

Counselling for Career Construction

Connecting life themes to
construct life portraits:
Turning pain into hope

J. G. Maree



SensePublishers

Counselling for Career Construction

Counselling for Career Construction

Connecting life themes to construct life portraits: Turning pain into hope

J. G. Maree

University of Pretoria, South Africa



SENSE PUBLISHERS
ROTTERDAM/BOSTON/TAIPEI

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN: 978-94-6209-270-9 (paperback)

ISBN: 978-94-6209-271-6 (hardback)

ISBN: 978-94-6209-272-3 (e-book)

Published by: Sense Publishers,
P.O. Box 21858,
3001 AW Rotterdam,
The Netherlands
<https://www.sensepublishers.com/>

Printed on acid-free paper

All photographs taken by Anton Maree.

All Rights Reserved © 2013 Sense Publishers.

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the Publisher, with the exception of any material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work.

Participants and caretakers gave oral and written consent for photographs to be taken and displayed in this book.

DEDICATION

“The loneliest people are the kindest. The saddest people smile the brightest. The most damaged people are the wisest. All because they do not wish to see anyone else suffer the way they do”

(Anonymous).

Dedicated to Mark Savickas, my personal role model and career counselling's most eminent scholar.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	xi
<i>P. J. Hartung</i>	
1. Turning Hurt into Hope: Rationale for the Book	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 How I Developed an Interest in the Topic of This Book	1
1.3 Why I Believe it is Worth Conducting Research on the Topic and Reporting on such Research	3
1.4 ‘Best Practice’ in Career Counselling Theory and Praxis: Perspectival Comments and a Call for Research	4
1.5 Meta-Reflection (Repeated Reflection on Reflections)	6
1.6 Overview	7
2. Need for a New Approach to Career Counselling	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 The Importance of Equipping Clients better to Negotiate Career Transitions	9
2.3 Broad Functions of Personality and Career Counselling Theories	10
2.4 Investigating the Continued Value and Power of 20 th Century Career Theory and Practice for 21 st Century Career Counselling Practice	11
2.5 Value of Present-Day Career Counselling Theories: Focusing on the Bigger Picture	11
2.6 Reflecting and Reflexivity as Integral Aspects of 21 st Century Career Counselling	13
2.7 Summary	14
3. The Effect of Changes in the World of Work on Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks for Career Counselling (Maree & Morgan, 2012)	15
3.1 Introduction	15
3.2 Impact of Global Workplace Change on Lifestyles	16
3.3 Predominant Waves in Psychology, Career Counselling, and the Economy Since 1882 (Maree, 2010a, 2010b)	17
3.3.1 Influence of Economic Waves on Work-Related and Career-Related Matters	17
3.3.2 Perspective	17
3.3.3 Interplay Between the Psychology, Career Counselling and Economy Waves Over the Past 120 Years	20
3.3.4 Connection Between Helping Models in the Career Counselling and Economic Waves (Molitor, 1999; 2000; Savickas, 2006a; 2006b; 2007b)	20

