CHAPTER ONE

The Spirit in Career Counseling

Fostering Self-Completion Through Work

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CAREER COUNSELING THAT envisions work as a quest for self and a place to nourish one's spirit helps clients learn to use work as a context for self-development. Career counseling that cares for the spirit seeks to identify how clients wish to spend their lives and which projects are worth their lives. This concern with passionate and spirited commitment to work goes beyond individual achievement and careerism to teach clients that work is a social activity, one in which they connect with, contribute to, and cooperate with other people. Using work in their quest for self involves more than just fitting themselves to an occupation's ability and interest requirements. The search for meaning involves meshing a life story with its preoccupations and projects into the communal effort to ensure survival and cultural self-realization for the group, not just individuals. To be fully alive means to share our unique contribution by joining spirit with other people in celebrating life through work, love, friendship, and worship.

This chapter begins with an explanation of how spirit moves a life and character charts its course. Attention then turns to how individuals can use work as a context for self-development and manifestation of spirit. The next section explicates how counseling that cares for the spirit can help clients use an occupation to become more complete. This is followed by a

description of a career counseling model centered in client stories that show spirit. The next section discusses how to turn spirited preoccupations into social occupations. Finally, a concluding section asserts that occupational manifestations of spirit that produce individual achievements should in due course become social contributions.

SPIRIT, CHARACTER, AND MEANING

To be alive is to move. Our animation distinguishes us from inanimate objects and from rooted plants and at the same time shows the world who we are. *Spirit can be viewed as the activating force or essential principle that helps to give life to physical organisms.* The very origins of the word *spirit* arise from words denoting blow, breathe, and wind. A spirited person feels full of energy, enthusiasm, and courage. Individuals experience this spiritual courage as a sense of meaning that breathes life into situations. The passions, aspirations, frustrations, and anxieties that arise from meaning give life significance and chart its course. As an essential principle of life, spirit moves (or motivates) the individual and does so in a certain direction.

Spiritual courage orients most human beings to move in the same general direction. Individuals strive to become whole as they move from where they are to where they want to be. Adler (1956) identifies this direction as moving from a felt negative to a perceived plus. The perceived plus refers to improved adaptive capacity, not egocentric self-aggrandizement. Freud (1948) identifies the direction of development as "from it to I," which he labels the *ego paradigm.* Maslow (1954) refers to the principal direction of human movement as from gratifying biological needs to actualizing the self. In relating spirit to work, Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1985) refer to this movement as *career* or the imposition of direction on human life. The movement toward self-completion, regardless of what we call the signposts, increases adaptive capacity. Unfortunately the new capacities do not always get put to good use because some individuals invest their new skills in useless self-aggrandizement rather than useful contribution to others.

To have the spiritual courage to move forward, toward other people and community responsibilities, defines mental health. Of course, not everyone

has the courage and the encouragement to move toward other people and embrace the common unity of life or community living. Lack of movement or movement toward material goals and extrinsic rewards such as power, prestige, and possessions tears the fabric of social living. In addition to interpersonal problems, individuals with stalled or misdirected movement experience intrapersonal demoralization, discouragement, and dispiritedness. In psychodiagnostic terms, stalled or hesitant movement can be called *neurosis*. Moving away from people can be called *psychosis*, whereas moving against people can be called *psychopathy*. Healthy people move toward the community of individuals because they realize that life involves connection between, contribution to, and cooperation with other people. As individuals move toward and with people, they quickly learn that their communal salvation and personal integration reside in the social roles proffered by the community.

Individuals enact life through social roles. Super (1980) identifies a rainbow of major life roles that include student, worker, citizen, leisurite, and family member. Adler (1956) believes that the three major roles are work, friends, and love. Cabot (1914) views the primary roles as work, love, play, and worship. Whatever personal tapestry of roles one weaves into a life pattern, the key role is work. Freud (1961) asserts that work is the basic tie to reality. Havinghurst (1954) agrees that work is the key role in life because it provides for money, association, structure, creativity, and self-expression. Other roles can offer the last four in his list, but work is unique in providing economic support. Erikson (1968) taught that work also provides personal and social identity. In stating occupational interests, individuals also state, in tangible terms, who they are and what they want.

Obviously the spiritual quest to become more complete, more whole, usually involves work. As a context for human development, work activities provide a venue for becoming more than one used to be. In and through work, individuals develop themselves by expressing the occupational interests, vocational talents, and work values that move them from a felt negative to the perceived plus. This progressive development constitutes a spiritual quest for meaning and self-completion that, in the process, helps people become someone they want to be, a person they themselves would like.

