Career Assessment Interview
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The individual I interviewed was a fifty-two year old woman named Annie. Her career is in administration at a correctional facility. I was able to contact her through a family member who works at the same correctional facility. The interview was pleasant and, honestly, eye-opening as to how I was able to apply developmental theory to her life circumstances and career choices. I am not an expert by all means, but I was able to apply what I have learned to Annie’s life story as she spoke.

Annie grew up in a household with two sisters and two brothers. Annie is the middle child and felt she held the traditional “middle child” role, meaning that she often felt like she was struggling to find her place in the family. Her older sister was a cheerleader, older brother was a football player, younger brother was musically-inclined, and youngest sister was considered to be “the baby” of the family. Annie fell into the comedian role of the family, often telling jokes and getting in trouble at school for her outspokenness. She remembers earning average grades through her childhood school years. Her interests did not lie within school, she wanted to be on the road with dad. Her dad was a long-haul truck driver, and her mom was a homemaker. Her dad was gone on the road a lot of the times, and she greatly missed him. She felt as though her dad was the only person that truly understood her.

Annie graduated high school in a small town in Washington. From there she attended a local community college where she earned a certificate in Communications. Annie had yet to narrow down a career choice. She stated that she was not too concerned with choosing a career up until attending community college. As a child, Annie wanted to be a police officer, but that was no longer on the agenda as she reached college. Annie reported being interested in a lot of different subjects once attending college. Psychology, nursing, and administration all peaked her interest. Annie had her first baby while attending the college and stated that she felt like she
needed to do something practical and quick so ended up with the communications certificate. She felt that she could not spend any additional time in schooling with a new baby and the costs that arise with parenthood. Annie would have liked to get some additional schooling if she were able to do things differently. She would have went for a four year degree, although she is not sure in what.

Annie’s work history was one that provoked questions such as, “how did you end up there?” and, “why the sudden shift in careers?” Annie worked in fast food as a high-school student. She remembers enjoying fun and casual atmosphere of the job and stated that it was nothing like how fast food workers are treated today. When I asked her if she could elaborate on that statement a little further she discussed the options that she had were not limited to working in fast food. Annie talked about how she knew that working in fast food would never be a career for her and that she had the freedom that she does not see in the fast food industry today. She is saddened by how many people are working in fast food as their career to support their family because of the economy. Annie does not believe that there is still freedom associated with a job working in fast food or other minimum wage jobs (in her experience). Annie’s sense of care for other’s well-being and happiness shined during this conversation that almost turned into a tangent. I could tell this was a hot-topic for her, and it revealed that although administration and clerical duties are not necessarily in the helping profession, a person still has to care about others in order to enjoy working in administration.

Once Annie started attending college she got a job as a customer service representative in business. Annie reflected on enjoying working with finances and people in the community but stated that her co-workers were too “stuffy” for her, and she had a hard time fitting in. She reported this being the worst job she ever had. Annie then became an insurance agent and
continued in that profession for eight years. Again, she enjoyed working with people in the community as part of her job. In her time as an insurance agent, Annie really thought about making that position her lifetime career choice. She began to question whether that was really what she wanted to do about five years in when she could not help but to feel bothered by the “sneaky things” that occur in the insurance field. I did not care to ask her to elaborate on this statement being that I am an insurance consumer and already feel duped when I pay almost as much in monthly insurance for various things just for two people as I do for rent.

Annie switched careers in less than two weeks. She is now employed in administration at a state correctional facility. She reported that she had support from her friends and family, although some of them were a little leery when they found out she was going to work for a prison. She has many duties including often communicating with the state’s Attorney General, setting up offender’s court proceedings, maintaining communications with news outlets and the general public, completing payroll for staff, and many other things. Annie also discussed having to continuously participate in retraining, continued education, advanced specialization. She completed a six-week core training when she was hired which included defense classes. She had to spend the week away from home and only got to see her family on the weekends for six weeks, and by this time Annie had two teenage children and a husband. Annie reported she still constantly attends trainings to make sure she’s safe and is doing right by the offenders. Her top priority is to make sure she is not violating offender’s rights. This statement stuck out to me because I would think in administration there would be a different set of goals, but the person-centered side of me was happy to hear that she is concerned about the welfare of the people in the facility. I think this is very important because although the individuals housed in the facility
are known as offenders, they should still be treated like human beings, however there is a page limit to this paper so I will not be divulging anymore into this topic.

When I asked Annie if she had attained her career goals she laughed and said, “no I am not retired yet” then followed that statement with, “I have not yet made it to where I exactly want to be. There are still positions that I could go for that would take me to a higher position with more responsibility and a higher pay. I am happy and comfortable where I am at, but when I am done here and I decide it is time to move up, then I’ll start applying to move up.” She notes that her current job is the best job she has ever had. She has already moved up in positions numerous times and thoroughly enjoys her work. She stated that she would have never initially chosen a career in administration in a correctional facility, but she feels that is where she is meant to be.

I am able to apply Super’s life-span developmental theory to Annie’s career development as she told me her career story. Annie’s self-concept changed and developed over time as a result of experience as did her career (Zunker, 2016). She has progressed through three out of five of Super’s life and career development stages. She is currently in what Super identified as the maintenance stage (stage four). She is continually adjusting to improve her position. What is interesting with Annie is that she has already progressed through Super’s establishment stage and built up work experience, yet she is still not done progressing although I would place her in Super’s maintenance stage. I believe where Annie is at in her career aligns with Super’s maintenance stage because she is already established and stable in her career, and she spoke about the continual process of additional specialized trainings in order to keep improving. She is at a point where she truly enjoys her career choice but acknowledges that it has been a process, never a stand-alone event. When concerning Super’s vocational developmental tasks (Zunker, 2016), Annie’s current vocational status fits best with the task of consolidation. As mentioned
before, Annie is established in her career and is respected as someone with knowledge and seniority.

Annie defined success to her as “being proud of the person that you are, proud of the people you raised, and happy in life.” When I asked if she believed she was successful, Annie replied, “absolutely.” Annie reiterated that her career development has been a process and continues to be as she contemplates continuing to move up in her career. She greatly believes that career choice evolves as a person truly gets to know themselves and what they want out of life. She identified her key motivators for her work history as having an obligation to take care of her family and being financially set. She also wanted to enjoy her work and have it be something that she was good at. She stated that she eventually found all that and more but not without going through times when she felt lost which Super identified as being in the exploration stage.
References


Belmont, Ca: Brooks/Cole.