

John P. Campbell

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I was born on September 1, 1937 in Carroll, Iowa (the closest hospital) and grew up in Westside, Iowa. The town had 375 people then and has 375 people now. It takes its name from being adjacent to the high ground from which water flows west to the wide Missouri and east to the great Mississippi. It is rolling hills, corn, and beef cattle country. My father operated a small auto dealership and, although they are long since retired, he and my mother still live in Westside. They are simply the two finest people I know and I can never repay them for what they gave me. I have two brothers, both younger. However, the three of us were able to simulate an entire baseball game (both teams) which ran more or less continuously over several summers. When I was growing up, there was no poverty, no illiteracy, no crime, and no extremism in that part of the world. It was a Huck Finnish existence, Iowa style, and everybody knew everybody; and, generally speaking, liked them. German, both Protestant and Catholic, was the dominant ethnic influence. My mother spoke German, but my father did not.

I liked school and almost everything about it from the very first day. Most of my peers did also. There were 50 people in the high school and eleven in my senior class (8 boys and 3 girls). Almost everyone, except two of us, lived on the family farm and were full participants in the family business after age 13 or 14. Consequently, teenage angst as we know it today did not really exist. We actually had intellectual discussions in English class rather than power struggles. My three strongest interests in high school were basketball, baseball, and modern fiction, not necessarily in that order. A typical day was school until 3:30, basketball practice until 5:30, home for dinner, and then back "downtown" (one street, one block in length) to shoot pool and discuss the great books. The last part is no joke. I clearly remember delving into James Joyce, Wm. Faulkner, and E. Hemmingway while losing at pool. The English teacher was the best pool player. I was better at basketball, and my high school single season scoring record stood for 24 years. (They kept consolidating more schools together and the rules of probability had their way). Baseball was another story. I developed a great love for the game, but not much else.

When high school graduation and the time for college came, there was virtually no community experience to use as a model. Only a very few people had even gone to the university. I did have basketball scholarship offers from a few very small schools. However, the protestant ethnic ruled in our neighborhood and it dictated that I do something hard. The hardest thing around was the college of engineering at Iowa State, so that's where I went, knowing nothing about engineering. The things I knew best at age 18 were basketball, modern fiction, and midwestern farming practices.

Engineering at Iowa State was indeed intense. I did well but never developed a real interest in the field. However, during my junior year I wandered over to psychology and took a course in industrial psychology from Arthur McKinney, a Minnesota Ph.D., who had just arrived from the personnel research unit at General Motors. Bill Owens was head of the psychology department at the time. After that, it was all I-O psychology. I stayed at Iowa State for a fifth year and earned an M.S. in psychology. Art McKinney was my adviser. Leroy Wolins, the statistician, and John Black, head of the mechanical engineering department, were on my committee.

Having found the right discipline, I entered graduate school at Minnesota in the fall of 1960. The next four years were virtually an ideal existence. Graduate school was a bit like baseball. You were rewarded for single-mindedly pursuing what you liked most, with very few distractions to get in the way. They were indeed the good old days: philosophy of science from Paul Meehl, individual differences from Jim Jenkins, personality from Gardner Lindzey, social psychology from Stanley Schachter, and the chance to work on a number of interesting projects with Marv Dunnette and the people at the Industrial Relations Center.

During graduate school, I developed rather broad interests and published research results in the areas of group vs. individual problem solving, models of job satisfaction, and multivariate prediction models. The

graduate student group was not very large at the time but I benefited greatly from my close association with Paul Banas, Howard Carlson, Robert Carlson, Wayne Sorenson, and Paul Wernimont. Some subset of us had coffee together almost every morning and every afternoon for three years and we spent a lot of time talking about the world of applied psychology. It was highly instructional, very rewarding, and a lot of fun. It was so much fun that I gave almost no thought to what would happen after graduate school until one early spring day in 1964 Marv Dunnette stopped me in the hall and asked if I would ever be interested in "teaching." He was holding a position announcement from the University of California at Berkeley.

In spite of not having thought much about getting a real job, I had developed strong substantive interests in two different areas, the prediction of performance and group problem solving and decision making. Even at that time, I was bothered by the lack of any conceptual specification for what the nature of the criterion should be and for how accurately we should expect such a complex thing as performance to be predicted. I was also struck by the incredibly short time frames in which organizational problem solving and decision making took place and within which management performance was evaluated. It seemed obvious that the domination of short term goals was going to get the country into trouble sooner or later. During my last year in graduate school, I did a study of individual vs. group problem solving with first and second line supervisors at the telephone company. However, my thesis research was on the generalizeability of regression equations across different criteria and the comparison of various indices of information loss as the number of equations was reduced from K to one. It wasn't until I read Cronbach's "two-disciplines" paper that I understood why doing these two kinds of studies at the same time felt strange.