WORK AS A CONTEXT FOR SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Work provides a major context in which individuals can meet their needs for agency and for union. Through work as a productive activity, people can be active agents who advance themselves and improve the world. Through work as a social contribution, individuals can share the fruits of their labor with family, friends, and neighbors. Through working with people, individuals can gratify their needs for cooperation and companionship. Thus work provides a forum for both individual identity and social significance. Accordingly, individuals can and do use work to develop into the self they want to become as well as manifest that self in social situations. Individuals both use and are used by work. Traditional career counseling emphasizes how employers and their occupations use the client's abilities and interests. Career counseling that attends to the individual's spirit, in addition, addresses how people can use occupations and work for personal and spiritual development. An occupation can allow people to resolve unfinished business from childhood, create meaning, advance life projects, and increase personal agency.

When counselors think of work as a theater to be used for developing the self, they want to know the manner in which a client seeks self-development and spiritual nourishment. Character sets the method of development. As architects of their own character, individuals choose their own style. Character is the personal mode of expression that individuals use to adapt to the world in which they live. Character is implemented in and made manifest through work. Motivational constructs explicitly denote the direction (or "perceived plus") that character implicitly sets. Remember, individuals are already animated, because to be alive is to move. Motivation does not move people; rather, it directs them. By providing a motivational direction, character charts the life course and channels daily behavior (Kelly, 1955).

Relative to the world of work, counselors focus on three modes of character expression: needs, values, and interests. These constructs point the direction in which clients think they can move to become more complete. Each mode deals with different aspects of motivation. Needs arise from a felt sense of incompleteness. Needs indicate the qualities that people lack yet think they require to feel secure and to become more whole. Values

denote the objects or gratifications in the world that people seek to satisfy their needs. Values are general goals that confirm who we are and what we wish to become. They signal a commitment to a way of life. In addition, values are communal and consequential because, as community sanctioned ways to meet needs, they relate the individual to the community (Bruner, 1990). Interests bridge needs and goals. Needs explain the why of life movement, whereas values describe what the goals are. Interests propose the route that links the *why* of needs to the *what* of values. Interests state a preferred *how* and project specifically how individuals propose to attain the goals that satisfy their needs.

For example, a career counselor might display a strong need to nurture other people yet at the same time to control and dominate. She can gratify these opposing needs through pursuing altruistic values that guide her to actively promote the welfare of other people. She may be interested in doing this as a career counselor but also as a social worker, minister, or nurse because these professionals also tell people what is good for them. Notice that in this example the career counselor's needs for nurturance and dominance naturally lead to altruistic values that she implements in a social occupation. People who possess this type of integrated, coherent set of interconnected needs, values, and interests have an easier time establishing a clear and stable sense of identity: They know where they are and where they want to go. When individuals exhibit disjunction among needs, values, and interests, they usually encounter difficulty in resolving the identity crisis because they are overwhelmed by life problems and confused as to how to chart their life course.

RATIONAL VERSUS SPIRITUAL CAREER COUNSELING

Personal needs, work values, and occupational interests have become the objective indicators that individuals use to gauge their life projects. Counselors foster adolescent self-awareness as a foundation for career decision making by providing objective feedback to students about their needs, values, and interests. Occupational information pamphlets describe the profile of needs, values, and interests that characterize satisfied and successful workers in diverse occupations. Individuals are then encouraged to

use "true reasoning" to match their motives to those required in different occupations and then select the most fitting match as their occupational choice (Parsons, 1909). This matching process itself can be assisted by objective techniques such as interest inventories. For example, in responding to the *Strong Interest Inventory*™ (Harmon, Hansen, Borgen, & Hammer, 1994), individuals report their interest in particular occupations, activities, hobbies, and types of people. A computer then matches this character profile to normative profiles of successful and satisfied individuals employed in many different occupations. The computer uses complex algorithms, or "true reasoning," to rationally indicate good matches between an individual and various occupations.

The objective, scientific, and rational methods of applied psychology do a fine job of representing common sense: They effectively and efficiently use actuarial methods to systematically match individuals to normative data (Super, 1954). The norms deal with aspects of character as an assembly of traits. Individuals' scores on each trait are graphed on a sheet of paper using a normal distribution or some variation of it. The individual learns, for example, that he or she scored at the 80th percentile on needs for nurturance and dominance and at the 70th percentile on altruistic values. This tells the person that his or her profile resembles those of people employed as career counselors. Objectively, the pattern of trait scores suggests that he or she is a fitting match for the profession of career counseling. Although effective, this rational approach usually ignores the essence of a client's unique character. What clients believe and feel about life is expressed in the unified, indivisible pattern that is more than its parts (i.e., assembly of traits). As Gestalt psychology asserts, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The best career counseling joins the individual's private sense about life and its meaning to the common sense through conversation and dialogue. When clients articulate their spirit, it becomes more coherent to them and clearer to their friends and neighbors as well.