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3.3.5	Attributes or Traits Emphasized During Each of the Four Economic Waves and Concurrent Helping Models in Career Counselling (Savickas, 2006a, 2006b, 2007b; Maree & Morgan, 2012)	21
3.4	Epistemological Approaches that have Underpinned and Guided the Practice of Career Counselling over the Past 120 Years	24
3.4.1	Traditional (Positivist) Approach to Career Counselling	24
3.4.2	Postmodern (Qualitative, Narrative or Storied) Approach to Career Counselling	24
3.4.3	Perspective	25
3.5	Addressing Career Counselling Needs Across the Diversity Spectrum	25
3.5.1	Indigenization	26
3.5.2	Managing Diversity in Career Counselling	26
3.6	Summary	27
4.	Career Construction Principles and Practices	29
4.1	Introduction	29
4.2	Contemporary Personality Theories' Effect on Career Counselling Theories	29
4.3	Existential-Phenomenological Theory as a Cornerstone of Meta-Reflection	29
4.3.1	The Meaning of Existential-phenomenological Theory for Human Functioning, Development and Choice Making (Self-Construction)	30
4.3.2	Interconnectedness Between Existential-Phenomenological Theory and the Storied Approach	31
4.4	Systems Theory	33
4.5	Social Constructionism Theory	33
4.6	Narrative Counselling	34
4.7	Career Construction Theory	36
4.8	Self-Construction	37
4.9	Career Counselling	40
4.10	Life Designing	40
4.11	Life Redesigning	41
4.12	Career Adaptability	43
4.13	Role of Counsellors in Achieving Meta-Reflection	43
4.14	Facilitating (Guided) Self-Advising	44
4.15	Self-Reflection	45
4.16	Exploiting Reflection and Meta-Reflection to Facilitate Movement	46
4.17	Summary	47
5.	Salient Features of Career Construction Counselling	49
5.1	Introduction	49
5.2	Goals of Career Counselling	49
5.3	Creating a Holding Environment	50
5.4	Narratibility	52
5.5	Autobiographicity	52

5.6	Intentionality	53
5.7	Body Language: The Body Never Lies; it Merely Speaks the Mind (Savickas, 2009a; 2009b; Shapiro, 2006)	54
5.8	Listening Carefully to what Clients Say	54
5.9	Clients Listening to Themselves	54
5.10	Obtaining Authentic Self-Insight	55
5.11	Using Metaphors to Wrap up the Career Construction Interview	56
5.12	General Hints for Career Counsellors Unfamiliar with Postmodern Careers Work	56
5.13	Summary	57
6.	Three Early Recollections Technique	61
6.1	Introduction	61
6.2	Use of Earliest Recollections: Brief Theoretical Background (Maree, 2012a, 2012b)	61
6.3	Using Earliest Recollections to Identify Clients' Major Life Themes	62
6.4	Importance of Earliest Recollections in Career Counselling	62
6.5	Analyzing Early Recollections	65
6.6	Demonstrating How to Analyze a First Early Recollection	66
6.7	Summary	67
From Theory to Practice		
7.	Using the <i>CIP</i> and its Narrative Supplement in Career Counselling	71
7.1	Introduction	71
7.2	Aims of the <i>CIP</i>	71
7.3	Techniques for Eliciting Clients' Career Stories	72
7.4	<i>CIP</i> Properties	72
7.4.1	Part 1	72
7.4.2	Part 2	72
7.4.3	Part 3	72
7.4.4	Part 4	73
7.4.5	The <i>CIP</i> as a Unit	73
7.4.6	Importance of the Second Last Question, Part 4	73
7.5	Inductive Data Analysis Strategy	76
7.5.1	Explaining the Concept of Qualitative Data Analysis to Clients	76
7.5.2	Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Methods to Facilitate Career Counselling	76
7.6	Using Triangulation and Crystallization to Facilitate Quality Assurance	77
7.7	Summary	79
8.	Practical Implementation of Career Construction as Shown through Case Studies	81
8.1	Introduction	81
8.2	Savickas' Eight-Step Strategy for Crafting a Life Portrait	81
8.2.1	The Eight-Step Strategy	81

