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DISSERTATION

SEARCHING FOR SOUL: WORK AND HUMAN EVOLUTION

Submitted by

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School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Fort Collins, Colorado

Summer 1999

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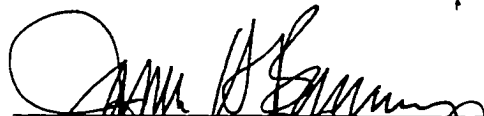
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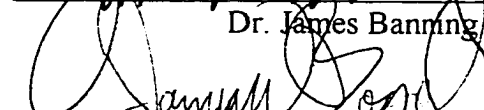
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BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
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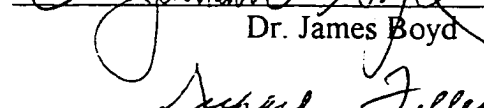
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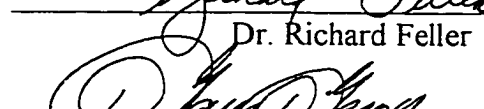
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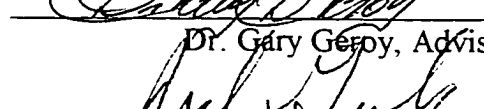
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

SEARCHING FOR SOUL: WORK AND HUMAN EVOLUTION

A grounded theory study reveals that when nine key concepts are present, workers find the optimal meaning of work. The concepts provide the constructs for the emergent work and human evolution theory. The theory is:

“For work to be meaningful to the individuals, it must provide a framework where people with different backgrounds and needs can choose to grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually at our own speed and will, experiment and discover our essence, manifest our vision in a concrete practical manner, be of service to others, and be purposeful by doing something we enjoy in the world with both visible and invisible guidance.”

When an organization understands the relationship between work and human evolution, it becomes critical to reconceptualize the organizational view of work and people. The reconceptualization is critical in meeting the challenges of the coming era.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study explores the meaning of work. “Meaning of work” is difficult to define because it may mean different things to different people. Job satisfaction and motivation, both extrinsic and intrinsic, may offer meaning in work. To some people, work may be just a means to make a living while others strive to make sense out of a job that may seem meaningless. At the deeper level of satisfaction and motivation may lie personal and spiritual growth, sense of self, and purpose. Since most of us spend many hours of the day working, it seems natural that many people try to find the job they like or to find meaning in the work they do. By listening to people’s diverse voices and stories, this study attempts to find some common underlying themes that construct the meaning of work and to develop a theory on work and human evolution.

Intrinsic aspects of work seem to be gaining attention in academic disciplines as well as in popular press. In management education, people are sensing a shift in management theory and practice (Neal, 1997). One example of this shift is incorporating spirituality in management. (Conger et al., 1994). Neal (1997) identifies a few possible forces that have caused this phenomenon. First, the baby boomers who lived through the idealistic 1960s are now middle-aged. They are starting to reevaluate their lives and calculate the time they have left. Second, a major force may be the changes occurring in

employment. Some workers are feeling devalued and dehumanized by the downsizing trend. “They hunger for jobs that nourish their souls and that provide some sense of meaning in the chaotic and unpredictable workplace” (Neal, 1997, p.122). The third force may be the approaching of the millennium (Harman, 1993). Many people use occasions such as New Year and birthdays to renew their commitments, and they might be feeling a more urgent need for personal and spiritual growth. Kantrowitz et al. (1994) say 58% of Americans who responded to a *Newsweek* survey said they feel the need to experience spiritual growth.

At the individual level, a growing number of individuals are beginning to look at their paths. More people are paying attention to the intrinsic satisfaction of their work, and beginning to feel that emotional and spiritual growth is important. Many books appear with the words “soul” and “spirit” today especially in the self improvement and management literature sections of a bookstore. It is naive to ignore this trend and to regard it as merely a popular sentiment that has no importance for more serious understanding of workers and their relationship to their work. A book called *Leading with soul* by Bolman and Deal (1995) has become one of the best sellers. Briskin (1996) speaks to the soul in the workplace. Because of this trend, “soul” no longer seems to be only a vague emotional or religious term, but a concept that is emerging as an important element of the current world view.

The word “soul” is used in this study to refer to the “meaning” that we are trying to find. Vaughn (1995) in describing Freud’s interpretation of soul, says, “The soul was thought to be the seat of both the mind and the passions” (p.46). If the mind and the

passion have to do with the soul, the meaning of work at the deeper level must relate to the more personal domain. It may constitute the congruence between what you do and who you are.

I would like to clarify the reason why the word “soul” is used as opposed to “spirit.” First, “soul” has a sense of an individual, personal experience while “spirit” transcends the personal domain and it is more universal (Bolman and Deal, 1995). The word “soul” is used in this study because it attempts to capture the individual endeavor to find meaning in work. I would also like to clarify that by the words such as “soul” and “spirit,” I do not refer to any particular religious beliefs.

In this chapter I will identify important current issues in changing attitudes toward work, especially the incongruence between work and self, some emerging philosophies on work that involve a broader conception of the worker’s self, and emerging system thinking that reflects those conceptions.

Today’s Work in America

The concept of work has changed over the years. For the last two decades in this country, the time spent at work has steadily increased for some people. Today, the work situation is difficult, especially for those who work in the service sector from single-income households. “In 1990, the average American owns and consumes more than twice as much as he or she did in 1948, but also has less free time” (Schor, 1991, p.2). This statement does not apply to all. A small group of people have benefited from the global economy and technology advancement but these recent economic changes have negatively

impacted many who are in the service and manufacturing work. Madrick (1995) contends that the stagnating wages have resulted in a widened gap between high and low wages, and the early 1990s saw the gap wider than any other time. Only a small number of Americans was making financial progress, and this population was made up largely of “college graduates in such fields as sales, engineering, health care, finance, law, and administration” (Madrick, 1995, p.138).

Schor (1991) also contends that capitalism has kept us trapped in a squirrel cage of work and encouraged us to spend. It seems contradictory that the expansion of working time has gone hand in hand with growing joblessness. Some may argue that the number of jobs is not decreasing, which is true; however, the number itself is not decreasing because many full-time jobs have been replaced with part-time jobs. Many jobs that are being created are not full-time positions but are still counted as jobs. Madrick (1995) argues that the unemployment rate alone does not tell the whole story. The unemployment rate in 1990 was 5.5% while in reality 15 % of all workers were unemployed for a period of time. Those who lost their jobs had to take a 23% pay cut in a new job (Madrick, 1995).

Kapstein (1996) states, “The global economy is leaving millions of disaffected workers in its train. Inequality, unemployment, and endemic poverty have become its handmaidens” (p.16). Technology certainly has changed the way some businesses operate and the way we work and live. At the beginning of this technology era, people didn’t plan for negative influence of technology although there have always been some that were less optimistic about the benefits of technology. It was mostly expected that technological advancement would free labor workers from toil, long working hours, and inhumane

working conditions. Technology has certainly lightened the toil of labor and produced wealth, but it has also resulted in some negative effects. The wealth created by technological development was not adequately distributed to support the poor and to build communities. According to McCain (1992), the classical utilitarianism would redistribute wealth from the rich to the poor because it holds the notion that everyone enjoys the same marginal utility of income. The mainstream economy, however, rejected the utilitarian formula long ago. As a result, the rich got richer and the poor stayed poor. Schumacher (1980) argues that GNP is a quantitative concept and it doesn't tell us much about the quality of life. He also believes that a healthy economy has to be built on the notion of enhancing the quality of life.

Industrial automation has affected blue-collar workers, and computerization has affected white-collar workers. Much of the work that was done by humans is now done by machines. We cannot deny that technology has made life easier for us in many ways. Some people, however, are at the mercy of technology in keeping or losing their jobs. Such individuals work longer hours and have less leisure time. For minorities, the situation is worse. Madrick (1995) explains that the gap in pay between the college-educated African Americans and white Americans was 3.7% in 1960s and 1970s, but the gap has widened to 15.5% today. Economists' investigation showed that the gap was the biggest in the midwestern area where many African Americans lost their manufacturing jobs.

Schor (1991) points out that the productivity has more than doubled since 1948, and that "we can now produce our 1948 standard of living (measured in terms of goods

and services) in less than half the time it took in that year” (p.2). Why are average Americans working longer hours today than they did at the beginning of the technology revolution if we can produce in half the time it took before? Work time for the average American has increased by 163 hours a year, or the equivalent of one month, in the past several decades, and more than 25% of all the full time workers work for forty-nine or more hours a week (Rifkin, 1995). Technology, which has saved time and labor in many industries, has also allowed companies to eliminate workers. Many companies have replaced full-time workers with benefits with part time workers without benefits. Having a small workforce work long hours is still less costly than paying for the costs of benefits and pensions for a large workforce .

Globalization has brought about changes in communication, economy, politics, and social life. Technological change and international market have significantly affected our economy and employment. With globalization and a vast network of information, consumers’ knowledge has increased and their attitudes towards institutions and their products have changed. Now an increasing number of industries compete for customers, who are more knowledgeable, more demanding, and less loyal in order to get more for less. According to Hey and Moore (1998), Americans’ values are changing due to the changing world conditions, and one of those changes is the way individuals relate to institutions and their products and services. They state, “With the shift in the consumer’s desire for effectiveness, new products that do the job better automatically win market share.... To create a sustainable relationship, a new connection between company and consumer must take place, and it needs to take place even before those once-sufficient

marketing tools even come into play” (p.223). In response to globalization, American corporate leaders downsized and reengineered their organizations, which created a highly unstable environment (Hey & Moore, 1998). It seems as though we cannot count on today’s job to be there tomorrow (Hammer, 1996). Companies cannot easily know customers’ changing demands and predict what business will be like years from now. Such companies cannot promise employees long-time employment. Factors such as globalization, technology advancement, information, economic development in other countries, and cultural and social changes have contributed to the working conditions we have today.

Some workers are working long hours with no future promises. Except for the higher social classes who have benefited from the knowledge based society, people generally have less time for sleep, time with their families, and time for themselves. Average Americans are sleeping 60 to 90 minutes less than they should for optimum performance, and many of them have sleep disorders (Schor, 1991). Many two-earner couples have to juggle many responsibilities with very little time to see each other and to spend time with their children.

This era of globalization and technology has widened the gap between the haves and the have-nots. This change has created many forms of separation and isolation. It has separated work from family and social life for the have-nots while the haves continue to enjoy more pay and time for themselves. The gap between the highest income and the lowest income has widened. According to Kapstein (1996), people in the top 5% of income bracket earned ten times more than those in the bottom 5% in the 1970s, and they

make fifteen times more now. It has also separated work into minute specializations of knowledge. It has physically separated people from each other especially with various technological means to work together without being together. Some contend, however, that these technological means might physically separate people, but bring together the people who might never communicate otherwise.

In some ways, work and leisure were less distinct before capitalism than they are today, and in another sense this technological era makes it possible for people to work in the comfort of their own homes. Schor (1991) states, "In a sense, the historians' characterization of precapitalist societies may teach us most about our own dreams and imaginations. It is hard to avoid at least a touch of nostalgia for a world in which work was more integrated into family and social life, recreation less commercialized, and time more an easy background than a scarce commodity frenetically spent" (Schor, 1991, p.14). Some people may be disillusioned and be less committed to work when it provides little meaning and satisfaction. Work life and personal life have become separate for many. Some of these individuals are not giving to their work any more than they are obligated to, and are starting to pay closer attention to their families and their personal well-being and satisfaction.

The social revolution in the last few decades is the shift from a life organized for us by a social system to a world in which we have to take care of our own destiny. Handy (1998) states, "An evolution in social values, pushed by breakthroughs in technology -- the contraceptive pill as much as the computer -- and a more competitive world in which changes are forced on us whether we like them or not, all conspire to loosen the bonds

between institutions and individuals” (p.61). In 1995, more than half of the available workforce did not have a full-time job in an organization. They are part-time or temporary, self-employed, or unemployed. Handy (1998) says, “It is clear that the psychological contract between employers and employees has changed” (p.64). It is interesting to note that employers use the word “employability” rather than “employment,” which, according to Handy, means the responsibility is placed on the employee rather than the employer. Thus, employers can avoid commitment to their employees.

Capitalism has encouraged competition. It is assumed by many that healthy competition creates quality and eliminates monopolized markets. The down-side of capitalism seems to be the mis-interpretation of competition. In the markets’ bid to compete, they often focus on the “hard skills” of business and minimize the human aspects. Many employees do not want to be reduced to skills and knowledge and what they mean to the company monetarily, but many employers care more about how much an employee brings to the company than about the worker’s own welfare outside of the workplace. For some people, work has been removed from family and social life that it has become something unpleasant we have to tolerate. Somehow we have managed to convince ourselves that work is not fun or joyful. Wood (1995) is disappointed to realize that “by the time children graduate from high school, they have learned that ‘work sucks’” (p.403). He also states, “They have learned ‘their place’ in the workplace and they are resigned to earning a livelihood as replaceable units in a workplace isolated from their lives (personal, home, and community)” (p.403). Ritzer (1996) argues that the fast-food industry has created piece meal “McJobs” that are low-status, poorly paid, and

dehumanized. Ritzer says, “Young people need to be counseled about the liabilities of McJobs and the fact that experience in them is unlikely to be helpful in acquiring more satisfying, meaningful, and lucrative occupations in later life” (1996, p.217).

Some companies keep hiring people to do these piece meal jobs and view people as a commodity. A company is not an inanimate entity but it really is made up of people who have much more than a source of labor to do certain jobs.

Incongruence Between the Organization and the Individual

Many people, I would assume, want to bring to work more than their skills or labor. Terkel (1974) says that work is “about a search, too, for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying” (p.xi). In Terkel’s interviews, he finds many people discontent with their work. “‘I’m a machine,’ says the spot-welder. ‘I’m caged,’ says the bank teller, and echoes the hotel clerk. ‘I’m a mule,’ says the steel worker. ‘A monkey can do what I do,’ says the receptionist. ‘I’m less than a farm implement,’ says the migrant worker. ‘I’m an object,’ says the high-fashion model” (Terkel, 1974, p. xii). Their discontentment is rooted in the way they are compartmentalized into their roles and not regarded as thinking and feeling humans. Workers want to bring to work their entire personalities, and want to feel part of the organization and its goals (Handy, 1998). Dean Berry’s statement quoted in Handy (1998) says, “If we are to feel spiritually rewarded, we cannot allow our lives to continue to be compartmentalized, divided, or labeled” (p.149).

The incongruence between the organization's view of employees and employees' view of organizations seems to have been with us for many years. Covey, Merrill, and Merrill (1994) say we live our lives in terms of roles. We play roles at work, at home, and in the society, and these roles represent different types of responsibilities and relationships. The word "role" comes from the theater where the actor read the lines from a rolled-up paper. Briskin (1996) explains that "role" is considered to be less than the whole person, and from this definition, we are not being real when we take up the role. He also says roles are often other-directed. Distinction among many different roles has become more prevalent in the capitalistic world. Compared to the time before capitalism when work was more integrated with family and social life, work roles now do not easily allow other dimensions of human life in them. Professionalism often means excluding family and social matters from work entirely.

What creates a problem of incongruence between the organizations' view of people and the people's view of organizations lies in the mismatch of their expectations. Many organizations are only interested in the people as roles that satisfy the organizations' needs. In other words, they don't view their employees in their entirety as people with their own personal interests, backgrounds, and goals.

Employees usually do not want to see themselves as mere roles to do certain jobs or as cogs in a machine, especially as replaceable separate parts. That may be the reason why so many workers feel dissatisfied and disconnected in their work. Statements such as "I'm a machine," "I'm an object," and "A monkey can do what I do" from Terkel's interviews express the workers' feelings of dehumanization. Consciously or

unconsciously, humans have strived for many years to find some meaning in what we do and who we are. Especially in an individualistic culture like the U.S., “self” is the unit of analysis and individual satisfaction is critical in work. At least in an individualistic culture, collective outcome will not happen until the individual “self” finds its meaning. People may not consciously think about it everyday at work, but they try to find themselves in the work they do in many ways. Some try to find an opportunity to use their creativity and express their presence at work. Some move from job to job in search of the right one that will provide meaning and satisfaction. And some try to make sense out of a terrible work situation that they are in.

Much of current management is still operating according to the efficiency values of the modern era, in which the scientific method is used to increase productivity to the highest level by controlling people’s time and space. They can control the employees’ job performance by using the reward system and by keeping them strictly in their roles . Companies can replace people to cut cost. With less commitment from the companies, employees’ level of commitment to work decreases. Bolman and Deal (1995) say, “A wide-spread tendency to specialize and compartmentalize leads us to dichotomize work and play, male and female, career and family, thinking and feeling, reason and spirit” (p.40).

What makes this era more complex is the emergence of the new Generation X culture, a culture in which there is much less definition of life direction than existed in earlier generations. A growing number of younger people today seem to be free agents who do not belong to one group or one belief system. We have different generations and

groups of people with different philosophies and lifestyles living together. Bell (1973) was right, perhaps, in predicting that the gap between social structure and culture would widen in the post-industrial society. In Bell's description, social structure is made up of economy, technology, and occupational systems, and culture is the symbolic expression of meanings. He says when the gap widens, there is no longer a strong mutual causal relationship, and change in social structure may not necessarily affect culture in a major way. Some people choose to opt out of the social structure, including traditional bureaucracies and institutions, just to maintain their culture.

Statement of the Research Problem

The problem for this study is to examine the emerging values and constructs which can constitute the soul of work, and to explore the relationship between work and human evolution. It is hypothesized that the soul of work is what gives meaning to the individuals' work and what facilitates their personal growth.

Philosophical Perspectives

The reason why I have found work issues intriguing is that work is not what it seems to be on the surface. I have intuitively felt that the actual work we do may be a small part of a bigger picture. In other words, there may be a reason for work other than simply a means to make a living. One phenomenon observed within the last decade is the self-improvement movement. More people are starting to pay attention to their own emotional and spiritual needs and to be more conscious about their health and personal

growth. Some individuals are reconsidering their career paths to find what they really want to do. Leider (1997) thinks most of us want to be somebody, and the search for who we are is basic to many of us.

Considering these trends, the ways to promote excellence in work may not be achieved through control and efficiency-oriented measures anymore. While much of the professional literature still focuses on training and performance of the human resource, more holistic ideas of developing people as a whole person are emerging. The field of management education as an academic discipline is starting to include spiritual dimensions of work.

There are some books written about work and personal and spiritual growth, which may not be considered to be academic literature. The fact that not much is written academically about work and spiritual growth is probably due to the academia's tendency towards science and rationality. Some of this literature, in spite of its non-academic origin, offers some insights that are worthy of our attention. When one discusses the affective and spiritual domain, consensus is more difficult to achieve. We naturally have different perspectives and beliefs in a pluralistic society. What may be important to remember is to have an open mind to listen to others' perspectives even when they seem foreign or different. This section discusses different ways to understand work and human evolution from philosophical perspectives.

Some philosophers say that the everyday mundane work we do may be the raw material to do the real work. The alchemist called the raw material *prima materia*, and it is for working out the soul's matter (Moore, 1992). Thomas Moore, who studied and was

trained as a monk in a monastery, describes the understanding he came to about his spiritual life at work. When his job was to prune apple trees on a cold day at the monastery, he wondered why he had to do what he knew nothing about, feeling cold and cutting his fingers, instead of praying, meditating, and learning Latin. His answer is that work is an important part of spiritual life, and work speaks to the soul. Ultimately, he says, “Work may be a means of sorting out issues that have little to do with work itself” (Moore, 1992, p.181). We may be doing work that has been in the family for a long time, or we may be doing work that has presented itself after many seemingly coincidental events. Moore (1992) says, “In this sense, all work is a vocation, a calling from a place that is the source of meaning and identity, the roots of which lie beyond human intention and interpretation” (p.181).