People are so much more than the traits that personality and career inventories objectively measure and profile. An individual transcends all objective classification taxonomies. A person possesses a spirit. This spiritual dimension is how people experience themselves. Individuals organize their lives around specific meanings. They do not know themselves by their traits; instead they know themselves by their passions and purposes. This subjective "I" cannot be measured like the objective "me." It can be

felt, understood, and communicated but not counted. The essence of a person, her or his unique spirit and activating force, can only be comprehended as a whole pattern, not trait pieces. In music, the melody is more than the individual notes. In life, the theme is more than behavior. The theme of a life gives it meaning and distinction, like the *idee fixe* or leitmotif in a piece of music by Berlioz or Wagner. It is the life theme that makes the person self-consistent and therefore knowable to the self and recognizable by others. Even when the melody is transposed to another key, it is still identifiable because its essence remains; like a melody, a person cannot change if in some important sense she or he does not remain the same. Behaviors and strategies for living can change or be transposed as people mature, yet the core theme remains constant. Even as people elaborate and increase their repertoire of adaptive abilities and interests, they maintain a self through cohesiveness among and continuity in their needs and values.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STORIES

The empirical tradition of rational career counseling does not encompass complex human qualities such as spirit, consciousness, and purpose. Science examines parts; personal stories explain the whole. Stories tell us the situation, the needs, the goals, the interests, and the outcomes. It is through stories that counselors gain access to a person's spirit and life theme. The theme in a life story makes biography possible. Career counselors who wish to help people plot a life story, not just choose an occupational position, use the literary techniques of the biographer to identify the theme of the life story already in progress. Some career counselors have articulated these narrative means to therapeutic ends in writing about career as story (Jepsen, 1992), self-construction (Neimeyer, 1992), subjective experience (Savickas, 1993, 1995a, 1995b), and narrative (Cochran, 1990, in press). These authors strive to help clients become more active agents in authorizing and authoring their own lives. Their first step in facilitating life planning involves clients in identifying and articulating their spirit in terms of the theme that runs through their lives (Csikszentmihalyi & Beattie, 1979). Counselors do this by asking clients to look at themselves as the central character in a drama and then discover the pattern in their unfolding lives, give form to their identity, and imagine future scenes.

Career counselors who care for the spirit possess the ability to see patterns. Events that cannot be patterned are useless to the client. Counselors need the ability to recognize patterns because most clients cannot say who they are or articulate their life theme. The essence of people, their unique spirit and activating force, can be seen only in the whole pattern, not in the individual traits, but clients find it easier knowing and reporting their traits; they are so embedded in their own pattern that they do not realize they have one. They need increased self-awareness to know their life themes, the unique arrangement of life force that defines them. Even the few clients who grasp the essential principle that guides their lives find it difficult to articulate it explicitly.

What most clients have is an implicit and intuitive understanding of their life theme. Although they cannot readily report the theme, they can tell stories about their pain, preoccupations, and projects. Each person cares about some things more than others and feels passionate about only a few issues, which are preoccupations at the core of the spirit. The pattern is revealed as people tell stories about how they turned these private preoccupations into public projects. These stories usually concern defining moments in their lives, models who inspire them and nourish their spirit, and leisure activities that set their spirit free. It is in these stories that people know themselves best, because in them they store their experiences and digest the meaning of these experiences. Thus counselors can know their clients better through stories than through theories.

Finding Themes in Stories

Over the years, I have developed a method for identifying the life theme that activates and characterizes an individual. As a career counselor, I seek to help individuals turn their pain into progress. I aspire to help them transform their tensions into intentions, not pretention. The simple idea is to show them how to use the social role of work as a theater in which to advance their story, develop themselves, and become more whole. It is counseling focused on the whole rather than the parts. Unfortunately the whole is harder to see than the parts. Accordingly, most career counselors start their professional lives looking only at the parts. However, as they gain experience, counselors become more interested in what connects the parts, the pattern that makes everything else about the person meaningful.

The heart of my counseling model is to identify a life theme by comprehending how clients try to actively master what they have passively suffered. This is the essence of Freud's ego paradigm, which identifies the master motivation in life as turning externally imposed pain, or "it," into personal strengths, or "I." In turning *it* into *I*, the individual turns symptoms into strengths, and if given the opportunity the strengths can become social contributions. Adler (1956) calls this movement from symptom to strength moving from "a felt minus to a perceived plus." Art Linkletter talked about turning lemons into lemonade, and General MacArthur spoke of turning victims into victors. Possibly the most elegant statement of this paradigm was penned by Milton (1667/1940) in *Paradise Lost* when he described Lucifer's arrival in hell. Lucifer turned to his followers and said, "Our torments also may, in length of time, become our elements" (p. 33). The theme of a life story can be traced by examining how the individual turned symptoms into strengths, tension into intention, and torments into elements. To do this, I ask clients for stories that reveal their spirit. Character and its formation are made visible and become available for analysis through personal stories. Stories are modes of knowing that capture the richness, uniqueness, and complexity of what life means to a client. From these stories about their torments and elements, their preoccupations and projects, I look to find the theme.

