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Ph.D., Pennsylvania 1978

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Life Events- Childhood

Q: What kind of school did you go to? What was your favorite subject? Least favorite?

A: I went to public school. My favorite subject always was changing as I was presented with new ideas. I did not like gym too much.

Q: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A: I wanted to be a teacher or a play director. I liked to write plays in grade school.

Life Events- Adult

Q: What job did you do for most of your life? What did you like or not like about it?

A: Teaching at university. I like interacting with students and doing research.

Q: What are some of the goals you are still working toward?

A: I want to have everyone in the class actively involved and discussing ideas related to materials presented in class.

Influences

Q: Looking back, what person, group of persons, or organization/institution has had the greatest positive influence on your life story? Why?

A: My parents and sister always supported my interests and tried to create opportunities for exploring the world. My mother was our Girl Scout leader and I still am best friends with girls from my Girl Scout troop. We would go camping, canoeing (a 100 mile trip down the Allegheny River in Pennsylvania) and had all sorts of adventures in the natural world. I got to meet with people of diverse backgrounds as well.

Identity and Personal Ideology

Q: How do you approach political and social issues? Do you have particular point of view? Are there specific issues that you feel particularly strongly about?

A: I care about issues of social justice for minority groups and human rights issues. IN the 1980's I was active in groups working for human rights of people in Central America (when there was a lot of US military aid sent to kill indigenous people who wanted land rights and civil rights). I decided to study African American children's language for my Ph D dissertation to hopefully show the creativity of a group whose language was under attack in the 1960's, being considered not a valid language variety.)

Q: What is the most important value in human living? Please Explain.

A: Respect for cultural diversity and tolerance of others is the most important value. Lack of respect leads to endless conflict.

Turning Point

Q: Please identify a particular episode in your life story that you now see as a turning point. If you feel that your life story contains no turning points, then please describe a particular episode in your life that comes closer than any other to qualifying as a turning point.

A: It was very meaningful for me to hear linguist Dr. William Labov talk about African American Vernacular English to teachers in Philadelphia. His lectures I could see changed people's ideas about this language variety as a legitimate variety at a time when there was a lot of prejudice against African Americans (the 60's).

Life Lessons, Challenges, and Legacies

Q: Please tell us about a memorable moment in your life; a time you will never forget.

A: Meeting Father Luis Gurriaran a priest working with indigenous Mayan people in Guatemala who were fighting for land and against government forces trying to suppress Mayans (70's and 80's) was the most memorable moment. In South Carolina at a Central American Information Week we had many people who put their lives on the line to fight injustice speak to diverse communities throughout the state. One of the people who spoke with us was this priest. This was during a time when the US was supporting military dictatorships in Central America.

Q: How do you define a “good life” or a “successful life”?

A: A good life is feeling part of a community of people who share common concerns and who have an intensity for what they do, whatever that might be.

Life Theme

Q: Looking back over your entire life story, can you discern a central theme, message, or idea that runs throughout the story? What is the major theme of your life story?

A: I have been interested in cultural diversity and concerned with how social class affects one's life chances.

Dr. Goodwin's homepage

You can access Dr. Goodwin's publications here.

<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/anthro/faculty/goodwin/>