

Development of

The Implicit Career Search

An Integral Approach to Career Planning

Designed by myself, in collaboration with Dr. Will Schutz, “The Implicit Career Search (ICS)” is a program intended to assist people to clearly define what the purpose of their work is to be, and to guide them in developing a successful career based on that purpose. This program represents a lifetime of searching for a clear answer to a question that entered my head when I was seven years old: “How do I decide what my work is going to be?”

The development of ICS can be viewed as a series of solutions to problems I came across since that question insolently intruded into my life.

How Do We Decide What Work To Do?

I was blissfully playing with my toy cars when the thought arose, so the first person I thought to ask was Mum. “That’s easy,” she replied. “Simply put away your toys when you are finished playing, clean up your room, eat your vegetables, do your homework, be nice to your brother and sister, and when you finish school decide if you want to be a priest or a doctor.” Although this may have been the clearest answer I was to receive in the next thirty years it didn’t, as we now say, *resonate*.

My schoolteacher warned me not to get into teaching because they were all overworked and underpaid. My aunt advised me to get into teaching because there was always work in that field. My dad pointed me in the direction of business because “that’s where the money is.”

I was getting lots of advice, but no answer to my question. I wasn’t asking *What* should I do, but *How* do I decide.

Then I discovered Joseph Campbell, the American mythologist, lecturer and writer.

At an early age, Campbell studied Native Indian mythology and went on to spend his life studying the myths and folklore of cultures across the globe. He was fascinated to discover that each culture had a myth of a hero’s journey where “*A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.*”¹

The idea that this concept was being taught in different parts of the world at different stages in time, convinced me it was an eternal, universal, career decision-making method and contained the answer to my question.

By this time I was a career counsellor, following the dictum: “If you don’t know it, teach it till you do.” It now seemed that my work was to translate the hero’s journey into a practical method that would guide my clients through their own story.

¹ *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell, p. 30. Princeton University Press, 1949.

What is the Point of Career Counselling?

After delivering a program for the federal government, the project officer, Boldavex, (not his actual name) came to visit me. He was delighted with the results of the program and wanted to know what we were doing. This ended up being an uncomfortable conversation for both of us because I told Boldavex that I couldn't see the point in what we were doing. It had occurred to me that we were helping people

find work by giving them an injection of energy, esteem and some useful resume/interview techniques. There were still as many people out of work in the community at the end of the program as there had been at the beginning—what was the sense of the program? Boldavex, with whom I have remained friends, suggested we keep running the program while trying to answer the question.

To Where Does the Hero Venture Forth?

In those early, stumbling, days of delivering career planning workshops, I experimented with many different techniques and methods (traditional career and personality assessments, identifying and prioritizing values and beliefs, team-building, stress management, conflict resolution, self-help approaches, etc.). Most of these were fun to deliver and, occasionally, of some practical use to some of the group members. Most of the topics covered in the workshop, however, had little to do with actual career planning or decision-making. What seemed to be more important than the subject matter was the energy that was being transmitted to participants that if it was fun to participate in the workshop, perhaps it could be fun to participate in life also.

There were a few people coming out of these early workshops with some solid career plans and when I asked them how they had made the decision to do what they were going to do their answers surprised me. They said things like: *“During the course of the workshop I remembered what I wanted to do.”* Or, *“Thanks for reminding me.”* Or, *“Until I took this workshop I had forgotten that I wanted to be a ____”*.

It was after a few of these responses that I began to realize that my job wasn't to tell people what they should do but to help them remember.

The Astronaut of Inner Space

Successful clients were finding the answer to their career search inside themselves. It was there before they arrived at the workshop. It was *implicit* (available but not apparent). How could I help more people remember? Noted human potential leader and author, George Leonard, dubbed Will Schutz “The

Astronaut of Inner Space” for his remarkable ability to help people and groups find answers from within themselves. After leaving a prestigious position at Albert Einstein Hospital in Chicago, Schutz spent ten years at the Esalen Institute at Big Sur in California, immersing himself in the culture of human

potential. He worked alongside people like Joseph Campbell and Abraham Maslow, vied with Fritz Perls (Gestalt) to see who could fill the most workshops, and introduced people such as Ida Rolfe and Moshe Feldenkrais to North America.

