

Career is not always a vocation

IN A RECENT meeting with graduating college students, I asked what factors led them to select their careers in business or the professions or other enterprises.

In the responses of the majority, one heard references to financial reward, security or opportunities for advancement in the corporate structure. While these motivations, practical and realistic, are not to be faulted, I noted the absence of a sense of vocation. Vocation comes from the Latin "vocare" — "to call" and suggests that one's life-work is a calling, the fulfillment of a mission.

ANYONE WITH a sense of vocation does in life what he feels needs to be done. He works for the love of the task and the satisfaction that comes with it. Often, the drive for economic gain and for security blunts our perception of "calling" and thereby denies our dreams and prevents us from achieving rest and meaning in life.

For centuries, religion used the word vocation to mean a religious vocation, a divine summons, a sacred mission. But I suggest that the term now admits to a larger meaning.

Our vocation is to be found in our inner inclination, aptitude and dedication. It is what we can do



moral perspectives
Rabbi Irwin Groner

well — as craftsman, teacher, chef, engineer, surgeon — anything we have a special talent for. I know a writer, a taxiderver, a receptionist, a tailor, and a barber who turned their humble jobs into vocations, or "callings" by the way they approached them.

THEY WORKED out of love of the task, a desire to excel, and a dedication to serve others well. The integrity of their work was a form of adoration. Their nobility of purpose so lifted their job that it became greater than itself.

Our sense of self-worth and well-being depend upon the realization of a vocation not as something externally imposed or chosen for us but rather as a calling we selected in response to the inner promptings of our heart.

The tendency in a scientific age is to see our future only in the structured patterns of rationality. We ignore the gap between reason and emotion, we shun the area of intuition, where some of our best inclinations dwell. In ignoring this inner psychic world, young people are apt to choose careers for shallow reasons.

I have known college students to major in a certain area because that's what their friends majored in.

THERE ARE fads in graduate studies as much as in rock music. Students ponder, will lawyers or corporate executives be in greater demand in the immediate future. How sad it is when choices about one's life-work are made without seeking an awareness of our innermost hopes and dreams, and our yearnings and aspirations.

The issue is far greater than choosing a career. Finding a worthy vocation sets us forth on the way to happiness. A sense of purpose gives a great lift to the heart, and a lack of direction can become life's heaviest burden.

Ortega Y. Gasset once wrote: "And every living creature is happy when he fulfills himself, when he is being that which in truth he is."

Consumerism has come long way

THE WEEK of April 29-26, 1986 is a celebration for all the 237 million consumers in the U.S. It is National Consumers Week.

The consumer movement pushed to the national forefront in 1965 with the publishing of the national bestseller "Unsafe At Any Speed" by Ralph Nader. Prior to this, looking in the dictionary for a definition of "consumerism" was useless — it wasn't there.

The word consumerism was coined by the business community as a term of derision to encompass all the activities of consumer advocates which began questioning the inadequacies in the marketplace and the unwillingness of businesses to respond to consumer needs and demands.

AS CONSUMERS, we've all actively participated in the economy from the first time we put our penny in the gumball machine. And, as consumers we have an important role to play in the economy.

The way we perform will in turn affect the performance of the economy. Remember, however, that the primary purpose of our economy is to provide the goods and services we want. Secondary purposes may include jobs, profits to businesses, taxes to various governments.

But these are all secondary to the primary purpose of satisfying consumer wants and needs. The job of the consumer is to guide the economy so that the goods and services wanted will be produced.

In 1962, President Kennedy in a congressional message outlined four consumer rights that have become the cornerstone of the consumer movement:

- The right to safety — to be protected against the marketing of goods that are hazardous to



Terry Gibb

health or life.

- The right to be informed — to be protected against fraudulent, deceitful, or grossly misleading information, advertising, labeling, or other practices and to be given the facts needed to make informed choices.

- The right to choose — to be assured, wherever possible, access to a variety of products and services at competitive prices, and in those industries in which competition is not workable and government regulation is substituted, as assurance of satisfactory quality and service at a fair price.