TABLE OF CONTENTS

8.2.2	Crafting a Life Portrait	82
8.2.3	Developing a Vision and Mission Statement	83
8.3	Case Study 1	84
8.3.1	Participant and Context	84
8.3.2	Mode of Inquiry	84
8.3.3	Ethics	84
8.3.4	Career Story ('Results')	84
8.4	Case Study 2: From Basing the Choice of a Career on the Advice of Others to Guided Self-advising	90
8.4.1	Participant and Context	90
8.4.2	Data Gathering	90
8.4.2.1	Quantitative Techniques: Psychometric Instruments	90
8.4.2.2	Qualitative Techniques	90
8.4.3	Process	90
8.4.4	Data Analysis and Interpretation	91
8.4.5	Career Story ('Results')	92
8.4.5.1	Maude's responses to selected questions in Part 2 of the <i>CIP</i>	92
8.4.5.2	Maude's responses to selected questions in Part 4 of the <i>CIP</i>	92
8.4.5.3	Responses to the questions in the <i>CCI</i>	93
8.4.5.4	Maude's reflections on her reflections	97
8.4.6	Discussion	99
8.4.7	Sequel	99
8.5	Case Study 3: The Importance of Noting Clients' Hobbies	100
8.6	Case Study 4: 'Stuck in a Rut': Using Facilitating Movement	104
8.7	Case Study 5: Restoring a Sense of Self	105
8.8	Case Study 6: Connecting the Dots to 'Confirm' a Career Choice	107
8.8.1	Interest Profile	108
8.8.2	Career Story Narratives	109
8.9	Summary	110
9.	Closing Chapter	113
9.1	Introduction	113
9.2	Is it Sufficient to Use only the <i>CCI</i> in Career Counselling?	113
9.3	Some Limitations and Caveats of the Approach	113
9.4	Recommendations	114
9.5	Advice to Others Using this Approach	114
9.6	Role of Counsellors in Facilitating Career Construction by Clients	115
9.7	Conclusion	115
	Epilogue: <i>J. D. Jansen</i>	119
	Notes	121
	References	123
	Index	131

FOREWORD

CAREER COUNSELLING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Paul J. Hartung
Department of Family and Community Medicine
Northeast Ohio Medical University
Rootstown, OH 44272
U.S.A.

The complexities of 21st century life require new ways of helping people navigate the world of work and careers. Longstanding emphases on fitting people to occupations and readying people for stable careers that dominated 20th century vocational guidance and career education practices, today give way to helping people use work to make their lives more meaningful and matter to others. A contemporary perspective on career as a project realized through self-reflective life design now augments well-established views on career as comprising objective person-occupation matches or subjective cycles of managing self in work and other psychosocial roles over the lifespan.

The career as project perspective recognizes that in an unstable world people must create stability within themselves. Career counselling in the 21st century therefore increasingly helps people to know and narrate their life stories so that they may effectively design their lives. When people understand and can tell their own life stories with clarity and conviction, they become authors who actively shape themselves and their life-careers rather than actors who passively perform in work roles, often playing parts scripted for them by someone else.

Harnessing the power of story in human life and responding to the need for innovative, inclusive and context-rich career development principles and intervention practices, *Counselling for Career Construction* masterfully combines history, best practices, contemporary models and methods, case studies and a distinctive approach to advance career counselling in the digital age. Author Professor Kobus Maree explains and demonstrates how self-reflection and reflexive self-construction – both central processes of career construction counselling – assist people across the diverse spectrum of human life and experience to use work as a vehicle for self-making and self-healing.

As Professor Maree explains at the outset, the reflexivity involved in counselling people for career construction helps to infuse work and career with the very private meanings that derive from individuals' experienced problems, preoccupations, and pains. He well notes early on that it is “reflection under the attentive eyes of skilled career counsellors [that] has the power to heal psychic wounding and scarring” (p. 10).

FOREWORD

Accordingly, the central goal of career counselling thus shifts from choosing an occupation or charting a career path to championing a meaningful work life that matters to the person and to society. In short, the goal moves from what occupation to pick, to how to use work with purpose. In telling their life stories, people shape their identities in the form of self-defining autobiographical narratives. These narratives hold and carry them through times of uncertainty and instability. Professor Maree explains this process as he elaborates on how career construction counselling fosters narratability to tell one's story coherently, adaptability to cope with changes in self and situation, and intentionality to design a meaningful life-career.

Comprehensive and captivating, this book both signals and amplifies a fundamental shift toward social construction to understand careers and the use of narrative methods to promote career intervention. In so doing, it recognizes and respects people as holistic, diverse and self-organizing individuals. Throughout the volume, readers will discover rich, scholarly analyses of established traditions as well as emerging themes in the career development field. Human stories told along the way engage the reader fully in these analyses. By describing and demonstrating how people may use work to actively master what they passively suffer, *Counselling for Career Construction* sends a resounding call to construct and shape life with poise and purpose.

