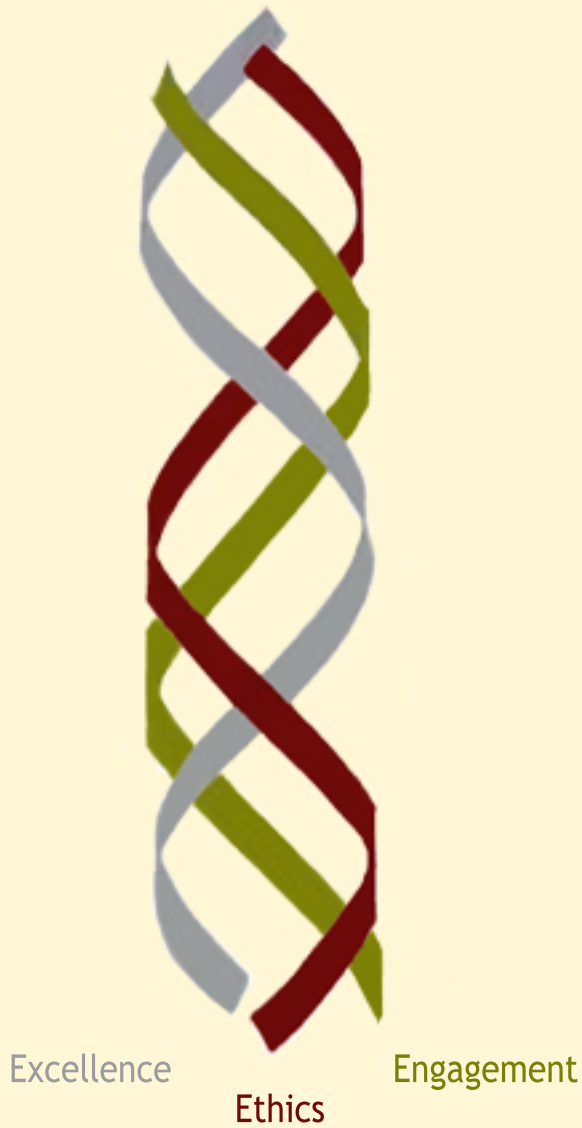


GoodWork: Theory and Practice



Howard Gardner, Editor

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GoodWork: Theory and Practice

1

Introduction

Howard Gardner

When William (Bill) Damon, Mihaly (Mike) Csikszentmihalyi and I went to the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in the fall of 1994, we had no intimation of the long-term consequences of our joint fellowship. On the personal side, Bill and his wife Anne soon moved from the northeast coast to Stanford University, and after a while, Mike and his wife Isabella moved from the shores of Lake Michigan to the Claremont Graduate University in southern California. (My wife Ellen and I stayed put in Cambridge, our home since we were college students). On the scholarly side, Mike, Bill, and I embarked on a collaboration that has lasted, in one form or another, since those days.

A number of factors, none of which could have been anticipated, catalyzed to yield this long-term ambitious collaboration. First of all, we liked one another, respected each other's work, and had applied jointly for the fellowship year. As a result, we began to meet regularly to discuss issues of creativity and morality, topics on which each of us

had worked separately in one way or another. At these meetings it became clear that our interests and methods were similar but also complementary. It also turned out that our writing styles supported one another in unexpected ways: As I once put it, Bill has an unerring sense of rhetoric and audience, Mike embraces the most lapidary of formulations; and I am obsessed with the ways in which to structure and arrange literary materials.

But external events also influenced us. Our fellowship took place in the year that, for the first time in forty years, the Republicans took control of the United States House of Representatives. Their leader was Congressman Newt Gingrich, a powerful Speaker who laid out a seductive “Contract with America.” Part of the contract was a belief that government activity was almost always counterproductive, and that except for the obvious exceptions (military, security), almost all functions were better carried out by private institutions and subjected to the operations of market forces. The three of us did not object to markets—far from it. Each of us were beneficiaries of the market, and our political opinions were all over the map. But we were each uneasy with the notion that all sectors and spheres of life are best left to forces of supply and demand.

In addition, we each had occasion to observe our own scholarly ideas as they spread, exerted influence on others, and could be manipulated and misapplied. Bill had developed the conception of a Youth Charter and had observed how difficult it was to implement such structures properly in a politicized community. Mike’s influential ideas of ‘flow’ were often mistranslated as ‘the untrammelled pursuit of happiness’. Numerous attempts were made to instruct people how to be in flow, rather than allow that state to emerge as a result of attaining skill in an area that matters to a person. I had seen my concept of multiple

intelligences give rise to many educational practices and even some schools; and while I learned from most of these implementations, a few had made me shudder.

Probably the worst experience involved an educational program, apparently adopted throughout a state in Australia, that had catalogued the various racial and ethnic groups in Australia in terms of the intelligences that each possessed and the intelligences that each lacked. In a rare moment of courage, I went on Australian television, denounced the educational intervention as pseudo-scientific, and was pleased to learn shortly thereafter that this perhaps well-intentioned but ill-considered intervention had been canceled.

At least one other factor impelled us in the direction of Good Work. That was the aging—or, if you prefer—the maturing of three psychologists. Each well into middle age, each established in our scholarly careers, each with children who had or were rapidly become adult, we found ourselves turning our attentions to the future, to the next generation, and, more specifically, to the ethical fiber of that cohort. Indeed, social scientists have often turned their attention in later life to ethical issues—and we certainly adhered to that trend.

Going from an idea to a research project, proceeding from seed money to full funding, assembling research teams, and, eventually, moving two of the laboratories across the country, the Project proved to be an enormous undertaking. Originally, we called our study “humane creativity”; but it gradually evolved into a study of how professions fare under market conditions, when few countervailing forces existed, and the name was changed to “Good Work.” Originally, we sought funding from six foundations; five showed no interest, and we

received an initial grant from the one foundation—the California-based William and Flora Hewlett Foundation—with which we had no prior relationship. We eventually were fortunate enough to secure funding from over two dozen agencies and persons. And while we are tremendously grateful to each and every one of them, life would have been much easier—and perhaps we would have learned more with less sweat—had we originally been able to secure full funding from one or two sources.

Details of the development of the project, along with a timeline, have been recorded in various places—most prominently in the Overview section of our website (goodworkproject.org)—and so it is not necessary to record them here. Having evolved from a study of Humane Creativity to an examination of Good Work, we eventually designed and executed a large-scale empirical study. We carried out in-depth semi-structured interviews that usually lasted well over one hour with over 1200 professionals representing a range of ages, roles, and other demographic variables. These professionals were drawn from nine different domains (as we came to call them): genetics, theater, journalism, law, medicine, pre-collegiate education, tertiary education, philanthropy, and business. We also carried out more focused studies with several of the groups—for example, creating an exercise in which individuals were asked to prioritize their values, posing specific professional dilemmas to our interview subjects. The secured data were recorded, transcribed, and subjected to coding on several dimensions, including goals, missions, obstacles, strategies, mentoring, the changes that were occurring in the domain and whether these changes were seen as positive or problematic.

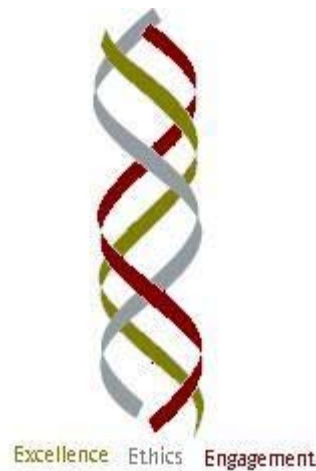
While we strove to interview people who were considered by colleagues to be good workers (initially undefined for the purposes of

research), we have never claimed that ours is a study of good workers per se. After all, we are not investigative journalists, and so we cannot determine whether a specific person deserves that accolade. Rather, by speaking to knowledgeable and reflective professionals, we sought knowledge about what it means to be a good worker. To use an analogy, however flawed their terms as Majority Leaders may have been, we could learn a great deal about “good work” in the United States Senate from speaking to one time leaders Lyndon Johnson, Everett Dirksen, Mike Mansfield, Howard Baker, Bob Dole, and Tom Daschle.

Having arrived at a general approach to the study, we developed a system for studying good work, and, eventually, a conception of good work. We see good work as the intercalation of three ingredients, each (as it happens) beginning with the letter E.

Good work is good in the Excellent, technical sense: the worker knows his stuff, is highly skilled, and keeps up with the latest knowledge and techniques. Good work is good in the phenomenal sense: it feels good, feels right, is personally Engaging, yields experiences of flow. Finally, good work is good in a moral sense: it is carried out Ethically, in a way that is responsible, and in a way that serves the wider good, even (indeed perhaps especially) when it goes against the immediate interests of the worker.

Borrowing imagery from genetics, we see Good Work as the integration of three strands, beginning with the letter E; and whimsically, we speak of ENA.



In one sense, one could say that this definition of Good Work is a priori. We did not need to interview 1200+ persons to arrive at this formulation of Good Work. And indeed, in a way that we did not anticipate, the three senses of good reflect our own previous research interest. As a student of intelligence, I was interested in Excellence; as a student of motivation, Mike was interested in Engagement; and as a student of moral development, Bill was interested in Ethics.

And yet, in my view, that is not how social science works. Social scientists have our hunches, our hypotheses, but we do not just think about them while we are alone or merely talk to a few friends and await their nodding agreement. Rather we collect data systematically and analyze it in as disinterested a way as possible. This procedure is even more likely to happen when one has three principal investigators and when, over the years, we have involved several dozen research managers, assistants, and students. To be sure, Excellence and Ethics emerged soon after Humane Creativity had transmogrified into a study of the professions; but Engagement was added near the end of the empirical study.

Moreover, even at the cost of further alliteration, the characterization of Good Work could continue to change. We began the study, with a critical attitude towards a ‘markets–über–alles’ Weltanschauung (if I can be permitted a shift in mid sentence to a Teutonic mode of expression). But, we could not have anticipated the growing skepticism about markets—beginning with the fall of Enron and Arthur Andersen at the start of the millennium and reaching feverish heights after the financial meltdown of Lehman Brothers, AIG, Citigroup et al in the autumn of 2008. In the wake of the latter events, many have urged the addition of a fourth E—that of Empathy. And indeed, in the work of our colleagues Lynn Barendsen and Jeff Solomon, we have noted the importance of Empathy—the capacity to put oneself in the place of those whom we serve as professionals. Certainly good work in medicine, teaching, social work is not possible without a powerful sense of empathy.

Yet, at least for now, I hesitate to add a fourth E. And that is because in certain other professions, other considerations trump Empathy, as it is usually understood. The goal of journalism is to get the story right, not to be empathic to its subject. The goal of science is to understand the phenomenon, not to sympathize with it. It is possible, however, that others, or new data, or data re-analyzed, will persuade me that Empathy, properly defined, should be deemed as a characteristic of GoodWork. If so, the ENA helix will add a fourth dimension.

One other candidate E has been proposed—E for equity or egalitarianism. This E seems particularly pertinent when it comes to ‘ordinary workers’—individuals like blue collar workers or those in the service industry. An important consideration for these workers is whether they are treated fairly by those in power and whether their

compensation seems reasonable or is completely dwarfed by the salaries received by management. Studies by the Work Foundation in England suggest that good work is far more likely to be achieved when a feeling of fairness pervades the workplace.

Current Efforts

What does one do when one has completed a study—or as any grant-seeking social scientist would automatically add “Phase I of a study?” First and foremost, one publishes one’s results. The Good Work project has published at least eight books (Good Work, Making Good, Responsibility at Work, Good Mentoring, The Moral Advantage, Good Business, Taking Philanthropy Seriously, and Lessons from the Edge); and in 2005 we co-edited an issue of DAEDALUS devoted to the professions. In addition, we have published several dozen articles in scholarly journals. On our website goodworkproject.org we have posted several dozen technical reports that have emerged from our project, and a number of these constitute significant additions to the scholarly literature.

Second, the project has given rise to considerable teaching. Some of the teaching is done by ‘graduates’ of the project. For example, Jeanne Nakamura has taught a graduate seminar on “Good Work” at Claremont Graduate University; Susan Verducci has long taught a course on “Integration of Liberal Studies” at San Jose State University. I myself have taught or co-taught courses or seminar series on good work at Colby College, Amherst College, New York University, and Harvard College. Also colleagues at several high schools, colleges, and professional schools such as law and nursing have offered courses on the good work theme.

Third, we have initiated collaborations in places beyond the United States. Our longest and most important collaboration has been with Hans Henrik Knoop, who has spearheaded studies and writing about Good Work in Scandinavia, and who, with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Bill Damon, has forged ties between the Good Work study and the important new area of study called Positive Psychology. We have as well the beginnings of scholarly or applied collaboration in other countries as well. (These collaborations can be monitored on our websites, www.goodworkproject.org and www.goodworktoolkit.org)

Principal researchers have also launched a number of projects, that we've dubbed 'the offspring of good work.' At Stanford, with Seana Moran, Bill Damon has headed the Purpose Project—a study of how a sense of purpose can be inculcated in the young. At Claremont, as part of their new Center for the Quality of Life, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Jeanne Nakamura are developing models of a full life in various work and leisure settings. At Harvard, my colleagues and I are involved in such endeavors as the Good Play project, a study of ethics in the new digital media; the Trust and Trustworthiness Project; the Quality project, a study of the qualities of objects and experiences that individuals most value; and the Good Collaboration Project, a study of what makes for an effective collaboration in non-profit sectors, such as education and civil society.

Of great importance, particularly at the time of this writing, are practical applications that have grown out of the Good Work project. The first of these was a Traveling Curriculum in Journalism, a joint effort undertaken by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel of the Future of Journalism Project and Bill Damon. This ambitious undertaking involved the development and testing of a curriculum that has been

used in a significant percentage of print journalism outlets of the country. Our 2001 book *Good Work* called attention to the threats to the traditional values of journalism; and, alas, our concerns were prophetic. Nonetheless, participants have lauded the power of this good work–inspired–curriculum; it serves as well as a model of what can be achieved in other domains like secondary school education. For their part, as leaders of our higher education inquiry, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Jeanne Nakamura have developed a series of good work workshops; these interventions allow the different stakeholders at colleges and universities to record their priorities and values, to compare them with one another, and to take steps to bring them into closer alignment. Similar efforts have been initiated in other domains, for example, in nursing, under the direction of Joan Miller of Bloomsburg State University in Pennsylvania.

At the Harvard site, our principal practical activities have used the GoodWork Toolkit. As developed by long time researchers Lynn Barendsen and Wendy Fischman, the Toolkit consists of several dozen bona fide cases, drawn from on our own research, of ethical dilemmas that arise in the course of work. Organized roughly in terms of the coding system mentioned above, the cases are presented as catalysts to encourage discussion of the myriad ethical dilemmas that individuals face, along with some of the possible resolutions of these dilemmas. Our goal here is not to provide the right answer—frequently we don’t know what it is or whether a single correct answer exists. Rather, our goal is to raise consciousness about the kinds of dilemmas that arise in the work life of any reflective person, and to provide ways of thinking about these dilemmas that may not be intuitive or straightforward. In our experience, individuals of all ages and professions find these dilemmas engrossing. And while we can scarcely claim that the Toolkit solves the ethical dilemmas of our

time, we are secure in reporting that individuals find the exercises useful and helps them to be far more reflective about their own decisions.

Until recently, the Harvard group has served as the principal clearing house for all questions and responses directed to the GoodWork project. We have been pleased to do what we can to react to comments and to connect individuals or groups with one another. But in the era of the internet, such a boutique operation is neither necessary nor, as the demands grow larger, possible. And so we have set up an interactive website (goodworktoolkit.org). It is our hope that individuals all over the world who are concerned about the quality of work will visit the website and will, as appropriate, participate in online discussions about and offer examples of good work. We monitor the website, eavesdrop as appropriate, and participate via posting or responding whenever we feel that we can be constructive.

GoodWork in Contemporary American Society

Since the project began, we have monitored the extent to which our ideas are noticed and discussed and our recommendations implemented. We have had our share of media attention but the media attention in the US so far has been modest, far less than has occurred with respect to other, less expensive and less time consuming aspects of our individual research programs. Given the choice of funding to pursue our projects, or media attention, we unhesitatingly choose the funding. Nonetheless, we hoped that good work would become more a part of the public lexicon than it has to this point.

There were a number of times at which interest in the work might have increased. After the collapse of Enron and Arthur Andersen, we thought that the business and finance worlds might pay more attention to issues of ethics at the workplace. That did not happen. Similarly, after the attacks on the Twin Towers of 9/11, we thought that there would be more serious attention to the importance of journalism; but neither 9/11, nor the Iraq war, nor Hurricane Katrina, have heightened the interest in reporting to a discernible extent. Moreover, the corrosive attacks on print journalism—some intentional, some the unintentional consequences of the speed and ubiquity of the Internet—have left that sector struggling for its survival. Nor have the other major professions flourished in a time of market mania.

The fall of 2008 ushered in two events—perhaps related—that might constitute a tipping point, in the US, abroad, or perhaps both places. The financial meltdown consequent to the collapse of Lehman Brothers, AIG, and other financial giants, raised consciousness about the costs of severe ethical lacunae in the world of commercial banking, investments in finance, and various regulatory agencies. At the same time, the election of a candidate who appeared to have strong ethical fibers also raised the possibility that good work and good citizenship might be more on people's minds at the end of the decade than they had been at the beginning. Only time will tell whether the promise of 2008 bears more fruit than earlier failed openings like 2000, 2001, and 2005.

Without pretending to speak for others, I've put forth a simple mnemonic to describe the needed change in American society:

In the last two decades we have been dominated by the three
Ms

Money

Markets

Me

We need to flip these three Ms on their side and valorize the
three Es

Excellence

Engagement

Ethics

And then, we finish the job by flipping the image one more
time to yield a W for

We

After the financial meltdown, many people said “How long will it take until we are back to where we were before?” My answer, from a GoodWork perspective: “We will never get back to where we were before—nor should we!” It is my most fervent hope that the ideas developed in the fifteen years of the GoodWork project can help our country, as well as others, find a new and better direction. And indeed, it is reassuring to note that the ideas of GoodWork—and, at times, the Project itself—are stimulating a good deal of interest around the planet.

This Collection

One of the fascinating aspects of scholarship is the observation of which ideas are fertile and spread, and which do not. To use the current jargon, what are the ‘memes’ that travel widely and why do they do so? The ‘meme’ of good work has interested those who support fundamental research in the social sciences and has yielded an amazingly large and broad family of publications. In that sense, it has been reassuringly fertile. To this point its effects on practice have been more selective; but with the advent of a lively website, the catalytic effects of our work have been more prominent.

Happily, with respect to this collection, when I invited researchers who had been deeply involved in the GoodWork project, nearly all of them responded in the affirmative. Demonstrating the strength in numbers, the resulting collection of papers is richer and more diverse than I could have anticipated. For convenience sake, I have grouped them as follows.

Reflections on Origins: At the start of this essay, mentioning both personal and professional experiences, I put forth my own recollections of how the project began and how it has developed. I stress the extent to which I came to feel responsible for the implications and applications of my work, and how this led to a broader interest in questions of responsibility and ethics. My colleagues (technically, the other “Principal Investigators”) have contributed their own ‘origin myths’.

- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi was originally interested in the question of whether, and if so how, creative work could also be so fashioned that it also embodied humane values. Using the image of ‘three

men in a boat', he recalls the various shoals which we encountered and the navigational moves that we, often haltingly, made to circumvent them. Most important for this author is the assertion that human beings have agency, and that we can control our fates, even under adverse conditions. As examples, he cites the existence of 'good business' despite enormous pressures to make profits, and efforts by colleges and universities to bring about alignment among the often different agendas of stakeholders.,

- Bill Damon's own interests grew out of his collaborative work, with Anne Colby, on remarkable individuals—gathered in their book *Some do care*. He wondered how it was possible for certain persons to fuse their work life with a sense of moral imagination, such that they could reach beyond conventional responses. Using the example of Nelson Mandela, he outlines the ways in which one can help to redefine the moral terrain for an entire society. With admirable candor, he also indicates how his own faith in the 'wisdom of the marketplace' has been challenged by the events of the past decade.

Expansion of Theory: In scholarship, nothing is more deadening than a theory that is promulgated and then becomes ossified. Among theorists, Jean Piaget was not alone in asserting "I am not a Piagetian." Happily, members of the Project have penned contributions that expand the theory in various ways.

- Using the financial crisis of 2008–9 as a point of departure, Bill Damon talks about how the core values of a professional domain can be warped. He focuses on the phenomenon of 'mission creep' and illustrates how such a waning of values occurred in recent

decades in the financial and investment sectors. The shift from a Wall Street to a Las Vegas mentality was lamentable, and the loss of trust within the sector proved fatal. Higher education has been a victim of this mission creep, but it is not an innocent bystander. A diminution of dedication to fundamental mission of knowledge creation and transmission has undermined the credibility of colleges and universities at the very time when it could be most critical.

- Hans Henrik Knoop explores ways in which the core ideas of the GoodWork theoretical framework can be related to ongoing issues of import. In particular, he analyzes the ways in which democratic values are at risk when conditions of alignment do not obtain—for example, when the state explicitly promulgates one set of values but in fact operates according to a quite different value matrix. He also draws intriguing connections between the problematic of the GoodWork framework, on the one hand, and the key ideas of positive psychology, on the other. Since Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi is one of the architects of positive psychology, and others of us have been associated with the movement, this delineation helps to fit the theoretical and empirical work of the Project into a broader scholarly framework. Moreover, a stance from positive psychology may help to bring into better alignment the stakeholders that are crucial to a democratic polity.
- Susan Verducci addresses the crucial role played by trust in the execution of good work. Issues of trust are especially sensitive when the players are not of equal status—and thus the role of philanthropy deserves special scrutiny. Verducci outlines the challenges to trust that arise in the funder–grantee relationship

and then delineates ways in which reciprocal trust can be established and maintained.

Critique of Theory: Even more crucial than an expansion of a theory is a sober discussion of areas where the theory merits criticism and reformulation. Three contributors discuss weaknesses of the theory—two from within psychology, the third from a sociological perspective. The three Principal Investigators are especially pleased that these critiques come from a younger generation of researchers. The longevity of the project depends on younger, more fertile, and more energetic persons—and minds.

- Jeanne Nakamura revisits, and then problematizes, the fundamental concepts and organizational frameworks of the theory. She points out that the three Es of Good Work can be thought of, individually, in a number of ways; and that the ways in which the elements are integrated or, alternatively, dissociated from one another is far from self-evident. She then turns her attention to the four nodes that determine alignment or misalignment, and, accordingly, the prospects for good work. On her argument, these nodes need to be considered with reference to organizations, as well as individual workers. She also points out that the professions are themselves evolving systems, and that it is within the power of individuals or organizations to change, on occasion fundamentally, the ways in which professions carry out their mission.
- Seana Moran, a scholar of creativity, focuses on the extent to which creative breakthroughs, whatever the sphere, entail a significant misalignment—at least initially, and occasionally over considerable periods of time. Just as misalignment may be

necessary for needed alterations, so, too, excessive alignment can be a warning sign. Echoing a theme of Nakamura's essay, Moran subtly suggests that those of us involved in the promulgation of the GoodWork enterprise should be sensitive to this peril.

- Again, in line with Nakamura's critique, Carrie James, by training a sociologist, suggests what may be lost by too exclusive an application of the psychological perspective. While the motivations of individual workers can and do make differences, a far more powerful force is typically the institutional culture in which the worker is embedded. Those who want to understand good work need to take into account the organizations and institutions in which work takes place; and those who want to increase the incidence of good work should direct considerable attention to how the workplace can be altered.

Applications: In the latter portion of the book, the authors direct attention to various ways in which the key ideas and concepts of GoodWork have been applied at various levels and with various organizations. We begin with an analysis of what happens when organizations attempt to work together to execute good work; and then proceed to efforts to teach the topic, to apply the theory in different educational realms, and, finally, to ourselves as workers.

Collaborations: Once the idea of GoodWork began to become known, we had many opportunities to collaborate with individuals, groups, and institutions.

- Wendy Fischman takes a probing look at the various collaborations in which the Harvard research group has become involved. Some of these have been quite successful

and it is important to identify the features that contribute to the success. But equally instructive have been those collaborations that have been suboptimal. By reflecting on these experiences, we have learned more about our own organizations, the conditions under which a collaboration should or should not be undertaken, and the conditions under which a collaboration should be terminated.

The Educational Sector Our project has worked in various sectors, ranging from journalism to law. But as educators, situated primarily in schools of education, the primary application of our work has been in educational settings, both here and abroad.

- Kendall Bronk has been involved a researcher–practitioner in two distinct educational interventions: one with veteran journalists, a second with classroom educators. Despite the evident differences in these professions, surprising parallels emerge in the challenges faced today by workers in these domains and in the approaches that help practitioners to connect to the core values of their respective callings. In particular, time for reflection, particularly with peers and with others occupying a different niche the same enterprise, can prove a salutary experience and may help to launch longer–term efforts to induce good work.
- Drawing on her experiences as a researcher on Bill Damon’s Youth Purpose Project, Karen Rathman describes the challenges involved in efforts to encourage youth to think more, and more deeply, about their mission(s) as a human being and as a worker. While few oppose such a thrust in

principle, in practice, a serious involvement with self-reflection is typically a casualty of systemic constraints and personal limitations, particularly at the secondary school level. Rathman sketches the steps necessary to undertake and sustain self-knowledge among youth.

- Exploring the same general territory as Rathman, Kathleen Farrell chronicles work with college-age students. She laments the lack of opportunities for these older youths to engage in serious reflection about their lives, their career options, their personal priorities, their long-term projects. Drawing on Reflection sessions catalyzed by the GoodWork Project, she indicates some of the methods that can be used—and some of the benefits that can result. She identifies four criteria for the success of such enterprises.
- Katie Davis has been both a student and a teaching fellow in a graduate course on GoodWork at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She describes her experiences in both capacities as well as the changes that have taken place in the course over a seven year period. Much of the course involves the development of papers that examine an issue or phenomenon through the analytic framework of the Good Work project. Impressively diverse papers have emerged, the most distinctive of which are posted on the GoodWork Project website. As with the papers in this Collection, some of the papers challenge the legitimacy or the scope of the framework while others apply it in unexpected venues. Also included in the course is discussion of revealing current events, which over the years have ranged from the Twin Tower bombings of 9/11 to the financial meltdown of 9/08. In the optimal

situation, participation in the course affects how students see themselves and how they reflect on events that occur around them or in the wider world.

A Mirror test for GoodWork Researchers

- Lynn Barendsen takes her inspiration from the “mirror test”, which was introduced as an early aid to the execution of good work. According to the mirror test, the individual must look at himself/herself clearly in the mirror—warts and all—evaluate the extent to which good work has been achieved, and then work out a plan to increase the incidence of good work. In her essay, Barendsen describes the somewhat surprising personal and professional ways in which Project researchers—including herself—have been affected.

This collection of essays reveals just some of the ways in which participants in our research have taken these ideas further, on both theoretical and practical levels. A perusal of our books and articles reveals many more facets and offspring of this nutritious set of ideas. Nowadays, thanks to the internet, it is easier than ever for interested readers and workers to join the conversation. We invite you to do so—for example, at goodworktoolkit.org.

PART ONE

Reflections on Origins

2

Writings on a Coffee–Mug: My Experiences of the Good Work Project

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

M*emories of the Dawn*
Trying to reconstruct the events of a fifteen–year old collaboration from the different perspectives of its participants, must yield a Rashomon–like story with conflicting plots, a somewhat different cast of characters, and motivations at odds with each others. I for one have a hard time even remembering the year in which Howard, Bill, and I, started meeting in Palo Alto to forge what turned out to be the Good Work Project. Whenever I try to remember, I ask my wife; and she then tells me to look in the kitchen cupboard, where I gratefully grab the remaining mug from that year’s program at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences, with “1994–1995” prominently stenciled on its side. “Oh, yeah. Fifteen years ago”.

This is just to say that I may not be the most trustworthy of historians. I can vouch for what I recall of my own thoughts and actions (well, almost...), but as for what others did, why, or when, I must decline all claims to objective accuracy.

The Good Work Project started to take shape (fifteen years ago!), when one afternoon as we were sitting in our common work-space at the Center, Howard challenged the three of us to think what we would like to accomplish in our professional lives—"Imagine your next project was the last you could accomplish", he said, (or words to that effect). "What would that project be?"

This was the time (according to my mug) when the new Republican Congress was taking over Capitol Hill. A cold wind of anti-intellectualism, laced with gusts of fundamentalist moralizing, was blowing across the land. In one way or another all three of us felt offended by slurs on the character of scholars—that we were a-moral, godless, interested only in our career advancement. Each of us knew personally eminent scholars who did not fit this caricature popularized by Newt Gingrich and his cohorts; we even had research data that contradicted it. But we had never focused in our professional work on this issue. So it was not surprising that the responses to Howard's question began to circle around such questions as: What values motivate artists, scientists, and scholars at the cutting edge of their profession? Are there ethical principles, is there a faith, that leading intellectuals share?

Eventually, our discussions began to be more focused, more theoretically interesting, and—in some respects—different. Mainly because of Howard's urging, we gradually changed the purpose of our quest from that of demonstrating that ethical principles—such as

honesty, fairness, and a concern for the consequences of one's actions, were generally present in the minds of most persons doing creative work—to a more general question: What are the values that keep professionals of all stripes doing the kind of work that benefits society? Although overlapping, these two are slightly different questions. Creativity, by definition, operates in uncharted territory. There are no ethical standards binding on the person. Those who operate in a profession, however, usually have a social contract binding them to a set of standards. Generally the creative activity is done by a professional, who then may or may not reject the code of conduct.

Personally I was not particularly happy about this new direction we were taking. I liked our first idea of finding out whether creative individuals might suggest new ways to think about ethics and morality. I thought it was a high risk, high gain proposition. But adopting the rule: What if this was the last study you could do? My choice would have been to go in that direction. By then, however, I was hooked on the opportunity to continue our incipient collaboration. How often does one get the opportunity to spend time conversing, and arguing, with colleagues of this caliber, in a completely un–pressured environment? Besides, as it turned out, the new take on GW had distinct advantages. For one thing, it had a broader and more immediate relevance, and thus promised to provide more generally useful knowledge about human psychology.

So by the end of our year in Palo Alto (or June of 1995 according to my mug) we were quite committed to continue working together on the topic. Each of us had an administrative staff and a laboratory of graduate students at our respective campuses, so one of the consequences of our decision to start working in this new direction

would be that our existing resources for doing research would become too strained. Which meant that the first step we had to take was to find new resources.

Three Men in a Boat, with no Oars or Paddle

Finding resources to continue our fledgling collaboration meant turning for support to a foundation interested in problems such as the one we were about to tackle. Ideally we would have applied to a government agency, but not one of us believed we could go far in that direction, given the increasingly narrow scope of the kinds of grants that were being funded from Washington, their applied content, and their quantitative methodological requirements. Writing an application to NSF or NIMH is an exhausting task, requiring detailed documentation and full of bureaucratic clauses. In a pinch we have been known to seek federal founding, and do so successfully; but in this case it did not seem worthwhile to do go through the exhausting rigmarole given the scant probability of getting anywhere.

On the other hand, each of us had been blessed in the past by adventurous and thoughtful private philanthropies, so we believed that with a few well-placed inquiries we would soon identify a potential patron, who would then be interested in supporting our endeavor. So we turned up our sleeves, and started looking. Again, Howard took the leadership in this phase of the process, and spoke to more philanthropists than I was aware existed on this planet. The results were surprisingly meager: although the contacts we established were usually intrigued by our plans, they felt that the funding priorities of their organizations did not leave room for “good work”.

For a few years after we started, the project remained on the back burner in our labs. We tried to meet as often as possible on one of our campuses, involving as many of our staffs as possible, but we could not push to the next level of data collection without adequate funding. During this period, I was reminded of the title of that great book by Jerome K. Jerome: *Three Men in a Boat*. I had first read that book more than forty years earlier, in an Italian translation, and by reading it I understood what made British humor so renowned: the ability to describe unlikely situations without cracking a smile, so to speak; piling one strange event on top of another while desperately trying to use common sense—however inappropriate to the occasion—to come to terms with an absurd situation. The similarity between our predicament and that of Jerome’s characters might have been tenuous, (except for the number three), but I felt, like they did, that we had embarked on a wonderful adventure, but were being frustrated at every step by malignant forces.

Nevertheless we did not lose faith, and despite the general disinterest in what we thought was such an important idea, we did persevere. And eventually, little by little, enough resources became available from one source or the other, so we could begin to gather new data more systematically.

What I Learned About Good Work

What went on in the next decade under the GoodWork aegis is too extensive to deal with systematically here. There has been a veritable explosion of books written by the three PIs and by their staffs—several of whom have become our colleagues in the process. The public interest has also begun to gather some momentum—requests

for lectures and consultations suggest that more and more people are getting intrigued by the implications of the concept.

However, here I am going to restrict myself to write about what I think GoodWork means to psychology and to our concept of human work in general. It might be a boring subject to some, but actually it is probably of more lasting importance than a baker's dozen of practical, concrete applications are likely to be.

Most research on the psychology of work is conducted within a paradigm where workers are seen as helpless, interchangeable units that need to fit into pre-existing jobs. The question usually is, how can the worker perform the job more productively? And occasionally: How can the job be changed so that the worker will be more satisfied doing it? Only rarely do psychologists break out of this frame, and consider workers as autonomous agents who have the power of transforming jobs, either behaviorally, or at least in terms of how they are subjectively experienced.

In this sense, the Good Work literature that the project has spawned is part of a rare, but precious seam within psychology, one that has recently become better appreciated: a psychology that takes human autonomy seriously, is aware of the embeddedness of human action in a socio-cultural matrix, and attend carefully to subjective experience—both positive and negative.

Though I participated in discussions across the spectrum of domains, my own portion of the GW Project concerned primarily two domains: business, and higher education. I will try to bring out some of the findings I found to be most interesting, and suggestive, from each.

Businessmen as Good Workers

The study that resulted in the book *Good Business*, which to-date has been translated into nine languages, including Thai, Turkish, and Chinese, was a real eye-opener for me. When we started interviewing CEOs who had been nominated as both excellent at their jobs and concerned about the social environment in which they were operating, my first reaction was: *sure, whatever*. This was the time when Enron was cracking, Global Crossing was sinking, and Arthur Andersen was ending a sterling tradition in ignominy. Like many others, I believed that good work in business was an oxymoron.

But after a few interviews, I began to have second thoughts. Even though my critical antennae were up and vibrating, I came to believe what I was hearing. The documentation of what the respondents were saying—as far as it was available, given the often personal nature of the material—gibed with each other. These were people who seemed to walk the talk. Of course, they were a select bunch, unrepresentative of businessmen in general. Yet what they said, and did, confirmed that it was possible to do good work in business too.

In this sample there was the owner of a textile factory that burned to the ground. The owner, while not legally obligated to do so, kept paying his workers for more than a year to be idle, because he feared that without a job the workers would have to move out of town, and the community, which relied on their paychecks, would collapse.

There was a very successful CEO of a large company, who had been involved in rebuilding a huge urban area that was becoming a slum; in his mid-fifties he resigned his job to dedicate himself to help the leadership of the ghetto community by volunteering his experience

and his contacts. Then there was the owner of a large mechanical factory located in a small Mid-Western town whose family, two generations earlier, had made an offer to the township: We will pay for all the architectural fees for any public structure you plan to build. He continued this family tradition, and the small town is now a Mecca for busloads of architectural buffs converging on it from as far as Europe and Asia to admire the churches by Saarinen (*père et fils*), the jail, schools, fire-station, hospital—all designed by a chorus-line of blue-ribbon architects.

These men (and the many other similar women and men we talked to) got very bored when asked what values motivated them to act so defiantly against the imperative of the *bottom line*. In their opinion, what they were doing was just good business. To do well in business over the long haul, they said, you need to be trusted and respected by those you are doing business with. You need to earn the loyalty of your workers and customers. And you need to take responsibility for the well-being of the community in which you are located: no business is likely to prosper if it is surrounded by slums, ugliness, and resentment. In fact, in their opinion, good business was synonymous with what we had been calling Good Work—another instance of researchers discovering what their respondents had known for a long time. But I was glad to have learned that, at least for those willing and able to do so, it was indeed possible to do good work in business. Bill Damon came to similar conclusions in his book *The Moral Advantage*.

The Ups and Downs of GoodWork in Higher Education

The design of the study of higher education was rather unusual. It took place in several stages, each organically arising from the

previous one. We started by having a panel of experts nominate the best colleges they knew, meaning by “best” those they thought were doing a great job at transmitting knowledge while adapting to changing times. Out of the schools nominated, we selected the two or three most often endorsed in each of four categories: traditional liberal arts colleges; research—1 universities renowned for the undergraduate education they offered; community colleges; and minority institutions like Morehouse College in Atlanta; Xavier University in New Orleans; or Mount St Mary’s, an all—women Catholic school in Los Angeles.

At each of thirteen schools, we sent surveys to about 100 members of the faculty and administration, asking them to nominate one or more persons in the institution who made the school as good as it was, and explain what that person did. The nominations that were returned included the usual suspects: President (sometimes), Provost (rarely), particularly effective faculty and Deans. But also registrars, coaches, and cafeteria workers. Next, we interviewed a substantial number of these good workers, to see what they had to say about what they, and their school intended to accomplish. The next step was to survey a representative sample of faculty and staff at these institutions. Finally, we surveyed over 1000 juniors and seniors at the same schools, to get their perspective on what they hoped to get from their education, and what they thought they were actually getting.

Again, only some of the results that were most interesting to me personally will be described here—to do justice to all the rest, several books could be written. One of the main problems of education highlighted by our data was the lack of alignment between the educators and the students, concerning the aims of education. The faculty and staff were adamant that their responsibility was to

provide cognitive tools like critical thinking and analytical skills. While their students also endorsed these goals, their priority was clearly to learn how to live a good life—a goal foreign to their educators. Of course, these two goals are not necessarily contradictory, and in fact they are mutually supportive. For why would one want to acquire cognitive tools if having these did not contribute to a good life? And how could one have a good life without developing cognitive tools? Yet in the learning environment of the colleges the two goals were perceived as representing mutually exclusive orientations: The faculty looked to the students' search for happiness as a hedonistic yearning unrelated to the pursuit of knowledge, while the students perceived the faculty's emphasis on cognitive skills as a tiresome demand unrelated to their true needs. Similar discrepancies were the rule rather than the exception in most of the colleges studied. Instead of building on the synergy of what was common to the two sets of goals, all too often it was the differences that were most obvious.

At the conclusion of the study, and in part as an expression of gratitude to the schools participating, we offered to organize workshops at the schools, reporting our findings and discussing them with those stakeholders who wanted to do so. At the four schools that accepted the offer, we had some extremely engaging and useful exchanges that we hope will help to diminish the gap between educators and students, and result in a more fruitful educational experience for both.

Another interesting and thought-provoking finding was that students at schools that were at the two extremes on the affluence scale—one having an endowment more than a hundred times as large as the other—felt about equally satisfied with their education. The

implications of this finding are very unclear, yet seem to be very important. Does it mean that students eventually find the level of education that they can afford—the Ivy Leaguers being satisfied with what they learn from a school that relies on resources that are 100 times greater than that of a community college, where the less demanding students are happy with what they get, even if it is objectively 100 times less than what the Ivy League students get? Or does it mean that in higher education one can get the same value at a school with an endowment of 60 million, or of 6 billion? It seems to me these are questions that are at the heart not only of higher education, but of education in general. Our study highlighted this issue; it will take a lot longer to resolve it in an acceptable manner.