Fox (1994) explains the distinction between “job” and “work.” The word “job” comes from the word “jobbe” and it means “piece.” So, a job is a piece of work that is discrete and not joyful. “Work” on the other hand does not mean something we do merely to make money. In fact, some work we do doesn’t bring money. Work, as opposed to a job, helps you to feel being part of the task for the unfoldment of the world. Fox (1994) suggests we turn a job into work. As much as companies need to do their work in minimizing dehumanizing jobs, individuals can do our part in educating ourselves about the job markets and about our skills and desires. One way to find satisfying work is to go beyond the intellectual reasoning and feel deeply in our hearts to find what really brings the feeling of joy and passion. Fox calls this “inner work” and the actual work we do

“outer work,” and we can merge the inner work and the outer work. That leads to the sense of purpose and meaning in work.

Moore (1992) says etymology, such as the “job” example, offers insight into work. The word “occupation” is often used to refer to work, and it means “to be taken or to be seized.” We think we chose our work, but according to Moore, it might be that work has found us. The word “opus” is also used to mean work. Opus is described as “work of imagination” by Jung. Moore (1992) says, “We might understand the role of everyday work in the soul by looking more closely at the idea of opus”(p.185). Some of us might say we put in long hours merely to make a living, but all of us have an explicit or implicit desire to know our own being. Work is a major arena where people, in Moore’s terms, craft themselves, and “Work is fundamental to the opus because the whole point of life is the fabrication of soul” (p. 185).

Some say we have lost the heart in work. We are just beginning to talk about our deep feelings and desires in work. Work is not just about performance, which I think is the very basic misunderstanding of work. Where performance and productivity are the only issues addressed, we lose the soul of work. We strive to look for better methods to raise the productivity and forget the more basic human aspect. When we really enjoy our work and our hearts feel the joy, the performance could come as a by-product. Gawain (1994) believes that work and play can be almost the same thing when we really enjoy what we do, and says, “When you are doing what you love, you may work harder and produce more than ever before, but it will feel like play” (p.125).

I would like to share stories of two women, whose work is to clean buildings and bathrooms. The first woman is someone I saw many years ago in a bathroom of a hotel where I was presenting at an academic conference. The careful and mindful way she cleaned the bathroom and polished the mirrors perturbed something in me. It made me look at my own attitude towards work and caused me to think about the meaning of work. I didn't know what she was thinking or how she felt about her work, but I felt I saw integrity and service in her work. Whatever it may have been, she found meaning in the work she did. The second woman is someone who cleans the building where I teach. Her commitment to service is expressed through the messages she puts on the paper towel dispenser for all the people who use the bathroom. Nobody tells her to do that; it seems to come out of her genuine place of service to others. When I see her positive message in the bathroom, I feel that her work is much more than providing a spotlessly clean bathroom. We don't really know what these women were really thinking and feeling. It is not necessary to know exactly what they did. It is not necessary to doubt the motive of their actions. What is important is that we learn something from what we perceive as a beautiful act.

From these two women and others, I have come to realize that the socio-economic status to which so many of us pay attention really has nothing to do with human evolution and work. I must admit I still catch myself placing some judgment on others based on the societal hierarchy we created. Who is to say professionals are more self-actualized than laborers? Some who appear to have become the success of the world may not have found the meaning of work. Each of us has a different story, different potential, and a different

calling. As stated previously, actual work may be the raw material to do the soul's work. It is our challenge to find our own meaning in work, and when we feel the sense of purpose in our work, we are probably doing the soul's work.

Many think business has nothing to do with family or home. The word "economics," however, comes from the combination of "oikos," meaning "home," and "nomos," meaning "management" (Moore, 1992). So, economics really means management of home. If the workplace is where we spend many hours of our day, why not create a sense of home. If the workplace cannot provide the sense of home, it is missing the most important ingredient in making it a successful workplace. Moore (1992) says nobody teaches people to put their family pictures or flowers on their desks. It is a natural expression of creating a home out of work space. It sounds simple enough, but many organizations spend a great deal of time and money on training and completely miss the core issue of the heart.

From the heart emerges creativity. I used to think creativity meant painting a masterpiece of art or writing a novel. I now realize that creativity is not just for the selected few who achieve exceptional worldly accomplishments. I think we all have creativity within ourselves. Creativity can be in the way we interact with others, the way we cook, and the way we do other everyday things. Some creative people who get a sudden intuitive inspiration describe the phenomenon as being almost a medium for a higher power (Miller et al., 1992). Franck (1981) speaks of creativity in *Art as a way*. He says that the purpose of art is not to discover who you are but to become your truth. In other words, our potential and essence are already there, and we just need to become them

rather than finding them. He also contends that true art helps us manifest the Self. My interpretation of the “Self” with a capitalized “s” is the essence of a person who is on a path of purpose. Based on Miller’s and Franck’s assumptions, creativity holds the key to linking the inner work and the outer work for many people. Fox (1995) contends that people need opportunities to express their creativity to find happiness in their work.

Moore(1992) says, “The ultimate work, then, is the demands of fate and tending the details of life as it presents itself. We may get to a point where our external labors and the opus of the soul are one and the same, inseparable”(p.199). Fox’s definition of creativity (1994) is similar to Moore’s. He writes, “Creativity is a link between our inner work and outer work that society requires of us. Creativity is the threshold through which our non-action leads to actions of beautification, celebration, and healing in the world. Creativity is both an inner work and outer work”(p.115). O’Hara (1995) states, “As you stand on the brink of magnificence, be aware that you are charged to bring your inner vision into a workable reality. The moment this inner vision becomes an outer reality you assume the responsibility for seeing it delivered safely home”(p.56). What O’Hara is saying is that when we have a great inner vision, the vision is yours to manifest it the best you can in the physical world. This vision may be an idea to help the community, clean up our environment, or start a project. It can be as small and mundane as having an intention to be peaceful towards everyone you meet that day. What your inner vision manifests is the creation of peace in the hearts of the people you touch. Acts that seem small and trivial often have the power to influence a bigger entity. Ricoeur (1967) said, “To manifest the ‘sacred’ on the ‘cosmos’ and to manifest it in the ‘psyche’ are the same

thing....Cosmos and Psyche are the two poles of the same 'expressivity'" (p.12, 13).

When the inner vision and the outer work match, we can create the opus out of every experience and feel the deep sense of congruence and synchronicity.

Work is an area where some people try to find their purpose, and that may be because we develop ourselves in work. Human endeavor for search for purpose has manifested in many ways. Some try to find it in religion. Some try to express it in work. And some push themselves to their limit physically and mentally. Humans have for many years asked this existential question of our being. Thomas Aquinas, quoted in Fox (1992), says, "To live well is to work well, or display a good activity" (p.186). Work and the issues of life's purpose are not completely separate things because work offers many factors that would help us discover who we are and our purposes. Those factors may be skills and knowledge, joy, devotion, service to others, relationships, and personal growth. According to O'Hara (1999), an appropriate job is "a job you enjoy going to, one that allows you growth and creativity, one that covers all your needs, and one that is right for you right now" (p.6).

I mentioned earlier that work may be sorting out issues that have nothing to do with the work itself, and that the actual work is the raw material to do the soul's work. The meaning of the soul's work is often explained by the word "purpose." Leider (1997) notes, "Purpose is the quality we want to center our work around -- the way we orient ourselves toward life and work. It is the way we make sense or meaning out of our lives" (p.11). How do we know we are on purpose? Zukav (1990) answers, "When the deepest part of you becomes engaged in what you are doing, when your activities and actions

become gratifying and purposeful, when what you do serves both yourself and others, when you do not tire within but seek the sweet satisfaction of your life and your work, you are doing what you were meant to be doing” (p.236). I once heard someone talking to many young people on TV saying, “Find something that you love to do, something you love so much that you would do it for free. You get so good at it that you can get paid for it.” What you love to do may not always lead to a paying job, but the optimism and hope for life that this message communicates should not be disregarded.

Some people might say that life is too difficult or that personal growth has nothing to do with them. I acknowledge that some people feel trapped in a job or life’s situation that may not be their choosing, and all this talk about meaning and purpose may sound foreign to them. I do believe purpose can mean completely different things for different people. I don’t believe purpose only means achieving something grandiose. We may not necessarily have to be educated to be able to discuss these issues to be on purpose. When we feel trapped or victimized, however, it is the individual’s challenge and the intention to change their reality as much as the economists’ and the policy makers’ work to create a better world. People who cannot find meaning in their work seem to try to find it in something else. It could be volunteer work or hobby or any other activity where people can feel connected with their own creativity and longing for expression.

The meaning of purpose can be expressed differently. Fox (1994) in his response to Rilke’s question, “When can we be real?,” he proposes, “We are on the way to being real when we pay attention to non-action, that is to the *via positiva* (awe) and *via negativa* (darkness) in our lives. But we don’t actually become real until we abandon

ourselves to creativity, until the Spirit that made the heavens and the earth can flow through us and effect its New Creation through us.... In other words, we become real when our work becomes compassion expressed in creative ways that surprise and that effect change”(p.113).

In relation to the discussion on purpose and becoming real, I would like to include a part of the story, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, by Margery Williams. The following is a part of the story where the Velveteen Rabbit asks the Skin Horse what it means to be real. Velveteen Rabbit and Skin Horse are both toys and they are having this conversation in the nursery.

“What is REAL?” asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. “Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick out handle?”

“Real isn’t how you are made,” said the Skin Horse. “It’s a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become REAL.”

“Does it hurt?” said the Rabbit.

“Sometimes,” said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. “When you are REAL, you don’t mind being hurt.”

“Does it happen all at once, like being would up,” he asked, “or bit by bit?”

“It doesn’t happen all at once,” said the Skin Horse. “You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are REAL, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are REAL, you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand.”

This story offers significant messages to us, both children and adults. Life is a journey for us to become Real, and it is a long process of learning and discovery. Someone told me once that “not all life’s gifts are pleasant.” A birthday card I received years ago said, “Life can only be understood backwards, but we must still live forward.” What it means is that when we are in the middle of a situation, it is difficult to see the lesson or the gift life brings. When we look back in our lives, so much of it makes sense. A negative experience can turn out to be a blessing in disguise.

Another message this story offers relates to what I mentioned earlier about the type of work and understanding the soul of work. Who is Real may not be obvious from the work they do or their socio-economic status, or their appearance. Real people only look shabby to those who don’t understand. Becoming Real may be similar to the idea of self-actualization, but words such as self-actualization and success are often interpreted to

include a sense of success in the socio-economic achievement. Ralph Waldo Emerson has an interesting definition of success. His statement in Handy (1998) says, “To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and to endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know that even one life has breathed better you lived; this is to have succeeded” (p.104).

Symptom vs. Problem

We have obvious problems with displaced workers and economic crises, but the crises are not just about joblessness. More jobs and better training would certainly help the situation, but it cannot all be solved by creating more jobs. The situation we have is a symptom, not the problem itself. Symptoms are merely a manifestation of an underlying problem, but more often than not, symptoms are mistaken for problems. Fox (1995) contends, “Today’s job crisis is a symptom of something much deeper: a crisis in our relationship to work and the challenge put to our species today to reinvent it” (p.5).

When we have disruptive students, we tend to solve the problem by hiring more counselors or expelling them. In industry, lower level of commitment, lack of morale and motivation, and absenteeism are observed in workers. Mistaking a symptom for a problem, the organization assumes that the individuals who have such problems need more training or a reward and punishment system. If we only see the symptom and react to it

without understanding the core of the issue, we will perpetuate the problem and keep ourselves from evolving.

Although the phrase “paradigm shift” has been overused, that might be what it takes to make necessary changes. Making small changes and patching things up will not always work. I have mainly discussed individual aspects of work so far, and the reason is that we must first understand what work means to an individual before organizations can grow. Furthermore, if the organization doesn’t allow humans to evolve in it, the organization as a system will not evolve. It sounds paradoxical, but for the whole system to evolve, individuals need to evolve, and the individuals as members of the group can only evolve as far as the system evolves. The individuals and the whole system are not separate things. The old theory of a system was the view of physical summativity, which a whole is just a collection of parts. A system, according to Littlejohn (1996), is “the product of the forces and interactions among the parts,” and he further argues, “A group of people standing in a row at a bus stop is not much of a system, but a group of people sitting around a table discussing a problem certainly is” (p.44) In the Quantum theory, the individuals can be autonomous and the whole at the same time. That it is not “either or” but it is “both” may not be an easy concept to understand. The West is largely influenced by a monotheistic tradition where the concept of self is more individualistic and experiences are more dichotomous. Individualism has achieved some great things but it often catches us in rigid thinking and a feeling of isolation. Wheatley (1992) states, “Loneliness pervaded not only our science, but whole cultures. In America, we raised individualism to its highest expression, each of us protecting our boundaries, asserting our

rights, creating a culture that, as Bellah et al. write, ‘leaves the individual suspended in glorious, but terrifying, isolation’ (Bellah et al., 1985, 6)” (p. 30). The modern concept of an individual is an atomistic being independent from the rest of the world. In order to understand the relationship and the dynamics between the individuals and organizations, we need to move beyond the Newtonian paradigm of separate parts.

Newtonian Theory and Quantum Theory

We keep various academic subjects as separate disciplines, and many believe that hard science has nothing to do with human science. It is intriguing though to see the same epistemological issues woven through different disciplines. For example, the concept of self, is a fundamental issue in philosophy, economics, and other social science disciplines. Wheatley (1992) believes that there is a metaphorical link between some scientific perspectives and the organizational phenomena. In this section, I would like to explore the relationship between the organization and the individuals by looking at theories in physics.

Comparing the theory of quantum mechanics to Newtonian theory can explain the complex relationship between the individuals and the system. Quantum mechanics has the opposite epistemological assumptions from that of the Newtonian theory. The philosophical implication of quantum mechanics is that all things in the universe are parts of one all-encompassing pattern (Zukav, 1979). The Newtonian world has a single reality that can be explained and predicted in an exact manner, while a quantum system is a world of emerging multiple realities that can be mutually contradictory. Another difference is

that quantum mechanics is based on observations, and it says nothing about predictions as opposed to the Newtonian physics, because in quantum theory, reality is created. The well-known example of “the particle and the wave” explains that in the Newtonian theory, particles and waves are separate but a quantum theory views things being particles and waves at the same time. What is intriguing is that whether it is a particle or a wave is created in the relationship with the one who experiences.

One interesting understanding of a quantum reality, according to Zohar (1990), is that we do not actually create reality. “We are essential to its coming forth. We evoke a potential that is already present. Because things cannot exist as observable phenomena without us in quantum world, the ideal of scientific objectivity disappears” (Wheatley, 1992, p.36). In the Quantum world, linear time has little meaning. Weick (1979) suggests action precedes planning, and strategic planning, which responds to the external demand, does not make sense. The external world, or the environment, does not exist until we interact with it. Zohar (1990) contends that the central idea of the Quantum world is that “unobserved quantum phenomena are radically different from observed ones” (p.41).

In order to understand quantum mechanics, shifting of some pre-existing beliefs is necessary. These two theories can be applied to the discussion of individuals and organizations. The Newtonian view of an organization is that individuals in it are seen as separate parts with no apparent connections or interactions. It is linear, cause-and-effect, and goal-oriented. A quantum system on the other hand is process-oriented and unfolding. Zohar (1993) explains that quantum systems evolve very much like the way thoughts evolve in the realm of the imagination. Prigogine (1984) suggests that living

particles create order out of chaos, and that life is self-organizing and capable of living through chaos. Living systems are quantum self-organizing systems.

It is interesting to see how physics relates to philosophy. Fox (1985) writes about Hildegard, who lived eight hundred years ago as a nun with an extraordinary spirit. Her belief was that human body is in the cosmos and the cosmos is in the human body; therefore, she saw a “human (microcosm)/cosmic (macrocosm)” relationship. This is not a relationship where one affects the other in a linear manner but rather like a quantum particle/wave relationship. Using an understanding of Hildegard’s belief and of quantum mechanics, we can better understand how we as individuals relate to a complex universe. We can better see how, by looking at ourselves as part of a physico-spiritual complex, we will have an affect on our planet and the universe. This notion is applicable to the individual/organization relationship. Tarlow (1998) says, “From chaos theory, we learn that very small micromovements in a system can have totally unpredictable implications, like the proverbial butterfly which by flapping its wings in Japan eventually causes tornadoes in the midwest”(p.22).

Zukav acknowledges the sense of uncertainty in quantum theory. He states, “The uncertainty principle rigorously brings us to the realization that there is no ‘My Way’ which is separate from the world around us. It brings us to question the very existence of an ‘objective’ reality, as does complimentarity and the concept of particles of corrections”(Zukav, 1979, p.136). Quantum theory explains the intricate interconnectedness of dynamic particles. Thurman (1998), in his writing on Buddhism, explains, “Our constant, instantaneous disappearance and reappearance -- our infinite

transparency -- imparts a new vividness and clarity to the infinite network of the relatedness of things and beings” (p.82).

We might actually be in the chaotic period between phases. The old paradigm has practically broken down and a new paradigm is not yet well-established. We have moved on from growing (agricultural) to producing (industrial) to processing (information). By achieving a richness of information, we may have reached the point where we have too much information. The next step might involve our wisdom to choose the information. This may be a time of uncertainty and anxiety. What we need to learn from the old lessons is that we may not be able to use the same scientific method and the brain to analyze or define the new era. We might need more than our brain and rationality to embrace what is coming. During the period of change, Tarlow (1998) suggests, “Leaping into the void is the way to tap into one’s deepest levels of creativity. Unless you can let go of conceptual and emotional assumptions, you can never allow anything bigger to enter” (p.21). According to Tarlow (1998), Gen-Xers are already equipped for chaos -- “fluid identity, unattached to outcomes, and a little need for commitment” (p.21). She also explains that these descriptions have to do with coping with a culture without form. Prigogine (1984) contends that breakdowns are necessary and natural for the energy to be released to search for a new order. When a new order is established, the old dissipates. For a dynamic system to evolve, disequilibrium is necessary to create perturbation. Many knew this shift was coming; they called it different names. According to Tarlow (1998), greater complexity, or new intelligence, “only seems to occur when unpredictable possibilities

arrive in a way that brings not just new information, but an ability to entirely rewrite our perceptions of what lies ahead” (p.25).

Significance of the Study

This study can contribute to the field of Human Resource Development (HRD) in several ways. First, this study will help us view HRD from a different perspective. HRD is about people who make up the organization. It is critical to understand people’s inner vision and desire for work, which will help us understand what work means to people. Second, this study will shed some light on the relationship between work and human evolution. Third, this study will help us better understand the organizational management role in serving people in their evolution. Fourth, this study will hopefully help us and organizations to be more aware of ourselves. Wheatley (1992) says, “To be responsible inventors and discoverers, though, we need the courage to let go of the old world, to relinquish most of what we have cherished, to abandon our interpretations about what does and doesn’t work” (p.5).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Work

Humans have always worked, and civilization has been structured around work. We have moved from an agricultural society to an industrial society, and we are now in a post-industrial phase, also referred to as the information era. Bell (1973) discusses the challenges humans have faced over the years, and he calls those challenges and battles “games.” It is interesting to note how the name of the “game” has changed over the years (Bell, 1973). For thousands of years, life has been a game against nature, finding shelter and safety from elements and finding food from natural surroundings. Humans have tried to conquer the waters and the heights. Much effort was spent fighting against nature — it was a fundamental part of living. Before the industrial revolution, work was based more on interdependency and workers related more with others and with their natural surroundings. During the industrial period, technical order was established to assert human power over natural phenomena. According to Bell (1973), the post-industrial society would see people no longer regarding nature either as good or bad, and society would be a game between people instead of a game against nature. The description of the differing challenges during the pre-industrial era, industrial era, and post-industrial era are described by Bell as “person against nature,” “person against machines” and “mental

person against mental person.” The economy of each of the three epochs, according to Bell (1973), is an extractive one in the pre-industrial society, a fabricating economy in the industrial society, and processing economy in the post-industrial society.

The organization of this literature review on attitudes toward work and involvement in it will be to look at the three Western historic epochs: pre-industrial, industrial, and post-industrial, and discuss the constructs of the epochs in the framework of philosophy and theory related to work. Based on the philosophical and theoretical implications of each epoch, we will be able to formulate some perspectives on current and the emerging thinking about the meaning of work.