PAUL J. HARTUNG
Rootstown, Ohio, U.S.A.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the following people for their contributions to the book.

Prof. Mark Savickas, for sharing his invaluable insights and for changing the course of career counselling forever. You are so right, Mark – magic does happen when we **move**.

Prof. Jonathan Jansen, for being a role model for me and many others; for giving and educating selflessly; and for his kind words about me and my book.

Prof. Paul Hartung, for his incisive input at a critical stage, for helping give the book its final shape, and for writing the foreword.

Prof. Annamaria Di Fabio, for her constructive inputs.

Prof. Chris Briddick, for his helpful comments.

Prof. Linda Theron, for offering fresh input from a South African perspective.

Mr Tim Steward, for his editing of the text.

All the clients and participants who participated graciously and allowed me to share their stories with others.

My mother, whose own story never fails to inspire and encourage me.

My son, for patiently encouraging and supporting me, often in the smallest hours of the morning.

PEER REVIEW

This book has been independently peer-reviewed by national and international academics who are experts in the field. The reviews included the entire text that appears in the published book and peer reviews were exceptionally positive.

The scholars who provided reviews of the book were:

- a. Prof. J. D. Jansen, Vice-Chancellor and Rector, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa.
- b. Prof. P. J. Hartung, Department of Family and Community Medicine, Northeast Ohio Medical University, United States of America.
- c. Prof. A. Di Fabio, Department of Counselling Psychology, the University of Florence, Florence, Italy.
- d. Prof. W. C. Briddick, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota, United States of America.
- e. Prof. L. C. Theron, the School of Education Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus, South Africa.

ENDORSEMENTS

Prof. J. D. Jansen, Vice-Chancellor and Rector, University of the Free State, South Africa

This book is many things. It is a compendium of classical and modern thinking in counselling that will serve generations of professional counsellors with a reference book to consult in practice. It is a critical survey and synthesis of knowledge on the subject covering a range of theories and methods that will guide Master's, doctoral and postdoctoral scholars for purposes of teaching and the design and the execution of counselling research. It is a treasure trove of innovative thinking in counselling that provides a launching pad for the next generation of research in this exciting field. It is a teaching resource for those who train young researchers and professionals in the field of counselling.

Prof. P. J. Hartung, Department of Family and Community Medicine, Northeast Ohio Medical University Harnessing the power of story in human life and responding to the need for innovative, inclusive and context-rich career development principles and intervention practices, *Counselling for Career Construction* masterfully combines history, best practices, contemporary models and methods, case studies and a distinctive approach to advance career counselling in the digital age.

Prof. W. C. Briddick, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota:

“The highest compliment to either paradigm or theory is when someone kindly and carefully nudges either toward further definition and utility. Kobus Maree has accomplished the aforementioned both thoroughly and brilliantly.”

TURNING HURT INTO HOPE: RATIONALE FOR THE BOOK

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I discuss how I developed an interest in career counselling and why I believe the topic warrants research. I support a shift in career counselling towards a contemporary, contextualized approach that will be of value to every person irrespective of colour, creed, financial situation or geographic location. Our primary aim as career counsellors should be to find the best ways to be useful (the term used by Mark Savickas (2005; 2011a) and also in this book) to our clients and not to align ourselves with any particular theoretical approach. I refer frequently to the growing realization among career counselling theorists and practitioners that so-called ‘objective’ (psychometric) tests often fail to assess career counselling-related variables adequately (such as subjective or phenomenological experiences). The term ‘meta-reflection’, which is used to signify the unobtrusive help counsellors give to clients as they repeatedly reflect in, on and for action, is introduced. The chapter ends with an overview of the chapters that follow.