Looking Back (and Forward)

Considering the accomplishments of the GoodWork Project in the last 15 years, several positive and some negative conclusions seem to be warranted. The bad news first. I think it is fair to say that we did not do as well as we could have done in shaping our research into a mold that was readily acceptable either by the field of psychology, or by the general public. These days, what counts as serious research in psychology is what gets published in peer-reviewed “A Class” journals—and we have not done that. What counts for impressive findings for a lay audience is a single, understandable, sexy result—and we have not provided that either. We could have done better. At the same time, whenever we report the GoodWork findings and ideas at meetings or conferences, the response of the audience is always interested and often enthusiastic. Just a week before I wrote these lines I was in Korea, where the mayor of the city of Seoul had invited me to speak to the managers of the metropolitan administration about creativity. I chose instead to spend most of the talk on what

GW means for public servants—and the reception was phenomenal. The question of how to preserve and enhance good work, once asked, is one that everybody feels a stake in answering. So we hope that, one way or the other, the results collected during the last 15 years will continue to enrich our understanding of what makes human activity valuable and meaningful. Occasionally I remember Lorenzo Ghiberti, who spent fifty years of his life putting together the East doors of the Baptistery in Florence—which Michelangelo later dubbed “The Gates to Paradise”. Was the work he invested in those doors “good”? I do think so. And I hope, humbly, that what we started will have a fraction of the impact on the future that Ghiberti’s work had on the Renaissance.

3

My “Origins” Story

William Damon

The Good Work Project was conceived when the three of us applied to spend a year as fellows at CASBS, and it was born (fittingly, just about nine months later) when we crossed the country to California and started meeting. In its embryonic form, the “GoodWork Project” was known as “Humane Creativity”. Both titles, as I recall, were products of Howard’s skill at turning a resonant phrase; and the original title was in part a gesture of recognition to the MacArthur Foundation’s program on creativity, whose interest in funding we hoped to evoke.

Although the Humane Creativity embryo would not have been viable had it not been transformed into the more encompassing study of “GoodWork” (more about this later), the phrase did capture the question that has long fired my curiosity, then and now: How do some people manage to find solutions to intractable moral problems by reaching beyond the conventional responses that can get well-intentioned people snagged in a briar patch of troubles? I had gained a glimpse into this amazing phenomenon (people who act with

unremitting moral integrity and actually succeed) in the study that I did with Anne Colby, reported in our book *Some Do Care*. Now I had been given the great gift of a chance to further delve into this question with Howard and Mihaly, each among the world's most distinguished savants on creativity, intelligence, human psychology, and all other related matters...

1994 is a long time ago in memory years, so I shall illustrate the question that fascinated me back in those days with a more recent encounter that still lies safely within my recollection zone. I recently saw the movie Invictus and was fascinated by its portrayal of Nelson Mandela, very much the type of person we studied for *Some Do Care*. The movie shows Mandela accomplishing three things that still have the power to astonish me, despite my own work in this area and despite everything else I have read in the social science.

First, the man survived unbowed, with his will and his purpose intact, during or despite 27 years of hostile confinement in a tiny jail cell, an unjust confinement that defied all reasonable standards of jurisprudence. *27 years* at the prime of life—try to imagine the experience! Second, when Mandela was released, he made conscious determination to forgive all those who were responsible for putting him in jail. Now these first two accomplishments reflected exactly the type of extraordinary moral commitment that I and others had been examining in *Some Do Care* and works of that sort. Mandela's third accomplishment was also a manifestation of his expansive moral commitment, but it drew on an additional capacity that I had not thought to explore: the moral imagination, or, to resuscitate our old phrase, humane creativity.

What Mandela did to realize his moral goal of forgiveness on a national level is nicely chronicled in *Invictus*. In the face of opposition and cries of betrayal from his own supporters, Mandela threw the full blessings of his government behind the South African national rugby team, long a hated symbol of white privilege among the black and colored communities. He invested vast amounts of his own time and political capital building the team's morale; and he avidly wanted the team to win. Few understood what Mandela was doing: Mandela's own bewildered administration counseled him against it. But it worked. In retrospect, everyone could see that Mandela had created a brilliant strategy for uniting a society that had seemed irredeemably fractured. On a moral level, the sins of Apartheid were starting to be absolved; on a practical level, Mandela strengthened his own political mandate and solidified his society.

Individuals make a difference, especially when they are prepared and determined to do so. As our project grew into the study of "good work" in all its forms—ordinary as well as extraordinary, and across a wide range of vocations and professions—this guiding conviction stayed with us. Strangely, it is not a conviction that is widely shared in even the most individualistic of the social sciences, psychology. As Mihaly has written in the preceding chapter, "Most research on the psychology of work is conducted within a paradigm where workers are seen as helpless, interchangeable units that need to fit into pre-existing jobs." The question usually is, 'How can the worker perform the job more productively?' And occasionally: 'How can the job be changed so that the worker will be more satisfied doing it?' Only rarely do psychologists break out of this frame, and consider workers as autonomous agents who have the power of transforming jobs, either behaviorally, or at least in terms of how they are subjectively experienced. By focusing on the missions and strategies of individual

workers and taking seriously their capacity to make a difference in their jobs, the GoodWork Project redresses this myopia that had limited the purview of our scholarly domain.

The GoodWork Project has been an invaluable learning experience for me, both in relation to my original questions about the wonders of moral imagination and in other unexpected ways as well. On the former, I believe that we have made substantial progress in understanding how leading figures in domains such as journalism, law, philanthropy, higher education, and the biological sciences accomplish moral missions through creative solutions to hard problems. On the latter, I have learned things in the most dramatic way possible, by discovering that some of my prior assumptions about moral behavior were misfounded. I will end this brief reminiscence on that note, which, though a bit unsettling from a personal point of view, I take as refreshing and welcome in my own quest to make sense out of the mysteries of moral commitment.

Howard has written in his introductory piece: “Originally, we called our study ‘humane creativity’; but it gradually evolved into a study of how professions fare under market conditions, when few countervailing forces existed, and the name was changed to “GoodWork.” In point of fact, I did not enter the study of good work with skepticism concerning market forces. I tend to be a fan of free markets, and my own interest was in discovering how certain highly successful people manage to turn market forces towards moral ends by creating products and services that serve the public and make money at the same time (yes, this is one instance of what I would term “humane creativity”, and it was the subject of my book on business entitled *The Moral Advantage*). My assumption was that, if given a choice, everyone would prefer to master markets in a way

that serves the public good than simply rake in as many dollars as possible unscrupulously.

What can I say? Recent events on the financial scene have made me feel a bit like the Woody Allen character who revered an eminent scholar's philosophy of life—until the scholar jumped out a window leaving a note that rather un-profoundly stated, “I went out the window”. Well, Wall Street went out the window on me in 2008; and it took with it my belief in unrestrained free markets (this is the subject of my chapter in the present book). I am grateful that my world-wise colleagues Howard and Mihaly had provided—for me and for other readers of our musings—a GoodWork framework that helps capture the influence of market and other “field” forces on the human—and hence very fallible—capacities for moral commitment. For this and for many other learning opportunities, I count the GoodWork Project as one of the peak experiences of my intellectual life.

PART TWO

Expansion of Theory

4

Mission Creep and Bad Work in Higher Places

William Damon

Good work relies on a commitment to stay focused on how one's work serves an essential public need. The “mind” of good work is an understanding of the public mission of the line of work that one has chosen; the “heart” of good work is a constant devotion to that mission.

Of course there are forces beyond most individuals' control—what we in the Good Work Project have called “field” forces—that can tempt workers to pursue less public-minded goals. Incentives such as status, wealth, and glory easily can lure workers away from the public missions of their work. In a society (such as ours) that prizes self-promoting incentives such as these, it takes a sharp fix on public mission to accomplish good work.

The essential public missions of most domains are neither obscure nor hard to define. In fact, a simple version of most core missions can be formulated in a single sentence. Consider some of the fields that we have examined in the Good Work Project: The mission of medicine

is to promote health; Law supports justice and the social order; Journalism provides the information that people need to make decisions about their lives; Science explores, discovers, and verifies truths about reality; Education imparts formal knowledge, skills, and learning; Business provides desired goods and services.

This is not to say that good work in such fields always serves these missions directly. Financial officers who keep hospitals or schools fiscally afloat in responsible ways contribute importantly to the public missions of these domains without treating patients or teaching students directly. Yet, as I argue here, it is every bit as crucial for these “indirect” workers to be aware of, and dedicated to, their field’s public mission as it for those who do perform the actual front–line duties.

The public missions of almost all domains are well–known and established by longstanding traditions. The hard challenge for most workers lies not in recognizing what these missions are but in continuing to pursue the missions in the face of temptations to do otherwise.

Indeed, a striking feature of the “good workers” in all the fields that we examined was how readily they articulated the larger purposes that motivated their work, and how closely these purposes aligned with the traditional public missions of the fields that they worked in. The public missions of the fields provided the workers with a set of common touchstones that anchored their reflections about the ultimate purposes of their own work. Almost mantra–like, the workers would refer repeatedly to identical mission themes, with markedly similar justifications. These workers often shared the same heroes: celebrated historical figures who had stuck their necks out in

order to accomplish good work against serious resistance. When facing their own obstacles, these workers consciously reminded themselves of these examples as a means of inspiring their own efforts.

All this had the curious effect of imparting something of an old-fashioned air to the ruminations of the good workers. Despite their prominent positions in fast-moving professions and enterprises, they often took a look backwards to tradition, and to the prior achievements and missteps of their fields. However inventive they try to be in their work, they accepted standards not purely of their own making, standards that had been chiseled out of generations of prior experience in the workplace.

A commitment to public mission does not guarantee ethical standards of behavior—history is replete with examples of those who have lied, cheated, and killed in the name of some noble cause. But it does set the stage in the right way. A constant dedication to a public mission orients one's attention away from the rewards of the work to the self and towards the benefits of that work for those who use it. Securing self-oriented goals is not the main concern. The work must make a valid contribution to the interests of others (not necessarily "others" in the present time and place, for unconventional breakthroughs may take a while to become appreciated). Work that makes a valid contribution requires both ethical and achievement standards if it is to succeed in the long run. Shoddy, dishonest, or corrupt efforts inevitably fail. Work that is purpose-driven, as I have shown in my study of business success (*The Moral Advantage*) is far less likely to be shoddy, dishonest, or corrupt than work that makes no attempt to serve a useful purpose.

Over the fifteen years of the Good Work Project, we have had no trouble finding widely-heralded cases of shoddy, dishonest, and corrupt efforts. This may be a hallmark of our historical epoch, which, until the recent financial collapse, had been characterized as a post-modern gilded age. Gilded ages have always spawned generous doses of greed, charlatanism, and unashamed hokum. I do not make too strong a point of this historical claim, however, because I am sure that both good and bad work are always with us, as higher and lower reflections of the human condition. My real point is that cases of astonishingly bad work have been very close at hand in recent years. Moreover, these are neither obscure nor inconsequential cases. Some of them have rocked the foundations of our economy and our most vital cultural institutions; and they continue to threaten our way of life to this very day.

In this essay, I examine bad work in high finance, a field that has come close to imploding in the last few years because of epic inattention to its essential public mission. I also examine collateral damage that this implosion has brought to another elevated field, higher education. But the damage wrought to higher education was not entirely of others' making. The mission creep that unhinged higher finance from its ethical moorings seeped into the decision-making circles of higher education during this same cataclysmic period. As a consequence, higher education took at least as big a hit as its financial soul-mates. If higher education has been a victim of recent economic circumstances, it was a victim that participated eagerly in the original acts of destruction. From the wreckage will emerge a new way of operating for both fields, but my guess is that, of the two, higher education (at least in America) will be the one more profoundly transformed, certainly with needed gains but also with many painful losses.

Low times in high finance

The financial sector of our economy is commonly referred to as “Wall Street”, to distinguish it from the direct selling of goods and services that takes place on the markets of “Main Street”. “Wall Street” is more than a mythic symbol, because a sizable number of financial deals still originate from lower Manhattan; but today’s hyper-charged global financial world finds stages for its performances everywhere, especially in cyberspace. Still, like many digitized communities, the financial industry shares a distinct culture. It operates on shared assumptions, uses the same methods, and looks to common standards when making judgments about the value of its work. In our time, this culture has changed to such a degree that some who entered the financial industry when they were young say that they now can barely recognize it. Change itself, of course, is not a problem—unless the nature of the change is antithetical to the essential mission of the field.

The mission of the financial industry is to deploy capital so that enterprises can produce goods and services in a profitable manner. When well invested, the capital will itself grow: this is the benefit expected by the financial industry’s investor clients. In this way, Wall Street and Main Street enjoy a symbiotic relationship. Wall Street supports the activities of Main Street by providing needed capital, and Main Street shares its earnings with Wall Street and supplies most of its investors. As long as Wall Street makes sound choices about which enterprises to support, the capital that it invests will be returned with profit.

Such a success is never guaranteed. Because markets sort out useful goods and services from those that are inadequate or obsolete, some enterprises fail, and investors in such enterprises may lose their capital. Risk, therefore, is a fundamental part of the financial industry's investment mission. Indeed, one of the industry's widely shared assumptions is that risk is proportional to reward: investors who are willing to support less established enterprises expose themselves to greater losses while positioning themselves for greater gains.

Few would question the fairness of such an arrangement. If investors choose to take a chance by reaching for higher gains, this is their prerogative; and the social system gains the opportunity of trying out innovative and unproven ideas. But long ago, in his *Inquiry in the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith pointed out that this mutually beneficial system works only under the following conditions: 1) investors and all other participants in the arrangement must have access to complete and truthful information about the transaction; and 2) investments must be in service of productive activities and not of speculative trading for its own sake. Distorted information disables both the moral and economic integrity of the transaction. Pure speculation has no greater connection to the mission of investing than does idle gambling.

2008 will long be remembered in the annals of financial history as the year when virtually all financial instruments, with the lone exception of U.S. Treasury obligations, lost huge portions of their value. Relatively "safe" stock and bonds lost between 10 and 30 percent; commodities, real estate, and more speculative equities lost between 25 and 70 percent; and shares of many companies once deemed impregnable (such as A.I.G., Bear Stearns, Lehman, and Citigroup)

lost up to 98 percent of their value. None of this was accidental. From all perspectives, every observer of the collapse has agreed that the financial industry had lost its way.

Not surprisingly, the calamity has attracted so much attention from analysts that (unlike in our prior studies of good work), there is little need to conduct further original research. The causes and consequences of this particular breach in good work have been thoroughly chronicled in the daily news, in the financial press, in televised feature stories, and in many probing books and magazine articles. By and large, they all report the same story—an industry that, step by step, has departed from its ethical moorings over the past two decades or so. In my treatment here of this bad work in the financial industry, I shall draw on these recent accounts; but in order to explain its broader significance, I insert a concept from our Good Work framework: *mission creep*.

About twenty years ago, the investment company Drexel Burnham Lambert (put out of business, interestingly, because of unrelated allegations of stock parking and stock manipulation scandals) introduced a new instrument to the financial community: CDO's. A CDO (or "collateralized debt obligation") is a "derivative" of underlying assets such as bundles of loans. As such, it has no intrinsic value other than that which can be inferred from the worth of its underlying collection of assets. This, however, is not always easy to do. In fact, as the investment community became increasingly familiar with the potentials of this new instrument to generate snowballing fees for itself every time a trade is made, it found ever more complex and intricate ways to bundle the underlying assets of CDO's. Naturally this tack reduced the capacity of all but the most sophisticated technicians to gauge the value of those assets.

Because CDO's proved so lucrative for those who sold and traded them, their use as an investment tool grew steadily during the 1990's and early 2000's. Almost everyone got into the game. Banks created and then marketed quantities of CDO's that dwarfed the normal stock market. Ratings agencies—highly esteemed institutions such as Standards and Poor's and Moody's—made enormous profits by providing ratings for them. Traders bought and sold CDO's, both on the “long” and “short” sides, collecting fees at every step. Over time, the trading became so frenetic that most investors became unable (or, in some cases, unwilling) to detect any link between the price of a CDO and the value of the underlying asset that it supposedly reflected. In a revealing *Portfolio.com* piece called “The End”, financial writer Michael Lewis offers searing examples of mortgage loans that any rational investor would balk at; and yet untold numbers of such loans made their way into CDO bundles that, incredibly, often were given investment-grade ratings. For example, Lewis offers, “in Bakersfield, California, a Mexican strawberry picker with an income of \$14,000 and no English was lent every penny he needed to buy a house for \$720,000.” In another case, a Jamaican immigrant ended up owning five townhouses in Queens because a mortgage company saw a chance to leverage early gains on the first loan. By the time of the final loan, the woman no longer could make any of the payments.

Losses in loan making are a legitimate part of the risk-based capitalist system. But with derivative instruments such as CDO's, such losses are obscured—at least for a time—by the non-transparent nature of the underlying assets. When finally revealed, the losses are magnified by the leverage created by the incessant back-and-forth trading of the CDO notes. In fact, the CDO trading, detached as it is from any sense of investment in assets that are

understood and evaluated according to market principles, amounts to little more than a casino of side bets. Note here the violation of Adam Smith's two key standards: first, no reliable information is available to make investment judgments; and second, the mission of the activity has become pure speculation, or gambling, rather than investment.

CDO's do not bear the entire burden of this sorry narrative. They were joined by other alphabet amalgams, such as CDS's (credit default swaps). A credit default swap is a kind of insurance on bonds and mortgage securities that guarantees payment in the event of default. Just as in other kinds of insurance, issuers earn premiums. So far, fair enough—insurance is a legitimate endeavor. But, once again, the side-bet mentality transformed the nature of the game. Rather than simply selling CDS's to investors and companies who wished to hedge against possible losses, traders sliced and bundled them, bought and sold them, borrowed against them, and eventually lost track of anything that could reflect the actual value of what they were trading. Although CDS's, like other financial derivatives, may have been designed to serve a useful investment purpose, their actual application on many Wall Street trading desks turned into little more than reckless gambling. It was this common application that led Warren Buffet, sounding quaintly old-fashioned at the time, to label derivatives as “financial instruments of mass destruction”.

The rampant use of derivative instruments such as CDO's and CDS's, the neglect of the intrinsic value of investments, and the compounding of all such irresponsible acts through astonishing degrees of leveraging (Lehman was leveraged *35 to 1* at the time of its collapse) turned Wall Street into Las Vegas. Now it is not that Las Vegas is without a mission: gambling can be justified as a rather

expensive type of entertainment. But this is far from the public mission of the financial industry. As I noted above, investments serve the mission of enabling enterprises to function and grow—and investors expect that their capital will grow in some reasonable proportion to the risk that they intentionally take on. There were some in the financial community who continued to pursue this mission during even the craziest years of this shameful epoch. Yet the sheer scale of the gambling that had come to dominate the field overwhelmed their efforts. Almost everyone took a hit, including professionals who stuck to their field's traditional mission and maintained high standards of fiduciary responsibility.

Where do we stand now in this bad work story? Are we at the dénouement? Or at least well along in the tale? Unfortunately, not likely. Despite all the pain and anxiety that people have experienced, despite all the public anger that has been aroused regarding the integrity of our financial industry, we still seem to be stuck in the opening chapters of this unhappy saga. The lessons that could lead to a resolution have not yet been learned. The government, under both the Bush and Obama administrations, has done little more than shore up the banking system with emergency public funds. One notable consequence of this approach has been to reward the very people who gambled away the investments that they were responsible for. In one of the most apt phrases from the financial lexicon, this creates a lasting “moral hazard” by signaling future generations of investment officers that irresponsible gambling pays off.

The future of financial markets is nearly impossible to predict, and I shall not try to do that here. But I will make the observation that steady markets rely on trust, and trust has been violently shaken by the shenanigans of the past two decades. In my view, trust cannot be

restored without convincing demonstrations that the dominant participants in the financial industry are committed to the industry's traditional public mission, however plodding, dull, and old-fashioned this pursuit may seem. This outcome certainly will not happen until the incentive structure of the industry changes to reward sound investment activities rather than speculative gambling or leveraged trading for its own sake. At the time of this writing, there is no sign that any such change is in the works.

Higher Education brought low

The fall-out from the financial collapse was not confined to the inner circles of the investment community alone. The tidal wave ripped through every sector of every society around the world, triggering economic damage ranging from increased unemployment to reductions in public services. The non-profit world in the United States was particularly hard hit, due to its reliance on invested endowment funds. In the remainder of this essay, I shall examine one prominent sector of the non-profit world, higher education. I do this not only to demonstrate the extensive damage that bad work can cause but also to show how, during periods when ethical moorings become unbound, parties can be complicit in their own demise.

It is well known that endowments of major universities have declined by a vast amount since their height in 2007. The exact amount of this decline is not well known. Estimates given by the universities themselves in 2009 tend to be 20–30% range, but some outside observers have placed the figure at 50%. The reason for this uncertainty is the nature of the investments that the universities have made over the past two decades—the same two decades, not coincidentally, when Wall Street had turned into a gambling casino. In

the case of universities, the new investment instruments of choice were hedge funds, private equity shares, and real estate, commodity, and timber deals—investments that are hard to value until they are sold.

For many of the wealthiest universities, the turnabout in investment strategy was amazingly sweeping. The old rule of thumb of a 60/40 split between common stocks and bonds was thrown out the window in favor of new “alternative” investments. In the portfolios of some leading universities, common stocks and bonds amounted to less than 10% of holdings. The revved-up strategy paid off for a number of years, yielding returns well above the norms for conventional investments.

But the financial market collapse of 2008 revealed three fatal problems. First, the alternative investments were significantly more speculative than balanced portfolios of stocks and bonds, aggravating the extent of the decline. Second, the private equity deals required future “calls” on university assets: for example, a initial billion dollar investment would entail a commitment to invest yet another billion in the future—meaning that the universities owed additional money on investments that now were worth only a fraction of what they cost. This kind of leveraged investing, as “margin” customers of brokerage firms have discovered countless times, can compound losses to such a degree that entire holdings can be literally wiped out. Third—and most devastating—the universities had so much of their holdings wrapped up in these illiquid alternative investments that they left themselves with insufficient cash to run their core operations. Writing about Harvard in *Boston Magazine*, David Bradley reports the following exchange:

HMC (Harvard Management Corp) “took the university right to the edge of the abyss,” one alumnus, a financier who is privy to details of the university’s balance sheet, told me. I asked him what he meant. “Meaning you’re out of cash.” “That”, he added, “is the definition of insolvency.”

Universities have responded to their present crunch by selling their own bonds, in effect borrowing large sums of money at significant rates of interest. Short term, this may help them keep their core operations afloat, but in the long run it could cost them dearly. As for operations not deemed “core”, the cutbacks have been severe, affecting everything from external lecture series to non–limelight sports programs. Hiring of new faculty has been frozen, non–tenured faculty and staff have been let go, class sizes have increased, research budgets have been eliminated, and aid programs for needy students have been reduced. The damage has not been confined to elite colleges: San Jose State, for example, shut down its application process to over 4000 qualified prospective freshmen, the first time in a century that this public university has been unable to serve students who come from the crucially important lower–middle economic bracket.

From within the university community, many consider higher education’s recent setbacks to be collateral damage from the shattering debacle on Wall Street. There are a number of problems with this interpretation. First, some of Wall Street’s most audacious strategies were inspired by work originating from within the halls of academe. This work was applauded and rewarded by virtually all the gatekeepers of higher education. Second, managers of university endowments, egged on by presidents and trustees, designed their own reckless approaches that became duly celebrated by a cheering financial community. In most cases (there were some exceptions), voices of caution were drowned out by those who seemed to believe

that there was no upper limit to investment gains, and that the idea of risk was irrelevant for investors who had enough time, money, and smarts. (Those who held such beliefs might have done well to stray across campus and audit a class in ancient Greek literature—but that’s a recommendation for another day). Third, and perhaps most importantly, the incessant desire within higher education for greater and greater financial gains—a desire manifested in the frenzied investment climate that replaced sound assets with illiquid, speculative, and obscure holdings—was driven by a degeneration in higher education’s own essential public mission.

The mission of higher education has long been the formulation and preservation of knowledge through scholarship, and the transmission of that knowledge to its students and to the broader society. How does this mission align with what has become for many university leaders their major preoccupation in recent times: the competitive “arms race” for high-achieving students? In this arms race, colleges recruit students with strong prior academic records by offering them merit scholarships and other incentives. Moreover, in recent years colleges have spent heavily on housing, dining, and recreational facilities in an effort to outdo one another in attracting top students. The stakes in the game are the national rankings. Conventional wisdom among college officials these days has it that a loss in their ranking position is a slippery slope: prospective students will take note, top students will go elsewhere, the ranking agencies will register this decline, the college’s position will drop another notch, and so on until supposed oblivion. In any competitive game, of course, fear of defeat can be replaced by lust for victory: lower-ranked colleges imagine overtaking their higher-status rivals by the same logic in reverse.

Not only is it difficult to reconcile such competitive goals with higher education's essential mission, it seems likely that these misaligned goals undermined that mission by requiring vast and possibly unsustainable resources. Winning the arms race has certainly been one of the driving forces behind the frenetic fundraising and investment activities on campuses in recent years. Gordon Winston, an economist of higher education, has written:

"The increasing professionalism and energy of development efforts, as well as the fund-raising preoccupations of presidents, evidence the need to increase such resources. One frustrated trustee, presented with plans for the next, even larger capital campaign, asked his president 'How much is enough'. In a positional arms race, there is no such thing."

So we have come to the heart of the problem: a wrong turn in educational mission that in turn has led the financial management of colleges and universities astray. Efforts to win the competitive "arms race" have placed pressure on the fiscal resources of institutions, leading to ceaseless fundraising and risky investment strategies. No longer can universities afford to settle for predictable streams of revenue and dependable rates of return on their investments. Stability, the hallmark of the higher education community for centuries, has been sacrificed for the seductive but uncertain prospect of rapid growth and competitive gain. In many fields, such a choice would be labeled greed. Yet in the recent annals of higher education, this change has not been experienced a choice, but rather as a tough-minded adaptation to contemporary reality. Now, of course, bad work often is conducted under an ill-conceived assumption of inevitability of this sort—at least until someone questions that assumption and convinces others to focus on the true nature of their mission. As Gordon Winston has commented: "An arms race has no finish line

that indicates success. It is a continuing process that can be ended only by ending the process itself.”

Conclusions: Stability, innovation, and the preservation of essential mission

My essay is directed toward the problem of retaining a commitment to essential public mission amidst pressures and temptations to pursue more “rewarding” goals. The nature of “mission creep” is often gradual and unintended: in both of the fields that I have considered in this essay, people believed that they were furthering the interests of their employers by adopting new goals and strategies. Few saw any conflicts or misalignments between the new ways of doing things and the traditional missions that their fields had long served. Where such conflicts may have been perceived, no doubt the traditional way was seen as old-fashioned and unrealistic in today’s world. But *actual* reality eventually intervened, revealing the new strategies to be so misconceived that they placed at risk the preservation of the very enterprises that they had tried to advance.

The problem of preservation, of course, is only one side of a good work mission. Every mission requires innovation as well. Journalism may someday dispense with any semblance of “journals”, at least in printed form, and the field will need to adapt to this change with innovative solutions. But unless it does so in a way that preserves the core of its mission to provide truthful information that people need to make decisions about their lives, there will never again be good work in journalism. Innovation cannot cut so deep that it eradicates the ethical standards and moral purposes of a field.

In the financial world, it is argued that innovation arises most readily in a climate of unfettered profit-seeking. It is certainly true that the financial industry has produced its share of useful innovations in recent times, ranging from ATM machines to money market funds for small investors. But many innovations, such as highly-leveraged derivatives trading, have gone terribly awry, with grave consequences to the world's economic stability that still are not wholly known. The point here is that innovation is not always a good thing. It can be valuable, and sometimes necessary, when it serves a worthwhile purpose. At other times, it can weaken or even destroy the ethical underpinnings of a field. The fashionable notion that "creative destruction" is generally desirable in a capitalist economy can be no more than a cover for pursuing self-serving interests. I doubt if the destruction of trillions of dollars of wealth, held by non-profit organizations and people of limited means across the world, was beneficial to any but those in the financial world who were in a position to profit from it—and who, to this day, continue to reap the rewards of their "innovations" even as the investments of the public languish.

A more serious one-sidedness in the argument I have made concerns my emphasis on stability over growth. Yet I do not question that growth can be healthy; and growth is a dynamic process, entailing uncertainty, risk, and yes, a certain amount of destruction (or at least loss and departure). In any field, it is important to be forward-looking, "pulled by the future" rather than to be driven by or chained to the past.

As I have pointed out in my discussion of the financial industry, speculation is a perfectly legitimate way to attempt high growth, as long as speculators understand the risks. The financial world got into

trouble not because it started speculating—sensible investors have speculated successfully for eons—but because the speculation was done in a context so convoluted that it became wholly non-transparent. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner framed the problem in this way: “The complexity of the (derivative) instruments overwhelmed the checks and balances of risk management and supervision”. But my own favorite statement of this principle comes from Raymond Chandler, in a bit of wisdom from his murder mystery *Blue Dahlia*: “Don’t let yourself get too complicated, Eddie. When a man gets too complicated, he gets unhappy, and if stays that way, he loses his sense of direction.”

As for higher education, I admit a fair dose of ambivalence about the desirability of growth versus stability. I am never comfortable when I hear about universities taking over large swaths of their home communities, and I wonder (as did the trustee whom I quoted above) how much will be enough. On the other hand, the public mission of higher education is a noble one, and if growth means opening up greater access to populations of students who have not yet benefited, I certainly applaud it. But I see no useful purpose to the arms race; and I would hope that growth would not be pursued in such a reckless way that it harms the stability that educational institutions need in order to do their good work. Institutions as well as individuals must be careful not to lose their sense of direction.

5

GoodWork after 15 years—In Education, Leadership and Beyond

Hans Henrik Knoop

Three conceptions of “democracy” define very different contexts for doing good work. The more expanded the welfare system, including child-care, education, health-care and law, of a country is, the more relevant the particular functioning of their democracies may become. Firstly, there is the view that democracy is really what it purports to be, in the traditional sense: Rule of the people, in an open and just form where everybody is free to think and act responsibly—and trusts that this is the case for all parties. Secondly, there is the conspiracy model, according to which “democracy” is more or less a hoax. According to this view, the great majority of people are deluded into thinking that free elections and free market forces actually exist; in actuality society is controlled by a tiny elite of super-wealthy and influential players who more or less covertly run the media, the economy and the political system. Thirdly, there is the idea that democracy is rapidly revitalizing as the internet and other forms of social technology make possible a much finer and much more direct

form of democratic participation by virtually every engaged citizen on the planet

In an attempt to frame important aspects of good work in political–democratic contexts, I focus here on the first and the third scenario, while remaining open to indications of the second. Based on this, I attempt to integrate main ideas from the GoodWork Project with central ideas in Positive Psychology. I propose ways in which technological and psychological approaches to development might be merged.

Relative difficulties in the contexts for GoodWork

As the Dalai Lama reminded us, it is good to feel bad if a bear is hunting for you. But what is good if you work for an unscrupulous banker who haunts your professional pride and self-respect? A banker responsible for millions of families having had to leave their home because of his selfishness and self-aggrandizement? A “professional” who became ultra-rich by luring trusting customers into personal bankruptcy? Where is your existential anchor in such settings? To whom should your social responsibility and loyalty be directed? What standards can you wholeheartedly invoke in such a situation? Or even more complicated: What if the banker himself is only acting irresponsibly because of an alternate meaning of “peer-review”: everybody else around him is doing so and is more or less directly signaling him, as a member of the profession, to comply? Or if he is told to by *his* superior, rendering his job a real-life version of Stanley Milgram’s classic demonstration of blind obedience? What is the responsibility of those obeying flawed orders by the very “gatekeepers” of their own profession? How can an uncertain worker even legitimize his protest, if his superior, who by definition

can/should be assumed to have a keener professional judgment, is directing him to carry out his job in a certain way? Would not the very idea of skilled professionals run into paradox, if the seniors could no longer be assumed to be more skilled than juniors? Would not professional and ethical guidance *de facto* dissolve thereby?

To be sure, despite their acute topicality, these types of questions are not new. Any set of social/societal rules will potentially be of greater benefit to some than others. We may assume that certain people have always been more inclined to comply with a given set of written rules or unwritten ethics than others—with the exception of systems conceived as fair by all, should such have ever existed. Indeed, in search of “best practice” we may never find perfect examples of the latter. Certainly, there are many situations in which we feel part of something that is deeply and genuinely “we”/“us”: these can range from families, love affairs and groups of rebels with common cause to political parties pursuing a shared vision of a better world—a system for all. But does not the devil lie in the detail, even in these most serene of communities? Does deep conflict not lurk right around the corner even there? Does not the evidence of public scandals and revelations of dishonest leaders provide disturbing justification of these doubts? Does not the sheer quantity of conspiracy theories swamping the Internet signal just that? And whenever conspiracy theories are conceived of as more true than the official and scientific ones, deep social and existential doubts should be expected— affecting, even likely to misalign, individuals, families, work-places, and entire professions.

What *is* good work, then? Are our primary anchors simply the core values of the professions as reiterated by Bill Damon in his essay “Mission Creep” in this volume? If so, it must be presumed that the

professions and the knowledge-bases grounding them are basically acceptable and that the democratic foundations for the professions are in proper place. However, a challenge here is that a significant proportion of the problems identified by informants in the GoodWork Project reflect conceptions of societies that are malignant: free markets are totalitarian fields of power controlled by a few ultra-wealthy families; politicians are more like puppets than we wish to believe; much of the free press appears to be a propaganda machine dressed up as bread and circus, rendering intelligent and informed public debates marginal, if not outright impossible—alienating individuals and groups in society at large, and in families and work-places particularly.

I do not subscribe to conspiracy theories. Science is basically about understanding the world in the most truthful way. In scientific terms a conspiracy theory can be no more than a hypothesis to be tested, leading to either rejection (no more conspiracy, just flawed, theory) or open acceptance (no more conspiracy, but publicly recognized truth). This said though, theories should always *be* open for testing, and the GoodWork Project may have even more to say about what is really going on based on the over thousand, presumably *very* well informed leaders and practitioners of the study. In other words, the GoodWork Project may hold an even greater societal potential than originally conceived of when focusing distinctly on professions.

Especially with new social technologies, we people of the world are much better connected than we ever were before. Maybe now is the time to do away with the, shall we say, “hypothesis of secrecy” forwarded by President John F. Kennedy, on April 27th 1961, in his famous address before the American Newspaper Publishers Association during the height of the Cold War:

“.... The very word "secrecy" is repugnant in a free and open society; and we are as a people inherently and historically opposed to secret societies, to secret oaths and to secret proceedings. We decided long ago that the dangers of excessive and unwarranted concealment of pertinent facts far outweighed the dangers which are cited to justify it. Even today, there is little value in opposing the threat of a closed society by imitating its arbitrary restrictions. Even today, there is little value in insuring the survival of our nation if our traditions do not survive with it. And there is very grave danger that an announced need for increased security will be seized upon by those anxious to expand its meaning to the very limits of official censorship and concealment. That I do not intend to permit to the extent that it is in my control...For we are opposed around the world by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covert means for expanding its sphere of influence—on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice, on guerrillas by night instead of armies by day. It is a system which has conscripted vast human and material resources into the building of a tightly knit, highly efficient machine that combines military, diplomatic, intelligence, economic, scientific and political operations. Its preparations are concealed, not published. Its mistakes are buried, not headlined. Its dissenters are silenced, not praised. No expenditure is questioned, no rumor is printed, no secret is revealed...I am asking your help in the tremendous task of informing and alerting the American people, confident that with your help man will be what he was born to be: free and independent.”

As it happens, in July 2009, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown spoke at the TED-conference about “wiring the web for global good”. He expressed confidence that human beings are inherently inclined to act morally. Through the powerful connecting of digital technology, it will be possible to enlarge the evolved moral preference for taking care of intimates. Brown’s illustrations were a handful of globally known news-illustrations: The photo of Kim, the nine-year-old

Vietnamese girl screaming as she is running towards the photographer with her back being burned away by napalm, awakening the conscience of the nation of America to begin to end the Vietnam War. The photo of Birhan, the Ethiopian girl who launched Live Aid in the 1980s, 15 minutes away from death when she was rescued and photographed. The photo of the protesting man standing alone before the tanks on Tiananmen Square in 1989, becoming a symbol of just resistance for the whole world. The photo of the Sudanese girl, a few moments from death, with a vulture waiting patiently in the background, shocking people into action on poverty. The video of Neda, the Iranian girl dying on the street in the wake of the corrupted 2009–elections in Iran, now the focus of an entire YouTube generation. A few excerpts of Prime Minister Brown’s talk:

“...And what do all these pictures and events have in common?... the invisible ties and bonds of sympathy that bring us together to become a human community. What these pictures demonstrate is that we do feel the pain of others, however distantly. What I think these pictures demonstrate is that we do believe in something bigger than ourselves. What these pictures demonstrate is that there is a moral sense across all religions, across all faiths, across all continents—a moral sense that not only do we share the pain of others, and believe in something bigger than ourselves but we have a duty to act when we see things that are wrong that need righted, see injuries that need to be corrected, see problems that need to be rectified...I believe there is a moral sense and a global ethic that commands attention from people of every religion and every faith, and people of no faith. But I think what’s new is that we now have the capacity to communicate instantaneously across frontiers right across the world. We now have the capacity to find common ground with people we will never meet but who we will meet through the Internet and through all the modern means of communication, that we now have the capacity to organize and take collective action together to deal with the problem or an injustice that we want to

deal with, and I believe that this makes this a unique age in human history, and it is the start of what I would call the creation of a truly global society... That, in my view, gives us the first opportunity as a community to fundamentally change the world. Foreign policy can never be the same again. It cannot be run by elites; it's got to be run by listening to the public opinions of peoples who are blogging, who are communicating with each other around the world. 200 years ago the problem we had to solve was slavery. 150 years ago I suppose the main problem in a country like ours was how young people, children, had the right to education. 100 years ago in most countries in Europe, the pressure was for the right to vote. 50 years ago the pressure was for the right to social security and welfare. In the last 50–60 years we have seen fascism, anti-Semitism, racism, apartheid, discrimination on the basis of sex and gender and sexuality; all these have come under pressure because of the campaigns by people to change the world... We are the first generation that is in a position to do this. Combine the power of a global ethic with the power of our ability to communicate and organize globally with the challenges that we now face, most of which are global in their nature. Climate change cannot be solved in one country but has got to be solved by the world working together. A financial crisis, just as we have seen, could not be solved by America alone or Europe alone; it needed the world to work together. Take the problems of security and terrorism and, equally, the problem of human rights and development: they cannot be solved by Africa alone; they cannot be solved by America or Europe alone. We cannot solve these problems unless we work together.”

Certainly, whatever conception of good work one adheres to, this work is not performed in a vacuum. As history shows, the likelihood of good work correlates strongly with the quality of the society hosting it. And up until now, no societal quality seems to be better than true democracy. Not necessarily along the specific priorities of John F. Kennedy or of Gordon Brown, but by and large in the spirit of freedom, openness, constructive criticism of the press and universal

social responsibility that these leaders described and aspired to exemplify.

To be sure, critical thinkers such as the Noam Chomsky or Gore Vidal remain convinced that democracy, though a great idea, in the currently dominating version is basically fiction. On their reading (or deconstruction), a small more-or-less anonymous elite of bankers, military leaders, and propagandists create the illusion that people have a real say. In fact the people are being cheated and cynically manipulated, “manufactured”, into a belief of consent—rendering even the president of the United States a puppet. Whatever the merits of such views, though, any viable road ahead seems to be of the same kind as suggested above: Democracy has to be reinvigorated, for the sake of deeper meaning for citizens, in civil life, and, no less important, as truly legitimate contexts for the professions, that is: for good work. In my view, this assignment appears to require very hard work for a very long time.

Zooming in on education, I now turn to what we are up against. I consider how issues of trust and responsibility play out in this, maybe most crucial, domain of future knowledge societies—the domain preparing the coming generations for all domains.