Pre-industrial era

In every period in our history, people have had reasons to work. During the Middle Ages, the Judeo-Christian tradition values emerged. One of those values was that work is a way to heaven. The story of Adam and Eve speaks about Adam being punished by having to work hard to get enough food to eat. The meaning of the story is that now humans have to work because of our proto-parents' failings. “This account of the Fall, as it is called, eventually came to provide in the Middle Ages the basic reason for working: to do penance and thereby make up for the taint of the “original sin” and its effects, which are directly, a weakened state of virtue, and, indirectly, one’s resulting personal sins” (Byrne, 1990, p.69). As economic growth became more important, theologians insisted that hard work was a way to salvation.

The type of work ethic that once existed during the pre-industrial era and nearly disappeared with the market driven economy is that of the craft model. Many people found meaning and pride in the craftsmanship associated with their work. “It too is a kind of work ethic, one whose roots will be found in ancient ideas about virtue as self-actualization” (Byrne, 1990, P. 70).

Byrne identifies three points about workers practicing craftsmanship:

1. They gave the practitioners not only a personal sense of accomplishment (craft pride) but also social status.
2. Practitioners of each craft typically sought, through organizations known as guilds, to exercise control over access to the craft and over the terms and conditions of its practice.
3. Authoritarians long opposed, and at the time of the Industrial Revolution did in fact destroy, the guilds. (p.71)

The economy of the pre-industrial era is basically extractive, characterized by activities such as agriculture, fishing, mining, and using other natural resources (Bell, 1973). Before technology, people had a closer relationship with the natural world, and their well-being depended more on the natural elements. Artisans and skilled workers were valued in the pre-industrial era. Workers found the personal sense of self in their work, and in many cases their work represented their identity, position, and status. Eventually, technology and mass production changed the nature and concept of work.

The type of job control that existed before the industrial revolution was the craft guild. A craft guild is “an interest-group association the purpose of which is to maximize over time the common welfare of practitioners of a particular craft” (Byrne, 1990, p.147). Craft guilds have existed for many years in both Europe and Asia. They have existed from 600 B.C. in India, under the emperors in Rome, and from the Middle Ages in the western Europe. (Byrne, 1990). They still exist today in many countries. A current equivalent may be a state bar association for attorneys or a medical association for doctors. Craft guilds controlled the entry into the guild and ensured the quality of work.

Craft guilds have been perceived to foster self-esteem through the sense of shared participation and social worth that accompanies them. They helped to give people pride in what they did and who they were. This notion is probably central to the concept of work during the pre-industrial era. Guilds had rituals and pageants, in which they displayed their social status. Craft guild members were responsible for maintaining product quality. The society either accepted or tolerated guilds because of their quality-control function. There were turf control issues with merchants and traders controlling the conditions to protect the skills.

According to Byrne (1990), the social utility of craft guilds is controversial, and he offers some reasons for the controversy. First, there was a great deal of variation in the guilds’ organization and purpose over time. The role of guilds also changed at a fast pace along with changes in government structure and the expansion of commerce. The guilds, according to Byrne, were viewed as “free craftsman organized in opposition to city government; agents of government to police particular industries for the benefit of

consumers; or self-governing bodies of craftsmen whose decisions were subject to government sanction or veto” (1990, p. 147).

Second, it is difficult to find adequate information on guilds because social situations changed over time and differed from one country to another. As a result, we tend to impose our own world and knowledge to understand them. Contrary to what we might think, guilds were not a collection of autonomous craftsmen. The practice of guilds was subject to control by other craftsmen, merchants, and companies. Third, because of the historical complexities, we should avoid using guilds to support a case for or against labor unions or modern corporations.

Summary

Not much is known about the concept of work before the industrial era. When people worked hard, it was not because of aggressive management or a market-driven economy. As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, medieval religious or moral philosophy was the main driving force in people’s work ethics. Self-actualization was considered to be achieved through good work; however, self-actualization during that period seems much more prescribed in a religious and moral sense. The relationship between work and individuals was much stronger. Work was the identity of an individual rather than how much the person produced economically. Based on the craft philosophy, the quality of the individual was derived from the quality of the work. Craftsmen found much pride in the quality of the work they did. There was less distinction between work life and social or family life. In fact, it was common to naturally assume inheriting the

family business for generations. In that sense, the quality of the work meant the quality of the whole family. In the pre-industrial era, people were identified by the type of their occupations or social roles such as weaver, carpenter, tailor, husband, and wife (Casey, 1995). They didn't really have a concept of creating a surplus production or advancing economically; they needed to produce enough to sustain their families and maintain their pride. Figure 1. shows the summary of the theories and philosophies dominant during the pre-industrial era and the implications on work.

	Theory	Philosophy	Implication
Pre-industrial era	Religiously and morally prescribed self-actualization	Religious doctrines Emphasis on social life and structure, Hard work as salvation	Craftsmanship valued, Pride in their work, Identity of self in work, Sustenance of livelihood

Figure 1. Summary of the Pre-industrial Era

Industrial era

The industrial era saw major changes in economic and social systems. Blumer (1990) attempts to define industrialization and to identify some of the economic and social changes associated with it. Blumer notes that one way to look at industrialization is as a type of economy; the other is as an agent of social change. Unlike the earlier, pre-industrial economics of hunting, fishing, and growing crops, industrialized economies produce goods with the use of machines. An industrialized economy is a complex system based on and centered around manufacturing, but around which other parts of the system

such as communication, transportation, and banking are dependently arranged.

Industrialization as an agent of social change might involve technological development, and the productive processes which include the division of labor into separate tasks and increasing direction of work by non-laboring managers. Industrialization's social impact will be touched on later in this chapter.

Blumer (1990) also identifies what is necessary for an industrialized system to function. He lists the following:

1. Production by machines in place of production by hand.
2. The location of production in factories or manufacturing establishments instead of in homes or handicraft shops.
3. The location of manufacturing establishments at economically advantageous points and thus the clustering of such locations in common sites.
4. The location of workers near the industrial establishments in which they work.
5. The formation of occupations essential to manufacturing production.
6. The formation of skills required in such occupations.
7. The formation of systems of internal government in industrial establishments -- a hierarchy of authority, lines of command, rules of work and operation, and a system of discipline.
8. A pressure to achieve volume production at low unit costs.
9. A search for markets and a promotion of their expansion.
10. A mobility of the elements of the manufacturing system -- labor, capital, machines and equipment (in the sense of replacement), and exploitable markets.

11. The utilization of a money economy -- transactions are monetary as in the case of wages, salaries, purchases, sales, rent, interest, and profit.
12. The establishment of contractual relations, as between employer and employee, purchaser and seller, principal and agent, lessor and renter, creditor and debtor.
13. A motif of rationality, reflecting a need for efficiency in production, in operations, in management, and in marketing.

(Blumer, 1990, p.38, 39)

Sociologists consider occupation as a primary element in social organization and a social status indicator in the modern society. "Occupation has also been regarded as a primary locus of cohesion and a site of practical solidarity in the factories and the cities of industrialism" (Casey, 1995, P.21). In the industrial society, work as a role in the economic development was dominant while in the pre-industrial society work is regarded more as a social identity.

The first factories in Britain appeared in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. These factories looked more like large-scale workshops, and they focused more on reorganizing work than mechanizing it. It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that they had enough technological and economic development to mechanize the factories (Thompson, 1989). Marx (1976) identified these changes as the stages of the development of labor process: co-operation, manufacture, and large-scale industry. As a function of the capitalist economic system, workers were brought together to work under the direction of the authority. Still lacking the technological means of control, employers established direct control over work, which resulted in division of labor. As a result, a

hierarchy was established based on skill and training, and “work itself begins to be revolutionized, resulting in a much greater specialization of tasks that subordinates the knowledge, judgment, and will of the worker” (Thompson, 1989, p.45). Marglin (1976) says the origin of management stemmed from the employers’ effort to control, discipline, and supervise to reduce costs during this period.

Changes in technology and work organization brought worker resistance and struggles. There were struggles between employers and employees. There were struggles between workers and machines. “The concept of real subordination was therefore meant to indicate the new and more powerful mechanisms for control embodied in this stage of the labor process” (Thompson, 1989, p.52). According to Casey (1995), Marx argued that industrialism affected workers by ruining their bodies and minds, and the human aspects of work, such as creativity, were devalued and destroyed. The Marxists attempted to identify ways in which industries created class cultures.

Thompson (1967) argued that the workers’ values, beliefs, and norms were shaped by the particular work around which classes were organized. Industrial work was quite a shift from agricultural work in the pre-industrial era. Agricultural workers worked only as much as they needed to sustain their families. The progression of industrialism and the increased demand for productivity required the skilled craftsmen and agricultural workers to learn new habits. Some of the new habits included time-keeping, respect for authority, and working for economic growth. These new rules were imposed on the workers and their energy was redirected into industrial production. Casey (1995) states, “Expansion of industrial capitalism, and increasing specialization of function, required the production of

an individual self who would live in an increasingly differentiated and privatized world” (p.76).

The economy in the industrial era was based on “fabricating” as opposed to “extracting” in the pre-industrial era, and “processing” in the post-industrial era. The commodities were sold and consumed in identifiable units. The first industrial revolution marked the use of steam power to manufacture various goods, mine ore, and drive the steam locomotives. It replaced some of the human and animal labor. The second industrial revolution, which occurred between 1860 and the World War I, was based on oil and electric power. Oil and electricity, along with other inventions, continued to shift the burden from people and animals to machines. The third industrial revolution, the electronic revolution, came after World War II and it is making a significant impact on our economics today (Rifkin, 1995). Robots, computers, and machines are already doing much of the work that was done by humans before, and they are now invading the realm of thinking, which was once thought to be the human domain. Machines have not only lightened the labor and toil of humans but have also taken over some of the mental functions of humans.

In the 19th century, the modern idea of efficiency emerged. Engineers were measuring efficiency by using machines. “Efficiency came to mean the maximum yield that could be produced in the shortest time, expending the least amount of energy, labor, and capital in the process” (Rifkin, 1995, p.49). Taylor and his “scientific management” principles were responsible for the economic process during this time. Bell (1973) says if the logic of efficiency as a mode of life is attributed to one person, it is Taylor.

Braverman's definition (1974) of scientific management is "the organized study of work, the analysis of work into its simplest elements and the systematic improvement of the workers' performance of each of these elements" (p.88). In this method, humans and machines were both measured for speed and input/output ratio.

Arendt (1958) examined the distinction between work and labor. Labor, according to Arendt, is done in service to or at the command of others, and work leaves a product and forms an addition to the human artifice. In that sense, the era of scientific management was shaped by the logic of labor. The logic of labor is based on the belief that good human life depends on continuous consumption, which substitutes for the "artifice" of work (Arendt, 1958). Philosophically, this era equates happiness with "perfect balance of life process of exhaustion and regeneration" (Arendt, 1958, p.134).

One of the theories behind the emergence of the modern industrial period is social Darwinism. The perspective of Social Darwinism means, among people, as well as other species, the fittest survive, and preserving the inept is expensive and damaging to the evolutionary process of people (Miles, 1975).

Management practices during the modern industrial period resulted in "simplified tasks for those who are not simple-minded, close supervision by those whose legitimacy rests only on a hierarchical structure, and jobs that have nothing but money to offer" (Work in America: Report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1973, p.18). Close supervision is rooted in a negative, pessimistic view of people. Theory X, based on McGregor's work (1960), explains the assumptions of workers during the era.

Theory X assumes that people:

have a genuine distaste for work

must be prodded, coerced, or threatened into work because it is so unpleasant

prefer to be closely supervised

avoid as much responsibility as they can

have little ambition

value security above all else (Rothwell, Sullivan, McLean, 1995, p.21).

Managers were led to believe that employees found work unpleasant and they preferred monetary rewards more than other rewards. Creativity and autonomy in people were devalued. Very few people were thought to be suited to do creative work, and autonomy was considered too risky.

Given these assumptions on industrial work, it is interesting to explore the link between the people's view of themselves and the work philosophy. When we think about the concept of self, the modern view of people has its roots in the Western philosophical tradition and ideas developed by philosophers such as Hobbes, Hume, and Locke. They agreed on the view of self as general, shared orientation, atomistic, individualistic, non-social, and egoistic (Allen, 1997). These Western concepts seem to be rooted in Cartesian epistemology. The Cartesian approach assumes that reality equals rationality. Descartes argued that only what is rational to a clear mind is true. He also valued the mind that allows thinking; therefore, the self is a thinking thing that is individual and independent

from others. If self is an autonomous thinking thing independent from the rest of the world, one can only be certain of one's own existence and experience. The modern philosophy has been rooted in the model of ego-oriented solipsism formulated by Descartes.

Capitalist economists such as Adam Smith maximized this theory of self and believed that this concept could help establish a rationally constructed economics. Therefore, the idea of independent self, the theory of the survival of the fittest, and rational modern economics all helped form the basis of thinking about the industrial era.

Modernity in Western history has its roots in the "Age of Enlightenment," which began at the end of the eighteenth century. "The historical trajectory from these origins to the present (or possibly recent past) may be understood as having been founded intellectually on a belief in the power of reason over ignorance, order over disorder and science over superstition as universal values with which to defeat the old orders, the old ruling classes, the *aciens regimes* with their outmoded ideas"(Leonard, 1997, p.5). These beliefs were to provide the foundation to achieve progress through the new mode of production called capitalism. Kant's philosophical belief was that enlightenment came from the present knowledge, not the past. Reason based on present knowledge creates its own norms regardless of the past or tradition, and therefore, reason is universal (Osborne, 1992). Post-modernists believe that modernity represents "a Eurocentric, patriarchal and destructive triumphalism over populations and nature itself" (Leonard, 1997, p. 7). Foucault (1977) argues that modernity is embedded in the domination practiced in the language of science, order, and truth. Foucault's work was done during the eighteenth

and the early nineteenth century by studying the administrative control over people with the single concept of truth and false (Leonard, 1997). According to Foucault, modernity excluded the voices of the oppressed.

Calagione and Nugent (1992) note that anthropology of work reveals modalities of inequality and power with capitalism. Franco (1988) describes the margins of capitalism, where millions labor, and says, "The Third World becomes the place of the unconscious, the rich source of fantasy and legend recycled by the intelligentsia, for which heterogeneity is no longer a ghostly, dragging chain but material that can be loosened from any territorial context and juxtaposed in ways that provide a constant frisson of pleasure" (p. 505).

LaBier (1986) contends that industrial discipline and control affected not only the physical but the emotional lives of workers.

Blumer (1990) describes the social processes identified with industrialization:

1. Increasing occupational specialization and a greater division of labor.
2. Detachment of production from family and village institutions and its lodgment in a separate institution with its own distinctive character.
3. The formation of a new class structure through the articulation of the divergent participants in the industrial system.
4. The organization of a new system of prestige, authority, and power.
5. Accelerated processes of physical and social mobility.
6. The process of urbanization.
7. The secularization of values, institutions, and social relations.

8. The generation of impersonal social relations, replacing personalities and paternalism.
9. A process of individualism (detachment of individuals from social groups, a kind of atomization of society).
10. A shift from status by ascription to status by achievement, i.e., from an evaluation of an individual on the basis of birth, family, etc., to an evaluation of him on the basis of his abilities and performance.
11. A shift away from traditional mindedness, and the development of a disposition favorable to innovation and social change.

(Blumer, 1990, p. 40)

McKee (1997) has broken the time frame of 1940s to 2000 into five periods: mechanistic period, legalistic period, organistic period, strategic period, and catalytic period. Mechanistic period was when manufacturing was the main driver of American industry. McKee believes that this period saw the birth of human resource profession. Labor was the predominant work and the relationship between workers and employers was adversary. There was little innovation in pay practice and benefit programs, and there was also very little development of employees and management. Workers were predominantly white males and were thought to be commodities.

The legalistic period, according to McKee (1997), was a period where changes occurred in the workplace. These changes allowed more people of color and women into the workforce: people of color into work other than labor and field and women into work

without typewriters. As opposed to union-management issues in the mechanistic period, the legalistic period saw laws dealing with the treatment of the human asset. Management began to pay more attention to the development of managerial and organizational skills.

The following table (figure 2.) is modified from McKee's model (1997) of the evolution of human resources. It shows the demographics of workers, employee relations, pay and jobs, and organizational development during the two periods in the industrial era.

Dimensions	Mechanistic 1940s-50s	Legalistic 1960s-70s
Demographics	White males, Racism, Sexism, No upward mobility	White males dominated, African Americans hired in offices, Women start to move up
Employee relations	Labor management adversarial, Unions powerful	UAW/Teamsters supreme, Steel union strikes
Pay/Jobs	Fair day's work for a fair day's pay, Bonuses: profit sharing, Pensions, Beginning of health insurance	Sales and management incentives, Stock options, Experiment with cafeteria benefits
Organization development	Little employee/management development, Hierarchical; dehumanized assembly lines	Beginning of management science, T-group, Hierarchical

Figure 2. Evolution of human resources.

Summary

During the industrial era, the modernist notion of the scientific method as a sign of the development of civilization became predominant. This method was an effort to produce as much as possible within the shortest possible time, which was based on the belief that economic success would bring happiness and satisfaction in their lives. They controlled the workers' time and space to ensure maximum production. That resulted in

separation of “work and family,” “role and self,” and “individuals and society.” Creativity was taken out of work and work became a series of isolated tasks. The management’s view of workers was negative and their relationships were adversarial. People’s backgrounds and differences were minimized, and people were perceived as universal humans constituted by the definition of the dominant culture. The incongruence between the expectations of organizations and the workers widened. Work during the industrial era posed hardship on the workers’ physical bodies and their mental health. Hierarchical social structures became common, and a great deal of oppression was imposed upon the voiceless during this era. Figure 3. shows the summary of the theories and philosophies during the industrial era and the implications on work.

	Theory	Philosophy	Implications
Industrial era	Newtonian theory Labor theory Scientific method Theory X Management theory Social Darwinism	Universal view of people, Universal reason, Individuals as separate beings, One truth/reality, Static sense of self, Rationality as the dominant value	Incongruence between work and self. Work as isolated tasks. Workers viewed as roles and commodities, Lack of creativity and autonomy, Racism in workplaces, Workers mostly male, Increased mobility

Figure 3. Summary of Industrial Era

Post-industrial era

Over two decades ago Bell predicted that those who had and controlled knowledge would be the single most dominant group by the year 2000. As the knowledge

sector became the center of the global economy, a division developed between the haves and the have-nots. Technology has been replacing workers for many decades, but has recently reached the level of middle management positions. The gap between the knowledge sector and the service sector has widened during the last decade. Rifkin (1996) says, “the upper tier of the labor market includes the managers, lawyers, accountants, bankers, business consultants, and other technically trained people whose daily duties lie at the heart of the control and co-ordination of the global corporation at the bottom of the labor market is the other, less fortunate, pool of urban residents whose collective function is to provide services to the workers in the upper tier”(p.176).

As we have moved from the industrial society to the information society, the nature of work has changed drastically. According to Rifkin (1995), we will have virtual elimination of blue collar factory workers by 2020, and the service industry will keep eliminating layers to the point where we will see virtual companies based on strategic networks. Virtual companies may actually help the home and child care dilemmas, but they will weaken the relational aspect of work. Rifkin calls this phenomenon a revolution which fundamentally changes the nature of work, and the transition could completely manifest itself in less than half a century.

What marks the post-industrial era is the emphasis on knowledge. Knowledge is what seems to give one power in the post-industrial society. According to Bell (1973), “Knowledge is a product of the self-conscious and renewable comparison and judging of cultural objects and ideas in order to say that something is better than something else (or more complex, or more beautiful, or whatever the standard one seeks to apply), and that

something is truer”(p.422). To many, knowledge is a form of authority, and education refines authoritative judgments. Humans have used knowledge to exercise power and control in many ways, and in the information era, more power goes to the ones with the knowledge.

In the post-industrial society which emphasizes knowledge in minute specializations, experiences become more narrowly defined and less widely shared. We can easily predict that it would take a greater effort to understand each other and trust each other when knowledge becomes specialized and compartmentalized. A conceptual schema may be a term necessary to integrate diverse attributes or properties of an object (Bell, 1973). The nature of the knowledge society would perpetuate individual liberalism in which the individual is the singular unit of society, not the family, the society, or the community. With technical skills as the operative power, professional occupations become central, leading to an extension of meritocracy. This situation would further widen the gap between the haves and have-nots, result in serious social unrest, and cause further economic downfall.

