

## The Employment Interviewer, the Vocational Counselor, and the Dream Weaver By Robert J. Gregory

Once upon a time, when I went to look for work, I stopped at a branch of the Employment Service. The first person I talked to was an Employment Interviewer. Later I had the opportunity to meet with an Employment Counsellor. Finally, a third visit led to my meeting a person I think of as a “merchant of dreams” or a “dream weaver.” I recall now, nearly 40 years later, what happened with each of these helpers I met.

### Scene I: The Employment Interviewer

“Hi, I would like to find a job,” I said as I entered the employment office. “Sure thing, come over and sit down,” the employment interviewer replied. “There are some job leads listed in this paper on my desk, and you might want to look them over. Pick out and write down any leads you want. I will be glad to help you.” He turned back to his desk and gave me freedom to explore. Eventually, I wrote down a couple of possibilities, planning to go for interviews, if I could get them, later in the day. When I left, I felt proud of myself and pleased with my potential jobs. I thanked the employment interviewer and departed on my quest.

### Scene II: The Vocational Counselor

“Hi, I would like to find a job,” I said as I entered the employment office for the second time. “Sure thing, come over and sit down.” the Employment Counsellor replied, and then asked, “but tell me, what are you really looking for?” “Well, I want something interesting, that pays reasonably well, you know. I just graduated from my university, and I would like a challenge.”

Ah, Yes,” she replied, “I have some ideas for you, let’s sit down for a while and talk further. I have a few jobs on a listing, but you want more than just a job. You are looking for a career, right?” she said. Do you prefer work with people, data, or things?” she asked. “Have you ever taken an aptitude test?”

“No, but my major in university was liberal arts,” I replied, “and during the summer vacations I tried to my hand at several things like farming, clerking in a store, and working on an assembly line. I would be very interested in an aptitude test, for that might help me sort out which type of job to get.”

“Yes, we can schedule such a test, and we will gather some other information about you today. I will interpret the test for you, and together we can figure out a direction that makes sense to you. After all, unless you are happy in a job, you won’t be able to be really productive, which is what an employer wants, too. So, I will keep you in mind for job possibilities in the meantime, but first, let’s get information to help you make decisions.”

I took the aptitude test, brought in my university transcript of courses completed and grades, shared my ideas about careers, exchanged information about skills, interests, and so on, and sure enough, a number of directions looked promising. Together we built a resume and a curriculum vitae and then picked out some good companies. I planned to take the resume to the appropriate companies and follow up with the curriculum vitae if they showed signs of interest. I felt that, “Now that I know something more about me, and I have an idea about exactly the type of job I want.”

I thanked my employment Counsellor and when I left, pleased with my direction, I was positively enthused about the attention I received. I knew that one day I would have the job that was exactly right for me.

### Scene III: The Dream Weaver

“Hi, I would like to find a job,” I said as I entered the employment office for the third time. “Sure thing, come over and sit down,” the person behind the desk replied, “but while you are looking at the lists of jobs, please share with me what sort of life you are seeking?”

Well, I replied, “I am especially interested in working with people. I like to help people, because I get a good feeling about me when I do.”

“Oh, I bet you are like me, thinking that one day you might get a chance to do good deeds?” he said in a soft voice. “You know, when I was your age, that was what I thought about, that maybe one day, I would be able to make a difference for other people in the world,” he continued. “I had a dream that the future would be different than it is now., and that I could help in some small way to create a future. I bet you that in mind too? “ he inquired gently. By the end, he enabled me to start talking about my dreams, wishes, and goals. Suddenly, I found myself pouring out my deepest ambitions for the world, and not surprisingly , for me too.

The dream weaver listened intently as I talked about the career that my dad had followed, the hopes my Dad had for me, as well as my own feelings. He listened carefully as I talked about my hobbies, and activities after school, my brother and family, even girlfriends. His questions were few, but his ability to focus on my concerns and interests was so complete, that before I realized it, an hour had gone by. “When can you come back so we can talk some more?” he asked.

We scheduled a time later in that same week,. I left feeling that I just had to get back to talk more with him, to share my feelings with him and to enter deeper into the search for the “right job.” I began thinking not just of the right job, but also of the “right direction in life.”

When the day and hour finally arrived, I had thought up several questions for him, as well as a number of ideas to share about my own self. I started with a question, “have you ever been out of work?” I asked.

“No, but I sure have studied people who have been, and when I listen to them, they tell me of a journey in their own lives that has taken them to many places and times and events.” he drawled. “They are on a path, with many directions ahead, and I learn about their travels, and their hopes for future destinations. I bet you, too, have traveled to some most intriguing places as you have thought about jobs and careers. We need to talk more, and when we have found the places are that are the most important in your dreams, then we will be ready to begin looking for the jobs that will lead you there.”

“How did you know? It is almost as if you were reading my mind,” I stated. Then I proceeded to share my own dreams, and ideas, and feelings, and after talking again for a long time, I knew that the process of seeking a career was only part of growing up and living life. “I am on the way,” I realized at the end of that hour. He added, “Do come back and we will share some more ideas next time - work and jobs are only a means to an end, you know. You are welcome here any time.”

We continued until my path took me to places far away, but my destiny was charted then. Some of the dreams have been realized, others have been replaced or satisfactory substitutes found, and a great many new aspirations have emerged. Throughout, the dream weaver remained part of my thinking.

### Reflections and Commentary

The three people with whom I spoke were similarly labeled, but I think of them as I experienced their effect on me - employment interviewer, vocational counsellor and dream weaver. They were all performing similar work in the Employment Service.

One operated at the level of a sales clerk, a person who has a product, and a customer in front of the counter or the desk. He was interested in having his customer take one of the products available so the proper check mark could be recorded on the list. His books will be kept up-to-date, no doubt, and yet, a bond of togetherness in the enterprise of life was missing.

The second person operated as a salesperson, someone who knows the product well, and who talks fluently with the customer about the product, perhaps even negotiating a bit on tasks and duties. This person shares information and enables the customers to become more than they thought was possible.

The third person was a dream merchant, a weaver of the tapestry of life, a person who learned about the feelings of the people who came by. He talked with them, as he talked with me, about their interests and goals. He shared on a feeling level their deepest concerns. He tapped into those products that would be meaningful and fulfilling specifically for and with that person. He took the time to develop a story of life's intrigue and mystery and meaning, or created an adventure that stretched from the known to the unknown, and in that way, carried the person on into an exciting and almost magical space and time.

Who do you think I remember most? Why? Are you an employment interviewer, a vocational counsellor, or dream weaver?