

Overview and Advice

Ocean Tides, Fall 2010

I have to admit, I was a little nervous and slightly intimidated by Larry when I first met him. When I was initially starting my internship, he approached me and immediately started asking questions. How do you like it here? What's your role in the classroom? Are you getting to know the boys? Is anyone making you feel uncomfortable?

I knew he was a psychologist; something I was striving to be at the beginning of the semester. I tried to answer all of his questions and incorporate some psychology terminology that I learned in school.

In the next couple of encounters, we chatted a little bit and I became less nervous. Eventually, I asked him to be my career mentor. Before the first interview, as we walked the halls, he asked me about my nationality, family, and my hobbies and interests. I came to find out, he starts all interviews that way and I was proud of myself for making my first observation.

When Larry pulls a boy out of class before an interview, he always asks the same question; "Have you seen me around before?" and the answer is usually no. He doesn't tell the student that he is a psychologist because a lot of people will shut down due to the "reputation" that psychologists have. Instead, he explains to them that he is a consultant who used to work at the school when it first opened, but now he just visits on Fridays to meet with the students. He explains to them, the purpose of his talking with them is so he can get to know them. When he has meetings with the "Brothers" who run Ocean Tides, or meetings with the teachers, if ever the student's name comes up, he knows who they

are talking about.

Larry's interview style is extremely laid back and relaxed. He slouches in his chair a bit, my guess is because he wants the interview to feel less formal. It takes place around a large circular table in large high back chairs that are positioned on each side of the table. When discussing his interview technique, he said that it is important to start with questions that the interviewee knows a lot about and that are easy to answer. Larry's strategy is to start with a greeting, then ask about the interviewee's family. In the case of his consulting at Ocean Tides, he asks about the students' charges, likes and dislikes, and talents. He also asks the student to describe himself.

Not only did I learn how to conduct an interview from the consultant, I learned a little bit about the field that I will be going into through a personal, informational interview that I conducted with him as the interviewee. I used his technique for conducting the interview. Ultimately, I learned from him that in the field of psychology or counseling, it is inevitable to not take work home with you. I learned that more often than not, it has the possibility of taking time away from your family and it can prove to be a stressful career, however, I am willing to take the challenge. One of the best pieces of advice that I received from the consultant was to "find something you love, don't let anyone discourage you, and don't be afraid to fail.

I have been trying to find something that I love to do and the path to my career that I have planned has altered over the course of the semester. After a couple of weeks I had so many changing thoughts about what I wanted to do. I knew I still wanted to go to graduate school, but I didn't know for what. After talking with some of the students, I had this idea that I wanted to work at a Boys and Girls club, or another organization like

that, in the city where I would be able to dedicate my time to adolescents in order to try and prevent them from getting involved in gang related activity. I also had thoughts that I would want to focus on working with just juvenile delinquents and try to help them help themselves. After explaining this all to Larry, he suggested that I work for a few years, doing different things, to gain experience. Then after working, go to graduate school and at that time I will have a more concrete idea of what I would like to do. Also, because I do not want to do research, he suggested that I continue my education in social work. I thought hard about what he said and I think it would be a smart idea to follow his advice.

I am very appreciative for the simple fact that I was able to work with the consultant for the past couple of months. All in all, I learned a great deal from him and some of the advice I received will not only help me in my future career, but it will help me personally.