

The GoodWork® Project: Dedicated Young Professionals

"GoodWork Among Young Professional Actors,
Journalists, and Geneticists"

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ABSTRACT

Over the past three years, researchers on the Dedicated Young Professionals strand of the GoodWork Project conducted in-depth interviews with 21 young actors, 20 young journalists, and 21 young geneticists. We have just begun interviewing 20 young businesspeople. This research offers a unique opportunity to understand the thinking of individuals at the threshold of their professions. Ultimately, in conjunction with other strands of the Good Work Project that investigate individuals of different ages, this study presents the possibility of understanding professional development at different stages across a variety of domains.

While many professions have an impact on society, we believe that individuals working in journalism, science, and theater are uniquely positioned: journalists control much of the external information that we each receive about our world; scientists, in particular geneticists, have the means by which to alter our world (not to mention our physiology); and actors help us to make sense of the world by interpreting and reflecting back to us our human condition.

In the report that follows, we detail the main trends that emerged from our study. We focus on the dedicated young actors, but when appropriate refer as well to data from the study of dedicated young journalists and geneticists. The strongest emergent findings relate to *ideals, responsibilities, challenges, future of the domain, sustaining commitment, domain attrition, and training young professionals*.

Young professional actors seek work that enlightens and entertains. Torn between maintaining integrity to their personal values and fulfilling their ambition in theater, they face many challenges. The actors in our sample are optimistic and tenacious, typically sustained by the work of acting itself.

In our analysis of five forms of *responsibility*, geneticists more often describe their responsibility to their domain, while young theater aspirants more often express a responsibility to others. Actors are less likely to mention a responsibility to society than journalists or geneticists. Novice actors place a strong emphasis on their responsibility to themselves, and in contrast to journalists and geneticists, rarely impute responsibilities to someone with greater authority. Geneticists are at the threshold of a burgeoning domain; journalists believe the golden age of journalism is at an end; theater professionals describe negative changes in the short term but nonetheless remain positive about their involvement. This trend is supported by our findings in *Domain Attrition*: unlike journalists and geneticists, young actors are not likely to consider any other profession seriously. In contrast to journalists, who generally prefer to learn on-the-job, and to geneticists, who are required to train in a formal doctoral program, young theater professionals generally suggest a combination of on-the-job experience and formal training.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

In the project on Good Work, we seek to understand how people develop beliefs and practices that allow them to carry out high quality work in a socially responsible manner. We use the term “good work” with these two meanings in mind: 1) high quality work, and 2) work that is socially responsible. Through interviews with professionals in a variety of disciplines and at differing career stages, we solicit perspectives on individuals’ goals for their work, the formative experiences that have influenced their work, and the pressures that impact work-related decisions.

In the first phase of our study devoted to Dedicated Young Professionals, we interviewed journalist and geneticists completing their training and similar cohorts during their first job experiences. In the second phase of this component, we have interviewed actors and are just beginning to interview young businesspeople. Speaking with young adults at these early career points offers us the opportunity to learn how their training prepares them for the realities of the work world and the challenges they face. We are also able to discern how they may perceive the profession differently than do their more veteran counterparts. In addition to the Dedicated Young Professionals study, the larger collaborative Good Work Project includes:

- *Origins of Good Work*: Our subjects are 10-15 year olds who are deeply committed to gymnastics, figure-skating, theater, music, and community service work, and 16-21 year old journalists, scientists and actors.
- *The Core Study*: Our subjects are veteran professionals in media, genetics, cyberlaw, criminal law, philanthropy, theater, and higher education.
- *The Contemplative Mind*: We interview veteran professionals in media, science, and jazz music with an emphasis on contemplative and reflective practices.
- *The Apprenticeship Project*: We explore the mentoring relationship through interviews with (1) leading scientists, journalists, and artists; (2) their students; and (3) when available, their “grand-students.”
- *Studies in Business*: We are conducting intensive case studies of business leaders nominated by their peers to exemplify good work.
- *Interdisciplinary Study*: We are interviewing exceptional individuals who work primarily in an interdisciplinary environment, for example, in technology and the visual arts.

The study of Dedicated Young Professionals links the young Origins subjects to the older professionals of the Core study. Through our intensive interviews, we secure information about a pivotal time in professional life. Our comparisons of these different age and career levels will ultimately offer a developmental trajectory of Good Work across a variety of professions.

Progress to Date

During the first phase of the study of Dedicated Young Professionals, we completed 41 in-depth interviews: 21 geneticists and 20 journalists. Last year at this time, we reported on our findings in these domains.

Review of Findings in Journalism and Genetics

For the most part, the journalists in this study were steadfast in their desire to maintain the fundamentals of the domain: honesty and integrity, truth and fairness. They were discouraged by the pressures they felt almost daily in their work; to “dumb-down” the news, to focus on sensational topics, to act against their own ethical standards. Young journalists entering the field mostly acquire skills from on-the-job rather than formalized training, but they agreed on the value of training in ethics and wish they had more exposure to these considerations.

The young geneticists we studied, who have gone through a long and formalized training process, also voiced concerns about the pressures they face in their work. Like the journalists, they feel pressure to compromise meticulous and careful work in order to produce results quickly and to publish. They worry that these pressures might have a negative impact on the quality of their work. Even though science is based on collaboration, competition with both peers and mentors is fierce. Although the domain itself is thriving, young geneticists worried about maintaining quality of life: establishing a family, maintaining relationships, and earning a comfortable income.

Findings of this first phase are featured in the just-published book, *Good Work: When Ethics and Excellence Meet*, co-authored by Howard Gardner, William Damon at Stanford University and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi at Claremont Graduate University. Results from these findings also figure prominently in another forthcoming volume on the *Origins of Good Work*, authored by members of the Harvard Research Team

Progress in Theater

In the second phase of the study we interviewed 21 young theater professionals (see Appendix A for research methodology and a description of the subject sample). We have spent the last months doing an in-depth analysis of the data, with particular focus on the beliefs, values, challenges and future plans of this group of actors, just starting in their careers. The bulk of this report will involve deep analysis of the theater findings, and when appropriate, offer comparisons to young professionals in journalism and genetics.

Progress in Business

In July 2001 we began a new phase of our study of Dedicated Young Professionals, devoted to interviewing and examining young professionals in business. The subject sample will consist of 20-30, twenty to thirty-five year old women and men who are committed to succeeding within the business domain. It will include graduate students studying business administration and individuals working in the business sector. We will begin the study by focusing on fifteen entrepreneurs, both students and practitioners.

We began interviewing subjects in September 2001. We have conducted two pilot subjects to test the protocol (See Appendix C for the Interview Protocol). When we have completed the first 15 subject interviews we will assess the sample with particular regard to representation across business sectors. We plan to begin data analysis in February of 2002, and to write about our findings in the late summer and early fall.

In this phase of the study of Dedicated Young Professionals we hope to learn about the opportunities and challenges experienced by young business professionals. We also hope to have the chance to determine if these exemplary individuals at the onset of their careers view their profession differently than do veterans in the same domain.

Main Findings

This report is organized according to the main themes that emerged from our study.

- I. *Ideals of Good Work in Theater:* Most of the actors in our sample describe good theater as work that at once enlightens and entertains the audience. These goals provide a major source of meaning in their work. The young actors in our study measure success by a variety of standards, from a sense of artistic satisfaction to a feeling of personal progress. Although actors seek and hope for compensation and recognition, these are not their primary concerns.
- II. *Responsibilities:* Whereas geneticists more often describe their responsibility to their domain, young theater aspirants more often express a responsibility to others, specifically to the audience. A lower proportion of young theater professionals mention a responsibility to society, as compared with the journalists and geneticists. While the young theater professionals place a strong emphasis on their responsibility to themselves, only one theater subject imputed responsibilities to someone with greater authority. In contrast, young journalists and young geneticists are much more likely to impute responsibilities to those with more authority than themselves.
- III. *Challenges:* Actors are torn between maintaining integrity to their often wrenching personal values and fulfilling their ambition in theater. This conflict takes the form of difficult compromises with respect to race, gender, and aesthetic value. Actors also face challenges in balancing the personal and professional, negotiating difficulties with colleagues, and maintaining self-confidence in a profession obsessed with physical appearance.
- IV. *Future of the Domain:* While geneticists are at the threshold of a burgeoning domain and predict positive changes, and journalists believe the golden age of journalism is at an end and predict negative changes, theater professionals describe negative changes in the short term due to technology and market forces. While theater professionals seem to have a more positive outlook than journalists, most of their positive comments address the benefits of technology.
- V. *Sustaining Commitment:* The actors in our sample sustain their commitment to the profession by creating opportunities for themselves and being willing to make compromises. They are extremely resilient, tenacious, and unusually optimistic,

and are often supported by family, friends and teachers. Most are sustained by the work of acting itself.

- VI. *Domain Attrition:* Although the acting profession involves profound challenges to success, young theater professionals are not likely to consider any other profession. Novice journalists and geneticists are more likely to consider leaving their professions.
- VII. *Training Young Professionals:* Similar to geneticists and journalists, young theater professionals evaluate their training based on how well they acquire the skills necessary to do their work. While most actors feel satisfied with their technical training, many do not feel prepared for the business and marketing challenges that lie ahead of them. In contrast to journalists, who prefer to learn on-the-job, and geneticists, who are required to train in a formal doctoral program, young theater professionals generally recommend a combination of on-the-job experience and formal training.

I. IDEALS OF GOOD WORK IN THEATER

What is Good Work in Theater?

What is “good work” in theater? What are the goals that motivate these young actors? What are the standards by which they judge their own work and the work of their colleagues?

“...good theater changes the way you see the world.”

Theater entertains, inspires, and educates. The best theater may do all of the above. During the course of these interviews, we questioned subjects about their personal goals and about the goals of the profession. Types of theater vary tremendously: popular Broadway revivals of the classics coexist with Disney productions; repertory theaters offer new interpretations of Shakespeare; avant-garde productions explore new territory. Comparisons may seem futile; nonetheless, some standards of excellence emerge.

Some subjects, like the young student actor whose words begin this section, believe that good theater opens minds and changes perspectives. Another working actor describes good theater as follows:

I think the best pieces of theater are the ones that resonate with you long after you saw it, where you can go through your week and keep thinking about the ideas, or things that were said or done, in the piece that keep moving you, or that change you; or you walk out of the theater saying, “damn.”

Most of the actors in our sample describe good theater as that which has an impact on the audience. The precise nature of that influence may vary (to move an audience to tears, to anger, to inquiry, to self-examination); the common denominator is simply to have some kind of impact. A few subjects, however, are more specific in their

understandings of what makes good theater. A young actor, just starting out in the working theater world, describes her views:

I believe theater is one of the last places you can go to hear the truth... I think seeing human beings acting with – seeing the human spirit and considering it, and being able to consider it, I think that there are so few things where that's the goal anymore...theater should leave people with more of a sense of life than they had when they came in; more of a purpose or more inspiration...

Although the goals that give meaning to their work may be quite lofty, these actors do not lose sight of a more everyday reality of the theater: to entertain. How individuals try to balance these two apparently disparate goals is an intriguing topic treated at more length in our discussion of *Challenges*. Some subjects try to balance work that is pure entertainment with other work that probes life-and-death questions. A few try to focus their efforts on finding work with a message, while most simply try to find work. But what do these differing intentions (to have impact and to entertain) mean to the profession? How does good theater manage to combine the two? A student at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts offers one response to this question:

...sometimes the most lighthearted of theatrical experience can also be incredibly challenging on its own terms. And also the most intellectually demanding, challenging theater can be incredibly entertaining.

