

I. What Is Good Work?
II. Achieving Good Work in Turbulent Times

HOWARD GARDNER

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HOWARD GARDNER is the John H. and Elisabeth A. Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He also holds positions as Adjunct Professor of Psychology at Harvard University and Senior Director of Harvard Project Zero. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University. Among many other awards, he was elected a fellow at the John S. Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and he received a Presidential Citation from the American Educational Research Association, the William James Award from the American Psychological Association, and the MacArthur Prize Fellowship. In 2005 and again in 2008 *Foreign Policy* and *Prospect* magazines named him one of the one hundred most influential public intellectuals in the world. His numerous publications include *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet* (2001), *The Development and Education of the Mind* (2006), *Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons* (2006), and *Five Minds for the Future* (2007).

I. WHAT IS GOOD WORK?

Most scholars like to keep the divisions between fields as clear as possible. Philosophers are charged with defining a terrain, making key distinctions, poring over ambiguous cases, placing items in the optimal, most airtight arrangement. For his skills along these lines, Aristotle was long honored as The Philosopher.

Psychologists test hypotheses about human and animal behavior and thought. These scholars strive to develop clean, unambiguous tasks: when administered properly, these tasks should allow comparisons between treatment and control groups and, ultimately, identification of causal mechanisms and chains. In contrast, policy makers may draw on several fields. Their task is to define a problem within society, review the available data, commission new data if possible, then recommend a course of action. Policy makers may be quite promiscuous in the lines that they cross. Like scholars, policy makers are expected to keep their personal predilections in check. But this requirement of strict disinterestedness proves difficult for most of us to honor, and scholars are no exception.

In this and the succeeding lecture, I will be speaking about the Good-Work Project, an academic endeavor that violates the strictures to which I've referred. A long-term collaboration with psychologists Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and William Damon, the GoodWork Project started as qualitative social science—a set of interviews of prominent leaders about the work that they do. Most of the analyses we carried out were qualitative, but as the subject population grew, it became possible to pursue quantitative analyses and even to test some hypotheses. The findings themselves proved intriguing, and, indeed, we continue to mine the data for answers to questions about work. Our progress to this point constitutes the subject of the first lecture.

Somewhere along the way, the tenor of the project changed. Part of the change reflected broader trends in the culture of our time; part came about because of the often unsettling nature of the findings themselves. And so, what had begun as a typically academic research project gradually transmogrified into an examination of current policies and practices. And before much longer, my colleagues and I were no longer just addressing policy issues; we had actually become actors, if in a modest way, in seeking to bring about changes that we believed were desirable. Our interventions constitute the topic of the second of these two lectures.

All scholarly work must begin somewhere, and ours began in psychology, particularly in the subfield called developmental psychology. Developmental psychology is often thought to be the study of children, but it is more precisely described as an examination of how human cognitive and behavioral structures become increasingly complex, more differentiated, and, ultimately, better integrated.

The prototypical (and, in my view, the greatest) developmental psychologist was Jean Piaget (1896–1980). Actually trained in biology and epistemology, Piaget began each of his studies by defining an end state—a fully developed human capacity as it could be observed in the mature adult. For example, he described how adults navigated space; understood the relation among time, distance, and speed; and solved logical syllogisms and other puzzles. Through careful observation of children, both in their natural habitat and in a contrived experimental situation, Piaget sought to delineate the initial or opening state in the infant or young child. Then he described the succession of changes, often qualitatively different ones, through which youngsters passed during childhood and adolescence, as they navigated from initial to the full-blown mature end state: for example, from invoking inadequate causal chains to applying truth tables accurately.

As befits any great scholarly pioneer, Piaget (1970) first dominated the field of study, then was subjected to searching (as well as inappropriate) criticisms, and now is recognized for his pathbreaking but imperfect work. Most of Piaget's research focused on cognitive development—he laid out the developmental sequences outlining children's increasing mastery of senses of time, space, number, and physical objects. As pointed out by his scholarly peer ethologist Konrad Lorenz, Piaget demonstrated the developmental forerunners of Kant's major full-blown categories of thought—thus “psychologizing” key philosophical distinctions and concepts.

Although Kant and Piaget were most interested in the fundamentals of reason, especially critical and logical thought, they also explored the moral sense. In a classic monograph, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (1932/1965), Piaget pointed out that young children focus on the consequences of an action—if you break five teacups rather than a single one, you are more culpable, independent of the reasons for the breakage. Toward middle childhood, children come to recognize a crucial distinction. One is culpable to the extent that an action is intentional, and far less so if an action is innocent, accidental, or well intentioned. Thus, a ten-year-

old recognizes that the child who is trying to help his mother prepare the table and breaks five teacups is less culpable, less worthy of punishment, than the child who, in the course of stealing cookies, accidentally breaks a single teacup.

An American psychologist, Lawrence Kohlberg (1982), extended Piaget's work significantly. In the 1950s and 1960s, Kohlberg posed a series of dilemmas to young persons—all of whom happened to be boys. Like Piaget, Kohlberg was less interested in the moral judgments per se (right-wrong, good-bad) than in the *reasoning* that underlay and gave rise to judgments; ultimately, in tried-and-true developmental tradition, Kohlberg laid out a series of six stages of moral judgment through which, by hypothesis, all human beings pass. Young children are absolutists—A is right, B is wrong, might is right, the weak shall inherit nothing. Children in later childhood are rule followers—they want to do exactly what the society stipulates in the way it stipulates. Adolescents and adults at higher moral stages do not consider rules as sacrosanct. They are prepared to disobey them if the rules seem unjust, geared up to make and justify their own decisions, and willing to accept the consequences of civil disobedience. We see the end state of moral development in such paragons as Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Mahatma Gandhi.

Like Piaget's, Kohlberg's work was first dominant, then sharply critiqued, and is now recognized as having broken important ground. In a post-Piaget, post-Kohlberg era, we affirm that moral judgments are important, but that they do not always predict moral behavior. Some sophisticated judges behave immorally, while individuals at so-called lower stages can and do exhibit moral courage (Colby and Damon 1992). We also recognize a wider variety of spheres: social conventions (drive on the right side of the road) are not the same as moral strictures (drive so as to protect the lives of passengers); individuals may behave differently in their personal lives than in their professional lives; one can injure individuals directly or carry out behaviors that violate ethical codes (Turiel 2006).

All of this is background to my topic today. In 1994–1995, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, William Damon, and I spent a year on sabbatical at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. We had a loose-knit plan to talk about issues of creativity, but no firm agenda or “deliverables.” During that year, the country took a sharp turn to the right politically. While there was a centrist Democrat in the White House, conservatives swept both houses of Congress. One of the themes

stressed was that the role of the federal government should be reduced wherever possible, and that most functions of society—with the obvious exception of defense—were better left to the private sector. Markets and capitalism were triumphant everywhere. Even President Bill Clinton declared, “The era of big government is over.”

The three researchers had nothing against markets; indeed, we were—and remain—beneficiaries of the market. Yet we were far less confident than were many others about the “genius of the market” or about its inherent “righting mechanisms,” particularly when it came to taking care of the less able or the less fortunate. We were not at all sure that societies could function properly if medical care, legal protection, education, accounting were all left strictly to market forces. At the same time, as students and aficionados of creativity, we did not want to impose constraints on individuals or society, unless they were exceedingly well advised.