Educating for good work: foundations and pitfalls

I recently put forth the hypothesis that many pedagogical debates are basically about something other than pedagogy, namely *whether, daily, one experiences liberal democracy as a meaningful ideal, worth fighting for or not*. Furthermore I stated two hypotheses:

- 1) *If one does embrace the ideal*, one will be inclined to contribute to the functioning of institutions according to the political intentions

behind them. Moreover one will do so in a democratic spirit of combined openness and skepticism—even in the case of one disapproving of current politicians or administrations in office—simply because democracy as the foundation for social life will likely be perceived as far more important than the changing political, and maybe even cultural, content as the basic form of social life in preference;

2) *If one does not embrace the ideal*, one will be inclined to regard democratic institutions as more or less illegitimate means of oppression that are to be appropriately opposed so that the democratically elected individuals in political power are not successful—unless, of course, one happens to agree with them for the moment.

Yet, however obvious these challenges are, they rarely appear to be taken under serious consideration—maybe because no one seems/dares to openly disagree with a democratic mindset. Indeed, almost all leaders of the world pay homage to liberal democracy. To my knowledge, the only, de jure, non-democracies in the world are the Vatican, Brunei, Myanmar and Saudi Arabia (of course, a lot of dictatorships brand themselves as democracies). It would probably constitute malpractice if a public employee in a democratic society, such as a teacher or a medical doctor, did not acknowledge the democratic basis for his or her employment. Indeed, even radical “social critics” and “freedom fighters” will typically fight for not only “freedom”, but for “freedom for everyone”, which, at least in a literal sense, makes them all liberal democrats, side by side with the rest of the world.

In his book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), issued directly after the fall of the Soviet Union, the philosopher and political economist Francis Fukuyama wrote:

“...What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such ... That is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government...”

Fukuyama later explained that the book was never linked to a specifically American model of social or political organization, rather something like the present European Union. But that's not the point I am trying to make here. Rather, by extrapolating Fukuyama's hypothesis to cover educational systems throughout the developing world, one may to predict that education would gradually transform into a civilized system, enabling the freedoms combined with strong sense of meaningful belonging to every pupil and student.

But why, then, the initial hypotheses? Because, for the time being, much education still implies rather brutal cultural and social (*de-*) *selection* of young people, along side other core functions such as *qualification* and *socialization*. In other words, despite its liberal democratic basis, for many, education is likely to come across as something quite different, something by default suiting some far better than others, just as some genes are far better suited for adaptation in a given environment than others. Thus, despite democracy being basically an idea of peaceful revolt against raw Social-Darwinism, designed to help everyone on board, education across the planet tends to stress its exclusionary, rather than its inclusionary, faces.

In principle, liberal democracy aims to, in the best possible way, help citizens become meaningfully engaged in the societal community, in part by securing binding rights for the individual, in part by securing responsibility on the part of the individual. Yet, this ideal is difficult to realize in an educational system, if those who lose the competition for attractive further education are *not* safe—in analogy to societies, standing few chances of developing true democracy if minority rights are not secured. As former president William J. Clinton, stressed at a meeting in the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia on the 28th of April 2009, it is far easier to sell the idea of “majority rules” to leaders in non-democratic countries than the idea of “minority rights”. The one thing that more than anything else legitimizes majority rule in democracies, Clinton said, is that minorities are safe. So, staying with Clinton, if an educational system that is constituted and organized after liberal-democratic ideals does not function liberal-democratically, we have a serious problem. Moreover this problem may even prove difficult to debate, for leaders, given the opportunity, may be inclined to pursue more covert or indirect strategies, however paradoxical and undemocratic. Furthermore, studies suggest that a large proportion of what *is* being debated is really pseudo-conflicts based on misunderstandings (e.g. Miller & Steinberg, 1975; Tannen, 1990, 1999).

Taken together, this state of affairs predicts a future congested by empty talk and hidden agendas, if nothing serious is done—notably “something serious” that does not only dig the social ditches even deeper, which debates, as noted above, all too often do. If debates are not only to produce majorities, but also to secure minorities, such a turn of events presupposes citizens fighting also for their opponents. And such a turn of events, in turn, presupposes an understanding of democratic *processes* as more important than *results* of democracy,

since the Darwinist nature and rationality of democracy implies that one cannot beforehand know which of the many ideas (the variation) will be the best/strongest (be selected). After all, if we *did* know, it would be a clear waste of time debating it, and democratic processes would not be meaningful in the first place. Furthermore, democratic processes presuppose that citizens can trust each other, trust their common knowledge base, trust their political representatives, and trust their institutions, if the processes are to strengthen the sense of democracy, greater social belonging, and meaning. This is no small challenge, as the following example drawn from Italian education indicates.

Systematic cheating in Italian schools

At a conference at Aarhus University on March 19th 2009, the Finnish educational theoretician Yrjö Engeström spoke about systematic cheating in contemporary Italian society. Indeed entire families, even towns, were apparently involved in subversive activity, undermining public system of educational examination. Engeström spoke, if not enthusiastically at least with ill-concealed admiration, about the long and proud tradition of Italians cheating at exams. He considered it to be somewhat understandable that the various parties cheat, given the ridiculous circumstances provided by the examination system, as he saw it. To prove his point, he had brought with him sample artifacts showing how the cheating was performed: slips of papers with compressed information written on it and ammunition-like belts for hiding the slips under one's clothes—all applied in a spirit of righteous, morally defensible, cheating. As it turned out, the process of compressing the information and preparing the cheating acts proved so effective for learning that often the students did not even have to use the cheating equipment. Competing

against the evil enemy of authority by covert means was apparently more pedagogically effective than following the rules.

After Engeström's talk I was wondering what the deeper meaning of promoting this systematic cheating practice might be, since the Italian students obviously could have gotten just as far, using just the same means for learning, without cheating. And it was difficult for me to see how the Italians could avoid undermining democratic thinking and strengthen the more Mafioso kind that already keeps much of their nation in a cultural iron grip. Therefore, after the talk, I asked Engeström where, in his opinion, the line between legitimate cheating and corruption ran, acknowledging the possibility of a gradual transition. Engeström gave as an answer the example that if one was imprisoned in a concentration camp like Auschwitz, it should be obvious that it would be morally justified to cheat. I replied that, after all, the Italian educational system was not a death camp but a democratically established institution with the purpose of letting the will of free and informed Italian citizens unfold, and that, by undermining democratic institutions, one would risk undermining democracy itself. I did acknowledge how one, staying with Aristotle's definition of wisdom, could always argue for exceptions from a rule in order to secure a humane spirit within the system, but that, in case so, this would still happen *in respect for* system, not in opposition to it.

We did not get any further that day. But as far as I am concerned, Engeström's answer was also sufficiently informative for the time being. What I heard him say was: "It's not easy" and I agree with him. And it does not get any better in the absence of any attractive substitute for democracy, unless one is willing to accept the totalitarian alternatives: Social-Darwinism (law of the

jungle/unbound market–forces) or dictatorship/mind–control). Of course, as mentioned, one may choose to view democratic institutions as socially oppressing technologies of the elite, but even if so: would the solution be to destroy them? Would it not be better, inspired by the example, of unfettered scientific inquiry, to apply a combination of openness and skepticism as foundational values for the Italians, in order to improve and strengthen their democratic institutions and thus give their citizens better hopes and means for true societal engagement?

Can corrupted professions be cured by corrupting democracy, one may ask? And can a social scientist defensibly argue this line? Does Engeström have any scientific or moral justification for claiming that his insights and/or his morals are better than those of the Italian authorities, so that he, more or less indirectly, is entitled to morally support the cheating, as he was on the verge of doing in his talk (no more—I do not wish to saddle Engeström with views that he may have put forth only in a polemical mode). And if he does, is his duty not rather to help the Italian authorities than to undermine them by indirectly promoting the (to some of us) amusing cheating practices?

Clearly, these are deep issues that are interconnected; that are potentially self–reinforcing (cheating breeds distrust, stimulating further cheating); that flirt with hypocrisy (one expects credibility from others, but does not act credibly oneself). Furthermore, the problems border on a relativism of values akin to Social–Darwinism: a side–effect may well be a strengthened conviction that Italian democracy, in the era of Berlusconi, is giving way to a more brutal social order. Everyone is therefore better off taking care of number one and one’s closest relatives—which again tends to invite even tougher control measures on behalf of the authorities, now based on

hard evidence for widespread cheating, delivered by observers like Engeström.

Having sketched what I believe are some important contextual aspects for good work, in what follows I take a closer look how the GoodWork Project may be conceptually linked to Positive Psychology; how technological and psychological understandings of development may be dovetailed, and which possible future may thereby be envisioned.

The GoodWork Project and/as Positive Psychology

So far, the GoodWork Project has been based on a strong respect for professional traditions and a belief in the more or less universal knowledge and practice in specified domains; fields of thinkers and doers; and individuals living up to standards and producing novel ideas and products for the field to evaluate. This position has been adopted for evident reasons, as domains, disciplines, sciences bring together humanity's best understandings of the natural, cultural, social and personal world, for all to peruse and use. Furthermore, the project has been conceived of in a "traditional" way in a double sense: professional traditions are both seen as "worthy" transmitting, and as ideally "traditionally transmitted", that is: top-down, vertically downward, from the elders to the younger, from the more learned to the lesser learned, often involving direct and informal contact for prolonged periods of time between mentors and apprentices. (Nakamura, et al, 2009)

This traditional arrangement (mentorship dates back to Greek times) is now under pressure and reconsideration. The changing conditions obtain, in part because in of dramatic developments over the last

decades. On the one hand, the task of strengthening the professional core principles may be more important than ever. On the other hand the very nature of human creativity may be changing from the so-called 1.0 to 2.0 mode with mere social interaction as more of a driver than before. Even the highest political and scientific levels are affected through interactive mass-media such as YouTube; through collective knowledge gathering such as the Wikipedia; and through collective knowledge creation such as virtual self-help groups of diabetics or cancer patients. These technological developments supplement—even if they do not supplant—the more traditional novelty-producing, gate-keeping and domain-changing character of professional and creative work.

To understand how GoodWork can be performed in such, sometimes dramatically, new settings, psychology certainly continues to appear important—but maybe especially the new sub-domain called Positive Psychology. Insights emerging from this field are important when focusing on GoodWork in several senses. Positive Psychology can comfortably be framed as the psychology of good in the sense that it is concerned with the enabling of good institutions, promotion of individual strengths, good social relations, well-being and happiness. In slightly varying form, the official definition of Positive Psychology given by the International Positive Psychology Association asserts “...the scientific study of what enables individuals and communities to thrive”, which could literally function both as a supra—and a sub—category for the GoodWork Project. Thus we may consider advancing the GoodWork Project further by conceptually linking it closer to Positive Psychology. Indeed, as hinted, the GoodWork Project *was/is* an early “study of positive institutions”, now Positive Psychology’s first “pillar”, and the “study of individual strengths”, now Positive Psychology’s second pillar, from the very beginning in 1995. Its recent

additional focus on engagement positions GoodWork Project squarely at the center of a third pillar of positive psychology: “Happiness and well-being”.

In this scheme however, the strongest contribution to Positive Psychology coming from the GoodWork Project is probably understanding how institutions, workplaces, professions, fields function with books such as *Good Mentoring*, *Good Business*, *The Moral Advantage*, and *Responsibility at Work* could all to be considered contributions to positive psychology. To my mind, this is far more than repackaging or rebranding. The GoodWork Project is obviously also about much other than psychology, wherefore the term “positive social science”, also being discussed as a possible extension among leaders of the Positive Psychology movement, may be an even more direct match to GoodWork Project. In more schematic form the links between the two endeavors may be illustrated as follows

- Positive institutions (PP)—relating to the ideal of Ethics (GWP)
- Social relations (PP)—relating to the ideal of Empathy (GWP)
- Individual strengths (PP) and Success (PP)—relating to the ideal of Excellence (GWP)
- Positivity (PP)—relating to the ideal of Engagement (GWP)
- Success (PP)—relating to the ideal of quality work (GWP)

A provocative approach such as Positive Psychology has caused considerable debate. There is discussion of whether the movement is too focused on individuals rather than enabling environments or lack of such; naïve in the face of cynical mass media “psychology” being applied around the clock all around the world; and premature application of not so robust findings. Whether justified or not, one

obvious way to deal with complex matters such as these is to frame them systemically as for example done in the original systems model for creativity used in the Humane Creativity Project, where domains, fields and individuals were triangulated. Or in the expanded Good Work diamond, that adds the overarching reward and prestige system of the ambient society. (see GoodWorkProject.org)

Interdependence of technology, psychology, and the future study of future GoodWork

To understand what keeps people going, also in the sense of wanting to do good work, I believe we need to understand positive emotions, engagement, meaning, and the nature of success as well as we can. Even today, all too often workplaces are designed in ways that are unpleasant, disengaging and without visible relationship to individual or social meanings. In other words, the physical and social technologies, developed to serve the aims of the workplaces, often prove to be counterproductive. Negative experiences tend to drive people away, in thought and action, even from positive things. In the definition of GoodWork, we may consider giving this dimension even more focus than we have so far. Certainly, our interview protocols have been about what give people meaning in their work, how they are engaged, and sometimes even the more aesthetic side of things, relating to basic positive emotions.

I believe there is potential in looking in an even more focused way at positive emotions (indicating ordered body and mind), “flow-like engagement (indicating ordered attention)”, and experienced meaning (indicating social and existential order). All three phenomena function as “prime psychological movers”, that is: 1) they are self-reinforcing in that experiencing positivity makes likely that you want

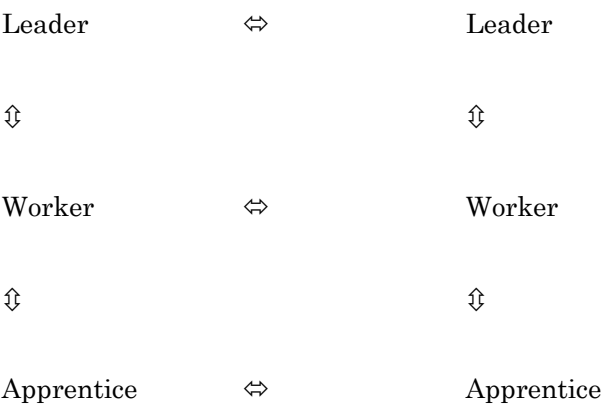
more of it, 2) they are promoting growth in the form of learning, creativity, and social responsibility, and 3) they all feed on / make active and positive use of moderate negativity: “needs” can be seen as moderate negative emotions that are preconditions for satisfaction; flow in games/challenges is only possible if players have moderate “fear of failure”, and meaning in life is difficult to imagine in complete absence of problems to work on. Rather than promoting trouble per se, these factors should confer resilience in the face of hardship—at least in cases where the dynamic is understood and welcomed.

Though we seem to have a pretty firm understanding of GoodWork, we may acknowledge that both the conception of work and the conception of good may be in transition. This is not to say that all is changing, but rather that technical as well as ethical anchors may be anchored in somewhat different “places” in the future. For instance, it would probably be good if we could instill some notion of “virtual responsibility” in children for navigating the more anonymous venues of the internet; or help people understand better how to deal with job-mobility without becoming cynical or depressed through the loss of social relations on which one had always counted. Thus, when looking further ahead, the study of goodwork may indeed also involve some elaborated aspect of empathy as suggested in the present volume—not the least because the quality of “2.0–interaction” seems to depend considerably on just that.

I propose three types of “empathy” that should apply fairly well to the study of groups and professions alike: emotional empathy (mirroring others’ feelings), cognitive empathy (alignment of thought), and moral empathy (elevation: being inspired by moral deeds of others). Students of nonverbal communication may even add physical

empathy (when, perhaps via mirror neurons, people mirror each others’ movements and facial expressions).

One final idea for further consideration: the systematic study of how vertical and horizontal interdependencies and reciprocities are experienced by all involved parties—quantitatively and qualitatively—in professions, as mapped in the following scheme, where the arrows signify interdependence and reciprocity:



My reason for this suggestion is that interdependency and reciprocity are not only foundational dimensions of informal positive social interaction; they also appear to be far more necessary in modern workplaces than in more traditional one-way-types, as studies of mentoring, of legitimacy in decision making, and of interdisciplinary teams have shown. With reference to the present context, in dealing with professions, it has thus become quite clear how the quality of professions depends on the quality of their democratic context, on the quality of their relations to other professions (for instance the relation between banking and higher education), and on their crucial role with respect to the viability of democracies and professions—as we have also learned by studying good work.

Just as democracies clearly cannot function without effective institutions and true professions, it seems that professions and institutions will not last unless under true democracy. Certainly, things are ever changing, and we are forced to adapt, but as advanced humans our adaptation now more than ever seems to depend on our ability to understand and create truthfully, beautifully, and in a moral and ethical way.

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6

“In God We Trust; All Others Bring Data”

Trust and Accountability in Good Work

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Over the life of the GoodWork Project, we have observed how the language of accountability has crept into the lexicon of professions that previously operated without this focus. We hypothesized that underlying this shift has been the adoption of the business model and market rationality. However, hidden costs accompany an acceptance of accountability as fundamental to doing good work.

A cost that will be examined here is related to trust. Both trust and accountability are important sources and catalysts of good work. Accountability's typical relationship with trust is one of inverse proportionality; when accountability becomes a focus, trust diminishes (or has already diminished). Likewise, when trust takes center stage, the need for accountability recedes. When I engage a

doctor, I grant her a certain degree of freedom and discretion to determine how to act in my best interests; I trust her judgment. If I were to require that all of her recommendations be supported by research, the trust that grants her discretion to treat me properly would vanish. A quip goes: “In God we trust. All others bring data.”

Although accountability typically reduces the need for trust, paradoxically it can also increase trust. Hardin (2006) provides an example of this paradox. American democracy is characterized by a separation of powers; each of the three branches of the government is separate and independent from the others, but they limit each other other’s power through a checks–and–balances system. In this setup, the government creates citizen trust through institutionalizing a distrust of people and organizations that hold power. Paradoxically, accountability both increases and decreases trust.

The plus side of the paradox derives from the potential benefits that can be had from both trust and accountability, and from the costs that attend their absence. A question arose for the Good Work Project (GWP): Under what conditions can accountability create trust in professional work? In this essay I address this issue. I begin by defining and exploring the benefits of both trust and accountability. I then use grantmaking philanthropy as an extended example. I show that grantmakers believe accountability measures mitigate the risk of wasting valuable foundation resources and improve the foundation’s likelihood of remaining true to its mission. And yet, in reality these measures often place undue burdens on nonprofits’ resources, encourage dishonesty, and hinder the good work of their nonprofit partners. In addition, these measures can narrow the mission of grantmaking in ways that move foundations away from their sources of legitimacy. Typical accountability measures often accomplish the

opposite of what grantmakers intend and jeopardize a foundation's ability to do good work. I conclude by discussing a study of high-engagement philanthropy. This newly emerging form of philanthropy may feature a type of accountability that generates trust. The benefits of both trust and accountability can be enjoyed while the costs of each are minimized.

Trust and Accountability

Trust and accountability are both responses to uncertainty and risk. Indeed, uncertainty can be considered a defining feature of virtually all professions. Professions are distinguished from most ordinary occupations: in arranging the nature of their work their workers are afforded more autonomy. Friedson (1994) characterizes this as “performing complex discretionary work.” (10) Autonomy and discretion imply that professionals have significant choice in how to behave in most circumstances; there are a range of ways to act, and only minimal constraints restrict professionals' decisions in most circumstances. As noted above, when we engage a doctor, lawyer, or financial advisor, we usually grant these professionals and their institutions significant freedom in determining how to act. In general, we rely on them to act judiciously, rationally, and professionally, rather than in self-interested ways. When we rely on others in the presence of uncertainty, we accept the risk that accompanies this reliance.

There are a number of ways to respond to uncertainty and risk. One is to simply trust that another party will do the proposed work in a competent way. When we trust, we expect that a person, institution or system will act in a certain way with respect to items of consequence. Important consequences surround the act of trusting,

including making oneself vulnerable to the one who is trusted. There is always the possibility that the trusted will not follow through as expected and the trustor becomes vulnerable to this possibility. A gamble lies at the heart of trust, a gamble that Sztompka (1999) characterizes as a “bet” and Möllering (2005) calls a “leap of faith.” Trust itself entails risk at the same time it responds to it.

Given this double risk, why trust? There are a number of significant benefits to trusting. It evokes positive actions and feelings in others and is related to personal well-being and improved interpersonal relationships. It catalyzes social interaction and enterprise, including the sorts of ventures grantmaking foundations support. Trust lowers transaction costs by not requiring costly activities such as monitoring others’ behavior. It also fosters cooperation and reciprocity and promotes knowledge sharing and open communication. Most importantly perhaps, trust generally produces trust in others, increasing these benefits exponentially.

Another way to perceive the benefits of trust is to explore the costs of a low degree of trust, an absence of trust, or a condition of dis-trust. In these circumstances, we require evidence of our expectations having been met. Gathering and analyzing data takes time and energy and can waste valuable human and fiscal resources. The lack of trust can create layers of bureaucracy that can slow down or even extinguish good work. Further, diminished trust or an absence of trust can be a source of disengagement, turnover, and even illegal activity. Clearly, trust provides significant benefits in professional work. Essentially, it “lubricates” interaction and cooperation (Luhmann 1988), while the consequence of its diminishment or absence is friction.

Accountability also responds to uncertainty and risk in professional work, albeit in a neatly oppositional way to trust: it requires that evidence of agreed upon expectations has been met. Whereas trust brackets the need for proof, accountability requires an “account” of behavior and its outcomes. Tied to the concept of responsibility, it entails an obligation to provide a record of one’s actions, products, decisions, and outcomes in light of agreed upon expectations. Accountability measures mitigate or lower risk by sharing control and (distributing) responsibility. It is often believed that when we make people responsible in the particular ways that accountability requires, we lessen the chance that bad things will happen. The people involved will attend to their obligations more seriously and do their best to bring about the desired outcomes. Thus, accountability, properly conceived and implemented, can lessen unexpected or unwanted consequences.

Accountability can be found in a number of areas in professions: in relationships; in practices; in rules and regulations; and in the structures and routines of a professional domain. For example, grantmakers typically require their grantees to reapply for funding periodically. This simple routine requires that nonprofits provide evidence that their funding continues to be a worthwhile investment for the foundation. There are also different types of accountability: internal accountability; external accountability; compliance based accountability; performance based accountability; accountability within an organization, between organizations, to the general public; ethical accountability; financial accountability; high stakes accountability; low stakes accountability; and so on. Although I do not tease these types apart in what follows, the different levels, layers and shades of accountability can all be seen in the context of grantmaking philanthropy.

Like trust, there are numerous potential benefits to accountability. It can do all of the following: lower risk; provide people with incentives; raise and focus awareness on critical issues; gauge what is working and not working; test theories; open doors of communication; and allow for midcourse changes in strategy. It can also make previously obscure aspects of work more transparent.

When people and organizations operate without the oversight accountability requires, much can go wrong. The sub-prime mortgage crisis of 2008 illustrates the radical effects that a lack of accountability in the domain of banking had on global fiscal health. Without accountability mechanisms, responsibility may become diffuse or dissolve; if that happens, sloppy, inefficient, ineffective and even illegal activity might follow. Thus, a lack of accountability may yield heavy costs.

I have argued that accountability and trust are radically different responses to uncertainty and risk. Trust requires a leap of faith and a gamble; accountability requires evidence. They both have undeniable benefits; and, at the same time, important costs attend their absence. Unfortunately, inverse proportionality usually characterizes their relationship. When we want the benefits of accountability, we may sacrifice the benefits of trust. When we prioritize the benefits of trust, we may incur the costs of the absence of accountability.

In what follows, I probe this inverse relationship in a profession that the Good Work Project studied: grantmaking philanthropy in large foundations.

Trust and Accountability in Grantmaking Philanthropy

There are a number of reasons that grantmaking is ideal for examining the trust–accountability relationship. First, in the GWP, we interviewed both grantmakers (donors, board members, executives and program officers) and successful grant seekers. Given that trust is a relational phenomenon, it can best be studied with evidence from all involved parties. Second, as an emerging profession struggling to determine best practices, accountability is on the minds and in the writings of those active in the field. Furthermore, the profession’s focus on accountability has increased dramatically over time. In recent literature (Brest 2008; Fleishman 2007; Frumkin 2006), accountability plays a much more prominent role in conceptions of good work than it has in the past. The final reason to examine grantmaking philanthropy is that significant uncertainty and risk remain inherent in its mission, and in assessment of its legitimacy.

Understanding philanthropy’s sources of legitimacy requires understanding its mission. Simply stated, the mission of grantmaking philanthropy is to create and contribute to the public good, however we might define that good. As one informant told us, “Philanthropy helps other people to do good work.” The foundations we studied grant funds strategically and aim to have a measurable impact in their focus area. They engage the field’s broad mission and their organizations’ specific missions without the sorts of constraints facing the public and private sectors. Government does not directly influence what foundations fund and how they do their work. At the same time, foundations are free from market mechanisms; no profit considerations constrain their work. There are few (if any) direct pressures on philanthropy to act in particular ways.

This autonomy and desire for major social impact positions foundations for their societal role as innovators and risk-takers. (Anheier & Leat 2006; Lang & Schneiper 2005) 3 Many people in grantmaking philanthropy conceive of their work as a prime engine of social change, seeding innovative programs or funding the take-over of social services in an environment of governmental devolution. Innovation provides direction for the sort of risk that foundations take on. One source of a foundation's legitimacy lies in its ability to take the sorts of social risks that government and the private sector will not, or at least do not, take. Unprompted, nearly half the people we interviewed in the philanthropy study associated the mission of the field with risk and innovation. A president of one foundation called it "the risk capital for the nonprofit world." Risk taking was seen as connected to doing good work: "if you're not taking risks...and you're not out on the edge, you're probably not doing your job."

As a response to the uncertainties and risks inherent in grantmaking, we found conceptions of good work included two interlocking forms of accountability: accountability to the general public and accountability from nonprofits. Regarding the first, foundations utilize funds that otherwise would have been collected through taxes and placed in public coffers. Increasingly, foundation leaders believe that they must account for the loss of the tax revenue in terms of the goods that they provide the public. Although there have been minor moves from the government to require accountability from foundations, philanthropy continues to fly largely under the public radar and, in a staunchly protectionist stance, most action toward making it accountable comes from within the field itself. Related to this inward press toward accountability, we found that conceptions of good work include requiring accountability from nonprofits for what they do and produce. Reporting mechanisms (as part of what the field

calls “due diligence”) are fundamental to grantmaking. These reporting mechanisms ask if nonprofits did what was agreed upon and what effect was achieved. Foundations require this information to assess whether they are achieving their own missions effectively. Foundations also use the accountability mechanisms from nonprofits as a way of providing accounting to the general public.

Grantmakers recognize the tension between accountability and innovation. One noted, “We’ve got to do better at simulating innovation by getting accountability off our back. I mean one of the things that accountability does is make you less willing to take risks, because you are going to be accountable at the end.” To most, doing good work means balancing the risks associated with innovation, on the one hand, with the protective shield of prudence, on the other. Such balancing can be quite difficult. “You have to do calculation. You want to support new things, new ideas, new people. But you need evidence of some kind that they are going to do good work.” Resisting the desire to trust their own and others’ instincts and ideas about social change, these grantmakers require accountability. At the same time they recognize the dampening effect it has on their social role as risk-takers and innovators.

To complicate matters, we find that a focus on accountability all too often, if not inevitably, narrows the vision of philanthropy to that which can be measured (and measured within the typical three-year grant cycle). All sorts of valuable social goals are difficult, if not impossible, to measure. Accordingly, this achievement may be undermined when foundations are too focused on having appropriate impact. So, although a focus on accountability is intended to mitigate the risks of grantmaking, such an emphasis can have the unintended consequence of narrowing the focus of philanthropy and further

diverting it from its social role. Unintentionally, the measures designed to limit risk can move philanthropy away from its sources of legitimacy.

Although the nonprofit leaders we interviewed understood the reasons that foundations require accountability, they saw little benefit in it for themselves. As foundations seek further controls and safeguards to insure that their goals will be met, they are less able to suspend doubt and more preoccupied with insuring that their work is on target. Trust in the nonprofit suffers as a result. Dasgupta (1988) describes how, “The trustor [the foundation tries to reduce risk] by monitoring or imposing certain constraints on the behavior of the trustee; but, after a certain threshold perhaps, the more monitoring and constraining s/he does, the less s/he trusts that person. Trust is relevant before one can monitor the actions of ... others.” (51)

Many nonprofit organizations do not have the human and fiscal resources to carry out these accountability requirements, much less the ability to do so in ways that strengthen their own practices. They find themselves engaged in activities largely, or even solely, to satisfy grantmakers—activities that take them away from doing the direct work of fulfilling their own missions. To compound this problem, nonprofits usually have multiple funders with multiple and various reporting requirements. This drain on human resources is coupled with high stakes, as accountability is usually tied to future funding. When this is the case, the consequences of low levels of trust and distrust—discussed earlier—begin to emerge. Incentives for a nonprofit to “show” the expected impact arise, even though that impact may not have occurred. Here we found a troubling trend: in order to retain or obtain grants, nonprofits all too often “spin” their organization’s image, activities and outcomes to align them with

those of the funder. In effect, they shape themselves to be aligned with foundation requirements. They do this even though the act of spinning may ultimately undermine their own goals and their integrity as an institution. The burdens of accountability that nonprofits experience and the spinning it can (inadvertently) encourage further drain trust and enhance the climate of distrust that the accountability measures initially catalyzed.

This impact on nonprofits is highly problematic for good work in grantmaking philanthropy and, in deed, for any field that is inherently relational. Recall that foundations do not produce social change; they help others make change. One foundation president told us, “The good foundation recognizes that standing alone it really doesn’t accomplish anything....When you think about it, it facilitates, it abets, it brokers, it encourages, it supports, and it celebrates the work of others.” Grantmaking is inherently relational; it is done by people and organizations in necessary cooperation with others. In philanthropy’s most simple form, there is a giver and receiver. There can be no philanthropy without these two components: no matter how the receiver is described, how much time has elapsed between the gift and the reception, how many intermediaries or how many recipients there are, and no matter how all these players are configured. Grantmaking foundations cannot act alone; they must form cooperative relationships with others to carry out the foundation’s mission.

These relationships are symbiotic. Not surprisingly, Good Work data suggests that “collaboration” is a crucial strategy applied in foundations; over two-thirds of our subjects in the philanthropy study unbidden noted the grantor–grantee relationship as an important indicator for good work. Honesty, transparency and trustworthiness were also mentioned as critical elements in forming positive

lasting relationships. Subsequent studies from the Center for Effective Philanthropy (2004) further articulate exactly what is valued in these relationships.

Given philanthropy's relational nature, grantmakers cannot do ethical, excellent work if in the process they harm their nonprofit partners. Although grantmakers may believe that accountability measures are necessary for evaluating one's work, this belief may ultimately be a dangerous one. Why do I say this? If these accountability measures unintentionally impose assorted foundation values and divert nonprofits from doing what they originally intended to do, they may be *precluding grantmakers from enabling good work*.

In addition to dampening foundations' ability to take innovative risks, narrowing the mission of philanthropy, deterring nonprofits' abilities to do good work and fostering a climate of distrust, a further problem with accountability measures emerges. The development and execution of appropriate benchmarks for nonprofits can be time consuming and expensive, and the final evaluative measures are often viewed as useless by both grantmakers and nonprofits. "I think one of the trends [in grantmaking] is toward a more rigorous evaluation and a more rigorous measurement of outcome. Frankly, that's a dead end. We're going to spend millions of dollars of our philanthropic resources trying to develop instruments of measurement and it isn't going to work." Overall, a dilemma faces the field of philanthropy in finding a suitable balance between productive measurement of outcomes and wasting time, energy, and resources on evaluative devices that say little about the "true" impact of grant money.

Nevertheless, accountability and impact measurements are not, in themselves, inherently negative, indeed, accountability is a component of good work. A focus on accountability usually arises from a desire to do better and better work, and to know that one is doing good work. One of the constructive purposes, of accountability is the potential to show when a new strategy or a redirection of resources would be more effective. Trust, like accountability, is also a component of good work in grantmaking. Both trust and accountability have positive effects, and yet they may have inverse effects on each other. The deeper the trust, the greater the risk to the grantmaker. The greater the risk, the less control grantmakers possess to fulfill their own missions. Yet, the more control a foundation exerts on a nonprofit through accountability, the less trust is evident. This inverse relationship forms a tight circle, one that may preclude good work for all involved.

The Trust–Accountability Paradox

How can accountability create conditions that generate trust? Preliminary answers can be found in one source of the problem: grantmaking's relational nature. The view of trust currently present in most conceptions of grantmaking is uni-directional, with grantmakers as the trustor and grantseekers as the trustees, with grantmakers requiring accountability and grantees as those made accountable. When grantmaking is conceived of as a symbiotic relationship between funder and nonprofit, bi-directional trust and bi-directional accountability must be present. Bi-directionality suggests that trust and accountability be symmetrical, reciprocal and aimed towards learning for both the funder and nonprofit.

When trust and accountability *become* symmetrical, they become balanced and proportionate. They have the potential to create harmony and synergy among the different activities that foundations and nonprofits typically engage in. One nonprofit president proposed that there "Should be a rule, 'For every hour of burden [grantmakers] impose on the grantee, the grantors must also spend an hour.'" As foundations are made accountable to nonprofits, they become *partners* not simply funders. Not only are nonprofits responsible for helping foundations do good work, foundations assume significant responsibility for the good work of nonprofits.

We can see this sort of symmetry of trust and accountability in a subset of data from our study. A key difference between this subset and the other interviews was that both funders and nonprofit personnel characterized the philanthropic relationship as a partnership. These interviews described how foundations and nonprofits care about the others' organization beyond the monies provided and spent. Partners care about each other's well-being and make each other responsible for the success of their mutual goals. High engagement philanthropic partnerships fell into this category. However, the ways of conceptualizing the partnership need not be as time, energy and financially consuming as that of high engagement grantmaking. In other partnerships, there were different forms and degrees of engagement; the appropriate one for the organizations and the project were negotiated with each partner on an equal footing. Only through such negotiations, though, can trust and accountability become symmetrical and reciprocal—shared and felt by both partners. The negotiations, as well as their resulting accountability requirements, can and should generate trust.

If accountability is to generate trust, it must also be aimed at having both partners learn something useful. Typically the grantmaker who makes a nonprofit accountable for certain outcomes chooses to measure outcomes that the foundation finds useful in assessing the quality of its own work. A problem for the nonprofit is that its work may be qualitatively different from that of a foundation. Thus, nonprofits often experience these measures as a burden on their already thin resources. The only “useful” aspect of it for the nonprofit consists of the possibility of continued funding. Little incentive exists for nonprofits to show outcomes that would reflect their struggles and challenges, much less their failures. Numbers are crunched and reports are spun to give work the highest gloss possible. This situation is not good for either party. We found that grantseekers craved the sort of accountability measures that took into account their human and financial resources, that measured what was meaningful to the nonprofit’s learning and that was not tightly tethered to future funding. One nonprofit president spoke eloquently on this, “So we’re trying to transform that conversation [of accountability]. If you bring tracking of progress, continuous improvement, and learning into that [dialogue], I think you’ve got a better chance of stimulating innovation than you do in the current way we’re framing a lot of this stuff around kind of a “gotcha” accountability.”

Framing accountability in terms of mutual learning seems to be an idea that can be useful to all. When this is the case, being straightforward about challenges and failures with funders actually can bolster the confidence and trust of foundations in the nonprofits. “When you are really honest and forthcoming about what the risks are in doing a particular project, or what the problems are likely to be—and as you run into problems in the actual doing of work—being

up front about what those are, it actually enhances your credibility.” But, as these and other grantees noted, nonprofits also have to trust that their honesty will not risk their future funding.

In our study, partnerships were not always easy, but they were relationships in which the benefits of both trust and accountability appeared. We found that information was shared openly, mistakes were tolerated and encouraged as a way of learning, the culture was innovative and creative, people talked honestly and confronted real issues, and transparency was a practiced value—all characteristics of businesses with high levels of trust. (Covey, 2006: 237) In these partnerships, accountability’s primary function was mutual learning for the persons and organizations involved. When accountability is symmetrical, reciprocal and focused on learning, it generates trust. And this trust greases the wheels of the philanthropic enterprise.⁴

Conclusion

In the field of grantmaking, the inverse relationship between trust and accountability constrain the ability of both foundations and nonprofits to do good work. The benefits of trust are often lost in proportion to the gains that funders reap from accountability measures. This inverse relationship can be reframed by revitalizing the trust accountability paradox: organizing relationships and processes in which trust and accountability mutually constitute and reinforce each other. In this scenario, the benefits of both are enjoyed, and the costs of their absences ameliorated. The key to creating this paradox in grantmaking philanthropy lies in the relational nature of the social endeavor. Accountability must be symmetrical, reciprocal and aimed at mutual learning.

This single grantmaking example does not allow for a generalization to other professions. Yet the need to explore possible commonalities is growing. The increased emphasis on accountability for the professions suggests that negotiating the typical inverse relationship between trust and accountability will be an important challenge, one that can be aided by considering those conditions that revitalize the trust–accountability paradox. Perhaps the grantmaking example will have its greatest relevance for professions that are inherently relational, professions such as teaching and medicine. In such professions, we might try to shift “In God we trust; all others bring data.” to “In Partners we trust, and bring data.”

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PART THREE

Critique of Theory

7

Defining and Modeling Good Work

Jeanne Nakamura

An essay reflecting on the GoodWork Project (GWP), which occupied much of my energies between 1996 and 2006, might take many directions. I will address this essay to just two questions.¹ First, what is good work, and what has the GWP meant by good work? Second, how are the dynamics of good work most productively conceptualized, and what models of these dynamics have been generated so far by the GWP? These questions reflect two conditions: 1) nothing can be understood without its definition being considered 2) to understand how something works, there is nothing as useful as a good theory or, in this age of mini-theories, a good model.

From Humane Creativity to Good Work in the Professions

The question that has animated the GWP is: What are the nature and conditions of good work in the professions? Originally, however, the project was conceived in order to address a different, if related,

¹ Gardner, H. (2009). I. What is Good Work? II. Achieving Good Work in turbulent times (G. B. Petersen)

question: Can work that is creative *also* be humane? Thus, from a question about the reality of a purported tension between two desirable outcomes, the focus shifted to a broader and less provocative question, which might be rephrased as: Can work that should be humane in fact *be* humane?

Of course, like humane creativity, good work is not the line of least resistance. As Csikszentmihalyi (2004) put it, one of the GWP's assumptions is that "bad work is easier than good work." Indeed, in some professions, or all professions at some times, tensions abound. Nevertheless, for professionals the assumption is that the most derailing tensions are generated by obstacles to doing humane work rather than by tensions purportedly intrinsic to doing humane work.

To put this another way, from artists, scientists, and inventors, who seek to transform the culture through their creative efforts, the GWP's attention shifted to members of the professions, whose purpose is to perform a service for others; to do humane work, with no necessary concern for its originality. A revised focus on the professions and professionals, rather than occupations and workers more generally, obviated some questions about the nature and conditions of good work—assuming it makes sense to apply the concept of good work beyond the professions. This is because more fundamental than the other defining features of a profession (a specialized body of skills and knowledge, a code of ethics, a community that controls who can practice, etc.) is its raison d'être: "to serve responsibly, selflessly, and wisely" (Gardner & Shulman, 2005, p. 14). That is, responsibility to the client and society is a first principle for the professions whereas arguably for many lines of work it is not. In every profession, but not necessarily in other occupations, work is by definition humane to the

extent that it is true to its mission. I return to this point later, in discussing the definition of good work.

Defining GoodWork

One fact about moving from humane creativity to good work is that everyone found the first term puzzling and in need of explanation, whereas everyone feels that they know intuitively what good work means. Perhaps because it was so rarely questioned, the definition of good work evolved in only one major way over the ten-year course of the project. *GoodWork* defined it as “work of expert quality that benefits the broader society” (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001, p. ix); the subtitle of the book was “when excellence and ethics meet.” Along the way, the “2 E’s” became “3 E’s” in Gardner’s mnemonic, and good work came to be defined as “work that is of *excellent technical quality*, work that is *ethically pursued and socially responsible*, and work that is *engaging, enjoyable, and feels good*” (Gardner, 2007, p. 5). In other words, the definition of good work expanded to encompass qualities of the worker’s subjective experience as well as attributes of the work.