Further discussion of the balance between entertaining and challenging audiences will follow in the upcoming discussion of *Responsibilities*.

The above discussion outlines a few standards of excellence in theater. As we attempt to understand "good work," in theater, we look for standards such as these to help us define work that is at once superior in quality and socially motivated.

During the course of our interviews, subjects were asked to describe the "essence " of theater: What are theater's primary goals? What is theater about? There are many nuances to these descriptions of the profession. Actors see much possibility in their profession, and the range of influence they imagine is broad. One subject believes theater inspires independent thought:

...one of the reasons theater is so important in a public sense is that it produces and encourages independent thinking. And it's a problem solving and it's very much about the people. It's not about a form of government, or a thought, a school of thought, or a movement.

Another actor traces the potency of theater to its connection to real life:

To show the confusion and complexity of life and thus the beauty... Not to show a glossed-over, entertaining pretty life, but to show all sides of it. And that's what's beautiful, the ugliness and the moments that feel perfect.

Finally, many of the actors in our sample believe a production should stimulate by holding a mirror to the audience. Two actors, both students, one female, one male, offer similar descriptions of this point of view:

...ideally, theater should, as an artistic vehicle, reflect its audience in a way, reflect its world in a way, and affect a kind of change... a revolution of thought...

the ultimate goal of theater [is]...to expose human nature and to shine a light on human life and to expose to people maybe things about themselves that they're uncomfortable with, or that they don't even know, or things about their society that they don't know or want to change.

What Do Actors Hope to Achieve?

The young actors in our sample describe goals that are informed by a desire to affect the lives of others. These goals provide a major source of meaning in their work. Asked *why* they act, most respond that they have no choice, it is in their blood, it is "like oxygen." Many of the actors in our sample seem to be truly called to this profession. When asked *what they hope to accomplish* in their work, to elaborate on the specifics of this calling, actors' responses grow more varied. Some subjects believe their purpose is to use this medium to enlighten and to educate. In the words of one subject, "I think art has the power to transform. And I don't know if I can make that a goal, but I think I can make it a purpose."

Other subjects hope to relay a message. This might be a theme in a particular script. As one subject describes it, "there is always something in each script that is important for people to know." This might involve a challenge to a racial stereotype. Almost without exception, each of the people of color we interviewed discuss the challenge of getting ahead without taking roles that represent degrading racial stereotypes. (This conflict is discussed in depth in the section on *Challenges*.) One young Indian-American actor sees this challenge as an opportunity to change public perception of people of his background:

I don't see too many faces like my own on the screen or on TV or on the stage. And I would love to be able to be the Sidney Poitier of Indian or Asian actors. Put the face out there, and make the world in America realize that we're not just the 7-11 owners, or we're not just taxicab drivers; there's a whole culture of young Indian American people who do a variety of different things and [have] a lot of stories to tell.

Another actor of color describes a similar goal. Initially attracted to theater in order to find her "voice" to express herself, this Asian American actress hopes to debunk stereotypes of the "geisha girl" or "dragon lady:" "...to raise the perception or awareness of what it means to be Asian in America and to break past old ideas into new truths."

Not unlike other professionals, actors hope to have impact by leaving a mark on the profession. In journalism, this may be breaking a story such as Watergate that forever changes the nature of reporting. In theater, this kind of impact might be an individual

performance that becomes a famous version of a particular role. One subject hopes to contribute in this way, by setting a new standard, “I guess just raising the bar, just really giving something, even just one thing really beautiful and truthful to theater. And to other actors, you know, to the profession.”

How Do Actors Measure Success?

The above discussion highlights the aspirations of the actors in our sample. We wondered, what progress are they making towards these goals? In a profession where success is so very elusive, we were curious to learn the standards by which actors measure achievement. How do subjects know when they’ve “made it?” Do they hope to star on Broadway, in films? Work with specific actors? With particular companies? Do they want to earn a specific income?

Artistic Satisfaction

Although a few subjects say that they would like to be on Broadway, win an Oscar or a Tony Award, many more emphasize the importance of being artistically satisfied:

It’s about being satisfied as an artist and doing good work, being a part of projects you believe in...looking back over my life, that’s what I would like to be able to say, that I was a part of work I believed in my whole life.

Or, in the words of another actor:

That’s when I feel successful, when I’m in active pursuit of my creative urges. On a more objective level in a career sense...being able to make a living doing nothing but doing things that are associated with my passion.

This woman brings up yet another goal raised by many of her contemporaries: to be able to earn enough money in acting so that secondary jobs (waiting tables, clerical work) become a thing of the past. For the vast majority of our subjects, success means doing work that fulfills them. Money, though certainly relevant, is a secondary issue. Those who mention income, usually raise it as something that concerns them (“I hope I can make enough to live on”) rather than a goal (“I want to make X amount of money per year”). One subject describes monetary reward as important in that it acts as an acknowledgment of worth:

...ideal success to me would be doing really strong work as an actor. Work that I knew that had artistic as well as professional merit, and receiving the monetary reward that in this society says, “hey, your work is worth something.”

Many of the subjects in our study accumulate a great deal of debt during their time in graduate school. This debt is mostly in the form of student loans, but many also accumulate quite a bit in credit card debt; lacking cash flow, this is the main way some actors are able to purchase necessities. Paying off this debt becomes a primary concern, and another standard by which some measure achievement:

Beyond survival, I want to be able to afford to pay all my bills. I don't want to have any bills over my head, and I want to have a family one day and be able to live comfortably.

The above actor is one of only four subjects who mention family in their discussions about measuring success. Notably, three of these four subjects were men. Balancing family with career is a challenge in many professions, and acting is no exception. (There is further discussion of this issue in the *Challenges* section of this report.)

Although money certainly offers one measure of success, it almost always takes a back seat to the work itself. As one working actor puts it, "I've already made it. I'm an actor. I'm a working actor in New York City. How much more "made-it" can you be?" Just to get acting work is in itself a level of success. To act and live on that work is another level of success. To act in quality productions and make a living is, for many, the ultimate level of achievement:

By being able to work I guess; being able to do projects and good projects with good people, good actors and good directors and stuff, that's how I measure success. If people can call me up and say, 'We'd really like you for this,' or 'We'd really like you for that,' without even me having to audition.

Happiness

Beyond artistic satisfaction, subjects mention a variety of standards by which they determine success. A few seek happiness. One young woman, a working actress, makes this connection clear, "I guess if you're happy...then that's your success." But what does it take to make a young actor happy? To some, happiness comes with being able to pursue one's dreams. For many, being involved with theater, in almost any capacity, means happiness and therefore indicates achievement:

...if I could support myself by being a theater person, whether it's acting, directing, designing costumes, you know? If I could support myself by being in the creative process of theater, and when I say support myself, maintain my rent, maintain my bills, maintain a standard of living, you know, I would be very, very happy and shocked if that actually ever happened, you know? I hope to do it.

In spite of her doubts, this young actor remains deeply committed to her profession.

The Ephemeral Nature of Success

Perhaps because success is elusive, some of our subjects frankly admit they may never reach a level of achievement they would term "successful," "I think I will never feel like I've made it in this business and I have to come to terms with that." This young woman knows the tremendous odds against her chances to win good roles. But she is also referring to something more. Perhaps already her own worst critic, she recognizes that even if she should achieve "success," she would always strive for something greater. Another young actor expresses similar doubts:

I don't know if there really is any progress frankly. Like I think the sense of achievement and the sense of progress or the sense of having attained something, it's incredibly elusive to me. And I think that's part of the nature of performing; and I don't know about other mediums but especially in live theater, it's such an ephemeral event.

This doubt, however, does not discourage any of the actors we interviewed in their pursuit of their goals. In the following pages, we describe how actors are able to *Sustain Commitment*. Many have an incredible capacity to remain optimistic, despite the odds. One young actor, still in school, echoes the sentiments expressed above but adds a new twist, "I guess I'll know that I'm on my way, but I don't feel like I'll ever really think I get there because how boring would it be to get there?" Acknowledging that she might never achieve (or perhaps recognize) success, she suggests that reaching this goal would only dull its pursuit.

Alternative Definitions of Success

A few actors reject standard measures of success altogether. The subjects in our sample are just starting to pursue careers that will most likely be fraught with difficulty. Ultimate achievement might be very far into the future. Perhaps because of this, or perhaps because of that same capacity to find optimism mentioned above, some subjects find smaller, everyday methods by which to judge their progress:

But to define success, it's much different than I thought. I used to think if I did a great film or did a great play I'd feel successful. But life doesn't happen like that, it happens like this. And so I mean...you don't make a film; you have a day of rehearsal and filming. So in the day was I prepared for the shoot? That felt good. Did I talk to the director and share my ideas, did I make time later to talk to my family members? So it's like each day – that's how I think of it now. Did each day feel good and do I know the elements that make my day feel good?

This young woman has self-consciously changed her way of thinking about achievement, and charts her success on a day-to-day basis. Another actor, a young man who is pursuing work full time, ascribes success to a feeling:

Sometimes when you are so self-conscious, you don't feel success because you are judging yourself too much. When you let yourself alone and go with it, with heart and soul, that's where it lives. It lives right there. When you know you're going the right way it feels relaxed, it feels bright, very bright.

Many subjects mention the importance of the audience, and at times, an actor judges the quality of his performance on the basis of audience reaction. This subject instead uses an internal meter to measure his performance, and also, assess his progress in pursuit of larger career goals. "Going the right way" is a feeling that tells him he is successful on both counts.

In short, the young actors in our study measure success by a variety of standards, from a sense of artistic satisfaction to a feeling of personal progress. Although they certainly seek and hope for compensation and recognition, these are not their primary concerns.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

In writings emanating from the Good Work project, Howard Gardner has identified five different responsibilities professionals should address: 1. To one’s self, 2. To others (one’s colleagues and intimates), 3. To one’s institution, 4. To the domain (or one’s calling), and 5. To the wider society. We have looked at the extent to which young theater aspirants, novice journalists, and geneticists at both professional levels, described feeling responsible at each of these levels. Additionally, we identified what we call “imputed” responsibility: the notion that someone other than one’s self was, or should be, responsible.

Comparison Among Actors, Journalists, and Geneticists

	Novice Actors (n=21)	Novice Journalists (n=20)	Novice Geneticists (n=20)
Responsibility to Self	71% (15/21)	75% (15/20)	55% (11/20)
Responsibility to Other	76% (16/21)	75% (15/20)	80% (16/20)
Responsibility to Workplace/Institution	5% (1/21)	40% (8/20)	25% (5/20)
Responsibility to Domain	67% (14/21)	35% (7/20)	60% (12/20)
Responsibility to Society	52% (11/21)	100%(20/20)	90% (18/20)

*The categories presented in this chart (and those that follow) are not mutually exclusive and therefore do not add up to 100% per domain.

Interviews with young theater aspirants, geneticists, and journalists revealed that each group had a somewhat different emphasis regarding the five levels of responsibility.

Whereas geneticists more often describe their responsibility to their domain, young theater aspirants more often express a responsibility to others, specifically to the audience. However, the responsibility to others is often difficult to distinguish from our young actors’ sense of responsibility to themselves. Many young theater subjects stress that the best way to fulfill their responsibilities to others is by following their own instincts, aesthetic sensibilities, and doing the best work possible. While young journalists also express a strong responsibility to themselves, this is to a sense of truth and ethical integrity, and without reference to the condition of the journalism profession or society.

Notably, while the young theater professionals place a strong emphasis on their responsibility to themselves, only one theater subject imputed responsibilities to someone with greater authority. In contrast, 55% of young journalists and 85% of young geneticists imputed responsibilities to those with more authority than themselves. As discussed under *Sustaining Commitment*, the tendency to take complete responsibility for their concerns, along with a sense of optimism and tenacity with

regard to their own success, may be an adaptive approach which enables them to survive in an increasingly competitive profession.