From discussions along these lines, we began to formulate a project that we tentatively christened the “humane creativity” project. The question that we formulated, back there in the middle 1990s, was this: is it possible to have individuals, institutions, and societies that are at once creative and innovative, yet at the same time are also humane, providing for those who cannot fend for themselves? In a sense that we probably did not realize at the time, we were probing Adam Smith’s conviction that markets could be consonant with moral sentiments—though we thought that this consonance was something to be achieved rather than a fundamental operating assumption of a civilized society.

As empirical social scientists, we immediately pondered how to collect data relevant to our guiding question. Rather than thinking through the issues, in the manner of an armchair philosopher, or moving directly to regulations or laws, as a policy maker might do, we instead elected to interview leaders in different sectors to see whether, and if so how, it might prove possible to combine creativity with humaneness.

Armed with what we thought was a good question, we proposed to the MacArthur Foundation, with which we had some connections, that they provide us support to study humane creativity in six different sectors of society. They replied in essence, “thanks but no thanks.” We wrote to several other foundations where we also had connections. Half of the foundations never responded, and the other half replied that this topic was “outside our area.” As the late Frank Keppel quipped, “They had no mailbox for humane creativity.” Truth to tell, the phrase “humane creativ-

ity” did not sing to funders, and that dissonance probably made it more difficult to garner funding.

Ultimately, the one foundation with which we had no relation—the relatively new Hewlett Foundation—gave us some funds to launch the project. In due course, we received support from several other sources and carried out a far more ambitious project than we could have envisioned during our California year. Our life would have been considerably easier if MacArthur had simply said yes. But perhaps we gained as well from having to approach many foundations and private individuals, with brass cup conspicuously in hand.

Nonscholars might have difficulty believing the following fact: it took us nearly five years to come up with a good name for the project and to formulate the precise question that we were tackling. We moved away from the study of creativity per se, and toward an examination of major professions in America. We did so because it is easier to study humane conduct when there are clear guidelines for ethical and nonethical behavior than when ethics is left largely or even totally up to the individual practitioner. Put concretely, doctors and lawyers are enjoined to operate according to specific guidelines and can sacrifice their reputations and lose their licenses if they behave in an unethical manner. In contrast, workers in business and the arts have no such restrictions. They are essentially free to do what they want (including behaving ethically or unethically) so long as they do not run afoul of the law.

As for the name, we decided to call ourselves the GoodWork® Project. Initially, we defined Good Work as work that is Excellent in technical quality and work that is carried out in an Ethical manner. Subsequently, we added a third criterion and an alliterative third *E*—that the work be Engaging and personally meaningful. The word *good* thus draws on three separate connotations: good quality,



Excellence Ethics Engagement

FIGURE 1. The triple helix of GoodWork: Excellence, Ethics, and Engagement

feels good, and embodies the good pole of morality. (If you prefer a visual aid, think of “good work” as a triple helix of intertwined *Es*.) For whatever reason, people prefer the term *good work* to the term *humane creativity*, though many—perhaps even most—individuals refer to our endeavor incorrectly as the Good Works project.

On to the question that we posed as researchers. We asked: “How do individuals who want to do good work—work that is excellent in quality, personally engaging and meaningful, and carried out ethically—succeed or fail at times when things are changing very quickly, our senses of time and space are being altered by technology (such as the Internet and the World Wide Web), market forces are very powerful, and there are not comparable forces—religious, ideological, communitarian—that can counter or moderate the market forces?” Note that the question does not critique markets per se. But the question—and the questioners—are forces that can temper the Darwinian, dog-eat-dog quality that all too often characterizes a completely *laissez-faire* system.

So armed with a name and a question, what did we actually do? We created a comprehensive questionnaire that contained sixty questions with follow-ups, and sampled eight different topics: goals and purposes, beliefs and values, the work process, positive and negative pressures, formative influences, training of the next generation, community and family, and ethical standards. We sought nominations of individuals in various domains who were thought to be good workers. The nominators included both experts in the field and individuals who themselves had been nominated—the so-called snowball method of amassing subjects. We had no independent proof that each of our subjects was actually a good worker, and indeed in a few cases, a subject was subsequently revealed to have behaved in an unethical or even illegal way. Nonetheless, in the aggregate, we were confident that our subjects are reliable informants about good work, whether or not each exemplified good work in every particular.

Every research subject was administered a version of our research protocol. Interviews averaged one and a half hours, with some of them running substantially longer. On the average, a transcription of an interview ran to thirty single-spaced pages and often forty or even fifty pages. The interviews are best described as semistructured. That is, we carried them out in a conversational way, letting the subject direct us comfortably from one sphere to another, yet made sure that at least the eight major topical areas were covered in each case. In addition, in most domains, we administered more quantitative measures. As examples, we posted ethical dilemmas to

subjects and noted how they resolved these conundrums—for example, should a journalist insist on interviewing a bereaved person, when the family asks for privacy, or should a government-supported researcher secure a patent on a discovery in her own name? In nearly all cases, we also administered a Q sort, in which subjects were asked to indicate which personal values (for example, integrity, fame, responsibility, financial security) were most important and least important to them.

Initially, because of our own interests and the availability of funding, we focused on two domains—genetics and journalism. The coupling proved fortunate for both a conceptual and an empirical reason. Conceptually, geneticists have the most to say about our bodies, while journalists affect what is in our minds. As we quipped, we were studying the guardians of our “genes” and our “memes.” Empirically, the coupling was fortunate because it turned out that the two domains differ dramatically from one another in terms of the experiences and reflections of the practitioners. More on this later.

In the end, during the period 1996–2004, we interviewed more than twelve hundred subjects drawn from nine professional domains: genetics, journalism, theater, precollegiate education, higher education, law, medicine, business, and philanthropy. Ironically, we never were able to raise money to study law or medicine, the two most prominent professions. We had to be creative, as well as ethical, if we were to survey these two domains. In sharp contrast, we were awarded more money to study philanthropy than any other domain. Perhaps there is a moral (or even an immoral!) to that story.

We surveyed quite widely: promising young individuals just entering these domains, individuals in midlife, veterans, and individuals we nicknamed “trustees”—persons no longer as active as they had once been but with an impressive concern about the health of the domain. (Think of Walter Cronkite in journalism or Sandra Day O’Connor in the law.) The demography of the subjects paralleled that of the domain; for instance, we interviewed many more female teachers than female geneticists. When funding permitted, we secured a truly national survey, but in most cases, we focused on the coasts, where our respective universities were located. All subjects lived in the United States, though quite a few had been born abroad. These points need to be kept in mind when one considers the generalizability of the findings.

We collected massive amounts of information—much of which can properly be called data. Some of these data are unashamedly quantitative—

how many subjects were male, African American, mentioned God explicitly, considered switching occupations, and so on. But most of the data are better described as qualitative. That is, we picked a topic of interest—for instance, a sense of responsibility—reviewed the transcripts for discussions of responsibility, created a coding system, and then categorized the responses of subjects in terms of their differing senses and loci of responsibility.

In no way have the data been exhaustively analyzed. Indeed, our most recent book, *Responsibility at Work* (Gardner 2007b) focused on just one of our sixty-odd questions, “To whom or what do you feel responsible?” Fortunately, the data are archived, and with proper precautions, our own students are encouraged to analyze the existing transcripts. At some point in the future, the transcripts should also be made available to other qualified researchers.