I took a workshop of Will's and, once he heard my question, we became colleagues.

He had developed a theory called FIRO® (Fundamental Personal Relations Orientation) that helped people look within themselves at deepening levels of awareness (Behaviours – Feelings – Self-Concept). He had also developed some powerful methods to help workshop participants increase their self-awareness. It was an honour to learn such techniques as guided imagery, non-verbal learning methods, effective group feedback, and to be trained to deliver his scientific assessments.

FIRO Theory takes individuals on an inner journey that takes them very close to the very core of their being—their essence. It

does this by pointing out the “*fabulous forces*” that are to be encountered and conquered. Far from being mystical mythological monsters, these forces are concrete barriers to self-awareness that, using Schutz's techniques, can be overcome and moved on from.

On to essence: the great wisdom traditions, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Sufism, Hinduism, etc. talk about a part of us that is our “witness” or “observer.” A place that resides within us non-judgmentally, observing our personality as it participates in the world. Should we get confused and think that our personality is who we are, then we will participate in a personality-based world, taking jobs because they are available, or are easy, or pay well, or will make our mums happy. If we allow ourselves to reconnect with the very essence of who we are, we can tap into an infinite reservoir of wisdom and simply “remember” what we have to contribute to our community through our work.

How Do We Deliver These Boons?

I spent another couple of years delivering workshops helping people connect with their essence. This was a very exciting time, seeing participants become in touch with more authentic selves, becoming rejuvenated, alive, ready to contribute to their communities while developing successful careers.

How do we develop these successful careers? Back to the drawing board... Now that I had a career-decision making method, I needed a way to develop it into a career. I was looking for a path.

While studying the works of philosophers such as Huston Smith and Ken Wilber, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, I noticed that they

used a technique called isomorphism to predict change, or growth, in people or groups or historical events. It was a simple technique based on the idea that what is happening without also happens within, what is above reflects what is below and vice-versa.

If I wanted to develop a path for individuals to follow in career development, I had only to look at how society in general had developed in its approach to work. There seemed to be consensus amongst historians that, although infinite stages could be identified in our evolution of work, four major ones had clearly occurred. Our culture has evolved from Hunting/Gathering

to Agriculture to Industrial to Informational. Each of these stages took much less time to develop into the next one and indeed the

Informational stage may be evolving into the Age of Imagination already.

To mirror the development for individuals I created something called the Career Development Spectrum:

EVOLUTION OF WORK	MAIN DEVELOPMENT	CAREER DEVELOPMENT SPECTRUM	MAIN DEVELOPMENT
Imagination	Creativity	Creator	Contributing
Information	Knowledge	Expert	Solving
Industrial	Team Work	Leader	Teaching
Agriculture	Settled Security	Manager	Marketing
Hunting/Gathering	Nomadic Survival	Craftsperson	Gaining Skill

The order of the stages is important and simple. Once a work purpose is developed from essence, the next step is to develop the skills necessary to achieve it. When the skills are sold, or marketed, we make a living through delivering our contribution to our community. To further develop that contribution we can learn more through

teaching it to others (leader). As the work purpose becomes more focussed, we become experts in our field and provide solutions to heretofore-unresolved problems. The culmination of the four stages (craftsperson + manager + leader + expert) results in a unique contribution or creation.

Is There a Point to Career Counselling?

It seems to me now that career counselling is not about telling people what to do, but about helping them get to where they already know they want to be. This sounds like planning. For this final piece of the journey I studied with one of the best Strategic Planners in the world, Jack Knight of University Associates. Jack taught me how to break dreams down into Visions, develop Implementation plans to accomplish the

Visions and devise Contingency plans that will ensure the Work Purpose is achieved.

Participants in “The Implicit Career Search” complete something called a “Career Development Profile” – a personal strategic plan that outlines how they will make a living-making contribution. This is a clear, practical step-by-step plan that describes...

“...A hero venturing forth...”