If Only I Had Read Ahead

I was very disappointed when I read the readings for this week. The exercise at the end of the book chapter and the Schwartz article were reminiscent of the experience I had over Fall Break of looking for a suit. Overall it was an unpleasant experience with a happy conclusion, but I hope to keep the paradox of choice in mind when I decide it is time to buy another suit.

I have several interviews for post-graduation jobs scheduled for the coming weeks. Going over the choice for what to wear to these tense sessions, I found that I had very little professional-attire pieces in my closet. I decided I needed to go out and purchase an "adult" outfit. Talking with one of my friends, we found ourselves in the same predicament and we decided to go at it together. We dragged another one of our girlfriends and together the three of us stormed Briarwood Mall.

Four agonizing hours later my friend Martha had the perfect outfit and I had nothing. I was tempted to go ahead and just buy an expensive and semi-stylish jacket from Express, but I was not altogether comfortable shelling out over a hundred dollars for a suit jacket I was not even sure was really something I would want to wear. About to give up, I made a mad dash into Sears. The first thing I saw was a black jacket hanging alone among brightly colored blouses. It was the only one in the section and I had a small sliver of hope that it might be the one for me. I picked it up, saw it was my size, noticed it was on sale, and bought it. As an added bonus it looked like it would be a pretty close match for a pair of dress pants I already owned. \$15 later I was a satisfied shopper.

The summary of the results of the studies looking at expanded choice as demotivating (Schwartz, pg. 19) did not surprise me very much after spending this day at the mall. I had spent the better part of an afternoon searching in vain through multiple stores and departments and trying on countless jackets. As the jam and chocolate tasters behaved, I too was less likely to want to have those things that I had tried out of an endless supply. The large array was discouraging and I found myself not enjoying the experience of shopping.

Reflecting on this outing I realized that I had been putting too much emphasis on my search for the perfect suit. I was getting agitated and depressed that I had not been able to find just the right outfit and to make it worse, the girl I was shopping with had. This realization had probably also affected my decision to buy a jacket and probably influenced me to want to buy a similar stylish jacket that I would not have been able to afford. I wish I had read the readings a week earlier! To have been able to cut out the first four hours and zoom right in to the time window where I had spent less than ten minutes finding something that fit me and my budget would have been glorious.

The jacket probably will not last long in my wardrobe, it should not have taken up so much of my energy to find. In the end though, I was satisfied with my purchase and I think it was the result of just finding something simple that worked. Hopefully in the future I'll be able to keep the mindset that finding something I only plan on wearing about three times should not take up most of my day.