I have just presented what, in “psychologese,” are called the Subjects and the Methods sections of a journal article. Before moving to the theoretical framework that we ultimately arrived at, and a sampling of our results. I’d like to make just a few comments about the “feel” of this kind of research—the sort of information that *rarely* gets into the academic journals.

First of all, this was a large-scale collaboration. In addition to the three Principal Investigators (PIs), at least fifty other researchers participated in the research during the decadelong project. Two of the PIs moved to new universities during the period, thus necessitating the setting up of new research offices and the hiring and training of new staff. Funding for the research was never completely in hand: many researchers did not know the source of their salaries from one year to the next, and, in a few instances, researchers had to be let go because of lack of funds. The cycles of grant renewals do not necessarily coincide with availability of research subjects or payroll demands: considerable resourcefulness was required to keep the project afloat.

That said, the three PIs and the rest of the team worked together well, and with remarkably few jolts and hitches. At least part of this smooth operation was due to the long-standing personal connections among the PIs and their respect for and trust of one another. The advent of computer-file sharing and excellent Internet connections made possible collaboration that would have been far more difficult even a decade before. I would add, however, that the researchers who joined the team also believed in the mission of the project. This conviction resulted both in a “can do” attitude

and in the capacity to solve problems rather than harp on them or sweep them under the rug. I'd go so far as to label them "good workers."

Recruitment of subjects was not always easy. We were asking from subjects a considerable amount of time and a considerable degree of candor, with essentially no compensation in return (subjects were offered a book authored by one of the PIs). In general we had a high success rate in recruiting subjects, and, once recruited, nearly all subjects cooperated throughout the study. In cases where we felt that a particular subject was crucial to the study, but also elusive, we made use of personal contacts and were usually successful in carrying out the interview. (One very busy, very famous subject gave me only a half hour but managed to go through the entire protocol in that period.) We respected the subjects' privacy and assured them that any and all remarks that they wished to be off the record would be so treated. It is worth noting that subjects often commented on how useful the interviews were—the sessions had given them a rare and valued chance to reflect on their lives. And subjects' memories of the conditions of study could also shift over time. More than one subject requested anonymity during the session, only to ask us, at a later time, when the book devoted to their work would be published!

Over the course of the project a useful theoretical framework emerged. Inspired by an analytic framework that had been developed by Csikszentmihalyi (1996) in his earlier studies of creativity, we posited the interactions in work of four crucial factors:

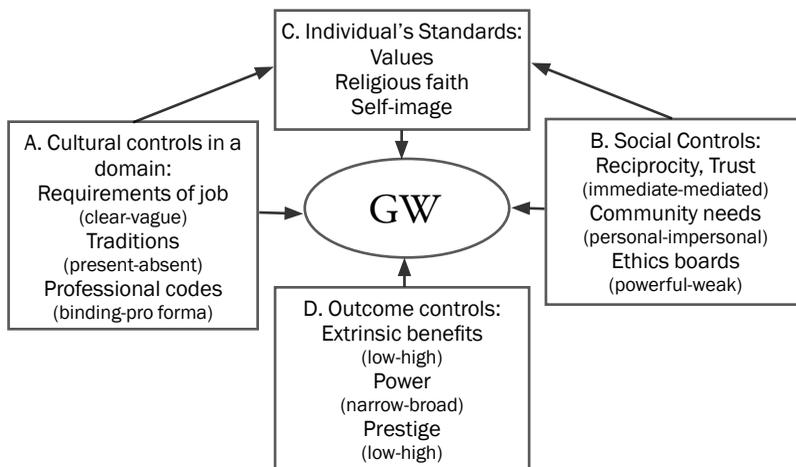


FIGURE 2. A graphic rendition of the principal elements of GoodWork

A. The domain, discipline, or profession under study. Domains are cultural inventions: sets of beliefs, practices, and values—often encoded in a symbol system—that are developed over time and passed on from one generation of workers to the next. As conveyed by the ancient but still relevant Hippocratic oath, medicine constitutes a powerful domain, one that in the West has served as a model for other domains and professions.

B. The field or social ambit within which the domain is situated. Surrounding any profession is an ensemble of training institutions, gatekeepers, prizes, sorting mechanisms, punitive agencies—all devised by those having an interest in the domain to regulate its operation. Within medicine, the field consists of such assorted entities as medical texts, medical school admission departments, internships and residencies, and the bodies that issue and withdraw licenses. Whereas the sum of domains constitutes the culture, the sum of fields constitutes the society.

C. The individual is the locus of all work. Whatever the rewards and strictures of the ambient society, in the end it is the individual—with her beliefs, values, goals, motivations, personality, temperament, fears, ambivalences, and so forth—that takes a stance vis-à-vis the precepts of the domain and is ultimately placed, honored, or chastised by the field. With respect to our example, the domain of medicine in the United States consists of the approximately 850,000 individuals who are empowered to practice medicine.

D. The control mechanisms of the society. Individuals from their chosen domains located in societal fields are inevitably subjected to broader forces within the society: the opportunities available, the prevalent rewarding and punishing mechanisms, the messages prevalent on the street and in the media. In the United States of the early twenty-first century, powerful messages about the hegemony of the market and the need to succeed financially exert potent pressures on the practice and the practitioners of medicine. Such forces can give rise to physicians who participate in large HMOs or who risk hanging up a single shingle, who work in consort with drug companies or who travel to Haiti to help control the AIDS epidemic, who practice concierge medicine or campaign for single-payer health plans.

All four of these forces are always present. The ways in which they operate and interact determine the likelihood of good work.

FINDINGS

1. Alignment

Our first and in many ways fundamental finding grows directly out of the application of our framework. In our search for individuals who exemplify good work and institutions that are hospitable to Good Work, we identified a crucial factor—that of alignment as opposed to misalignment or nonalignment. Briefly put, good work is easier to carry out in instances when all of the major stakeholders involved with the domain want the same thing. Conversely, good work proves elusive in cases where the various stakeholders espouse different and often conflicting goals.

As it happens, the first two domains studied—genetics and journalism—provided starkly contrasting cases. In the United States at the end of the twentieth century, genetics turned out to be a well-aligned domain. The principal stakeholders—the scientists, their funders, the core values of science, the current social institutions—all wanted the same thing: basic and applied discoveries that would lead to better health and longer lives. Geneticists were seen as key to this goal, and so all roads were wide open to their dedicated pursuit of science. None of the geneticists we studied actively considered leaving the domain—most could not wait to get up in the morning, go to work, and discover new and valued knowledge, techniques, or products.

Journalism presented a dramatically contrasting case. At the end of the twentieth century, American journalism turned out to be a massively misaligned profession. Many reporters had joined the profession for idealistic reasons—they wanted to investigate the most important stories, report them fairly, bring truth to power, and do so in a way that was respectable rather than sleazy. But most journalists felt stymied at nearly every point. The tastes of the public called for sensation, not substance. News outlets belonged not to individual families (as they had earlier in the century) but to large multinational corporations that were interested in ever-greater profits—and, it appeared, *only* in profits. For them, selling newspapers or TV news programs was no different from selling chairs, corsets, or cigarettes. Investigative reporting—an indispensable accoutrement of a truly democratic society—was frowned upon: it was expensive and politically controversial, and—worst of all—it might embarrass the advertisers or the publishers. No wonder that fully a third of our subjects considered leaving journalism, and a majority felt that the domain was moving in the wrong direction. Alas, subsequent trends have only confirmed the con-

tinuing misalignment of journalism, with concomitant damage to its principal values, and little sense of what may be ahead.