The economics of information is different from the economics of goods, and the post-industrial social or work relations are not the same as the social or work relations in the industrial society (Bell, 1973). Bell predicted that learning to live with one another would be an issue in the post-industrial society. The emergence of Gen-X, who belong to a culture without as much form and attachment as earlier generations exhibited, may be a manifestation of the emerging social order of post-industrial society.

McKee (1997) divided the post-industrial time frame of 1980s to 1990s into two periods: the organistic period and the strategic period. The organistic period in the 1980s brought rapid and constant changes: an increasingly diverse workforce, an awareness of work and family issues, the demise of labor as king (McKee, 1997). At the organizational level, changes occurred in the form of mergers, restructuring, divestitures, and downsizing.

The strategic period in the 1990s has brought constant changes in many aspects of the workplace. Similar changes as those in the 1980s happened but organizations had a more strategic approach to the changes.

1. The world has shrunk, and we are residents of the Global Village, conducting our transnational business electronically, heedless of time differences.
2. The work force is a “salad bowl,” all ethnicities working together, not necessarily harmoniously.
3. An aging workforce of Baby Boomers who will once again change workplace programs and attitudes toward the “older worker.”
4. The potential rise of white/pink collar unionism.
5. The rise of diversity as a state of both mind and program which considers disability, marital status, occupational, gender preference, and weight, as well as age, race, sex, national origin, religion, and so on.

(McKee, 1997, p.187)

The following table (Figure 4.) is modified from McKee’s model on the evolution of human resource during the organistic and strategic periods.

Dimensions	Organistic (1980s)	Strategic (1990s)
Demographics	White male/female competition for jobs, More African Americans and Asians in high places, More Hispanics	A salad bowl, White males threatened, More females, Baby Busters not committed, Waves of immigration
Employee relations	Employee involvement, Beginning of decline of union power,	Teams, Contingent workers, Roles vs. jobs, Stress, Diversity
Pay/Jobs	Differentiated pay, Rewards systems, Compensation,	Team pay, Rewards and recognition, Options in lieu of high base, Executive pay caps
Organization development	Downsizing, Emergence of leadership, Management	Restructuring, Androgynous management styles, Learning organizations, Virtual corporation, Powerful leaders

Figure. 4. Evolution of human resources.

If the word post-industrial has to do with work and economics, the word postmodern has to do with the social, intellectual aspects of our lives. One way of viewing post-modernism is as an intellectual movement with the goal of critiquing earlier views of modernity. Post-modernism rejects the notion of self-validating knowledge as the universal truth, and argues against using knowledge in the service of administrative and professional power. Modernity's knowledge is a representation of the objective world. "Discourses, as regulated systems of statements, are determined by the *real*, by the objective world. Furthermore, we can discover the truth of this objective world through theories and methods which create bodies of knowledge that approximate ever more

closely to the reality that they represent” (Leonard, 1997, p. 9). What we learn from the postmodern experience, however, is the diversity and multiplicity of human affairs. In the postmodern paradigm, reality, knowledge, and truth are socially, culturally, and even linguistically constructed. Reality is not out there to be discovered but it is constructed. Guba (1990) says that the three central ideas of postmodernity are the abandonment of moral absolutes, pluralist realities replacing “grand narratives,” and the emphasis of difference. Any “grand narrative” or meta-narrative will be linked to power and interpreted to be hegemony of the social order.

Unlike the static, independent, rational concept of self in modernity, self in postmodernity is fluid and contextualized. Neo-classical economics, influenced by positivist beliefs, is based on the notion that people are rational beings with basically the same backgrounds and needs. “The positivistic account of science encourages a conception of human beings as merely passive” (Lawson, 1997, P.38). “And just as the positivist conception of science is uncritically accepted in much of contemporary economics so the associated specification of the human agent as the passive receptor of atomistic events goes relatively unchallenged” (Lawson, 1997, p. 39). The problems of economic downfall and unemployment are partially due to this economic model. The positivist methodological inquiry in economics failed to do ontological investigation and takes the deductivist’s approach.

The postmodern era will continue to emphasize diversity and inter-relatedness. Individuals are viewed as beings that actively participate in decision-making and the creation of reality.

Summary

The post-industrial era is marked by the rapid advancement of technology, which shifted our work of material production to work with information and knowledge. The post-modern era came as a natural reaction to the oppressive characteristics of modernity. While modernity emphasized universal human traits, the post-modern era stresses the diversity and multiplicity of humanity. The underrepresented population's voices are better acknowledged. The organizational and societal hierarchy imposed by the modern system theory has shifted to a flatter structure. However, the post-modern era has created its own hierarchy: the knowledge sector and the service sector. Technological advancement has helped widen the gap between the rich and the poor. Many workers are feeling isolated from each other and the society. They are also uncertain about tomorrow's employment. There is a sense of "going back to our roots" to discover our backgrounds. More reflection on their personal lives and well-being is observed. With this emphasis on the personal well-being, more intrinsic aspect of life is valued. Employees have begun to evaluate their work in terms of their intrinsic rewards as well as extrinsic value. Figure 5. is a summary of the dominant theories and philosophies during the post-industrial era.

Epoch	Theory	Philosophy	Implications
Post-industrial era	Quantum theory Social theory	Multiple realities Direct sensory experience Constructivism Relativism	Separate work and social lives, Emphasis on social and personal lives, Fluid/constructed sense of self, Technological advancement, Knowledge valued, Widened gap between haves and have-nots,

Figure 5. Summary of Post-industrial Era

Current Thought on Work

McKee (1997) calls the year 2000 and beyond the catalytic period. McKee (1997, p.188) predicts the following for the future:

1. Employment will be cross-border. Increased international exposure for corporations. Workforce will need to feel comfortable in and out of culture.
2. Organizations will continue to evolve.
3. Staffing will be fluid and contingent.
4. The workforce at all levels will be diverse.
5. Compensation practices will be innovative, and new approaches to planning and managing performance will be implemented.
6. Employees will take charge of their goals and be more selective of their choices.
7. Telecommuting and other forms of flexible work will be common.

8. Benefits will be portable.

9. Teams will be a way of life. Organizational structures as webs and networks will be common.

The following table (Figure 6.) is modified from McKee's model (1997) on evolution of human resources. It shows her predictions in the demographics of workers, employee relations, pay and jobs, and organizational development.

Dimensions	Catalytic (2000-)
Demographics	Women as CEOs, Diversity issues, Increase in racial tensions, Impact of Baby Boomers
Employee relations	Loyalty to one's profession, Just-in-time workforce, Borderless employment, Unions increase
Pay/Jobs	Pay for competencies, Variable pay at all levels, CEO pay regulated, Portable benefits
Organization development	Webs/networks, Telecommuting, Restructuring, Employ self-development

Figure 6. Evolution of human resources for the future

As mentioned in the first chapter, Americans are suffering from fatigue from long hours, a sense of isolation, and anxiety about the future. Many have chosen to not invest much of themselves into work, choosing, instead, to rebuild their families. A part of this reorientation may be the emergence of neo-classical thought on work and life style. People are longing for relationships, a sense of belonging, congruence with work and self, and development of the self, all of which modernism and capitalism have deprived us of. More people are starting to value their social and personal lives and leaving the work that does not satisfy their personal needs. Tarlow (1999) quotes Hagel's statement, "When I compare how much money has been invested in technology versus that spent on

understanding social dynamics -- how behavior evolves in these environments -- it's a hugely baffling imbalance. And yet so much hinges on understanding the latter"(p.5).

Social problems are worsening. A sense of community is disappearing from American towns and cities. We suffer from economic problems, crime, depression, and other social problems. Many people are now skeptical of rational decisions. They don't need more policies or empty promises. Bolman and Deal (1995) believe that people need a leader who has courage, spirit, and hope in addition to rationality. Humans historically have looked for and found meaning in work, family, and community. They united to achieve collectively what they couldn't achieve alone. Now we are wanting to regain the sense of meaning in the era when people and communities are separated. Bolman and Deal say, "We enjoy all the achievements of modern civilization that have made our physical existence easier in so many important ways. Yet we do not know exactly what to do with ourselves, where to turn" (p.7).

Another idea about which people have become more skeptical is "the bigger, the better." We have long invested in creating bigger industries and more complex technology. The endeavor for more and better technology still goes on, and yet it may have reached its limitation emotionally in the minds of some people. An emergence of some sort of neo-classical sentiment may be happening. Going back to smallness doesn't mean going back to the old tribal ways. More people are choosing to simplify their lives, and choosing what technology is viable and to their best interest.

As I mentioned earlier, we may be in the time between epochs. We may be a stage of chaos. According to Haken (1994), the way chaos theory works in a large system such

as a society is “to steer a system continuously and softly by setting again and again conditions so that it can smoothly self-organize into a hopeful optimal stage” (p.64). We seem to be manifesting many signs of the unstable stage before a new system is established. Haken says that a change has two steps: destabilization and decisive fluctuation to drive the system into a new stable state. Another critical notion during the time of change is the principle of enslavement mechanism, which is the relationship between individuals and the order parameters. Whether we recognize it or not, the enslavement principle, or conceptualization, works in many forms such as language, culture, and various ideologies. Some of these belief systems and conceptualizations often get in the way of establishing a new system. We need synergy among these various parameters to move a whole society into a new system. Much of the movement for change is driven internally, so where the future takes us depends on us.

	Theory	Philosophy	Implications
Present	Self-organizing theory Chaos theory	Lack of one dominant belief system, Eclectic philosophy,	Sense of isolation and loss, Looking for meaning and purpose, Uncertainty, Making choices

Figure 7. Summary of the Current Era

Summary

Through the three epochs, the concept of work has changed a great deal. We can also observe the constituting theoretical and philosophical changes. The pre-industrial era

seems to be marked by a somewhat romanticized view of craftsmanship, pride, and self identity. People were often viewed and assessed by the work they did and took pride in their work. Craftsmanship in the traditional form still exists in some occupations today. Agricultural work was also predominant during the pre-industrial era. Agricultural work depended on and was controlled by the natural elements. As technology and capitalism developed, work was increasingly controlled by machines and management techniques.

In the industrial era, the view of people drastically changed. People were viewed more like parts of a machine that were supposed to produce as efficiently as possible. Very little individuality and creativity were recognized. This view of humans as cogs in a machine was heightened with the outset of the scientific method and management theory. Work meant isolated tasks that did not require creativity. Compared to working to produce enough for the family in the pre-industrial era, the industrial era encouraged workers to produce for the economic surplus. They had to learn new ways of work to produce as efficiently as possible. This work philosophy took its toll on the workers' physical bodies and their mental health.

In the post-industrial era, knowledge became an important asset. Technological development and the economic situation created a widened gap between the haves and have-nots. The philosophical and cultural shifts that have occurred with the post-industrial period are identified as post-modernity. Post modernity celebrates individuality and a multiplicity of realities, and these movements were in part prompted by the rejection of an oppressive modernity. With uncertain employment situations, work and family became separate entities. In pursuing the social and family life, people have become

detached from work; consequently, their lives are a dual system of work and social life.

We may be in a period of uncertainty where a new system has not yet established itself.

There seems to be no one dominant belief system to latch on to. There is no guarantee for tomorrow's work. This current situation is a part of the increased interest in personal growth and finding meaning in work. Figure 8. is a summary of the dominant theories and philosophies during the three epochs and the implications on work.

	Theory	Philosophy	Implication
Pre-industrial era	Religiously and morally prescribed self-actualization	Emphasis on social life and structure Hard work as salvation	Craftsmanship valued, Pride in their work, Identity of self in work, Sustenance of livelihood
Industrial era	Newtonian theory Labor theory Theory X Management theory Social Darwinism Scientific method	Universal view of people, Universal reason, Individuals as separate beings. One truth/reality Static sense of self Rationality as the dominant value	Incongruence between work and self. Work as isolated tasks. Workers viewed as roles and commodity, Lack of creativity and autonomy
Post-industrial era	Quantum theory Social theory	Multiple realities Direct sensory experience Constructivism Relativism	Separate work and social lives, Emphasis on social and personal lives, Fluid/constructed sense of self, technological advancement, knowledge valued
Present	Self-organizing theory Chaos theory	Lack of belief system Eclectic	Sense of isolation and loss, Looking for meaning and purpose, Uncertainty, Making choices

Figure 8. Summary of the Three Epochs and the Present Time

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Point of View

It is my view that human behavior is complex and developmental. As I mentioned in the first chapter, my research question is of intrinsic nature. The positivists' framework may be appropriate for a meta knowledge inquiry or theory testing. I believe there are some weaknesses in the strong positivists' view of the world and people.

In the first part of this section of this chapter, I would like to discuss the philosophical beliefs of the two major research paradigms in relation to social science research. It is my hope that this discussion will provide the acknowledgment of my own bias towards positivist/naturalist approaches to research, and also provide the rationale for the use of a qualitative method for this study. In the second part of this section, I will discuss my own philosophical point of view regarding the topic of soul of work and human evolution. I believe that recognizing our own biases and taking some measures are critical in a qualitative study where the researcher is a participant.

Point of View in Research Paradigms

According to Mouton (1990), the following are the main tenets of the modernist view of science:

1. The assumption that reason is the main instrument in human (and therefore also scientific) progress.
2. The view that objective science implies the acceptance of a value-neutral attitude.
3. The view that truth and certainty are the true goals of the scientific endeavor.

The Western modernistic view of individuals has a root in Cartesian epistemology, and was articulated by philosophers such as Hobbs, Hume, and Locke. They agreed on the view of self as general, shared orientation, atomistic, individualistic, non-social, and egoistic. This is the view of people employed by the capitalist economy, and it de-emphasizes the non-rational aspects out of people. It treats people as rational beings without contexts, backgrounds, cultures, and assumes that they are all human and are basically the same.

It is interesting to note that this modernist view of people is similar to the description of a stage in the “Intercultural development inventory” continuum by Bennett (1999). Bennett contends that people go through stages to develop cultural awareness. These stages are on a continuum with ethnocentrism at one end and ethnorelativism at the other end. These stages of development are: 1. Denial, 2. Defense, 3. Minimization, 4. Acceptance, 5. Adaptation, 6. Integration. After people go through the negative stages of denial and defense against other cultures, they reach a stage of minimization where they assume more similarities than differences and their world view is universal. The shortcoming of this stage is that these absolutes tend to obscure deep cultural differences

and view people as “all humans.” This type of universal world view can be dangerous in the sense that the dominant culture generalizes people as all humans by making others conform to the dominant view of humans. The positivists’ framework has a world view with an imbalanced power structure. Based on Bennett’s model, the positivists’ perspectives are similar to the “minimization” stage of the intercultural development inventory.

The naturalist’s view of the world is relative, and it can be identified at the stage of “acceptance” or even the stage of “adaptation” on Bennett’s continuum. At the acceptance stage, people respect behavioral differences and value differences. At the adaptation stage, people believe in pluralism and can empathize with other cultures, which doesn’t necessarily mean that they buy into other belief systems. Rather, a constructivist perspective allows one to move in and out of cultural belief systems. Bennett says people in this stage can be fluid in their experiences, and they can “deconstruct” and “reconstruct” their reality without making value judgments. Whorf (1956) called this fluid experience “kaleidoscopic flux.”

Hammersley (1990) points out that qualitative methods have become more central in social science in the last thirty years. Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue that qualitative data can be systematic, reliable, and precise, and they also believe that qualitative method is the only way to capture the emerging nature of field research. Qualitative research is based on the postmodern paradigm that believes that reality, knowledge, and truth are socially, culturally, and linguistically constructed. We construct a different view of self in different discourses. Reality is not out there to be discovered but it is constructed in

different settings and in relation to other people. Qualitative research is a naturalistic way of inquiry. It understands and includes all the extraneous variables as an important part of human behavior rather than controlling them. This paradigm views people as unique individuals each possessing their own realities and interpretations of the world. It also views people in totality of their existence including their context and relationships with others. The purpose of a qualitative study is not to find the underlying truth. As the developmental nature of humans, qualitative research is emergent and unfolding. Naturalistic inquiry uses not only the verbal data but also the subtle para-linguistic and behavioral data. In a pursuit of understanding human behavior, it is critical to pay close attention to these subtle means of communication.

The long debated discussion of quantitative and qualitative paradigms is an intriguing one. Quantitativists often argue that research has to be applicable to the general population and that contextualized and constructed information is meaningful only to the individuals directly involved. If we try to reach possible answers to bridge the gap, it is critical to understand the philosophy of both paradigms. They have a different world view and they both have their strengths and weaknesses. One weakness of relativism is the lack of implications. In a sense, we are lost in terms of what to do with multiple realities. Possibly, the approach of constructivism where one can have fluid experiences in and out of realities without judgment may offer a clue as to bridging the gap. The notion of microcosm/macrocosm could also provide an answer to the missing link between the meta knowledge and the contextualized knowledge. The answer may not be to debate whether one reality exists or multiple realities exist; realities can be like particles and the wave at

the same time. If there is one absolute truth, it may be a holographic, multi-dimensional complex of truths, but the absolute truth is not the sum of those truths. Each truth as a dimension contains the knowledge and the quality of the whole truth.

For this study, I believe that the qualitative methodology is appropriate. When the research inquiry is about the deepest feelings and desires of people, multi-sensory approach including the subtle para-linguistic communication and the intuitive assessment of the researcher is critical. It also takes certain skills to elicit the deep level information of the participants.

Point of View in Self-actualization and Work

The word “self-actualization” may be a Western concept, or there might be a similar idea in other cultures but expressed differently. The idea of self-actualization or finding a purpose has been addressed and is increasingly explored in the discussions on work. On self-actualization, Maslow (1954) says, “We may define it as an episode, or a spurt in which the powers of the person come together in a particularly efficient and intensely enjoyable way, and in which he is more integrated and less split, more open for experience, more idiosyncratic, more perfectly expressive or spontaneous, or fully functioning, more creative, more humorous, more ego-transcending, more independent of his lower needs, etc. He becomes in these episodes more truly himself, more perfectly actualizing his potentialities, closer to the core of his Being, more fully human” (p. 96). According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1954), there are five levels of human needs: 1. physical subsistence, 2. safety and security, 3. affiliation, 4. esteem, and 5. self-

actualization. Bass and Ryterband (1979) argue though that “a hungry man is sometimes just as eager for good fellowship or self-esteem as for food” (p.41). Maslow’s model would assume that self-actualization can happen when all the other needs have been met. It can also be assumed that self-actualization requires the socio-economic stability. Some studies have shown that growth needs associated with self-actualization were important to white-collar workers while affiliation and job security were more important for blue-collar workers (Bass and Ryterband, 1979). While these assumptions may make sense for many, others do not agree with the hierarchical structure of this model. It reinforces the notion that the world is made of a class system. The class system exists in many societies, but is it a healthy goal for us? Maslow’s model offers insights into people’s needs and still plays an important role in the management education. However, our belief systems and the societal expectations have changed since Maslow developed his model forty years ago.

The important question here is the definition of self-actualization. It is true that the people who are at the highest level of the hierarchy may be conscious about growth or they may have the meta language to discuss it. Would they have to be conscious about it or know it in order to self-actualize? I mentioned in the first chapter that we seem to have different stories, backgrounds, and callings. We may all have different unseen contracts with the universe. Again, referring back to the first chapter, work may not be what it seems to be. A hungry person who lives from hand to mouth may be reaching his or her potential, and a company executive may be missing the mark. We just don’t know each person’s potential and his or her soul’s work. As Moore (1992) said, the actual work may be the raw material to do the soul’s work.

I would like to include here some additional biases of mine regarding work and people's innate desire to self-actualize. The actual work we do may not be the beginning and the end. I feel that we make everything complex for the sake of complexity. The world may be really much simpler than we believe it is if we can see through all the distractions and know what we are looking at. Could it be that the job of any organization, educational or entrepreneurial, is as simple as providing a framework for humans in which to do our soul's work? The profit may be a by-product.