If one truly believes that the whole is in every piece, any story a client chooses to tell the counselor would suffice. Nevertheless, there are certain stories that are easier for counselors to understand. It is these stories that I seek. I start career counseling by asking clients how I can be useful to them. I carefully write down their answer and continually remind myself of it as I listen to their stories. It is only when I can understand how this opening statement exemplifies the client's life theme that I am ready to help that client use work as a theater for self-development and as a context for actively mastering what she or he has passively experienced. After listening and responding to the opening statement, I explain briefly why I want their stories, then immediately proceed to ask for the first story.

Early Recollections

The first stories I elicit from clients deal with the time when they were making up their mind about life. These stories reveal the key elements of their life theme. Consider an analogy to explain this point. Imagine that

you are standing outside of a community theater and someone runs up and begs you to join a play in progress. You agree to do so and ask her what part you are to play. In response, she says that there is no time to tell you and she pushes you center stage as the curtain rises for Act II. There you stand. Think for a moment what you would do. You could retreat by running offstage, look to the director for orders, do a monologue that ignores the other actors, avoid attention by hiding behind a prop, try to get others to follow your script, stand still and do nothing, or watch what the other actors do and try to fit in. As strange as this may seem, we have all been cast into this situation. When our parents brought us home from the hospital, Act II began. Before we arrived, the play was in progress. Stated differently, before the individual was the community. At about age three or four, children start to decide what life means to them. The natural way to begin to construct a life plan is to look to family members and try to fit into the ongoing story by scripting our unique contribution to it. Other less desirable solutions are to retreat offstage into psychosis, become dependent upon parental direction, develop a narcissistic monologue, shyly avoid attention by hiding behind fears and obsessions, psychopathically manipulate the other actors to fit our own script, or stand still and depressively do nothing.

In their family of origin, individuals begin to script their lives to address the torments they experience at home, in school, and around the neighborhood. Some pain hurts more than all others, and that problem becomes a preoccupation. Individuals become sensitive to this particular pain and spend their lives trying to turn it into a strength, compulsively reliving the seminal event or events. Hopefully, with each repetition, they take another step toward mastery. The strengths they accrue in actively mastering what they passively suffered become the talents, needs, values, and interests that they implement in choosing an occupation. Their mastery and movement to a perceived plus actually explain the origins of the adaptive capacities measured by personality and interest instruments as well as provide a window on the unique spirit and life theme that define an individual.

I start by asking clients to tell me three stories about their early childhood; in fact I ask them for the three earliest recollections (ERs) they can remember (McKelvie, 1979). These stories contain their blueprint for life, the essence of their spirit. To provide some practice at seeing life patterns, consider the ERs of four different clients. I choose these ERs simply

because each occurred in a car. The first client remembered driving with her mother and grandmother during a violent thunderstorm. The thunder frightened her until her grandmother told her a beautiful story about lightning being God playing with a flashlight and thunder being the angels dancing. She was reassured and learned to enjoy hearing thunder. The second client reported going on an extended summer vacation with her parents. The drive was long and boring yet she enjoyed passing time by writing stories in a blank booklet her grandmother had given her for that purpose. The third client also remembered driving on vacation. She was dancing in the back seat and enjoying herself when her mother told her to sit down and be still. The fourth client remembered getting into the car parked in her driveway so they could go to church. She stated that her mother purposely slammed the door on her hand.

Could these four stories actually portray lifelong preoccupations, a sensitivity to certain torments, and motivation for particular projects? Try to guess at the preoccupation and life course for each of these clients. The client who heard the thunder became a counselor who uses narratives and humor to help clients deal constructively with their fears and problems. The client with the blank booklet writes science fiction novels. The client who was enjoined to sit still and do as she was told selected a nontraditional career for women, against her parents' directives, and as a pioneer she stands up for her rights and those of other females. The fourth client suffered great paranoia and found it difficult to establish herself in a career because she believed other people sabotaged her. She decided to leave the world of work to concentrate on being a good mother and church volunteer.

