ My grandfather ~~was an important case~~ was a founder, worker and my father had transcended the conditions of his birth to the extent of becoming a corporate executive ~~and~~ rising through the ranks. I felt a deep desire, almost a moral duty, to rise at least an equal amount and my measure of progress was money. When thinking about my vocational future I sometimes ~~became upset~~ felt inadequate to the tasks I had set myself and became upset. The reality of ~~my~~ my educational standing (I never received much above a "C" grade point average) made me despair even more. I must admit however that this depression was often ^{assuaged} ~~relieved~~ by the hugeness of my ego strength, conceit, ^{self} confidence or whatever you wish to call it.

When I was fifteen my father accepted a foreign assignment with the Ford Motor Company in Melbourne, Australia. Since then he has spent only ten months ~~in~~ working in the U.S. Soon after we returned from three years in Melbourne (my Senior High years) he was transferred to his current position in Buenos Aires Argentina. Through

this foreign travel I was exposed to new vocations which I began to seriously consider. For many years I felt that whatever job I eventually chose must be one which allowed me to spend much of my time outside the United States.

One of the most attractive possibilities was to be a travel agent. It seemed like it would not be overly boring and would be easy enough to do once you knew the ropes. Also, and this was the incentive that initially started me thinking in this direction, I could ~~for~~ take trips almost anywhere in the world almost for free.

Another travel connected occupation that held my interest for awhile was that of hotel management. It seemed that the life would be easy (what with a maid to clean your apartment every day) and the job would be stimulating in that I ~~was~~ would be meeting interesting new people every day. I must admit also to the fantasy of sleeping with a succession of gorgeous lovely women on those big soft vibrator beds. I realized that it might take awhile but my eventual aspiration in this area was to manage a hotel outside the United States.

Later I got the idea of connecting my earlier idea of being a lawyer with my international aspirations. I spoke about this with a professor at the U of M Law School and became very excited about it. I pictured myself wheeling and dealing across the globe, knowing all the angles in my specialty area, bombarded by exotic experiences and esteemed by my various colleagues. My passport would be as thick as a textbook from the accretion of stamps and visas during my travels.

After I entered college at Western Michigan University, another vocation became more and more appealing, gradually gaining on my desire to go into law. I wanted to be a college professor. The workload, the tension

and the cocktail party syndrome I pictured in law began to ~~be~~ pale before the prospect of peace and quiet and scholarship, of perpetually working in a community of intelligent, informed, liberal thinkers. The only problem was that, within the circumscribed areas of the social sciences and philosophy, I am a generalist rather than a specialist. Many times I tried to convince myself that one particular area was my true interest but it never worked. It seems that each time I tried to investigate the discipline intensively I discovered that after a point I lost interest. At some level along the way I regarded all the ~~the~~ areas I was exposed to as becoming pedantically academic, unrelated to the needs of people and thus less exciting.

In April of 1967 I began to develop a social consciousness. I read volume after volume to ~~be~~ find out who has the power and who is powerless, who is exploited and who is the exploiter, who is oppressed and who is the oppressor. I began to develop my political analysis of the character of American institutions and began to instigate action ~~and~~ on the basis of this analysis.

At the same time I cast body and soul into the "counter culture"; the vast and growing body of alienated white youth. I discovered and began to explore the boundless potentials for ecstasy in my body and my mind. Concomitant to this, of course, I discovered that ~~one~~ should not deviate from dominant normative patterns if he wishes to remain unharassed. The social forces instigating this ~~type of~~ repression against my peers were ~~the~~ controlled by the same people I ~~as~~ had come to regard as the enemy through my previous political

education. Therefore my anti establishment, left wing, ~~anti capitalist politics~~ far political ideas were further reinforced.

Needless to say, if I am to retain any degree of intellectual integrity, new orientations such as these led necessarily to an altered view of vocational possibilities. An international lawyer ~~is~~ must now be seen ~~that~~ as what he is, an operative of American imperial neo-colonialism. A hotel ~~owner~~ ^{manager} is the plank for the exploitative capitalist hotel owner.