It is very possible that if the GoodWork Project had spent more time dwelling on definitional questions at the start, it never would have accumulated the vast and rich archive of information that it did. However, even now, I find that probing the notion of good work suggests numerous directions for future theory and research; beyond question, it is a generative inquiry. And so I focus here on two issues that have been especially vivid for me. First, how do we understand each of the three elements of good work? Second, what are the relations among these three elements?

Regarding the first question, we have room both for more conceptual work to clearly define each of the three aspects of good work, and for more empirical work to identify principles of excellent, ethical, and engaging work that either hold across all professions or vary across professions in significant, systematic ways. In terms of the definition of each aspect, with respect to excellence, we usually stress technical quality but at times we may choose to focus on other criteria (e.g., the aesthetics of a surgeon's suture). With respect to ethics, we sometimes highlight specific guiding principles (e.g., honesty, rigor, fairness) and at other times aspects of responsibility more generally. With respect to engagement, we sometimes highlight the experience of the flow state and at other times personal fulfillment or meaning. Although this implies a multi-faceted definition of each aspect of good work, we do not yet have a taxonomy of different facets of excellence, ethics, and engagement. We have come closest with respect to different forms of responsibility (e.g., Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001; Gardner, 2007).

In terms of empirical generalizations about the aspects of good work, directions for further research seem endless. To take just one example, we view all three as 'goods' but we have yet to try to identify systematically the better and worse forms of each. Yet the literature suggests that each of these goods holds inherent risks—that they have both positive and shadow variants and/or taken to extremes can become a threat to good work. Thus, compassion or care may be the critical motivation for responsible work. Further, Verducci (2007) concluded that the ability to respond to others' needs, "response-ability," was a distinguishing attribute of the half dozen individuals whom the GWP staff singled out as the most memorable exemplars of good work. But a phenomenon called compassion fatigue has been identified in the psychological literature as an inherent danger of the caring professions.

How the risk of compassion fatigue relates to the pursuit of good work is just one of many potential topics for study.

Also regarding the first question, there is ample room to study in greater depth the fuzziness or contested nature of each of these aspects of good work, particularly the two aspects that are not experiential, the ethical and the excellent. Gardner worked through a position that I think most of the members of the GWP team have shared, so I quote it at length:

...we are well aware that not all ethical issues and judgments are...clear-cut. Some ethical dilemmas involve right versus right...Other ethical issues involve shades of grey...Other ethical issues draw on valid but sharply contrasting value systems...That the answer is not always clear-cut or that judgments may be controversial is not a license for “anything goes.” My colleagues and I believe that in most cases one path is superior to another, that consensus as to the proper course should be found within a society, and that in many cases consensus might be found across societies...[The ethical worker] takes the challenges of responsibility seriously and seeks to behave in as responsible a way as possible. (Gardner, 2007, p. 13)

While Gardner focuses here on ethics, and this is undoubtedly the more vexed matter, I would suggest that definitions of excellence are often less than clear-cut. The extent to which definition of “the good” is contested (within the profession, within the host society, or between the two) is an empirical issue. We can study the extent of social consensus that exists with reference to what constitutes excellent or ethical work in a community. As I’ll elaborate on later, our models as well as our future research ideally will take into account this fuzziness, which is rooted in the cultural and hence socially constructed dimension of ethics and excellence.

Regarding the second question, just as we have yet to develop a taxonomy of different aspects of excellence, ethics, and engagement, we have yet to develop a model of how they relate to one another. The students in my GoodWork seminar at Claremont posed important questions in this direction: Can we only speak of good work when excellence, ethics, and engagement all co-occur? Clearly the three E's are distinct but is there an expectation that they will tend to correlate? Must all three reach some level before it makes sense to speak of good work? If not, is one of them privileged? Are there different variants of good work depending on which of the three E's is most salient? All of these questions merit attention.

Back when there were only two E's, I liked to describe the terrain of work, good and otherwise, in terms of the intersection of ethics and excellence. Work can be high in quality but low in adherence to ethical standards; the accountant who skillfully cooks the books, for example. It can be ethically admirable but mediocre in quality, because of limited resources or other factors; the principled and dedicated teacher whose students don't learn, for instance. Work can also be both inferior in quality and compromised on ethical grounds; a bank robber writing his stick-up note on the back of his own deposit slip comes to mind (for obvious reasons, these cases tend to be self-extinguishing). Finally, work can be good in the sense that we mean it—held by the worker to both high ethical standards and high standards of quality.

This simple mapping may have some utility but it provides only the barest of beginnings conceptually, telling us nothing about the conditions under which the different aspects of good work tend to co-occur, or how the different aspects of good work interact. There is a great deal to be learned about the conditions under which the different goods are compartmentalized, amplify one another, or come into

conflict. For example, Damon, Colby, Bronk, and Ehrlich (2005) considered the tensions among the aspects of good work and the balances that need to be struck among them. They explored the potential conflict between “passion and mastery”—between intense personal engagement, and the exercise of skill in the service of the aims of the profession. Their analysis might be described as an exploration of the tension inhering in the attitude of “disinterested interest” that professionals are taught to value. Damon and colleagues focused on the cases of journalism and law but the implications are more general.

Taken together, these two questions prompt recognition that there is room for a more complex model of good work. My exploration of the two questions suggests that we might want to (1) systematically differentiate the three aspects of good work (the first question) and (2) seek to integrate them (the second question).

Having made the suggestion, I will offer one modest integrative proposal, which is that excellence, ethics, and engagement all derive from a more general, underlying attribute of good work, at least in the professions. I seem to recall a period at the start of the project before we differentiated the “good” in good work into the two aspects for which we have since come to use the shorthand “excellence and ethics.” In these early formulations the emphasis was on serving a common good through the work (vs. serving the interests of the worker, or worker’s employer). This would have represented a logical transformation of the humane creativity problematic. One might conclude that the “ethics” aspect of good work accordingly should be privileged in the “3 E’s” definition.

Another possibility: the fundamental defining feature of good work is a dedication to the mission that provides the profession with its reason

for being. That is, good work is work that serves, and serves well, the essential mission of the profession, the workers devoting themselves to providing the service to society that the profession exists to perform. The profession articulates standards of quality and ethical standards that provide specific regulative ideals for professional practice, but these derive from and are subordinate to the purpose (moral, because pro-social) that ought always to be the professional's touchstone or compass. They derive from it in the sense that they translate the mission into specific principles of conduct (and at the individual level, good workers care about meeting these standards because they care about the purpose it allows them to serve). They are subordinate to it for an important reason: if, as conditions change, codified standards cease to put action in the service of the profession's defining mission, then the standards (not the mission) need to be reconsidered. One virtue of this small shift is to highlight the daylight between the professions and the many other kinds of work comprising the focus of mainstream organizational psychology, for which a basic question must be "*Is there a common good that this work is meant to serve?*" Without such a mission, pursuit of excellent and ethical work, and pursuit of one's personal enjoyment of the work, can still take place, but these goods are not connected, and hence not referable, to any larger and ennobling consequence of the work.

In addition to considering how we have defined good work so far, and identifying ways in which we might continue to deepen our understanding of the complex nature of good work, I turn now to the second issue that has engaged me: how we have modeled the dynamics of good work.

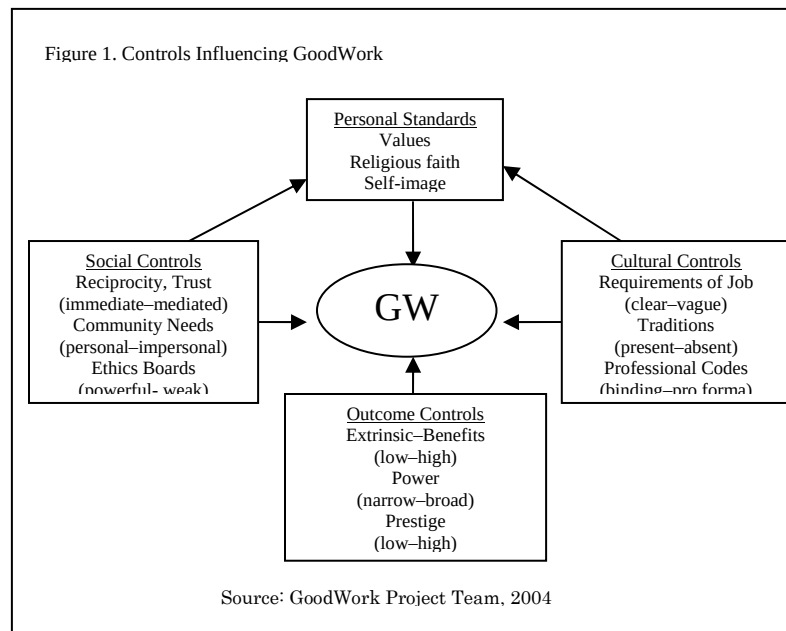
Modeling the Dynamics of Good Work

The studies of the nature and conditions of good work in specific professions—the GWP’s “core” studies—have yielded several closely related conceptual models. Rather than being psychological models in a narrow sense, these are all systems models. While consistent with a general shift in psychological science toward examining the person in context, a shift with which all of the researchers on the team are intimately familiar, the direct influence was the systems model of creativity introduced in 1988 by Csikszentmihalyi and used by several of us to inform our research.

The initial model of the dynamics of good work was presented in the 2001 book. It identified the key components of a profession that determine the ability to do good work in it: (1) the *individual practitioner*, who is trained for and does the work; (2) the *domain* (i.e., the cultural component of the profession: the knowledge, values, practices, and so on—the profession’s ethical standards and standards of quality fit here); (3) the *field* (the professional community, or social component of the profession: the experts, apprentices, and gatekeepers who evaluate the work being done); and (4) other major stakeholders (e.g., the clients, broadly defined, and the general public). In addition, that original model introduced and illustrated a central dynamic revealed by the GWP: the influence on the ability to do good work that is exerted by the alignment or harmony (vs. misalignment or conflict) existing within and among components of the system.

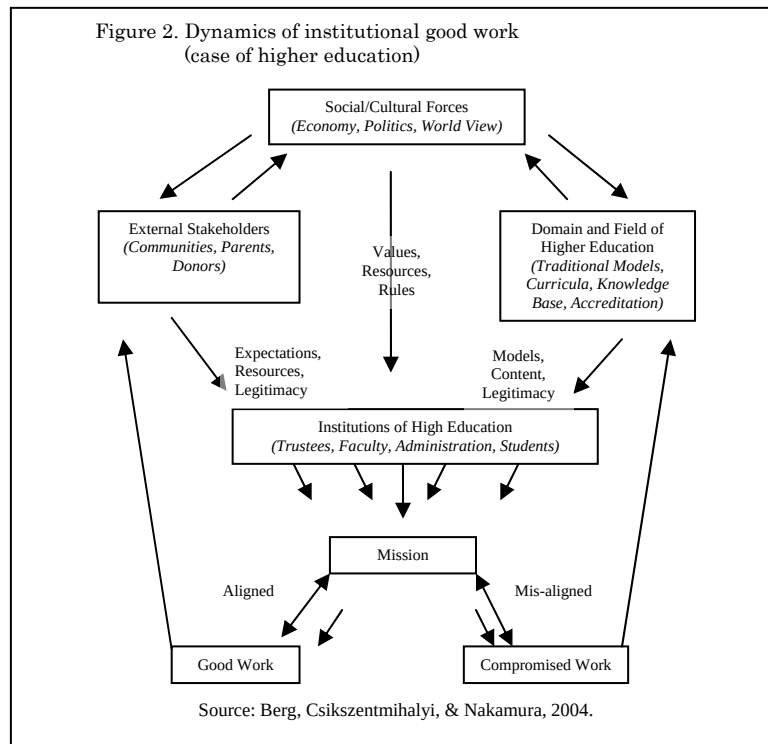
Evolving versions of this model were developed in presentations by Csikszentmihalyi (e.g., 2004) and summarized in several overviews of the GWP (e.g., GWP Team, 2004; Gardner, 2007, 2009). This version of the model posits multiple specific controls that push and pull (compel

and inspire) the individual to do good work (see Figure 1). These forces arise from four sources: the individual, domain, field, and sources beyond the profession (e.g., macro-social conditions such as the labor market). As Gardner (2009) summarized, “All four of these forces are always present. The ways in which they operate and interact determine the likelihood of good work” (p. 210). Csikszentmihalyi used the model to generate general hypotheses based on GWP findings about specific professions. For example, based on the finding that business leaders tended to ascribe their pursuit of good work to religious or other personal values, he hypothesized that when other controls are weak or lacking (as in young or otherwise relatively un-professionalized domains), good work is more dependent on conducive personal controls. Based on the finding that country lawyers were less easily tempted to do compromised work than lawyers in large firms with anonymous clients, he hypothesized that the more personal (less mediated) the social controls are in a system, the more likely good work is. Knoop (2007) used the model to organize a panoramic analysis of interviews with exemplars of good work in Danish education, business, and journalism. To amend Knoop’s (2007) characterization of the model, it identifies the key forces each of which acts to foster good work either by encouraging responsibility or by discouraging irresponsibility on the part of those pursuing the work (i.e., intra-individual forces both incite and inhibit, and so do extra-individual forces). In this model, alignment exists “when these four forces all point in the same direction” (GWP Team, 2004, p. 19).



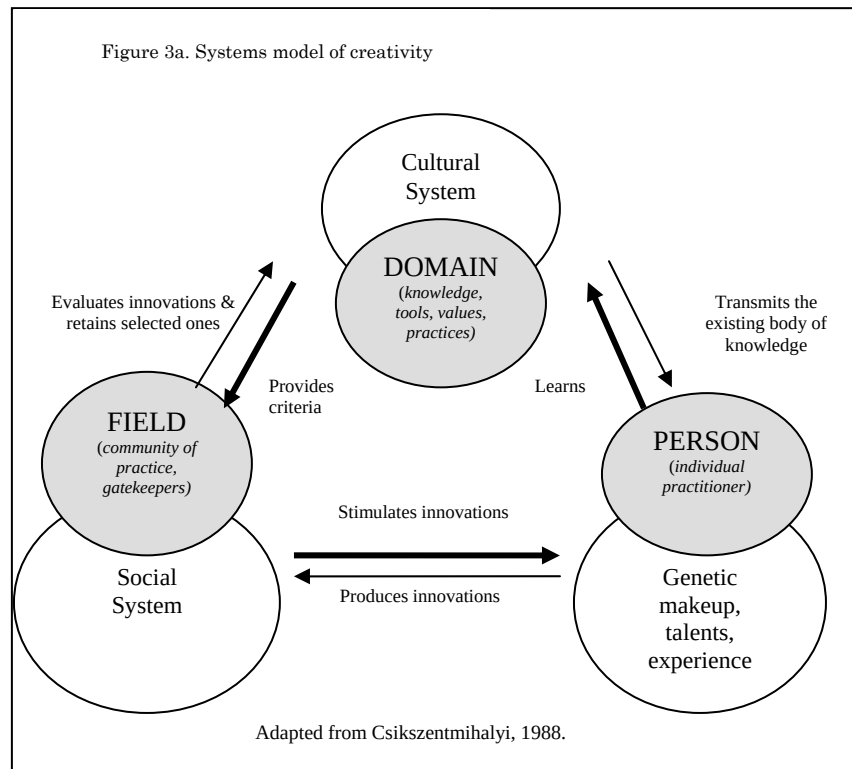
On the basis of interviews with stakeholders at ten colleges and universities that had been nominated as institutions doing good work (see Figure 2) a variant of the systems model subsequently was presented by Berg, Csikszentmihalyi, and Nakamura (2004). Their essay incorporates the *organizational* level into the analysis of good work, beginning to specify the dynamics of alignment/misalignment as an institution interacts with the profession (domain and field), other stakeholders having contact with the profession, and the wider society and culture. Note that the model experiments with reconfiguring the components of the system to give a more central place to external stakeholders. We suggested that the degree of alignment among an organization's different stakeholders around a shared mission influences the capacity of both the organization and the individuals within it to do good work—in cases where the institutional mission is aligned with the defining aims of the profession, at least. Specifically, we suggested that a clear, agreed-upon institutional mission tends to

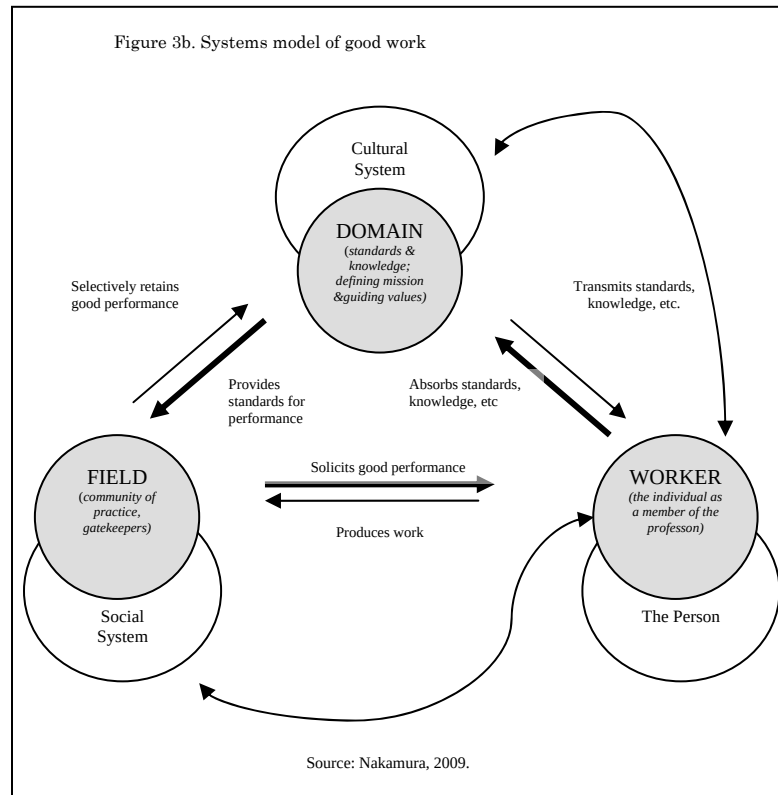
(1) provide the individual worker with an overarching purpose; (2) marshal the energies of the various institutional stakeholders into complementary efforts; and (3) equip the institution with a touchstone in its interactions with external forces, particularly important in the case of misalignments between these forces and the institution. While this particular model is a first effort, some model of this kind seems needed for addressing the distinctive issues that arise when investigating how *institutions* do good work. (See James, this volume.)



Returning to the general level , I have also found it useful for exploring the dynamics of good work to formulate a model that is closer to the original systems model of creativity (see Figures 3a and 3b). It differs from that model in straightforward ways deriving from the fact that the animating purpose of medicine, law, and the other traditional professions is to provide a service well rather than to introduce original

and valuable new forms into a cultural domain. The model posits key processes through which good professional work is produced. It resembles the model of creativity in depicting each of three major components of the system (individual, domain, and field) as agent and target in bidirectional processes. It recognizes, in addition, the roles of the wider society and culture, and of the individual professional's personal attributes, extra-professional life, and life history. Further, this model of good work suggests how changes in the definition can occur over historical time as an aspect of socially-mediated cultural evolution, thus incorporating as an intrinsic part of the process the socially negotiated nature of the definition of good work (see the earlier discussion of the need to model the fact that the definition of good work is to some extent fuzzy or contested—also cf. Moran, this volume





In my view, knowledge may be gained by examining the processes by which professions, understood as systems embedded in the larger society and culture, evolve. In the study of “good work” lineages, for example (Nakamura, Shernoff, & Hooker, 2009), we foregrounded these processes of cultural evolution. More operationally, we foregrounded the concept of memes, or units of cultural information, identified the memes that characterized three individuals who exemplified good work, and conducted case studies of their transmission across generations in the three individuals’ lineages. This way of approaching the phenomenon revealed that some memes (but not others) were handed down across generations and these included both “good–work” memes that the three lineages shared, such as honesty and integrity, and

“signature” memes that set apart the variant of good work embraced by a particular lineage. The research showed the roles of domain (profession-wide memes), field (mentor’s memes), and individual (novice’s selective adoption of memes) in shaping a practitioner’s approach to his or her work, and provides a concrete illustration of the social construction of our notions of good work.

The evolutionary systems framework subsequently was used to good effect by Nick Standlea to study a different domain and research question. He asked what memes characterize traditional philanthropic organizations and how these differ from the memes characteristic of an emergent form, venture philanthropy. In other words, whereas the lineage study used the model to conceptualize the perpetuation of memes known to be associated with good work, the philanthropy study used it to conceptualize their transformation by domain innovators.

In terms of the generative value of the evolutionary systems model, the labels in Figure 3b do not exhaust the kinds of influence exerted in each direction between pairs of the three central “players” in the system (person, domain, field); nor do the labeled pathways exhaust the ways in which the various components of the system can affect the fate of good work in a profession. That is, the labels in Figure 3b denote and invite hypothesizing about “business as usual” in a profession: the domain acting as an evolving repository of established purpose, knowledge, practices, and standards used by both the individual practitioners and the field; the field (often through local arbiters) shaping the quality of the individual practitioners’ work; and the individual practitioners influencing the profession directly, through the work that they train for and do. However, quite apart from this, the model invites hypothesizing about other, non-standard interactions that may occur among the various components.

Consider two examples. More than the arts and sciences, professions in the United States are characterized by fields that have significant power to introduce changes directly into the domain. It is possible that the field might initiate action directly on the domain, either seeking to codify or challenge certain ideas, practices, or standards. For instance, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education shortened medical residents' work hours in 2003, mandating an 80-hour work week, with effects on the work done by residents but also by other practitioners in the institutions training them.

As a second example, separate from the work they do, individual practitioners might direct actions toward the wider community, seeking popular support for new—or old—practices or values. In our first book, we described what happened when a Chicago television station decided to put talk show host Jerry Springer on its newscast. Shortly thereafter acclaimed co-anchor Carol Marin resigned on air in protest of the decision. In so doing, she bypassed the field as manifested locally in the station's management and communicated her concern about the abandonment of traditional news values directly to the larger community, including the program's viewers and other concerned citizens.

The model I've introduced invites us to generate a taxonomy of the kinds of proactive moves that individual practitioners undertake, to accomplish good work. We might hypothesize that at least some of these pathways will show increased activity when—as suggested by the two examples—a profession begins to fall out of alignment in ways that threaten good work.

As noted, all of these are systems models. In adopting a systems approach to defining the questions asked and modeling the phenomena studied, we both contextualize the actions of individual practitioners and go beyond paying lip service to the importance of context. In fact, it is notable that the models are not person-centered even though most of the studies' interview protocols were. We recognize that when comparing two professions, or the experiences of two individuals in the same profession (e.g., those entering a profession during its heyday vs. when it is in decline or disarray), structural conditions may render comparatively inconsequential the individual differences that often occupy the center of psychologists' attention. For instance, we described a cycle of psychological rewards in journalistic work, moving from the pleasures of satisfying one's curiosity by uncovering new information, to the satisfaction of bringing order and meaning to the information collected, to the rewards of being the modern-day town crier and communicating the information to others. Some journalists stressed one of these rewards as animating their work; a few mentioned all of them. However, the profession today is under siege and these individual differences may become important primarily for counseling out-placement as jobs disappear, while explaining little about differences in current journalists' degree of satisfaction with their work.

In addition, how the changing structural conditions are perceived, how they differentially affect individuals having different attributes, and how they come to be fruitfully responded to by some individuals, are issues that are occluded in traditional psychological research on work experience and certainly in laboratory studies. As suggested, such analyses, important as they are, will presumably require input from historical and cultural perspectives as well as the social scientific lenses that we have favored in our own studies.

Finally, the systems lens can provide a complement to existing psychological conceptions of specific phenomena. For example, most mentoring research addresses the impact of mentoring on the young person's career and personal development, and secondarily on the mentor or employing organization. Researchers are seeking to measure with increasing rigor the benefits of mentoring for these parties. The systems approach highlights the fact that mentoring also has important implications for the perpetuation of good work, the evolution of the field and domain, and, as a consequence, the downstream impact of the profession on those whom it serves.

Conclusion

The GWP has addressed itself to critical, basic questions about the nature of work and its impact on both the individuals who pursue it and those who are served by it. Indeed, the most essential contribution of the GWP arguably has been to direct attention to these fundamental issues. In this essay, I stepped back from the rich details of the many inspiring individuals and institutions that were studied over the course of the GWP and also for the most part from the specific results of the research we have conducted. My goal was to revisit, with the benefit of our research and some time for reflection, what we have meant by good work and how we have modeled it. In stock taking, my goals were to identify directions for further research and theory that might productively be pursued alongside the work currently underway to move from research to application. Our joint efforts are enhanced when both theory and application continue and, even more importantly, inform one another.

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8

Returning to the GoodWork Project's Roots: Can Creative Work Be Humane?

Seana Moran

I aim in this essay to return the GoodWork Project to its roots, to remind us why the project arose in the first place and where researchers might go from here to address the original question.

¹ The GoodWork Project originated from conversations among Howard Gardner, Bill Damon, and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi while simultaneously on sabbatical at the Center for Advanced Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto in the mid 1990s. Initially, they named the research the Humane Creativity Project with an intent to examine whether and under what conditions creators and innovators also

¹Acknowledgment: I am professionally indebted to all three principal investigators of the GoodWork Project. Their ideas, ways of thinking, and creative spirits have influenced the research questions I have chosen to pursue, the conceptualizations I have devised, and the habits of mind I have cultivated. From the time I first stepped into Harvard in 2000 for doctoral education through my postdoctoral adventure at Stanford, the GoodWork Project has been the path underfoot, sometimes focused on and sometimes taken for granted. In this essay, I attempt to articulate both my gratitude for and my frustrations with the intellectual puzzles GoodWork has provided to me. From my perspective, these frustrations are the opportunities I see for further developing the potential of GoodWork and its influence on occupational behavior.

consider those “who cannot fend for themselves.” Since creativity, both in the scholarly literature and in general parlance, often is equated with serving self-focused goals or seen as completely separate from morality, the Humane Creativity Project aimed to find and better understand instances of creativity that serve the common good.

Creativity is a novel and appropriate outcome of the interaction of three factors: the individual worker, the field of practitioners, and the domain of knowledge that captures principal values and long-standing practices (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). Potentially creative ideas and products arise when an individual’s contribution to a domain varies significantly from the standard or norm for the outcomes expected of practitioners. After the new idea or product is shared with other practitioners, the field’s leaders or practitioners—depending on how hierarchical or how dispersed the field’s power is—determine whether it is also useful. Is the idea or product an appropriate response to some problem or situation or societal values? Sometimes, this evaluation process can occur rather quickly. But often it takes considerable time for the field to work out how useful something new may be. If the idea or product is revolutionary or requires specialized knowledge to understand, sometimes there are not sufficient processes available to evaluate it. (See Moran, 2009a, for more on the systems perspective.)

In addition to the inability to garner funding, perhaps this difficulty to specify evaluation criteria contributed to the Humane Creativity Project turning away from creative work and toward the professions. As Gardner stated, “[I]t is easier to study humane conduct when there are clear guidelines for ethical and nonethical behavior than when ethics is left largely up to the individual practitioner” (Gardner,

2009a, p. 205). It was felt that the nature and structure of creative work, which often is seen as more open ended, ambiguous, uncertain, and unpredictable, would be too difficult to examine in moral terms. The project's name changed to GoodWork. Good work is work strong in three dimensions: quality for the end user, meaningfulness to the worker, and social responsibility to the wider society (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001). Thus, the creativity dimension was replaced with an excellence dimension.

Yet, the tension of creativity remains and is mentioned throughout the many books and reports of the GoodWork Project's canon. How do we deal with the innovators? How do we make sense of how change occurs in a work field? Returning to the GoodWork Project's original question, how do we evaluate when creativity and ethics intersect?

First, we might consider *whether* creativity and ethics *can* intersect. Can creative work satisfy the three dimensions of good work—quality, meaningfulness, and social responsibility? Most people would say yes to quality, at least after the creative work has been evaluated by the field. Usually field acceptance also includes an endorsement of excellence. Most people also would say yes to meaningfulness. There are countless descriptions by creators about how much their work means to them even when—and at times, especially when—it is difficult.

The dimension less agreed upon is whether creative work can be socially responsible (see Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2007, for a brief history). Morality and ethics focus on the development of understanding, judgment, and practices of “goodness.” Creative works can unsettle moral certainties by presenting alternatives: consider the furor over the financial ramifications of open source software

code, 140-character Twitter “novels,” and rap music lyrics. Those who support *current* understandings of goodness might consider these new works socially irresponsible. (Keep in mind that jazz music used to be considered deviant, racy and irresponsible as little as 50 years ago.) There are other cases—including the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, Mahatma Gandhi’s nonviolent resistance approach, Margaret Sanger’s campaign for birth control, William Wilberforce’s campaign to end slavery in Britain, several public arts projects, and many other “moral exemplars” (e.g., Colby & Damon, 1992; Daloz, Parks, Keen & Keen, 1997; Oliner & Oliner, 1988)—whose creative efforts aspired to overturn current mores that the individuals felt were wrong or unfair. These social activists believed their creative acts were socially responsible even if they were also subversive to the status quo.

In this essay, I explore two ways the GoodWork Project simultaneously returns to its roots, and also might extend its branches, to address creativity. The first way is through the notions of alignment/misalignment, an approach that builds upon one of the main findings of GoodWork studies. Creativity is a special case of fruitful misalignment. The second way is through the notion of temporal consequence, which labels instances that are discussed in GoodWork studies but not explicitly examined. Creativity involves a future-oriented ethic: it aims for a goodness that *could be*, not just the goodness that *is*.

Creativity as Fruitful Misalignment

A central conclusion of the GoodWork Project is that good work is supported by alignment. Alignment means that the forces bearing on a worker are providing reinforcing messages. The standards of the

individual, the field, and external stakeholders point in the same direction. Alignment reduces conflict, uncertainty, and confusion, three conditions which are believed to contribute to bad work or compromised work. The inference is that when forces align, purpose and performance standards are clearer, and good work is more likely to emerge.

Misalignment occurs when mission, institutional reinforcements, individual understanding, and output controls do not aim toward the same beacon. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the commitments of these forces diverge, which can range from minor disagreements to incompatibility of meanings and values. GoodWork studies use strong words to describe the pitfalls of misalignment: from work that is simply “shoddy” to work that is “detrimental to the well-being of the community” (GoodWork Team, 2008, p. 23). Sometimes, misalignment is a “worst case scenario” exemplified by business scandals such as Enron.

However, there are three difficulties with carte-blanche equating misalignment with negative outcomes. The first difficulty is that alignment is a special case, a particular state of the work field that is unstable—it does not continue without significant, continuous reinforcements and adjustments via communication, sanctions, or structural constraints. Some amount of misalignment is the norm in work situations. Workers are not carbon copies of each other. Rarely do workers’ interests and skills line up perfectly with work roles’ affordances (see Moran, 2009a). Workers approach and frame issues differently because they bring their own personalities, values, past experiences, education, understandings, and interests to the situation. Workers also interpret differently the work role, its position within a field, and its effects on other practitioners and end-users. They may

perceive or understand a role's demands more or less specifically, prioritize them along different criteria, or aim them toward different outcome possibilities. That's one reason organizational leaders interview several lawyers, doctors, or realtors before selecting one to hire. Although tensions of misalignment are more likely to be seen in diverse teams or organizations, even fields that are considered in alignment still exhibit some friction because not everyone is thinking the same way. There are just enough checks and balances, and enough overlap in understandings and values among practitioners, that the "average" of the field appears rather constant. By equating misalignment with bad work, or even worse, suggesting that misalignment is a cause of bad work, the implication is that *most* work is then, in some degree, bad.

The second difficulty is that misalignment sometimes produces helpful, productive, or even needed outcomes. So far, the GoodWork Project has addressed creativity as a positive form of temporary misalignment that eventually results in a new alignment once the idea or product is accepted by the field. For example, studies of good work among actors, entrepreneurs, and social entrepreneurs point out that misalignment can sometimes be productive (e.g., Fischman, 2007). Some people—such as the Ralph Naders and Noam Chomskys of a field (Gardner, 2009b)—actually prefer and thrive in states of misalignment. Misalignments can propel a field to overcome its own inertias or outdated groupthink. A field could be stuck in its own mindset, such as physics was focused on the ether in the late 19th century, or astronomy was stuck on an earth-centric model of the universe for centuries, or psychology was stuck on static traits versus varying states or dynamics during the 20th century.

In a misaligned field, there are few clear, authoritative models to follow, so individual variation may be less constrained. Or some workers may be stimulated to challenge or overcome the influences of antimentors, “tormentors,” or “dementors,” authorities in their fields that they believe do not fulfill the basic tenets of the domain. The individual worker is under more pressure to reason through the alternatives and to make his or her own decision about what to do. More complexity of thought is required. By equating misalignment with bad work, the implication is that placing trust in the individual worker in the absence of external controls is something to be avoided, even though some individuals that trust their own vision of the way things should be—if “everything works out”—are held up as moral exemplars (e.g., Colby & Damon, 1992; Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2007).

The third difficulty is that bad work that snowballs may be just as likely due to alignment as to misalignment. A case in point is the financial meltdown starting in 2007. Some explanations target new products, such as subprime mortgages, credit default swaps, and collateralized debt obligations, as causes of the debacle that rippled through markets worldwide. In no way am I applauding or apologizing for the train of events that have unfolded in financial markets during the ensuing years. However, it should be noted that the perpetuation of these products benefited not from fruitful misalignment but from a strange alignment of individual understandings, professional standards, institutional reinforcements, and the value of the output to society. Damon (this volume) described this alignment in terms of the majority of the field engaging in “mission creep.”

Part of the impetus for the subprime mortgages was the cultural value to make the “American Dream” accessible to a wider population, and part of the reasoning behind CDOs and CDSs was to diversify risk across a wider population. These underlying values of accessibility and diversification would be considered laudable by many (after all, we’re told repeatedly to “diversify our stock portfolios” and to “get insurance” for similar reasons). As for institutional reinforcements, both the private rating services, such as Standard & Poor’s and Moody’s, as well as government regulators agreed to perpetuate these products. Few people understood why the products were so fruitful for many years, but as long as they “worked,” people went with the flow. Individual understandings and professional standards also were in alignment: mortgage bankers wanted to get people into the houses they wanted to buy, could make good money doing so, and still could stay within the regulations and codes of conduct at the time. By equating misalignment with bad work, the implication is that bad work doesn’t happen in aligned situations.

These two associations (implied, if not stated)—misalignment with bad work, and creative work with misalignment—are problematic because they imply that, by syllogism, creative work is bad work. Countless examples of the ideas and products we use on a daily basis attest that creative work is not always “bad” just because it corresponds with the less easy-to-understand or easy-to-control misaligned state of a field. Furthermore, this syllogistic “by association and extension” logic assumes that creativity requires conflict, whereas the perpetuation of new ideas and products also can come from cooperation and a well-aligned field—that is, creativity can be evolutionary as well as revolutionary (see Moran, 2009b). Google’s growing impact seems to result, in part, because it is “at the

right place at the right time” and the field is aligned in its favor (and perhaps its influence is helping create that alignment).

The field acceptance aspect of creative work, when a new idea or product is deemed appropriate and worthy, entails a ripple effect of aligning the new product with the moral or mission foundations of the field. Developmental psychologist David Henry Feldman’s (1994) universal-to-unique continuum models this ripple of acceptance among increasingly wider groups of people (see Moran & John–Steiner, 2003). Creative work, to become truly transformative, must have the cooperation of the field’s practitioners or it is not perpetuated beyond its originator(s). If other practitioners do not accept and learn the new idea or use the new product, it falls away as an historical oddity or an “error” (Stacey, 1996).

Finally, this logic insinuates that, since misalignment is something to be avoided because it leads to bad or compromised work, creative work is also to be feared. Since we cannot predict nor control how new ideas will be incorporated with existing notions, practices, and structures, the safest option is to quash all new ideas. GoodWork researchers, of course, do not agree with this strong of a stance. But many in the general public do, either explicitly or tacitly. Studies show that, despite calls for “more creativity” or “more entrepreneurial behavior,” many teachers and business leaders tend to create obstacles for creativity in their classrooms and companies (see Moran, 2010a, 2010b).

It is important to recognize that creative ideas and products affect the mores of their time. Those that change only practices may reinforce current mores by providing even stronger tools. But some also change the values and assumptions on which the domain or field is based.

When someone proposes a different vision or interpretation, it bares the assumptions that drive the field. Practitioners become more aware of unspoken, taken-for-granted morals and values that underpin their work. This disclosure can be uncomfortable for some people because it may shake belief systems as well as expose power relationships. This creativity-in-opposition-to-the-norm stance is taken in much past research, such as classic studies of jazz musicians, artists, “outsiders,” and “deviants.” These studies position those who “play by the rules” as “good girls and boys” and those who don’t as “rebels” and “risk takers” (see Moran, 2009c, 2010b, for review). For example, successful but genre-conforming writers were lauded with awards by leaders in the literary field, whereas Beatniks like William S. Burroughs or sexually explicit writers like Henry Miller were scathingly criticized and even censored (Moran, 2009c). Historical “geniuses,” such as Charles Darwin, Pablo Picasso, Sigmund Freud, and Igor Stravinsky were, at first, denounced, and they faced considerable resistance from their respected field colleagues (Gardner, 1993).

Alignment/misalignment and creativity are different dimensions and do not always correspond cleanly with each other. Alignment is a state of the field, in relation to individuals, domain values, and the overall messages from the wider culture. Creativity is an outcome of the field through introduction and eventual acceptance of a novelty. GoodWork’s foundational “3M” tests of mission, mirror, and “effect on mom” do not negate creativity and innovation. Rather, they call for people to pay closer attention to both aspects of creativity’s definition. Creativity is the combination of novelty with usefulness, including moral or social responsibility implications.

Creativity is not just novelty, and certainly not novelty for its own sake. To be creative, the product must be both a new response and an appropriate response to a problem, situation, market, or issue. Sometimes the novelty and the appropriateness do not come at the same time. Norwegian organizational psychologist Geir Kaufmann (2004) distinguishes between reactive and proactive creativity. Reactive creativity occurs when the environment presents a problem for which a solution is needed. Many research and development departments within companies are involved in this type of creativity—devising new shampoos to address dandruff or lack of shine, concocting nonstick pans to address consumer complaints about imperfect omelets. The appropriateness criteria exist, even if they aren't explicitly stated, because the problem has been defined. Appropriateness comes first, then novelty follows. Proactive creativity, on the other hand, occurs when someone initiates a new approach or idea and has to find an application for it. Some medical research findings or methods are developed and published, such as the ability to inject viruses as carriers for chemicals, and only later do practical uses arise. Novelty comes first, then appropriateness follows.

Creativity as a Future-Oriented Ethic

Alignment describes a state of a professional field at a particular point in time. In fact, whether a field is considered aligned or misaligned, and whether that state is considered fruitful or detrimental, depends on when the snapshot of the four forces of GoodWork are taken. Fields are not steady states. They can ebb and flow with changing circumstances. Individuals within fields also adapt to each other and to the changing affordances within the field. GoodWork scholars realized that the professions they studied came

into and out of alignment even in the 15 years since the GoodWork Project began. For example, journalism was poorly aligned in the late 1990s, but came quickly and temporarily into alignment following the events of 9/11, and has since fallen a great deal out of alignment again with many newspapers facing bankruptcy. Similarly, scholars speculated whether genetics research may fall out of alignment if funding dried up or the politics surrounding stem cell research became overwhelming (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001).

Part of my discomfort with creativity as a form of misalignment—as a state—is that creativity is not viewed within the context of a temporal perspective, that is, in relationship to past and future. (Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura [2007] argued that time was central to the relationship between creativity and responsibility but, in effect, reduced the time dimension to the one point by “folding” the past and the future into the present.) What this temporal perspective brings to light is the importance of the *passage* of time as a parameter in the “equation” of good work. This oversight creates difficulties in studying creativity within a GoodWork framework on two fronts: conceptualization and data collection.