With practice, a counselor can quickly discern life themes from ERs, but that is not the goal of career counseling. Instead the goal is for clients to become aware of their life themes and decide how to nurture or redirect their life projects. One technique for helping clients to do this involves writing headlines. After I have elicited three ERs from a client, I explain that effective headlines for newspaper articles always contain an action verb. Remember, to be alive is to move. Accordingly, a good headline summarizes the action in the story. I then ask the client to write a headline for each ER. We collaborate until the client is certain that the headlines fit. These headlines contain the gist of the life theme and, when read in sequence, reveal the direction of movement. We will use these headlines

later when we discuss how to extend the life theme into the future and turn private preoccupation into public occupation.

In reading the three headlines, both individually and as a three-part sequence, the counselor can see the client's chief preoccupation and blueprint for life. The question becomes how to turn preoccupation into occupation, problem into opportunity, and symptom into strength. There are many possible methods for doing this, but I prefer a simple one—asking the client whom they admire.

Role Models

Of course, it is easy to see the connection between preoccupation and occupation in retrospect. But the career counselor's job is to see life prospectively, to extend a life theme into the future and forecast how preoccupation can become occupation. I find that stories about admired people reveal clients' goals (values) as well as their preferred methods (interests) for attaining these goals. If I can know only one thing about a person, I want to know whom she or he admires. My rationale follows Spranger's (1928) assertion that we know people best by what they value. Although the counselor can recognize needs from ERs, the narratives about role models reveal goals and interests. Through narration of the past (ERs), life becomes meaningful, but through narratives of the future (role models), tomorrow becomes real.

People who are admired are called role models because others model their self-construction after these images. Role models show ways to devise and develop better solutions to problems. Models serve as templates that individuals use to design their own lives. By finding people to admire, individuals find possible selves (Markus & Wurf, 1987). As individuals develop, they imitate the role models and strive to be like them. This role-playing leads, in due course, to the development of interests and skills.

Hanna (1994) describes this process well when she writes about one of her role models. This professor of political science learned from Wonder Woman the value of warm, loving communities, that "women can do anything if they stick together," and that "a woman could be in love and still retain her own identity" (p. E2). Interestingly, Wonder Woman was consciously designed by a psychologist, William Moulton (the inventor of the lie detector), as a role model for his daughter and other children, a superheroine who showed that love is stronger than violence. Because not

everyone looks at a role model the same way, it is important to ask clients why they admire particular people. Counselors cannot assume that everyone admires Wonder Woman for her empowering message; people find different messages in her stories. A case in point: One young man found Wonder Woman fascinating because of her invisible airplane. He later became a research scientist who worked on designing the stealth bomber.

Let us be clear that individuals have more than one role model, that they idealize and identify with many people. They take bits and pieces from several heroes and heroines as they construct themselves. Accordingly, I ask clients who are still constructing their identities to name three people whom they admired when they were growing up. They can name famous people, individuals they actually knew, or fictional characters. After clients name three role models, I ask them to describe each one in some detail and if possible tell a favorite story about each one. Finally I ask clients to tell me how they differ from each person they admire. This question sharpens the focus of their self-report.

Of course, counselors listen at several levels to client descriptions of role models. First they listen for the collection of traits that the client believes will help them address their preoccupation and become more complete. Second, counselors listen for the overriding commonality that connects these three figures and reveals the essential goal. And third, they listen for the aspects of the heroines and heroes that clients reject and do not find useful in their own lives. In short, counselors need to hear the clients' goals/values and methods/interests for reaching these goals.

Certainly many counselors will wonder about the validity of using role models for recognizing values and goals. Once as I was explaining my view of role models, a student in the front row exclaimed, "I always admired Mighty Mouse. Does that mean I want to be a rodent?" Not to be deterred, I asked her what she admired about Mighty Mouse. She responded that Mighty Mouse always rushed to crisis situations and resolved them. With that response, the class began to laugh. Neither she nor I knew why they were laughing, so I asked them. They pointed to the jacket hanging over the back of her seat. The sleeve had a paramedic patch on it. She blushed and said that she worked part-time as a paramedic and that her ambition was to be a counselor who specialized in crisis intervention.

A similar incident occurred at a counseling conference. As I was explaining how people use role models to design their lives, a man seated

on the center aisle said that this seemed too simplistic and deterministic. Of course, I had to ask him whom he admired when he was growing up. He responded, "Robin Hood. Try to make something of that." Fortunately I did not have to. The individuals seated in his row began to laugh. They said he was their counseling center director and they were his seven merry men, although four were female. They explained that he even insisted that they attend the conference with him and sit together at this session. Of course, they were glad to add further stories connecting Robin Hood to the director's management style and daily life. After a few minutes, he said, "Enough. I have to reconsider this."