In any event, I rather casually assumed that I could put these interests to good use in some kind of personnel research position that would most likely come along. Marv Dunnette's question about whether I wanted to consider teaching changed everything. I had never really considered an academic life. A moment's reflection always suggested that I wouldn't be any good at it. Somehow the people at the University of California were fooled and in September of 1964, I found myself driving to Berkeley, never having been west of Omaha, Nebraska.

What an experience. Driving across the Bay Bridge for the first time and descending into San Francisco was like entering another planet. People had warned me that 1960 vintage Californians believed themselves to be in heaven and acted accordingly. In early September of 1964 that could not have been more true. However, three weeks later the first major tremor shook the fantasy right down to its fault lines. The Free Speech Movement (FSM) erupted and blamed the establishment for just about everything. Campus buildings were occupied, there were mass arrests, and classes were disrupted for most of the fall semester. The tragedy that was Vietnam was not far behind. However, I somehow managed to develop a new course called "organizational psychology" and start a series of studies in cross validation and predictor parameter estimation in multivariate prediction. I also taught Ed Ghiselli's course in measurement theory, when he wasn't doing it. However, before doing that, I took the course myself, and I will treasure the experience forever. In the classroom, Professor Ghiselli was absolutely masterful.

During my second year at Berkeley I joined Marv Dunnette, Ed Lawler, and Karl Weick in a project supported by the Richardson Foundation. The overall objective was to find all published and unpublished research having anything to do with the determinants of management performance. For the sake of thoroughness, we made personal visits to every university, corporation, government agency, and research organization that might possibly be doing such research and looked in all their file drawers. This effort produced the book, *Managerial Behavior, Performance, and Effectiveness*, which had at least three major effects on my own professional development. First, it illustrated how much can be gained from sheer exhaustive scholarship. Second, it also taught me that very large and very long lasting benefits will result if one can internalize, and overlearn, a working theory for how to approach each major research area. During my first quarter in graduate school, Marv Dunnette invited Sy Levy (Pillsbury) Cliff Jergensen (Minneapolis Gas Company) and Wayne Kirchner (3M) to come share their collective wisdom. Each of them said that the most critical component of an applied psychologist's training is to thoroughly master a theoretical position. The nature of the theory (e.g., behaviorist, differential abilities, decision theory) was not as important as simply having one. I'm not sure I believed them at the time, but I certainly do now.

Without a well internalized model of the world it is virtually impossible to look at the ill defined problems with which we deal and make sense of them. A third major effect of the book was that it forced us to think hard about the nature of performance itself, and that has become my strongest substantive interest.

There have been four other major influences on my life as a psychologist. One is the rich tradition of psychology at the University of Minnesota and the chance to interact with a lot of very capable colleagues and students. I somehow got to the right place. Don't ask me how. I only remember that I was offered a job at Minnesota at the same time that I became somewhat uncomfortable with the California culture and the sheer number of people in the Bay area. I did not move because of a big salary increase, more laboratory space, or other perks.

The second was the opportunity to serve as the associate editor and editor of the *Journal of Applied Psychology* over a period of nine years. It was a great deal of work but it was also a fascinating and very rewarding experience. I learned a lot about psychology and about my fellow psychologists. It also forces the person in that position to develop some kind of conceptual framework for the entire field. However, the thought of having read, evaluated, judged, and provided feedback on upwards of 4000 manuscripts is sobering.

The third was the opportunity to serve as the principal scientist for the U.S. Army's Selection and Classification Project (Project A). Because of excellent work by the psychologists at the Army Research Institute, the project was funded as a comprehensive, longitudinal R&D effort that focused on an entire personnel system at once (i.e., the U.S. Army's enlisted personnel selection and classification system which at the time had approximately 500,000 applicants for 125,000 openings in 275 different jobs). For the purposes of the research, jobs were sampled from a population of jobs and we had much more than the usual amount of time to develop measures of performance and to build a comprehensive battery of new selection and classification tests. The data base included two major samples of 10,000 people each. The project used everything in the textbook, and also incorporated a formal management function. Coordinating effort, meeting deadlines set years in advance, maintaining the original objectives, and mediating "differences of opinion" among investigators was challenging. Week after week, it demonstrated yet again that whether the issue is ability measurement, performance assessment, job analysis, data analysis, validation strategies, or the communication of research results, there is absolutely **nothing** as practical as a good theory. Without one, intelligent discussions of any number of issues is impossible, whether the conversations are with your fellow scientists, the sponsors, or the management.

Finally, a major, major career influence has been my involvement with Division 14 and the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology. From membership on the Education and Training Committee to Chair of Scientific Affairs to Chair of Long Range Planning to my term as President, I appreciated very much the opportunity to serve. It has enriched my work life and made me a better psychologist (at least as measured by my self assessment). I cannot imagine what the last 20 years would have been like without these experiences. I wish to thank the members of the Society, many times over, for the opportunities and the experiences they have provided.

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