Logophile, A Lover of Words

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Logophile, a lover of words (Merriam-Webster). A person who identifies as a logophile has a love-love relationship with words. To a logophile, words are stimulating and exciting. Words have power and creative energy. Words can build up, or tear down. In fact, according to The Passion Translation (TPT) of Proverbs 18:21, your words are so powerful that they can kill or give life (The Passion Translation, 2018). Having an affinity with words is just one of the themes I discovered as a result of completing the Wise Wandering Map, an assessment tool used in colleges, universities, and other institutions to aid in career development. In fact, at the conclusion of my analysis, a rudimentary yet workable "diagnosis" emerged: client presents as a creative logophile with a perfectionist complex and low self-esteem who thrives in academic settings.

Connections, Themes and Threads

As previously stated, a re-occurring theme that appeared in my Wise Wandering Map was words. Words seemed to be the connecting thread among many of the other themes that emerged. This probably should not come as a surprise since I was in the Humanities program at my high school. From as early as 4th grade straight through to 12th grade I was exposed to languages such as French and Latin. In elementary and junior high, I was an avid reader and often wrote poetry and short stories. I loved collecting quotes, too. Poetry writing lends itself towards songwriting, which I did a tremendous amount of when I was singing in a girl group called Sylva Rose my senior year of high school.

Employment

My career choices reflect an emphasis on words, reading and writing. Since 2002 I have worked as a stenographer in various offices and courts of New York state, a job that requires excellent command of the written word. As a teenager / young adult, I worked as a peer

counselor for NYC Youthline, a runaway and crisis hotline for teens. In addition to providing crisis counseling to my peers over the phone, I conducted workshops in the community on domestic violence, STD's and other pertinent teen issues. This job's heavy emphasis on speaking was yet another connection to words. In addition, my interest in Mental Health Counseling as a future career goal is another connection to words. Not only does this career require a lot of speaking and life-long learning (to stay abreast current and new trends in the field), but it also requires the mental health professional to delve into their own psyche in the pursuit of self-awareness, to uncover their own self-talk, intrinsic beliefs and motivations.

Entertainment

The forms of entertainment I gravitate towards are game shows such as Wheel of Fortune, $10,000 Pyramid, Family Feud, Word Search puzzles, Boggle and other word games. Games of logic and reasoning are not my strong suit - it took me years to learn how to play and be decent in the card game of Spades! I also enjoy watching comedy shows (I secretly wish I were funny so I could be a stand-up comedienne). I enjoy how they can use words to make audiences laugh and think at the same time.

Creative Outlets

In addition to words, another theme that was pervasive in the Wise Wandering Map was creativity. Throughout my life, there were various ways that I was able to tap into my creative side. Activities such as cheerleading, step team, art, African dance, ballet, poetry, playing viola, songwriting and singing were all creative outlets that were made available to me and I was able to pursue. According to Zunker (2016), Holland's model of personality types and occupational environments proposes that personality types can be arranged in a coded system: R (realistic occupation); I (investigative); A (artistic); S (social); E (enterprising); and C(conventional). It

would be safe to bet that one of my dominant themes would be "artistic" based on the creative activities I have engaged in. Additionally, according to Chen and Simpson (2015), my personality type, as well as my gender, race/ethnicity, and high school achievement, is statistically significant in increasing or decreasing my odds of enrolling in a STEM major (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Specifically, students with a strong investigative personality are more likely to enroll in STEM majors, while those with a strong artistic personality (such as myself) or enterprising personality are less likely to do so (Chen and Simpson, 2015). This finding is consistent in my life, as I did not pursue a STEM major in my undergraduate or post-graduate studies.

Resilience

Another connecting theme I recognized was resilience. It showed up in many ways. Whether it was conquering my fear of heights by trying new activities like ziplining and indoor skydiving, or accomplishing something I had little confidence that I could achieve, such as learning how to drive or having a VBAC (vaginal birth after cesarean), the enduring character trait of resilience was needed. Resilience is defined as an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change (Mish, 2003). Another area where resilience came was in the form of surviving sexual abuse at the age of 5 and later sexual assault at the age of 19. Fritz et al. (2019) state: Adolescents who have been exposed to adversity in childhood (CA), such as traumatic and/ or severely stressful events, have a higher risk of developing mental health problems. Here, the themes of words and resilience worked hand in hand as I sought recovery and healing through mental health professionals as well as the healing words of scripture.

