



Creating
Your
Professional Path
Lessons From My Journey

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Dedication

To all those who have enriched my life,
both personally and professionally;
and to those whom I have had the privilege of mentoring,
who are now mentoring others.





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Preface

The idea for this book, *Creating Your Professional Path: Lessons From My Journey*, has been on my mind for more than 5 years. A major part of my professional work has involved mentoring students in various ways. In this book, I want to act as a mentor to you by sharing some of what I have learned from my personal and professional experiences.

In many ways, this book is autobiographical. I describe the evolution of my professional path, focusing on teaching, writing, and consulting, and show how my personal and professional paths have intersected. My professional journey has included a number of different positions: high school teacher, community college psychology instructor, teacher educator, practitioner of individual and group counseling, consultant, psychologist, and counselor educator. My passion is being an educator, and you will learn about some of the courses I often teach, what I get from teaching, and lessons I have learned through my experiences as a teacher. Your path may be different from my own, but I hope you will be able to apply many of the lessons I share from my journey as you create your own personal and professional path.

In writing this book, I want to talk directly and personally to you, my readers, who include students currently enrolled in graduate counseling programs, recent graduates, new professionals, and those who are or will be mentoring others. As I share the lessons I have learned and am still learning from my journey, I encourage you to reflect on your own professional path. In addition to my lessons, 18 students in graduate programs or new counseling professionals have contributed stories about their own professional journeys. These

contributors share their vision, describe the challenges and roadblocks they faced, emphasize what was helpful to them in pursuing their career path, and provide recommendations for getting the most from your school experiences. Although their personal stories are diverse, they share a common thread. All of these contributors faced both internal and external barriers when pursuing their goals and struggled in various ways, yet they did not let these obstacles stop them from continuing on their professional path.

This is a book about mentoring. When I speak of mentoring, I do so in a broad way, and some phrases that come to mind are teacher, coach, adviser, sponsor, facilitator of personal and professional development, source of encouragement, colleague, confidant, friend, counselor, role model, and resource person. Mentoring is a cyclical process: Many of those whom I have mentored are now mentoring others themselves, and the cycle of life continues. Most of us have at least some vague idea about what we would like to do professionally, yet moving that vision toward reality is not an easy journey. We may face both internal and external obstacles that must be overcome before we can achieve our goals. In this book, I focus on some of the individuals who inspired me when I had little faith in myself. Many of us recall significant mentors who helped us create our unique path, and many of us have a desire to give back to others. My view of the mentoring process includes both how we were mentored by others, and now, how we take steps to pass on to others what we have learned. For me, a meaningful life includes giving back and striving to make a difference. I hope to stimulate your thinking about the kind of personal and professional journey you want to create for yourself. This is not a skills-oriented book, a regular textbook, or a “how-to” book, yet if this book achieves its purpose, you will find it to be both practical and personal.

Most chapters include some reading resources that provide an in-depth discussion of many of the topics introduced here. By sharing aspects of my career and the stories of others illustrating turning points in their personal and professional journeys, my expectation is that you will garner strength in following your passions and realizing ways you can carve out a meaningful career and a meaningful personal life as well.

Overview of the Book

Chapter 1 (Turning Points and Reflections on My Personal and Professional Journey) provides a brief sketch of my personal life

from childhood to the present, with implications for the turning points in the evolution of my professional career.

Chapter 2 (The Counselor as a Person and as a Professional) develops the theme of the integration of the counselor as a person and as a professional and shows how our professional life is influenced by who we are as persons.

Chapter 3 (Being Mentored and Mentoring Others) includes six personal stories from graduate students and new professionals who write about their experiences being mentored and how they are giving back to the profession by mentoring others. In this chapter I write about lessons I learned from my mentors, what mentoring means to me, my views on mentoring, and suggestions for getting the most out of a mentoring relationship.

Chapter 4 (How I Developed My Personal Approach to Counseling) describes many of the theoreticians and writers who have influenced me in developing my personal approach to the practice of counseling and psychotherapy. I also share my perspective on the integration of theories and provide guidelines for developing an integrative approach to counseling.