To be sure, alignment does not guarantee good work, nor does misalignment preclude it. Even in the most aligned of fields, some sinners will be inept workers, or feel alienated, or cut corners. And even in the least aligned fields, some saints will pursue work that is excellent, engaging, and ethical. Indeed, some good workers seem highly motivated by misalignment—scholar Noam Chomsky and lawyer Ralph Nader come to mind. Yet, all things considered, it is far easier on practitioners bent on carrying out good work if they happen to have chosen professions that are well aligned in their time.

2. Differences across Professions

The finding about alignment cuts across professions. But each profession also has its own particular topography, a fact that counsels caution about generalizations across the workplace. In the case of education, and particularly higher education, many decisions occur at the institutional level rather than at the individual level. And so, in our study, we elected to begin by identifying institutions—rather than individuals—that themselves seemed to embody good work. Our measure of good work in higher education began with an examination of the extent to which priorities expressed by faculty, students, and the institutions' mission statement were aligned. Another example: in the case of law, we regularly encountered an institution that was rarely mentioned in any other domain—that of the partnership. And so we ended up studying what makes for a robust partnership and which forces can weaken it or even trigger its collapse.

The economic basis of a profession might seem an important factor in the quality of its work. And, indeed, we found that precollegiate teachers' struggles to make ends meet threatened the quality or the longevity of their work or both. Yet economic security does not guarantee work quality or satisfaction. We happened to study theater and philanthropy at about the same time. We had every expectation that theater would be a domain under stress, because of the difficulty of finding well-paying (or even paying!) work, whereas, in philanthropy, with no need to raise funds and with relatively high salaries, we expected the work to be unproblematic. Yet we discovered almost the opposite picture. A large number of grant givers reported feelings of uncertainty and anxiety, because there was no reliable way of determining the quality of their work. In contrast, despite the economic uncertainties, individuals in the theater reported great en-

gagement with and passion for their work. Perhaps only someone who really loved the art form would endure such an uncertain vocation.

Finally, the quality of work is at risk when individuals enter a field in search of great fortunes rather than because they cherish the work per se. Those who entered medicine in the hope of becoming wealthy were much less likely to embrace their work than those who valued the treatment of patients or the discovery of new knowledge.

3. Individual and Group Differences

Our sizable sample allowed us to look at differences within as well as across professions. Somewhat to our surprise, group differences were not particularly salient. On most measures, respondents within a profession aggregated with their peers. Put differently, the differences we encountered were as likely, or even more likely, to reflect the choice of profession (and the current atmosphere within that profession) rather than one's membership within that profession.

That said, some individual or group differences emerged. On the average, women and minorities reported less of a sense of "agency" or "control of work conditions" than did men and members of majority groups. Other than that, gender differences were not salient (James 2007). Asked to whom or what they felt responsible, a large number of African Americans cited their ancestors who had sacrificed so much. To a lesser extent this sense of fealty to one's forerunners was found among Jewish and Asian subjects, while it was virtually never mentioned by white Anglo-Saxon subjects.

By far the most striking individual differences were found between older and younger subjects. Older subjects generally endorsed the values of their profession, honored those who adhered to them, spoke appreciatively of their mentors, and reported their own efforts to behave in an ethical manner. In contrast, our younger subjects reported a much more mixed picture. They less often cited mentors and more frequently lamented the absence of mentors or other heroic figures. Often they focused instead on a tormentor or antimentor. And when pressed for role models, they were more likely to combine features of different persons—a practice that we've dubbed "frag-mentoring."

Like their senior counterparts, the young workers could identify the qualities of good work, and they expressed their admiration for good workers. But a large minority of these subjects stated that they could not or would not at this time carry out work that is fully ethical. Their stated

reasons: they were ambitious and wanted to succeed; they knew or suspected that their peers were cutting corners or executing compromised work; and they were simply unprepared to sacrifice their own chances for success by behaving in a way that was more admirable than that exhibited by the peers with whom they were competing. Some stated this position reluctantly or apologetically, while others were quite matter-of-fact or even defiant—“That’s just the way that the world is.” This finding deeply disturbed us and was a primary factor in prompting our recent efforts at intervention.

4. Responsibility

When we arrayed our subjects by age, we also discovered an ever-widening circle of responsibility. Youngest subjects are most likely to express responsibility to those immediately around them: family, friends, their own personal agenda. As they become more firmly established, they enlarge the circle of responsibility: it now comes to include the institution for which they work and, at least sometimes, the particular domain in which they are working. Scientists talk about the importance of adhering to the codes of ethical science, while lawyers speak about their responsibility to the courts and to the pursuit of justice. Among our oldest veterans, we occasionally encounter individuals who see themselves as responsible for the continuing health of the domain. As noted, we’ve dubbed these wise persons as “trustees” of the domain (cf. Damon and Bronk 2007).

A useful division in the conceptualization of responsibility emerged across domains. Individuals in professions like medicine or teaching speak primarily of their responsibility to the individuals whom they serve on a daily basis—patients and students, respectively (Barendsen 2007; Verducci 2007). In contrast, individuals in other professions express a responsibility to a more abstract conceptualization. Thus, journalists speak of their responsibility to a broader public, to democracy, to the ideal of a free press; grant makers cite a sphere—justice, the environment, the eradication of poverty or disease (Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura 2007). We certainly would not say that one form of responsibility is more valuable or more to be cherished than its complement. Both are needed. What is not clear is whether individuals with different senses of responsibility (to person versus to career path) are drawn to different professions, or whether the formative processes and ambient atmosphere of the profession themselves inculcate different priorities of responsibility.

One surprising finding was the lack of invocation of responsibility to God or to a higher power. In the most religious developed country on the planet, only a handful of subjects explicitly mentioned God. About one-seventh of the subjects cited a spiritual element in their work: this could include the feeling that they were “called” to their work or a sense of mystery or oneness with the universe when they are in the throes of work (Wax 2007). Quite a few subjects mentioned the importance of values acquired during early childhood, and they often credited religious training, whether or not they considered themselves religious at the present time.

Some years ago, I presented early findings from the study in a city in the American South. The first questioner said, “Dr. Gardner, you spoke for over an hour, and you never once mentioned God.” As she explained, such an omission would have been most unlikely in her region of the country. The relatively low religious-response rate in our study could have been due to the preponderance of subjects from coastal regions, to a reluctance on the part of professionals to speak explicitly of their religious commitments to a social science researcher, or, as I suspect, to a widespread bifurcation between work life and one’s personal religious persona. Even in the United States, professionals may render unto Caesar those things that belong to his realm.

In an hour or so, I have covered a wide range of material. Our study is so large, and touches on so many issues, that I could easily have gone on with a talk of Castroesque length. But my goal has not been to be exhaustive or exhausting, but rather to give you a taste of what we did, and what we uncovered in the process. Clearly, we have not solved the issue of what determines good or compromised work in our society at the present time. But I hope at least to have given some hints of the likely factors, a way of thinking about the findings, and a few frameworks for considering your own work and the work of those whom you know and cherish. In the second lecture, I’ll turn to issues of policy and values as I address a pressing question: how can we cultivate good work in the young?