First, creativity as an experience of bringing novelty into a field can orient toward the past or the future, but not primarily toward the present. A present orientation would be in line with expertise (see also Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2007). Creativity is often conceived of as a break from the past. For example, some practitioners that aim to improve the domain or field may position themselves in opposition to what has been done before. They may think standards are too low, rules are outdated or no longer serve the field’s mission, or procedures have become inefficient or ineffective (see Moran, 2009c for an example with writers). However, creativity

can also be conceived of as a bridge to the future. For example, entrepreneurs, inventors, and artists often talk in visionary terms, promote imagination, and emphasize strategy. They focus on what British educational psychologist Anna Craft and colleagues call “possibility thinking,” orienting to “what could be” (Cremin, Burnard & Craft, 2006). They position themselves in line with a future that is yet to unfold. After all, the future is not directly observable, like the present is, nor does it have artifacts to refer to, like the past does. The future lives only in imagination until the brave put in the effort to make it real. This is particularly the case for “problem finders,” individuals who initiate new approaches with no or little stimulus from the environment (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; see also Kaufmann, 2004).

Second, creativity as an experience of judgment (or being judged) takes time to complete. Creative works are introduced to stimulate a future upon which people may not yet agree, or about which people have differing intuitions and comfort levels, or for which people may reference or calculate different costs and benefits. Fields decide which new ideas to keep or reject. Even though many fields have individuals with varying levels of power and influence (gatekeepers), evaluation of novelties often results from choices made by individual workers that affect, are shared with, or are adopted by others. As more people adopt these novelties, they become the norm by common usage, if not by declaration. Authorized field institutions are rarely at the forefront of the field. And in some rapidly changing industries, such as journalism, automobile manufacturing, and finance have been in the last few decades, institutions may lag behind the curve of the field’s momentum.

Because of the time lag for communication, agreement, decision-making, and institutionalization, there is a period after a creative work is introduced but before the field has fully incorporated the work when individual workers are experiencing the future coming at them at different rates. Creativity's effects may not be felt until years later. Or effects may be both negative and positive and appear at different times. Several fields—journalism, real estate, finance, software development—are in the midst of working out which innovations, such as online newspapers, adjustable rate mortgages, ways of bundling securities, and open source software introduced in the last few decades, are to be kept, dumped, revised, regulated, or adapted.

This relationship between creativity and the future leads to twists on key issues that the GoodWork Project aimed to address: *evaluation* of work and sense of *responsibility*. As the GoodWork principal investigators stated, creative work is more difficult to study than standardized work. Why?

First, in part, this difficulty arises because new works often elude current evaluation methods. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1993) claimed that the first task of the field for truly transformative contributions is to devise assessment criteria. Without foresight of how the idea or product may be used or misused, or without clear teleological guidance for why the idea or product exists, many organizations may default to reactionary blame games and politics, or reflexively graft currently available assessments in a hit-or-miss fashion.

One way to install a “safety valve” during this time of evaluation is through a “shadow system” (Stacey, 1996). Some fields are more

adept than others at separating products–under–development from products–ready–for–market. Given that outcomes are not certain with a new product, organizational psychology Ralph Stacey suggests that another task of the field is to separate the assessment of the idea from actual work processes. Then, in the case that the new idea or product is deemed an error, there are fewer negative repercussions for end–users. For example, test pilots not commercial pilots evaluate new planes, animals and clinical trials participants not patients test new medicines, and psychology researchers not therapists work out the kinks of new treatments.

“Skunk works” also exemplify this process of “setting aside” resources for workers to “play” with few repercussions. Such places exist for thinkers to be released from their daily constraints to explore unexplored territory. Centers for advanced study in academia aim toward this purpose. Bell Labs was the classic example in business during the early and mid 20th century. Xerox PARC is perhaps the most famous example, where computer “geeks” took a no–holds–barred approach to developing user interfaces, mice, and other computer tools that have become the norm. Unfortunately, the parent company, Xerox, did not know what to do with the innovations. Fortunately, Apple did. The rest is history.

For ideas to be seen as useful and applied, people must think differently about creativity, not as a trait or process that produces only novelty, but rather as a complete cycle of transformation involving novelty introduction, appropriateness evaluation, and institutional adjustment. This shadow system, however, may not be as visible to researchers for study, especially in industries where “leaks” of new ideas could be very costly. Or those fields without a shadow system may be less likely to allow researchers to evaluate

their processes because their innovations are tested directly (or perhaps prematurely) in the market. Release of the study findings might cause “beta testers”—for example, in software development—to be more reticent to participate.

Second, in part, this difficulty in studying creative work is stimulated by different points of view of practitioners in the field as well as of end-users. These perspectives also change over time. “Good” is a moving target because the relationships among people change. Which instantiations of the field have the opportunity to evaluate and judge work products changes as the newly credentialed enter the field, as the veterans retire, and as creativity alters the contours of knowledge, values and power. With this ongoing adjustment, to whom or to what an individual worker or a field feels responsible also narrows or widens.

The business world is a case in point. As more people co-opt the term “entrepreneur” to label a person that starts any organization, such as the growth of “social entrepreneurs,” even traditional business entrepreneurs are feeling the pressure to include a wider array of “stakeholders” within their ripples of responsibility. That is, social entrepreneurs focus more on the “outer ripples” beyond traditional end-users of products. These outer ripples include those affected by behaviors secondary to the use of the product, what economists call “externalities” or spillover effects. They address concerns of people suffering from second-hand smoke, or the diffuse effect of global warming for which it is difficult to blame one cause, or the diffuse effect of a declining labor force resulting from poor education systems, or the diffuse health benefits of organic farming. This wider-impact focus over time sets a standard that traditional businesses are feeling increasing pressure to live up to as well, if only to keep their current

customer base from shrinking or to silence expectations on the part of the general public.

Similarly, social networking media are not only affecting computer usage but also changing social dynamics more generally. These software programs and websites provide mechanisms for socially awkward people to have a voice in social interaction. But sites like Facebook or Twitter also are denounced by parents and teachers for consuming too much of young people's time, and by people who are less computer literate because it requires them to learn new skills. These media also are placing pressure on people to be responsible in content they upload, in how they access and disseminate friends' information, and in providing timely information on their own pages. The introduction of these innovations is impacting phenomena as diverse as conversational prowess and the post office's profitability.

Some creators do not think forward to the implications of their work over time. The GoodWork study of genetics found that long-time geneticists tended not to consider in their decision-making how their works might be used later (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi & Damon, 2001). A developmental perspective shows that workers tend to consider a ripple of responsibility only as they came in contact with that ripple. That is, they consider friends and family or coworkers first because they are close by, then customers or suppliers. Only when they encounter people who have lung cancer from second-hand smoke, or whose children are mentally handicapped from exposure to chemicals, or who lost their homes because of predatory lending practices do workers consider the broader effects of their work. They do not think beyond where they were at the time. For example, GoodWork studies found that adolescents focused on their immediate friends and family, young professionals focused on bosses and

colleagues in their immediate work environments, veterans focused on training the next generation, and only a few “trustees” looked beyond the field itself to the field’s position within and contribution to the wider society (Gardner, 2009a).

But let me mention a surprising finding that emerged from my study of commitment among highly successful novelists and poets (Moran, 2009c). Those writers who orient toward serving and perhaps transforming the domain, who talked about being a vehicle for sharing the as-yet untapped potential within the domain with others, also spoke the most about a wider sense of responsibility. It was not the expert writers who abided by the rules of the literary field, nor the fringe writers who were labeled as rule breakers (and which are often those labeled “creative”), but rather the writers who eventually transformed the literary canon who spoke with the strongest sense of moral purpose and responsibility. Through their works, they aimed to surprise the reader and change the reader’s mind to a *wider* morality beyond the current norm or standard. This drive to change minds carried a strong consideration of the effects of their works. But the primary responsibility was not to other people directly. Rather it was to change minds to support the writers’ responsibility to the domain, to what language could contribute to the world.

This focus among creators on the integrity and possibilities of the *domain*—the symbolic body of knowledge—as a moral compass (see also Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2007) is not often considered or accepted as a moral stance in the scholarly literature. Morality tends to be limited to reference to a social community—the field, in the case of the work world. A few sociological theorists and researchers address the interplay of social and symbolic in moral commitment (e.g., Bourdieu, 1993; Passy & Giugni, 2000; Stacey, 1996). Yet, even

they tend to place the social dimension as more important than the symbolic dimension (see Moran, 2009a). The social dimension is more visible, easier to see and understand; and fitting in with other people tends to be a goal of most people. Foucault's (1980) discussion of power and knowledge addressed how those with power (a social dimension) constrain what concepts (a symbolic dimension) are considered true and relevant: might makes right. Vygotsky's (1962, see also Moran & John-Steiner, 2003) developmental theory argued how symbolic knowledge is difficult to see/hear without social interaction. Finally, symbolic knowledge is contained within individual minds. So individual-domain relationships are often conceptualized and assessed as individual traits not as interactions (see Moran, 2009a).

Where Do We Go From Here?

How can workers and fields improve the possibility of good work in relation to creativity? In other words, how can leaders and workers improve their skills at imagining and assessing consequences or change-oriented behaviors and outcomes? They must improve their future oriented thinking (see Joireman, Strathman & Balliet, 2006, for a start). They must become less swayed by optimism and fear of the unknown and by biases in projection or anchoring. They must become better trained in counterfactual thinking, probability calculations, and unearthing the assumptions and gaps in their own points-of-view. They must cultivate anticipation and flexibility. In short, they must better understand and be able to handle risk and uncertainty. Risk involves known consequences and can be calculated. Uncertainty involves unknown consequences. Diversification, insurance, good nutrition and exercise, strong social networks, and even good luck cannot ensure good outcomes nor

prevent bad outcomes because they still incorporate both risk and uncertainty.

Returning to the financial meltdown of 2007, we are in the midst of the evaluation process of creativity at work. Ideas and products contributed to the financial field in anticipation of or response to perceived needs in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s are continuing to be assessed based on their consequences over time. The costs were hidden by a time delay. It took years, plus several exogenous, intervening events that put pressure on financial resources—including 9/11, hurricanes Katrina and Rita, spikes in oil prices, continuing wars—to create the near perfect circumstances for the system to break when adjustable-rate mortgages did what they were designed to do: adjust interest rates at a pre-set time. Unfortunately, they adjusted when home values had fallen, creating a spiral effect through the banks, the investment markets, employment markets, and consumer markets. This is not borne of a misalignment but rather an instance of a system at work plus a time lag.

Going back to the GoodWork Project's initial question—whether creative work can also watch out for the “common good”—where does the financial meltdown stand? While all was well, during what is now called the “bubble,” many would say that the answer to the initial question was “yes.” Home ownership, and all its benefits, was expanded to a more diverse population, satisfying some social goals of inclusion and economic goals of equality of opportunity. Now that markets have crashed, most would say “no.” They blame the products themselves instead of looking more closely at how such products were incorporated with the field/domain and within the wider society over time. (See Damon, this volume, for an alternative interpretation.)

How can leaders and workers improve their skills at widening one's realm of responsibility? They must include moral dimensions as criteria for evaluation of products. Whom might this product affect? *Why* is this work valuable? How might this work be used or misused? The thinking process is like kaizen for the future. Kaizen involves asking, "What is the problem?" Each answer leads to a further question, "And what causes that?" This process continues until the root cause is found. Then the root cause, not just the symptoms, can be addressed. Similarly, for each creative idea or product, the repeated question becomes: "Who will be affected and how?" Thus, it is kaizen oriented to purposes and outcomes rather than causes. If started in school, even children could become more oriented to a contribution mentality, to understanding how what they do—be it standardized work or creative work—has an effect on others directly and indirectly (see Gardner & Wolf, 1988).

Summary

One of the primary conclusions of the GoodWork Project was that good work—work that is excellent, ethical, and engaging—is more likely when individual, field, and historical forces are in alignment. But sometimes individuals' "why's" —their reasons for working—aim toward change. They see an injustice or wrong to reactively address, or a possibility or opportunity to proactively address. They have both a "why" and a "why not?" There is a spirit of going beyond current bounds, or a "what next?" They do not limit themselves to what currently is, but rather aspire toward what could be. Most people who make the history books are victorious changers, whether for the better (Lincoln, Picasso, Einstein, Gandhi) or for the worse (Attila, Hitler, Stalin, Mao).

Creators have been considered workers in fruitful misalignment from other forces in a field (Gardner, 1993). However, field alignment is a dynamic concept. Circumstances, needs, and thus, purposes can change over time. We can suffer from moral myopia if we think something with an underlying dynamic is a steady state or a stable trait. We may become overly certain in our understandings or beliefs and overconfident in our predictions and decisions. We can become broadsided by change that seems sudden—or an abrupt misalignment—when it may have been the underlying dynamic just “doing its thing.” That is, the outcome was one of several probabilistic outcomes that could’ve naturally arisen in the system.

Both change and stability are necessary for a field to thrive and develop good work. Although socially and psychologically, stability feels better for most people, it’s important to our individual and collective well-being to develop. Without change, we’d still have slavery, bartering-only economies, and outhouses. Societies and fields create institutions and processes to regulate introduction of innovations. Yet, even those institutions and processes must not be reified. Rather, they should be reviewed and changed as needed. Missions also need to be reevaluated to avoid myopia. Ideally, and perhaps eventually, we could become better at anticipating consequences. For the time being, we live with an imperfect system in which innovations are introduced, are communicated in waves, and create ripple effects.

Creative works that perpetuate change take time to be evaluated. If those works are eventually deemed destructive errors, it is going too far to say that creativity itself is to blame and should be curtailed. What may be more fruitful is to train practitioners not only how to come up with novel solutions to current problems, but to devise better

evaluation systems for determining appropriateness. Such evaluations should address not only current circumstances but extend into probabilities of the future, and not only for those immediately involved but for wider ripples of people who might be affected.

A few recent studies suggest that “expert” creators are not those who suspend judgment but rather those who can flip back and forth between producing novelty and evaluating appropriateness within their ongoing creative process (e.g., Kaufman, Baer, Cole & Sexton, 2008). In other words, “creativity workshops” should not be about “safely sharing your ideas without judgment,” as many of the popular ones currently are. Judgment—especially with creativity—is paramount. People—both those who want to come up with new ideas as well as those who perpetuate the influence of current ideas—should recognize the consequences they can bring about. That, I believe, is the foundation for Humane Creativity.

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9

Reflections on The GoodWork Project: A Sociologist's Perspective

Carrie James

On January 28, 1986, shortly after launching from Cape Canaveral, Florida, the Space Shuttle Challenger broke apart, resulting in the deaths of all seven people on board. The launch was a national event—turned tragedy. It was viewed live by school children across the country and most notably in Concord, New Hampshire where Christa McAuliffe, special guest on this Challenger mission, was a teacher. In the wake of this tragedy, President Reagan ordered the establishment of a commission to explore the causes of the accident. The commission's report pointed to technical failures and poor managerial decision-making as key factors leading to the accident. Ten years later, sociologist Diane Vaughan published a nearly 600-page book (1996) analyzing these factors. Vaughan argued that responsibility for the disaster could be traced to a “culture of deviance” among the management at NASA, in which it had become normative to explain away the risk of catastrophic shuttle failure in the face of clear evidence of danger.

The Challenger disaster is a pointed example of “irresponsible work” (Gardner, 2007) a failure of excellence and ethics, two core components of how we define “good work.” However, I submit that the way in which the disaster was investigated and the ultimate conclusions about its causes might have been somewhat different if The GoodWork Project team had studied it. As noted throughout this collection, The GoodWork Project (GWP) was conceived in 1994 by three psychologists who were inspired and troubled by the hegemony of market-oriented thinking. They elected to explore the question: “What does ‘good work’ mean at a time when rapid social and technological change is underway, powerful market forces prevail, and few counterforces to the market exist?” This question could have been examined through a variety of disciplinary lenses and research methodologies. However, the three principal investigators of the GWP naturally favored an individual-centered, psychological approach. Qualitative interviews were used to explore individuals’ conceptions of good work, psychological underpinnings (such as personal beliefs, values, goals, and senses of responsibility), supports, and strategies for achieving good work.

In this essay I call attention to the strengths and blind spots associated with using this methodological approach to studies of good and irresponsible work. I ask: How might the GWP have been carried out differently—and to what extent would its conclusions have been different—had the investigators taken primarily a sociological, rather than a psychological, approach? In posing this question, I do not mean to suggest that there is one sociological method, and one psychological one, nor that little overlap exists in approaches taken in these disciplines. Rather, I seek to highlight the broad differences in emphasis that make each a distinct discipline. While psychology is

focused on individual development and dispositions, sociological accounts tend to emphasize social interactions, culture, and social structure. It is important to note that the principal investigators of the GWP (Csikszentmihalyi, Damon, and Gardner) are not typical psychologists in the sense that each were trained in interdisciplinary environments in which they were exposed to sociological theory as well as social relations, human development, and other interdisciplinary traditions. Moreover, their sensitivity to the sociological factors in good work is evidenced by the Good Work Model (see Conclusion, Figure 1), which the team devised after studying several domains of work. Even so, I contend that the core methodology and data of the GWP illuminate more psychological than sociological elements of good work.

Therefore, with respect to the GWP, I ask, what would have been yielded by a stronger focus on social relations, culture, and structure—as opposed to individual development, disposition, and values—as factors influencing achievement and failures of good work? My own interest in this question stems from my background as a sociologist *and* as a member of the GWP research team. Also, I believe that the question is important in light of recent large-scale failures of good work, such as the 2008 collapse of the financial services industry, to which the GWP approach could lend important insights but may also possess limitations.

Below, I describe the GWP approach to our core research questions, discuss findings about good and irresponsible work from select domains, and then consider the strengths and gaps in our approach. I then turn to a discussion of how sociologists have tackled “good work”—style—questions, and the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches. Finally, I consider the ways in which the two disciplines

complement one another in the quest to understand the contours of good work today. Here I explore the psychological *and* sociological dimensions of the “Good Work Model”—one that proposes the major factors and conditions that contribute to, and detract from, good work across a range of domains.

The Research Approach of The GoodWork Project

As previously noted in this volume, over a 10-year time frame, the GWP team studied nine different domains of work: the arts, business, genetics, higher education, journalism, law, medicine, philanthropy, and pre-collegiate education. Smaller studies were conducted with special groups such as social entrepreneurs. In total, these studies involved over 1,200 participants. Each domain study typically involved the following steps: background research (including literature reviews and informant interviews) on key trends in the domain; a nomination process in which informants identified exemplary workers in each field (including young, mid-career, and veteran workers); semi-structured interviews and values sorting exercises with nominated individuals; coding and analysis of interview data around core questions and emergent themes; and writing of results.

When the GW research team set out to study good work, a number of different psychological frameworks and perspectives could have been brought to bear. Damon held a long-standing interest in moral and ethical development, Csikszentmihalyi in flow, and Gardner in intelligences and creativity. Yet the investigators did not restrict the focus to specific lenses and subfields of psychology. Nevertheless, clear links can be made with developmental psychology (particularly

moral development), positive psychology, social psychology, and industrial–organizational psychology.

Ultimately, the project’s conception of “good work” was arrived at empirically after studying the first domains of work. In its earliest iteration, good work was defined by two E’s—Excellence and Ethics. Later in the project, a third E—Engagement—was added, resulting in a “triple helix” conception of good work. More specifically, good work is the outcome when an individual is doing excellent (high quality) work in an ethical (socially responsible) manner, and is highly engaged (gains meaning and flow from) the work. Although these three E’s were not determined a priori, they align remarkably well with the particular research interests of each principal investigator.

As noted above, the specific method on which the research team came to chiefly rely was the in–depth, person–centered interview. Of course, the interview method is by no means restricted to psychology; anthropologists, political scientists, sociologists, and even some economists use qualitative interviews. Nor are interviews the most dominant method within the discipline of psychology, where surveys and experiments are commonplace. Therefore, when I describe the GWP methodological approach as ‘psychological,’ I am referring to the principal focus on individuals’ psychological dispositions and behaviors related to their work. As Gardner et al. (2001) state, “our primary focus in this study of good work is what happens ‘inside the heads’ of engaged professionals. We are interested not only in how people make sense of their situations but also which plans and actions they ultimately pursue and why” (p. 13).

More specifically, through semi–structured, qualitative interviews, the project team explored how individual professionals in certain

fields define “good work.” Data were collected about individuals’ personal beliefs, values, goals, responsibilities, supports, and their strategies for navigating organizational or profession-wide obstacles to carrying out their personal definitions of good work. Evidence was also sought on the ways that formative experiences—either in an individual’s family life, peer group, or work setting—shaped individuals’ conceptions. These core themes were covered in every interview across all domains of work. Tailored questions were also asked about domain-specific issues, pressures, and opportunities that our background research suggested might affect individuals’ efforts to do good work. In many domains, a values sorting exercise was used to identify the core values participants held in their work lives.

When I joined the GWP research team in 2003, these methods had already been used in studies of the arts, business, genetics, journalism, and law. I participated in applying these methods to studies of higher education, medicine, and philanthropy. From the time I joined the team, it was clear to me that the GWP interview approach had numerous strengths. The approach yielded valuable data about the meanings of good work held by individual professionals as well as perceptions of the obstacles (personal, organizational, and field-wide), that can make achieving good work challenging at best. Through these individual accounts, we were able to infer prevailing and contested notions of excellence, ethics, and engagement in their fields.

For example, in the first book to emerge from the project, *Good work: When excellence and ethics meet* (2001), Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, and Damon compared findings from the first two domains studied, genetics and journalism. Interviews were conducted with respected geneticists, both young and established, working in academia or

industry. In journalism, nominated reporters from different institutions in broadcast television, radio, print media and the then current form of the Internet were participants. Interviews showed that most geneticists felt well-supported by their colleagues, institutions, profession, and the larger society, which facilitated the achievement of their personal definitions of good work. By contrast, a large percentage of the journalists felt frustrated in their efforts to abide by their personal definitions of good journalism, often because their institutions and/or their audiences had different views about what they should be producing. The corporatization of the news media appeared to be an important factor; journalists complained that media outlets had become profit-oriented and had drifted from the traditional values, ethics, and mission that had attracted them to the domain in the first place.

These findings suggested the importance of “alignment” between the missions of individuals, institutions, the domain, and the society. This is not to say that “good work” is impossible if any of these elements are misaligned, but it is more difficult. In turn, if all elements are aligned, excellent, ethical, and engaging work is by no means guaranteed but is easier to achieve.

In one of the final studies of the project, colleagues and I spoke with exemplary physicians about how, in an increasingly complex and strained health care system, these professionals defined and sought to achieve good work in medicine. In order to understand how different specialists were faring, we interviewed internists/primary care physicians; cardiothoracic surgeons; and obstetrician-gynecologists. Not surprisingly, physicians complained that their conceptions of good work were often at odds with those of the larger system, especially insurance companies. We found that primary care

physicians in particular often felt stymied in their efforts to do good work. Compelled by health insurance companies to see more patients in less time and to do more paperwork, many of these doctors described their difficulties in establishing meaningful relationships with patients.

The coping strategies they used were quite varied, ranging from simply working longer hours to pursuing alternative practice structures. A few of our interviewees had pursued concierge practices (in which patients pay out of pocket for high quality care) in order to find engagement, deliver excellence, and feel that they were doing “right” by their patients. At the same time, at least one concierge physician expressed ambivalence about the ethics of her decision. On the one hand, she could now deliver superb care to her patients. On the other hand, her practice was limited to those who could afford to pay, and her choice did little if anything to address the larger problem of a dysfunctional, unequal health care system.

All told, the GWP studies of genetics, journalism, and medicine produced rich accounts of both the rewarding and the more difficult aspects of working in these fields. Individuals shared inspiring, emotion-filled stories about their successes and struggles. These accounts are an important strength of the person-centered approach used in most GWP studies. Most domain studies involved interviews with individuals working across different specialties, organizations, and sectors of a given domain (e.g., journalists from different media outlets; primary care physicians in different practice structures). These data thus revealed the extent to which conceptions of good work vary among individuals within the same domain. Moreover, our data allow us to identify specific dispositions, beliefs, supports, and strategies that help individuals achieve good work even in the face of

pressures to do otherwise. Valuable lessons emerge for all workers: “Adopting this psychological perspective enables us to understand what we see as essential on a personal level for ourselves and everyone else. In our view all of us need to take stock of our own situations, weight the various alternatives in light of our own values and goals, and make decisions that are optimal under the circumstances and that we can live with in the long run. In the absence of this person-centered perspective, we are merely observers buffeted by the fates.” (Gardner et al., 2001, p. 13)

At the same time, there are weaknesses in the person-centered GWP approach. While individual beliefs, values, and strategies are certainly important aspects of the good work equation, the contexts in which these elements are put into action are arguably just as important. More specifically, organizational cultures and authority structures can provide supports and/or constraints with respect to individuals who are seeking to realize their personal definitions of good work. Moreover, the relationships with colleagues through which culture and structure operate can influence individuals’ conceptions of good work in powerful yet sometimes subtle ways. Although our interviewees often provided some data about their work environments and relationships, the individual nature of these accounts constitutes a limitation.

Our data can be used to speculate about, but cannot confirm, how certain types of work contexts (including structure, culture, and interactions among colleagues, authority figures, and leadership) impinge on individual achievements and failures of good work. If we had collected more contextual data, perhaps we could discern patterns that suggest ideal, and not so ideal, conditions for good work to flourish in a given organization or domain. For example, we might

have supplemented the narratives of admired journalists with observations and interviews with people in different departments and levels of the hierarchy in their media organizations. In so doing, we might have gained a more objective, systematic view of organizational norms, processes, and supports that affect individual journalists' work, such as the ways in which editorial decisions are made and disputes handled. In short, good work is rarely a simple matter of individual integrity; complex social, cultural, and structural forces are almost always at play.

Although the person-centered approach was typical of the way in which most GWP studies were conducted, there were some notable exceptions involving the use of more sociological approaches. For example, in the Good Work in Higher Education study, 10 institutions were nominated as exemplars of good work, and individuals within each institution were interviewed. This approach allowed us to gain a broader and deeper picture of the elements at each school that contributed to their success and challenges (see Berg et al., 2003). Also, several investigators conducted case studies of lineages of good work in four fields. Interviews were conducted with veteran geneticists, journalists, dancers, and martial artists. Subsequent interviews with their students and their students' students revealed how good work was perpetuated over time as exemplary practices and values were passed down through the generations (see Nakamura et al., 2009).

As part of a large, mainly person-centered study of Good Work in Law, colleagues conducted a case study of the collapse of a law firm, Hill & Barlow. Interviews with a dozen attorneys sought to ascertain the major factors contributing to the firm's sudden closing. Contrary to news media accounts that attributed the collapse to greed and

disloyalty on the part of partners, the GWP study suggested a more complex set of factors were at play. These included external factors in the legal profession, such as commercialization, competition, and compensation pressures, and factors within the firm such as economic pressures, growing misalignment among partners about the mission of the firm, and a failure to communicate about these issues (Marshall, 2004).

Sociological Approaches to Good Work

In the most general terms, sociology is dedicated to the scientific study of human societies. Sociological research and theory often call attention to the ways in which institutions and other large-scale features of society are socially constructed yet constrain the experiences and choices of individuals (Berger & Luckman, 1967). Some sociologists define the purpose and overall focus of the discipline in more specific terms; for example, Giddens describes sociology as “the study of the social institutions brought into being by the industrial transformations of the past two or three centuries” (1987, p. 9). At the same time, sociologists also address “micro” processes such as social interactions and the development of identities. These foci are similar to those of social psychology but sociologists often pay greater attention to the social contexts (ranging from informal group structures to formal institutions and large-scale economic or political systems) that influence the shape of these micro social and individual processes. As C. Wright Mills asserted, “The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise.” (2000, p. 6)

The activities in which individuals engage—work being an important one—are clearly part of this broad purview of sociology. Research on various aspects of work is carried out through various subfields of sociology, the most obvious of which are the sociology of work, occupations, and organizations. Sociological studies have been undertaken in nearly all of the domains studied by the GWP. The American Sociological Association has specialty membership groups for researchers studying the sociology of education, medicine, law, and science and technology—in addition to groups dedicated to the more general areas of work and occupations, labor relations, and economic sociology.

As in psychology, the methods used in sociological research on work are diverse, ranging from surveys to qualitative interviews and ethnographies. Surveys contribute statistical data about workplace practices and demographic trends in occupations which often reveal patterns of segregation by race, class, and gender. Qualitative approaches are often used to capture the micro processes by which these patterns are produced or to explore the workings of organizational cultures that can contribute to, or detract from, high quality and ethical work. Historical sociologists examine archival materials in order to demonstrate change over time in certain fields of work. Paul Starr's Pulitzer Prize winning book, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (1982), is an excellent example of this latter genre.

Among sociologists who study work, diverse sociological lenses are brought to bear. Stratification is an especially popular lens. For example, a significant body of research in sociology focuses on how “master statuses” (i.e., characteristics that powerfully affect people's lives) such as gender, race, and class influence opportunities in

business, law, medicine, and other fields. Examples include studies of the “glass ceiling” an invisible barrier to advancement that women often experience in the professions (Cotter et al., 2001; Freeman, 1990), and of the “glass escalator” to senior positions for men in female-dominated fields such as nursing and pre-collegiate education (Williams, 1992). Such studies aim to show the ways in which various forms of stratification are perpetuated or modified through constraints and opportunity structures in particular organizations or entire fields of work.

Note that sociological studies that explore how inequalities are reproduced at work are not addressing the good work question in a strict sense. Nevertheless, this research arguably helps us understand how the professions and other domains of work contribute to broader ethical priorities such as social equality.

Culture is another important lens, which has been used to help explain stratification at work. Cultural norms among those in power can subtly perpetuate power relations and inequality of opportunity in workplaces. Some sociologists examine how cultural norms related to self-presentation (dress, language, emotions) or interests (sports) perpetuate class, gender, and racial discrimination in occupations. Research suggests that discrimination is often produced by unintentional, cognitive processes such as social categorization (ingroup vs. outgroup) and stereotyping of others. At the same time, organizational norms, processes, and codes have been shown to encourage or mitigate these tendencies in powerful ways (Reskin, 2000; Roth, 2004). Whether discrimination is intentional or not, an inability to achieve “good work” is a likely result. For example, targets of discrimination such as women and racial or ethnic minorities may feel isolated, alienated, and therefore less “engaged”

in the work. Moreover, they may be thwarted in their efforts to deliver high quality work (excellence) due to inadequate access to needed supports, including tips of the trade, mentorship from veterans, and administrative assistance. Indeed, unequal outcomes for women and minorities have been shown to be mitigated in some white, male-dominated professions (such as investment banking) by access to influential mentors; the development of specialized and highly valued expertise; and the presence of objective performance criteria (Roth, 2004).

Sociologists have also explored how specific work practices, standards, and values are influenced by organizational cultures. For example, Jackall (1988) conducted qualitative research in business to produce a rich account of how large bureaucratic corporations shape the moral consciousness of their employees. Through in-depth case studies of a small number of large corporations, he was able to discover how managers' moral and ethical codes of conduct at work were influenced by bureaucratic structures and interactions with colleagues, supervisors, and corporate leadership. More specifically, Jackall found that a chief characteristic of the "moral ethos" of corporate managerial circles was its "lack of fixedness...morality does not emerge from some set of internally held convictions or principles, but rather from ongoing albeit changing relationships some person, some coterie, some social network, some clique that matters to a person." (p. 101).

Jackall described the case of a rare manager, Brady, who held strong internal convictions and "blew the whistle" on various unethical accounting practices (including bribing officials in developing countries; falsifying invoices to cover up over-expenditures; and drawing on employee pension funds for profit slush funds) within a

large, international corporation. Brady's own account—and interviews with his colleagues and managers—revealed that they had pressed him to drop his accusations, contending that the practices were “part of the game in business today” and therefore devoid of moral and ethical implications (p. 109). When he refused to back down, Brady was transferred to a new division, demoted to a position that limited his access to financial information, and eventually fired. He came to see that possessing a fixed moral and ethical professional code was both unusual and undesirable in the corporate world. As Brady put it, to nearly all of his colleagues and supervisors “What is right in the corporation is not what is right in a man's home or in his church. *What is right in the corporation is what the guy above you wants from you.* That's what morality is in the corporation” (p. 109).

The lens of deviance has often been applied in sociological studies of quality failures and ethical lapses in organizations or entire domains of work. Examples include research on white collar crime and technically legal wrongdoing in business (Simon, 1999; Sutherland, 1949). Sociologists have also explored mishaps in large organizations, including those in high-risk technology industries such as nuclear power, airlines, and aerospace (see Perrow, 1984).

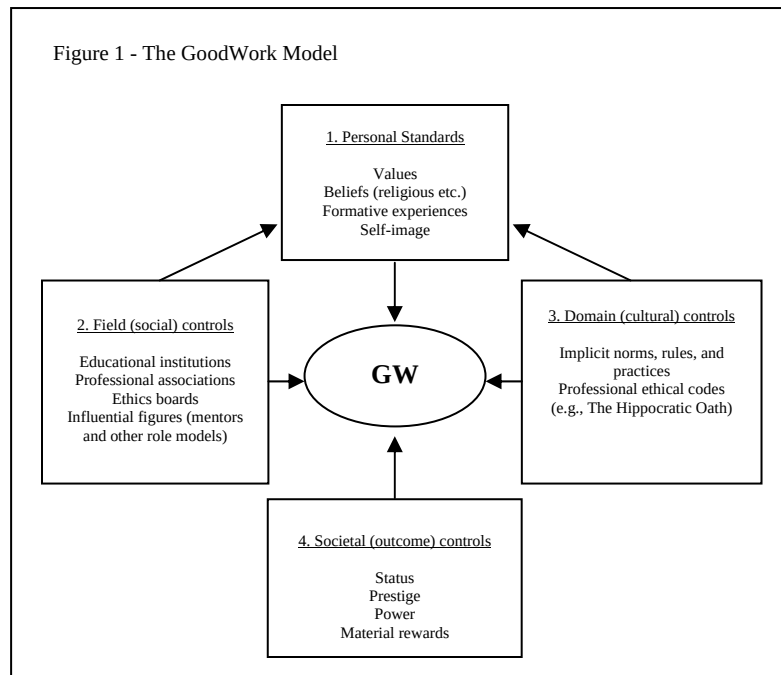
The opening example of Vaughan's study of the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster (1996) provides a case in point. Her methods included historical ethnography and in-depth organizational analysis. Vaughan studied over 122,000 pages of historical documents from the Rogers Commission's investigation of the accident, including transcripts of hearings and internal memoranda about safety concerns leading up to the accident. She also conducted interviews with individuals in different levels of the decision-making hierarchy at NASA. Through these methods she gained detailed insights into

organizational norms within NASA. Her analysis challenged a popular explanation of the Challenger accident, that amoral managers at NASA downplayed safety concerns in order to stick to an ambitious shuttle launch schedule. Among her most important findings was the discovery that objectively “deviant” or risky decisions had become normalized and justified through the “scientific paradigm” (Kuhn, 1962) developed over time among key launch decision-makers at NASA. These individuals were not consciously belittling safety concerns in order simply to get shuttles off the ground, she argued. Rather, they believed that their procedures for assessing risks and making launch decisions were sound. Vaughan’s comprehensive analysis sheds light on the social processes by which risk and deviance can be normalized within organizations, resulting in irresponsible work.

Sociological accounts of good and irresponsible work can lend important insights to the larger GWP enterprise. Sociology is particularly well-equipped to address the important role, in promoting or thwarting good work, of systemic and cultural features of large organizations and entire domains. Sociological lenses may be particularly helpful in explaining accidents such as the Challenger and the rise and fall of powerful companies like Enron. On the other hand, the strong emphasis on social context, culture, and structure in sociological approaches can underestimate the role of individual agency, disposition, and long-held beliefs, values, and feelings of responsibility in the good work equation. Ultimately, we may need a balance between “oversocialized” and “undersocialized” conceptions of individual workers (Wrong, 1961).

Conclusion: Considering the GoodWork Model

In this essay, I sought to demonstrate how sociological approaches could enhance our understanding of good work. I explored the distinct advantages and limitations of applying psychological vs. sociological lenses and methods to studies of “good work”—work that is technically excellent, ethical, and engaging. Despite the differences I’ve emphasized between these disciplines, there are important areas of overlap in lenses and methods (e.g., social psychology, and qualitative interviews and surveys). And where the approaches are more distinct, they complement one another quite well. This affinity is apparent in the GoodWork Model, devised by the GWP team as a way of illustrating the conditions that facilitate or thwart good work.



The model suggests that good work is driven by 1) *individual, personal standards* shaped by beliefs, values, and formative experiences; 2) *field controls*, including the institutions and figures who socialize, educate, train, employ, and support practitioners of a given domain (e.g., medical schools, hospitals, the American Medical Association); 3) *domain controls*, including the implicit cultural norms, rules, and ethical codes (that workers may learn through the formal or informal education, training, and relations with peers in the field); and 4) *societal controls*, or the value of the domain to the larger society, often signaled through the outcomes accorded to practitioners, including status, prestige, and material rewards (The GoodWork Project Team, 2008).

The person-centered, psychological approach of the GWP resulted in a rich set of data about factor 1) the personal standards, beliefs, and values that individuals bring to their work. Through individual accounts, we also gained individuals' *perceptions* of how factors 2) field, 3) domain, and 4) societal controls impinge on good work. However, we only rarely collected direct, primary data about the actual relationships among these factors, or the objective ways in which they influence one another. A more sociological approach along the lines of Vaughan's study of decision-making at NASA used in combination with the individual approach would have demonstrated the social, cultural, and societal influences behind individuals' conceptions of good work—thus fulfilling the promise of the GW Model. Indeed, the Model is a graphic illustration of my undergraduate sociology professor's claim that "behind every psychology is a sociology."

In many ways, my discussion here suggests that the rich question that inspired the GWP could be—perhaps should be—examined from

the standpoint of different disciplines and theoretical traditions. A fuller understanding of the contours of good work seems to require both a deep, in-depth view of individual psychology *and* insights about the social interactions, cultures, and structures that surround and influence individuals' minds. This imperative is especially true for complex, large-scale cases of good and irresponsible work, in which both powerful individuals and institutional cultures and structures are implicated. For example, an explanation of the financial collapse of 2008, which continues to rock the global economy, requires lenses and approaches from both psychology and sociology, among other disciplines. More specifically, an investigation of the collapse should consider the beliefs, values, and purposive intentions of some powerful leaders. However, it's hard to believe that full responsibility for the collapse lies with a few powerful individuals simplistically motivated by ambition and greed. We also need to consider the cultural norms that convinced key figures that their decisions were ethically and technically sound, or at least justifiable. Finally, the complex structure of the financial industry and of the large organizations that comprise it is a critical factor that lends power to certain individuals and allows deviant cultures to evolve and persist, often unnoticed by public stakeholders until it's too late. My hope is that my reflections here might inspire a robust, interdisciplinary research agenda capable of understanding the workings of such complex domains, whose failures and successes affect us all.

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PART FOUR

Applications

Collaborations

Good Collaboration: What Works, What Hasn't

Wendy Fischman

My fifteen year involvement on the GoodWork team has been rewarding on many levels—intellectually, professionally, and personally. Aside from learning about the research process itself, I have been enriched and edified by the opportunity to interview many different professionals at various stages in their careers; I have enjoyed learning about their goals, beliefs, ambitions, formative influences, and perspectives on future work. Listening to other people's reflections and stories has furthered my own thinking about my work, and helped me to articulate my own values, beliefs, and goals.

Every individual faces daily dilemmas in his/her work: how to convince others of a particular agenda, how to handle a difficult co-worker, how to balance personal life with professional demands. Like every other worker, I would like to think I make the “right” decisions—the one that carefully considers potential impact on those with whom I work, as well as my family and friends, and even the

broader society. So, for example, even when facing pressures to do work quickly, I still *try* to make sure to take the time to mentor more novice research assistant rather than only focus on my own work; report data accurately rather than create stories that may be more intriguing to those on the outside; and on a personal level, maintain balance between professional life and personal life.