In comparison to journalists and geneticists, the young theater aspirants' sense of responsibility to the workplace is negligible. This may be because actors change venues on a regular basis.

Responsibility to Self

Young theater professionals describe three different kinds of responsibilities to themselves. They speak of 1.) A sense of responsibility to do what they love, 2.) A sense of responsibility to do work that meets a certain standard, and 3.) A sense of responsibility to take accountability for their own work because of its importance to other people. This last example will be discussed under *Responsibility to Others Through Dedication to the Self*.

First, several subjects speak of a responsibility to be true to their passion for acting. One young actor describes how he feels responsible to himself to have fun and enjoy his work:

It doesn't have to be always to try and heal and try and promote a certain type of an idea. It could be fun, and I ask myself, "Is this fun, do I enjoy this?" And sometimes, that's more important to me than, "Okay, how many people can I help?...I trust that I'm a pretty decent person ...I don't have to try and narrow my work and judge all my work on how much it's going to help society."

Considering the challenging nature of the work, and the many obstacles to success, it is not surprising that those who have remained in the profession exhibit an overriding dedication to their passion.

Second, even more subjects speak of a sense of responsibility to meet a personal standard in the quality of their work. One student actress explains that the quality of her work has an impact on other people. "I feel responsible for my own excellence for the sake of the play and the other people that are involved." For some young actors, the standard is based on a desire to give their personal best. One young professional actor, who was performing in a successful Alan Ayckbourn play at the time of this study, explains his personal standard with reference to Michael Jordan. According to the subject, in every game Michael Jordan tries to play for all the kids in the crowd who have never seen him play before: he is determined that these kids will not go home without receiving the "Michael Jordan Experience." During every performance, our subject tries to give the audience his version of the "Michael Jordan Experience."

Other young acting students describe a responsibility to do quality work that lives up to standards of theater paragons they have come to admire. As one young actress lamented, "You watch great actors on stage, great people that you admire, and when you know what it is, when you know what a good work looks like, every second that you know you're not measuring up to that can be torture." She is not satisfied until she is happy with the quality of her work.

Third, most notably, young theater professionals express the sense that by being responsible *to* and *for* themselves and the quality of their work, they fulfill their responsibility to others.

Responsibility to Others through Dedication to the Self

Young theater professionals in our study speak most often of their responsibility to others: to the *audience*, to engage in high quality collaboration with *colleagues and peers*, and to members of their own *racial, ethnic or gender groups*.

Responsibility to the Audience

Almost all subjects discuss the paramount importance of the audience. If it were not for the audience, their work on stage would be pointless. One young acting student asserts:

I would have to say I feel most responsible to the audience....Without an audience, it's not theater. It's not theater, it can't be. I mean, it's just a couple of people in a room doing stuff for fun. The word "theater" to me means a group of people watching another group of people, participating in their own way.

The relationship with the audience is not a simple one, however, and some subjects express a reluctance to cater to it. While subjects acknowledge that the audience is what makes theater theater, it is difficult to strike a balance between doing work that entertains the audience, and doing work that challenges and stimulates the audience. In the words of one young student actress:

It is hard because a lot of time the audience is very unforgiving or very cynical, because they are just regular people that are also living life and critical. And yet that is why we do it and so you have to constantly go back to them, back to why we're doing it and who we're doing it for and constantly ask ourselves what their experience is or what it might be like and what should it be, what do we want their experiences to be?

In order to serve the audience (or even society), many young professionals say they must first be responsible to themselves. By pursuing their passion for theater, being true to their own convictions and artistic integrity, and working hard on their craft, these actors believe that the audience and society-at-large benefit. As one subject puts it, her responsibility to herself "embodies my social ideas, it embodies my moral ideas... It embodies everything that I think of as being important in terms of the world." Theater subjects pay great heed to and trust the wisdom of their own instincts. The same young professional goes on to say that ignoring her instincts leads to professional mistakes:

If I don't follow my heart...if I don't follow my instinct, then I'm in trouble; then I'm in a show that's like a big nightmare and I knew it from the beginning, knew it at the audition, but did it anyway. I guess I have to follow myself.

This formula for serving others is not as straightforward as it seems, however. While subjects believe that they serve the audience by being true to themselves, they sometimes feel the pressure to lay aside their values for others. One subject describes how artistic integrity and honesty help her to meet her responsibility to the audience. Maintaining personal values is not always an easy process:

If I am not being honest about what I am doing, then I'm not doing the best work that I can do, and therefore I'm not responsible to the audience and anyone who comes to see it or pays to see it, or to the world of theater. I think if I'm selling out and not constantly reevaluating what I'm doing and doing things because it's what I need to do in order to pay the bills, which happens — it's really easy to get jaded and really easy to lose your creative edge.

Several subjects remark that a sense of responsibility to the audience or to their colleagues may override a commitment to their artistic integrity. For example, many of our subjects have compromised artistic integrity by continuing to work in a bad production, once committed to it, in order to maintain a good reputation among colleagues and to fulfill their obligation to the audience.

Responsibility to Colleagues

Almost all subjects stress a sense of responsibility to their colleagues, whether they are actors, directors, or the crew behind the scenes. If actors do not work well with colleagues to create a high quality production, then the primary obligation to the audience is not fulfilled. According to the young theater professionals, a "good collaboration" needs a director who uses the rehearsal process to create a shared vision of what the play is about. It requires that the actors (and all those involved with any aspect of production) are at once honest with colleagues about their own artistic convictions, and yet, offer mutual support and respect for one another. The lines between responsibility to self and responsibility to others are blurred yet again.

Young theater professionals seem acutely aware of the interactive nature of their work and the importance of individual preparation to group success. One actor explains how the very nature of the theater profession requires working with others:

An actor is part of something bigger than themselves. It is hard to separate an actor from an ensemble...because it's the entire group that's creating something, and you're just a part of that group. Acting is interesting because it's one of the greatest professions that you really rely on so many people and so many different elements. I can't go into my room and paint a picture-as an actor you just don't go alone. You go alone and you memorize your lines...but everything relies on a group of people. You just can't do this alone.

One young acting student explains how the individual work and preparation he puts in to his own character, prior to rehearsal, is critical to the ensemble dynamic:

Ultimately, whatever I decide is going to happen in my scene, or whatever comes out of me is only coming out of me for someone else to hear. In a scene of people, you speak to be heard. When I'm not in rehearsal, in order to be ready for rehearsal, I need to focus on myself. I need to know about my character, I need to know each little piece of the scenes that I'm working on... making decisions about what I'm attempting to do in those scenes, to be very familiar with the play.

Another young theater student, the son of a successful prime time actor, describes how every actor needs to take personal responsibility for establishing the necessary trust to work effectively as an ensemble. This process involves:

a sense of responsibility to the task at hand and to the other actors at hand. When you are doing a fight scene with somebody it's about respect and safety and trust... You have to put yourself into a position to be trustworthy, to be sensitive to people's needs. If I'm doing a difficult scene with a woman which requires something of both of us that is maybe uncomfortable for whatever reason — emotionally, physically, with a man, whatever —that requires a relationship based on trust and knowledge, that I'm there to catch you. That's what I would want from my peers.

The interactive nature of work in theater may explain why collaboration emerged as an important theme with theater subjects; this theme was not present to any significant extent in our interviews with young journalists and geneticists.

Responsibility to Racial and Ethnic Groups

It is notable that many of the subjects who are people of color felt a deep sense of responsibility to their own racial or ethnic group, and to their ancestors. As discussed in the upcoming section on *Challenges*, almost all actors of color discuss the difficulty of finding roles when most of those available represent degrading racial stereotypes.

Several young theater professionals have a deep sense of gratitude for the sacrifices that their ancestors have made, and a resulting sense of commitment to represent their race well. One young Indian-American actor eloquently describes the complex interplay between how his ancestors have helped him get to where he is and his sense of responsibility to present his race in a positive light:

I feel like not too many people have been given the opportunities I've been given. I don't want to sound too egotistical, but in a way, I'm the face that people see. I might be the first Indian people see in different parts of the country, so I represent my whole background ... all the struggles that my grandfathers and great-grandfathers all have been through. I'm the result of their struggles; all the good and all the bad they've done; I have to give respect to that.

Another young student describes her obligation to the Asian American community as a "burden of privilege." She sees herself in a unique position to open up artistic avenues.

However, not all of our subjects are comfortable with their roles as representatives of a race. Their genuine sense of responsibility as a member of a race can come into conflict with their own artistic inclinations or individual career ambitions. In one example, a young African-American actor was rehearsing for a controversial play that was being protested by the African American-Community as racist. After much deliberation, the subject risked criticism from the African-American community and decided to do the play because it had artistic merit, and because he had made a commitment to the

director (who was also a personal friend). In another example, an Asian-American actor has been criticized by Asian-American friends when she has accepted "semi-orientalized" roles in order to further her career. "I feel judged and maybe I'm judging myself." While she feels responsible to her community, she must also be responsible to her own career.

Responsibility to Society

While most subjects acknowledge that entertainment has its place, many of the actors in our study think theater, and the actors involved, have a responsibility to reflect and educate society about social issues and help to effect change. One young acting student says:

I think not only my work, but just theater in this country in general, has a very big potential to affect people's lives and to make changes. I think it can be a very volatile art form in terms of arousing passion in people and inspiring people to examine their own life and their own world...As I've gotten older and engulfed myself in theater, the more I realize how powerful that can be and how important and necessary that is, too.

This young man's perspective is indicative of that of many of his colleagues. A sense of responsibility to society is aligned with what many believe to be the primary essence of theater: to expose and reflect aspects of human nature and society and instigate change.

One young actor, who is involved with performance art, describes actors and theater as "the last safety net of full public awareness." Very often, theater is the place society can learn about social issues which other professions, such as journalism, view as too controversial: "The reason why they (people in theater) are there to is say what is going on."

While a lower proportion of young theater professionals mention a responsibility to society, as compared with the journalists and geneticists, this may be due to the fact that actors have a much more immediate relationship with the people who benefit from their work. Society is present in the audience to whom they feel a primary responsibility. Journalists and geneticists are not present when society judges or benefits from their contributions.

Responsibility to the Domain

Theater aspirants and geneticists express a greater sense of responsibility to domain (67% and 60% respectively) than do journalists (35%). Both geneticists and theatre aspirants are concerned with producing accurate and truthful work that is in keeping with the values of their domain. Just as geneticists strive to produce accurate data in keeping with "good science," most young theater aspirants feel a sense of responsibility to remain true to the playwright's intentions and to the true essence of the story as a whole. Actors want to "[get] at the gold in the piece." "Otherwise," one young acting student says, "If we are not responsible to that essence then the audience is watching a mess." While journalists believe that accuracy and truth of the written word is of paramount importance, their sense of responsibility is driven by their own sense of personal integrity, not concern for the domain.

III. CHALLENGES

Acting is a grueling (if rewarding) business and these young aspirants confront countless and varied obstacles. In interviews, we heard about the struggle to make ends meet financially; the frustration with audiences who only want to be entertained when the actor wants to help them stretch with new ideas; the challenge of pursuing this demanding work while maintaining relationships with friends and family.

Maintaining Values While Pursuing Success

As already discussed in the preceding section, all too often actors are torn between maintaining integrity to their personal values and fulfilling their ambition in theater. Numerous professional actors discuss the challenge of getting ahead without taking roles that represent degrading racial, gender, or social stereotypes; however, with the dearth of available roles, turning down a job is difficult.