One's collection of role models is a collection of possible selves. At first, this collection of selves is not integrated or coherent. As individuals mature and deal with the identity crisis (Erikson, 1968), they fashion these highly selective images into a clear and stable personal identity. In due course, individuals translate their personal identities into cohesive and unique vocational identities. Career counseling that cares for the spirit pays particular attention to tightening this integration of possible selves before translating it into a viable and suitable vocational identity. The skills, interests, and attitudes that constitute character are what rational career counseling matches to possible occupations. A deeper approach to matching tries to identify occupations that implement and develop character itself. The job should manifest who individuals are and want to become.

Articulating the Theme

After hearing the needs reflected in ERs and the values reflected in role models, the counselor attends to connecting the two. The connection between these two points is the life theme, the line of movement the person has chosen for his or her life course. In the language of career counseling, this connection can be called *interests*. The word *interest* comes from two Latin words, *inter* and *est*, meaning *it is between* or *to be between*. Interests are not in *us;* they are in situations. Interests relate individuals to their context by connecting personal needs to environmental goals and communal values. Interests focus the quest for self because they reveal how the individual plans to become more complete and how he or she envisions using the world of work as a context for further development (Savickas, 1995a).

As a counselor begins to learn this technique for identifying interests and the individual's quest for meaning, it may be helpful to write the

client's needs/symptoms/ERs on the left side of a blank piece of paper and write the role models and goals on the right. The blank space between the needs and values is reserved for brainstorming possible interests that connect the two. Filling in this blank space is what clients seek from career counseling.

From this perspective, interests are solutions to problems in growing up (Carter, 1940). New and richer narrative unity comes from connecting ERs to role models. The technique gets its validity the same way a novel does, by coalescing the particulars of a life around a coherent theme. The theme is an explanatory proposition that makes sense of the life. Coherence is enhanced when the theme explicitly connects the story's beginning (ERs) to its middle (role models). This connection clarifies choices and in so doing makes it easier for clients to decide on an occupation and then write the next chapter in their life story.

Example

Consider an individual who reports a defining moment in life as follows: She is an only child who spent her first nine years on crutches because of a defect in her left knee. Her father, on his death bed, told her that he was disappointed because he had no son to keep his name alive. This haunting story echoes through her life as she continually feels her father's disappointment. She wants to live her life in a way that resolves this issue, yet how can she keep his name alive? This question at least implicitly preoccupies her and intuitively guides her life choices. Of course, she cannot solve this problem as her father would have liked, yet there are numerous resolutions. She must, however, perceive these options in her environment.

As a teenager, she works as a waitress in a diner. Every day a man comes in for lunch. Eventually she learns that he owns a gym and is a famous weightlifter whose name is in the Weightlifters Hall of Fame. She finds that she can actively master her leg defect through weight training, and eventually she also masters her main preoccupation. She becomes the first woman inducted into the Weightlifters Hall of Fame and in this way makes her father's name live forever. The title to this story as it appeared in a local newspaper also provides an example of a good headline: "Lifting Her Name Up High" (Rosewater, 1994). Notice how weightlifting became her passion because it integratively addressed her torments about a defective knee, a disappointed dad, and societal sex roles.

CAREER COUNSELING THAT CARES FOR THE SPIRIT

The basic paradigm for rational career counseling consists of translating a self-concept into fitting occupational titles (Parsons, 1909; Holland, 1985a). Clients seek a counselor's guidance in identifying work environments in which they will feel belongingness and co-workers will appreciate their contributions. At a deeper level, career counselors can discuss how work will nourish the client's spirit and implement the client's passion and projects. Counseling that narrates the client's life theme combines objective person-position matching with the subjective meaning created by the client's spirited quest for meaning.

Narration

A narration should retell the life in a way that fosters understanding of the origins and meaning of clients' life themes and their relevance for career development. The narration helps clients to understand themselves and engage in more purposeful action. It should help them impose direction on their vocational behavior by clarifying their goals and the means to reach them. The narration provides a character sketch, one that includes the client's "superobjective." Stanislavsky, in his system for teaching acting, emphasized that each character in a play has an overall objective that motivates all of her or his behavior throughout the play. This superobjective welds together all aspects of the role, and the actor must know that overall objective in order to create an integrated and purposeful character (Levin & Levin, 1992). The same holds true for career-counseling clients. In knowing their character by its superobjective, they can more purposefully impose direction on their career choices and vocational behavior.

By attending to the essential principle and spiritual passion that activate a client, the counselor can weave a story. The story begins with a recitation of the three headlines from the ERs accompanied by a narrative description of the client's principle preoccupations and how they direct a quest for meaning. The counselor should in most cases be rather candid in retelling the origins of the spirit in the client's character. In other words, the counselor should clearly articulate the pain or problem most frequently experienced by the client and give examples of how it repeats itself in various life episodes.