1.2 HOW I DEVELOPED AN INTEREST IN THE TOPIC OF THIS BOOK

I have always been interested in the impact of poverty on people and the hardship caused by it. Growing up as a member of a poor family in an impoverished, rural environment, and seeing the suffering of others and the loss of so much talent, I took a particular interest in poor, disadvantaged people. I was always regarded as an ‘outsider’ – one of the reasons being that I grew up as the child of an English-speaking (Catholic) mother of Lebanese origin and an Afrikaans (Protestant) father in an exclusively Afrikaans milieu at the height of apartheid. A particular early recollection stands out: one Christmas day, when I was seven years old, my family and I visited neighbours on a farm in the distant Northern Cape. After lunch on that extremely hot afternoon, walking in the *veld*, I passed by a shack. I heard a faint noise coming from inside it. Upon inspection, it turned out that two very young children were hiding inside the scorching zinc structure. The older of the two petrified youngsters said: “Mommy is in jail and Daddy died long ago. The woman we live with is drunk today.” I was appalled by this human tragedy and the ‘hopelessness’ of the children’s situation. The neighbour’s reaction, when I related this story to him, still rings in my ears today: “This is a huge problem. There are so many of these kids; there is so little one can do.” Yes, we fed both of them, but

our impact on their plight was negligible. My life was shaped by this incident, and, subsequently, I did all I could to find ways to buy clothing and food for the poorest of the poor.

The older I got, the more I was intrigued by the way in which human beings often deal with their own pain, sorrow, sadness and loss by doing something for others (“turn lemons into lemonade”). Consider the following examples:

- a. A mother goes hungry and wears old clothes so she can save money to send her child to university.
- b. A wealthy father’s daughter is attacked and dies in a deserted part of the country because of no cell phone reception there. His response is to erect a cell phone tower in the region so other travellers will not suffer the same fate.
- c. A woman loses two young children to cancer and subsequently devotes her life to working in hospices and finding funding for the building of more hospices for cancer sufferers.

In other words, I have been inspired by the following principle: many people, after having suffered a tragic loss, reach out to others (try to make a difference in the lives of others who have suffered a similar loss) to deal with their own loss. This principle (healing oneself by helping others) is neither new nor startling. Freud (1961; 1963) is generally acknowledged as the first person to refer to the principle of turning passive acceptance of a given situation into active mastery of that situation. However, it was Mark Savickas (2011b) who coined the expression “actively master what you have passively suffered”, stating that every client’s story starts with pain. This inspired me to find ways of not only identifying clients’ initial pain but also to empower them to use their pain to help others and, in the process, heal themselves and make social contributions.

The following three remarks capture the essence of what is being said here. Firstly, Marsh (1933, p. 404) contends that “[b]y the crowd they have been broken, by the crowd they shall be healed”. In other words, pain (which provides the starting point and life plot of every career and life career story) is socially constructed and dealing with it will of necessity imply reflexive construction, deconstruction, co-construction (collaboration between a client and a counsellor) and reconstruction (Savickas, 2011b). Secondly, Rosenberg (1992), after having studied traumatized populations in Latin American and Eastern European countries, declared that “[n]ations, like individuals, need to face up to and understand traumatic past events before they can put them aside and move on to normal life”. What she was saying is that it is essential for counsellors to enable clients (and, at a macro-level, nations) to narrate their autobiographies, build on these life stories and “actively master what they have passively suffered” (Savickas, 2011b). Thirdly, Herman (1992, p. 207), referring to possible ways in which healing from painful experiences can be facilitated, maintains that “While there is no way to compensate for an atrocity, there is a way to transcend [and transform] it, by making it a gift to others. The trauma is redeemed only when it becomes the source of a survivor mission”. Herman (1992)

maintained that people who display a survivor mission make a conscious attempt to use their painful experiences to help people who face similar challenges, and, in doing so, manage to convert their own, private hurt into triumph.