The paradoxical statement that I made in the first chapter is that people can grow as far as the group/organization takes you, and the group/organization cannot grow unless individuals grow. People and a group have a synergistic relationship just like the particles and the wave. I believe that we draw ourselves situations, people, and groups to do our soul's work whatever it may be. To minimize the effect of my bias, I used the technique called triangulation. Having three individuals analyze the data helped ensure some objectivity.

Methodology

The method for this study is an approach known as "grounded theory." This approach is used for the development or generation of a theory related to the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). May (1986) says, "The finding is the theory itself, i.e., a set of concepts and propositions which link them" (p.148). The theory, according to Strauss and Corbin (1994), can be a relationship between concepts or sets of concepts. The researcher uses outside support for the theoretical model from literature. The use of the data helps a

reader of the study assess how grounded the theory is in the data. Glaser and Strauss (1967) contend that qualitative method can capture the emergent nature of processes. The development of the grounded theory was prompted by Glaser and Strauss's direct involvement in the research of the hospital care of terminal patients and their discontentment with theories that were speculative and ungrounded. In this study, a theory related to the relationship between work and human evolution will be developed.

Data Source

The data for this study was collected through interviews. The interview participants consisted of people who are both male and female from U.S. dominant culture and co-cultures with a wide age range. The age range covered in this study is 20 to 55. The type of their work has a wide range. I identified several types of work such as labor, clerical, service, self-employment, and professional and selected participants from each category.

Sampling will be done in two steps. For the first sampling, a technique called "maximum variation sampling" was used. It is a type of purposeful sampling, "that aims at capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or program variation" (Patton, 1990, p.172). Patton also suggests that variation can be maximized even in a small sample by identifying diverse characteristics or criteria. The participants represented approximately the equal number of males and females, and a wide range of work, age, and ethnicity. Guba and Lincoln (1989) say that this technique is a deliberate hunt for the different. For this study, I deliberately included

participants who might fall into the lower categories in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. For the first step, 14 participants with variation were selected.

The sampling technique called "theoretical sampling" was used for the second step to "help the researcher best to form the theory" (Creswell, 1998, p.57). This sampling technique was used in order to develop a theory based on the themes that arose from the first sampling. Strategic selection of people who would provide rich information to help generate a theory is a theoretical sampling technique. The strategies for the second step were based on the themes that emerged from the first step. Therefore, the second step participants were the individuals who could address to those themes. One of the participants from the first sampling was asked to participate in the second interview. The second step interviews contained questions that were much more focused on the research questions (Appendix B). Including individuals who would be placed at the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy might be a strategic sampling technique. The participants for the study also represented a wide range of work, showed interest in the issues of work, and the development of self, and were willing to talk about the issues related to research questions. The participants in the second step were reflective of themselves and their personal growth in relation to their work. Knowing when I had adequate data and when to stop was not an easy task especially when the study needed a wide variation in the sample.

Before the interviews, an interview guide was prepared to help me to focus on the topic of importance. Patton (1990) says, "The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer remains free to explore, probe, and ask questions that

will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject” (p.283). One factor to keep in mind during the interview is to stay within the boundary of the research question so that the researcher would not accidentally take a participant into a potentially dangerous situation. For example, interviewing an angry and frustrated worker could potentially be very dangerous. I developed five basic open-ended questions with exploring and probing questions embedded in each question. The interview guide developed for the study is in Appendix A. The second step interview questions are in Appendix B.

Open-ended questions are perfect for eliciting information, and the exploring and probing questions can guide the participant to the information-rich places. In a relaxed, safe environment with ample time for the participant to contemplate on the questions, I was confident that the participants felt safe to express some of the deep personal thoughts and feelings. Engaging myself in the interview in a whole-hearted manner was important to me, and I kept the note taking to a minimum. I found it difficult to take extensive notes and at the same time to engage completely in an interview process. According to Guffy (1997), only 7% of the attitudinal message comes from the actual words spoken, which means 93% is conveyed through non-verbal cues. I wrote down information on the non-verbal and paralinguistic cues soon after the interview when the memory was still fresh. All interviews except two conducted over the phone were audiotaped and transcribed.

Data Analysis

Transcribed data from the interviews were analyzed with the constant comparative method. Creswell (1998) describes the steps in the systematic format:

1. Open coding is the first step. The investigator finds categories of information related to the phenomenon being studied.
2. Axial coding is the next step. The investigator forms the data in new ways after the open coding. The investigator “identifies the central phenomenon, explores causal conditions, specifies strategies, identifies the context and interviewing conditions, and delineates the consequences” (p.57).
3. Selective coding is the final step in a grounded theory study. The investigator makes a story line which integrates the categories in the axial coding.

HyperResearch was used for the first and second level coding of the transcribed data. After these two steps of coding, I developed major themes and categories across the participants. Strauss and Corbin (1990) provide parameters for grounded theory studies. Their suggestions include:

1. Develop a clear analytic story in the selective coding of the study.
2. Write an analytic story and conceptual framework rather than a description of the phenomenon.
3. Specify the relationships among categories in the axial coding.
4. Specify the relevant conditions under which the theory holds.

A grounded theory study poses some challenges. Creswell (1990) points out the reasons of the challenges as follows:

1. The investigator needs to set aside, as much as possible, theoretical ideas or notions so that the analytic, substantive theory can emerge.

2. Despite the evolving, inductive nature of this form of qualitative inquiry, the researcher must recognize that this is a systematic approach to research with specific steps in data analysis.

3. The researcher needs to recognize that the primary outcome of this study is a theory with specific components: a central phenomenon, causal conditions, strategies, conditions and context, and consequences. These are prescribed categories of information in the theory.

Reliability and Verification

Among all the credibility issues, Lincoln and Guba (1985) stress understanding and accepting the naturalistic inquiry. Patton (1990) lists the issues that are critical to the credibility of a qualitative study:

1. What techniques and methods were used to ensure the integrity, validity, and accuracy of the findings?
2. What does the researcher bring to the study in terms of qualifications, experience, and perspective?
3. What paradigm orientation and assumptions undergrid the study?

Patton acknowledges that a part of a qualitative study is creative, insightful, and conceptual, but there is a technical side that is rigorous, mentally replicable, and systematic.

Creswell (1990) suggests we use the word “verification” instead of validity because the word validity underscores that qualitative research is a distinct approach, and

the traditional image of validity is rigid and two-dimensional. Richardson (1994) challenges the traditional sense of validity by saying, “Crystallization, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of “validity” (we feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves); and crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know” (p.522). Wilcott (1990a) also argues that validity distracts him from understanding what is going on, and does not capture the essence of his inquiry.

The issue of internal credibility includes approaches such as reflexivity, member checking, peer examination, structural coherence, and triangulation. Triangulation can be achieved with data, investigators, theories, and methods. For this study, issues of credibility were addressed by peer examination, triangulation, personal reflexive journal, field notes, and member checking by making the transcription available to the interviews.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Demographics of Participants

The data for this study was collected through interviews. The interviews were conducted in two steps: first step to capture the general themes around work, and the second step to focus on the themes and generate a theory on work and human evolution. The participants were selected by word of mouth.

For the first step sampling, I used the sampling techniques called maximum variation sampling. It is a type of purposeful sampling, “that aims at capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or program variation” (Patton, 1990, p.172). I interviewed fourteen people with a wide age range of twenty to fifty-five. Eight participants were male and six were female. They had a wide range of occupations. The participants’ occupations are: unemployed, student advisor, retail, lifeguard, custodian, massage therapist, supermarket checker, self-employed, construction foreman, roofer, dean of a business college, vice president of a health care consulting firm, administrative assistant, and officer in the Air Force.

For the second step sampling, five people were interviewed. The techniques used for this step is called theoretical sampling. This sampling technique was used in order to

develop a theory based on the themes that arose from the first sampling. One of the five people was a first step participant and he was called back to be interviewed again for the second time. The reason for asking this person to participate for the second time was that his first interview contained data that could be pursued further for the second interview. The age range for the second step sample was twenty seven to fifty five. Three participants were male and three were female. Their occupations are: a cosmetologist, a vice president of a state university, a massage therapist, a business coach, and a founder of a company and owner of a coffee shop.

Interview Process

All the interviews were informal and conducted in a relaxed atmosphere. Based on the interview guide, open-ended questions were asked, and the questions became more focused when relevant issues came up. Most of the interviews were conducted in the participants' offices or my office. A few of the interviews were conducted in a public place such as a quiet corner in a coffee shop and the student center. I asked where they would feel most comfortable and let them choose the location of the interview. The interviews lasted about forty-five minutes with one exception of a participant whose English was somewhat limited. His answers were shorter compared to other participants' answers. This particular interview lasted about twenty minutes. The open-ended questions in the interview guide were designed to help the participants to explore the issues to the depth they choose. They were encouraged to take time to contemplate and to explore the issue as long as they stayed within the boundaries of the research topic.

The interview questions in the first step interviews were open-ended, more general questions. The purpose of the first step interviews was to capture the emerging themes around the topic of work. The second step interviews were the same as the first interviews in terms of the length and the choice of the location. The purpose of the second interviews, however, was to generate a theory on the research topic based on the themes that emerged from the first interviews. A different set of interview questions was asked; some were open-ended but many were focused questions that directly addressed to the themes from the first interviews. One of the first time participants was called back for the second interview because of his interest and rich information in the research questions.

All the interviews except two conducted over the phone were recorded, and all the interviews were transcribed. These two interviews were conducted over the phone purely because of the participants' time constraints. With the computer software called HyperRESEARCH, I coded the interviews and generated the themes based on the grouping of the codes. To ensure reliability and verification, triangulation was performed. The two individuals who performed the triangulation process are both faculty members of a university and versed in language, career issues, and research. One is a professor in English and the other is a career counselor. For the second step, the key concepts that would lead to generating a theory were identified manually.

Participant Profiles

A brief profile of each participant is included in this section so the reader can have a better sense of who these people are. To ensure anonymity, each participant has a

pseudonym. These pseudonyms are: Gerry, Maria, Margaret, Bill, Phyllis, Larry, Justin, Sylvia, Eric, Felipe, Roy, Brad, Nicole, Sally, Helen, Rick, Jennifer, and Tina.

Gerry has had twenty-seven jobs. He is currently unemployed but is hoping to find the right job for him. He applied and was interviewed for one hundred seventeen jobs last year. He has done everything including climbing mountains, buying and selling books, working for an oil company, and making and selling jewelry. He continues his ongoing search for the perfect job.

Maria works as a student advisor at a state university. She has had some jobs in which she was treated like a machine and didn't allow her any individuality. She enjoys her current work because it allows her to work with students, relate to their needs, and solve problems.

Margaret has worked as a department manager at a retail store for several years. She is in charge of paper products, pet supplies, food, and all the cleaning products, which keeps her extremely busy. She enjoys the challenge of her work, but she would like to work in an environment where there is more fun and dream.

Bill has been swimming all his life and he has worked as a lifeguard since he was sixteen. Swimming is something that comes naturally to him. He has had different jobs and he also works as an RA in a dormitory. His real dream, however, is to continue swimming and to manage a swimming pool someday. He strongly feels that his passion is in the water.

Phyllis works as a custodian. She cleans a building from 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight everyday. Phyllis has a diverse work history. She has worked in a factory,

raised cattle on a farm, raised racing greyhounds, and worked in a nursing home. She feels that the real joy in her work comes from serving people and connecting with them.

Larry works as a massage therapist. Years ago he came from Hawaii, where he had worked in a moving company for twenty eight years. He feels that he is a natural at his current work, from which he thinks he learned a lot about himself. He considers his work personal and meaningful because he works with people, not objects.

Justin works as a checker at a supermarket. In the everyday routine, he makes his own work meaningful and enjoyable by connecting with the people who come in to the store. He likes to talk with the customers and to make people laugh. Even though his work is being a checker, he believes his real talent is in making other people happy.

Sylvia has her own business of selling educational service and products for the disabled. She also works with the county to provide a day school for adults with multiple disabilities. She is now working on a project to build a forty acre educational institution for the disabled.

Eric is a foreman in the construction business. He has worked as a carpenter and also built and sold furniture. He takes pride and finds satisfaction in creating beautiful things. He appreciates good craftsmanship, and says he feels very good when something he is working on turns out to be just perfect.

Felipe has been working as a roofer since he was fifteen. Roofing is his family business and his supervisor is his uncle. He is proud of his work and thinks he does a better job than anyone else when it comes to roofing.

Roy is the dean of a business college in a state university. He has taught at many different institutions in the U.S. and abroad for many years, and he also does consulting in technology statewide and nationally.

Brad is the vice president of a health care consulting company. His background is architecture, and his consulting partly consists of designing hospital architecture. His work is a combination of designing and planning, and management.

Nicole is an administrative assistant in a busy health care office. She has worked as an administrative assistant for twenty years in various offices. She believes in good service. Nicole also enjoys interacting with people.

Sally has been an officer in the Air Force for fifteen years. She has worked in different departments and she currently teaches required courses at the Air force Academy.

Helen is the vice president of finance and administration at a university. She started out as a food service worker and became a food service manager for the school district. She had done some restaurant work before she received a degree in accounting.

Rick is an owner of a coffee shop and an active participant in community building. Earlier, he founded a moving company which started very small and became a successful company which meets seventy percent of all the moving needs in the area.

Jennifer works as a business coach. Her background is ecology, and her passion is about harmony between the environment and civilization. She formerly held a public office in the county.

Tina works as a cosmetologist. She opened her own salon last year and she has been very successful. She does more than people's hair. She advises her clients on self-imagining, which helps them develop better feelings about themselves.

Data Analysis Process

The constant comparative method was used to analyze the data. This method consists of three steps: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The first two steps were performed with a computer software called HyperRESEARCH. In the first step, each phrase or sentence relevant to the research question was highlighted and given a descriptive code, and this process was done for all the first step interviews. In the second step, the list of codes from the first step was sorted into categories. In the third step, the categories were interpreted in a conceptual framework and written as a text. In this study, vignettes from the data were included to illustrate the emerging concepts.

In the second step, which consisted of just five participants, the data was analyzed manually. Instead of doing the open coding process this time, chunks of the data that were related to the research question were marked. From the marked text, the key concepts were identified.

Triangulation was performed with two university faculty members. One is a professor in English and the other is a career counselor. They both followed exactly the same process as I did. Based on the outcome of the triangulation, I concluded that the result of this study is valid. I sat with each person to discuss some of the differences.

The differences among the three of us were semantic and organizational. For example, they used the terms “individual growth” and “personal growth” while I used “self-discovery.” At least one of them agreed that “self-discovery” might actually be a better term to use. One person identified a theme as “change and development” when I used “goal and process.” “Challenge” was used where I used “negative experience,” and “spirituality” was used where I used “Higher Power.” Another wording difference was “humanity at work” vs. “recognition.” An organizational difference was that they identified “creativity” and “freedom” as separate categories as opposed to “freedom” as a sub-category under “creativity.” One of them didn’t consider “mastery of work” as an important enough theme. Almost all of the differences were judgment calls, and all three of us agreed on the concepts of the results.

Most of the themes that emerged from the first step interviews have a few sub-themes. For the theme of creativity, for example, the sub-themes that emerged are individuality, autonomy, and freedom. In analyzing the interviews, it has become clear that people express their thoughts in different ways. When they said they didn’t want to be bound by the rules or they needed more autonomy, what they were saying is that they wished to do their work in their own way. When I listened to the participants’ statements about individuality, autonomy, and freedom, I heard the underlying theme of creativity. Thus, I chose the superordinate theme based on their deeper meaning. In a similar manner, when the participants talked about something that “happened for a reason” or something that was “meant to be,” they were alluding to some Higher Power influencing their fate.

Some of the themes overlap with each other to some degree. For example, creativity and self-discovery might have some elements in common. Therefore, we must understand that the themes are not clearly discrete isolated groups.

For member checking, I made the transcripts available to all the participants. Most of them did not feel the need to read their transcripts, but I talked with many of them to clarify some points of the data. Two of the participants asked for the transcripts and four wanted to know exactly which part of their interviews would be included in the dissertation. The transcripts and the copies of their vignettes were sent to the participants who wanted them.

The reflexive journal consists of my reflections on the interviews and my frustrations of dealing with a topic of illusive nature. One question that I still keep asking myself is how “words” would accurately convey the people’s realities, and how research might deal with data that are supposedly constructed.

Themes

This section of Chapter four is divided into three sections: themes from the first step interviews, themes from the second step interviews, and an emerging theory based on the second step interviews. Pseudonyms are used throughout this chapter to identify the quotes, and all the quotes from the interviews are fully indented.

Themes from the first step interviews

A qualitative analysis of the first step interviews generated ten themes. These themes reflect the essence of the participants' work experience. The participants talked about the following topics: the positive and negative aspects of their current work, positive and negative work experience in general, the impact of these experiences on their personal growth, their vision for ideal work, and their future goals. The following table (Figure 9.) shows the themes that emerged from the first step interviews. The themes are listed in the order of most frequently mentioned to least frequently mentioned across the participants. That a theme was most frequently mentioned doesn't necessarily mean that the greatest number of participants mentioned that particular theme. The relationship between the frequency of themes and the type of work is illustrated in Figure 10.

Theme 1.	Creativity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuality • Autonomy • Freedom
Theme 2.	Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting with people • Sense of belonging
Theme 3.	Goal and process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support in the process of change
Theme 4.	Self-discovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role and self • Work as a place to grow • Find my essence
Theme 5.	Enjoyment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love of the work • Passion
Theme 6.	Recognition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation • Respect
Theme 7.	Higher power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fate • Purpose • Guidance
Theme 8.	Role of negative experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative experience as a catalyst for change • Negative experience as a learning experience
Theme 9.	Mastery of skill and knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction from job done well • Craftsmanship ethos
Theme 10.	Innate talents and gifts

Figure 9. Themes of the first step interviews

The themes from the first step interviews revealed that many of the participants had a clear sense of development of themselves. They all seemed to find some meaning

beyond their paychecks. Of all fourteen participants, not one person said he or she worked only to make a living. They articulated their hopes and disappointments, and the lessons they have learned in their work history. The next section of this chapter will discuss each theme that emerged from the first step interviews. The vignettes from the interview verbatim are included to illustrate each theme.

Theme 1. Creativity

Much of their disappointment with work stemmed from not being allowed enough creativity and individualism. They made comments such as “The boundaries were put on me through rules and regulations,” “There has to be a big enough box to pursue some things and to be flexible,” and “I couldn’t offer my individuality at all.” In other words, they couldn’t demonstrate all of who they were, and felt that they had to keep their work and creativity separate. Out of the fourteen participants, thirteen mentioned creativity or issues related to creativity such as individualism and autonomy. They felt that creativity is what is lacking in their work. Some people may have a stronger desire to express themselves than others. We all seem to want to express who we are in some way. Many jobs do not seem to encourage much creative expression but treat the workers as parts of a machine that does the routine. Some workplaces are starting to delegate more responsibility to allow more autonomy for the individuals, but it takes a great deal of trust and risk taking on the part of the management. Brad, who is the vice president of a health care consulting company, clearly associates his expression of creativity and autonomy with trouble.

If I don't get intellectual challenge or use my creativity at work, I get bored and start to underperform. I would like to have some creativity, autonomy, and freedom at work, and I would like to be able to show all of who I am. But these are the things that got me in trouble in the past.... So, I need to tone down my need for creativity and spontaneity.

The following is an example of an episode where Gerry's spontaneous decision turned out to be a satisfying experience to him. Rules and boundaries in a workplace often keep us from doing what we feel we should do. By fixing a copier without a permission, Gerry could have lost his job, but he did it anyway and the experience became a memorable one.

So, the lady was crying and she said her boss was going to jump on her case. I patted her on the back and said I would take care of it. I went back to the shop and took our machine apart and stole the part and went back. I could have gotten fired, but I went back and got their machine up and then ordered the part and took it to fix our machine. She was totally happy and it was a happy experience to make the customer happy.

The following quote is from Justin, who works as a checker at a supermarket. He creates his own meaning for his work even when work becomes routine. Finding something unique that he can do allows him to express who he is.

