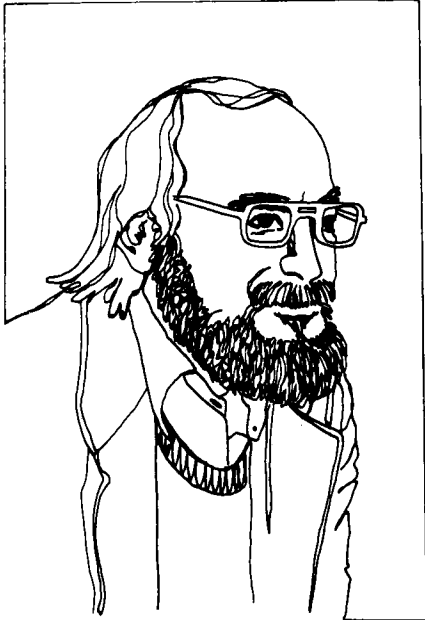


COUNSELING

INSIDE/OUT



Dale Wachowiak is a Counseling Psychologist in the Counseling Center and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte.

Adult-ery

Well, the book finally appeared in a bookstore that could defeat my fiscally responsible tendency to say, "I'll wait and buy the paperback." I shelled out 10 hard-earned dollars for *Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life* (E. P. Dutton & Co., 1976) by **Gail Sheehy**. It was worth every dollar of it! Not only do I now know what to expect from the rest of my voyage into senility, but I have something to put on my bookshelf next to the child and adolescent books. I feel complete.

Sheehy is a journalist bringing together information that has been floating around in other places for some time. **Daniel Levinson's** work is chief among these (See *Psychopathology*, University of Minnesota Press, 1974). Levinson was the first to detail the existence and course of what he describes as "relatively universal, genotypic, age-linked,

adult developmental periods." He focuses on male development in early and mid-adulthood, tracing men's course through *Leaving the Family*, *Getting Into the Adult World*, *Settling Down*, *Becoming One's Own Man*, *The Mid-Life Transition*, and *Restabilization*. He gives greatest attention to that which is most important to most men at these stages: THE CAREER. He introduces the concept of The Dream—the vision men develop of their future. He describes how they make use of a professional mentor to help in bringing The Dream to life. He outlines the unsettling periods when the mentor must be dropped and The Dream revised. Such stages are more than abstractions for men such as myself who are in the midst of them.

Even more realistic for the academic is **Harold Hodgkinson's** application of Levinson's stages to educational faculty and administrators' careers (*Educational Record*, Fall 1974). If you are an educator and interested in knowing what's in store for you down the road, this article is a must. I wish Hodgkinson had been kind enough to leave off the final stage that he depressingly entitles *Hanging On* ("Toughing It Out"). Sheehy also relies heavily on the work of psychiatrist **Roger Gould**. Apparently too heavily. Gould secured an out-of-court settlement of a plagiarism suit and will receive \$10,000 plus 10 percent of the book's royalties. Sheehy acknowledges additional debts to **Bernice Neugarten**, **George Vaillant**, **Margaret Hennig**, **James Donovan**, **Marylou Lionells**, and **Carola Mann** for lending their professional expertise.

So what does Sheehy bring to the book herself? For one, she brings a curious reporter's ability to dig up and integrate disparate information. She incorporates an impressive array of facts into her own stage framework, which consists of *Pulling Up Roots*, *The Trying Twenties*, *Catch-30*, *Rooting and Extending*, *The Deadline Decade*, *Renewal or Resignation*. Second, she brings a wealth of case study material for

examination (although the cases seem to be mainly people she encounters in New York City—either ghetto dwellers, artists of one sort or another, and a multitude of lawyers—hardly a representative sample of people-in-general). Third, she brings the writer's ability to breathe life into abstract concepts. I know "professionals" tend to scoff at Pop Psych books written by "nonprofessionals." I, for one, would like to see more researchers turn their material over to top-notch writers before inflicting it on the public. It was a pleasure to read an author who could comfortably use a funny word like "chockablock" and who could describe an anxiety attack as "my heart lurched into manic rhythms and began leaping around inside my chest like a frog in a jar."