Whereas the reality of trauma, pain and hurt can never be ignored or made up for, adversity can be turned into triumph, defeat into victory and loss into gain by contributing socially to alleviating the hurt and pain of others; by enabling those that have suffered to persist and never to accept defeat. Commonalities of these four authors: firstly, every life story is defined by the pain suffered by its author. Secondly, for survival, it is essential to turn this pain into a social contribution, a gift to others who have suffered a similar fate. Thirdly, healing is brought about by narrating or telling the story to empathetic career counsellors as well as other valued audiences in the client's life such as parents, partners and friends. Lastly, repeated reflection under the attentive eyes of skilled career counsellors has the power to heal psychic wounding and scarring.

1.3 WHY I BELIEVE IT IS WORTH CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON THE TOPIC AND REPORTING ON SUCH RESEARCH

Realizing that millions of people have never been given the opportunity to construct themselves (realize their potential – Maslow, 1987), to design even remotely successful lives and to make social contributions, I cannot but agree with the following sentiment expressed by Bar-On (2007): “It will suffice to say that [conditions in which people are deprived of an opportunity to blossom] hide, if not bury, many gifted individuals, compounding the human tragedy that they evoke. It is interesting to ponder, for example, how many gifted individuals were buried, both figuratively and literally, among the six million Jews killed during the Second World War. Have we lost *another* Abraham, Jesus, Nostradamus, Spinoza, Mahler, Kafka, Pissarro, Marx, Freud or Einstein who may have significantly contributed to human existence and mankind?” (Bar-On, 2007, p. 137). Clearly, a career counselling strategy is needed for all people across the diversity continuum. All clients deserve career counselling irrespective of gender, socioeconomic situation, sexual preference, age or creed, including the most disadvantaged. The focus on career counselling internationally accordingly needs to be adapted to meet the requirements of **all** people.

Taking my cue from Winslade (2011), I believe that career counselling today should enable career counsellors to answer the following career counselling questions: how will postmodern career counselling be useful to a) a gifted 17-year-old learner from a private school in Sydney who wishes to study medicine, b) an average 18-year old girl in Grade 12 in a public school in Gaborone who wishes to become a teacher, c) a 15-year-old boy from Soshanguve who sells newspapers to support his seven siblings, d) a young child soldier who suffered brain damage in the war in Darfur, e) a glue-sniffing street child in Mumbai, f) a penniless mother of eight in Nigeria, g) an inmate with AIDS serving a lengthy prison sentence in Lagos,

h) a homeless vagrant with no education in Sao Paulo, i) a beggar roaming the streets of Istanbul, or j) an alcoholic roaming the streets of New York?

An Approach is Needed that Will be of Value to Every Person Irrespective of Colour, Creed, Financial Situation or Geographic Location.

The proposed shift in career counselling (discussed later on; see Chapters 2 and 3) towards a contemporary, contextualized approach is built on respect and is aimed at exploiting change and its effects. Such an approach compels clients and counsellors to re-author clients' stories in a way that facilitates movement from pain-filled to triumph-filled themes and, ultimately, making social contributions. This will facilitate the making of social contributions, which lies at the heart of what I am advocating. This approach ties in with a multi-method approach comprising quantitative and qualitative, objective and subjective methods of career counselling assessment, data gathering and counselling (Hartung, 2011; Maree & Molepo, 2007; Maree, 2010a, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c). Emphasis is placed on identifying deep-seated strengths and motives in clients and on using innovative techniques to empower clients to a) reflect on their career and life stories, and b) reflect on these reflections to initiate appropriate action because magic is bound to occur when clients begin to move (self-construction, self-realization or development will occur when people make an active attempt to let it happen) (Savickas, 2011b). The mere desire or motivation to do something means little as does merely promising or 'taking' a decision to work harder, to do job analysis, or to 'do better' (Krieshok, Black & McKay 2009; Watkins, 1984). Storied career counselling consequently stresses the vital merger between clients' intention and action (Polkinghorne, 1990, 1992). The value of movement (action) as the ultimate aim of career counselling is generally acknowledged:

“[G]et your patient, any way you wish, any way you can, to do something”
(Erickson, in Zeig, 1980, p. 143).