I think the happiest experiences as a checker have been when I get people to leave our store laughing and happy especially when they are pissed off or have had a bad day....And I can turn that behavior around because I am pretty good at reading the situation and picking up a topic that will turn someone's attitude around... When they expected to be pissed off, and all of a sudden, they walk out laughing.

Justin also speaks about how company policies such as a dress code can diminish our sense of creativity and uniqueness. He has to wear the same uniform at work all the time and he thinks wearing the same clothes affects people emotionally.

We all have to wearwe have a uniform code. And in some ways I can understand that because you see somebody in that code and you associate the person with the store...But having to buy my clothes based on where I work and having to wear the same thing. Do you know what it's like having to wear the same clothing 5,7,9 days in a row? Every time I go to the store, I associate with the colors and you get sick of them. I think that affects your work performance.

Sally, who is an officer in the Air Force, also talks about her uniform. She doesn't necessarily mind wearing the uniform, but it changes the way she behaves and changes the way people interact with her. Wearing a uniform puts you in a work role, which distinguishes the self and role boundaries. Sally says in her uniform she cannot always say

what she would say out of her uniform because her role as an officer is made obvious and the responsibility of being an officer puts her personal self in the back seat.

It's not me because of what I am wearing. It's interesting that the first impression that they have is that it's not me. I think I am more aware of my actions because people are watching me. Uniform is part of the boundaries. I wouldn't be a different person but I would express myself a little less freely and a little differently.

Justin, a checker at a supermarket, wishes to work in an environment where he can suggest his ideas freely and his supervisor would allow him to explore. Justin believes that people change constantly, and for the management to treat people like machines that do the same thing over and over for a long time is a mistake.

If I have a cool idea, I can go and say, "Look, I'd like to work on something different than what I'm working on right now. I have an idea; let me work on it."....And they give him some room to work. I think it all comes down to an employer that treats their person like a person.

Bill, who works as a lifeguard, believes that people should be hired for their skills and their personalities. Some individualism should be allowed so that they can do their work in their own way.

They're not only hiring what I can do. They are hiring me as a person. I think that's really important because you can hire a lot of people with different qualifications, but you hire a person based on both their qualification and their personality.

Sylvia, who is self-employed, says we all create our environment. By creating a certain environment, we create certain relationships. If you are about intimidating others or competing with others, your environment would communicate that feeling.

When I came into your office, I thought you created a homey environment in your office. It shows who you are. Creating a certain environment really affects the relationships between people. In other people's offices, I have felt intimidated right away and I get the message that I shouldn't cross the boundaries of a certain kind of a professional relationship. It affects the communication too. In a conversation with someone who communicates the barrier between us, I can't be creative. I just want to say what I need to say and leave the office.

Theme 2. Relationships

Many of the participants mentioned enjoying working with people or helping others. They said, "I try to make other people around me feel better," "What I like about my work is that I can work with people," and "What makes it unique is that I work with a fellow human being." Many participants in this study value relationships and connection

with other people. For many of the participants, relationships and connection with people were important. Twelve out of fourteen participants mentioned some issues around relationships. Brad, the vice president of a health care consulting company, says he enjoys the technical side of his work, but the management aspect brings out the side of him that enjoys interacting and connecting with people.

The management side... I can show my ability and interest in interacting and connecting with people. I think I am good at that. I can show more of who I am and people appreciate me. It's a different kind of satisfaction when people appreciate who I am.

Roy, a dean of a business college, values building relationships at different levels. He thinks it is critical to build positive relationships in business and invests a lot of effort into creating interdependent networks. At another level, he really enjoys working with people who are positive and with whom he can feel the real camaraderie.

I have never underestimated the power of relationships. With great knowledge and skills, an organization will collapse easily without the genuine relationships. At a personal level, I love to work with the like-minded people whom I can trust and work together to reach a common goal.

Margaret, a store department manager, enjoys talking and connecting with people. She is outgoing and friendly. She talks about her negative experience of feeling isolated at work. Margaret thinks a important element of good work is feeling part of the group and its goal.

I would be left by myself during busy lunch hours and it was horrible. I had no opportunities to talk with other people that worked there. I think I just didn't feel tied to the rest of the store. Work is not fun or meaningful with nobody to talk with or connect with.

Sally, who is an officer and teaches in the Air Force Academy, says the best part of her work is relating to other people and her students. She feels fulfilled when a student from semesters ago comes back to talk or seek some advice from her.

I have always liked helping people. It's working with people that I really enjoy. In teaching, when students come in and make you feel you are appreciated and valued, I really feel good.

Theme 3. Goal and Process

Work seems to be an ideal place to learn about themselves in their relationship to others and also to the work itself. Many of the participants regarded their work as a place where they can develop themselves professionally and personally. Some of their negative

experiences were rooted in the lack of support and guidance from their employers. They contended that many employers did not see their employees as dynamic beings that change and develop, and they expected them to do the same work in their roles. They made comments such as “Companies should treat people like people and expect them to change,” “Employees should be encouraged and supported so they can go as far as they want to go,” and “How can I maintain income and develop skills or explore other career options without support from my employer?” There were other comments such as “I want companies to listen to people and companies need to change with the people” and “People need a super goal.” Eight out of all the participants identified their goals and talked about their processes. Roy, dean of a business college, says everyone has a super goal, which is that person’s ultimate or long-term goal. He believes that employees need support and encouragement to set the goals and to proceed with the process. Within the parameter of the workplace goal, an employee should be provided with a wide range of possibilities and enough freedom to facilitate his or her growth.

A manager has to provide sufficient incentive and support so an employee can go as far as he or she wants to go. Controlling the employee’s day to day work won’t help. A manager should communicate the goal and trust that it gets done, and how things get done is completely up to the individual. A company should facilitate the individuals’ goals and desires, but the goal of the workplace has to be congruent with the kind of things employees want to do in their lives.

Justin, a supermarket checker, and Eric, a construction foreman, both mentioned the lack of organizational support to pursue their career goals or to develop new skills. One issue is how to maintain income and to take classes to learn new skills. Justin is convinced that many companies expect people to stay the same. Eric is ready for a transition, but working in order to keep his income would make it difficult to commit to learning new skills.

I think I am ready for some changes, but if I take some classes to learn new skills or knowledge, I wouldn't be able to keep my income. I feel kind of caught in the situation. It would be really nice if the employer can support me in learning new things.

An employer has to treat people like people and expect them to change. And the company changes. So, if the company changes and the people are changing, then they have to look at it realistically as well. Most businesses don't do that. Most businesses put you in a role and they kind of force you into a little box and they keep you in the box as long as you work there. People often ask, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" I am always growing up. I want to be different stuff. I want to change.

Sylvia, who has her own business and works with disabled people, says her passion is in helping disabled people make their transition to a better, more meaningful life. Sylvia

also feels that we don't teach enough about transitions in life, and schools and companies don't offer enough support to help people transition. In working with disabled people, she discovered that all humans want to grow whether they know it or not, and with the right kind of support, many people learn to get more out of their lives.

It takes a lot of energy, time, and patience, to really listen to people. When someone who is superior to me in a hierarchy creates an environment and really listens to me and validates my opinions, I feel good. If you really treat another person with integrity, you have to trust the person with his or her ideas. You may disagree with something and there might be a profit loss. When they make a mistake, you can say "OK. We will try it again." That's the risk they don't want to take anymore. The price we pay though is losing humanity.

Many of the participants were thinking of a possibility of doing something different someday even though they seemed realistic about what is and isn't feasible. Maria, who is a student advisor at a state university, loves her work but still thinks about other possibilities and her ultimate goal.

The other thing that I want to try and do at some point in time may be in the next few years is doing some real estate type of work. I am thinking more of an appraiser to be able to look at a piece of property and say this is worth that much. That comes second only to if I were not so old I would love to be a teacher, which

was my ultimate goal. Throughout my years of work, I keep coming back to being a teacher.

Theme 4. Self-discovery

They talked about their learning experiences in their work. They thought they learned about themselves and others through work. Many of them thought that work was a large part of their lives. One participant said, “99% of who I am is what I do in my work.” He identifies so much of himself with his work that he would rather work than to spend time with friends and family. There were other comments such as “Every job I’ve had has been a teacher,” “Through the experiences of work, I have come to know myself and to accept who I am,” and “I cried everyday in that job because I was not moving.” Nine out of the fourteen participants mentioned notions related to learning about themselves. We learn about ourselves in many experiences and situations, and these experiences and situations may be avenues for self-discovery. What we learn may be our strengths and weaknesses, our passions, and many more trivial details. Briskin (1996) says, “Soulmaking is an odyssey of self-discovery that connects us to the world and to our duties in this life” (p.11). Some of our negative experiences bring us face to face with who we are and our issues. That may be because we may not voluntarily learn what we don’t want to. Some of the participants have gone through many jobs, and these experiences taught them important lessons.

Self-discovery is a long process of “being” and “becoming.” Work teaches us a great deal about who we are, and knowing who we are leads to the sense of purpose.

Larry, who works as a massage therapist, sees not only work but other activities as opportunities to search for who he is.

I don't know how to describe who I am. I just continue searching -- I just continue searching and continue meditating and praying that someday I will be very satisfied with who I am. And I think I am getting close to that. I am not stopping -- I'm not going to be content today. I am very sure that there's more to me -- I need to find out more about me and just talking to you is just another lesson for me because it's an experience again that, without you asking me all these questions, nobody else would ask me that and I wouldn't attempt to answer these question.

The following quote is from Larry, who used to move furniture and is now a massage therapist. He discusses how his personal being affects his work. He explains that when he made a mistake in the past, it was with a piece of furniture, but now when his client complains, he is dealing with a real person. He feels the depth of responsibility with his work that involves his whole self.

But my job calls for a very personal... when they complain to me, it's very personal. It's them; it's someone's soul and their physical being that I am doing something wrong to. They don't lie and the majority enjoy my job because I did something for them, not their furniture, not their material things. What's so

unique about this is that it's all personal. I cannot fake it; it's very personal. I cannot lie about what I'm doing.

This person feels the high level of responsibility of working with people and feels the joy when he receives compliments. It is interesting that Larry says he cannot lie in his work. His statement also shows his deep respect toward fellow humans and their well being. Phyllis, a custodian, speaks of her dedication to her work. To her, hard work comes naturally and it is a deep part of her essence. She takes great pride in the quality of her work.

I work hard and am honest and diligent. I try to accommodate others to be respectful and I feel dedicated toward my staff and students. I take pride in what I do even though it is cleaning a bathroom or floor. I enjoy my work and everyone is friendly. I receive compliments on my work, which makes me feel really good. So, I try even harder to please them. When they do not leave big messes, wipe their feet, that makes me feel that they appreciate my work. Devotion, kindness, and cleanliness are the qualities that I feel I am a part of.

Bill, a lifeguard, believes that work is an excellent place to discover who he is.

I think it's very important for you to not only learn about yourself during the job, but before the job so when you go into the job, you can do your homework and

say this is something I really want to do, enjoy doing, and can learn a lot about myself. Three quarters of your life while you are awake is during work, so I intend to keep learning about myself until I die and I really hope my job will help me learn about myself and about other people.

Nicole, an administrative assistant, says work is the best place to learn about herself because it provides a combination of tasks and people interactions.

To me, work serves as a mirror. I find what I like about myself and also what I dislike about myself, aspects I want to change. I interact with people all the time at work and what I see is a true reflection of who I am. I see the result of who I am in the people I work with and serve.

Theme 5. Enjoyment

Enjoyment was also an important factor for many of the participants. They said, “I really feel good in this job,” “Enjoying what you are doing is the best part,” and “It’s working with people that I really enjoy.” They may not have used the word “enjoy” every time, but they made comments such as “I really feel good,” or “That makes me feel happy.” The notion of enjoying the work came up often throughout the interviews and they seem to be able to identify what they enjoy. Enjoyment of the work, for some people, relates to their expression of creativity. Many people naturally have their likes and

dislikes of activities. Many participants of this study mentioned that they enjoyed working with and being around people.

Felipe, a young roofer, enjoys his work because he is good at it and proud of it. Brad, vice president of a health care consulting firm, enjoys intellectual work. Phyllis enjoys cleaning and hard work because she says she is a part of these qualities. Larry, a massage therapist, enjoys his work because he values the personal touch that he offers to people. Bill, a lifeguard, says, "I think for me, it has to be something that I enjoy doing, that I have definite interest in, something that excites me. I've been swimming since I was six years old, and that's what I want to do."

Nicole, who works as an administrative assistant, doesn't see her work as a task that she needs to do.

I don't see work that way. To me, work is a place where I can meet and interact with people. I really enjoy that part of work. Even though the task itself is the same thing everyday, I enjoy the people aspects, which bring new things everyday.

Theme 6. Recognition

Receiving recognition also seemed to be an issue. They actually identified two levels of recognition: being treated as an equal human being and being recognized for their successes. Many of the participants have had negative experiences around the issues of recognition and respect. They did not feel appreciated or recognized for the work they did. They also had experienced being treated "like dirt," "like less of a person," and "like

a lower member of the society.” They also felt “like a machine” and “dehumanized.” Seven out of the fourteen participants have experienced being treated without respect. One of the examples is the way employees are treated like numbers or parts of a machine. Maria, a student advisor at a university now, once worked as a stenographer where she was treated just like a piece of machinery. She says it was dehumanizing to be treated that way she did.

I worked as a stenographer for the government. When I got there, it was a huge gymnasium full of desks, just one after another after another after another. We all did pretty much the same thing. We had typewriters at our desks and we transcribed our shorthand eight hours a day. They rang bells when we could get up from our desks, and they rang bells when we could go to the bathroom. It was a pretty canned, controlled kind of thing, everything that I was not. I felt as though I was dehumanized.

Justin, a supermarket checker, also speaks of his experience of being treated like a machine in a tightly structured work environment.

If I have to work in a structured area and a structured routine, you become the machine that I try to stay away from being. I try to stay away from automation; this is the way things work, this is the way you are going to do it, and this is the way you are going to say it.

Some examples of lack of respect relate to the way some people are treated in a hierarchical work structure. Margaret worked in a department that was considered less important than others, and the people in her department were looked down upon.

I was made to feel like less of a person because everybody that worked at the store and the rest of the store were tied together. We were always left on our own and they would have competitions between departments and we were always left out. They always forgot about us and so it was like it made me feel like I didn't even deserve or I wasn't worthy to be recognized as an employee.

Larry, in his job as a mover in the past, did not feel appreciated for his work

The negative part in my experience of twenty eight years is that I wasn't appreciated although for twenty eight years of work I worked like a young man; I worked hard. My attitude was not only to make me grow but to help my customer. But yet somehow I had the feeling that I wasn't appreciated. When in promotion or anything like that, somehow I am left out; they will pick another person.

Sometimes employees are caught in an abusive work situation. Phyllis, a custodian, used to work in a factory with an abusive supervisor who would use his power

to keep the employees working hard. His use of power sometimes turned into physical abuse.

He was an unpleasant person. He was mean. If he wanted to get our attention, he would take your skin and twist it, or stomp on your toe. I tried to stay on the good side of him most of the time because if I got on the wrong side of him, I was extra miserable.

Gerry, in his last job, was sent to some of the most dangerous neighborhoods in the country. He didn't feel that the job was worth it when his life was threatened.

I was with my boss one day and he had a loaded gun in the car next to me. He was going to threaten somebody with it. I knew that it wasn't right and I didn't like the possibility of violence. Being sent to the neighborhood where you are scared to get out of the car — the job wasn't worth it.

Theme 7. Higher Power

Some of the participants alluded to the presence of higher power in the process of finding meaning in their work. Even some of their negative experiences had a reason in the bigger scheme of things. In the discussion about losing his job because of his company's downsizing, one participant said, "Losing that job was a godsend. The stress was so bad my heart was being ripped out of my chest." Others have also mentioned that

their negative experiences have turned out to be a blessing in disguise because they served as a catalyst in changing their lives. There were other comments such as “I was chosen to do this work,” “I felt as though the powers were working through me, and I was being used as a vehicle,” “Believe in the vision,” and “I need to go where I am led.” From these comments, there is clearly a sense of unseen guidance that they value in their career process. In this section I include some quotes that indicate the existence of some higher power involved in the process of finding meaning in work. Four out of the fourteen people alluded to the unseen guidance or a sense of fate. It doesn’t really matter whether people call the higher power God, or the universe, or spirit. Some of the participants believed that everything has a purpose in a larger scheme of things, and that things don’t happen in a haphazard way. Some also felt led or guided by some higher power.

Gerry, who is currently unemployed, expressed the notion that the work that best expresses who you are and the work that you feel is right are the work of the universe. It is interesting that he says he almost becomes a medium for the work by the universe.

The best expression of who I was in a job wasI don’t think any of them were. I would think that the job I am now headed to is. Because I am feeling the power working through me. I feel like I am being used as a vehicle, and my ego is getting less and less.

He is describing the feeling we all get sometimes, the feeling of doing exactly the right thing at the right time with great synchronicity. We also feel powerful and strong when we do the work we believe is worthwhile.

Larry, a massage therapist, has a clear sense of the existence of the higher power and believes that his work has brought spiritual growth. Larry worked as a mover moving furniture for twenty eight years.

That's the reason why it's so fulfilling for me to work with people, to be with people, to touch people. As I said, I am not working with objects. I am working with being created by God, like me, so that alone is very spiritual. I think I was chosen to do this, mainly because I tolerated working with objects and I think that part is more of a...I think it's a gift. It's time for me to get a reward, a gift, because I tolerated objects. So, I think the current occupation or vocation of what I'm doing now is really what is making my spiritual growth a lot.

Theme 8. Role of Negative Experiences

The role of a negative experience was already discussed in part in the previous section in relation to the Higher Power issue. One observation about negative experiences or failures from this group of interviewees is that none of the participants were completely discouraged by them. Rather, they used the experiences, even devastating ones, as reasons to regroup and reevaluate the situation. One participant's view of negative experiences is "the reason for a dark time in our lives is to find the truth." Others made

comments such as “I need negative feedback to better myself,” “We can turn failure into a learning experience,” and “After a failure I regroup and march ahead.” Four participants have mentioned that their negative experiences were blessing in disguise. In retrospect, they feel that without the negative experiences, they would not have the positives they are experiencing now. Many of us in the middle of a negative experience do not recognize any positive in it, and we don’t have a choice sometimes but to have faith that things will turn out for the best.

The following is a statement made by Larry, a massage therapist who never stopped searching for meaning. To him, work served as a teacher who has guided him to who he is today. This teacher called “work” may not always bring positive reinforcement. As someone once said, “Not all life’s gifts are pleasant.”

If I didn’t have the negative experiences during the 28 years of working, I wouldn’t have discovered ways to better myself. I would have been content believing my faith without searching. By the negative experiences, I search and search, and that way I have the choice to find the truth. I don’t disregard the other truths because the universe is the ultimate truth, and my faith is only a piece of the truth.

The next statement was made by Gerry, who is currently looking for work. One of his 27 jobs he has had was a logging job, and he absolutely hated it. He now thinks that even the most terrible job has a purpose.

I have had jobs that were just terrible; hand to mouth. I worked a job out in Idaho as a logger for eight weeks, and it was the worst job that I had ever had.

Seriously, we were taking people to the hospital who got hit by falling trees. A very scurried job and all I thought about was getting out of it. I think what the job was about was teaching me to live in the present moment. After a while it established a presence for me. But as soon as I got that, they fired me. I was very happy.

He also says that not only work can be a teacher to us but also we can be teachers to others in work situations. There may be a reason when we find ourselves in a situation that seems negative or dissatisfying.

There has to be something there, a symbolism in all of this. I don't catch it right away. Sometimes I think that you have to be immersed in some pretty dark areas to realize the truth. For example, I once worked in a company that turned out to be involved in the Ku-Klux-Klan....I didn't fit in that place. Now that I look back, I was such a contrast that I was teaching them a lesson. They were in such darkness and I was placed there to teach them a different way of living.

Many of us think failing is negative and we try hard to avoid it even though failure might be what it takes sometimes to make a necessary shift. Sally talks about a student that she failed in her class.