Having identified the client's preoccupation, the counselor continues the story by discussing how the client's role models actually portray solutions to the concerns. Role models are important not for what they accomplished in their own lives but for what they can accomplish in the client's life (Cobb, 1991). It is useful for clients to consider how the models selected directions for their own lives or, in the jargon of counseling, how they chose values and constructed meaning. The counselor can help clients understand how their role models provided cultural scripts for them to use as they designed their life pattern. For example, the weightlifter can come to explicitly understand how a solution to the problem of keeping her father's name alive was embodied in her role model, a Hall of Fame member. Her work as a weightlifter was more than interesting; it was a passion that embodied her spirit. It made her more whole, more complete, and more effective. In short, weightlifting made her more herself. All clients, upon leaving counseling, should clearly understand that they are the architects of their character. In authoring their own lives, they are both storyteller and story.

The counselor should make sure that the client understands the narrative. If the client does not understand it or disagrees with some details, then the counselor needs to seek the client's revisions. When the narrative does not suit the client, the counselor should encourage him or her to edit the narrative so that it does fit. The counselor's goal is to be useful, not right. Even errors in the initial narration can be useful if they are used to heighten understanding and focus on important nuances. Working together, client and counselor should come to some agreement about the origins and progress of the story line. To check that we have reached clarity and agreement, I ask clients to tell me something that happened today that exemplifies the preoccupation that we have just articulated. Most clients do this easily; after all, the whole is in every piece. This brief exercise also reinforces the client's belief in the ongoing importance of his or her life preoccupation.

Interests

At this point, the counselor has narrated the client's story. By focusing on the life theme, the counselor has described the client's needs and their origins as well as values and their meaning. It is now time to discuss interests,

or how the client may proceed in the future. Naturally there are as many ways of approaching this topic as there are counselors. My approach is to describe the client's interests as solutions to personal pain or problems. Of course, I do this by describing how the person's talents and interests relate to his or her preoccupation as well as how these solutions should be implemented and made manifest in fitting occupations. In an ideal situation, work implements the self-concept (Super, 1961). Work can be a vocational manifestation of identity. This means that the life theme, with its vocational needs, work values, and occupational interests, finds autonomous expression in job activities. In turn, the work itself becomes a context for further development and greater mastery. Unfinished business from childhood can be addressed and old issues worked out in a new situation.

Identifying specific occupations for a client to explore flows seamlessly from the discussion of the client's life theme and its implementation in future roles. Work that interests the person is recognized because it already lies in the direction the individual is moving. Once the counselor knows the client's line of movement, the group of occupations the client may find interesting and useful is clearly circumscribed. The pattern of needs limits which values and interests can be useful to the individual. The inherent direction he or she has chosen shapes the occupational activities that can in due course attract his or her interest (Anygal, 1941). So the little girl who finds consolation and courage in her grandmother's story about God's flashlight later finds herself attracted to occupations in which she can listen to people's fears and encourage them with healing words of her own. We cannot easily predict whether she will be a social worker, nurse, counselor, psychiatrist, minister, or bartender, yet we know that she will carve out an occupational niche in which she can use the skills she has rehearsed these long years. Her social contribution comes in helping other people overcome their fears using the strengths modeled by her grandmother and rehearsed by her since she was a child. In this way, her preoccupation becomes her occupation and her spirit is engaged and nourished as she earns her daily wage.

The actual choice of specific occupations to explore is usually easy because clients have secret ambitions or occupational fantasies that show the way. Eliciting these expressed interests can be rather straightforward once the client has learned to trust and collaborate with the counselor. Simply asking clients what occupations appeal to them typically produces

a good list with which to start. The first page of one of the most popular objective interest measures, *The Self-Directed Search* (Holland, 1985b), asks clients to list their occupational daydreams. According to empirical research, this page is the best section of the measure for predicting what occupation the individual will enter (Touchton & Magoon, 1977). A list of occupational daydreams can now be quite useful because the occupations have a context within the life theme. Examining the occupations listed with regard to their relevance to the client's needs and values, problems and solutions, tensions and intentions clearly reveals those occupations that merit in-depth exploration. This exploration typically uncovers a few additional occupations to explore, yet the expanded list retains a coherence and consistency that the client understands.

If the counselor does not want to ask clients about occupational daydreams or the client responds with only a few occupational titles, then there are alternative ways to generate a personally meaningful list of occupations for the client to explore. One easy way is to identify the client's vocational personality type (Holland, 1985a) by assigning typological codes to the ERs and role model descriptions provided by the client. It is usually pretty clear from the ERs and role models what objective code best describes the client's character. With this vocational personality type code, the counselor and client can scan *The Occupations Finder* (Holland, 1985c) to generate a list of occupational titles for client reaction and exploration.