Almost all of the people of color we interviewed describe issues with racially demeaning roles. Ironically, some of them have difficulty getting cast in their own ethnic or racial group because they fail to fulfill ethnic or racial stereotypes:

As an ethnic actor, people want – in order to break in, people want you to play stereotypes or want me to play stereotypes. And so I'm always conflicted, not always, but when I'm offered those opportunities, I'm conflicted because should I – how do I give them what they want, but yet make a statement for my people as well?

Another actor of Jamaican-Canadian background describes her struggle to find roles that are not necessarily about racial issues:

I guess the hardest thing I think for me might be the outside; the people on the outside that are not letting me read for things that I should be reading for. And not giving me the opportunity to audition for things that I should be reading for because of my color, because of all these things. I think that's the hardest thing because that's almost like changing hearts, you know? ... opening people's minds to truth essentially; that the American public will buy a black person that doesn't speak like this, that doesn't look – you know? That...I can be in something and not have it be about my race or, you know? I think that's the hardest thing for me because I feel like that's the hardest to control; that's the hardest to get around.

Additionally, both women and men we interviewed raise the issue of the poor treatment of women in theater, from pressure to appear nude onstage to the scarcity of good roles for women over 50. One young theater student offers his perspective:

I think that a lot of people in this business tend to do things that go against their moral values or their integrity or their dignity, and they do that so they can get that break, you know? Women, especially. It just really makes me sort of sad that the business is geared towards this type of objectification...to know that there are hundreds – hundreds of women

in LA... aspiring actors, that they know that they do not want to appear in the nude in anything, but they do, and they are miserable while they do it, just to get that break. And I don't agree with that – the way the industry is built...A lot of the women in my class are having a hard time with the fact that...straight up in the industry, there are more roles for men than there are for women.

How actors choose to react to these challenges is largely dependent on the context: How badly do they need the money? How well connected is the director? What do they need to take their career to the next level? What are the lines that they would never cross?

To try to discern where these young actors draw the line, we posed a question about funding for the arts. Here is the question and one actor's response:

WHAT IF YOU HAD THE OPTION TO DO A REALLY GOOD PIECE OF THEATER OR FILM, AND IT WAS FUNDED, BUT IT WAS FUNDED BY A COMPANY WHOSE POLICIES YOU DIDN'T AGREE WITH. WOULD YOU DO IT?

I would like to say “no” but I think that if I believed in the work, and the point of the play as an artistic piece being powerful enough to make me really want to do it, then I would do it. I would consider it even that much better that these companies I hated were investing in something really good.

This is a particularly apt question in the theater world because Philip Morris, the cigarette manufacturer, sponsors quite a bit of work, and Philip Morris is a company that many consider controversial. In particular, Philip Morris sponsors quite a bit of work at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Another actor ponders this question as follows:

Oh, I'd love to perform at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. But the thing is, I don't know, it's kind of like being a politician. A politician sometimes receives campaign funding from somebody who they don't necessarily agree with. But they take it because they know their own principles and they know their own values and they're going to live up to them and they don't feel obligated to them. If I worked at B.A.M. I wouldn't feel obligated to smoke or to tell people to smoke. Smoking is a personal decision that people make anyway, if that's the way they want to do things...I don't know, it's a planet filled with a lot of different people with a lot of different belief systems and everybody's just trying to make their own way and do their own thing. So, where's the line? I don't know where the line is I have to admit. That's where I am today...I don't know. I'd have to decide it on a case by case basis on the given circumstances of each case.

As mentioned in previous discussions of the *Ideals of Good Work and Responsibilities*, many of the young actors in our sample believe good work in theater entertains as well as challenges audiences. Although few subjects specifically seek roles in productions

they judge to be of limited aesthetic value, most are willing to take such roles. One student, contemplating a future of countless auditions, offers this view:

If you keep the attitude of I'm only going to be in the feature shows or only on Broadway, you're never going to work. I mean, you have to have some sort of a realistic view towards this business; not everything is going to be handed to you on a silver platter...And, having the idea that I'm only going to do shows that are going to get incredible reviews and just make my career that much better, that's ignorance in and of itself, you know?

Maintaining Balance

The decision or compulsion to pursue theater shapes the individual's personal life, and actors we interviewed view these circumstances in varying ways. It is notable that of the 21 professional young actors we interviewed, only two are married (coincidentally both in the same conservatory program), only a handful are in serious intimate relationships, two are divorced, and one has ended an engagement. At least one divorce and the broken engagement were specifically linked to the individuals' prioritizing their involvement in theater over their commitment to relationships. We are confident that this is not an atypical finding, because we discovered the same surprising ratio in another study. One of the actors explains why she got divorced:

I have to do this work and it's a part of who I am, and I feel it's a part of why I'm on this planet. And it is where I feel often the most alive and feel like I have the strongest voice, and I am most who I am when I am acting, and it has to be there to the neglect or to the exclusion of all else if necessary, I guess...it's really tough and it makes me really question what is possible in terms of relationships in this business...I need a lot of freedom, a lot of space around me. I do envision another person being in the picture. But I guess I envision that person as — okay, maybe I'm working and maybe we see each other once a week, and we're just flying back and forth to see each other and spending the weekends together because we're able to do that. Then we have moments when we are together all the time, but that I guess that I will be able to choose my work based on a combination of what my career and what my creativity needs, balanced with that other person.

In her explanation for the reasons behind her divorce, this subject also describes how many of her colleagues feel about acting, "it's a part of who I am." That this work often comes at the exclusion of close personal relationships outside of theater is an unfortunate consequence, but one many feel they are unable to control.

Maintaining the Collaborative Process

The balance between autonomy and collaboration in theater can be precarious for a young actor. The importance of autonomy is described in various contexts—from spending time alone as a child to developing facility in creating the imaginary inner worlds on which an actor draws, to being responsible to one's self, whether this means keeping a healthy diet or advocating for their own careers.

The work actors do in isolation, however, eventually becomes part of a collaborative process. As mentioned in our discussion of *Responsibilities*, almost all of the actors we interviewed emphasized the importance of collaboration in their work. Collaboration in theater takes place in the moment when actors are onstage and performing with others, as well as during the rehearsal process. When collaboration falls apart, the entire production suffers. For example, some subjects describe actors attempting to upstage one another, to garner audience attention for themselves. In these instances, the actor is failing in his responsibility to others by leaving his colleagues unsupported and vulnerable onstage.

A 21 year-old actor, completing her Boston University undergraduate training, describes one frustrating situation during which she felt “abandoned” by a fellow actor. After performing the play well together through rehearsal, the group performed for an audience. Rather than working as part of the ensemble, one of the actors “just started hamming a lot of things.” The subject recounts:

I remember feeling a real sense of abandonment...First of all, it took me out of the role of the play; there is, I think, a real trust that goes on when you go in it together...and I see people in the student matinee change a little bit...give it a little bit to the audience more than we've worked or than we have in every other show, and it's not necessarily a bad thing, but I think it's too easy. I do, I feel like shame on you for — I think it's an abandonment.

Maintaining Self Confidence: Body Issues

For many of our subjects, self-consciousness about body type is an issue. Some bemoan being typecast; others consider plastic surgery. In particular, many women in our sample discuss concerns about physical appearance. One actor, still in school, already wonders not just about the limits physical appearance may have on her success, but about the impact it may have on her self-confidence:

Not having Jennifer Aniston and Gwyneth Paltrow – they're very different body types – they are bodies that are undeniably conventionally ideal. And worrying that – to give myself the most amount of opportunities – and that I'll be denied opportunities for not having that. And for having something that's, yes, fine, I have a nice body, it serves me fine. But I think I need more than that in a way when there are so many people that have fine bodies and then maybe a better voice, or that have great bodies and not as much talent. I just see the great body getting it, getting the role; I worry about that. I worry that that will get in my way, and I'm not sure yet how much of that is in my head.

IV. FUTURE OF THE DOMAIN

Comparisons Among Actors, Journalists, and Geneticists

	Novice Theater Actors	Novice Geneticists	Novice Journalists
Domain Change Positive	67% (14/21)	75% (15/20)	45% (9/20)
Domain Change Negative	81% (17/21)	50% (10/20)	70% (14/20)

Journalists, geneticists and theater professionals have contrasting views regarding the future of their domains. While geneticists are at the threshold of a burgeoning domain and predict positive changes (75%), and journalists believe the golden age of journalism is at an end and predict negative changes (70%), theater professionals describe negative changes in the short term due to technology and market forces (81%). While theater professionals seem to have a more positive outlook (67%) than journalists do, most of their positive comments address the benefits of technology.

Market Pressures

Many subjects fear that theater is in decline due to ever increasing market pressures. As production costs rise, so do ticket prices. Because the seating capacity of a theater cannot expand, the only way for producers to absorb this increase in costs is to raise the price of a ticket. As ticket prices soar, the demographics of the audience become more homogenous: students, young adults, and people with lower- and middle-class incomes are unable to attend theatrical productions with any frequency. This privilege is available to the more economically prosperous, older population. Additionally, if an individual can attend only one show each year, it is understandable that he may be discouraged from taking risks in choosing that production. Thus, while the popularity of classic plays, "hit" musicals and spectacle is rising, there is decreasing demand for less-established, experimental, or newer productions.

In fact, regional theaters, once known for supporting emerging playwrights, are instead increasingly choosing plays that will appeal to traditional subscribers. As a strategy for selling expensive tickets, film and television celebrities are often placed in leading roles in place of lesser-known, but well-trained, theater actors. Along with a decline in government funding for the arts, these factors could further inhibit employment opportunities for actors. The competition for roles is already fierce.

While this strategy succeeds in bringing in an audience, it also encourages the view of theater as an extension of television and film. Many of the theater artists we spoke to are concerned that this repositioning will ruin the magic of theater. Because television and film are usually produced to appeal to the masses in order to earn high returns, the shows in these media are likely to be less challenging. This trend affects theater by lowering expectations of an audience accustomed to watching television and film.

Adding insult to injury, escalation in real estate prices and rents in New York City have limited the availability of affordable living, practice and performing spaces for actors.

One actor's comments reflect these concerns and the hope that these circumstances are temporary:

Being in New York for the little time that I've been there, what seems to be happening is that [theater is] getting bigger and more "Disneyized", and a lot of little theaters are getting rents hiked and they're getting kicked out. I hope that's not a long wave of direction. I hope it's just like an intermittent thing because it's scary to think that the only forum will be large-scale, sure-to-profit, high-profile, guaranteed success things because that's not what theater is.

Given the market pressures that are at work in theater, many of our subjects say they now regard work in television and film as an essential strategy for survival. For some, television and film offer employment opportunities that are lacking in the theater environment. Most subjects speak of their hope that doing commercial work or a situation-comedy role on television will give them the financial stability to pay their educational loans and return to the theater. Of course, there is always the danger that those who find success will not return. A couple of subjects express concern that theater is now suffering as talented professionals and producers focus their efforts on other mediums. One young "working" professional, worries that:

there's a generation of the theater community who seems to be dying out and it just seems like the torch isn't being taken up. We need that part of the community who is willing to go out and put their shirts on the line for this art.

Technology: Television and Film

Nonetheless, theater is experiencing exciting transformations. Technological advancements in lighting, sound, and stage design are positive changes, and many subjects note the role that the Internet plays in facilitating interstate and even international collaboration among theater professionals. Although these advancements are positive, more than one subject emphasizes that all one needs to produce theater is an actor, a light and an audience member.