However, whatever seems like the “right” decision at the time, does not always lead to a positive outcome. In fact, one of the major findings of our research has been that most individuals seem to have “good” intentions—they espouse values of responsibility, care, and relationships and even offer examples of how these are important in their lives. Yet, far too often, individuals think chiefly of themselves when they confront a dilemma, whether the issue be financial gain, public recognition, or support of an idiosyncratic belief or value.

Over the years, my colleagues and I have listened to numerous young individuals who want to do what is right, but who reveal—explicitly or implicitly—how other influences get in the way. For example, pressure to please authority figures (supervisors, parents, teachers, coaches), future goals and career ambitions (getting accepted to college, graduate school, a new position or new job), and lack of mentorship (not having a mentor, or having a bad mentor, or “tormentor”) can lead promising individuals down the wrong path. The GoodWork Project has been a useful barometer for me—a standard by which I judge the quality of my work. Our framework of excellence, ethics, and engagement—otherwise known as the 3Es—helps me to reflect regularly on the work I carry out, and whether the work meets these three criteria.

One recent example involves a research project on how individuals

conceptualize ‘quality’. At this point, we are interested in comparing survey responses in the United States with an international sample. Accordingly, we posted an advertisement on Craig’s List, an on–line version of classifieds that people can access on the Internet (we are offering money as a prize to one lucky participant). Because Craig’s List is so popular, our advertisement can easily get moved to the bottom of the list, even within a few hours. This fact makes the advertisement less accessible over time. Many people have suggested that we continually change the title of our advertisement (even on an hourly basis) in order to keep our advertisement at the top of the list when people come to the screen. My colleagues and I have refused to do this, because it seems unethical, even if it is a minor offense. In this way, being a part of the GoodWork Project provides its own litmus test.

A Study on Collaboration

In our work, we are frequently presented with opportunities to collaborate with other organizations or groups. Sometimes, we come across challenges when we work or consider working with people outside of our own team and our own umbrella organization (Project Zero, housed for over forty years at the Harvard Graduate School of Education). Of course, like most people, we deal with situations that arise within our team; but we have been surprised how challenging it can be to collaborate with other organizations. For better or worse, we have learned that we work in a unique setting. The GoodWork Project is one of many research projects at Project Zero, a research organization that is funded by grants from the government and private foundations as well as contributions from generous benefactors. Like many people at Project Zero, we have a strong institutional culture of seriousness and professionalism, and at the

same time, we enjoy a friendly and warm atmosphere. In our own view, we have high standards and expectations for our work (and we are willing to spend long hours to ensure the quality of our work); we are in constant communication with one another, which seems to happen mostly over email (even within the same team of researchers). We all respect implicit rules of email, for example, confirming receipt of messages, even when a return email reads “got it, thanks.” Furthermore, we only work on topics that interest us—we seek funds for work we want to do, rather than choosing a topic because we know we can get funding for it. We are also honest with and accountable to our funders about what we learn. Admittedly, this description is self-serving, but the long service of many of our members testifies to a good degree of alignment within the organization.

To an extent that has surprised us, our approach has seemed challenging for many individuals and organizations that do not always work in the same way (e.g. educators who have limited time for email during the day, researchers at organizations that may not be as transparent about funding and other administrative procedures). Moreover, there are many individuals who are interested in the Harvard name (and, to be frank, in the “Howard” name) and are not ready to make a serious investment of time, resources, and people for the proposed work. Indeed many individuals and organizations have a hard time articulating their goals in working with us, because collaborating with us “looks” like something they want to do and “feels good,” in itself. Our challenging experiences stimulated us to seek support for a recently launched research project, “Good Collaboration: Successful and Unsuccessful Collaborations.”

In this research, we are interested in exploring *why* collaboration among individuals and organizations in the non profit educational sector is often difficult to carry out with high standards. In our own efforts we wonder why so many promising collaborations end before they start, and why others fail—leading to a feeling (quite possibly on the part of each party) that the effort was a waste of time, resources, and energy. Most surprising to me, personally, is the way in which some organizations (and the leaders of those organizations) espouse values (in the name of their own organizations and in their own taglines); yet these same, seemingly exemplary leaders don't uphold these values when collaborating with other organizations. Some of the individuals with whom we have collaborated (to bring about “good work”) seem to put aside their espoused core values in order to meet other demands (e.g. those emanating from a board, a supervisor, a financial constraint).

As with most of our research efforts, we began our study of collaboration with a literature review. We want to find out what has already been written on the topic and discern any gaps that may exist. Literature specifically addressing collaboration in education has focused primarily on school–community partnerships and collaboration between K–12 institutions and higher education institutions (e.g. teacher education programs, instructional improvement efforts, and action research). Somewhat surprisingly (though perhaps also reassuringly, given our goals), we found few studies about collaborations in nonprofit education. It is possible that research and writings on “collaboration” were not easily found because of our terminology. Notably, the word “partnership” is more widely used in the literature than the term “collaboration,” though it seems that the terms are interchangeable.

It turns out that defining collaboration is not easy. In the literature, collaboration has been defined as “a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and a sharing of resources and rewards.” (Mattesich et al, 2001, pg.4). We asked: Is this the same as partnership? Does the definition stipulate or imply that there should be common goals between or among the organizations? Do collaborations and/or partnerships only exist between or among organizations, or can there be a collaboration between or among two or more individuals? I have wondered myself whether some of the work we’ve informally called “collaborations” merits that term. If, for instance, individuals ask us (and sometimes pay us) to use our materials in their schools, is this a collaboration, or a consultancy relationship, or both? If we interview individuals who work at a particular organization (e.g. Teach for America, a high school) and share the analyzed findings with them, does this short-term contact qualify as a collaboration?

Since we are still in early stages of formal research on this topic, I refer to these disparate examples as collaborations. The participating organizations are each contributing to a new outcome, even if this goal is not directly stated at the beginning. For example, suppose that (as often happens) educators at a particular school ask us for our materials and advice on how to implement them in their own setting. In the process, we learn about their uses and how students respond to the materials, and very often, these lessons have expanded our own work in some way. Similarly, if we interview individuals at an organization and we share information with them, the collaborating organization may use these findings to change practices and

approaches. Finally, I believe that collaborations exist between and among individuals (not just organizations). Even if a collaboration is set-up formally between two institutions, the actual work is always carried out by the individuals most engaged in the project at-hand.

Below, I chronicle some of our own experiences in collaborating with other organizations (In an effort to be fair, with respect to the less fruitful collaborations, I de-identify particular organizations and individuals within these organizations). Because we have just begun research on what is “successful” and “unsuccessful,” I have not categorized our experiences by these labels. Instead I employ the characterizations: “meaningful collaborations” and “failed collaborations.” At the end, I summarize the lessons from each group and suggest a framework for conceptualizing successful and unsuccessful collaborations. I also highlight some of our major insights. Ultimately, I hope this essay will further our understanding about how to build and maintain successful collaborations within the field of non-profit education.

Meaningful Collaborations

Over the last fifteen years, we have encountered many positive experiences in collaborating with other organizations.

- *GoodWork Project*

First and most importantly, the collaboration among three centers at three different universities that originally formed the GoodWork Project has been extremely productive and valuable (at the start, Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Center for Adolescent Development at Brown University, and the psychology research laboratory at the University of Chicago). When the project

first began in the middle 1990s, we met often (two of the original organizations were only one hour apart); we were in frequent communication (email made conversing easy); and we made efforts to get together in-person at least once per year. We had an unspoken rule that researchers at the hosting site also took responsibility for logistics (housing, meals, and putting together the content for discussion). Because we rotated the locales of these meetings, this responsibility seemed evenly divided.

The research and work itself was also organized, well defined and for the most part, divided fairly and evenly among the three sites. Each principal investigator (PI) took responsibility for a particular domain or area of study (e.g. Howard Gardner for genetics, Bill Damon for journalism, Mihayli Csikszentmihalyi for mentoring lineages) and this approach continued for most of the research phase. All of the researchers at each site chipped in by conducting interviews, literature searches, and analysis of data, but one site was responsible for keeping track of data collection and the analyses for a particular study. Even when the three PIs spread out across the country, researchers worked together on the conceptual pieces as well as the daily tasks of the various studies via the Internet and the phone (this all before Skype!). As evidenced by the co-authorship of numerous books, articles, and even a website, this collaboration worked well on multiple levels. As a researcher, I observed the mutual respect, admiration, and friendship among the three PIs, which provided a model for the rest of us on the respective teams.

- *Albert Schweitzer Fellowship Program*

Early on in our research, we collaborated with the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship Program (ASFP), a national organization that sponsors graduate and professional school students to develop and carry out a

service project in their respective communities. Our particular focus was the Fellows' commitment to service work. Interestingly, when we first contacted the Fellowship Program, we only requested suggestions (e.g. names) of fellows to interview. Happily, this relationship turned into a collaboration because each of our organizations (the GoodWork Project and the Schweitzer Fellowship) used the findings from our research to inform future work.

To be specific, as we interviewed two groups of fellows—former and present—we shared findings with key individuals at the Schweitzer Fellowship Program. Knowledge of our findings helped the ASFP to think through and structure a new initiative called Fellows for Life. This new initiative had two primary purposes: to encourage Fellows to understand their commitment to service as a lifelong endeavor and not just a one year undertaking; and to direct the staff to stay in touch with former fellows and to learn from them. Even after we completed our data analysis and writings (most of which took place in the late 1990s), we continue to be in touch with staff at the Program as both organizations monitor how the GoodWork framework illuminates a life of service.

- *Noble and Greenough School*

Early in the 21st century, in an effort to encourage GoodWork, we began to develop materials to be used with young students in educational settings. Accordingly, we set out to find collaborators—individuals at schools who were interested in trying out programs in their own settings and giving us feedback on what worked with various constituencies. We invited ten different schools to collaborate, and of those with whom we worked, we had both positive and negative experiences (as detailed below).

Our most rewarding experience was with Noble and Greenough School, an independent school for students in grades 7–12, in a Boston area suburb. Positive signals emerged immediately. After receiving the initial invitation letter, the Dean of Faculty contacted us within a few days. She wanted to set up a meeting to discuss her own ideas about how the materials could be used in a few different venues. With the benefit of hindsight, we now see that an immediate response back, one signaling interest and readiness, revealed an important part of their culture. This cooperative spirit was one of the reasons that Noble and Greenough was a promising school with which to collaborate.

As described elsewhere (www.goodworktoolkit.org, Barendsen and Fischman, 2007) we worked closely together over the next two years to create several programs and experiences for students, faculty, and parents. These programs allowed both parties to consider the meanings of GoodWork and the ways in which the concept could be discussed and infused in the school culture. We met in-person with a core group of individuals at the school (including the Dean of Students, Dean of Faculty, Head of Middle School, Head of Upper School). We also communicated via email frequently about ideas as well as logistics. Such broad contact and ‘buy in’ may be a necessity in working with any school. Because this diverse group “championed” the effort, the GoodWork initiative resonated within various parts of the school. The “buy-in” of others—or agreement to work on this initiative—took place at the beginning of our effort and may have helped individuals at the school to take ownership of the GoodWork programs.

As a result of our successful collaboration with Noble and Greenough (and other schools), we now have several different models of how a

school can implement GoodWork—e.g. a professional development day, a student retreat, a parent evening, a single course. We continually refer to these models when other individuals ask us how they can implement the materials in their own settings, and we also feature many of them on our new website (goodworktoolkit.org). Our collaboration benefited from the interest, enthusiasm, and the culture of the school—open and honest communication, willingness to take risks and try new things, timely attention to questions and requests, ability to engage in difficult conversations, and the interest in developing “good people.”

- *Freshman Reflection Seminars*

Another positive collaboration we have undertaken over the past few years has been with individuals at Harvard University. It may seem odd or stretching to speak of a collaboration within a single University; but in fact Harvard is famously decentralized and even the funding motto “every tub on its own bottom” reflects the challenge of genuine, long term collaboration.

Against this background a few years ago, we initiated a series of Freshmen Reflection Seminars (FRS). Originally developed by four individuals at the University Freshmen (Dean Tom Dingman, Professor Howard Gardner, Professor Richard Light, and Freshmen Dean staff member Katie Steele), the Reflection Seminars give freshmen an opportunity to think about and articulate the goals they have for college and beyond. Since its inception, other faculty and staff at Harvard have joined the group to facilitate sessions for Freshmen—all doing so on a voluntary, uncompensated basis. The individuals that have formed this core group of facilitators are diverse, including: researchers from the GoodWork Project, a doctoral student at the Graduate School of Education, several professors and

two deans from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the editor of the Harvard Magazine, a therapist, and an upperclassman. Each year about 125 students have signed up, and participated in one of a dozen groups. Without any prodding from the other architects of the session, Katie Steele has taken responsibility for organizing the logistics of the groups—setting meeting times, inviting freshman to participate, assigning students to facilitators, finding locations for the different groups, and pulling together packets of content for facilitators, all of which is no small feat!

One of the most interesting aspects of this collaboration, unlike any other experience we have had so far, is the amount of communication, specifically the *honest* communication, that takes place among group facilitators. The group as a whole only meets twice a year (one time to talk about new ideas and logistics before the sessions begin and a second time at the end to debrief our experiences). On the other hand, throughout the period of time in which sessions take place (February–May), numerous email messages describing particular sessions (and even specific activities and discussions) are distributed across the entire group—the architects, the established facilitators, and the new facilitators on the block.

It is most unusual for individuals in a professional setting to exhibit such candor. For example, in every email, facilitators failures as well as successes—stories of activities and questions that did not seem to inspire much discussion, or sometimes even elicit a negative interaction in the group. Rather than treat these stories as “gossip,” other facilitators often send back messages of support, anecdotes capturing their own difficulties, and suggestions for ways to adapt the ‘prompt’ the next time. In many ways, this collaboration stands as a prototypical example of a successful “learning organization”; each of

the participants not only contributes, but also learns from others. Moreover, even though almost all the facilitators try out different approaches and techniques in their own groups, each facilitator is privy to the work of the other facilitators and is free to draw on the triumphs and minimize the vicissitudes reported by others.

- *GoodWork in Nursing*

Almost daily, we are contacted by individuals, mainly educators, interested in using the GoodWork Toolkit materials in their own settings. Sometimes, these requests do not go anywhere; for instance there may be a lack of support for the initiative on the part of others in their own setting. However, among the positive interactions with educators around the world, we single out one collaboration with Joan Miller, a professor of nursing at Bloomsburg State University in Pennsylvania. Our collaboration with Miller is notable because she has sought to create a global community of nurse educators who use the GoodWork Toolkit.

Joan Miller originally contacted us because of her interest in how the nursing community understands and defines “good work.” After a number of meetings and communications via email, Miller conducted her own research project in which she interviewed nurses, using the GoodWork questionnaire and analytic tools (coding scheme, computer software program, etc.) Not only did Miller share her data with us (which contributes to our overall understanding of GoodWork); she also gathered a cohort of nurses from all over the world in a GoodWork Global Community of Nurses.

Our interactions have been mutually beneficial. On our part, we have provided this community with logistical support over the years (the GoodWork interview questionnaire, the GoodWork Toolkit,

assessment questions to ask students before and after their exposure to the Toolkit). Miller has also provided us with contacts from all over the world who are using the Toolkit in undergraduate and graduate programs. These individuals have encouraged us to think about how the Toolkit can be used outside the United States, how to assess Toolkit within an international community, and how to use the materials for students who are pursuing a particular profession (rather than general education). This group also provides a useful model for other educators who describe themselves as “lone rangers,” with minimal support from their school community. Because of our experience with Miller and her global nursing community, we now have materials that can help others interested in facilitating “good work” (e.g. course syllabi, student work, summaries) for general education purposes or for preparing students who have embarked on a particular professional trajectory.

Summary

Though these collaborations share certain similarities, they merit individual mention because each has contributed to our growing understanding of *meaningful collaboration*. The time and resources invested in each of these collaborations has been worthwhile because both the process and the outcome were productive. Many factors contribute to each of these positive experiences—the personality of individuals with whom we have collaborated, the mutual learning that takes place, the culture of the collaborating organization, and the connections that endure beyond the original purpose of the collaboration (even if the purpose was not stated from the beginning). In each of these cases, the work that we contributed to the collaboration was well worth our effort.

Failed Collaborations

Alas, this synergy and mutual growth is not always the case. Below, I describe some of themes of collaborations that did not represent “time well spent” for us. In order to protect the identity of several organizations and individuals with whom we attempted to work, I have organized this section by theme, rather than by specific organization. Of the many factors that can contribute to unsatisfactory and unsatisfying collaborations, I explore three in some detail.

- *Poor Leadership*

Over the last five years, we have been involved (at various levels) with numerous schools that have wanted to use our GoodWork Toolkit in one or another manner. Sometimes, we have been contacted by a particular individual who has learned about the materials and is interested in them for his/her particular use, and other times by an individual representing a school as a whole. As mentioned before, when the GoodWork Toolkit had first been developed, we contacted ten schools in our area to see if we could pilot the materials. Many productive relationships ensued (one of which is described above), but in some cases, the collaboration did not work.

In one such case, we worked for about one year with the headmaster of an independent school. During this time, we participated in at least four in-person meetings with the headmaster, developed and facilitated two sessions for students and one professional development workshop, and analyzed some data the school had collected from a survey we developed. Two pivotal experiences merit exploration.

First, the headmaster had asked us to come work with students on a special day in the Spring that had traditionally been a day “off” for students. Because this “day off” turned into the “good work day,” right away, the students interpreted working with us as a punishment. They were angry that they were required to participate in a workshop. Their frustration was clear in the way they talked with each other during a “town meeting,” at the conclusion of the workshop. Far from coming to the workshop with an open mind, the students were not interested in talking about pressing issues related to “good work.” Rather, they evinced negative feelings about “good work” and moreover, about the fact that they had to be there at all.

Second, in reviewing the email trail, it becomes clear that we were almost always “nagging” the headmaster for a response, for feedback, for a meeting. We have since concluded that this is an immediate “red flag”: *the interest between the GoodWork team and a school needs to be mutual in order for a collaboration to be worthwhile and effective.* In fact, our final communication with the headmaster was in August to discuss feedback about a session we had facilitated on April 7. In addition to feedback, we were planning to talk about the results of a student survey—to which only 11 students had responded.

Basically, we learned, that the headmaster was giving up on our efforts and, so far as we could tell, on the students. By postponing the survey and not addressing the fact that students had not completed it, he was signaling his students: “this is not important, I won’t push you to do this, and if you haven’t done it yet, don’t worry, we’ll just wait until next year”. We wonder, is this the kind of message one would want students to receive from their headmaster? How does this impact their understanding of responsibility, commitment, and timeliness? Needless to say, a meeting was still in the air when we

decided we would not push to get together anymore. We never heard another word from the headmaster or from anyone else in the school. Interestingly, when we last checked, he was still in charge of the school.

Some of these themes recurred when we worked with a nationally known independent school in another city. At this school, we worked most closely with the director of a new ethics center at the school, who ironically had just been designated as “leader of the year,” by a national educational organization. This school had originally asked us to work with them to launch the new ethics center and to represent it as a thriving initiative throughout the school. Over the twelve months that we had worked with this individual, several times, we asked that he put together a team of individuals to champion the work with us; he never managed to carry out this request nor to offer any explanation of his failure to do so. Based on our experiences with this individual and with our other positive collaborative experiences, we have learned that *establishing a team of educators to “champion” a new initiative at a school is essential because the school as a whole takes ownership of the work.*

After traveling for a handful of in-person meetings and developing and facilitating several different workshops, we were still left wondering what place, if any, the GoodWork initiative occupied in the school. The director of the center was reluctant to work with other individuals at his school and he did not want to commit to a long-range plan to incorporate the materials in the school. While he never stated it explicitly, he was more interested in our coming to facilitate meetings and workshops *for* individuals at the school, a role that had never been on the table, as far as we could ascertain. In our minds, after an initial introduction to the possibilities, we had hoped that a

school would take ownership of the program. *Without the school taking ownership, the GoodWork initiative will not be central in the culture of the school. It will feel like just another initiative that people have to do in addition to their other responsibilities.*

Our realization that the school was not committed to our work became most apparent in the spring of our ostensible collaboration. We had facilitated a series of sessions in January, and in April started to question why we had still not received the modest payment that we had been promised. After a few attempts to work to investigate when we could expect payment, we finally decided to contact the headmaster of the school. On the telephone, the headmaster simply stated that we were the “smallest” initiative at the school, and yet the most “expensive.” He invited us to submit a proposal for future work and said that if the center built an endowment, at that point, they could commit to our work. (Ironically, we had been told at the beginning of our relationship that their new ethics center was able to support the GoodWork initiative.) In addition, the headmaster told us that only the faculty at the lower school was interested in our work, which was absolutely not the case: we had received several emails from upper school faculty who wanted to use the Toolkit in their classrooms.

After several emails back and forth to the center director and the headmaster, (one which was even copied to the President of the Board of trustees, requesting that Howard’s testimonial supporting the center be removed from their website), we declined to write a proposal and suggested school leaders get back in touch with us if they were able and interested in making a commitment to the work. Needless to say, we never heard back. In reflecting on this experience, it seems clear that the headmaster and the director of the ethics center were

more interested in our names (e.g. Harvard, Howard Gardner) and affiliation than anything else. Not surprisingly, two years later, we heard about yet another major ethical scandal at the school.

It is important to note that we are not interested in making money from these collaborative efforts, but we do need to cover out services and materials. *Any official relation or collaboration has to include a contract or grant with Harvard; we make this clear at the outset, in order to avoid these difficult situations.* Even though we are not gaining money beyond our salaries, the collaborations that entail a money exchange are often harder than those that do not involve any payment. Perhaps this should not come as a surprise!

Coincidentally, at the same time this collaboration was ending, we began a relationship with a very large secondary school. Once again, in this case, we were told that this project was important to the community and would be underwritten. Over a three year period, we held numerous conversations with a faculty member to develop plans. At the time of this writing, the school is still considering options, and virtually nothing has happened related to GoodWork (other than a few introductory meetings). Again, we asked our contact there to form a group to champion the effort because we thought that might help to ignite the process, but so far to no avail.

As we had noticed some red flags early on in our relationship (e.g. reluctance to put together a team of individuals to champion the work, refusal to take ownership of GoodWork, over-processing by bringing in too many people to hear the same introduction, perhaps in the hope that people would mysteriously “buy-in” to concept), we decided not to encourage a collaboration, unless the team came to us with a plan and a team of people. We haven’t heard anything yet.

In addition to challenges we encounter with individuals in leadership positions, we also note the *importance of leaders being able to communicate openly and honestly with collaborators*. In the unsuccessful cases just sketched, this communication did not happen in an effective manner. Interestingly, we have also observed poor communication skills of those in leadership positions, even before a particular collaboration actually materializes. For example, a high-ranking official from a well-known educational institution in Latin America came to see us about his interest in the GoodWork Project. The organization at which he worked helps run numerous schools in the country. This individual wanted to collaborate with us to infuse GoodWork into the curriculum. He invited us to come to his country for a three-day workshop to introduce the GoodWork concept to educators from around the country. We signed a contract, spent time planning for the workshop, obtained visas, and made plane reservations. Three weeks before our trip, he notified us that the workshop had to be rescheduled because his company had gone public and was readjusting its corporate agenda. Nearly a year after we started planning for the trip, we received the following explanation in an email:

“I just had a meeting with our President and he asked me to be in touch with you regarding transferring the March agenda to the second semester. At this moment we are in the process of implementing new colleges, in seven different locations and we consider having 100 % of our energy dedicated to our expansions. I hope you will [be] understanding and if it is the case, please send to me two alternatives of agenda for October and November.”

We wrote back that we could not commit to new dates and asked to be compensated for our time (and cost of visas). In addition, since then, we have turned down other requests from him to collaborate on new

work. Evidently, our key contact was not fully supported by the leaders of his own institution. This leadership had not clearly communicated their agenda—which had a negative impact on our work and our time.

- *Poor Communication Skills*

Three other experiences in working to establish collaborations, actually ended before they started, because of poor communication, or lack of communication. These three experiences are frustrating most especially because the apparent lack of interest on the collaborator's part was never clearly stated—the conversation of potential collaboration fizzled once the “ball was in their court.” Each of these three experiences ended the same way (with no result), but the amount of work we put into starting a relationship varied, as did the type of collaboration we were proposing to form. The individuals with whom we spoke came from different kinds of organizations, including: a former businessman who started a nonprofit organization to encourage business leaders to practice ethical decision-making; a group at a university interested in adapting our materials for retirees, and, two educational consultants who were connected to a major national foundation.

In all three cases, we worked hard to get these collaborations up and running. We met in person (all three potential collaborations entailed out of state travel); we wrote proposals (summarizing the work we could do together); and we made plans for the work to take shape. All three situations ended in a mystery—at some point, we never heard back from our key contact or any of the people on this person's team (whom we met in-person or on email at some point in the relationship). Without a direct explanation, we surmise that the key contact was not interested in the proposed work or that the

organization did not have the funds to support the work. It seems that our contacts were simply unable to be honest and upfront—thus failing both on follow through and on explaining the lack thereof. This behavior is not justifiable in any human relation and is particularly jarring when the collaboration is ostensibly about ethical, responsible behavior.

Because of these experiences (and some others that could be detailed), we have been reminded of what our grandparents could have told us: *honesty is a key to a good collaboration*. In all three cases, we had wished that the individuals with whom we were working, would have communicated their hesitancy with respect to the proposed projects more clearly and that they could have been honest about any misgivings on their part. Indeed, one of the participants in our own collaboration study stated tellingly, “A new collaboration has to begin at least in part on faith, but if there is not a quick evolution into trust, the collaboration won’t work.”

This lack of communication and trust was also true of a different potential collaboration which we worked very hard to build, but in the end, failed to consummate. Once again, we were contacted by an individual in a Latin American country who represented a large educational institution; this individual expressed a great interest in our work and indicated that generous funding had been set aside for a collaboration.

After several emails and phone conversations, five individuals from the country traveled to Cambridge to meet with us about this potential project. At that three hour meeting, we described our approach and materials in depth and explored what is needed in the educational system in that country, given the political and societal

climate at that time. We also requested a written summary of their interests, along with an approved budget, and a timeline for the work upon their return.

After this meeting in August 2008, we did not hear back until October of that year. Apparently, they were having trouble getting a budget approved by their institution. In itself, this turn of events was not surprising because of the financial meltdown that took place in the Fall of 2008. Interestingly, however, we were told that someone new, who was head of the parent company's board, was interested in pursuing and underwriting the initiative. We arranged a phone call for the end of January, during which he promised to fund a sizeable project. We were so confident that this collaboration would materialize that we even notified our own Dean that this looked promising and identified key personnel for the project. At the beginning of February, the board chair emailed us that his company was holding a Board meeting and he would get back to us within a few days with the appropriate approval. A few days later, we received an email from one of our key contacts:

"Last week I had a very bad experience, I don't know if we are in the same channel at this point. At the last meeting I had with [head of company] he had already seen the proposal and supposedly, liked it and approved it. We agreed he would just call so we could give the next step, sign a contract and start working. After a week without news, I sent an e-mail asking for an update. Last Friday, his assistant...called me and said [head of company] asked her to call and said he was no longer interested in the project. I'm very, very sad... and very disappointed. Don't even know how to say it. I was just about to quit my actual job. Let me know if you have any news from him, she didn't give me any explanation."

After a string of emails (with some apologies), we ascertained that the Board decided not to support the GoodWork initiative. Again, given

the financial climate, this was not in itself surprising, But the fact that no one felt comfortable contacting us to give us this honest response, not even the leader of the organization, was shocking. Interestingly, one of the people with whom we had met in Cambridge (the previous August) sent an apologetic email. In it he states:

“I am very sorry how things have come up. I feel ashamed for how the people handled things here...I guess it is part of the culture. Anyway if there is anything that I can do to work out things...I will be pleased to help you.”

- *Different Cultures*

Internally, amongst our team, we discussed whether the failure of communication (and collaboration) was due to cultural differences, or more bluntly, to a lack of professionalism. A friend of the GoodWork Project, who lives in the Latin American country and also knows some of the putative collaborators personally, explained: “...there is a pattern in our country, it is very difficult for many people, even for the country, to accept and tell truth and failure.” *La verdad no pega, pero incomoda* is a common saying. “Truth is not a sin but it bugs, or bothers.” Though this was a helpful “reality check” for us at the time, we still believe that cultural difference cannot be an excuse for a lack of professionalism. Even though we may live and operate by different norms, being respectful to the “other” in the professional realm should be universal. As a result, we have learned that *in dealing with other individuals and organizations, respect, truthfulness, and honesty, are key*: without these, collaborations are unproductive and indeed unhealthy.

In the interviews conducted thus far for our own Collaboration study, cultural differences have been identified as a challenge to a “good collaboration.” This difficulty occurs not only in terms of working with

international groups, but also in working with organizations in the same country that operate differently than one's own, and even sometimes in working with different departments within a single organization. Culture is not a term restricted to different regions of nationalities; each institution, perhaps even each department within an institution, has its own distinctive culture.

For almost two years, we worked with an organization to develop materials that could be used with college students to get them thinking about GoodWork related issues. For the most part, the collaboration was productive—we developed materials that were effective with students and we still draw on these materials in our current work, but the collaboration was far from ideal. Specifically, the cultures of our respective organizations were different. The partner organization was a for profit group (we are non profit) which in turn, seemed to influence the prevalent working styles, perspective on ownership of the materials, and priority placed on getting the work done. Though we had regular in-person meetings and phone meetings to discuss progress and updates, we felt as though we were producing a good deal more than half the work. In the end, we worked harder to make sure that the materials and the programs met our standards. There were times that our collaborators agreed that they did not complete their “assignments” in a timely manner, but they rarely (if ever) acknowledged that we picked up the pieces they had dropped.

Had it not been for our key contact at one of the schools in which we used these materials (a person who actually operated as a third collaborator), we probably would have had a more frustrating working experience. However, because this key contact felt similarly about our shared responsibility to produce “good work” with a high

standard, we were mostly satisfied with our final products. In an ideal world, *a third party facilitator (or even an individual from one of the collaborating organizations) would work with the collaborating organizations to maintain a sense of balance and fairness, to keep the work moving forward, and to ensure that perspectives from all sides are heard.*

The third collaborator, the college at which we piloted our co-developed materials, failed to follow-through with its commitment to give us feedback about the programs we developed. At the end of one of our programs, we had agreed that we would help develop an evaluation tool (a questionnaire) that would be sent to students and faculty whom had participated in the program. After many attempts to launch the survey, we realized that we could not be effective if the collaborating organization did not want this to happen. After almost two months of emails and phone calls working to develop a questionnaire for students and faculty, we received a brief email from someone at the college simply stating they were going to develop and use their own survey. The sad dénouement is that nothing ever happened with this promise: the college did not develop its own survey, and students and faculty were never asked for feedback about the program (which would have been helpful to all three collaborating organizations).

In attempting to uncover why officials at the college had worked with us to develop a survey, and then all of a sudden declared their attention to develop their own (with no explanation), we had two phone conversations with the dean of the college. The last call was terse. The dean tried to argue that the problem was a result of a miscommunication. We then wrote an email to the two individuals with whom we had been working, and never received a response. I

excerpt from this email here because it highlights the level of detailed documentation process we use when collaborating with others (a tactic which, we must admit, often comes in handy). Also this excerpt raises the issue with which I started this essay—mainly, so many organizations do not “practice what they preach” when collaborating with others.

In this collaborative effort, we were working towards instilling a culture of good work for incoming freshman at this college. Yet, at the end, we were forced to argue with the dean, send documented logs of phone calls and emails about the work at-hand. Specifically, I wrote:

...to be frank, we are disappointed by the way this was handled. We spoke about this survey on Thursday, February 28 and you explicitly asked us to send you a draft by 3 PM on March 4—which we did. This was quick turn-around, but we were sure to work within your timeframe because you had said that you wanted to send the survey link to freshman the week before Spring Break (March 10). We were back and forth over email a number of times on March 5 regarding details of the survey (some edits you had), all of which we incorporated. Then, we heard nothing for nearly a month. We had sent emails with the link and left phone messages. Yesterday (April 3) after pestering you twice, you finally replied back with the message that you have decided not to use the survey and that you have developed another one, on your own. Our frustration is not only with the amount of time we spent on this and the speed (at your request) with which we worked, but also the lack of communication regarding your decision. If we had not pestered you, we wonder whether we would have been notified. Clearly, this is not the way we work. We find it puzzling that at a place like [yours] an institution interested in bringing the GoodWork Project into faculty and students' lives, things can be handled in this manner.

Sadly, as I've indicated at various points, this was not the first time that we encountered individuals who do not support their own "good" creed or their own organization's title and stated mission. Even when people come together to carry out "good work," some collaborators have a hard time exemplifying it themselves.

Surely, all of these experiences—the examples of meaningful and failed collaboration—are described from our perspective. We cannot be sure that a disinterested person would see it the same way. Perhaps from the point of view of our failed collaborators, we were too pushy, or too obsessive, or not focused enough on just telling the funder what he/she wants to hear. It is also possible that potential collaborators have an unrealistic view of Harvard: the University is so wealthy, or so sagacious, that it can somehow magically carry out a collaboration singlehandedly. Only if we were to explore 'the other side' could we be confident that the responsibility for these failed collaborations is not partly our fault. However, we can be sure that these "failed" experiences took a lot of valuable time for us, and quite possibly, for the other collaborator as well.

Conclusion

Throughout the essay, I have highlighted some of our own learnings over the years about what it takes to carry out a "good collaboration." Without any particular order, these include:

- *Every collaboration involves human beings—these individuals need to like each other enough to work together, they need to be able to communicate easily, and need to have and show mutual respect for one another.*

- *It is important to talk about goals up front and to ask: What is the goal of the proposed collaboration? Do we agree? Toward what ends*

do we want to work cooperatively?

- *Honesty in collaboration is key; open communication is also important.*

- *It is helpful to have a leader of a collaboration, or even a facilitator, who can stay attuned to moving the work forward and make sure all perspectives are heard.*

- *Being clear at the outset about parsing the work evenly, setting deadlines, and holding each other accountable is important.*

- *Scheduling a time to debrief the collaborative process—while it is happening and after its proposed duration—is essential. Far too often, the individuals involved in a collaboration do not talk about the process (its successes and mistakes)...or at least do not discuss it candidly.*

We expect that our current study on successful and unsuccessful collaborations will shed light on these core beliefs; additionally the study should also give us ideas about helpful strategies in working with others. Particularly in the domain of education, time and resources are limited, and sometimes the only way to share and disseminate ideas, and to bring about change is by collaborating with other organizations.

However, collaboration should not require more work than it is worth. In fact, many scholars who research the “what and why” of collaboration as a way of doing business are not overly positive. Lang (2002) notes, “Where adequate resources—whether financial, physical, or human—are available, inter-institutional cooperation presumably would not be undertaken (pg. 154). Huxham and Vangen (2005) are more direct in their advice: “Don’t do it unless you have to!” (pg. 37) The resulting adage may be: “If you want something done [and] you have to work with others, do it, even if it would be a

heck of a lot easier to do it yourself.” It is our hope that, through our work, we can challenge this adage and make collaboration a more productive, useful, and worthwhile experience.

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The Educational Sector

Educating for Good Work

Kendall Cotton Bronk

E*ducational interventions in two domains*

When the Good Work study began, the journalism domain was in the midst of a major transformation. For most of the 20th century, people tuned in each evening to watch their local or national news on a limited number of network channels, or they subscribed to one of few local or statewide newspapers. The simultaneous explosion of Internet and cable news outlets in the 1990s changed all of this. Suddenly news became available 24 hours a day and through an ever-increasing number of distribution channels. However, at the same time as news outlets were fragmenting, there was a trend toward convergence. Fewer large media companies owned more of these distribution channels, and they were chasing a shrinking audience.

Not only did the Internet and cable channels provide alternative news outlets, they also provided a novel kind of news, the quality of which varied greatly. A move from valuing painstaking verification of the

news to valuing the speed of its delivery was afoot. As a result, in many cases carefully vetted stories gave way to the quick display of raw materials as news. In some instances this change allowed greater access to primary sources, but in others it led to false reports. In either case, the role of the traditional news outlets as gatekeepers or watchdogs was changing, and the new face of journalism was unclear.

It was at this time that we decided to investigate good work in the journalism domain. Over the next 15 years of the Good Work project, this news media's transformation became only more acute. In 2004, the Project for Excellence in Journalism, in a piece entitled the State of the News, wrote "For some, these are all healthy signals of the end of oligarchical control over news. For others, these are harbingers of chaos, of unchecked spin and innuendo replacing the role of journalists as gatekeepers over what is fact, what is false and what is propaganda. Whichever view one prefers, it seems everything is changing."

As a part of the Good Work study, we interviewed leading print, broadcast, and Internet journalists. We asked these professionals, among other questions, how it was that they managed to do good work-or work that is at once of high quality, personally meaningful, and ethically sound-in the midst of all the change going on in the journalism profession. We compiled the feedback we received into a thick manual of strategies, tools, and approaches to doing good work in an industry that increasingly seemed to be designed to discourage such efforts. Eager to share what we had learned with other journalists, we decided to launch an educational effort, though we did not know exactly what form it might take.

In the late 1990s, Bill Damon was introduced to Bill Kovach, head of

the Committee for Concerned Journalists (CCJ) and Tom Rosenstiel, head of the Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ). The three decided to work together on an educational intervention and I was invited to collaborate in the effort. The PEJ and CCJ are related organizations which consist of a consortium of leading journalists, publishers, owners, and academics worried about the future of the profession. At the same time that Bill Damon and members of the Stanford research team were interviewing journalists to learn about their strategies for doing good work, equally concerned about the state of the news media, these organizations were leading a national conversation among journalists about the principles and priorities of the journalism profession. Clearly our interests were well aligned, so our team joined forces with Tom Rosenstiel and Bill Kovach and together we decided to create what eventually became known as the Traveling Curriculum.

The Traveling Curriculum is a day and a half, interactive workshop that can be altered to serve print, broadcast, and Internet newsrooms. Each session consists of three modules focused on different aspects of good work in journalism. Editors and publishers from the newsrooms select which modules they'd like featured in their particular session from a list of topics including bias, accuracy and verification, and engagement and proportionality. Sessions are typically held at an off-site location close to the newsroom, and attendees generally include about thirty journalists, editors, and the publisher.

Over the past nine years, these sessions have been carried out at hundreds of newsrooms across the country. A formal assessment of the workshops' effectiveness reveals that journalists and editors enjoy the sessions, and perhaps more importantly a blind review of the news products reveals an increase in the quality of the reported news

following the sessions. At present the sessions are led exclusively by a group of journalists associated with the CCJ, but in the first few years of the project, members of our research team along with a small group of journalists associated with the PEJ and CCJ facilitated the sessions. In the course of doing so we learned a number of important lessons regarding how to effectively foster good work in a profession.

Of course, the study of good work extends far beyond the newsroom. Therefore, in addition to attempting to educate for good work in journalism, we launched a series of similar seminars designed to foster good work in secondary education settings (See also goodworktoolkit.org). As educators ourselves, we did not feel the need to partner with an outside group, but instead designed these sessions with the help of more experienced professional development trainers in the field of education. We ultimately designed day-long sessions which became known as the Path to Purpose Seminars. Like the Traveling Curriculum, these sessions have typically been held at off-site locations near the school. Also similar to the Traveling Curriculum, these sessions are highly interactive and bring together a group of approximately thirty educators, including teachers, counselors, administrators, and the principal from each school. To date only a handful of sessions have been held, but given the positive feedback we have received from past attendees, plans to roll out this effort more broadly are currently underway.