Cochran (1997), Rogers (1942) and Young and Valach (1996; 2004) emphasize its role in making plans, setting goals and predicting consequences, which enable people to make sense of themselves and the social world in which they live. These authors describe action in terms of three steps: constructing a meaningful perspective in which possibilities become available; devising a life design to enable clients to achieve these possibilities; and, eventually, accomplishing these possibilities through action.

1.4 'BEST PRACTICE' IN CAREER COUNSELLING THEORY AND PRAXIS: PERSPECTIVAL COMMENTS AND A CALL FOR RESEARCH

I concur with Hartung (2010) when he says there is a growing realization among career counselling theorists and practitioners that so-called 'objective' (psychometric) tests often fail to assess all career counselling (including personality- and values-related) variables adequately (such as subjective or phenomenological experiences).

Hartung (2010, 2011), Nauta (2010) and Savickas et al. (2009) have shown that people do change over time often resulting in disappointment in the initial career-related choices of young adults and others later on in their lives (Borchard, 1995).

Over the past 25 years or longer, the value of qualitative approaches to career counselling has received increasing recognition as has the consequent development and application of narrative intervention theories and the accompanying strategies and assessment instruments in career counselling. However, some academics, theoreticians and practitioners do not see any need for a paradigm shift in career counselling. This view has been expressed at numerous conferences on postmodern-related topics and in anonymous feedback I have received on manuscripts dealing with qualitative approaches to career counselling submitted to scholarly journals. A handful of academics even totally reject the use of postmodern approaches to career counselling.

These academics argue that there are problems associated with the use of postmodern approaches to career counselling and use the following arguments to substantiate their point of view.

- a. The assumption that a changed approach to career counselling is needed in the 21st century has not been proved. In other words, there is insufficient empirical justification for using qualitative approaches to career counselling.
- b. Likewise, there is insufficient evidence (research data) to suggest that career theory and practice require a paradigm shift in the 21st century or to suggest that career counselling interventions require (as one anonymous reviewer put it) “the narrative approach to be effective in the 21st century”.
- c. There are no data to suggest that narrative approaches facilitate ‘better’ counselling outcomes or results than non-narrative approaches.
- d. It is not necessary for career counsellors to rethink their approaches when dealing with clients who present for career counselling in the 21st century.

I respect these practitioners’ endorsement of a quantitative approach to career counselling and their rejection of a qualitative or combined approach. I also understand the view expressed by some colleagues that adopting a qualitative approach implies the abandonment of a quantitative approach, even though I disagree. Based on their acceptance of logical positivist approaches to career counselling, they insist on more research-based evidence for the use of qualitative approaches, arguing that insufficient research evidence exists to support the use of the narrative approach to career counselling. In terms of their logical positivist conceptual framework, they are right. Moving beyond an approach that has served them well over time, that they feel comfortable with and that has brought them success (success defined from their perspective) does not appeal or make sense to them.

I believe it is not helpful to weigh up one approach against another or to adopt an either/or approach (i.e., using one approach to the exclusion of the other). Rather, I believe that we should endeavour to use the best elements in both approaches to career counselling. **After all, our primary allegiance in career counselling should never be to any particular theoretical approach. Our aim should be to find the**

best ways to be useful to our clients. Phares' warning about personality theories also applies to career theories:

A rigid and blind adherence to a theory can reduce one's effectiveness as a clinician ... When a better [theory] comes along, one must have the willingness and capacity to adopt it. Ultimate allegiance should be, not to a theory, but to the very best ways of describing clients and intervening on their behalf (Phares, 1992, p. 64).