Finally, Ms. Sheehy fills an embarrassing void by flipping up the female side of the adult development coin. She describes two competing growth tendencies in people: The Seeker Self and the Merger Self. Most women deny the Seeker Self until the thirties, displacing their seeker desires onto the others with whom they have merged. Sheehy describes those women who then come to own separate identities during the thirties and forties with admiration and accords them the dignity they deserve. She comes down hard, however, on those who persist in their "urge to merge."

Sheehy may not have all the stages right. The patterns she describes may not be universal. Her interpretations of the personality dynamics may be simplistic. *Passages* is nevertheless an important book. For any adult who has caught sight of Death waiting up the road a piece, *Passages* is also an impactful book. As one colleague replied when I asked him why it was taking him so long to finish the book, "It's too painful to read very much at one time."

Mid-Career Change

"We cannot live in the afternoon of life according to the programme of life's morning. . . . The afternoon of human life must also have a significance of its own and cannot be merely a pitiful appendage to life's morning. Whoever carries over into the afternoon the law of the morning . . . must pay for so doing with damage to his soul."—**Carl Jung**

Passages interfaces with career counseling at the time someone acknowledges the need for a mid-life change and seeks counseling help. In fact, few do seek such help. **David Harvey**

(1976 APGA Convention Presentation) reports that only about 10 percent of mid-career shifters use some form of counseling. Moreover, many of those seeking counseling reported dissatisfaction with the help received. Where did they turn for help? Their families and other business associates principally. They also reported having considered the shift for a long time. About one-third of Harvey's sample took from one to five years to work out their plans. If we can get counselors involved, **Dave Mahrer, Linda Brooks, and Kevin King** (1976 APGA Convention Presentation) have developed a counseling model called "Forty and Growing" to aid potential career changers through this long and involved planning process.

Gene Thomas (1976 APGA Convention Presentation), however, has found it to be a mistake to lump all mid-career shifters into one category with the prevailing image of the person who reassesses his or her values and decides to make a radical change of his or her own volition. In fact, many mid-career leaps are externally mandated; that is, it's a push more than a jump. Thomas divides people into Changers, Cryptochangers, Pseudochangers, and Persisters. Persisters never make any major change in their life-style or career, Pseudochangers make an ostensible job change but no real alteration in life-style or values, Cryptochangers keep their same job but make dramatic realignments in their life-style and the manner they approach their job.

In a separate study **Gene Thomas, Richard Mela, Paula Robbins, and David Harvey** (*Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, March 1976) look at corporate dropouts and again find that we are dealing with several breeds. There are the Counterattackers, the dropouts who maintain a high business success ethic and drop out to begin organizing their own corporate empires. There are the Flankers who still want success but are less single-minded and ruthless about it; they are looking for an avenue to success that doesn't involve tromping on others. The Retreatist doesn't have the ambition to succeed within the corporation structure, but he or she doesn't particularly drop out for altruistic reasons. The Own Drummer is the humanitarian dropout, the rejecter of corporate life's dog-eat-dog value structure.

Yes, there is life after youth, but it's not a simple process to understand or to intervene with. As career counselors to the young, however, we could improve the situation if we would stop asking

people what they want to be when they grow up and start asking them what sort of work experiences they want to have had before their life is over.

The Computers Are Coming

In fact, the computers have arrived. In the face of much counselor resistance computer-assisted career counseling is a *fait accompli* in a number of school systems and colleges. Illinois State University has been in the process of effecting such a program since 1972, and has been using ETS's SIGI (System of Interactive Guidance Information) system since 1974. The first experimental results of its use are positive. **Don Cochran, David Hoffman, Kenneth Strand, and Penelope Warren** (Unpublished manuscript) found significantly more progress in the decision-making process with regard to choice of major for students receiving three hours access to SIGI than for a comparable wait/control group.