II. ACHIEVING GOOD WORK IN TURBULENT TIMES

Yesterday, I described the GoodWork Project, a social-scientific study of how one might achieve work that is characterized by three attributes: such work is Excellent in quality, it is personally Engaging and meaningful, and it is carried out in an Ethical manner. Good work is always challenging to carry out, and particularly so in an era when markets are very powerful, and few if any forces are potent enough to modulate the market. The research carried out by our group indicates that good work is most likely to emerge when the various stakeholders are well aligned, that is, when the workers, the gatekeepers, the general public, and the deeply held values of the domain are all, as it were, “on the same page.” Still, instructive differences emerge across professions and across groups; indeed, some individuals are motivated to carry out good work precisely because their chosen professional domain has been wracked by misalignment.

Perhaps the most striking and the most disturbing result to emerge from our study concerns the testimony provided by young workers—individuals ranging in age from fifteen to thirty or thereabouts. These young subjects could readily distinguish good work from compromised work, many admired good workers, and some—in a most impressive manner—strove to carry out good work themselves. But a significant minority of young workers rejected good work as an immediate goal. As they put it, sometimes regretfully, sometimes defiantly, they wanted to succeed themselves as they perceive it, many of their competitors were cutting corners, and so they found it necessary to suspend their ethical sensibility, at least until such time as they themselves had gained the desiderata of fame, power, wealth—the sweet smells of success.

Unless one attributes a perverse motivation to these subjects, one can assume that they are articulating their genuine beliefs. There would be little reason for these young persons—the proverbial “best and brightest”—to portray themselves in a less favorable light. Moreover, I can add that many other pieces of data—some from our own subsequent studies and interventions, some from other social scientists and observers—corroborate the meager ethical moorings of the millennial and postmillennial generations (Callahan 2004; Clydesdale 2007; Levine 2005).

It is difficult to determine whether the present situation is unique. Perhaps young persons in the United States have always suspended their ethical sense until they have reached positions of power or grown older and

wiser in the pursuit thereof. Perhaps we are simply observing the swing of a pendulum that will soon revert to equilibrium (Hirschman 2002). But, as far as I am concerned, these hedges are beside the point. The current situation of irresponsibility, of compromised work, is worrisome, whether or not it is unprecedented. I like to recall the words of former Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan: “It is not that humans have become any more greedy than in generations past. It is that the avenues to express greed had grown so enormously” (quoted in Fischman et al. 2004, 1). No doubt we are dealing with a human proclivity toward crossing ethical lines—the question is whether, and to what extent, that proclivity can be curbed, and an ethical sense can be cultivated instead.

Be that as it may be, our study of GoodWork, which began as a program of social scientific research, soon raised questions of policy and practice that I alluded to at the start of my first lecture. We wondered whether the present perilous situation could be ameliorated. Could we help to preserve good work in domains that seem well aligned? Could we provide support in domains that are poorly aligned? And, in particular, could we raise consciousness among young persons about the importance of carrying out good work and the perhaps less tangible but ultimately more satisfying rewards of doing so (Wolf 2007)?

Here, in a way that we did not anticipate, the market proved relevant, perhaps all too relevant. We had a product: the results of our GoodWork research, along with nascent ideas about how one might intervene to increase the incidence of good work. The question, baldly put, was this: if we issued a supply of good work findings and recommendations, would there be any purchasers, any buyers, of our product?

An aside about my own earlier work may be relevant here. A quarter of a century ago (Gardner 1983), I put forth the theory of multiple intelligences (MI)—a theory of how the mind develops and how it is organized. I considered my work a contribution to cognitive and developmental psychology. I could never have predicted the size or the site of subsequent interest in the theory. On the one hand, the intended audience—academic psychologists—have never shown much enthusiasm for MI theory. On the other hand, precollegiate educators—whom I did not initially target as an audience—have been great celebrants of MI theory, and interest in that corner has lasted until today. Numerous vendors have prepared “MI” materials, and many consumers have seen fit to purchase them (Gardner 1999, 2006). Moreover, the “meme” of multiple intelligences has crossed

national boundaries. I can look at a map of the world and tell you in which countries MI theory has been embraced, where it has been controversial, and where it remains invisible. The story of the cross-cultural reception of MI theory is sufficiently intriguing that we are now issuing a volume, *Multiple Intelligences around the World* (Chen, Moran, and Gardner 2009).

As mentioned in the previous lecture, the first domains we examined were journalism and genetics. Our work has had virtually no resonance within genetics; the domain has remained relatively well aligned, and many experts on genetics are already in place to monitor its progress along with any signs of turbulence. On the other hand, our work has been of considerable interest to journalists. In part, this appeal may be due to the fact that journalism is a troubled domain, we recognized it as such, and we had offered some ideas that might be of help. A major factor was a happy alliance with respected journalists Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, coheads of the Committee of Concerned Journalists. My colleague Bill Damon worked with the committee to develop a “Traveling Curriculum” that has already been used in approximately one-third of the print newsrooms in the country.

A word about the Traveling Curriculum. The major participants in the newsroom—reporters, editors, publishers—meet off-site for a day or two. In this deliberately unfamiliar setting, they discuss cases that pose ethical issues: for example, how to cover a story in which one has a personal interest, how to handle pressures from a lead advertiser, what to do when the Internet has scooped a lengthy and costly investigation, whether and how to cover a story that could be destructive for the community. Although it is not easy to document the effects of such a workshop, participants report that the discussions are generative and that impact continues to reverberate months after the intervention.

What of the other domains that we have studied? To some extent, the story is marked by serendipity. Because we had considerable funds to study philanthropy, and because we have published a book about our findings in philanthropy, there has been interest in this work—particularly in our chronicling of the “harms done in the name of philanthropy.” Conversely, perhaps because we never received funding to study law and medicine, and because, like genetics, these powerful fields are much studied, our modest work in these two “megaprofessions” has received only sporadic attention. Thanks to the efforts of Joan Miller, a professor of nursing in Pennsylvania, an investigation is under way of good work in nursing in the United States and abroad.

Perhaps not surprisingly, since we are primarily educators, and since two of the principal investigators teach in schools of education, considerable interest in our work has arisen among educators. Our studies of higher education, under the direction of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Jeanne Nakamura, have engendered attention. As I mentioned before, these studies have taken as a point of departure the institution—the college or university—rather than the individual worker. And much of the analysis has involved a comparison of the goals and values of the various constituencies on campus. Examination of the extent to which various stakeholders have similar views of the school, and consideration of what to do when these views do not mesh, has proved illuminating and suggestive (Nakamura 2007).

The work in which our group at Harvard has been most involved involves precollegiate educators and institutions—primarily secondary schools, mostly though not exclusively in the Greater Boston area. This work has been motivated both by our studies of the often difficult conditions under which public school precollegiate educators work and by our unsettling findings with respect to the wobbly ethical compasses of American youth. And most recently, we have extended this work to the college and graduate school level, through coteaching of courses at New York University and at Colby College in Maine. In the fall of 2007, our ideas about good work provided an intellectual rationale for the freshman orientation week at Colby; in the spring of 2008, we worked with undergraduates at Amherst College and Harvard College, directing sessions in which the students reflected on their life in college and on what looms ahead, personally and professionally. The sessions at Harvard have been quite successful and are being repeated annually.