Lessons learned

We gleaned a number of important lessons from these two quite varied experiences of educating for Good Work. Two lessons in particular emerged that seem likely to apply to educating for good work in other professions, as well. First, we discovered that workers

in both professions can benefit from the opportunity to reflect on their professional purposes. This opportunity is rarely afforded to employees, but when it is, it can serve as a source of refreshment and lead to a renewed commitment to the job at hand. Second, we also discovered that even workers who function in highly independent positions, such as teaching and reporting, tend to appreciate and benefit from opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. We believe these lessons, which little or nothing to implement, are particularly relevant given the uncertain economic conditions in the present era.

As relative novices to professional development, we were somewhat hesitant to approach both journalists and educators. We humbly acknowledged the possibility that at each juncture our efforts, though earnest, could prove completely ineffective. Therefore, rather than approaching the sessions as experts with a long list of lessons to impart, we approached them as eager collaborators. We explained to participants that we had compiled some knowledge regarding useful strategies and approaches for doing good work in each field. At the same time we were quick to point out that the journalists and teachers were better equipped to know which of these tools would prove most effective at their particular place of work, and that they would be the best ones to make recommendations regarding how to modify the strategies or approaches to fit the particular needs of their place of employment.

We began sessions with both journalists and teachers in a similar manner. First we briefly introduced ourselves and explained our aims; then we asked participants to describe their professional purposes. Accustomed to professional development endeavors that provided answers, participants were somewhat surprised by one that posed questions, and this question in particular. However, within a

few brief minutes, a spirited and thoughtful exchange of ideas inevitably ensued.

The responses we received far exceeded our expectations. Many journalists said they felt responsible for sharing the news their readers needed in order to function as members of a democracy. In other words, the journalists saw their role as supporting an essential, democratic function. Other journalists talked about the need to give a voice to the voiceless or to offer an accurate, proportional, and thought provoking report of the most significant events of the day. Educators, on the other hand, often reported that their purpose was to help adolescents develop into educated, productive members of society. Some educators talked about trying to bring their subject matter to life. Such vividness and relevance is needed if students are to understand how language, mathematics, science, or foreign language can enhance their personal and professional lives. The focus of the educators fell on developing well-rounded and well-prepared individuals rather than on developing students who could score well on standardized tests.

After sessions in both professions, we received feedback that suggested this kind of conversation is held all too rarely. Water cooler conversations about the day-to-day grind are the norm, but opportunities for high-level reflection are nearly non-existent. Both groups of professionals appreciated the occasion to discuss this issue.

The question actually poses two questions at once and simultaneously serves two important aims. At least implicitly, the question prompts professionals to reflect on their own reasons for entering a particular profession and at the same time asks them to consider the broader purpose for their chosen profession. On the individual level, it offers

employees the opportunity to reconnect with their own reasons for entering a field. On the organizational level, it allows employees to re-examine the aim(s) of their profession. These related foci allowed professionals to consider an important dimension of good work: the degree of alignment among employees' aims and their newsrooms' or classrooms' larger goals. Both the individual and the organizational level reflections are critical to the support of good work in the professions.

On an individual level, asking this question served to re-energize the professionals we spoke with. Participants told us they appreciated the opportunity to reconnect with the reasons they had entered their selected professions. For many of the people we spoke with, the conversation that we catalyzed represented the first time in a quite a while, or perhaps ever, they had reflected on their professional motivations. By having this conversation in a group setting, not only were individuals given the space to reflect, but they were also given the chance to hear why their colleagues had chosen the profession they had. The result was consistently positive. In addition to feeling recommitted to their work, participants told us they came to appreciate and understand their colleagues better as a result of this conversation.

On the organizational level, alignment between personal and organizational purposes varied across the journalists and educators with whom we met. In some cases, the alignment was close and our job was an easy one; in others significant gaps appeared between the two, and in these cases addressing the issue of misalignment was key. When we identified schools or newsrooms where personal and professional purposes were poorly aligned, we were able to bring this to the attention of the principals and publishers who were present at

the sessions. We allotted time to address the misalignment and to establish steps to tackle these issues.

An example of misalignment surfaced at one of the high schools we recently visited. There was a general consensus among the participants that they had become educators to promote the well-being and success of *all* students, but they felt administrators were disproportionately focused on improving the performance of the weakest students. As a result, administrators had done away with programs that did not directly support struggling students. For instance, the senior project, a year-long effort to engage honors students in working in the community, had been cancelled, and teachers were disappointed. Administrators had thought they were doing the teachers a favor by taking yet one more out-of-the-classroom responsibility off of their plate, but the teachers missed the opportunity to interact with the high achieving seniors in a one-on-one capacity. Senior projects had given the teachers a chance to get to know their students better and to feel like they were making a significant and positive contribution to their well-being. While we were not able to resolve this misalignment during our session, we were able to bring it to light and to establish a set of steps designed to sort it out in meetings following our session.

The question of professional purpose is one that should be posed at several junctures in one's career. For example, it makes sense to ask young adults on the brink of entering the workforce to consider why they are attracted to a particular field and to reflect on what they understand to be the larger purpose of the profession they are considering. Over time, as employees learn more about their profession and their own aims within that field, their answers will likely evolve, but checking-in to see how well their personal purposes

align with the broader purpose of their chosen profession is an important step toward doing good work.

In sum, posing this question was the first step in educating for good work in the professions. It served to re-energize staff members and allowed us to identify—and in some cases even correct—potential misalignment between personal and organizational aims.

A second useful step in fostering good work in the professions, we learned, is to allow opportunities for collaboration. Even individuals who work at jobs where they typically function with a high degree of independence can benefit from collaborative experiences. Both journalists and educators are given a good deal of latitude in how they complete their work. While they typically work closely with the people they serve, they often do not have many, if any, regularly scheduled occasions during which they are encouraged to work with their colleagues. Most of the journalists and educators we spoke with appreciated the independent nature of their work. At the same time the feedback we received from both suggested individuals were grateful to have been given the opportunity to collaborate during the seminars.

Newsrooms and classrooms vary in how well employees know one another. Even in smaller newsrooms we were surprised to find that typically all staff members did not know one another. In one case, we worked with a small town paper in Northern California. Given that the paper had fewer than thirty people on staff, we assumed everyone knew one another quite well. We were surprised when, in the post-session feedback, more than one person suggested that in future sessions we should hand out nametags! Upon reflection we realized we probably should not have been as surprised as we were. Given the

24-hour news day, it is possible—even common—for daytime workers never to meet the nighttime staff. In some cases, we learned, copy editors would scribble notes late into the night for daytime reporters whom they had never met. In a formal assessment of the Traveling Curriculum in newsrooms, the need for improved communication, both among staff members and between newsroom leadership and staff members, surfaced as the leading problem in newsrooms today (Damon & Mueller, 2006). Encouraging staff members to work together is an important first step in addressing this communication gap.

Schools vary in this regard. Some junior high schools and high schools have large staffs that do not know one another; others hold frequent departmental and school-wide meetings, where teachers and administrators are more likely to meet and form friendships. In neither case, though, are educators typically given regular opportunities to meet, talk, plan, and collaborate.

One way in which we made the sessions more interactive was to include abundant opportunities for large and small group discussions. In some cases, we posed questions that encouraged participants to share their thoughts on complex and nuanced issues. In other cases, we designed activities that forced participants to work together to solve problems. Through both of these means, staff members got to know one another and, we believe, came to respect one another.

At the end of each of our sessions, we asked participants to create action plans. We asked that they hold themselves responsible for making the changes that they felt would help them do good work. Both the journalists and educators noted their surprise at learning that such a wealth of information existed within their organizations

and expressed eagerness to tap into this store of knowledge in the future. Many participants committed to establishing more formal opportunities for such interactions.

At more than one of the journalism sessions, participants pledged to set up brown bag lunches led by different reporters, copy editors, etc who would talk about their work. We followed up with the journalists afterwards and found that many of these sessions indeed got underway. Often brown bag sessions would feature a reporter who had been working on long-term investigative pieces. The reporter would share his or her reporting process with staff members, many of whom were eager to become investigative reporters themselves, and the participants would suggest additional avenues and contacts for exploring the issue at hand. We believe these types of staff-led initiatives played an important role in the stronger stories that were published following our sessions.

Applying these lessons in uncertain economic times

Educating for good work is important in any kind of economic climate, but for several reasons we believe such educational interventions may be even more critical during the challenging economic times in which we currently find ourselves. The number of jobs lost has been staggering, and we know that employees who survive lay-offs often experience high levels of guilt and disillusionment. One way to boost morale and improve the climate for good work at any type of organization is to engage surviving employees in a discussion around their professional purposes. Management may learn that the company's organizational purpose is poorly aligned with the staffs' personal purposes. For this activity to be successful, management would need to be committed to re—

examining the company's aims and the processes by which work gets done at the company. However, if there is a genuine commitment on the part of management to promote good work, such a re-examination may constitute an effective first step in doing so. This exercise can help facilitate good work in two ways: (1) it can help re-energize a demoralized staff; and (2) the resultant realignment can help the organization function more effectively as the staffs' personal and the company's organizational aims will be better matched.

Offering employees additional opportunities to work with their colleagues is another relatively easy and low cost way of promoting good work within an organization. Some jobs are already highly collaborative, but others are not. It seems logical for members of the management team to re-examine their company from the perspective of fostering additional opportunities for collaboration; such a move can mobilize and maximize the talent and knowledge pool in an organization. Of course, people who are naturally independent workers are likely to be drawn to positions that allow them to work on their own. To that end, a dramatic overhaul of the work process is neither required nor recommended. Instead, instituting voluntary opportunities for employees to work together coupled, perhaps, with incentives for collaborative efforts may prove to be an effective way of encouraging collaboration, and of ultimately fostering good work in an organization.

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The Acquisition of Self–Knowledge in Schools: Why it is needed and the changes it will require

Karen Rathman

In our view all of us need to *take stock of our own situations, weigh the various alternatives* in light of our *own values and goals*, and *make decisions* that are optimal *under the circumstances* and that we can *live with in the long run*. In the absence of this person–centered perspective, we are merely observers buffeted by the fates (italics added; Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, p. 13).

Abstract

On the basis of my work on the Youth Purpose Project, I argue that personal alignment is achieved through self–understanding—that is, living one’s life in accordance with one’s own attributes, aptitudes, goals and values. Personal alignment is a necessary precursor to finding one’s purpose(s), to doing good work in all aspects of life, and to determining what will be a good life based on one’s values, beliefs, needs, desires and gifts. In the adult years, personal alignment can happen through reflection on life’s challenges, one’s experiences,

successes, mistakes and perhaps lost opportunities. However, by incorporating self-knowledge or self-understanding into the definition of education, personal alignment could start to happen during adolescence with potential benefits for both the individual and for society. I also discuss why it may be difficult to incorporate self-knowledge in schools because of the structural obstacles and resistances seen among the stakeholders in the education of children. The vision I put forth requires a change in the definition of what we mean when we say, “to educate.”

The GoodWork Project

In their book *Good Work*, Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, and Damon suggest that individuals who engage in “good work” go beyond mere fortune and fame; they are thoughtful about the implications of their work for themselves and for others, even during difficult and uncertain times. “Good workers” are fully engaged in what they do, and that engagement is measured by its excellence and its ethical nature. According to this analysis, thoughtful participants in any profession ponder three issues: *mission*, “which reflects a basic societal need and which the practitioner should feel committed to realizing” (p.10); *standards*, whereby “each profession prescribes *standards* of performance, some permanent, some changing with time and place” (p.10) “a list of admired workers, along with their virtues, should reveal the *standards* embodied in the profession” (p.11); and *identity*, “a person’s own background, traits, and values, as these add up to a holistic sense of identity: a person’s deeply felt convictions about who she is, and what matters most to her existence as a worker, a citizen, and a human being” (p.11).

The Youth Purpose Project

Growing out of Bill Damon's life long research interests, and his lengthy involvement in the GoodWork Project, The Youth Purpose Project is a longitudinal study. The project investigates what purpose is in young people, determining how many young people are purposeful, and looking at how purpose is or is not being fostered by institutions such as families, schools, or religion. The Youth Purpose Project seeks to discover whether finding purpose during adolescence provides meaning and direction for life leading to a serious commitment to "good work."

One of the goals of the Youth Purpose Project has been to identify organizations that might be involved in fostering purpose in young people. We initially intended to write a report on best practices in organizations based on what we had learned. However, early investigations generated long lists of programs, schools, clubs and nonprofit organizations that included the notion of fostering purpose in their mission statements and goals. Yet, assessing these organizations' statements, as well as determining the effectiveness of their myriad approaches, proved problematic.

Therefore, we decided to partner with an established nonprofit organization, The Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations (QISA). QISA is actively engaged with a select group of public schools for the stated purpose of fostering aspirations in students. The QISA aspirations framework aims to create learning environments where students feel they belong and where students are encouraged to remain in school to reach their future dreams and goals. Our collaboration with QISA narrowed our focus to how public schools

might be fostering purpose through developing the aspirations of their students.

It is important to note that the framework of student aspirations incorporated two parts of the Youth Purpose definition, the *intention* to do something worthwhile and the *commitment* to follow through toward that intention. But it did not include the third and critical component that we use to define purpose: to do something that is at once beneficial to the self and also of *consequence to the world beyond the self*. We believe our partnership with QISA had a beneficial effect on all of the schools that work with QISA, and on QISA itself. Going forward, these efforts include finding purposes that serve both the self and others.

QISA afforded us access to schools where we could unobtrusively observe classrooms and faculty meetings. Our goal was to understand how faculty and staff think about, talk about, and implement purpose-fostering ideas into their conversations and lessons. We also held a teacher development day on fostering purpose attended by 250 teachers and administrators. And we offered separate seminars to groups of teachers from differing socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and from different sized schools. I draw my insights from these activities and observations.

What We Learned from School Visits

Because of the structure of the school day and the mission of teaching as understood by most professionals, teachers often do not take time to know the personal side of their students nor to offer the personal side of themselves. For the most part, they don't see these relationship-building tasks as part of the mission of education. As a

result of the QISA framework, some schools we visited were actively involved in creating opportunities for teachers to share their hobbies and talents with students, both to connect more personally with students and to expose students to interests they could develop themselves. Though the focus fell chiefly on teacher sharing, with less emphasis placed on student sharing, the long-term intent was to create relationships through common interests. However, it was clear that for many teachers, both in middle school and high school, teaching an academic subject, such as math or science, came easily but reaching out to connect on a more personal level with students was much more difficult.

Structural Obstacles—Stakeholder Misalignment

Our school visits highlighted considerable misalignment among the goals of various stakeholders in the education process. For instance, we heard many teachers talk about the overwhelming tasks they face in educating students from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, particularly at a time when both students and teachers are expected to meet state mandated test requirements. Many schools we visited were in the grips of “high stakes” testing and its preparatory reviews. Administrators were focused anxiously on those requirements and results. Many teachers were struggling to adhere to the requirements of the United States No Child Left Behind educational mandates. The drive toward improving test scores, and the temptation toward teaching to the test, were discussed among parents, teachers and administrators, many of whom had concerns about the validity of such foci.

Administrators also had other concerns. Some schools were burdened by decaying and outdated facilities, handicapped by lack of space for

growing numbers of students, or struggling with declining or rapidly changing student demographics. Parental and societal emphases on matriculation in college, independent of preparation or fit, burdened many schools. Vocational technology departments reported fewer college bound students willing to venture into the hands-on courses their programs offered. Budgetary cuts to programs were severe, even before the financial meltdown of autumn 2008. Stakeholders beyond the schools, such as funders for educational programs, added to the misalignment. For example, one potential funder of an educational nonprofit said, “I just need statistical proof that using a new model directed at a broader approach to education through character development will positively affect student test scores.”—as if that was the only purpose of such a program.

As teachers and administrators faced these testing and cost issues, dimensions of student development beyond the purely academic, of special importance to our Project and our collaboration, were left to counselors, often with hundreds of students to be served per counselor. As it currently stands, teachers aren’t sure of their role in the personal and social development of their students, and many schools don’t provide teacher collaboration time for discussion around how to incorporate this kind of learning into the curriculum, Accordingly, many teachers hope that guidance counselors can handle both the academic and nonacademic needs of students. Counselors, on the other hand, were desperate for more help and wanted more teachers trained to take on the roles of mentor or guide.

To be sure, some stakeholders did realize the importance of a broader definition of education. Consider what I heard from a caseworker in a nonprofit organization that provides tutoring and mentoring to low-income students from the 7th grade through four years of college:

“From a sociological perspective, what is often needed is a focus on the personal and social needs of adolescents. If kids have problems in these areas, it throws them off track in every other area.” Still, the forces toward academic-only achievement proved pervasive and persistent. The caseworker continued, “But our mission statement is about academic success, and so, though we see the need, we don’t have the funding or personnel to provide the counseling kids need.” Comments like these remind us of the bind that educators face in dealing with disparate needs and competing desires.

Challenges Faced by Teachers

Given the time constraints and heavy workload, many teachers did not want to consider a broader role. A few, who were part of the energetic, passionate and creative aspirations teams in the QISA schools we visited, saw obstacles but still wanted to be catalysts for change. They spoke of the need to have supportive leaders. They were enthusiastic about creating new environments in schools. In an effort to do so, they inspired changes like block schedules with longer class periods, planning sessions for teachers and advisory periods for students, senior projects, and school-wide community service.

Alas, these teachers sometimes faced derision or negativity from others who wanted no part of a changing environment. We heard teachers admit that they were afraid of the work involved in changing their class curricula to meet the demands of extended learning periods. We witnessed the slow pace and need for perseverance experienced by these change-agent teachers. For instance, we attended a long scheduled afterschool faculty aspirations team meeting at a large inner-city middle school. We arrived to find only three teachers, rather than the expected thirty, in attendance. The

principal had left a month ago, and the teachers had been given no word as to when or who the replacement would be. The frustration of those making the effort to meet and to create a broader learning environment for students was palpable in the face of structural difficulties that often seemed insurmountable.

Current Mission of Education and Standards for Teachers

Stepping outside the particular demands of our program, we found general acceptance among educators of the need for students to find purpose in their lives. Teachers understood that having defined intentions and committing to activities serving both individual needs and the larger community catalyzes a positive trajectory for youth. And yet, some teachers did not seem to know what, if any, their role should be in this process or even what they wanted their role to be. The emphasis on student test scores and grades kept teachers focused on short-term academic goals.

Perhaps we should not be surprised that people believe the mission of education is purely the acquisition of academic knowledge. While in the past, in the West, other social and personal goals were pursued, the trend in the last decades has been inexorably toward academic achievement. The major exceptions are in religious schools and some independent schools. And the same trends toward pure academics can be observed even at the collegiate level. For example, in a recent publication, Lee Bollinger, president of Columbia University, stated, “The crucial and, admittedly, extremely difficult question [is]: what is the knowledge and what are the capacities that we want young people to have in order to do well in the future world they’re going to be responsible for? Students need time to try things that are not necessarily career oriented” (Rosenberg, 2009).

Only if we move away from thinking that the role of schools is solely to provide an academic education, will it be possible to rethink the mission, standards and identity of our schools and teachers. In so doing, we will be revisiting some of the moral, ethical, and personal goals that were once more prominent in education around the world. Intriguingly, these goals were prominent even though individuals had far less choice about the lives that they would lead once they left school. Nowadays, when individuals have so many more decisions to make for themselves, understanding of one's self first through self-knowledge, and developing purpose in life, is more important than ever before.

In my view, schools should not leave students to “dabble” in a variety of extracurricular classes, activities and experiences with the hope that students will magically discover their individual purposes, their sense of identity, and their ability to function in society. Instead, schools should take a proactive approach to self-knowledge by offering a curriculum designed to help students discover individual assets, attributes, gifts and values. Qualities such as curiosity, industriousness, creativity, open-mindedness, relationship building, collaboration, engagement, responsiveness, innovation, teamwork, leadership, responsibility, caring, and consideration are a few of the many qualities that might be discussed. Students then may be able to choose to learn and to do the things in school that will help them materialize the futures they have decided they want.

Self-Knowledge at School

If self-knowledge is the precursor to finding purpose, then it is the ready in the ready, aim, fire approach to life. Without this self-

understanding, we are not giving students the best opportunities to thrive as individuals or as community members. Without self-understanding, we cannot expect them to meet the goals of being engaged and engaging, of being ethical, and demanding excellence of themselves. Nor will young people be able to do excellent work because they will not have learned to define their own form or definition of excellence. As Baxter Magolda (2003) suggests, “Young people need to move from the traditionally authoritarian approach to learning to one where they construct knowledge themselves and make meaning by placing themselves at the center of their thinking” (p. 232). Without self-knowledge, we are expecting students to aim and fire at something without the proper preparation for where they could or would want to aim either in the present or in the future.

Based on what I have observed in schools, students need adult-led and adult-facilitated discussions to explore personal attributes, difficulties and life planning goals. Also, understanding how to develop relationships, be they personal, as a community member, or as a citizen, requires a consideration of risk and balance, as well as tentative definitions of success and failure. Such discussions could enable young people to decide their own measures of excellence, including their values and ethics leading to engagement in tasks, associations and fields that are personally meaningful and rewarding both to the self and as contribution to the larger world.

Topics like these take time to understand and to pursue. For instance, several middle school boys said they like the year long aspirations class activities because they afford time to talk about their feelings, something they say they don’t often have a chance to do. A group of high school students told me that they feel they have no one in the school they can trust. Their friends are not really loyal

and will spread their “secrets” and feelings around their school. They can’t talk to their parents because they “don’t understand”. They will not go to the guidance counselors or anyone in the office because those adults are obliged by law to seek professional help if they think the students are in trouble. When I asked them if they would like to have an adult in their lives that they could talk to, they all said yes.

For these reasons I propose creating and testing a stand-alone curriculum similar in style to the GoodWork Toolkit that would encourage the personal, social and emotional growth of young people. Readings about the lives of others, journal writing and reflection, film, videos and class discussions, could all be used as tools to help young people in the search for identity, value clarification, what is important and what holds meaning for them. Young people need practice in how to think about and become engaged in self-knowledge work that is open ended, has no prescribed answers, and is evaluated based on participation, effort, creativity and cooperation. Although educators claim to encourage critical thinking skills, the processes currently used in the classroom would seem counterproductive to the goals of self-knowledge.

This Type of Learning Must Happen at School

When asked where acquisition of self-knowledge should happen, many people respond that it should happen at home. In a perfect world, perhaps that would be correct. However, for the vast majority of young people, such self-learning conversations are not happening at home for a myriad of reasons. Many children come from dysfunctional families or from families with poor parenting skills and/or very little education. Many families have little time outside

working hours to devote to children and many, families allow unsupervised media consumption.

A powerful example came from a middle school guidance counselor. She felt that, because some students have very difficult home lives, just showing up to school is enough of a purpose for them. Alas, while perhaps true literally, such a response does not recognize that it is just those young people who need the mentoring and support from teachers most because they may not have such guidance or examples anywhere else in their lives. Indeed, as a result of the increasingly pervasive modern family structure, self-knowledge must become part of the mission of educating at school. School is the only equalizing factor in EVERY child's life. It is the only place where each child, no matter what type of family he or she comes from, can be exposed to a variety of adults who could guide and mentor him or her toward making positive life choices. Young people need to know themselves first if person-to-organization and person-to-society alignment can be achieved later in life.

Changing the Mission of the Educational System and Standards for Teachers

If the definition of educating a child comes to embrace the goal of self knowledge, then the mission and standards for education and the training and recruitment of teachers must shift dramatically. In discussing identity, Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon (2001) invoke the "mirror test" in which one asks oneself the question, "What would it be like to live in a world if everyone were to behave in the way that I have?" (p. 12). The adult society of educators, parents and community workers should use this mirror test to determine

what role we should play in helping to go beyond academics with students.

However, we cannot expect teachers to take on this added role of facilitating self-understanding without first providing considerable training and scaffolding. Many teachers need extensive training before they will feel comfortable leading meaningful and lengthy discussions that are not academically focused. Some teachers naturally mentor and speak to all aspects of their students' lives, but many are uncomfortable, unpracticed or unfamiliar with diverse aspects of the development of young people. During the Youth Purpose Project discussions with teachers, we found that teachers might acknowledge the need for life skills learning and/or fostering purpose, yet blank stares often resulted when teachers were asked what they were actually doing to implement such learning. During day-long seminars we hosted on the subject of fostering purpose, teachers and administrators responded that one of the most critical parts of the day for them was the time spent discussing and brainstorming the "how to" part of fostering purpose in the classroom and school. Those who attended the seminar were eager to bring this kind of learning into their classrooms; they just didn't know how.

Revealingly, the attendees also reported spending relatively little time thinking about the role of purpose in their own lives (or the role that they could or should play in the development of purpose in the lives of their students). Yet, as was also found in the GoodWork interviews, many responded positively to the time provided for them to reflect on and share their original purpose in becoming a teacher and how that initial mission fit with their current goals. Many shared that they had not thought about their original reasons for teaching in a long time and that the opportunity to rethink and discuss these

reasons proved valuable. Many reported that they rarely share information about their professional purposes with their students because they are so focused on imparting the required academic material. During one seminar, we asked the attendees about the greatest value of the seminar. We heard responses like, “The validation that finding a purpose is worth class time!” and “Confirming that teachers and school have a greater influence on purpose than we realize.”

Conclusion

Often it seems that where one began may not have been at the very beginning. As a result of my work on the Youth Purpose Project, I suggest that the culmination of the GoodWork Project and the Youth Purpose Project could be an investigation of how to incorporate the acquisition of self-knowledge into formal education. It is my strong belief that thinking about self-knowledge at school could be the necessary precursor to finding purpose and to doing “good work” in all parts of adult life, including interpersonally, socially, physically, spiritually, intellectually, economically, and as a member of their communities and the larger world. I suggest that the role of teachers expand to include guiding students in the development of knowledge of themselves. Such knowledge can help students plan a future in which they explore their unique selves, identify their own aspirations and goals, and contribute to the world beyond themselves. The incorporation of self-knowledge into the mission of education would probably necessitate extensive structural change in schools, including how the school day is managed, how teachers are hired and trained, and what parents and the community expect of the schools. Still, incorporating changes in the identity, skills, and training of those we ask to become teachers, as well as the standards that we set for them

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in this most important work, might help bring about important changes for individuals and societies around the world.

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13

Taking Stock: The Value of Structuring Reflection on GoodWork

Kathleen Farrell

Success is a slippery idea. On the one hand it is relatively easy: Our days are replete with examples of success that range from athletic achievements to scientific discoveries to handsome financial returns. In this light success means achieving what we set out to do or doing something at a level that exceeds precedent. But success is surprisingly difficult to pin down: personal stories and human history suggest that what constitutes success by one accounting may come up short by another. Is increasing food production at the expense of ecological diversity a successful response to ending hunger? Should breaking the rules to move-up at work chalk up as career success or an ethical failure? How might an individual decide what is “good enough” in any arena of life when he can do virtually anything but not everything is equally worthwhile?

Questions like these hint at why success is elusive. It takes time to pause to articulate what we hope to accomplish in our various pursuits and examine why and how we hope to do so. Many of us are disinclined to set the many balls we are juggling aside for a moment to consider how we might better handle them. When we do, it is hard to think about them critically—to imagine how our aims in one endeavor may constrain possibilities in another, to entertain alternative, plausible pursuits, or to consider how our own goals may affect others for better or for ill. While popular tales à la *Tuesdays with Morrie* and *What Should I Do With My Life* suggest the appeal of wrestling with life's purposes, reports of dissatisfaction and anomie are burgeoning. But it is not only personal satisfaction that is at stake. Our collective well-being and trust are eroded when individual actions are compromised because individuals' aims and actions are short-sighted, one-dimensional, and insular.

GoodWork's educational initiatives wager that schools can play a significant role in helping individuals get a handle on "success". In programs that stimulate both *reflection* and *prospection*, we ask individuals to put their values in conversation with their day-to-day decisions, long-range goals, and commitments to others so they may act and plan more responsibly and with greater integrity. The GoodWork Toolkit includes a collection of activities designed to help individuals and organizations reap lessons from their own past experiences and from the stories of others. This instrument also invites participants to imagine the implications their goals may have for their own fulfillment and the well-being of their communities.

I was attracted to the GoodWork Project because of its conviction that undergraduate institutions, as part of their own good work, should foster students' commitment to work that is engaging, ethical, and

excellent. The project's research on young professionals, the role of mentors (and anti-mentors), and the importance of campus environments rang true to my experience as a college administrator and was consonant with my interest in educational research. In prior employment I instigated and implemented efforts to help students reflect upon their "purpose"—or how they might match their talents and passions with the needs of society. We explored the idea of a purposeful life, but anchored our conversation in their day-to-day experiences. Examining their academic plans, out-of-class activities, and work commitments gave them opportunities to consider whether the pieces of their lives were coalescing into a whole they could feel good about and which "did good" for others. A puzzle I faced then continues to captivate me: how do we best articulate the value of initiatives designed to catalyze students' thinking about lives of responsibility and meaning; and Can we determine whether our efforts are successful?

This is more than a puzzle, of course, it is a perennial educational problem. Putting our finger on long-term outcomes (do individuals go on to do good work in their lives?) and seemingly ineffable impacts (how self-honest are individuals' revelations about values, meaning, and responsibility?) is difficult at best. The challenge of designing and evaluating GoodWork initiatives takes on greater weight in an era when documenting the value of any intervention is imperative and when the prevalent emphasis on "basic skills" distracts from *how* students' lives gets lived or *how* their work gets done. Sadly, in such a climate it can be easy to conclude that educational goals whose importance is difficult to prove must diminish in priority. One way of addressing this challenge is to provide experiences that catalyze a consideration of what it means to do good work in a good life.

In one recent partnership, GoodWork researchers collaborated with an elite, private university to convene voluntary reflection groups for freshman students. Not all of the project's facilitators were affiliated with GoodWork, but we shared a commitment to creating opportunities for students to pause and think critically and intentionally about their personal values, experiences, and goals: the sessions were promoted to students as "...time to meet together, with a faculty member or administrator, to discuss important questions about life, about your time at (college), and about your future." During the project's evaluative wrap-up meeting, literally every group leader remarked on the program's general success: students participated voluntarily, the vast majority stayed for the program's duration, and their feedback indicated they would both do it again and recommend it to others. Howard Gardner articulated what many of us were thinking: Yes, "we built it and the students came", but was that sufficient evidence of our success? After all, students voluntarily participate in and enjoy activities of variable intentions and quality. There was certainly no doubt about the positive character or intention of our effort and the story of *what* happened in the groups remains compelling to students, parents, and colleagues at other institutions. However, until we better understand *why and how* such opportunities are valuable for students and institutions, we remain poorly equipped to argue that the programs are worthwhile or successful.

The GoodWork team is hardly alone in urging educators to engage students in reflection upon "big questions" about success, ethics, and personal meaning (*cf.* AAC&U, 2007; Connor, 2008; Damon, 2008; Kronman, 2007; Parks, 2001). Young adults are presented with expanding freedom, new responsibilities, and increasingly complicated decisions even as they are developing more mature

faculties for understanding their world (Baxter Magolda, 1992; King and Kitchener, 1994; Perry, 1999). To varying degrees, they are captivated by perennial, human questions about what it means to lead a life that is meaningful and responsible—and about what may constitute their own meaningful, good lives. Whether and how well American universities of the past championed education for a “good life” is yet another topic of debate. But there is recurrent clamor that most contemporary institutions have given holistic education short-shrift or abandoned it all together.

Students’ experiences echo this point. The freshman program described earlier was motivated by graduating students’ laments that their otherwise excellent education had not offered them opportunities to think about “the big picture”—also known as “their life”. Its participants observe how important it was that their community made an effort to acknowledge the challenging decisions most college students face. They note that college is part of a much larger journey, but that their many everyday academic choices obscure the big picture—they stare at the trees, rocks, and puddles rather than surveying the landscape and monitoring the horizon. Students say that questions like whether to study abroad, complete a thesis, or declare psychology or philosophy feel disconnected from one another. Likewise, neither the relevance of their choices for their long-term goals nor their long-term goals themselves is clear. For many students, the pace of life and the commanding expectations of family, peers, and their institutions make it challenging to know what guiding questions to ask of themselves—much less make time to wrestle with them.

There is reason to think that fostering self-reflective practices among students will help them connect their immediate and long-term

choices and be intentional about drawing “the big picture” of their lives. Several professions—including health care, education, and business—embrace reflective practices precisely because they develop individuals’ understanding, expertise, and responsibility within an occupational context. Similarly, GoodWork researchers have explored the role that contemplative practices—including prayer and meditation—play in supporting good work among professionals. Such practices (i.e. yoga, meditation, and journaling) are finding a home in some K–12 classrooms and reflective communities of practice are de rigueur in many professional preparation programs (though sadly, not all).

We currently know very little about whether, why, and how young adults pause to reflect voluntarily and constructively upon their experiences, beliefs, and goals. It is also unclear how educators can best facilitate and scaffold their self-reflection and whether our efforts may foster enduring habits. This situation frames a recursive problem. That is, until we assess our efforts more rigorously, it is challenging to know what types of interventions are effective and in what ways they make a difference. But until we articulate the plausible benefits of such programs and design our efforts to achieve them, we will continue to gauge their success anecdotally through participation and satisfaction.

There are historical, philosophical, and developmental foundations for why higher education should support students as they encounter “big questions” about work, success, purpose, and service during their time in college. But students who have had such opportunities are uniquely able to attest to the immediate relevance and importance of this work. Over the course of many years, I’ve been a part of various efforts to help undergraduates critically examine their values, goals,

and experiences. Some programs, including the freshman reflection groups, were completely voluntary. Others, including course-based initiatives, mandatory student retreats, and disciplinary programs, involved both the willing and the reluctant. Reflecting upon my experiences implementing these initiatives has helped me re-imagine the short-term value of such projects and how they may be effective.

By virtue of their context, such initiatives nest in broader educational goals such as developing students' conceptual knowledge, communication skills, and critical thinking abilities. Looking for ways that students' experiences align with undergraduate purposes was instructive. It led me to distill my thinking into a set of four objectives that I explore below. I hope they will provide a useful starting point for thinking about and gauging success in future designed programs—ones fashioned to encourage students to understand the idea of good work while considering what good work and a successful life may look like for them personally.

1. *We are successful if participants understand that the purposes of higher education include not only preparing students for employment but helping them develop as individuals with multi-faceted responsibilities at work, in their communities, and in their families.*

How higher education interprets and manifests its social contract is a topic of perennial intrigue and debate. However, that there is some perpetual mandate for colleges and universities to cultivate their resources (including their alumni) on behalf of the greater good is rarely questioned. Unfortunately, societal messages about college typically equate the diploma as a ticket to a career and not a tool with which to navigate life's varied terrain. Higher education marketing that touts job placements, fellowships, and graduate school

acceptances—even invitations to “discover a career you can be passionate about”—reinforce the intangible press to declare majors, secure internships, and prepare to earn a living. Some campuses balance this one-sided view with data and stories about students’ community service and experiences abroad. But on the ground, there is little to help students weave the disparate parts of a collegiate experience into a coherent whole—much less support to help them consider the meaning of that whole for themselves and their communities.

Such efforts are likely to find a receptive audience. Young adults are keenly aware that they will need to balance multiple roles and activities in their adult lives. On campus, their responsibility to extracurricular groups, family, and their own academic record are scaled-down dilemmas about honoring and prioritizing competing commitments. Participants in reflection groups have been effusive about simple exercises that invite them to map how they’ve spent their time or draw upon their personal values when thinking about their goals and making their daily plans. For example, students asked to record their “fixed commitments” are typically surprised: some share dismay at the amount of time they cannot account for, some are taken aback by how little margin they leave for spontaneity or self-care, and some are shocked at how much more time school work consumes than it did in high school. Similarly, whether or not they come to the conversation voluntarily, most students are quickly engrossed in compelling stories of how alumni, faculty, and guests reconcile and integrate diverse aspects of themselves in meaningful and manageable ways. Focused opportunities to think about multiple dimensions of ones’ self feed not only decisions that contribute to collegiate satisfaction and success. They can also convey a value for

the multiple dimensions of life and society to which higher education has a commitment.

2. *We are successful if participants expand their understanding of constructs including work, service, and success.*
3. *We are successful if participants increase their self-understanding—for example, knowledge of their own values, goals, abilities and commitments.*

How we define “success”, “work”, and “service” can constrain decisions we make about our own lives of work and service as well as how we envision our personal success. A personal story helps to illustrate this point. My forbears were farmers, clerical staff, factory-workers, and morticians: they worked with their hands, had something tangible to show for a good day’s work, and could see how their work mattered in the flow of daily life. Outside of work, my parents and grandparents were involved in local politics, fraternal organizations, church activities, and their respective ethnic communities. Through their example, I developed a very generous understanding of what it means to engage with one’s community. Not surprisingly, my understanding of “work” was likewise constrained. It took many years of urging by friends and mentors—years after my graduation from a highly selective college—before I really got it: “work” could include *both* tactile effort as well as intellectual pursuits, and scholarship’s long-term, tentative pay-off was valuable and worthwhile. Helping students examine their assumptions about what is possible can radically shift how they think about the achievements to which they aspire and how they might pursue them.

As many GoodWork authors have explored, the contemporary Western milieu equates success with compensation, prestige, and

personal freedom; responsibility to society is typically an afterthought. Subsequently, “work” is time invested toward this vision and “service” squeezes into the remaining time—balance (if there is a balance, of course) or arises after one is otherwise successful. Ostensibly, there are many students with whom this idea resonates. For most, however, part of the “money, markets, and me” equation doesn’t add up: for them the equation is incomplete or the variables are wrong altogether. Myriad students have shared that simply hearing how their peers think about success (both in life and in college) was liberating and pushed them to ask new questions of themselves. Others reported back how helpful it was to articulate their nascent ideas (e.g. about work, success, the college major) in a reflection group setting. One young woman shared that “making sense” of her situation to her peers enabled her to talk with knowledge and confidence to her family about the merits of a gap year versus a year investing scarce money and time in unfocused study. For her, plodding through college without a purpose was wasting the scarce resources of her institution, her family, and her community.

One way to reach a more expansive understanding of those ideas is to have a deeper understanding of self, a firm footing for facing each successive choice as they come along. Of course, it can be more challenging to make decisions once myriad options seem possible; scholars observe that the breakdown of traditional cultural categories (e.g. gender, religion, citizenship) and diffusion of concepts like work and service leaves many individuals rudderless. Not everyone finds ways through and around life’s obstacles and choices. But when students are asked to identify an individual they admire and why they admire that individual, the group almost unequivocally observes that people who live with integrity—whose lives are guided by clear

beliefs and values—are looked up to most often. In turn, students find the process of identifying and prioritizing the personal values they may use to navigate difficult decisions to be both challenging and rewarding. They are typically grateful to see how their values factor into the variables of their personal “success equation” and they are eager to explore how values are both personally important ideals and accurate descriptions of who we are. For example, stating “honesty” was a personal core value led a student to consider how getting older changed her relationship with her parents, creating situations where being honest may be more hurtful to them than telling an incomplete story or partial-truths.

Students also appreciated stories and activities affirming that values will compete with one another and strategies exist for wrestling with such conflicts. One first-year student struggled openly with how college was forcing him to revisit just how important excellence was to him. He observed that to excel in one area he would need to pursue fewer things overall; he wasn’t sure he wanted to forego other things that were important to him (i.e. relationships, new experiences, and quite possibly his health) to be such a star. Students may have implicit self-knowledge that shapes their actions (e.g. their values, abilities, relationships, goals) but which they don’t necessarily examine and use to inform their decisions and plans explicitly. Being asked to articulate and use such information to think through problems and past experiences was a valuable opportunity for these students, and hopefully a lesson in the value of self-reflection as well.