Despite the positive contributions that technology is making to theater, many of the subjects worry about the role that technologies such as television and film play in diminishing the audience's attention span, and in discouraging people from leaving their homes and coming to the theater. One subject, a performance artist, explains that constant exposure to television has a damaging effect:

I think technology challenges [theater] heavily because sitting and watching a half-hour show on television and doing that night after night trains your muscles differently than to sit for two hours and watch something...I think a lot of people come to theater untrained to be there...People are more and more shut off from actually engaging other people

Subjects worry that the influence of television and film is fostering a "spectacle-hungry culture" where "theater is becoming more about helicopters flying into the theater."

Theater subjects hope that there will be a cultural backlash, where people will start to crave the more immediate contact with others that theater provides. In the words of one young actor, "The more we go on-line, the more we need to go off-line, the more we need to be reminded of who we are together."

V. SUSTAINING COMMITMENT

In spite of all the challenges outlined in the previous pages, a striking 90% of the young actors interviewed have an optimistic approach to life and to work. While many describe themselves as being optimistic since childhood, many also point out the advantages to adopting this attitude as a strategy to survival in their current profession. A closer look at the personality traits of young theater professionals reveals that tenacity supplements this optimism. Beneath these traits is strong motivation spurred by the desire or need to act. Taking into account the personality characteristics of these young actors, outside supports from family and friends, and the strong reward from acting itself, we can see how commitment is sustained and how unwilling (or unable?) these actors are to consider leaving their profession.

Traits

The subjects in our sample demonstrate great resolve, discipline, and determination to continue in their chosen profession. Their tenacity is breathtaking. They are sustained by their enjoyment of and passion for the work of acting itself, rather than by promise of fame or wealth. These qualities are even more prominent among actors who have been in the domain for a longer time period. These young adults are also especially marked by tremendous confidence in their own talent and ability to succeed. An actress finishing her college-level professional training reflects:

I think ever since I started...there was a sense of, "Well, I hope I'm recognized as much as I should be"...I hadn't fully understood the potential of my abilities, but there was a sense of, "I know I'm going to greatness, but I don't know how to — I hope I get there, I hope I get my greatness." Because I just always knew that it was waiting, so I think knowing that it's waiting, and not that — I'll know when I get there maybe, but I think that is a driving thing. And I guess that's ambition; I think I'm very ambitious and I always was ambitious.

Tenacity/Resiliency

Not surprisingly, these young actors are extremely hard working and resilient. One subject expresses his approach to work by stating, "if I work, I can get there." This actor shows that he believes a strong work ethic will help him achieve his goals in his profession. When asked what qualities help him achieve success, another subject responds, "It's just that drive" and "persistence pays off." The passion to act supplies motivation and ambition; perseverance is also a necessary prerequisite to success.

Another subject expresses resiliency, or an ability to bounce back; this is a necessary quality in a profession filled with more rejection than acceptance. She comments, "So I don't know why I didn't stop after the third, or fourth, or fifth rejection, but I just knew it was what I needed to do." Tenacity provides one formidable defense against this profession's challenges. Optimism provides another.

Optimism

Nearly all of the young actors interviewed express an optimistic approach towards their work and also towards life. One young actor describes how optimism and motivation work hand in hand in guiding and sustaining his work:

I believe that I'm going to be successful in anything I do. And, I'm always optimistic about whatever I'm getting into at the time. I just believe that I'm going to "make it" and that always guides me. And I believe that I am successful at what I do and that I'm going to strive to do more, strive to go further all the time because I think that I've done a lot, but there's so much more to do. And I'm just determined to do what I have to do. I have a lot of motivation. I mean, that's one of the key things for me is my motivation to do what I need to do and what I want to do.

Another subject believes that optimism helps him to deal with the intrinsic obstacles in his profession:

And I tend to be a pretty optimistic person. And that I think helps too, because it's very easy to get bogged down and see sort of the futility of what we're doing in a lot of ways in terms of forging a career in this. So I think holding onto that optimistic, positive sort of attitude I really believe that if you go through life optimistically, then better things might happen to you — can happen to you.

This subject recognizes that optimism has benefits to his career survival and chooses to hold onto this attitude in the belief that it will pay off. Whether optimism has been with him since childhood, or if he has learned this trait, it is clearly employed as a strategy for survival in the profession.

Optimism is turned into a survival strategy by another actor, "If you embrace this life that you're given and you try to keep a positive outlook on it then things are gonna be alright, you'll be able to turn whatever adversity into an advantage."

Similarly, when faced with a question about leaving the profession, one subject responds, "I'll do what I have to do to do this." This actor is indicating not only the strength of his desire to act, but also his willingness to do whatever it takes for survival in the profession. The young actors in our sample are creative in making opportunities and often are willing to take risks.

Strategies for Survival

Since some of the young theater professionals interviewed define themselves by their acting, it makes sense that they are able to come up with so many strategies to survive in this difficult profession. One young actor says, "My father's uncle... sent me a letter trying to discourage me." This young actor's reply was, "But this is who I am." Our subjects are able to create opportunities and make compromises in order to pursue their goals.

Creating Opportunities

Finding and creating opportunity where it is not apparent is a strategy shared by many of the young theater professionals in our study. One young theater student provides a good example of this in the way she assesses her surroundings and takes action:

I sought out opportunity... and it made me that kind of person... there wasn't just a lot of theater sitting around; I had to go find it, and go to another town and put myself in new situations and places and people. So, even though it kind of was an obstacle, it really defined, it created an initiative and a drive that I see lacking.

This actor is not alone in her ability to create opportunity; many of the young actors interviewed are able to somehow transform apparent obstacles into possibilities. For example, when one young actor we interviewed has a bad audition, he tries to learn from this experience and employs the strategy of asking himself, "how do I fix that the next time?" In the past, this young Indian actor has had success in turning potential obstacles into opportunities. In auditioning for a character in a musical that was supposed to be a Japanese immigrant, he said to the casting directors, "Well, why don't you change him to an Indian?" He made up his own costume, added an accent and it worked; he got the job.

Likewise, after hearing that he was on the waiting list for NYU's Graduate Theater Program, another subject pulled out all the stops in trying to get accepted. He sent an additional four to five letters of recommendation, wrote another statement of purpose, and made several phone calls. It worked. He was the first person they called when a spot opened up. The resourcefulness and persistence of the young actors interviewed is remarkable.

Making Compromises

The acting profession demands a lot of time from young actors attempting to get established; this fact of life often means that personal life is set aside. Additionally, many of the subjects in our sample are willing to swallow their pride in order to keep working. A student describes her willingness to take a small part in a play even though she auditioned for a larger role. She says, "Sometimes my pride... I am willing to compromise that sometimes."

Perhaps a more difficult decision involves sacrificing time with family and friends. Demands on time are intense for these young actors, and, as discussed in previous sections, these demands often jeopardize balance between personal and work lives. One actor describes this dilemma:

I'm always willing to sacrifice my time. I'm a little over-committed at the moment, actually, but I think I like to invest in projects. I'm willing to compromise; yes, time, and that even goes into alone time or time with a boyfriend or someone. Because I just have infinite faith in my ability to work it out, whether it's like, 'Well, I have 45 minutes for lunch; do you want to have lunch on the park?' And then we'll go and do that. So that's my date and it's kind of sad, but that's life right now and if he wants to be with me then we can have lunch.

This young actor, typical of most young theater professionals interviewed, experiences conflicting responsibilities between her work and her personal life. Results of this study indicate that personal lifestyles are often compromised for the sake of the work.

Supports

Family, Friends, Teachers

Beyond the motivation they derive from the work itself, young actors mention various other forms of support. Most frequently, subjects describe supportive parents. Few, if any, had “stage moms” as children, though some parents were more involved in their children’s careers than others. Some young actors were originally inspired to become engaged in theater because of parents who were artists themselves; others came from families where art was not especially emphasized. Most often, family members are mentioned as role models, particularly in their capacity for hard work and dedication.

Mentors and teachers are also mentioned as supportive, though this is sometimes in the form of “tough love.” In our study of high school aged actors (in the *Origins of Good Work*), we discovered that the director of a high school arts academy regularly discourages her students from pursuing acting professionally. This is not an uncommon practice for theater educators with whom we spoke. Indeed, the actors themselves caution potential aspirants, “If there is anything other than acting that you can do, then do it!” Finally, as mentioned during the discussion of *Responsibilities*, theater is understood by our subjects to be a collaborative effort. Many actors describe supportive colleagues as crucial to the best forms of collaboration.

The Work Itself

Most of the subjects interviewed feel that they cannot help but act; they need to express themselves, and several claim that they are not qualified for any other work. When we asked our subjects what sustains commitment in this difficult profession, 90% of the actors said they receive support by simply doing the work.

One young student explains, “My ability I think to play and have fun has just made working, acting-wise, a lot easier because ultimately, it is play.” This subject frames his work as play; clearly, the work itself is rewarding and provides support.

Seeing and creating theater satisfies and inspires another actor in a way that is unmatched. She says, “...it’s nice to have this passion that you need to fulfill — it gives you purpose in life —in the world.” Here, we see that passion for the work itself provides the drive, a “need,” which offers a sense of purpose.

VI. DOMAIN ATTRITION

Comparisons Among Actors, Journalists, and Geneticists

Because theater poses so many challenges to young professionals, and because success in this profession is elusive, we wondered whether or not the actors in our sample might consider leaving their domain. We then compared this information to responses to similar questions posed to novice journalists and geneticists.

A comparative analysis among novice geneticists, journalists, and actors provides further understanding of the special dedication of actors. Results of this analysis reveal that although the acting profession involves profound challenges to success, young theater professionals are not likely to consider leaving it. Novice journalists and geneticists are slightly more likely to consider leaving their professions. This is particularly impressive when we consider the many opportunities that currently exist in genetics. In theater, the odds are much more against the aspiring professional, and yet they are more likely to continue in their pursuit of their goals. It is probable that the passion to act shown in all young theater professionals involves an inability to consider alternate professions.

Case in point, one subject states, “I can’t envision myself leaving the profession.” Likewise, another actor explains, “I’ve thought about what it would be like to quit and I can’t deal with it.” While many young actors do not seriously consider leaving their profession, several are able to describe hypothetically what they might be doing if they were no longer acting.

For instance, one actor says, “I don’t think [theater] will ever cease to be [an exciting profession].” He then later supposes, “I think I can be a great teacher, but I have to be an actor. I enjoy being an actor so much that the idea of not being able to do it because I have to commit to something else, it’s killing me.” Painful as it is, this actor is able to at least imagine an alternative profession.

Additionally, some novice actors were able to think of hypothetical conditions that might make them leave acting. For example, one actor explains that stress might potentially cause her to leave the profession, “The stress of not being able to find work or the stress of not being able to support a family, or whatever.” This concern is similar to that of novice journalists, who mentioned personal lifestyle concerns that might influence whether or not they remain in the domain. Those who considered leaving journalism because of personal concerns described the low pay, long hours, and difficulty of balancing work and family. Young actors face a level of competition for employment not dissimilar to that of young geneticists. Although competition is sometimes mentioned as a possible reason to leave each profession, neither actors nor geneticists are likely to be dissuaded from pursuing a future in their domains.

As mentioned in the discussion of *Ideals of Good Work*, novice actors are very motivated by the meaning they find in their work. To that end, one subject hypothesizes that his desire for meaningful work might inspire a move, “If I found that I could help people or touch more lives in a different way I guess [I would leave the profession]. I don’t think so.” He later reflects on the lack of financial security in acting, stating, “...can I just declare bankruptcy? Maybe I should just do that.” In short, young theater professionals are unlikely to leave their professions and hypothetical considerations of this possibility seem almost painful to the actors we questioned.