Paralleling efforts with the *Traveling Curriculum in Journalism*, my longtime colleagues Lynn Barendsen and Wendy Fischman (2007; see also <http://www.goodworkproject.org>) have developed an intervention called the GoodWork Toolkit. The Toolkit consists of a set of nutritious, genuine cases organized in discrete chapters. The chapters map loosely onto the principal sections of the GoodWork interview: beliefs and values, goals, responsibilities, mentors and role models, the nature of excellence, and the overall contours of good work. Teachers or other staff who use the Toolkit are offered a wide set of options on how to proceed: they may, for example, go through the kit from beginning to end, select certain chapters for focus, add or revise cases, integrate cases into regular curricula

when appropriate topics arise, or link the cases to events in the breaking news or on their own campus. With able input from Scott Seider, we've been developing formal and informal measures for ascertaining the effectiveness of the Toolkit.

Let me convey a feeling for the Toolkit by summarizing three specimen cases, each of which actually happened:

Debbie, the editor of a newspaper at a highly regarded independent school, learns about a rape on campus. She feels an obligation to report this incident. But the head of the school pressures her not to report the rape, because it might dissuade those who are considering attending the next year. Intensifying the conflict, Debbie comes from a family of intrepid journalists, whose loyalty belongs to reporting the story, but she also has a younger brother at the school and does not want to jeopardize his standing.

Allison is a high school scientist with a strong interest in neurobiology. Her heart is set on winning the Intel talent search, with the concomitant scholarship for college. Her research involves an experiment with mice. Just before submitting her entry, Allison learns that the judges of the competition frown on candidates who work with live animals. Determined not to jeopardize her chances for the scholarship, Allison re-describes her study as involving an examination of mouse behavior that she viewed on videotape. To her delight, she wins the scholarship and proceeds to pursue a scientific career.

Steve is an engineering professor at a liberal arts college. He is an excellent teacher and one who believes in honest feedback and rigorous grading. However, his tough grading practices result in students having less strong records when they apply to graduate school. Steve must decide whether to adhere to his demanding standards or whether to inflate grades so as not to penalize those students with professional aspirations in engineering.

Accompanying the cases are questions and provocations designed to sharpen the horns of the dilemmas and to stimulate the students to reflect on possible courses of actions and probable consequences thereof. For example, students are asked to "role-play" the various parties involved in the case of the high school rape and the reporting thereof. Or they are asked to outline the various options that Steve could follow, if he decided not to alter his customary approach to grading. Or they are asked to predict

what Allison will do the next time that she faces a moral dilemma—thus raising the possibility of a “slippery slope,” culminating in chronic ethical malfeasance.

A first result of our work with the Toolkit can be readily reported. In a word, students find the cases in the Toolkit engrossing. They like the cases, readily enter into the spirit of debate, often disagree quite vigorously with one another, and draw on the cases and emerging concepts from one session to the next. A welcome, and less predictable, finding is that teachers also find the cases to be fascinating. Though prepared with a young audience in mind, the dilemmas resonate as well with older persons—and in fact, those cases stimulate them to reflect on their own career choices and on the dilemmas that continue to arise within their chosen professions.

You might think—and the creators might hope—that the Toolkit results in a rapid conversion to totally ethical courses of action. However, the early results prove far more complex, and, perhaps, far more intriguing. To begin with, the cases direct attention to issues that turn out to be more vexed than might have been expected. By design, in most cases the best course of action is by no means clear, and especially not so for young persons who have had little experience in reflecting on issues of morality and ethics. Then, when young people do begin to talk about the issues, they discover that they may well not agree with one another—indeed, the disagreements may overwhelm the agreements, and cognitive paralysis may ensue.

A powerful additional force often enters the equation: the proclivity of adolescents—and perhaps particularly of male adolescents—to assume a relativistic or an antagonistic stance. Quite frequently the discussion begins with a bald statement of “That’s the way the world is” or “Ethics are a luxury we can’t afford” or “Who tells the truth, anyway?” Such sharply worded positions can produce a sharp rejoinder, but they can also serve to silence or mute an alternative, more nuanced point of view (Gilligan 1982; King and Kitchener 1994).

As a consequence, then, an early effect of the Toolkit may be to yield confusion rather than clarity, ambivalence rather than absolutism or absolutism. Indeed, a recent study of a course on social justice, carried out by Scott Seider (2007), suggests that enrollment in such a course may actually make students less tolerant, less oriented toward social justice perspectives, at least in the short run. There are many possible reasons for this paradoxical effect. I lean to the speculation that such a set of exercises

exposes students to their own shortcomings, including their own self-centeredness or selfishness. Rather than face directly their own inadequacies, many students prefer to “blame the victim” and to assume a more judgmental and peremptory attitude rather than a more generous stance. As psychologist William James might have expressed it, “tough mindedness trumps tender heartedness.”

A companion study, also by Scott Seider (2008), suggests additional reasons for this state of affairs. In the spring of 2007, a small group of Harvard undergraduates went on a hunger strike to protest the low wages being paid to security guards. Seider made a striking discovery. Of seven editorials in the school newspaper, six were critical of the strikers, calling them self-important and misguided, and speaking dismissively of the security guards. Nearly three hundred statements posted on blogs by students documented an analogous trend: two-thirds of the postings were critical of the students. Nearly all of the criticisms were leveled by men; fewer women posted, and those who did were more sympathetic to the strikers.

I will add, parenthetically, that these results are staggering to anyone who, like me, lived through the contentious 1960s. Although only a minority of students at that time would have joined a hunger strike, I doubt that many Ivy League students would have voiced—or even felt—doubts about the propriety of the strike. The present results indicate that the dominant themes—the prevailing narratives—of our time assume a quite different perspective on issues of justice and equity. Many students accept that we live in a competitive, social Darwinian environment. Not all like this state of affairs, but perhaps a majority feel that we must accept it, and that perhaps, at the end of the day, a rough justice, based on ability and effort, prevails. Whether the financial meltdown in late 2008 augurs a new era remains to be seen.

Let me offer some observations, based on our opportunities to teach about GoodWork at three different educational levels. For students at the secondary level, many of these issues are quite new. Sometimes they have not thought about them at all, and in such cases, even the introduction of a case may constitute a “treatment.” Over the course of a session or two, the students’ eyes are opened to considerations that they have not confronted before, with consequences that are not easy to predict. Note that we do not use words like *ethics* or *professions*; we just introduce the cases as true happenings and ask the students to make sense of them.

The ambience of the school itself becomes very important. School communities are generally intimate enough that a prevailing ethos—or lack of ethos—is apparent. When school leaders decide to devote efforts to promulgating issues of good work, this stance in and of itself is likely to have a significant effect on the student body. A decision, for example, to hold a workshop on “why be honest?” or to devote an orientation at the start of the year to “meaningful work” constitutes a powerful statement. The discussion about the Toolkit can also highlight fault lines in the community: if parents, students, teachers, and administrators are not of the same mind, this fact becomes apparent quickly. Indeed, members of our research team have quipped that we are most valued at places where we are probably not needed, whereas the places that could most benefit from discussions of GoodWork may be too dysfunctional to take advantage of what we have to offer. The presence on campus of one or more “champions” of the project is essential.

In secondary schools with any degree of selectivity, one project of the students dominates all others: gaining admission to college. Indeed, for many students and even some families, this campaign is the most important project of their lives. The process need not be a damaging or hurtful one; students can learn about themselves, put their best foot forward, gain admission to the college of their dreams, and make the most of their opportunities. But all too often, the process is plagued by stress, dishonesty, and inequities: students distort their records or get excessive help in preparing the essay or managing the campus visit and the interview (Thacker 2007). And, alas, this dishonest enterprise becomes a model for carrying out work in the future—work that may end up being compromised, if not frankly irresponsible.