- The right to be heard — to be assured that consumer interests will receive full and sympathetic consideration in the formulation of government policy and fair and expeditious treatment in the government's administrative tribunals.

President Nixon added a fifth right: The right to register dissatisfaction — to have complaints heard and weighed.

But with these consumer rights come responsibilities, as well:

- Consumers must be aware of their role and function in the economy. Their purchases will affect what and what is not produced in the marketplace.

CONSUMERS MUST perform effectively. The

right to choose one product over another or to choose not to buy at all has an impact and should be a knowledgeable decision.

Consumers must not tolerate waste. Many resources are irreplaceable and it is the responsibility of all consumers to avoid needless use of resources or their pollution.

Consumers must be honest in their dealings. They should pay bills promptly. They should call attention to errors whether to themselves or to the seller.

Each purchasing decision you make is a vote — for one product over another or buying no product. Do it matter the choice lightly or abdicate the decision to others.

Consumer education is a lifetime process in our fast-paced, ever-changing society. National Consumers Week has been set aside to focus national attention on consumers — you — as the hub of our economy.

Celebrate National Consumers Week all year round by making responsible, informed choices when deciding to purchase or not purchase an item.

ECO-TIP: In celebration of National Consumers Week, the Detroit Consumer Affairs Department, the Detroit F.D.A. and the Better Business Bureau are co-sponsoring a conference on Tuesday, April 22 entitled "Food, Fact, Fiction, Fraud" from 9:30 — 4 p.m. at Cobo Hall. Registration is \$20. (Includes lunch). To register or get more information, call Evelyn DeNike at 228-6260.

The Consumer Mailbag answers questions. Address mail to The Consumer Mailbag, Consumer Detroit, 1025 Shelby, Detroit, 48226.



gerontology
A. Jolayne Farrell

Dad's case not unusual; he should see a doctor

Dear Jo:

My father, age 81, lives with us. He has several medical problems that he sees his doctor about on a pretty regular basis. Lately, he has been very upset by a urinary problem.

He has not mentioned it to his doctor as he says it will "go away." But so far the problem has not gone away. He is spending more time alone and refuses almost all invitations to go out.

Also, I have noticed that he has cut back on his fluid intake. I am worried about him; he just doesn't look well.

Jo, since he reads your column, could you give him some advice on this subject — and maybe he will get some medical help.

Mrs. J., Northern reader.

Dear Mrs. J.:

Your father's problem with incontinence is very common in men his age. Unfortunately, men of his generation find it difficult to speak about urinary disorders even with their doctors. Incontinence is very treatable. As with any disorder, early diagnosis and treatment are imperative.

Often an older person thinks that less control of one's urine is just part of aging and not a medical problem. Aging by itself is not a cause; there can be a number of reasons such as an infection, a weakening of the muscles of the pelvic floor, or a neurological disorder.

Anyone suffering from incontinence will answer yes to the

question, "does urine ever come unexpectedly and without control?" Problems with incontinence may vary from the loss of only a few drops of urine occasionally to the loss of moderate or large amounts of urine.

It is years until it reaches unacceptable proportions when hygiene is compromised and it is no longer a private matter.

Your father's way of dealing with his problem is not healthy. He shouldn't be cutting back on his fluid intake; it could lead to dehydration and other health problems. Isolation from family is no solution either.

It is years until it reaches unacceptable proportions when hygiene is compromised and it is no longer a private matter.

He should discuss his problem with his doctor at once. There are various routes that can be taken depending on his diagnosis. He may be referred to a urologist or to an incontinence clinic.

Incontinence clinics usually exist in an outpatient setting. Here persons are helped through medication, pelvic floor exercises to strengthen the bladder outlet, and psychological support. There are also surgical procedures that can be done to improve or cure urinary incontinence.

If there is one message that I would like your father to get from this column — it is that incontinence is not a hopeless condition, it is a treatable one. So, he should get help — now.

Readers can write to Jolayne Farrell at P.O. Box 68 Postal Station 6, 1075 Queen Street East, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

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