The vocational implications of a realistic political analysis had ~~the~~ implications far beyond these new negative views of particular jobs. It became clear to me that my life must have a new positive goal - a goal related to the happiness of people rather than the accumulation of money. ~~Also~~, since ~~money~~ ^{money} lost its importance as a measure of personal worth, ~~it~~ ~~no longer~~ ~~made~~ ~~sense~~ ~~to~~ ~~try~~ ~~to~~ ~~transcend~~ ~~my~~ ~~father's~~ ~~position~~ ~~by~~ ~~accumulating~~ ~~more~~ ~~of~~ ~~it~~. It made no sense to become one of those people who

do what they do just to be
nothing more
than something they invest in

(Bob Dylan)

Instead I began to work at discovering what kind of life would be meaningful to me. I would tailor my work to my life, rather than my life to my work - a radically heretical idea within the ~~the~~ rationalized, efficient, technocratic ethos of the dominant society.

Thus I knew that whatever I got I took must serve the people and not be exploitative. Many alternatives in the general area of education flooded my mind. I would be a secondary school social studies teacher, I would

be a college counselor, I would be an elementary school teacher, I would administer effective poverty programs. I ended up, as you know, in the graduate school of Guidance and Counseling at the University of Michigan. My specific vocational choice is still ~~quite~~ quite open, subject of course to the preceding qualifications.

Many aspects of my particular vocational history bear a significant resemblance to the various patterns of career development which I have studied this semester. Miss Roe for instance would certainly point out that my present orientation towards working with people is closely related to my previous warm, accepting family environment. Since my achievement has been above average it is probable that ^{perhaps} I was well endowed genetically, or ^{that} the ~~importance~~ importance of achievement in my needs hierarchy generates a high level of motivation. Holland might perceive that no modal personality style is clearly dominant in my makeup (I vacillate between Intellectual, Supportive, and Persuasive) and this would correctly postulate that my vocational development has been and still is relatively erratic and unstable. Since my self evaluation is very positive and my intelligence higher than average he might predict that I would advance to a prominent place in an occupational level hierarchy. Many of the tasks postulated by the Ginzberg theorists for various life stages roughly fit my development. For example I am currently in a crystallization stage of development whereas during the capacity stage of the tentative period I was considering being a lawyer because I perceived that I had a talent for it. The comment that

7 Statements like "emotional problems were important factors in the decision making process" are an insult to my intelligence and a major reason why I never mind avoid this ~~area~~ area of study.

The reality factor of having ~~the~~ continuing monetary support often postpones the onset of the Realistic stage is also applicable in my case.

Psychoanalytic conceptions of career choice might also be construed in ways relevant to my objectives. ~~Certainly~~ Work as a counselor is ~~a compromise~~ between the pleasure of having a lot of money ~~seen~~ by me to be a satisfactory compromise between the pleasure principle (the work is not extremely aversive) with the reality principle (I have to work to buy food to live on). It might also be true that irrational vocational choices may persist in the service of ego integrity since I might end up as a Weatherman rather than a counselor.

The work of Super might be relevant to me in that I seem to ~~be~~ consciously be striving to implement my self concept by choosing an occupation in which my values will find expression. His developmental frameworks might also have some ~~some~~ applicability.

Generally, however, I do not feel that any theory of vocational development exists which is worthy of the time ~~spent~~ necessary to read about it. The banalities ~~printed~~ printed in the Osipow books, for instance, could provide excellent laughingstock for anyone seriously concerned with the application of science to human behaviour. Generally these theories contain ^{a few} kernels of ^{simple} common sense - legitimized for publication by the pompous manipulation of the jargon of the "discipline". ^{INSERT} The most apt possible comment is made by Osipow himself, that is, "that very little about career development that is systematic in nature is really known." Osipow's own paper "What do We Really Know About

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Career Development?" is ~~is~~ certainly the best statement in the area. This is true largely because he doesn't presume to have all the answers. ~~He doesn't let go of "Scientifically"~~ ~~Half cocked~~. He makes more sense because he trusts to say less. He does not go off scientifically "half cocked".

My only real contribution to remedying this situation would actually be a further obfuscation of it. I personally feel that totally random "chance" factors are ~~as~~ ^{as great} ~~as~~ ^{as} important ~~than~~ as any other single variable, be it socioeconomic status, inherited intelligence, "needs structure" or whatever. ~~As a challenge of mine~~ A doctoral candidate in this department ended up in counseling as the result of a ~~series~~ series of events following the fact that he missed the train that was supposed to take him away to join the Merchant Marine. ~~Enough said.~~ I might have been a corporate lawyer if the United States had not invaded Vietnam. Enough said.