Once in college, of course, there is the temptation to relax, and some students do just that. For others, the process exemplified by college admissions simply persists, while being ratcheted up to the next level: will I get into medical school, will I get the internship at a major law firm or newspaper, will I win the Rhodes Scholarship or the position with the management consultancy of my dreams? Good or poor habits acquired during the process of college admissions transfer all too readily to the next challenge at hand.

Colleges and universities tend to be far larger than secondary schools, and students are older, far more mobile, and far less accountable on a day-to-day basis; accordingly, the challenge of creating a community—and in particular a “good work” community—proves more formidable.

More likely, there is no pervasive ethos but rather an informal collection of diverse, and often shifting, communities—an increasing proportion of them virtual, in this day and age. The tertiary institutions that succeed in creating an integral community against the odds are ones that have long self-conscious histories, deeply entrenched procedures and rituals into which students are acculturated, as well as regular processes of renewal. Princeton's preceptorial, the "Morehouse Man," and Swarthmore's hour of silence come to mind (Nakamura 2007). Not all of these processes are necessarily benign: for every school that promotes community service or intellectual ambition, others catalyze or tolerate weekend binges or exclusionary access to fraternities or final clubs.

Our limited experience at the college level has yielded some impressions: First, it is important that the Toolkit be introduced by faculty members who are trusted by students and skilled in leading discussions of multistrand issues, in a setting that is relaxed and promotes reflection and camaraderie. Abstract discussions of issues like ethics (a word that we generally avoid) or responsibility are far less effective than dissection of concrete cases that engender deep and sometimes conflicting impulses. Second, in addition to having a champion on campus, it is vital to create a feeling of belonging in the group—otherwise, these voluntary sessions tend to peter out. A focus on the work of college—grading, membership in clubs, treatment of diverse populations, finding a niche in the extracurricular terrain—is more alluring than a focus on worklife after college. Still, issues that bridge these worlds—for example, how to select and benefit from a summer internship—compel interest on the part of most students.

Our work at college provides a strong confirmation of a situation dubbed "moral freedom" by political scientist Alan Wolfe (2001). According to Wolfe, every society needs and accordingly evolves a set of norms about moral issues. The United States of today stands out from nearly every other known society because our country has embraced moral freedom. This concept calls for individuals to behave morally. But it is modified by unprecedented clauses: each person is free to develop her own moral code; persons should refrain from judging the morality of others. This "live and let live" approach may have some positive effects, but it certainly does not foster an ethic of responsibility or a sense of membership in a larger community. Indeed, a laissez-faire atmosphere tends to highlight an insistence on Rights rather than Responsibilities, thus laying

the groundwork for a society racked by compromises at the workplace, at home, and in the wider polity.

That said, it is important to recognize that many students—quite likely, a majority—carry out works of charity or community service while in secondary school or college. And although some of this work is doubtless resumé packing, much of it seems genuine and meritorious. We have been impressed by the ideals displayed by social entrepreneurs and by dedicated medical students in the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship (Fischman, Schutte, and Solomon 1999).

Yet the excellent and often sacrificial work carried out by young Americans must be tempered by two considerations. First, students often couple a trust and helpfulness in regards to those within arm's length with cynicism or even outright hostility toward broader societal institutions, such as those of the government, the media, or the American corporate-sector life. Morality stops at the exit from the dorm, or, if one is lucky, at the border of the campus. Second, and relatedly, students often execute good work without attention to what is happening in the broader society—they don't follow the news, or they don't vote. Thus, as civic leader John Gardner once commented to our group, "They may be helping dozens or even hundreds of people—and yet laws are being passed, or not passed, that are damaging thousands or even millions."

Finally, let me say a bit about teaching good work at the graduate level. For several years, I have taught the concepts of good work to my own students, and, more recently, I've cotaught a graduate course on the topic at New York University. Most of the students are educators, and, in a sense, they have already committed themselves to a life of service—typically one in which they seek to help those who are less fortunate, and one for which they will receive relatively modest financial recompense in a very wealthy country. In comparison with their younger collegiate counterparts, these students are far more aware, and far more critical, of the current market-dominated American society. For the most part they resent what they see as the intrusion of market considerations into the educational equation—choice, vouchers, merit pay, high-stakes testing. They are also painfully aware of how difficult it is to remain engaged in one's work when there is little public appreciation of stressful conditions at the workplace, and, all too often, little support from one's colleagues (one person's commitment to carry out good work may even be seen as threatening by colleagues who are not themselves carrying their own weight).

Those in education are dealing with ethical issues on a daily basis, and, typically, they solve them on their own. The opportunity to reflect with colleagues about these issues is valuable and appreciated. More so than happens with other professional groups, considerations of empathy arise. The capacity to empathize with students (and their families) is of cardinal importance in a “caring profession” like education. Except at the higher end of the age spectrum, education is also a largely feminized profession. Many educators feel that they are not treated with as much seriousness or respect as would be the case if the profession featured a more balanced gender representation. In the terms of psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982), educators lean toward an ethics of care rather than the ethics of justice that we found in professions like journalism and law.

As I’ve indicated, the GoodWork Project is largely an American undertaking—we are researchers from the United States, working primarily with subjects who are American. It is therefore notable that the project has engendered considerable attention abroad—indeed, it might even be maintained that, like the theory of multiple intelligences, it has been more visible abroad than in the United States.

Interest beyond the shores of America has taken three principal forms. First of all, colleagues have used the GoodWork approach and methodology. Most notable among them is Danish psychologist and educator Hans Henrik Knoop. An early collaborator on the project, Knoop (2007) has undertaken extensive interviews with Scandinavian—particularly Danish—leaders, in the areas of business, journalism, and education. Not surprisingly, for those of us who admire Scandinavian society, Knoop has discerned and reported a healthier picture of work—more examples of good work, fewer dystopic tendencies than are visible in the United States. All the same, some of the trends that he has documented are cause for concern: the intrusion of the state into the profession of education, and the increasing marketization of the press throughout Europe have challenged the delicate interplay among excellence, engagement, and ethics.

A second international dimension has featured networking with individuals and organizations who share our concerns. Some of this common interest emanates from the movement of positive psychology, which looks at the sources of human strengths—as opposed to an earlier focus within psychology on human pathology—and seeks to enhance them. All three of the principal investigators are affiliated with the positive-psychology movement, and this connection enables a rapid sharing and dissemination

of information. We have also initiated longer-term contacts with business and community leaders in England, Scotland, and Italy.

A third source of international exchange has entailed use of the Toolkit. Wherever we speak or write about this instrument, educators have expressed an interest in seeing it and adapting it for use in their own classrooms. And so, portions of the Toolkit are being used on several continents.