Chapter 5 (My Journey Into Group Work) traces the evolution of my involvement in the field of group work as an educator, facilitator, trainer, supervisor, and writer. I show the connection of lessons from my experiences as a member of various groups to how I developed my approach to group work.

Chapter 6 (Becoming an Ethical Counselor) highlights some of the lessons I have learned about ethical practice. The main emphasis is on my approach to teaching ethics and how I assist students in developing their approaches to thinking through ethical dilemmas.

Chapter 7 (Choosing a Career Path) offers thoughts on creating a meaningful career path. By way of their personal stories, seven individuals present how they identified their passions and met challenges in creating their professional paths.

Chapter 8 (On Being a Writer) offers ideas and suggestions on many different forms of writing—papers for courses, dissertations, conference proposals, case notes, letters of recommendation, journal articles, and books. I highlight my way of writing a book and encourage readers to find a work style that is suited to their personality.

Chapter 9 (Taking Care of Yourself) develops the theme that self-care is not a luxury but is an ethical imperative and a necessity. I talk about my own experiences in self-care and what has been helpful for me, as well as my limitations in taking care of myself. I show how maintaining our vitality is essential if we are to have the stamina to create the professional path we desire.



Acknowledgments

Let me give special recognition to Marianne Schneider Corey—wife, colleague, and friend—who read the chapters as I was drafting them, gave honest and critically constructive suggestions, and also brainstormed ideas with me for developing this book. She was a true collaborator on this project and did her best to keep me honest, personal, and focused. I would like to extend my gratitude to a number of other people who read the manuscript and provided me with valuable feedback:

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In addition, I want to thank and recognize the 18 individuals who contributed inspiring and honest personal stories about their personal and professional journeys. You can learn more about them in the About the Contributors section.



About the Author



Gerald Corey, EdD, is Professor Emeritus of Human Services and Counseling at California State University at Fullerton. He received his doctorate in counseling from the University of Southern California. He is a Diplomate in Counseling Psychology, American Board of Professional Psychology; a licensed psychologist; a National Certified Counselor; a Fellow of the American Counseling Association; a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (Counseling Psychology); and a Fellow of the Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW). Both Jerry and Marianne Schneider Corey received the Eminent Career Award from ASGW in 2001. Jerry also received the Outstanding Professor of the Year Award from California State University at Fullerton in 1991. He regularly teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses in the theory and practice of group counseling and professional ethics in counseling. He is the

author or coauthor of 16 textbooks in counseling currently in print, along with numerous journal articles. His book *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy* has been translated into Arabic, Indonesian, Portuguese, Turkish, Korean, and Chinese. *Theory and Practice of Group Counseling* has been translated into Korean, Chinese, Spanish, and Russian. *Issues and Ethics in the Helping Professions* has been translated into Korean, Japanese, and Chinese.

Along with his wife, Marianne Schneider Corey, Jerry often presents workshops in group counseling. In the past 30 years the Coreys have conducted group counseling training workshops for mental health professionals at many universities in the United States as well as in Canada, Mexico, China, Hong Kong, Korea, Germany, Belgium, Scotland, England, and Ireland. In his leisure time, Jerry likes to travel, hike and bicycle in the mountains and the desert, and drive his 1931 Model A Ford. The Coreys have been married for 45 years; they have two adult daughters and three grandchildren.

Jerry Corey is coauthor (with Barbara Herlihy) of *Boundary Issues in Counseling: Multiple Roles and Responsibilities*, Second Edition (2006), and *ACA Ethical Standards Casebook*, Sixth Edition (2006); and he is coauthor (with Robert Haynes, Patrice Moulton, and Michelle Muratori) of *Clinical Supervision in the Helping Professions: A Practical Guide*, Second Edition (2010). All of these books are published by the American Counseling Association. Other books that Jerry has authored or coauthored, all with Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning, include the following:

- *Becoming a Helper*, Sixth Edition (2011, with Marianne Schneider Corey)
- *Issues and Ethics in the Helping Professions*, Eighth Edition (2011, with Marianne Schneider Corey and Patrick Callanan)
- *Groups: Process and Practice*, Eighth Edition (2010, with Marianne Schneider Corey and Cindy Corey)
- *I Never Knew I Had a Choice*, Ninth Edition (2010, with Marianne Schneider Corey)
- *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, Eighth Edition (2009, and *Manual*)
- *Case Approach to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, Seventh Edition (2009)
- *The Art of Integrative Counseling*, Second Edition (2009)
- *Theory and Practice of Group Counseling*, Seventh Edition (2008, and *Manual*)
- *Group Techniques*, Third Edition (2004, with Marianne Schneider Corey, Patrick Callanan, and J. Michael Russell)

Jerry is coauthor, with his daughters Cindy Corey and Heidi Jo Corey, of an orientation-to-college book titled *Living and Learning* (1997), published by Wadsworth. He has also made several educational video programs on various aspects of counseling practice: (a) *Theory in Practice: The Case of Stan—DVD and Online Program* (2009); (b) *Groups in Action: Evolution and Challenges—DVD and Workbook* (2006, with Marianne Schneider Corey and Robert Haynes); (c) *CD-ROM for Integrative Counseling* (2005, with Robert Haynes); and (d) *Ethics in Action: CD-ROM* (2003, with Marianne Schneider Corey and Robert Haynes).



About the Contributors

Personal Stories

Honie Abramowicz, MSW, LCSW, received a master's in social work from California State University at Long Beach; she is currently employed in private practice in Huntington Beach, California, specializing in hypnotherapy.

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Jamie Bilezikjian, MA, received her master's degree in counseling psychology from Argosy University; she is currently employed at Orange Coast Interfaith Shelter, Costa Mesa, California.

Jamie Bludworth, PhD, is a licensed psychologist working in a counseling center at a large university in the southwestern United States.

Beth Christensen, MA, received her degree in community counseling at Our Lady of Holy Cross College in New Orleans; she is currently a doctoral candidate in counselor education at the University of New Orleans.

Leslie Culver, MS, NCC, is a part-time counselor at a nonprofit agency and a full-time doctoral student in the counselor education program at the University of New Orleans.

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Yusef Daulatzai, MA, PsyD, is currently employed as a psychotherapist at Pacific Clinics, a community mental health program; he received his master's and doctoral degrees in clinical psychology at the California School of Professional Psychology.

Mary Jane Ford, MS, is a therapist intern working in a nonprofit community counseling agency in southern California.

Amanda Healey, MA, LPC-MHSP, NCC, is completing her doctoral work in counselor education and supervision at Old Dominion University.

Casey Huynh, MS, MFT, received her master's degree in counseling from California State University at San Francisco; she is currently employed with Pacific Clinics.

Bridget McKinney, MS, NCC, is currently enrolled at the University of New Orleans in a doctoral program for counselor education.

Natalie Mendoza, MS, received her master's degree in counseling and educational leadership from California State University at Los Angeles; she is currently employed as a faculty member and counselor at Citrus Community College District in San Gabriel, California.

Michelle Muratori, PhD, received her doctorate in counselor education at The University of Iowa and is currently employed at the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth as a senior counselor and researcher. She is also a faculty associate at Johns Hopkins University in the counseling and human services department.

Mark Reiser, MS, LPC, is currently a doctoral student in counselor education at the University of Wyoming; he is also an astronomy instructor at the University of Wyoming.

Valerie Russell, PhD, is a licensed psychologist who facilitates groups and supervises interns in a community mental health agency in southern California; she received her doctorate in clinical psychology at the California School of Professional Psychology, Los Angeles.

Julie Tomlinson, MSW, received her master's in social work at the University of Southern California. She is currently working toward her hours for social work licensure; she is a clinical social worker at a Veterans Affairs hospital.

Toni Wallace, LVN, MS, RAS, is currently working as an educator and counselor at Harbor University of California at Los Angeles Medical Center as a part of the Options for Recovery Treatment Program for pregnant and parenting mothers.