4. *We are successful if participants develop their self-reflective abilities as well as their inclination to be self-reflective.*

There are many ways of thinking about ourselves and arguably not all are equally desirable: “self-reflection” may imply constructive self-examination but it also may conjure images of idle navel-gazing, narcissistic self-examination, or ruthless self-scrutiny. Students’ feedback affirms that not only is it valuable to participate in reflection sessions, it is important to learn ways to pause and think about their lives “now and then.” Several students observed it was helpful that exercises asked them to think across time horizons—they had not considered the value of examining activities, questions, dreams, regrets, and accomplishments from their distant past, *vis-à-vis* ones that had occurred recently, or ones that represent plausible futures. As noted earlier, some students also cited tangible reflection activities (e.g. clarifying their values, evaluating how they use their time) as tools they expected to use in the future because they were helpful and well-structured.

Participants’ comments also affirm that although self-reflection is necessarily personal, it need not be private. Several participants have commented on how much they learned simply by needing to say something out loud—to make one’s own ideas, doubts and goals make sense to other people. One young man was surprised when he was unable to explain *why* he held an opinion that he shared freely in his daily life: it was very different for him to explain why he held a belief personally than it had been for him to defend the opinion intellectually. Others comment that, until they actually spoke out loud, they didn’t really know how they thought about a particular issue. Not surprisingly, students noted that simply hearing others’

stories both gave them new things to think about and reassured them that their own questions and uncertainty were typical and o.k.

It is true that many students independently enjoy conversations about “a good life” in late night bull sessions with their peers. However, students tell us that organized groups are uniquely valuable. First, they say it is easier to test new ideas and explore vulnerabilities with individuals you know less well in a setting that feels relaxed and confidential. On the latter point, they observe how valuable a facilitator can be in moderating conversation and helping them ask questions they might not think to ask of themselves. Others shared that having someone else to monitor the group, plan the time, and keep things moving made it a more relaxing environment and easier to participate with focus. Facilitators model how to ask probing questions of others respectfully as well.

More generally, the role of a facilitator in co-curricular reflection groups is an intriguing one. Much has been written about reflective pedagogies that undergird service learning, outdoor education, and professional practice. However, even faculty colleagues with generous experience in experiential education remark that it is very different to facilitate discussions that are not “anchored” in common experiences or readings; naturally, it is much harder to “go with the flow” of students’ lives! Additionally, framing questions for students to consider can be downright scary without professional and disciplinary boundaries to guide one’s choices. Students’ constructive feedback highlights this challenge. One student observed that it was hard for his facilitator to find “the edge”, the place where students are pushed to think hard about their assumptions and justify what they want but where they are not shut-down, embarrassed, or insulted. This student lamented that his leader played it safe and, while “safe”

was understandable in the student's eyes, he wondered what more he could have learned about himself and about how to challenge others respectfully.

Feedback from students who have contemplated their own “good work” and “good life” affirms that success is a challenging idea to grasp in both the abstract and the particular. Salient dimensions of our lives unfold in parallel making it hard to keep tabs on the varied things we are trying to achieve—much less to examine their implications and how they coalesce into a whole. Furthermore, we may measure success retrospectively but we are working toward it from any one moment onward. For young people in particular, questions of how to move forward and how they'll gauge success looking back are compelling and often consuming. Their stories push us to think beyond theories that state wrestling with “big questions” in college is worthwhile to illustrate why such opportunities are valuable. Ultimately, students' experiences suggest how educators might be successful in meeting young adults needs while cultivating their disposition to think broadly and responsibly about what they aspire to and how they achieve it.

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14

The Pedagogy of Good Work: Strategies of Engagement

Katie Davis

I feel fortunate to have been both a student and Teaching Fellow in Howard Gardner's graduate course on good work at Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE). The first class I attended as a student took place six days after 9/11. To be honest, I had enrolled in the course primarily for the opportunity to learn from a scholar whose writings on intelligence and creativity had inspired me to pursue my master's in education. (Based on my conversations with other students in the class, I was not alone in my motivations.) In fact, I had not even heard of the GoodWork Project before signing up for the course. But with 9/11, the good work concepts assumed a sense of urgent relevance and quickly took center stage. Like most people, we students were shaken out of our regular habits of mind. This jolt served as a forceful reminder that we were part of a larger community and bore certain responsibilities to contribute to its welfare. Several students, myself included, were not even American, but that didn't matter. The community transcended national borders.

In 2001, the course was young, its structure still a work in progress. The first major publication from the project, *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet*, had recently been published, and it served as our primary text for the course. The book was supplemented by readings on morality and creativity, reflecting the project's original focus on humane creativity. By the time I became the head Teaching Fellow (TF) in 2007, the project's publications had expanded significantly. There were now writings on good work in education, precursors to good and compromised work among youth, the third 'E' of engagement, and the role of responsibility in carrying out good work. These publications gave the course a new feel and focus that reflected the maturation of the project and its conceptual framework.

Despite these changes, two central aspects of the course have stayed constant. Each student is tasked with writing a research paper that explores good work concepts in an area of personal or professional significance. As the only graded assignment, students are expected to work on it throughout the semester. Consequently, the project becomes a focal point of the course. Indeed, my own student project figures prominently in the memories I have of my first semester at HGSE. Also clear in my memory are class discussions of good work in the context of current events, such as 9/11 and the collapse of Enron. Howard encouraged us to consider how the good work framework might be used to make sense of and learn from such events. When I returned to the class some years later, I was pleased to see that Howard was still encouraging such discussions. During my tenure as TF, we drew on good work concepts to explore the changing face of journalism, the execution of the Iraq War, and the causes and consequences of the 2008 financial crisis. The events changed from year to year, but the relevance of the good work framework did not.

I believe these two course components have lasted through the years because they are particularly effective ways of transmitting good work concepts. The research paper provides students with the opportunity to explore the good work framework in depth and use it to illuminate a problem of interest to them. The incorporation of current events into class discussions shows the broad range of contexts to which good work concepts apply, as well as their continued relevance. In this way, students come away from the course with both depth and breadth of understanding.

Encouraging students to own good work

Although H-175 (as it is often called) is not a methods class, the research project has always been a central fixture of the course. The primary purpose of the project is to give students the chance to apply the good work framework in an area of their choosing. Students are asked to draw on the framework as they collect and analyze their own data or synthesize a body of literature. Ideally, this exercise will produce new insight into an important and timely problem. Students find the research project challenging. For many of them, it is the first time they have collected their own data or conducted a literature review. Yet, in talking with students outside of class and reading their course evaluations at the end of the semester, it seems that most find it a worthwhile and rewarding endeavor. By the time they turn in their final paper, students have come to understand the subtleties of the good work framework and have gained a new perspective on a topic of interest to them. Our own thinking about good work has deepened as well, since many students have applied, and in some cases challenged, the framework in unexpected ways.

To give them ample time to develop their projects, students are asked early in the semester to choose their topic, articulate a research question, and select a method of inquiry. Most students investigate their research question empirically, typically through in-depth interviews with a modest sample of practitioners from a particular domain. Others choose instead to apply the good work framework to existing literature. We ask students to work on and submit their papers in stages during the course of the semester. After finalizing their research question, students conduct an initial literature review to determine what other scholars have written about their topic. Students who conduct their own research are given the opportunity to receive feedback on their interview protocol or survey before going out into the field. Towards the end of the semester, we ask for a rough draft that summarizes major findings and advances an initial argument. We also ask students to prepare a brief presentation of their findings and argument to share with the rest of the class. These presentations allow students to learn about other projects and receive feedback from their classmates and the teaching team. We have found that breaking the project into these smaller segments makes it feel more manageable to students when they sit down to write their final paper. It also keeps them on task and allows us to provide feedback at several points during the course of their project.

A large part of my role as TF involved supporting students in the development of their research projects. My fellow TF, Tiffanie Ting, and I each assumed responsibility for a subset of students with whom we worked throughout the semester. Our support included regular one-on-one meetings outside of class where we worked with students to refine their research questions, identify literature related to their topic, and troubleshoot logistical roadblocks. With Howard, we also provided students with extensive written feedback on their paper

submissions, including their initial proposal, literature review, and first draft. In addition, I led a series of hour-long sections during the course of the semester that sought to prepare students for each stage of the research project. Included in these sections were guidelines for formulating a research question, conducting a literature review, developing an interview protocol, analyzing data, and, finally, crafting a final paper. My predecessor, Scott Seider, introduced this basic format for section and we have received positive feedback from students, who often enter the class with little to no research experience. I have enjoyed the opportunity to guide students through the research process and witness their ideas crystallize and their confidence grow as the semester progresses. Not surprisingly, the students who appear to grow the most during the semester tend to be those who participate actively in class and section, take advantage of outside meetings with TFs, and endeavor to incorporate all feedback into their work.

The topics covered in student research projects extend well beyond the nine professions included in the original study of good work. During the time that I served as TF, students explored good work in a broad range of domains, from international aid work, banking, and blogging, to planetariums, summer camps, and professional football. Typically, students choose to explore topics that relate to their professional interests. As they examine their chosen area through the lens of good work, they discover a new way to look at their experiences. The concept of alignment often proves particularly illuminating for many students. One student, a classroom teacher, explored her school's process for creating and implementing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with special needs. She was troubled by her observation that IEPs do not always serve students well. In particular, the IEP meetings that bring

together parents, teachers, and support staff often prove unsatisfying to those involved. Through interviews with these stakeholders, she found considerable misalignment with respect to their goals, assumptions, and beliefs that undermined the effectiveness of the IEP process. By bringing to bear the good work concept of alignment, this student was able to shed light on an important problem in education and put forth recommendations to improve the situation.

Another student applied the concept of alignment to her case study of an elementary school art teacher. Through her conversations with and observations of the teacher, as well as interviews with various stakeholders, this student identified several tensions that confront the art teacher on a daily basis and make her work challenging. She must contend with the culture of testing that dominates today's educational landscape, as well as the perceptions of many parents, teachers, and school administrators that arts education is less important than "high-stakes" subjects like math and language arts. Instead of allowing this state of misalignment to undermine her work, however, the art teacher perceives it as a call to advocate for her profession. In this way, misalignment serves as a catalyst for good work in art education.

One of our international students, a curriculum coordinator in Singapore's Ministry of Education, employed the "three E's" of good work to explore teacher attitudes toward global education. As a curriculum coordinator, this student was responsible for developing literature curriculum for teachers of gifted students. Thus, she had had personal interactions with the teachers she interviewed and was familiar with their teaching practices. However, she had never spoken with them about their views on preparing students for a globalized world. Perhaps her greatest finding was the profound

thoughtfulness with which the teachers approached their work as well as their evident dedication to the profession of teaching. Each one of them spent a substantial portion of their week-long March vacation reflecting on and responding to her interview questions. In fact, one particularly thoughtful teacher submitted a twenty-page, single-spaced response! This student also discovered how excellence, ethics, and engagement shaped the teachers' perspectives on global education as well as their approach to teaching more generally. These insights allowed her to identify the structural supports they require in order to carry out their work successfully. After the course had ended, we were happy to receive a note from this student with news that the Ministry of Education had plans to publish her paper. Hopefully, those who read it will find the application of good work concepts to the Singaporean context equally illuminating.

Students have sometimes extended and even challenged aspects of the good work framework. For instance, one student drew on scholarship in his field to make the case for a two-dimensional model of ethics in international development work. Macro-ethics acknowledges the existence of certain universal ethical principles, while micro-ethics recognizes the need to exhibit sensitivity towards the cultural practices of different groups of people. Another student used her paper to explore whether our understanding of what it means to be a professional merits reconsideration in an era where web 2.0 tools make it possible for anyone to share information with a potentially vast audience. Several students have called for the addition of a fourth "E" of empathy. For example, one student interviewed a group of juvenile judges and discovered that they identified empathy as a critical skill and key ingredient of their success as judges.

I have noticed that many students achieve a sense of ownership of the good work framework as they pursue their research and become increasingly familiar with the concepts. In fact, I think of the research project as a type of good work apprenticeship, since it transforms good work from a theoretical framework to a lived experience. During this apprenticeship, we help to familiarize students with the good work concepts as they test them out on a range of problems and evaluate their usefulness. When certain ones prove unsatisfactory or limiting, students adapt and extend them as necessary. At this point, we have begun to learn from our students and to regard the good work framework in a new light.

Opening the class to the outside world

Bringing current events into class discussions requires a certain level of flexibility and willingness to depart from the fixed path of the course syllabus. In their course evaluations, a small number of students have expressed frustration over the lack of structure in some class discussions. We have tried to address this concern by providing more structure at the beginning of the semester through lecture-style classes, followed by increasingly fluid and interactive discussions as the course progresses. To spark conversation in these discussions, Howard might raise a recent story from *The New York Times* or *The Boston Globe* and ask students to consider its dimensions from a good work perspective. Although the destination is never certain in such discussions, I have always found our detours into current affairs to be interesting and edifying. It appears I am not alone, as several students have said they appreciate Howard's willingness to open the discussion to issues of immediate and practical importance. Using the good work framework to examine current events keeps the concepts

fresh and relevant and shows students how they can be usefully employed to make sense of the events unfolding around them.

In 2007, the rise of citizen journalism and the concurrent decline of traditional print journalism was becoming an increasingly widespread and pressing topic of debate. This debate found its way into our class discussions at several points during the semester. One of our students had a particular interest in the topic, since she was an active blogger, and had chosen to interview several “A-list” bloggers for her research project. For our part, Howard and I had become increasingly interested in digital media-related activities due to our involvement in the GoodPlay Project, an empirical investigation of the ethical dimensions of youth’s digital media use. As the class took stock of the current media environment, it soon became evident that many of the same forces documented in *Good Work* in 2001 were still relevant six years later. Indeed, the splintering of the news media was even more pronounced due to the proliferation of online news outlets and blogs like *The Huffington Post*, *Politico*, and *Daily Kos*. These sources provided immediate, free, and easy access to a vast amount of information, far more than could fit within the timeslot of a TV program or the pages of a newspaper. As a result, print newspapers found their revenues decline precipitously despite their efforts to keep pace with their new competitors. As discussed in the 2001 book, the pressure exerted by the bottom line raised concerns about misalignment in the profession and journalists’ ability to produce good work under such challenging circumstances.

Although many issues raised in the 2001 book proved applicable to a 2007 context, the distinct qualities of web 2.0 added new dimensions to our discussion of good work in journalism. On the one hand, “smart” phones, blogging software, and video-sharing sites like

YouTube gave everyday people the ability to produce and publish their own content quickly and easily. In many cases, such amateur content creators acquired large and dedicated audiences who looked to them as often as (sometimes more than) they looked to professional journalists for information. These citizen journalists were hailed by many for democratizing journalism. At the same time, such democratization raised concerns about professional standards and the proper boundaries of the journalistic profession. In our class discussions, we questioned whether bloggers could be considered professional journalists and, if so, whether they should be held to the same standards as journalists from the mainstream media. While we did not ultimately arrive at a definitive answer, using the good work framework to probe the issue in this way helped us to identify important tensions and consider possible solutions.

My final year as TF began in February 2009, months after the financial crisis of 2008 and weeks after the Presidential Inauguration. President Obama used his inaugural address to speak about individual and collective responsibility, urging individuals, businesses, and governments to consider their responsibilities to each other and to society. By employing the words “irresponsibility” and “responsibility” to define the problem and point to its solution, Obama was using the language of good work. Indeed, the events surrounding the financial crisis seemed to cry out for a good work critique, and we took advantage of this situation in our class discussions. Here again, the discussions found in the pages of *Good Work* proved their continued relevance. Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, and Damon’s warnings about the dangers of unchecked market forces resonated with particular force in the aftermath of the burst housing bubble and government bailout of Wall Street.

In our class discussions, we drew on the good work framework in a collective effort to make sense of this complicated situation. While the framework could not help us with the intricacies of derivative instruments like CDO's and CDS's, it did help to illuminate the central dynamics of the financial crisis. Far from encouraging responsibility, the incentive structure and cutthroat culture on Wall Street rewarded only those actions that contributed to the bottom line. With few regulatory mechanisms to counteract this force, a state of serious misalignment ensued, with grievous results. Bill Damon explores this fated dynamic in his chapter on "Mission Creep" (this volume), as well as the unfortunate supporting role played by institutions of higher education. The banking crisis also proved a useful way to illustrate to students the difference between two important good work concepts: field and domain. Howard observed that the *domain* of banking had been altered considerably over the last several decades due to forces in the *field*. Among these forces were recent entrants into banking, such as sales, marketing, and new forms of financial institution. Bringing with them their own traditions and professional codes, these entrants effectively reshaped the standard practices of the domain and contributed to its misalignment.

We brought many additional topics beyond journalism and the financial crisis into our class discussions while I served as TF for H-175. In each case, our conversations never felt quite finished, the issues never satisfactorily resolved. However, I believe these conversations enhanced students' understanding of the good work framework and gave them an appreciation for its ability to shed light on diverse and important issues of our day.

Looking forward with lasting impressions

I have yet to encounter a class that satisfies all students, and H-175 is no different. At the end of each semester, members of the teaching team review student evaluations and discuss ways to incorporate the feedback into the next iteration of the course. I have already mentioned the frustration that some students expressed about the lack of structure in class discussions. As I noted, we responded to such critiques by incorporating lecture time at the beginning of the course and gradually opening the class up to more informal discussion as the semester progresses. We have taken a similar approach in our response to other student critiques. For instance, we have recently begun requiring students to submit a weekly memo in which they discuss their reactions to and questions about the readings. This new assignment responded to students who said they wanted a more direct connection between the readings on the syllabus and class discussion. Howard read every memo and used students' insights and questions to prepare for class. The memo has also proved a useful way to hold students accountable for the week's readings. Sometimes it is difficult to know how to react to feedback, since students' suggestions are occasionally in conflict. For instance, a few students have recently asked for more discussion of basic good work concepts, while other students in the same class complained that existing discussions of such concepts feel repetitive. I believe finding the right balance requires keeping both comments in mind while carefully assessing the needs and desires of the next group of students.

My experience with H-175, first as a student and then as a TF, has influenced my thinking in important ways. In my work, the three E's are always present in my mind and shape my approach to each

project I undertake. As a citizen, I try to keep in mind the communities to which I belong and my responsibilities to them. I also find myself scrutinizing the day's news stories through a good work lens, trying to identify the variables that produced a particular instance of good or compromised work. I understand that the students who have participated in the course do not share the same level of familiarity with or involvement in the Good Work Project as I do. However, in talking with students, watching their presentations, and reading their papers and course evaluations I have come to believe that one semester in the class can be transformative. The research project engages students immediately in the good work enterprise and allows them to delve deeply into an area of interest to them. The incorporation of current events into class discussion provides a broader view of good work and often gives students new conceptual tools for analyzing important issues of the day. Going forward, I imagine the major assignment as well as the form and focus of class discussions will continue to undergo changes as a result of student feedback, the particular strengths and styles of the next TFs, and Howard's own evolving thinking. Whatever changes are made, I hope they will serve to encourage students to take ownership of the good work framework and illustrate its continued relevance and broad applicability.

PART FIVE

**A Mirror Test for
GoodWork Researchers**

15

Do You See What I See: Or, What Has the GoodWork Project Done to Us!

Lynn Barendsen

As a long time researcher on the GoodWork project, I became interested in whether or not GoodWork (GW) concepts have had any professional or personal influence on members of our research team. I also welcomed the opportunity to step a bit outside of our more standard research rubric, to confer with those who have worked on the project, to learn from them. Since the project began, we have had an extensive team of researchers at five university sites—and over the years, somewhere between 70 and 100 different individuals have worked on the project. Some of these are students, whose time with us is brief (a semester or a year), some are recent college graduates who work with us for a couple of years before returning to school for graduate work, some (like myself and other authors represented in this volume) have been part of the project for over a decade. Given my interest in the project's influence, regardless of

time spent or specific role on the project, I sent the following questions to everyone for whom I had contact information:

- How long have you been working/did you work on the GW Project?
- Why did this research project appeal to you?
- What have you learned about your own work as a result of working on GW?
- Do you find yourself looking at the world through the GW lens? What do you see?
- Do you think there are decisions or choices that you have made that are influenced by your thinking on the project? Please offer an example or two.
- Will your future work be influenced by what you've learned on the GW project? How so or why not?
- Have you had any disappointments with respect to the GWP? Anything you hope might come out of the project but has not, at least, not yet?

Because the three Principal Investigators have answered many of these questions in their own chapters, I decided to focus on what could be learned from the rest of the research team. In the end, I mailed the questions to 41 current and former team members, and received responses from 18 colleagues.

Of the 23 who did not respond, at least 5 were the result of invalid addresses. To the remaining 18, I sent another set of questions:

- Did you receive the original request?
- If you did, and did not respond, is it because:
 - a) You do not have time;
 - b) You no longer feel any connection to the project;
 - c) You feel you have nothing to say?
- * Of this 18, 6 responded, 5 of whom reported that they did not have time. The final respondent explained that he felt he had nothing valuable to contribute.

With respect to the 18 who did respond, most of these individuals spoke or wrote at length about their experiences on and off the GW

Project. The most compelling responses fell into the following categories: reasons drawn to the project; decisions made or considered that were influenced by GoodWork concepts; an examination of the world through a “GoodWork lens;” disappointments with respect to the GoodWork Project; and lessons learned as a result of GoodWork. Here’s what I discovered about my current and former colleagues, interspersed with some of my own reflections along the way.

Reasons drawn to the GW Project

People were drawn to working on the project for a few basic reasons. Many knew one or more of the Principal Investigators and their work, and were excited by the opportunity to work with and learn from them. Others were interested in the ideas. As one researcher put it, “I was intrigued by the question of how people manage to do work that is successful by the standards of their field and also socially responsible.” Some found both the topic and the potential impact appealing, “I thought the potential tension between doing cutting-edge work and being socially responsible would be a fascinating topic to explore. I also liked the direct connection to working on something to improve the world we live in.” As another colleague put it: I was attracted to the GWP because of the emphasis on important moral and ethical questions and the use of qualitative methods to explore these rich issues. I also appreciated the blend of research and practice—the commitment to both understand people’s conceptions of the good and to develop tools to promote ethical behavior at work, school and in other realms of life.

The impact of GW ideas on our research team is undeniable; however, it is also clear that during the past fifteen or so years, we have attracted some people who were already interested in ethics, or in

“having impact” of one kind or another. One former member of the team explains, “I have always been interested in contributing to positive social change, and the idea of investigating professionals who care about the social, ethical and moral implications of their work was exciting to me.” But this researcher, and others, also emphasize another pull to the work of the project, “...what was most intriguing to me was the opportunity to hear people’s stories.” Or, as another veteran GoodWorker puts it, “[I] loved the idea of doing the long-life interviewing process, giving people the chance to reflect on their decision making in their careers.”

In my case, I joined the team as a part-time assistant. I was in the midst of doctoral studies in literature, and saw the GW position as an interesting job that would pay a (little) bit more than my teaching responsibilities. Only later did I recognize the breadth of opportunities my colleagues describe. Little did I imagine I would change the course of my career and, over the course of a decade, lead or co-lead a number of initiatives.

Decisions made that were influenced by GoodWork

- Decisions about career choice

In the survey I had asked whether real-life choices had been influenced by GW, but quite frankly thought the likelihood that this had occurred was slim. In fact, decisions involving graduate school, choices about work, and even quandaries about family and parenting have been impacted by GW ideas.

One researcher, currently in graduate school, explains how her career choice was directly influenced by her time as part of the GW team:

“I worked on the project at a time in my life when I was just getting my footing as an adult in the world, and facing major decisions about what I wanted to spend my life doing. Hearing inspiring stories from the research participants, and hearing the ways that they balanced competing demands I think unconsciously helped me to make the tough decision for myself when the time came to invest in a career choice for myself.... I chose to go into clinical psychology as a clinician. It fit the criteria for me: fulfilling (I love contact with people and thinking about the complexity of their lives), socially responsible (I get to work with people who are seriously suffering and help them find a way out of it) and successful (well, that part remains to be seen, I guess, but I hope that I will be good at it and can make a living). I also feel that this is a profession that actually has a pretty good GW outlook as a whole. It’s nice to be surrounded by people who value the ethics and the fulfillment part.”

This former colleague confirms something I have long suspected: it is virtually impossible to listen to deeply committed professionals reflect on their lives and work and not reflect on your own. The subjects we interviewed were exceptional; although the majority of them were not pre-selected for their ethics (which we could not presume to judge in most cases), they were among the best of their respective professions in terms of the quality of their work. Their accomplishments were impressive; their reflections on their lives and work were inspirational and articulately expressed. Rarely would we leave an interview without having our own thinking stretched in one way or another. Many of us learned to hold ourselves up to some very high standards, at least in part, as a result of what we learned from our subjects.

- Decisions about work environment

In addition to affecting judgment of our own work, these standards are also applied to the environments in which we choose to

participate and how we think about them. For example, one veteran of the project rejected work in a corporate setting:

“As a result of my work on the GW Project, I have made conscious choices to pursue work that means something to me and I believe is “giving back” in some way (even if it is on a very small level)...I did a 1.5 year stint at American Express doing leadership development with executives and absolutely hated the corporate environment. Working on the GW Project spoiled me. Now, I crave a work environment where there is open discussion about important issues.”

Another colleague made a conscious choice to do service work and at the same time, work to mend a broken system:

“I have only to say that I am now working in the Family Welfare System for the connection between the work we did on the GoodWork Project and what I am doing now to be obvious. Could there be a system more at odds with its own goal of helping people? On a daily basis, I find myself trying to come up with solutions that will help individual workers and groups become more effective at helping people. I constantly ask if the principles espoused are accomplishing their aim, or have the principles become more important than the people.”

- Decisions about responsibility and reflection

One of the key concepts to emerge from the GW Project involves the idea of responsibility. In fact, we have authored an entire volume on the topic (Gardner 2007). One of our colleagues describes GW influence on her work these terms, explaining that she feels varying levels of responsibility to her institution, and to its mission:

I’ve recently become a Student Admissions Ambassador for HGSE. I attribute this decision wholly to my exposure to GW concepts, which have caused me to reflect on the fact that I’m part of an institution that existed before me and will exist after me and that its mission is

broadier than the personal reasons that initially brought me to HGSE. Being an Admissions Ambassador is one way for me to contribute to the continuation of the school's mission.

In the above example, a colleague realizes that GW concepts have encouraged her to "reflect". She is not at all alone in this respect; quite a few members of our team (myself included) explain that the project convinced them of the importance of reflection. Here are just two examples. One colleague describes how she employs reflective practice in her professional decision-making:

"[I have] ...increased consciousness about small decisions, or maybe not small decisions, about which grants to pursue. Pushed me to assess where the pressure is really coming from, from me, from my assumptions about what people really want—is there a right and a wrong? Maybe slowed down my decision-making, think it through, take more time."

Another colleague explains that she uses the process of reflection, specifically about work choices, in one of her courses:

"Working on the project has influenced how I choose the content of my courses as well as my pedagogy. For example, I structure a one-unit course called 'Integration of Liberal Studies' around the idea of Good Work. This course was created to bring LS majors (whose major requirements include courses in multiple departments across campus) together to explore how this sort of interdisciplinary course of study coheres. I use the GW thesis as the organizing principle for this course. Not only does it pull together what they are learning across campus, it introduces students to the ethical dimensions of the work that they are preparing themselves for (primarily teaching) and it draws attention to the much-neglected-in-the-academy idea of the importance of finding personal meaning in their future work. My student evaluations are off the charts for this course, in part because it allows these students to think about their schooling in terms of the development of their personal work standards, ethics and personal satisfactions. It is the space where they

begin to think of themselves as professionals who will create ripples in the world. There is no other space in their program where this happens. One comment that makes me smile each time I receive it (and I consistently receive it) is: 'I wish this class was longer.'"

The sentiments expressed in the above passage are very similar to experiences shared by myself and my colleague Wendy Fischman when we bring the GoodWork Toolkit into classroom settings. Our participants are often educators, sometimes students. Both groups value the opportunity to reflect on their goals and ethics and think about where they find meaning in their work (Barendsen & Fischman, 2004; Fischman & Gardner, 2008).

- Decisions involving family and balance

Decisions about work and career choice are not the only ones impacted by time spent on the GW project. A few researchers describe that choices involving family and personal lives have also been influenced by these ideas. For example, one former colleague writes about issues of balance:

"...now (as the birth of my first child approaches) my experiences are driving me to ... consider my options for future employment, how it will affect my family, and how I can integrate a family and work, and enjoy both equally. How to achieve balance, but also still contribute to my family at home and society as a whole"

Another describes her efforts to pass along some of what she has learned from her work to her children:

"As a parent, I often try to point out the things that we do for others and how it is easy to go out of your way for other people in order to improve their lives (e.g. making a meal for someone who is sick, visiting someone aging, helping a neighbor move something). I am also trying to structure more

family volunteer opportunities so that they can not only see their parents involved in the community, but they can get involved as well. Easier said than done, but this is something that is important to me, and has been highlighted from many of the people we spoke with in our study.”

As a matter of fact, my own decision-making has been influenced in ways both professional and personal by GW. My career has changed course; although I maintain a love of literature, I have grown to believe my current work may have greater positive impact, and that is very important to me. On a personal level, since the birth of my sons, I have promised myself that 1) the work that keeps me away from them must be valuable and 2) my work must set a positive example for them to follow.

Looking at the world through a GoodWork lens

Having worked on the project for over a decade, and because I am still immersed in the work, I see GW issues everywhere. I wondered whether the same might be said for colleagues who left the project years ago. What about those who were only involved for a year or two? Surprisingly, many view the world, still, through a “goodwork” lens. Certainly some members of our research team were interested in these ideas before they came to the project. As one former manager puts it, “...before I joined the project I was disposed to attend to ethical issues in society (especially, and with outrage, ethical breaches). If anything, work on GW confirmed part of how I look at the world.”

For many on our team, however, the GW framework offered previously unfamiliar subtleties with which to understand the complexities of the working world. In the previous section, I explained

how experiences on the GW Project have changed decision-making—the actions—of respondents; here, I explain how experiences on the GW Project have changed views—or outlook—of respondents. One researcher (currently in graduate school) puts it this way:

I see good work all around, but I also see compromised work. In a few cases, it is deliberately compromised, in more cases it is due to inadequate preparation, lack of skills, etc. I think more often than not, people want to care about what they do. They want to believe in it, they want to derive pleasure from it, but sometimes the stresses of success get in the way. This raises the question of whether we find good work or it finds us....

For others, the themes uncovered in their work have framed how they hear the news, and how they view the world. Sometimes, the view is a depressing one. For example, one researcher sees "...the omnipresence of the bottom line with few exceptions." Most of the researchers interviewed have not been a part of the project during or since the current economic crisis or the events preceding it, and yet many view these events in GW terms. For example:

I'm constantly wondering if people are doing work that is 'socially responsible'—especially individuals that are hailed as 'heroes' in the media. I think the current economic crisis, precipitated in large part by the greed on Wall Street (among other things) has forced people to reevaluate their lives and make hard decisions about what is really important.

One former researcher explains that this framework has simply become a part of who she is:

“[GW ideas] allow me to perceive and understand the social events and trends with more complexity. It informs my critical eye and provides a way to consider action that could lead to healthier, more ethical professional and social circumstances. I think that I have internalized the GW framework at this point and am no longer conscious about its application; it just is part of who I am and how I see the world. Am I a convert?!”

The above set of responses, describing a GW lens focused on news and world events, are familiar. Beyond this brief survey of colleagues, I have heard similar expressions from educators with whom we have worked over the years. They write and share stories about their own experiences in the classroom, describing them with GW terms, or they call our attention to headlines involving GW-related ideas. Another group of responses to this question about a “GW lens,” however, go well beyond a view of news and world events, and take on a more personal tone. Each of the following three researchers turn the “GW lens” on themselves:

“Three feelings come to the top of my mind: disappointed, stumped, and guilty. 1) Disappointed at times in how some “leaders” of our society make choices (with individual interests in mind more than community/society/world interests). 2) Stumped by the fragmentation of ethics, by some individuals, into relatively isolated spheres of life. For example, the unethical choices some individuals make at work sometimes conflict with the values and beliefs they espouse in temple/church or to their children at home. Howard talks about intrapersonal intelligence; this notion can be extended to ethics. Some individuals need greater intrapersonal alignment w/r/t to ethics. 3) Guilty because I often feel like I’m not doing enough good in the world.”

“Everything I think about is in terms of the 3 Es depending on the circumstance. For example, as a mom, when I’m at back-to-school night, I listen for how the teacher defines excellence—what are the standards and goals, and what do the kids have to do in order to produce “excellent” at work. As

a citizen, when Obama spoke to the nation and welcomed students back to school (Fall 2009), I heard him talk mostly about engagement and responsibility. As a spouse, I often think about balance and though I wish I had more, I strive to maintain some sort of balance between work and play. I also think it is important to do work that you enjoy and work that you think is important, not just work that will make enough money. This is a value I have tried to pass on to my own kids."

"In some form or another I know I hold that "mirror" up to examine my professional pursuits and my personal actions, as a form of reflection and self-examination. I see the work that people do around me, and notice in particular when someone is particularly conscientious about their work, or the impact that it has on others. On the flip side, I recognize when someone has chosen work that does not produce "flow" for them—that they don't enjoy—and consider why that person would choose it. The GW lens forces me to recognize that I always need to produce work that I can both enjoy and also be proud of, and always work deliberately toward this goal. Although the team was conducting interviews with doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc, I have also come to recognize a more general view of GW, in every place that there is a job to be done, not just those particular higher professions."

Depending on the viewer, a "GW lens" has slightly varied connotations. There are certainly some consistencies: an increased awareness of issues of excellence, ethics and engagement, thoughtful reflection, considerations about responsibility. When I described the influences GW has had on my own decision-making, although I failed to realize it at the time, this was the result of my looking at myself and my work through a GW lens. To be fair, I am not sure what set of criteria makes me a tougher judge: GW standards, or my standards as a parent.

Disappointments

Clearly, many of our team had high expectations for what the GW Project might accomplish. It is not surprising, then, with such high hopes, that there are also some disappointments with the end result. Most disappointments focused on the relative lack of attention the project has received in the general media. These responses involve comments such as:

“I am disappointed that GW is not more widely known; that so many people could benefit from reflecting on GW... [unfortunately] few will get the chance.”

Another member of the team agreed with this sentiment, arguing that GW has much to offer the public discourse, for example, about ethics:

“...my only disappointment is that the work, in general, has not gotten more attention, especially in light of all the ethical lapses that we’ve witnessed. It would have been nice to have been consulted about these or at least asked about our opinions, since we have learned an awful lot about these topics.”

Agreeing with the above statements about lack of attention, another colleague goes on to cite some positive media attention, and then brings up another disappointment, this one involving our potential influence. This comment speaks to a desire expressed by a number of researchers: to do more with what we have learned:

“...we should feel proud that the work of the project is mentioned from time to time by influential people like Frank Rich. The other disappointment is that our data (largely individual-level) can’t speak more directly to the cultures that often hold great sway in encouraging GW or bad work in particular contexts. To be sure, ethics is an individual responsibility, but we should better acknowledge that the

norms of the group in certain contexts can thwart ethical thinking.”

Finally, a group of colleagues wished we had had time and funding to expand our investigations. This “wish list” includes a desire to investigate additional realms of work:

“...there were some domains that are viewed as helping professions that are less prestigious that I would have liked to see covered: social work, counseling, psychology, childcare. I know some of this was due to funding limitations, and I'm glad elements of pre-collegiate education and nursing were covered. Still, I think it could be instructive to look into some of the lowest paid, highest responsibility areas like these.....What about GW in parenting—what it means and how it happens?”

To investigate more thoroughly the data we have already gathered:

“Every time I look at the Higher Ed and the Philanthropy data, I recognize the untapped potential. ‘There are a number of books waiting to be written!’ Also, ‘there’s so much data—how much more could it be mined?’”

And finally, a wish to spend more time examining and perhaps expanding upon our current quantitative data:

“I hope that the GW Project’s commitment to quantitative research can expand in a way that does not diminish the important qualitative aspects of the project.”

I share the sentiments of many of my colleagues and wish that the project’s impact were more widespread. I am still holding out hope that this may change: our work has never felt more relevant, and I believe we are learning how better to communicate and share our ideas with a broader audience.

Lessons learned

Perhaps the most focused and determined replies explained the lessons learned by respondents from their experiences on the GW Project. Previous sections have explained impact on specific decisions, and influence on a way of seeing the world. Here, colleagues articulate deeper influence on their work and on their lives, beyond any single decision made or interpretation of particular even in the news. In these examples, colleagues explain how they utilize GW concepts on a regular basis in their professional and personal lives. Roughly, these responses may be divided into two categories: 1) those that recognize how GW has influenced their own work; and 2) those that recognize an influence on how they consider the work of others. First, I offer some examples of how GW ideas have influenced individuals as workers. One colleague explains that she uses GW concepts to evaluate her own work, as a kind of “mirror test:”

While my own work is not in education, I know [the GWP] has impacted me as a ‘worker’ in general. I would sum up my experience as providing a base for me, or a mirror with which I can examine my own work, in whatever field that is, and make sure it is always of the highest quality and has a positive impact on those around me or society in general.

Another researcher explains that she regularly evaluates her own work in terms of what she has learned about GW, to establish for herself whether or not her work meets GW criteria:

“Having learned about GW I think more about how I can affect whether I do GW or not. I now give more consideration to where I am working, who I am working with, what I am

working on. I find myself wondering at times—am I doing GW? If not, why not? What can I do about it?”

Second, colleagues explain that GW ideas have influenced how they consider their work with others: some talk about particular interests as a result of GW. For example, one colleague explains that his previous interests were confirmed, “[The GWP] strengthened my interest in the ethical development of teenagers and also opened my eyes to the way that development plays into career choices.” Another researcher describes that career choice, but also tools used in the workplace, have been influenced by GW:

“I am committed to a career with the primary motivation of fostering human dignity, well-being and happiness. I recognize through my work at the GW project that GW must be accomplished through a dynamic combination of self-reflection and a willingness to take action to improve the factors that effect people’s potential for happiness.”

Others describe GW influences on their particular approaches in their work with others. One colleague, now teaching at the college level, explains that her work with students has been influenced by GW concepts:

“I train doctoral students. Ethics come up here, too. Would have always thought about ethics, I hope, but I think a lot about the importance of their development, about moving their own growth forward, their best interests, not my interests. Other professors don’t always center their students’ growth—sometimes lip service only. I think my awareness of this too is connected to the GW Project.”

And finally, another colleague describes her own work ethic and her sense that, as a member of a “GW Team” she has an increased sense of responsibility:

“...one of the things I’ve learned is about responsiveness and professionalism—getting back to people in a timely manner and taking responsibility to do work that is of a high standard...we live by our own motto ‘excellence, ethics and engagement,’ while so many others don’t. In order to encourage something and promote ideas, you need to be a model yourself.”

Our (past and current) team hopes to enact change, feels a responsibility to make this change happen, and employs reflective practice as a matter of course. If working on the GW project could be considered a type of intervention, or training, we need to do more hiring. Prior to doing this brief, informal survey, I had little inkling about the beliefs and ideals of many of my colleagues, or about the effects of the project on their professional and personal lives. The depth and seriousness of these sentiments was a surprise—albeit a pleasant one.

Conclusion

I joined the GW team in 1996. It’s now fourteen years later, and my professional path has wandered quite a bit from its original course. In that time I have learned a great deal about 9 different professions, I’ve been deeply inspired by interviews with truly extraordinary individuals, and I’ve been pushed in my own thinking to define more precisely what is good, and what is *really* good, and what is exceptional. I’ve had the privilege of working with some truly remarkable colleagues. In reading through the responses outlined in these pages, I’ve been impressed by them all over again. Former colleagues are involved in a variety of fields; some are doing academic research, some are teaching, some are in medicine, some in law; some in business; some are at home with children. In spite of these very different professional and personal lives, whether predisposed to the

ideas before coming to the project, or “converted,” once a part of it, many of us continue to see the world through a GW lens. It’s not always a reassuring view, I have to admit, but it’s what we see. From my own perspective, some of the more applicable concepts (responsibility, for example), help me to make sense of what I see. And as one of the more optimistic members of the current research team (sometimes it’s a lonely existence!), I’m hopeful that we might be able to address some of the disappointments mentioned in these pages, and share our view with a larger audience.

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