VII. TEACHING AND TRAINING

Comparisons Among Actors, Journalists, and Geneticists

Similar to geneticists and journalists, young theater professionals evaluate their training (via formal or on-the-job experience) based on how well they acquire the skills

necessary to do their work. They want their training to prepare them for the challenges ahead.

Specifically, young theater professionals want to acquire a “toolkit” of acting techniques and learn to market themselves successfully. Subjects speak of the importance of developing their body as an instrument, in order to be prepared for any acting challenge. Rigorous training in various acting methods, voice techniques, play interpretation and movement work provides the actor with a palette of skills upon which he is able to draw. One subject explains, "If you are great at hitting one note, and you hit it over and over again, it's going to be boring and wear out your instrument. But if you train yourself to have as wide a range as that instrument can have it's going to be a lot more rewarding." Despite the fact that most of the subjects are pleased with the intensive and broad technical training they have received, they thirst for more exposure to different types of theater, acting methods, movement techniques, and seek more experience on stage.

While most subjects feel satisfied with their technical training, many do not feel prepared for the business and marketing challenges that actors encounter when trying to find work. Several students express anxiety about leaving their programs and are unsure about plans following graduation. Fortunately, many young theater subjects, both students and non-students, exhibit the personal initiative, optimism, and tenacity necessary to create their own opportunities and learn the business on their own. One young "working" professional recalls how she met the challenge after graduating from her training program:

How to go to an audition, how to follow-up with an audition, how to do mailings...is not a strong point of this program, but that stuff for me was a lot easier to learn on my own than the stuff they taught me...You can get a book for those things...So I think people graduate and if they don't have a strong sense of what to follow that it can kind of fall off. I was like, 'I'm not going to do that. I'm going to be very focused.'

Formal Training Versus On-The-Job Experience

In contrast to journalists and geneticists, young theater professionals generally suggest a combination of on-the-job experience and formal training. Journalists generally prefer to learn on-the-job, whereas geneticists are required to train in a formal doctoral program.

Young theater professionals advise that acting aspirants attempt learning on-the-job before seriously pursuing a career and assuming the expense of training. Another “working” actor says, "I would tell [aspirants] to get out there and to really learn the business; know what they're up against, understand their weaknesses. I mean there is just no way you can know it until you do it." The life of a theater professional is so demanding, insecure and unstable, accordingly, the actors in our sample suggest that other aspirants take the time to discover whether they would be happy doing anything else. A subject explains:

You really, really, really, want to have to do this 100%. Whatever your reasons are, fine, but you really have to want to do it. If you don't, then

don't do it because it's not worth it at all. There's no glory behind this; unless you become successful and make tons of money. I don't know what that feels like, but at this level, there's not too much glory other than your love for it. So, again, if you love it, then there's a lot of glory in it. If you don't then there's other things you can do and then you find them.

Several subjects thought that on-the-job training, with a smattering of classes to focus on technical concerns such as voice training, was sufficient preparation for an acting career. One student suggests that aspirants

either stay in school or audition your butt off. Because you're pretty much learning the same thing by doing show after show after show. School is basically the most stable way in my mind, but if you have the looks or the drive or the connections to work all the time in theater or in movies or film, you're getting the same training.

When referring to successful actors without training, subjects list attractive, connected film actors like Gwyneth Paltrow and Uma Thurman. Most subjects believe that a person's looks or connections play a role in success.

If aspirants want to be theater actors, or have lasting careers in television or film, most subjects suggest that training is essential. Formal training provides a toolkit of skills that help to ensure their versatility, marketability and career longevity. Those who find success without rigorous training are less likely to last, as they are often unable to meet unexpected challenges. One actor, an undergraduate student, says that:

as an actor and solely as an actor, it's good to have training just so that when they get into the field, they won't be washed away and it wouldn't be a two-minute thing. They're in the business for two minutes and then they get washed away because they don't know how to deal with the pressures, they don't know how to deal with the scripts, with the different things we need to deal with... there's a certain way to do things, and if you're not trained to do them that way, then, you're not going to make it...and business people are going to know that you don't know what you're doing.

While many of the subjects who were in formal training programs spoke of the difficulty of having a personal life while in school, almost all were willing to put their lives outside of theater on hold in order to receive the best training possible. These subjects regard time spent in training programs as critical time for self-reflection, even to the exclusion of other concerns. One subject describes the training experience as a "luxury": "It gives you time to just focus on what you do and not to have to worry about anything else and that's a luxury." Another subject expands on this idea:

[training] has been about deconstructing old habits and examining the baggage we come in with as actors, like what our habits are, what our tensions are. And I think it's been a 2 1/2 year process of really just kind of shining a light on ourselves in terms of how we work, what we do and just a lot of self-scrutiny...just finding a truthful sense of release and

presence, and just a sense of power in myself, and an elasticity and flexibility to project what I want to project.

Ironically, subjects caution that training is so intensive that some can become lost in the process. One summer during graduate training, one subject felt he was "cannibalizing" himself by training to the exclusion of all else. "I was fueling myself with acting only. To be an actor, you have to bring a person to that actor. So, fill your life."

Not surprisingly, almost all of the subjects who recommend training say that formal acting training should occur at the graduate level. Aspirants must first allow time to develop the maturity, self-awareness and commitment necessary to engage in the rigorous self-reflection required of those in training. One subject, a "working" professional, explains how it helps to be older:

I think in undergrad, if I had gone to acting school, I would have gotten a little lost; I wouldn't have been able to explore myself as clearly as I can now being older and more mature, and being able to ask questions of myself and demand answers; whereas, before, if I asked certain questions, scary questions, or personal questions, I don't know if I could have answered them.

CONCLUSION

Our study of young professionals working in theater, genetics and journalism has been useful in revealing differences and similarities between the three domains, as well as between professional stages. Actors describe numerous ethical concerns and compromises in a domain itself facing many challenges. Although concerned about the effects of market forces and new technologies, actors remain hopeful that theater will prevail. Journalists across all ages describe a decline in standards of their profession, and demonstrate a keen awareness of the ethics of journalism. And though geneticists almost unanimously describe a thriving future in their domain, they are less attentive to the ethical concerns already appearing in their profession.

Although we have yet to determine the factors that identify the health of a domain, we are gaining insight into the many variables involved. Rapidity of growth and new technologies certainly play a part. We look forward to the additional information we will gather from interviews with young businesspeople in the upcoming year. We wonder about the impact of the recent terrorist attacks on our country, especially with respect to how young entrepreneurs view their opportunities. The nature of the business world has certainly changed since September 11, and we are curious to learn how these changes effect ethics, goals, and perspectives on the future of business.

In collaboration with other strands of the GoodWork Project, the Dedicated Young Professionals study is a crucial bridge: it links our understanding of children who are deeply committed to a domain to our knowledge of veteran professionals engaged in important domains. With these studies, we are approaching an understanding of professional development at different junctures across a variety of domains. We thank the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation for their generous and flexible support of our work.

Appendix A: Research Methodology and Sample Demographics in Study of Dedicated Young Professionals

Participants

We interviewed 62 individuals as part of a study of Dedicated Young Professionals: 21 theater actors (11 F, 10 M), 21 geneticists (10 M, 10 F) and 20 (10 M, 10 F) journalists. Subjects ranged in age from 20 to 36—specifically, 20 to 34 (mean age =27) in theater, 26 to 36 (mean age = 30) in genetics, and 21 to 29 (mean age = 24) in journalism. The relatively higher mean age of the genetics sample reflects the longer training required for entering the field. The theater sample included 8 graduate students, 3 undergraduate students, and 10 “working” professionals. The genetics sample included 10 graduate students, 5 academic postdoctoral fellows, and 5 industry scientists. The journalism sample included students as well as new professionals. We interviewed 6 undergraduate journalists and 4 journalism graduate students (5 aspiring print journalists, 5 aspiring broadcast journalists). The fledgling professionals included 5 television broadcasters (including reporters, a producer, and a news writer) and newspaper reporters. Nearly all subjects in the sample (n=58 out of 61) were nominated as “exceptional” and “promising” by leaders in their respective field.

Theater subject recruitment:

All but one of the 21 theater subjects were nominated by an “informant.” Nominators for the CHRISTIAN JOHNSON Theater study were either the Artistic Directors or Training Directors of eminent regional theaters in the New England Region, or taught at a leading theater training program that was recommended by the regional theater directors. One of our nominators was the President of a leading Boston casting agency. We narrowed down the training programs where we were interested in interviewing students by informant recommendations and by reviewing the U.S. News and World Reports ranking of leading Master of Fine Arts Programs in Theater. Additionally, all schools we targeted for students received at least 2 nominations.

Genetics subject recruitment:

We asked twenty “nominators” for names of exceptional graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, or former students now working in industry. The nominators were genetics professors or department chairs at three local universities—Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Brandeis—whose genetics departments are rated highest by the National Research Council Graduate Molecular and Cell Biology Program Rankings (“Research Doctoral Programs in the United States,” NRC, October, 1995). We have also conducted several informational interviews with industry scientists. Due to difficulties in procuring nominations from within the biotechnology industry, two of these interviewees were gained opportunistically.

Journalism subject recruitment:

We initially solicited respected veteran print and broadcast journalists for names of local professors and practitioners in a position to nominate exceptional and promising young journalists. We spoke by phone with individuals at the Poynter Institute, the Nieman Foundation, and the American Journalism Review to identify institutions known for producing high quality journalists. We were directed to a May 18, 1996

article published in *U.S. News and World Reports*, “Is J-school worth it?” Finally, we approached professors, editors, reporters, and headhunters for information and nominations of exceptional young print and broadcast journalism subjects.

Journalism students were nominated by professors of journalism at leading universities in Boston and New York (CHRISTIAN JOHNSON-The Columbia School of Journalism, Boston University, and Northeastern University) and the president of the Harvard University *Crimson*, a college newspaper of which our informants spoke highly. Additionally, journalism professionals were nominated by leaders in the field—such as editors, news directors, and senior reporters at major news organizations in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Because we sought to interview individuals poised to become the potential future leaders of these fields, we depended on nominations for our subjects rather than relying a random sample. Therefore, the sample is not necessarily—though it may be—representative of novice professionals in journalism, genetics, or in general.

Methods

Subjects participated in a semi-structured, audio-recorded interview that lasted approximately two hours. The questions assessed goals, practices, values, and formative influences of professionals (See Appendix C). In addition, we asked subjects to sort thirty pre-established values for a more quantitative measure (See Q-Sort results in Appendix B). Following the interview, the interviewers wrote a descriptive/interpretative document to summarize the main points of the interview and to record important data not captured on the tape, for instance, comments the subject made “off the record.” The summary documents were used to discover and develop trends that we later examine more precisely using coding in order to establish reliable counts on significant trends.

Coding and interrater reliability:

Once the interviews were completed, the audio recordings of interviews were transcribed. Final drafts of transcriptions were coded using a coding scheme based on one developed for coding interviews with older practitioners in these two fields. Slight modifications were made to capture issues unique to novice practitioners.

Two primary methods for establishing coding reliability were employed: formal reliability testing, and shadow-coding/consensus building. We established what we determined was reasonable inter-coder reliability ($K=0.60$) using Cohen's Kappa¹ on a 15-page sample drawn from three sections of a single interview. The mean Kappa for the theater coding was 0.694, while the mean Kappa for the genetics and journalism coding was 0.636 and 0.670, respectively. These numbers signify that across three coders, we were reliable more than 60% of the time.