This internationalization of the project has proved a boon to our thinking and our practices. Although some of the conditions that led to the GoodWork Project may be specific to the United States, the issues raised clearly resonate in many parts of the globe. At the same time, the issues will surely take different forms in different societies, and many of the most promising interventions and solutions will come from abroad. For the past decade or more, I have spent a great deal of time in Scandinavia as well as Reggio Emilia, an Italian community that I have whimsically declared an “honorary member” of Scandinavia. In addition to the attractions of food, climate, and camaraderie, I believe that the most impressive models of good work have evolved in these corners of Europe. (I might add that, due to rapid demographic changes in these regions brought about by immigration, issues of good citizenship have now come to the fore.) As I have listened to international students and colleagues, I have come to understand that North Americans look for solutions primarily from individuals, East Asians from the family (and from entities, like the corporation, that are analogized to the family), and Europeans from the state. As was illustrated dramatically in the twentieth century, different regions of the world spawn different counterforces to the market—religious, ideological, communal. And today, both continental Europe and Asia are far more likely to restrict the market in various ways than is the case in the United States or Britain.

The components of good work play out differently around the planet. In some societies, such as those of newly developed states, ethical issues are most at risk; in other societies, such as those that are already quite comfortable, engagement is fragile; and, in a rapidly changing world, our conceptions of excellence are continually being renegotiated. Indeed, unless they are conversant with the new media and comfortable with rapid change, even the most talented young workers will soon become anachronistic. Good work is most elusive when conditions are changing quickly, and when our senses of time and space are being altered by technology. It might be thought that the United States would have an advantage because

of our leadership role in technology, yet at present parts of Scandinavia and East Asia are more digitally sophisticated than we are.

In this lecture, I've focused on applications of the insights gained from the GoodWork Project—research undertaken in the United States, over the past decade, in nine specific professional spheres. It hardly need be said that this is work done in a specific time and place—and that our findings would likely have been different had we worked at the end of the nineteenth century, in Brazil or Borneo, or in domains other than those that happen to have been investigated, such as engineering or architecture. (I might note, parenthetically, that we did not study the domains that, arguably, are the most dominant in the United States today—politics, entertainment, and athletics. If you'll permit another quip, we've outsourced those studies to someone who has mastered all three domains—California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.)

Moreover, in this lecture, I have also highlighted some of the differences that we have encountered—differences uncovered across the educational spectrum, and differences that might arise from international comparisons. Clearly, the story of good work across time, space, and domains remains to be written, and until then, any and all analyses, recommendations, and interventions will be partial at best.

Yet, as social scientists, while we revel in these differences, at the end of the day, we are looking for underlying patterns: if not uniformities, at least reasons that spawn the variations. Thus, if it turns out that a different one of the three *Es* proves problematic in various regions of the world, we'd want to explain why, or if it turns out that in certain regions, Empathy or Esthetics clearly emerges as a component of good work, we'd want to know the underlying causes and consider the addition of this *E* to the helical structure of good work; and if shifting demographics cause a heightened concern with good citizenship, we'd want to understand that phenomenon as well.

Until further studies are completed, we will not know how parochial—or how prescient—has been the present formulation of GoodWork. But for now, in closing, I would like to leave you with my best guess about the conditions that are likely to lead to good work, and how best to determine whether you are, or can become, a good worker.

Good work depends significantly on three kinds of support. The first is *vertical*. Crucial are the values and models set forth by those in positions of power and influence: initially your parents and older relatives,

soon thereafter your teachers and coaches, and ultimately your own boss or employer as well as the leaders of the broader society. Occasionally, an individual can be inspired by a paragon—someone not known personally but whose example nonetheless provides guidance. The more these individuals model good work and expect to find it in the behaviors and attitudes of their charges, the more likely that you will become a good worker.

Next comes *horizontal* support: your friends and peers when you are growing up, your coworkers at the place of your employment. Needless to say, you don't have complete control over those age mates: your parents have a say about your friends, and the employers determine who will sit alongside you at your workplace. Nonetheless, within those broad constraints, you do have a choice in whom you hang around with, learn from, or spurn. Especially in the United States, but increasingly in other parts of the world as well, horizontal support proves at least as important as vertical support, and increasingly so as one grows from childhood to adulthood.

Finally, there are periodic *booster shots* of a positive or negative sort. Whether you are embarked on a good-work pathway or not, there will be periodic wake-up calls: something bad that happens at the workplace or in your life, or, more happily, an example of true excellence, courage, or sacrifice for a cause more admirable than one's own self-interest. By definition, these booster shots constitute wake-up calls, but it is up to you whether and how you react to them. And those reactions can occur at the individual level, at the company level, as during an editorial crisis at the *New York Times* earlier this decade, or at the corporate level, like Johnson and Johnson at the time of the Tylenol scare a quarter century ago (Gardner 2007a).

Some of us will have far more personal agency than others—real or presumed—and that is a fact of life. As John F. Kennedy once lamented, "Life is not fair." Nonetheless, at least in a country like the United States, everyone has some latitude. I have been inspired by the writings of economist Albert Hirschman (1970). This wise authority contends that everyone owes his or her organization a degree of loyalty. But at a certain point, if an inadvisable course is being followed, it is necessary to speak up, to "give voice." And finally, if one determines that one can no longer be effective, or no longer live with oneself, then the time has come to "exit." In the GoodWork Project, we particularly honor those individuals who attempt to change the course of their organization for the better, and, if that fails, who launch a new organization that embodies the values of good work.

Turning to the last question, “How can you determine whether you are a good worker, carrying out good work?” we recommend the administration of four measures, each beginning with the letter *M*:

1. **Mission.** What is the mission that I am trying to carry out in my work? Is it consonant with the mission of my peers, and, if not, what can I do about it?
2. **Model.** Who are the individuals whom I admire and why? Do I turn to them effectively when I am uncertain about what to do? What lessons can I learn from antimentors, or tormentors? And if I have no single mentor, can I cobble together a viable model—a so-called frag-mentor?
3. **Mirror Test (personal).** When I hold up the mirror to my own professional work, and peer into it clearly (without squinting or distorting), am I proud of what I see? If my mother were to read in the newspaper about all that I’ve done, would she be pleased or ashamed? And if I do not pass the mirror test, what am I going to do about it?
4. **Mirror Test (professional).** When I hold up the mirror to my fellow professionals, am I proud or ashamed of what I see? If I am proud, am I doing my part? And if I am ashamed, what can I do to confirm the core values of the profession, and, if possible, to steer it into a healthier, more aligned condition? Should I seek to become a trustee of my profession?

Whether we are ten, fifty, or one hundred years of age, good work is never fully achieved, and never totally beyond reach. Indeed, it is better described as a continuing process of education—self-education and education by others—than as a onetime or lifetime achievement. Learning about other good workers can be helpful, and the interventions that we’ve designed may also make a contribution. Ultimately, it is up to you whether you are seen as a good worker. Many individuals deemed professionals actually violate one or more of the three *Es*, and many workers in the least prestigious of occupations nonetheless exhibit excellent, engaged, and ethical work.

I’m often asked about what would be a sign that our project has been successful. One answer that I give is this: “When people all over ask about whether someone is a good worker, whether she or he is excellent, engaged, *and* ethical, and when the answer truly matters: *that* will be a sign that

we've achieved the goal of our project." In this context I note with pleasure that a Philippine educator, Joy Abaquin, now gives public recognition to individuals who exemplify good work in different spheres—thereby combining my long-term interests in excellence and ethics.

Meanwhile, I end with the words of two wise persons. Novelist E. M. Forster memorably said, "Only connect." The goal of our work is to connect the three connotations of the word *good*—excellence, engagement, and ethics. Each morning, writer and radio commentator Garrison Keillor ends his *Writer's Almanac* with a pithy phrase, and I'll conclude the lecture series by quoting his words: "Be well, do good work, and keep in touch."

NOTES

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