One time I had a sergeant come in and say, "I really appreciate that you allowed me to fail." I will never forget that. He appreciated the fact that I allowed him to fail and try new things, and not to be critical about it. I helped him with different alternatives. We turned it into a learning experience for both of us.

Theme 9. Mastery of the Job

Some of the participants expressed their joy in mastering certain skills. They feel a deep sense of satisfaction when they create something beautiful and perfect. Based on the way these people discussed their satisfaction, their creativity seemed almost self-less. One participant said, "I feel so good but it's not really because I made it. The object already has a life of its own. It's not mine." This ultimate craftsmanship was part of the joy they found in their work. For some people, doing a good job for the sake of doing a good job gives meaning. Three participants mentioned that satisfaction comes from perfecting a project. Eric, a construction foreman who also makes wooden furniture, describes the joy that he feels when the joints fit so perfectly that they cannot be any better.

I just like learning, learning new things, new ways to make things better. I feel so good when I make something so beautiful and perfect. I don't know if there is a

reason why. Yes, it could be because I made it. I don't know. It just feels good after planning and spending time to create the pieces, things just fall perfectly into place and it turns into an absolutely beautiful object.

Felipe, a young roofer, said something similar about the work he does. He didn't really care to talk about the meaning of his work, but it was clear from the way he described his work that he cared about his work. He is proud of his work. He says roofing is the only thing he has done in his life, and he certainly is proud that this work is the better than anyone else's.

It is good when we do a good job. Why do I like my job? Because I am good at it. We do a good job. We are proud of our work; nobody does a job like we do around here. We take the time and put the shingles on vary carefully. The only thing I don't like about my work is when I run out of shingles.

Gerry also says it is satisfying to master a job and it feels good to learn for the sake of learning.

I enjoy the actual learning of the job. The new knowledge is most enjoyable. I just like learning new things; it feels so good to think I have learned a lot about something. Usually, when I master a job, it is time to move on to something else.

Theme 10. Innate Qualities and Gifts

There was some discussion of innate talents and gifts, and the importance of recognizing them in finding the right work. Participants made comments such as “I am a natural at this,” “My passion is in the water,” and “That job was not what I am about.” Many of us have something we love to do or something that just comes so easily to us. We all have been given gifts of qualities or skills, and the feeling of passion often comes with them. Five people talked about their qualities with which they were born. Some say things such as “He is a natural” or “She is a born” These qualities often lead to finding meaning in work. Some participants said that enjoyment is critical in meaningful work. The following statement was made by Bill, a lifeguard who says he was born to be in the water.

For me I think it has to be something that you enjoy doing that you have definite interest in, something that excites you. I’ve been swimming since I was 6 years old, so that’s something that I want to do. When I get older, I could manage a pool. You have to know your place. If you don’t enjoy people, then you probably don’t want to do something with people. If you make money doing what you like, then that’s fine, but as long as you enjoy what you are doing, that’s the best part.

Larry, the massage therapist, thinks he is a natural at his work.

I had the gift and I'm natural for that particular endeavor so that's what I am now and I am loving everything about my occupation.

Maria, who is a student advisor at a university, considers parenting to be her real work. When she was contemplating on her essence, she said she saw her parenting work related to her essence. Her children are what she is very proud of, and they are a reflection of her own success.

My essence is probably supporting life and in tune with the whole creation kind of things, the core of people's being. The most important thing I will ever accomplish in my life, I've pretty much accomplished and that was to be a good parent. You can look at my children and realize that that effort was realized in many ways. They are not perfect, mind you, but I think that they are well adjusted, secure, and sensitive.

The following table shows the summary of the themes from the first step interviews. H (high) means the theme was one of the major issues for all the participants in the category. M (medium) means the theme was mentioned but not as a major issue or it was not mentioned by most of the participants in the category. L (low) means the theme was not a major issue or a few participants mentioned it.

	Male	Female	Service	Labor	Professional	Retail	Clerical	Unemployed	Self-employed
Creativity	H	H	H	M	M	H	H	H	H
Relationships	H	H	H	L	H	H	H	H	H
Goal and Process	H	M	L	M	H	M	M	H	H
Self-discovery	H	M	H	L	M	M	H	H	H
Enjoyment	H	M	H	H	M	H	M	L	H
Recognition	M	M	H	L	H	M	L	L	L
Higher Power	M	L	H	L	L	L	M	H	H
Role of Negative Experience	H	M	H	L	M	L	L	H	L
Mastery of Skill	M	L	L	H	L	L	L	H	L
Innate Talents and Gifts	M	L	H	H	L	L	L	M	L

Figure 10. Summary of the relationship between the participants' demographics and the themes.

Some assumptions can be made from the above chart. First, males are higher in most categories than females. Eight males and six females participated in this section of the study. A discrepancy in the number of male and female participants by two may have affected this outcome. Another assumption may be that males have a stronger concept of developing the self than the females.

Second, participants in the labor group scored low in the relationship category. Most of their satisfaction came from perfecting a job rather than connecting with others. They might have a more introverted personality. The labor group also scored low in the self-discovery category. It is not that they do not have the sense of self in their work. It is expressed differently from people in other groups did. They are extremely creative people

and enjoy creating things but they did not see their creation as their self expression. One of the participants mentioned that after something is created, it has a life of its own and it is not his.

Third, clerical, unemployed, and self-employed people scored low in recognition. Perhaps for the unemployed and self-employed participants, their employment situation may be related to their lack of concern with recognition issues. For example, for someone who is self-employed, recognition would not be a major issue.

Themes from the second step interviews

Five people were interviewed for the second step. One of the five participants was a first step participant and was called back to participate for the second time. The interview questions were more focused on the themes that emerged in the first step interviews. This section is organized by identifying each of the five participants' key concepts. The vignettes from the interviews are included to illustrate the key concepts, from which a theory was developed.

The first participant: Tina

Tina has been a hairdresser for fifteen years, and opened her own salon last year. She told me how she has changed and her attitude towards her work has changed over the years. At the beginning of her career as a hairdresser, she found meaning in hanging around rich people. Deep down she felt ashamed of her profession and she felt like she

was somebody by doing rich people's hair. She feels completely different about her profession now and described how some of the changes started to happen.

I thought I was a stupid hairdresser. The profession was kind of dumb. I was embarrassed to be a part of it. Then, one day, this person said, "Tina, I need to have my ends clipped here. Can you do that?" When he asked me that, I said, "Yes, I can do that. I am a hairdresser. I can do that for you." That simple statement made an enormous impact. It was like moving a mountain for me. Since then, I came to terms with it finally.

Tina did struggle with the purpose of her work. She wondered what the value of making people look prettier. Tina even thought that working on the form of people was shallow and her work was not meaningful. She struggled and searched for the meaning of her work.

I had the hardest time. What am I doing with esthetics? Making people look good? Working with the form? Who cares? That's not who you really are. It's just the vehicle you have. Pampering the form kind of got to me. I can't do that to people. You get to a point when you realize that the outside form is just a tool. For my profession, pampering the outside and making them feel good about the way they look is just a tool to allow the true beauty inside to come forth, to allow themselves to bring it forth, and shine to be who they really are.

Tina believes in the Higher Power in her process of career and her life. She tries everyday to make her work a little better and to serve her clients a little more. She has learned that the mindless gossip and chat that often go on in many beauty salons do not help her develop her career. She tries to be quiet sometimes to really serve each client in a special way. Tina described one day when she was working on her client's hair and something magical happened.

I remember one day specifically. I felt Higher Power through me. I even felt the particles of air. I remember feeling each strand of hair. I felt my hands were an extension of God. It was strange but it felt like it was learning itself. I think work is a tool. Work is an extension.

Another thing Tina strongly believes is that work has to be enjoyable. One change she has had over the years is that boundaries between work and play are not solid lines anymore.

My work is my play. My work is my devotion because I see God in everything I do. My work is my recreation, and I have relationships with people. There is no more lines anymore. No categories. It's all the same thing. When my husband says, "It was a long day," I say, "A day has the same number of hours. It's what you do with it."

During her journey from feeling ashamed of her job to maximizing her joy in her job, Tina has learned some lessons. She has much stronger faith and optimism in life and all the good things life brings. She doesn't worry anymore. She has always been provided with the necessities of life.

I have never worried about not finding a job. I feel that I have always been taken care of. Many people would think leaving a job is risk-taking because it takes courage. I think it's important to let go and soften. For me life is getting more and more fun. We shouldn't get stuck in time and places. If we make a mistake, I say, "Oh, well" and move on. I try to continually do different things.

In Tina's interview, the key concepts are: "work as developmental," "work as a tool," and "work as play."

The second participant: Helen

Helen is a vice president at a state university. She started out as a food service worker and became a food service manager for a school district. Helen has gone through more food service work and restaurant work. She started her advanced education later in life. She received an accounting degree and a graduate degree in management. In the process of her career development, both the negative experience and the positive support she received played a role.

I would say that I was disenchanted at the time, and I was very unhappy with the food services. But when I look back on it, it forced me to make a decision that really turned out to be a positive career experience for me. Since that point in time, I think I've always taken the attitude when something didn't always turn out the way I expected to, perhaps it was for a good reason.

Since I have moved into the accounting field, I have had a lot of support here and it has been a different work environment for me. When I was about finished with my degree, my supervisor challenged me to finish it faster so I would be eligible for the next promotion. My supervisor did a lot of accommodating with my work schedule and my class schedule so that I could accomplish the goal and he was very supportive of my reaching my goal.

It is clear from Helen's story too that people change and develop their career. She values the kind of support she received as an employee who juggled work, parenting, and school, and she believes in her work. She is returning some of what she received in the past by helping others. Helen believes she works best when she has a lot of freedom without many rules and regulations. She thinks that everybody develops but in different ways and at a different rate. Some people might be threatened to be given too much freedom and might not be comfortable with drastic changes.

I think work is developmental. And it is different for different people. I do believe that everybody has the ability to grow but maybe some people have the ability to grow at a slower rate. I think everybody needs to be developed to some extent. There is some growth potential and that is just about everybody and that makes them more satisfied with their jobs if they are growing at the right rate.

Helen thinks that the employees' satisfaction comes from feeling that they are growing. She recognizes the individual differences in their goals and processes.

There is different potential for each individual. I think the important thing in management is to recognize where there is potential and maybe the extent of the potential and to help the individual develop it to the degree they choose to. To be a catalyst in helping people realize that potential, it takes a little nudge or encouragement and support.

Helen believes that there is a strong relationship between work and personal growth. As a manager, she would like the employees to bring not only their technical skills but their personalities to work. She argues that the technical skills do not mean much when the employees don't feel good about themselves and the people they work with.

You do bring your personality to work. I don't think you can separate the personality from the employee and as a manager I can see that. It also makes me recognize that you need to learn to deal with different personalities and in different ways in order to optimize the individual's growth.

Helen's key concepts are: "negative experience as an impetus for growth," "work as developmental," and "individual differences."

The third participant: Larry

Larry was interviewed during the first step interview process and was called back to participate for the second time. He was asked to participate again because he has given a lot of thought to the meaning of work, and some of his statements from the first interview addressed the core issues of the research questions.

Larry is a massage therapist, who came from Hawaii where he worked as a mover for twenty eight years. He is a conscientious person and an astute learner of life. He said in the first interview that he has been searching for meaning of life most of his life. He believes that work plays a big role in finding the meaning or purpose. Larry has a unique way of understanding work.

I think the meaning of work is taking a breath of air. The only difference is between the two is that inhaling air is a gift from God; it's an automatic thing for you. Working is a choice. You need to work but you are given a choice to do it.

If you want to work, you work, if you don't want to work, you don't have to work. But that choice, there is a consequence for it. Taking a breath is a gift; you have no choice, you have to breathe, breathe life.

Larry is a very spiritual person who strives to live his spiritual existence through his work and personal activities. He believes that everyone is given a unique gift to give to the world and nobody else has that same gift. He says there are many other good massage therapists but he alone can give a massage in his own way. In our discussion about the real work, or soul's work, he responded quite assuringly:

The real work to me is preparing to go to that unknown place that all of us want to go. It's just a preparation. It's just an idea but I know it's the perfect place for me to be. That's my real work. And again, it so happens that real work is what I'm doing now. That, I think, is my real work.

The key concepts that came out of Larry's interview are "individual uniqueness" and "work as spiritual activity."

The fourth participant: Jennifer

Jennifer has degrees in biology and ecology, and her passion is about harmony among all living things on the earth and how humans can fit in the natural environment. She has held a public office in the county, and currently she works as a business coach.

Years ago she used to think convincing someone only required the logical and scientific data, but she has learned that dealing with any person on any decision making required building relationships. She says that we really cannot do things without thinking about how they will affect others and the environment. “We are not here alone,” emphasized Jennifer. Jennifer is another person who used her negative experience to her benefit.

When I didn’t get that position, I was devastated. I know now why that happened and what I was supposed to learn from it. Now I am doing a lot of the same things I used to do but on a much larger scale. I somehow associated my work with that position. What I needed to learn was that I shouldn’t get hung up on the place. I believe that the work I do is my life’s work. Life’s work transcends contexts. Not getting that position pushed me to do a bigger job. I know that things happen for a reason. Negative experiences make you change.

She added that people who can live through negative experiences and use them to their benefit usually have a solid support system and belief in optimism. Jennifer is dismayed about the power-based philosophy in which many systems still operate.

It is too bad that people operate in the “us against them” type of perspective. We need all viewpoints to have a healthy community. Based on my experience with the corporate world, I feel that organizations need to do much more to facilitate the employees’ creativity. I think people need more freedom and to feel more

independent. Many people feel that they cannot be who they are. They feel sometimes that they cannot be completely honest about their opinions, and they have to cover up their true feelings. We really need to develop the ability to have authentic communication. We should be able to communicate honestly to evolve as individuals and as a community. It is unfortunate that many people die with their music inside them.

“Many people die with their music inside them” is a good metaphor to describe the people’s need to have a creative outlet and to be who they are. Jennifer says “music” to her means creativity and passion. According to Jennifer, the soul’s work is bringing out the essence of the individual regardless of the context. Her soul’s work has to do with connecting people with the natural world and appreciating each other. She strongly believes that we are not separate things and all life is interconnected.

The key concepts in Jennifer’s interview are: “creativity in work,” “lessons in the negative experience,” and “finding essence.”

The fifth participant: Rick

Rick founded a moving company years ago, and now he owns a coffee shop. He is planning various partnerships to make his coffee shop much more than a coffee shop. He would like to create a place where people can come together for the benefit of the community. Rick says he has learned a lot from work both personally and professionally. As a business owner, Rick has his philosophy about business.

Work has been where all the issues of philosophy, of physical science, of psychology, human relations, every topic that I have ever run across comes down and gets grounded in business in a very practical way. I have gone through school and learned academic things, early public school through college where we develop some belief systems, and then work is where the rubber hits the road.

For me work has been a place of experimentation and a workshop on what succeeds and what doesn't, what's fun and what's not; this comes in various levels and kinds of success. It has to be financially solvent, fun, rewarding, and of service. Work has been literally a catalyst for learning. Things in my life that I thought I had understandings about I can test them out and ground them in many practicalities. There is a cute phrase from the Middle East that says "Praise Allah but tie up your camel first." I think that it is in the workplace that we get to be able to get more concrete and real of how we are praising Allah in ways that are in balance with physical kinds of things.

We tend to think that we do all the learning and experimenting in school and we have to know what we are doing when we go to work. It is intriguing that Rick thinks work is literally a catalyst for learning and a place for experimentation. It relates to the statements made earlier by other participants that they develop their career and themselves by searching and struggling. Rick adds another dimension that work helps us to make all

our ideas and visions concrete. He believes businesses need to engage a whole person to be successful, and talks about his business experience from a business owner's perspective.

When we are engaging everyone most freely most creatively with maximum buy-in and physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual robustness and vivaciousness, then all the problems that would hold us back are just places to be able to create solutions. Those kinds of things only happen in businesses that are holistic and robust. Understanding and nurturing different aspects of the human: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, honoring human relations, doing phenomenal problem solving.... all those kinds of things.

Rick's formula business has proved to be a success by doing exactly what he mentioned above, and he believes that some organizations don't do that out of fear. He described it by including a line from Rilke's poem.

"Who has not sat tense before one's own heart's curtain" to open ourselves up to the vulnerability, the possibility of being whole in our hearts and healed in our hearts, and our sense of interconnection with other people, sense of safety, and the ability to succeed in relations with others, with customers, and with employee, partners, the whole bit. It is very intimate.

Rick added an interesting comment about people's fear. He says according to Nelson Mandela, what people are really afraid of is not our failure or powerlessness but our own greatness.

What scares us is not fear and our powerlessness, but what scares us is, even if it is subconscious inside, the anticipation of our greatness and our wholeness and all of that means that we are meant to bring forth.

Just like individuals learn lessons about what works and doesn't work for them in work, organizations must learn from their lessons. Rick thinks organizations will have to go through major changes in order to survive.

I think wisdom is the next age that is approaching. Wisdom in the real holistic sense. Old thinking was that whoever had the most toys won. The new game people think is whoever has the most investment and information wins. The newest game which is still yet to be discovered by most is within the sense of purpose and the most holistic value of information, and is a redefinition of success and value of information. Information alone is not enough. Wisdom and enlightenment and understanding is what it takes.

In answering my question about actual work and soul's work, he responded by saying that he has made a mistake of separating them in the past. He says the most mundane work can be joyful if we don't separate them.

When I form a premise that my actual work and my soul work are separate, things get screwy for me. I do the mundane things like washing the dishes and doing the financial books — one thing after another in the sense of separateness. The mundane work loses its sense of meaning and purpose. I get stressed and demoralized when the mundane becomes a cycle of lack of creativity. Every time I remember that the mundane things are a part of my higher purpose and self-discovery, the joy and creativity return.

The same way Rick thinks the mundane and the soul work are the same thing, he believes that humans are both physical and spiritual beings at the same time. He also contends that we don't need to go searching for meaning; we already have it and we just need to recognize it.

I believe it is not that we are physical beings trying to see what it is like to elevate ourselves to spiritual levels of existence. Our essence is that we are absolute spiritual beings in physical vehicles with a purpose of discovering how to be whole in this wonderful playground with both visible and invisible things going on.

The key concepts from Rick's interview are: "work as a place to experiment and grow," "work as a place to manifest our vision," and "work as a vehicle to spirituality."

Theory

The following is a list of the key concepts from the second interviews.

1. Work is developmental. The goal and attitude towards work change as people change and develop themselves.
2. Work is a tool for us to discover the Higher Power.
3. Work is play. When you enjoy your work and find meaning in it, the boundaries between work and play diminish.
4. Negative experiences serve as an impetus for change and growth.
5. Individuals grow in different ways and at a different pace.
6. Individuals bring unique gifts to the world.
7. Work is a vehicle to find our essence
8. Work is a place to manifest our vision.
9. Work is a place to experiment and grow.

Based on the key concepts shown above, a theory about the relationship between work and people is generated. The theory is:

“For work to be meaningful to the individuals, it must provide a framework where people with different backgrounds and needs can choose to grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually at our own speed and will, experiment and discover our essence, manifest our vision in a concrete practical manner, be of service to others, and be purposeful by doing something we enjoy in the world with both visible and invisible guidance.”

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the essence of work. The data showed diverse work experiences and interpretations of the meaning of work. The theory generated in this study is truly grounded in the data. The first step interview data was collected through the maximum variation sampling technique to maximize the diversity in demographics and the type of work. The second step participants were selected on the basis of their interest in the research questions. The second step interview questions were focused on the themes that emerged from the first step data. From the second step interviews the key concepts were generated and synthesized into a theory. This process was very much like a refining process that synthesizes and condenses the data into an essence. The theory is an essence of the participants' voices on the meaning of work.

The theory, "For work to be meaningful to the individuals, it must provide a framework where people with diverse backgrounds and needs can choose to grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually at our own speed and will, experiment and discover our essence, manifest our vision in a concrete, practical manner, be of service to others, and be purposeful by doing what we enjoy in the world with both visible and invisible guidance" brings significant implications to the disciplines such as the field of human resource development, management, and career development.