K. Richard Pyle reports similar findings at the community college level (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, 1976). SIGI was employed in a career development class in Santa Fe Community College in Gainesville, Florida. Scores on the attitude scale of Crites' Career Maturity Inventory improved significantly more for students interacting with SIGI under the supervision of a counselor than for a control group. The following results should prove a relief to counselors threatened by computerized counseling: In a comparable study conducted three months before Pyle's, **H. F. Devine** (Unpublished manuscript) did not find a significant change in career maturity attitude scores among community college students who participated in SIGI *without* the aid of a counselor.

For grades 7-12, the DISCOVER system is now available. This package is distributed by the Discover Foundation of Western Maryland College.

Yet computer-assisted counseling still produces resistance among counselors. During the past few months, I have asked several knowledgeable career people what they thought of such programs. They dismissed them out-of-hand, but not for the expected humanistic reasons. They quickly replied, "They cost too much!"

Ahedonia

Do you suffer from an inability to curl the corners of your mouth upward? Have vertical worry lines, like mountain ridges, become etched into the middle of

your forehead? Does laughter echo from your lips only when you have been caught in an embarrassing situation? If so, you suffer from *ahedonia*. This common disorder of adolescence and adulthood is clinically defined as the inability to experience pleasure.

Lawrence Woodburn, John Snyder, Kenneth Parker, and Lawrence Barnhill (1976 APGA Convention Presentation) treat this malaise directly. No analysis of the underlying dynamics. No frantic searches for a personal meaning in life. Just pure "fun therapy." How do you do it? Start with "Liberating the Child," a fantasy exercise to overcome motor movement inhibitions. Follow that up with a rugged game of "Slow Motion Football." Or, for the less contact-oriented, "Slow Motion Basketball" may be substituted. For a fitting climax, stage a good old therapeutic "Group Pie Fight."

If all that sounds appealing, then either you need a fun therapist or a stint as a contestant on "The Gong Show."

Prima Donnas

Getting back to adult development, **Joan Ellen Zweben and David Deitch** (*Voices*, Spring 1976) lay out the stages in the evolution of your basic therapist *prima donna*. They are referring, of course, to those narcissistic stars of the workshop circuit whose magic we have all plunked down *mucho* money to observe.

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must, first of all, be generally gifted, well intentioned and initially seriously committed to becoming an excellent therapist. You must then begin attending training workshops to improve your practice. You will then, at some point, become attracted to some innovation in technique. This attraction will then grow into a conversion to this particular therapeutic faith system. You will begin to advocate it as The Best Way. You will come to rigidly apply the "rules" for the system, allowing no deviation. As your enthusiasm for the system tends to produce improved clients, you will decide to take your act on the road. There are more money and recognition in training workshops than individual clients. You will don the garb of the Suprema Donna in your particular faith system. You will have less and less contact with and critical feedback from peers outside your faith system.

"Back home" the clients will be neglected, but they are afraid to confront you with their feelings of lack of attention. You will begin to subtly brag among colleagues about your "trophy" clients—the famous and important who have sought you out. You expect to be treated by your intimates as you are treated on the road by the "groupies"—as a "pampered genius." Your homelife tends to fall apart just as the quality of your therapeutic practice has sunk.

Zweben and Deitch offer this formula not as a prescription for would-be gurus but as a *caveat* for the ambitious and dedicated young therapist.

Massage Is the Message

All you Rolfers and Lowenians out there, be sure to catch the Summer '76 issue of *Voices*. This special issue has more comprehensive coverage of the body than Gray's *Anatomy*. Among the more stimulating article titles:

- Bending Over Backwards: A Body Psychotherapy for Therapists Without Bodies
- Body Therapy As a Pearly Gate Through Which Previous Training and Experience Manifest Their Good Works: On Being in a Mysterious New World Which Is Strangely Similar to the Last
- Psychotherapeutic Massage
- Muscles and Madness
- Anger, Fear and Back Pain
- Me and My Shadow
- Getting Ahead on My Feet
- Touch, Acupuncture and Psychotherapy; and best but not least
- The Use of a Vibrator in Body Psychotherapy



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