Once we had established satisfactory interrater reliability, each transcript went through three steps as part of the shadow-coding process. 1.) The transcript was coded on paper by the first coder. 2.) The coded transcript was reviewed, or shadowed, by a second

¹ Cohen, J. (1960). A coefficient of agreement for nominal scales. *Educational Psychological Measurement*, 20, 37-46.

coder, the shadow-coder, who wrote in any suggested code changes next to the original code. 3.) The original coder and the shadow-coder met to discuss coding disagreement, and to ultimately reach consensus as to the most appropriate code(s) to apply to a given passage. When possible, we tried to vary the coding/shadowing dyads to build stronger consensus in our coding and to avoid biased coding trends among pairs.

Once the first coder and the shadow coder reached consensus, coding was then entered into NUD*ist, a qualitative coding and data management software package. Once entered into NUD*ist, data from all of the interviews could be analyzed categorically.

Appendix B: Q-Sort Analysis of Dedicated Young Actors as Compared to Dedicated Young Geneticists and Journalists

Q-Sort Methodology

The Q-Sort required the participant to rank 30 pre-determined values (see the attached list of 30 values) into one of five categories with a pre-determined number of cards in each category [i.e., Most Important (4 cards), More Important (6 cards), Relatively Neutral (10 cards), Less Important (6 cards), Least Important (4 cards).] Subjects were first asked to sort the cards in terms of the relative importance of each value to themselves as professionals. In a second sort, subjects were asked to sort the cards based on how they imagined an average person in the field would prioritize the values. In the third sort, subjects were asked to identify the four values that were most important to them as a person, not necessarily as a professional. In some cases, subjects declined to complete portions of the Q-Sort due to time constraints.

Sort I: Professional Values

Young actors (n=21) ranked the professional values of Courage/Risk-Taking (v. 29), Enjoyment of the Activity Itself (v. 36), Honesty and Integrity (v. 12), and Creativity (v. 28) as the three values of most importance. Among all young professional actors (n=21), journalists (n=19), and geneticists (n=19), Quality Work (v. 23) and Honesty/Integrity (v. 12) were consistently ranked among the top four values.

Apart from this agreement, young geneticists and journalists gave Courage/ Risk Taking (v. 29) less importance than young actors who felt it was more important than *all* other values. This difference might be explained by a relative lack of opportunity for success and more competition in theater than in genetics and journalism. This competition necessitates both courage and risk taking for survival in the profession.

Young actors felt that Enjoyment of the Activity Itself (v.36) was the second most important professional value held. This may be significant given the great challenges they describe in their profession. Both young geneticists and journalists gave this value less importance than young actors did, and geneticists attributed the least amount of importance to this value.

Not surprisingly, young actors also gave much importance to Creativity (v. 28) as a professional value. Geneticists were more in line with this view than journalists, perhaps because, as geneticists' comments reflect, they are pressured to do innovative and creative research in order to establish themselves in the field.

Sort 2: The Professional Values of Others in the Field

Young professional actors (n=21) indicated that their peers valued Professional Accomplishment (v. 3), Fame/Success (v. 15), and Recognition from One's Field (v. 24) as the three most important professional values. Young geneticists and journalists largely agreed with young actors with respect to Professional Accomplishment (v. 3) and Recognition from One's Field (v. 24), but differed largely from the young actors' view that their peers give great value to Fame/Success (v.15). Given the nature of the

theater profession, it not surprising that young actors feel their peers attribute great value to fame.

Young actors believed that their peers, like themselves, gave much importance to Enjoyment of the Activity Itself (v. 36). This differed more so from young geneticists than it did from young journalists, which is consistent with the way they ranked the importance of this value to themselves.

Sort 3: Personal Values

Like the young professional geneticists (n=19) and journalists (n=19), young professional actors (n=21) ranked Honesty and Integrity (v. 12) and Rewarding and Supportive Relationships (with family, friends, colleagues) (v. 11) as the most important personal values. Young geneticists, journalists and actors similarly ranked Enjoyment of the Activity Itself (v. 36), Creating Balance in One's Life (v. 21), and Personal Growth and Learning (v. 18) as also quite important.

The importance young professional actors place on the personal values of Rewarding and Supporting Relationships (v. 11), Enjoyment of the Activity Itself (v.36) (see also Sort 1), and Creating Balance in One's Life (v. 21), further illustrates the often described struggle in successfully balancing personal life with work.

Q-SORT VALUES LIST

BROAD INTERESTS

CHALLENGE

COURAGE, RISK TAKING

CREATING BALANCE IN ONE'S LIFE (moderation)

CREATIVITY, PIONEERING (originality, imaginativeness)

CURIOSITY

EFFICIENT WORK HABITS

FAITH

FAME, SUCCESS

HARD WORK AND COMMITMENT

HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

INDEPENDENCE

ENJOYMENT OF THE ACTIVITY ITSELF

OPENNESS (being receptive to new ideas or multiple perspectives)

PERSONAL GROWTH AND LEARNING

POWER, INFLUENCE

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

QUALITY (excellent, thorough, accurate, or careful work)

RECOGNITION FROM ONE'S FIELD

REWARDING AND SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS (with family, friends, colleagues)

SEARCHING FOR KNOWLEDGE, UNCOVERING WHAT IS TRUE

SELF-EXAMINATION, SELF-CRITICISM, SELF-UNDERSTANDING

SOCIAL CONCERNS (pursuing the common good; avoiding harm; caring about future generations)

SOLITUDE, CONTEMPLATION

SPIRITUALITY

TEACHING, MENTORING

UNDERSTANDING, HELPING, OR SERVING OTHERS

VISION (anticipating future directions, seeing the big picture)

WEALTH, MATERIAL WELL-BEING

Appendix C: Interview Protocols for Christian Johnson Theater and Business

Dedicated Young Professionals (Christian Johnson) Theater Interview Questionnaire

October 16, 2000

* Indicates questions which must be asked.

A. Introduction

- ___ *1. What attracted you initially to your area of work? Your subfield?
 - a. Is that still what appeals to you about it?
- ___ 2. What kinds of things are you trying to accomplish in your work right now?
 - a. (if needed) What are you hoping will be the greater impact of the work you are doing currently?
- ___ *3. What is the most important factor for you in choosing what you will audition for, or choosing which work you are willing to do? What are other things you consider? (Probe for four responsibilities.)
 - a. When you have an acting part, what's the most important factor in deciding how to portray it?
- ___ 4. What do you like about your work? Dislike?

B. Beliefs and Values

- ___ *1. Would you say that there are any personal beliefs or core values that guide your work?
(beliefs = world view: e.g. belief in truth, justice, fairness)
 - a. What experiences or influences were most important, in forming these beliefs/values?
 - b. How do these personal values or beliefs determine the types of projects with which you get involved?
- ___ *2. Are these values the same or different than the values of colleagues and others in your field?
 - a. (if in conflict) What effect does this have, if any, on pursuit of your goals?
 - b. Would it [degree of consistency] be different if you were working acting/performing in another organization? [i.e., another theater or training program?]
 - Is there a tension between your beliefs and values and those of the theaters that employ you or the programs that train you? If yes, how do you deal with it?

-What about if you were acting or performing in a different medium [film/type of theater]?

___ **3. What kinds of work, or which actors do you admire? Why do you admire them?**

C. Goals and Responsibilities

___ *1. In your work, to whom or what do you feel most responsible?

___ *2. Have you ever been torn between conflicting responsibilities (divided loyalties) in your work? [e.g.: personal vs. institutional (theater or training program), artistic director vs. owner/corporate sponsor, corporate sponsors vs. the public., audience preferences vs. own preferences?] [ONLY IF NECESSARY, follow with examples: "Your director calls for one thing, you think you should do something else?" "The corporate sponsor/owner of the theater issues an edict."] [If needed, probe for: universalistic/particularistic purpose.]
a. Please describe.
b. How do you resolve the conflict?

___ *3. In your work thus far, is there an overarching purpose or goal that gives meaning to what you do that is essential to making your work worthwhile? What is it? [If unclear, probe for: self vs. other orientation; universalism vs. particularism.]

- a. (if unclear) How does this connect to your day to day work?
- b. Are there certain tactics or techniques that have helped you achieve your goals in your day to day work? [probe for strategies]
- c. What experiences or influences were most important, in forming this goal?
- *d. How do you know whether you are on track / making progress toward this goal?

___ *4. What direction do you see for the future of your own career?

- *a. How will you know when you've "made it?"
- *b. What, if anything, would make you decide to leave the profession?
- *c. What would you be doing if you could not act?
- *d. Do you have particular hopes or requirements about your incomes flow?

___ *5. What do you think is the primary goal or essence of theater?

- a. What challenges that goal?
- b. Are your beliefs and values aligned with this?
- *c. What role do market forces (money, competition, profit motives) play in the theater? What do you think about that (agree or not?).

D. Opportunities and Supports

___ *1. What are some of the things that are helping you to pursue your goals? [probe for: most important opportunities or supports][probe for: financial supports]

- *a. Drawing from your own experience, how would you describe a

good collaboration in theater?

___ *2. Are there specific qualities that have contributed to your achievements?
(qualities = attributes: e.g., determination, persistence)

*a. What about qualities that have held you back or made it harder to pursue your goals?

___ *3. This is a difficult profession; What keeps you going or sustains your commitment to the theater?

E. Obstacles, Pressures, and Rewards

___ *1. What makes it difficult for you to pursue your goals?

What are the biggest pressures that you face in your work?

a. [if appropriate] Any difficulties from colleagues, your institution?

*b. [Probe, if S mentions difficulty balancing work & private life.]

*c. [Probe for financial obstacles.]

___ *2. How do you go about dealing with these difficulties and pressures?

[Probe for type of strategy (domain mission, etc.; proactive, reactive, etc.).]

*a. How did you come to deal with them in this way?

[Probe for: learned/devised]

___ 3. (optional: if needed) What is your immediate work environment like; is it generally supportive or constraining?

[probe for: collegiality, competition, autonomy, dispersion of resources]

a. [If not currently working:] What about your last job?

___ *4. In your work experiences, what kind of work is rewarded? What kind of work is discouraged?

___ *5. How do you judge/measure “success?”

a. Is this the same as your colleagues?

b. What role, if any, does the theater critic play in your success?

F. Formative Background

___ *1. Reflecting on your formative years as a child or adolescent, what influences do you view as most salient to the way you approach your work?

[note: influences on values and goals may have been described earlier]

a. How has your family background influenced the way you approach your work?

b. Influential religious or spiritual factors?

*c. Is your family involved in the arts?

d. (if needed) How did you spend your time as a child? / What would a person have seen if they shadowed you for a day when you were a child?

e. (if needed) As a child, were you intensely involved in one or more activities? Which ones?

If the question was not adequately answered at the start of the interview:

___ *What attracted you initially to your area of work? Your subfield?*

___ *2. Who has had the greatest influence on your approach to work and/or how you have made crucial decisions in your career thus far?

*a. Would you consider any of them mentors?

-How did they affect you? What did you learn from them?

*b. Any “anti-mentors”?

-How did they affect you?

c. An influential book, someone you didn't know personally?

d. An experience, opportunity, or project that was transformative?

G. Training the Next Generation

___ *1. Describe the training you've received: in what ways has it been adequate? In what ways has it been inadequate?

___ 2. How well has your area of work trained you to have the qualities that you think are important? How could your training have been improved?

___ *3. How would you advise someone who is thinking about a career in your area of work? How would you advise them to prepare for it (schooling?)

H. Ethical Issues in the Area of Work

___ *1. Do you have ethical concerns about your area of work—things that you worry about?

*a. Are your concerns shared by others? [e.g.: the public, mentors, colleagues]

*b. How would you like to see them handled?