The discussion section will illustrate the theory by breaking it down to phrases and justifying each phrase with the data. The conclusion section will include the significance of this study and its implications to the fields of human resource development, management, and career development. In the final section, recommendations for the above disciplines will be discussed.

Discussion

The theory will be divided into small sections and each section will be described with examples that arose in the study.

Work must provide a framework

This concept entails the notion that work is not a thing or a task but a context, framework, or environment. The participants' description of work constructed the notion that work is a framework. They made statements such as "I learned about myself in my work" and "I got out of that job." People grow in the context of work as though it were a kind of classroom. There are many such learning contexts. Schools, clubs, groups, and family units are all contexts in which learning and growth occur, not only doing the activities usually associated with those contexts, but also through the interactions with other people in the group.

People with different backgrounds and needs

It was mentioned in the data that every person has different needs. As Moore (1992) says, work may be a calling, but it calls differently for different people. Perhaps, Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1954) can be restructured into a more flat model. It may not be that people progress from certain needs to another but they are categories of different needs, not necessarily hierarchically arranged. A hungry person may need friendship, and may even be self-actualizing by doing the only thing the person knows how. Gerry, who is unemployed now, talks about his work experience as a logger. He says it was a hand-to-mouth job, and he had to do it only because he had to live. He recognized that the negative experience was something he had to go through, and it was part of his development process. Felipe, a roofer, has limited education and he says roofing is all he knows how to do. He is, however, very proud of his work and he thinks he does a better job than anyone else. If mastering the skill of roofing to the highest level was his calling, then he may be realizing his potential. In order to understand the true diversity in work and human evolution, we might need to reconceptualize the socio-economic hierarchy we have created.

Choose to grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually at our own speed and will

We all have our own will, potential, and choices in growth. People have different rates and routes of development, and their work environments can accommodate their

differences and choices. Helen, a vice president of a university, says “Some people would rather grow at a slower rate and not be pushed while some people are not challenged enough.” She also argues that if the person himself or herself is not ready to grow, nobody can help them change and develop. The will, or the intention, plays a major role in growth.

Most of the participants talked about their change in their work and their attitude towards work. They have also developed their careers and themselves. It was clear from the interviews that the participants saw themselves as dynamic evolving beings.

Experiment and discover our essence

People go through many experiences to discover who they are. This process might involve a lot of experimenting. As Rick says in his interview, work may be a place where all the knowledge and past experiences are applied to real situations. He says, “Work is where rubber hits the road.” For Rick, work has been a place for experimentation and a workshop. Nicole also says work is a reflection of who she is. She learned about herself in doing the work tasks and interacting with the people. Work provides us with situations and interactions from which we learn valuable lessons about work and ourselves. In the process of experimenting we develop our own relationship with work.

Manifest our vision in a concrete, practical manner

We have our visions and dreams. Work can be a place where those dreams and visions can be manifested in a concrete way. If work is where rubber hits the road, it

provides infinite possibilities of realizing our visions and ideas. Our vision is a part of who we are, our essence. Work should provide the raw material so we can realize our essence into something tangible. Humans might have the need to express ourselves in something concrete, and that may be the reason why many people associate work with self-discovery.

Be of service to others

All the participants mentioned being of service to others, the community, the environment, and the world, even though their statements were phrased in different ways. Many of us seem to think that meaningful work means benefiting others as well as ourselves. Gerry said in his interview that “work is a way of serving the world and meeting your own needs.”

Be purposeful by doing something we enjoy

The concept of purpose was expressed in different ways in the data. Statements such as “It was not meant to happen,” “It happened for a good reason,” and “Life’s work transcends context” have a sense of spirituality, and they allude to the influence of Higher Power. Many participants have searched for the right job. What they mean by “the right job” is the work that they were born to do, and doing such work provides a sense of purpose. Leider (1997) says, “Purpose is that deepest dimension within us—our central core or essence—where we have a profound sense of who we are, where we came from, and where we’re going. Purpose is the quality we choose to shape our lives around. Purpose is a source of energy and direction” (p. 1). Zukav (1990) says, “When the

deepest part of you becomes engaged in what you are doing, when your activities and actions become gratifying and purposeful, when what you do serves both yourself and others, when you do not tire within but seek the sweet satisfaction of your life and your work, you are doing what you were meant to be doing” (p.236). When our essence is engaged in work, the work should naturally be enjoyable and we feel a deep level of satisfaction. Work can serve as a framework for people to discover their essence and to merge the essence and the actual work. Enjoyment would come from knowing that our work is aligned with our essence.

Visible and invisible guidance

This relates to the previous discussion on purpose. The data alluded to the influence of Higher Power. Many participants talked about negative experiences being blessings in disguise and things happening for a reason. In the discussion about negative experiences with work, one participant said that her experience was supposed to bring a message. She said she didn't get the message right away, but it became clear. Not everyone used the word “God,” and not everyone shared the idea of God in a religious sense, but many of them felt that they were guided by some invisible wisdom.

Conclusion

This section discusses the significance of the theory in the fields of human resource development, management, and career development. The key concepts that are especially relevant to these fields will be discussed.

Humans as dynamic beings

Many participants experienced changes and developments in themselves over the years. Their attitude towards work changed and their goals were reevaluated. Some have mentioned that many companies do not see their employees as dynamic beings who change and develop. Instead, they see their employees as roles that do certain prescribed tasks for a long period of time. The participants of this study feel that they need more support from the employers in developing their careers and themselves. For example, the management can be more in tune with the individual needs for expanding their scope of work to help them reach their potential.

Human life is developmental. Many of us recall doing things in our youths that we would not do now, or we now do certain things that we did not do in the past. We move on and vacate our places and a new person can learn in your old place. The little chair in which we used to sit in grade school didn't seem that small back then, and now we can see a small person sitting in the same chair learning his or her lessons. The management can pay attention to who is outgrowing his or her chair and suggest trying a different chair. Watts (1996) believes that "career counseling should be accessible to individuals throughout their working lives" (p.233).

Some participants have mentioned that work is a place for experimenting and discovering their essence. They say they need more autonomy and room for creativity. However, the workplace as a place for growth and experimentation has not yet been realized everywhere. For example, Briskin (1996) says, "We mourn the loss of

individuals' ability to cultivate their own sense of purpose and direction in work" (p.158). He believes that Taylor's legacy of efficiency, which promoted the idea that workers are not paid to think, is still alive in some workplaces.

Role vs. self

Many employers have viewed their employees primarily as roles that play a part in the function of an organization. The Newtonian theory of a system, where the whole equals the sum of parts, is the philosophy that has been widely accepted. In this theory, employees become parts of a machine each playing his or her role. A role entails some expectations, and some of those expectations are a distinction from the personal life and prescribed function and behavior. The employees are not usually expected to bring their personalities to work. Some organizations do try to boost the employee morale because it translates to higher productivity and performance. However, the organizational motivation to facilitate the employee morale has almost always been driven by productivity.

Briskin (1996) argues, however, that the concept of role itself is not the problem. He says role is "a mental construct that is fluid and constantly changing" and "associated with perceiving an underlying rationale for doing what we do" (p.197). He also believes that role helps us to reflect what is appropriate in the context of relationships. "In taking up a role, we find out something about our courage and creativity in how we respond to the opportunities and constraints of our world" (Briskin, 1996, p.197). The problem might be that the role is often forced upon us instead of our own choosing. As Briskin

says, role can be a catalyst in finding who we are, but it must be an internal choice and the whole person has to be involved in choosing a role.

Geroy and Wright (in press) identified the relationships between the organizational view of individuals and the individuals' view of themselves. They speak to the issue of complexity of motivation and self-actualization by suggesting we consider a full interaction box model (Figure 11.) for viewing perspectives held by individuals vs. those held by the individuals in the organization. Briefly illustrated, Geroy and Wright suggest that the soul of work lies within the individuals' view of themselves. The individual view of themselves is the Gestalt of who they are, but the organizational view of individuals is often limited to their roles. Here lies the incongruity between what people look for in their work and what work expects of them. Work will be more meaningful for many if the Gestalt view of individuals can be transferred to the organizational view of individuals.

	Individual	Organization
Individual	1) The individual's view of themselves -- Gestalt of self	2) The individual's view of the organization -- Framework
Organization	3) The organization's view of the individual -- Role	4) The organization's view of itself -- Systems

Figure 11. Full interaction box model (Geroy & Wright, in press)

When individuals are viewed as roles, the view does not include the non-rational dimensions of humans. The non-rational dimensions would include the personalities, emotions, and spiritualities of the individuals. Viewing people strictly as roles is the machine metaphor of a workplace and reliance on the wages to satisfy all the human needs

(Briskin, 1996). Briskin also argues, “Work cannot simply be broken down and then reassembled to management’s satisfaction” (p.159).

The career development field could expand the scope of its discipline by viewing individuals in their Gestalt sense rather than mostly focusing on the skills and knowledge. The management field is starting to recognize the spiritual aspects as a legitimate issue in the workplace. However, this field is struggling to figure out where and how the spiritual dimensions would fit into the academic discipline of management education. The answer may lie in a shift in the organizational view of individuals and in reconceptualizing management. The organizations can embrace the employee as the whole person who has non-rational needs as well as rational needs.

The field of human resource development can benefit from the theory. The theory helps us look at the employees from their side rather than the organizational side. The terms “capital” or “resource” to refer to humans do not embrace the Gestalt of who we are. Calling the employees human resources suggests that the discipline is justified only from the management side’s view. The word “resource” means something that is used and discarded for a purpose external to the resource itself. The word “capital” implies that we are worthy only when translated into dollars. The data of this study, which is a collective voice of various employees, suggest that their needs differ from the HR view of their needs.

Self-actualization

Maslow's hierarchy of needs and its limitations were previously discussed.

Maslow's model assumes that the basic needs such as food and safety must be met before the need for self-actualization emerges. A few participants in this study have experienced the lower needs of the hierarchy. One participant had a hand-to-mouth job where people were regularly getting hurt on the job. He did the job only to survive but he realized that it was a part of his development and that it taught him a lesson. Even though he was placed in a miserable situation, he could recognize that it was an important step in the process of self-discovery. He said the experience taught him to live in the present.

We are born with different potentials, and these potentials should not be measured in a uniformly hierarchical manner. Each individual's potential is just different. I have mentioned earlier that someone who seems accomplished may not be self-actualizing. Someone who is working in a "McJob" situation may be doing what he or she needs to do as a process. We cannot define specifically what self-actualization means because it depends on the individual's essence and potential. Life and work seem to be developmental, so human evolution may be a constant flow of change and development. Perhaps the essence is the source of the vision and the potential is the driving force to manifest the vision.

The fields of human resource development, management, and career development can be enriched by the notion that self-actualization cannot be prescribed but individuals can be encouraged to discover their essence and their potential. The flat model of needs would help create a healthier, more egalitarian view of occupations.

Recommendations

The concept of work has changed over the years. Work has provided humans a wide range of things from money and material basics to joy, challenge, drudgery, pain, and even cruelty. Work might mean the same to some people today. What may be different is that many people are coming forth with their deeper hopes and desires. We have lived through the agricultural era, industrial era, and the post-industrial era. We await to see what the 21st century will bring. The recommendation section includes changes that might enhance future workplaces.

The era of wisdom

We have become an information society. Technology can help us transcend the barriers of time and space, and access a great deal of information in a short amount of time. In the last several decades, however, the quantity of information available to each of us and the rate at which it can be accessed have increased so rapidly that we may have come to a point where we cannot process all the information we receive. We may be reaching the end of the period where bigger is better and more information is better. As one of the participants mentioned, the coming era has to take wisdom into account. It's not that the one with the most information wins, but the one with the valuable information wins. Information alone will not be enough in the future. If value is something that will be important in workplaces, we should reevaluate what really is valuable to us as individuals and organizations.

A company's success is often measured by its productivity and financial profit. If we continue to strive for more productivity at any cost, we may not survive in the future. Many people are starting to value the quality of life with physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual areas fulfilled. We are also beginning to see the seriousness of our environmental damage caused by the industrial development. Barrett (1997) believes that there is a link between emerging environmental and social issues and the philosophy of business. He believes that businesses will have to shift their values from merely pursuing their profit to balancing their own interest with the interests of the workers and the communities.

Shifting the core values of an organization takes a transformation, and transformation is not the same as re-engineering or re-structuring. Transformation might mean a whole new way of existence or identity. For example, for an organization to view helping people evolve as the top priority is a transformation.

Reinventing work

It is Barrett's contention (1998) that the most successful companies in the 21 century will be the ones that are responsible community members and align the company's values with society's values, and says, "This means caring for the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of their employees. Companies will need to invite employee participation, provide work that gives their lives meaning and align employees work with their passion. They will need to create a climate of trust and openness that encourages employees to become all they become and bring their whole selves to work." Thus, it is critical to reinvent our concept of work. However, any transformational change has to

begin at the top and from within in order to bring out change at the organizational level (Barrett, 1998). The top management would have to transform themselves as individuals. Businesses that are experiencing high turn-overs and lack of morale and creativity may have to reevaluate their definition of success and their view of the employees.

The first step may be to stop viewing the individuals as a human capital or resource and to start embracing each individual as a developing being with physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Purpose of organizations

The ultimate goal of an organization may not be different from the purpose of other groups such as a class, a club, or a family. A group provides a framework where we can receive support, protection, and encouragement for growth. Many groups we outgrow and move on to the next group that provides what we need at that time. Groups can take us as far as the group potential can take us. Group potential can also evolve as the individuals in the group move forward. Humans as a group can achieve an outcome which we cannot achieve alone, but it is only possible when the individuals can be the self and the whole at the same time just like the particles and the wave.

If the organizations can identify their highest purpose to be providing a framework in which humans can evolve, the organizations can also evolve to maximize their potential. In the short term, for an organization to invest in humans may seem risk-taking, but in the long run, that may be the only way to exist in the era to come. Rather than “investing” in the humans, which does presume that there is another motive, the organizations can

develop a genuine attitude of serving humans by providing a framework. The profit may be a by-product of the service. The theory that emerged from this study resonates with Osterburg's view (1993). He states, "The primary purpose of a company is to serve as an arena for the personal development of those working in the company. The production of goods and services and the making of profits are by-products" (p.96).

Soul of work

Briskin (1996) says soul as an ancient hypothesis based on various religious traditions touches four core themes that are vital to humans. First, soul is linked with the underworld, the shadowy realities, which give us connections to the unconscious domain of ourselves. Second, the soul is associated with "our vitality, the source of animation, essence, and renewal" (Briskin, 1996, p.11). Third, soul unites the opposites: spirit and matter, and light and dark aspects of the whole person. Fourth, soul has a spark of the divine, a bridge to the qualities of the cosmic consciousness.

In order to integrate Briskin's definitions of "soul" into a workplace, it is clear that we must go beyond the physical tangible reality. Understanding the soul of work will require the courage to let go of what doesn't work anymore and to be open to new ideas.

EPILOGUE

I enjoyed the “work” of writing this dissertation. It was not a job; it was a part of my life’s work. I have come to realize that a part of my purpose is to help others find their purpose. Another piece of my life’s work is to help others see things from a different perspective. A part of everybody’s purpose, I believe, is self-discovery. We draw ourselves various experiences to discover who we are. If we let go of our ego, we can see that every experience and every person we encounter is a teacher. We can see the synchronicity.

In my life, I have been led to places and people who brought the right lessons for me. My being where I am and writing this dissertation are not accidental occurrences. My search for the right job can be as simple as doing the ground work, setting the desire in motion, and waiting to see which door will open. I have been told that I am idealistic, but I believe in the power of optimism.

I decided to focus my work mainly on systems rather than counseling individuals because individuals’ problems often stem from non-working systems. Systems such as workplaces can improve so much by understanding what people need physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. I believe that the most important purpose of a workplace is to provide an environment in which individuals can grow. The profit is a by-product.

I have been taught to “know what I am looking at” beyond the facade of things and events. It is important to be able to see what the real issue is in our experiences. I feel that we can all benefit from developing an intuitive eye to know where we are headed and how we need to change. I wish my existence to be one of compassion, service, and positive change, and hope the world will be a little better place because I lived and worked in it.

I now close this project by sharing a poem by Philip Levine.

What work is

We stand in the rain in a long line
waiting at Ford Highland Park. For work.
You know what work is--if you're
old enough to read this you know what
work is, although you may not do it.
Forget you. This is about waiting,
shifting from one foot to another.
Feeling the light rain falling like mist
into your hair, blurring your vision
until you think you see your own brother
ahead of you, maybe ten places.
You rub your glasses with your fingers,
and of course it's someone else's brother,

narrower across the shoulders than yours but with the same sad slouch, the grin
that does not hide the stubbornness,
the sad refusal to give in to
rain, to the hours wasted waiting,
to the knowledge that somewhere ahead
a man is waiting who will say, "No,
we're not hiring today," for any
reason he wants. You love your brother,
now suddenly you can hardly stand
the love flooding you for your brother,
who's not beside you or behind or
ahead because he's home trying to
sleep off a miserable night shift
at Cadillac so he can get up
before noon to study his German.
Works eight hours a night so he can sing
Wagner, the opera you hate most,
the worst music ever invented.
How long has it been since you told him
you loved him, held his wide shoulders,
opened your eyes wide and said those words,
and maybe kissed his cheek? You've never

done something so simple, so obvious,
not because you're too young or too dumb,
not because you're jealous or even mean
or incapable of crying in
the presence of another man, no,
just because you don't know what work is. (Levine, 1991, p.18, 19)

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APPENDIX A

The Interview Guide

1. Describe your current work and your experience with it. What aspect of your work are you happy with? What aspects do you feel dissatisfied with?
2. Describe the best/happiest work experience you have ever had? How did you feel? What comes to mind when you think about the experience? How did that experience affect you? What did you learn from it?
3. Describe the worst work experience you have ever had? How did you feel? What comes to mind when you think about the experience? How did that experience affect you? What did you learn from it?
4. If you could have a job that is perfect for you, what would it be? Describe it. Tell me why it is perfect for you.
5. What is an important aspect in choosing a job for you?
6. What would you like to be doing five years from now? Ten years?
7. Additional comments.

APPENDIX B

The Interview Guide

1. Please discuss the positive and negative experiences you have had with work?
How have they affected you?

2. Please describe meaningful work for you?

3. What does self-actualization mean to you?

4. What role does work play in your personal or spiritual growth
What does personal or spiritual growth mean to you?

5. Would you like to comment on any of these themes?

APPENDIX C

**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT**

TITLE OF PROJECT: Searching for Soul: Work and Human Evolution

NAME OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Gary D. Geroy, Ph.D., School of Education, Colorado State University

NAME OF CO-INVESTIGATOR: Keiko Krahnke, Doctoral Candidate, School of Education, Colorado State University

CONTACT PERSON FOR QUESTION/PROBLEMS: Keiko Krahnke, (970) 226-1159

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: The purpose of this study is to explore your work experience and your personal growth. You will be one of 20 participants who will be interviewed individually. Your interview will last from forty-five minutes to one hour. You will be asked questions about your work experience, your vision for the ideal work, and your personal growth.

PROCEDURES/METHODS TO BE USED:

All interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. The participants will have access to the transcription of the interview to check for accuracy. All the tapes, transcripts, and analysis will be kept in a locked cabinet during the study. Upon completion of the study, they will be labeled anonymously and stored in a locked cabinet for three years for possible use for another study. After three years, all the tapes, transcripts, and analysis will be destroyed. The audiotapes will be erased and transcripts and analysis will be shredded. The participants will receive the result of the study.

RISKS INHERENT IN THE PROCEDURES: There are no known risks to participants in this study. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, but the researchers have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

BENEFITS: There are no known benefits to the participants.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All personal information gathered for this study will be kept confidential. The participants may be quoted but your names or the names of your workplaces will not be mentioned in the study. The participants will have access to their transcripts. All audiotapes, transcripts, and analysis will be kept in a locked cabinet during and after the study. They will be destroyed after three years.

Page 1 of 2

Subject Initials _____ Date _____

LIABILITY: The Colorado Government Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury.

Questions about subjects' rights may be directed to Celia S. Walker at (970) 491-1563.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 2 pages.

Participant name (printed)

Participant signature

Date

Investigator or co-investigator signature

Date