Synthesizing Themes via The Learning Theory of Career Counseling (LTCC)

Zunker (2016) states that the Learning Theory of Career Counseling (LTCC) focuses on the process of career selection based primarily on life events that are influential in determining career selection. LTCC stresses that everyone's unique *learning experiences* over the course of their life are the main influences that lead to career choice (Zunker, 2016). The life events, themes, interests and passions that emerged from the Wise Wandering Map tool were highly influential in the career paths I was interested in and pursued. For example, before working as a peer counselor or stenographer, I had a summer job as an intern working in a courthouse in the Special Victims' Department. That experience ultimately led me to NYC Youthline. Both jobs, as well as my personal traumatic experiences, produced a desire to help people achieve thriving mental health.

In LTCC, the process of career development involves four factors: (1) genetic endowments and special abilities, (2) environmental conditions and events, (3) learning experiences, and (4) task approach skills (Zunker, 2016). Zunker states that learning experiences includes instrumental learning experiences, such as those an individual learns through reactions to consequences, through direct observable results of actions, and through the reactions of others. Through NYC Youthline, I learned that work in the social services field can be personally rewarding, and I received a lot of positive feedback and affirmation from my superiors and colleagues alike about my natural counseling abilities. The feedback gave me confidence in the workplace and confidence about pursuing mental health later in life. This illustrates the idea that if an individual has been positively reinforced while engaging in the activities of a course of study or occupation, the individual is more likely to express a preference for that course of study or field of work (Zunker, 2016).

Task approach skills includes the sets of skills an individual has developed, such as problem-solving skills, work habits, mental sets, emotional responses, and cognitive responses (Zunker, 2016). While working as a peer counselor, I learned such skills as active listening, using "I" statements, developing compassion, debriefing and leaving work at the office.

LTCC Theory Intervention

Plan or Next Steps

While having experience in jobs that emphasize words and supporting people emotionally, there was a period in my life that I did not know what career path I should take or what I was good at. As a young adult, I did not have the benefit of the Wise Wandering Map to visually map out what my interests, passions and experiences were. If I could counsel the 20-year-old me who had not yet begun to pursue a career in stenography (by divine intervention I might add), the LTCC theory would be a great approach to assist in figuring out next steps.

According to this theory, career decision making is a learned skill (Zunker, 2016). Therefore, before any assessments or intake information is collected, I would begin counseling my 20-year-old self by first educating her. I would emphasize that choosing a career is a big decision, a complex decision, and one that may take a few attempts before we get it right. In that way I would alleviate the pressure on the client having to know exactly what s/he wants to study and do for the rest of his/her life; a challenge that many college-age individuals face at this crucial time in their lives.

I would assure my 20-year-old self that she need not feel guilty if she is not sure of what career to pursue (Zunker, 2016), that it is normal and understandable given her age. But even if she is sure what career choice she wants, that we can still systematically investigate all it will entail to be successful in it, because even individuals who claim to have made a career choice

need help, too. Their choice may have been made from inaccurate information and faulty

alternatives (Zunker, 2016). I would make it clear that there isn't just one occupation that's the

best for any one individual, as other theories suggest (i.e. trait and factor theory), but many

occupations that could be a good fit (Zunker, 2016). Finally, I would define the goal of our

sessions as equipping her with skills to make decisions for herself and choosing a job or career as

the icing on the cake.

In LTCC, the client is viewed as one who is exploring and experimenting and

should be empowered to take actions that help to create a satisfying life (Zunker, 2016). Once we

establish the ground rules, we would begin with intake questions and assessments in an attempt

to identify problematic beliefs / generalizations the client may have that could hinder her from

growing in her career decision-making abilities and exploration of new career choices (Zunker,

2016). Assessments such as the Wise Wandering Map and the many self-assessments found on

EducationPlanner.org, as well as The Holland Quiz to determine her Holland Code, would be

used to explore her unique personality traits, areas of interest and discover learning opportunities

we can pursue. We would engage in role plays to tackle personal deficits such as low self-esteem

and perfectionist tendencies; shadowing professionals in fields of interest, internships, job/career

fairs, and many other resources to allow for a rich interaction with a career opportunity.

Creating this Wise Wandering Map has helped me identify parts of my life and things I

have accomplished that I can be proud of. It has boosted my confidence. It has allowed me to see

myself from a broader lens than I normally use and uncover a plethora of career opportunities

that are available to me as a result of who I am as a person and the things I naturally gravitate to.

More importantly, it has helped this self-proclaimed perfectionist with less than mediocre self-

esteem discover that I am a likable person and someone I would want to be friends with. This

paper began with a diagnosis: client presents as a creative logophile with a perfectionist complex

and low self-esteem who thrives in academic settings. Through the LTCC counseling

interventions described, it can conclude with a promising prognosis.

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