If desired, the client could even generate a list of occupations to explore by taking an interest inventory such as the *Strong Interest Inventory* (Harmon, Hansen, Borgen, & Hammer, 1994). Again, however, in reviewing the results of the *Strong*, the counselor should interpret the scores in context of life themes so clients deeply understand why they scored high on certain occupations. Situating the scores in clients' life themes explains why a few occupations for which they earn high scores may not appeal to them. I recall one client who scored high on optometrist. It was the only high score in that occupational group. She had no attraction to the field and wondered how she resembled optometrists. I asked her if she would like to explore optometry to answer that question. She responded, "Absolutely not. I am not interested in that kind of work. How could it possibly show up on this test?" I suggested that we review her ERs. In her third ER, she reported a story in which the son of her mother's friend teased and chased her. She ran to her dog for protection, thinking the boy could not get

close to her. In anger, he threw a rock that hit her in the eye. The two mothers took her into the bedroom to tend to her eye. Her headline was "Dog plan fails to control boy." I asked her if it could be that her sensitivity to eye injury may have been enough to make her score similar to optometrists, although she had no intent of becoming an eye doctor. She agreed. It appeared that the main preoccupation scripted in this ER dealt with how she would relate to men, not the world of work. In contrast, a man who was interested in optometry had as his second ER a story about being embarrassed when his first-grade teacher called him to the front of the class so that she could clean his dirty glasses. One difference between the two stories is that her ER dealt with eyes, whereas his ER involved eyeglasses.

FROM SOLUTION TO SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION

By now it is clear that the client's personality is a solution, one that resolves problems in growing up and in so doing produces character. Career counseling that cares for the spirit does not end when clients understand how to turn preoccupations into occupations. It continues by focusing on how clients can use the solution to make a social contribution. Counselors approach the issue of social contribution by discussing how clients can use the work role as a context in which to further master their problems and to implement their life projects. However, I would like to go further and discuss the spiritual nourishment that comes from turning personal solutions into social contributions. It is too easy to get trapped in careerism, or egocentric uses of work, by focusing on personal victory (Richardson, 1993; Savickas, 1994). These personal victories can become social failures if they focus exclusively on the "three p's" of power, prestige, and possessions. The path to growth goes from symptom through strength toward social contribution. Strong people need to be generous, to share the solution with the community.

Counseling theorists, to a great degree, talk about themselves in their theories, turning their private victories into public gifts. Therefore consider, as an example of turning personal solutions into social contributions, the lives of three leading psychodynamic theorists. Sigmund Freud's self-analysis of the Oedipal triangle that enmeshed him remains one of the great

intellectual achievements of the modern era. Through his self-analysis, Freud created *a* truth that freed him from his own neurosis. Had he stopped with this private victory in which he actively mastered what he passively suffered, society would never have heard of him. Fortunately Freud made a social contribution by sharing with Viennese society his newfound strength, thereby turning his personal solution into a form of therapy that remains helpful to individuals who suffer problems similar to those he experienced. Of course, his theory and therapy for dealing with sexual trauma by making the unconscious conscious have little relevance for individuals who suffer from different problems. Consider Alfred Adler, for another example. Adler's problems did not constitute a sexual neurosis. He envied and felt inferior to his older brother. Adler's solution was to develop the courage to cope with life's tasks and feel equal to other people. His solution became a social contribution in his theory of sibling rivalry, insights into birth order positions, and therapy that uses encouragement techniques to overcome feelings of inferiority. A third and final example comes from the life of Erik Erikson, who escaped Nazi Germany and struggled as a disoriented immigrant in his new country, the United States. When he actively mastered his disorientation and established his new identity and transformed life, he renamed himself from Erik Homberg to "Erik, son of myself," or Erikson. His new name symbolized the self-constructive process he had completed. Erikson shared his solutions and strengths as a social contribution in the form of a theory of psychosocial identity development. He explained that adolescents resemble immigrants to a new country, because they leave the land of childhood to explore the land of adulthood. As immigrants do, adolescents must cope by constructing an identity that achieves inner certainty and outer recognizability.

We could continue to describe each counseling theory as an extension of the theorist's active mastery of personal problems, but most readers are probably already familiar with the personal origins of their preferred approach to counseling. There may even be some truth to the speculation that counselors use theories that address their own preoccupations because it is so easy for them to learn these theories. In career counseling that cares for the spirit, counselors strive to help clients understand how they too can turn their private victories into social contributions.

CONCLUSION

Career counseling that cares for the spirit attends to both career and the person who constructs the career. By dealing with both the personal preoccupation and the public occupation, counselors help clients to manifest their spirit and character through work. Clients learn to use occupations as a context in which they can become more complete and continue to actively master what they have passively suffered. Counselors foster client development through nurturing the spiritual courage that propels clients to use work as a forum for turning their problems into their elements.

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