___ *2. Have you ever been involved in a situation which violated your ethical sensibility (sense of right and wrong)?

a. Why did you see this as wrong?

b. How did you frame the problem and your solution to it? (How did it become clear to you what to do?)

c. (If unclear) Did the solution come immediately?

d. Where did these beliefs come from?

e. IF NO, can you tell me about an incident in your area of work where you weren't sure about the right course of action?

- ___ *3. Have you ever been put into a position where you stood by your principles to your own detriment?
 - *a. What would you not compromise as an actor? Is there a line that you will not cross? [Probe for profit vs. limited aesthetic value.]
 - *b. What are you willing to compromise?
 - *c. Some stage actors say they would never do TV or film and some say they would do TV or film. Would you be willing to do TV or film? Why?
 - *d. Hypothetical Dilemma: If you have an opportunity to perform at a reputable theater but the performance and your salary was sponsored by companies whose policies you did not agree with, what would you do? Why?

- ___ *4. To what extent do people in your area of work have a role in serving the public?
 - *a. How important is it for you personally?
 - *b. If you do this, how do you serve the public?

I. Conditions of the Domain/Field: Present, Past, Future

- ___ *1. What changes do you anticipate in theater and do you like or dislike these changes?
 - a. (if appropriate) If you ran your own theater company and money wasn't an object, how would you run it?
 - *b. Thinking about work that you respect, what are the common denominators? Common denominators of work that you don't respect?

- ___ *2. We understand that there are many issues facing theater today. What do you think are the major issues?

- ___ 3. Are there standards for good theater? If yes, what are they?
 - a. Is theater living up to those standards? If not, where is it failing and why?
 - *b. Are these standards affected by the proliferation of film and TV?
 - c. What is "artistic death" to you?

- ___ *4. How has technology changed theater? (If unclear, explain: With technology as it is today, time and space are constantly changing...Do you think theater has been affected by those changes? If so, how?
 - *a. Do you think the internet has changed theater?
 - *b. Can you foresee technology changing the way theater and plays are presented?
 - c. Are there some types of technology that would enhance theater?

- ___ *5. Right now, theater sounds like such an exciting field; under what circumstances would it cease to be, for you?

- ___ *6. When you think about the future of theater, what are your hopes; what are your fears?

J. Closing

— We are coming to the end of our interview, is there anything you would like to add?

- a. Check notes for things left out.
- b. May I follow up with you in the future?

Dedicated Young Professionals (Christian Johnson) Business Interview Questionnaire

June 28, 2001

* Indicates which questions must be asked

A. Introduction

- *1. What attracted you initially to business? Your subfield?
 - a. Is that still what appeals to you about it?
 - b. If you were not doing this, what might you be doing instead?
 - c. How do you think you differ from your peers who choose other professions like law or medicine? How about peers working in large business organizations?
- 2. In lay terms, what kinds of things are you trying to accomplish in your work right now?
 - a. (if needed) What are you hoping will be the greater impact of the work you are doing currently?
- *3. What were the most important factors you considered in starting an organization?
- 4. What do you like about your work? Dislike?

B. Beliefs and Values

- *1. Would you say that there are any personal beliefs or core values that guide your work?
(beliefs = world view: e.g. belief in truth, justice, fairness)
 - a. What experiences or influences were most important, in forming these beliefs/values?
 - b. How do these personal values or beliefs determine the types of projects with which you get involved?
- *2. Are these values the same or different than the values of colleagues and others in your field?
 - a. (if in conflict) What effect does this have, if any, on pursuit of your goals?
 - b. Does this degree of consistency have any relation to the reasons that you chose to start your own company?
 - c. Would it [degree of consistency] be different if you were working in another industry?
 - d. Is there a tension between your beliefs and values and those of individuals in your organization? If yes, how do you deal with it?
- 3. Do these values contribute to your achievements?
 - a. (If so), how?
 - b. Have you had any beliefs or values that have hindered your achievements or goals?

4. What kinds of work, or which business leaders do you admire? Why do you admire them?
- a. Do you admire leaders who give away a large portion of their money (e.g. Gates or Rockefeller)? Does philanthropic work play a part in who you admire?

C. Religious/Spiritual Practices

- *1. Do religious or spiritual concerns play an important role in your life?
2. Do you employ any particular methods or practices to help you gain or maintain perspective, insight, and balance in your life? (e.g. prayer, meditation, reflective practices)
- d. In what ways do these methods or practices help you in your decision-making?

D. Goals and Responsibilities

- *1. In your work, to whom or what do you feel most responsible?
- *2. Have you ever been torn between conflicting responsibilities (divided loyalties), in your work? [e.g.: personal vs. institutional, profit or professional integrity]
- a. Please describe.
 - b. How do you resolve the conflict?
- *3. In your work thus far, is there an overarching purpose or goal that gives meaning to what you do that is essential to making your work worthwhile? What is it? [If unclear, probe for: self vs. other orientation; universalism vs. particularism.]
- a. (if unclear) How does this connect to your day to day work?
 - b. Are there certain tactics or techniques that have helped you achieve your goals in your day to day work? [probe for strategies]
 - c. What experiences or influences were most important, in forming this goal?
 - d. How do you know whether you are on track / making progress toward this goal?
 - e. How would you describe an ideal culture within an organization? How would one go about creating this kind of culture?
- *4. Do you see any conflict between the traditional business goal of making money and any of your other personal goals? [probe extensively on this one, with lots of counter suggestions and challenges such as “Is that realistic?” or “Doesn't it ever come down to a flat-out choice between making a profit and promoting (x) goal?”]
5. Have your goals changed over the years? (If so), how have they changed? What caused them to change?
- *6. What direction do you see for the future of your own career?
- *a. How will you know when you've “made it?”
 - *b. How do you measure success?
 - *c. What, if anything, would make you decide to leave the profession?
 - *d. Do you have particular hopes or requirements about your income flow?

7. What do you think is the primary goal of business?
 - a. What challenges that goal?
 - b. Are your beliefs and values aligned with this?

E. The Work Process

- *1. Do you have a particular philosophy, or perhaps rules or aphorisms, which guide your overall business approach ?
 - a. If so, how did you come to acquire this philosophy?
 - b. What are some examples of how you have employed this philosophy in your career ?
 - c. To what degree does this philosophy reflect your approach to life in general?
- *2. Which of your accomplishments are you most proud of?
 - a. To what do you attribute your success in this endeavor?
 - b. What strategies did you use to accomplish this achievement ?
 - c. How did you learn these strategies yourself?

F. Opportunities and Supports

- *1. What are some of the things that are helping you to pursue your goals? [probe for: most important opportunities or supports]
- *2. Are there specific qualities that have contributed to your achievements? (qualities = attributes: e.g., determination, persistence)
 - a. What about qualities that have held you back or made it harder to pursue your goals?
- *3. What keeps you going or sustains your commitment to your company?

G. Obstacles, Pressures, and Rewards

- *1. What makes it difficult for you to pursue your goals?
 - a. [if appropriate] Any difficulties from colleagues, your organization?
 - *b. [Probe, if S mentions difficulty balancing work & private life.]
 - *c. Can you tell us about a specific situation that you found discouraging or especially hard?
2. How do you go about dealing with these difficulties and pressures?
[Probe for type of strategy (domain mission, etc.; proactive, reactive, etc.).]
 - a. How did you come to deal with them in this way?
[Probe for: learned/devised]
4. What is your work environment like; is it generally supportive or constraining?
[probe for: collegiality, competition, autonomy, dispersion of resources]
5. In your work experiences, what kind of work is rewarded? What kind of work is discouraged?

a. Is innovation/creativity rewarded?

6. What, if any, would make you give up your company? Would you give up business all together? If so, what would you do?

H. Formative Background

*1. Reflecting on your formative years as a child or adolescent, what influences do you view as most salient to the way you approach your work?

[note: influences on values and goals may have been described earlier]

a. How has your family background influenced the way you approach your work?

*b. How did you spend your time as a child? / What would a person have seen if they shadowed you for a day when you were a child?

d. As a child, were you intensely involved in one or more activities? Which ones?

***If the question was not adequately answered at the start of the interview:
What attracted you initially to your area of work? Your subfield?*

*2. Who has had the greatest influence on your approach to work and/or how you have made crucial decisions in your career thus far?

*a. Were there any particular people who attracted you to business?

*b. Would you consider any of them mentors?

How did they affect you? What did you learn from them?

*c. Any “anti-mentors”? How did they affect you

d. An influential book, movie or someone you didn't know personally?

*3. Would you say that there has been an experience, opportunity, or project, either your youth or more recently that was transformative or has had an important effect on your life or career?

4. Can you recall instances of events in your youth that were early indications of your business acumen or entrepreneurial inclinations? Do you recall what motivated you to initiate each of those endeavors?

I. Training the Next Generation

*1. Describe the training you've received: in what ways has it been adequate? In what ways has it been inadequate?

a. Did undergraduate training adequately prepare you for work in the business domain?

2. In your opinion, is it necessary to attend one of the top graduate business schools in order to succeed in business?

a. If so, what is it that one gets out of business school that one would not get otherwise?

3. How well has your area of work trained you to have the qualities that you think are important? How could your training have been improved?

*4. How would you advise someone who is thinking about starting their own business?

a. What about in terms of preparation for an MBA program?

J. Ethical Issues in the Area of Work

*1. Do you have ethical concerns about your area of work—things that you worry about?

*a. Are your concerns shared by others? [e.g.: the public, other organizations, your colleagues]

*b. How would you like to see them handled?

*2. Are there things that you would not do in your business, even though they would be legal and profitable?

*a. Have you ever been put into a position where you stood by your principles to your own detriment?

*b. What would you not compromise? Is there a line that you will not cross?

[Probe for profit vs. limited aesthetic value.]

c. What are you willing to compromise?

*3. Have you ever been involved in a situation that violated your ethical sensibility (sense of right and wrong)?

a. Why did you see this as wrong?

b. How did you frame the problem and your solution to it? (How did it become clear to you what to do?)

c. (If unclear) Did the solution come immediately?

d. Where did these beliefs come from?

e. IF NO, can you tell me about an incident in your area of work where you weren't sure about the right course of action?

*4. Have you perceived a change in the availability of opportunities to work in business that you consider to be responsible and ethical?

K. Conditions of the Domain/Field: Present, Past, Future

*1. What changes do you anticipate in your business and do you like or dislike these changes?

a. (if appropriate) If you could, how would you do things differently?

*b. Thinking about work that you respect, what are the common denominators? Common denominators of work that you don't respect?

2. What direction do you see for the future of your area of work?

*3. When you think about the future of business, what are your hopes? fears?

4. Right now business seems like an exciting area under what circumstances would it cease to be, for you?

I. Perspectives on the Business World

*1. What does business enterprise do well? Not so well?

*2. How would you respond to those who criticize business or the market model as being amoral and in need of being accountable to values beyond the bottom line ?

*3. In general, does work in business serve the public well? When does it and when doesn't it?

*a. How important is it for you personally?

*b. If you do this, how do you serve the public?

c. If not monetarily, do you contribute in other ways?

*4. With respect to moral and ethical standards, do you think that conduct in the business world is getting better or worse?

*a. One observer of business recently said that, in the old days, CEO's tried to build their companies to last whereas now they try to build them to sell. Do you agree? If this is the case, does the trend detract from the moral climate of business in any way?

*b. How would you analyze the impacts, either positive or negative, of the increasing globalization of business?

*c. What about new technologies or other forms of innovation- Should the current pace of technological innovation cause us any more or less concern regarding ethical implications than before?

*d. Are there any recent trends that you feel threaten the integrity or moral commitment of people working in business?

***We are coming to the end of our interview, is there anything you would like to add?

a. Check notes for things left out.

b. May I follow up with you in the future?