McIlveen (P. McIlveen, personal communication, October 16, 2012) neatly encapsulates what has been said thus far:

Dan McAdams' integrative theory of personality is the contemporary framework for understanding career. It draws together dispositional traits, social-cognitive adaptations, and life stories, all given in the rich contexts of human existence. This theory progresses the understanding of an individual from the general (e.g., measured traits seen in the "average" person) through to the specific (i.e., the life stories that only an individual can live). Savickas' career construction theory aligns with McAdams' theory. From the perspective of the career construction theory, a person's career can be understood as traits, abilities, skills objectively known through to the unique personal stories subjectively known. Thus, staying true to McAdams and Savickas' theory requires the career development practitioner to consider objective, quantitative psychometric measures that represent a person's traits, abilities, and skills, in combination with the rich subjectivity of stories qualitatively told and heard. This combination of quantitative and qualitative career assessment and counselling honours the vision foretold by Donald Super.

The power of early childhood experiences and memories should be factored into any career counselling approach or strategy and the effectiveness of these interventions, strategies, techniques and instruments in career counselling settings should be demonstrated (Di Fabio, 2012; Di Fabio & Maree, 2011; Hartung, 2011; Maree, 2012a, 2012b; Savickas, 2011a, 2011b, 2012; Subich, 2011). In addition, researchers and practitioners should not only theorize about what works in career counselling but also conduct research and report on the value and limits of narrative career counselling in one-on-one (private) practice settings as well as in (small or large) group-based contexts (Di Fabio & Maree, 2011; Niles, 2003; Savickas, 2001b, 2011c; Skovholt, Morgan & Negron-Cunningham, 1989) and, especially, in non-traditional contexts).

1.5 META-REFLECTION (REPEATED REFLECTION ON REFLECTIONS)

In line with the perspective supported in this book, clients should be regarded as the sole experts on themselves and enabled to narrate and authorize their own stories – counsellors should adopt a 'not-knowing' position aimed primarily at facilitating self- and career construction on the part of clients by encouraging them to elicit and eventually recount their career and life stories (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992; Joffe,

1999). Such encouragement should better equip clients to negotiate career transitions by choosing careers, designing successful lives and making meaningful social contributions. Savickas et al. (2009) believe that the personal life story provides the script for each individual's life and should be drawn on in times of change to enable clients to manage repeated shifts from occupation to occupation. Career counsellors' primary task is to create safe spaces where reflexivity is encouraged; to enable reflection and repeated reflection on clients' reflections. Clients are thus helped to navigate career-related transitions and rise above the weaknesses experienced in the past and the present as well as the projected weaknesses in the future (Chen, 2007; Savickas et al., 2009). These weaknesses can undermine clients' chances of making a proper living, their chances of establishing satisfactory social networks and becoming self-directed and self-determined (Blustein, 2010), and their chances of designing successful lives and making valuable social contributions (Savickas et al., 2009).

Polkinghorne and Savickas both highlight the importance of ongoing reflection during career counselling. 'Meta-reflection' is accordingly used in this book to refer to reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action (Farrell, 2004; Killion & Todnew, 1991; Kuenzli, 2006; Schon, 1987). All meta-cognitive activity, namely planning, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self-regulation and decision making (Flavell, 1979), is included in the term. The term is used to signify the unobtrusive help given by counsellors to clients as they (the clients) reflect in, but, more particularly, on and for action. Clients are guided to reflect on their lives by narrating their career and life stories during the initial, elicitation phase. For me, the success of career counselling depends largely on the degree to which career counsellors can guide clients to reflect authentically on their own as well as on the counsellors' reflections during the second or authorization (Savickas, 2011b) phase of career counselling. Its aim is to help clients to 'move' (third phase) and culminates in choosing not only a career but, more importantly, designing a life.

Lastly: Many career counsellors still pay lip service to the idea of allowing clients to make their own career choice-related decisions. This is not useful and, in my opinion, contributes to high failure rates at training institutions and frustration in clients' working lives. The emphasis on enabling clients to author their own stories and draw on their own reflections should be understood from this perspective. I believe this notion, which is hardly new, is the essence of career construction theory.

1.6 OVERVIEW

In this book, I try to bring together career counselling history, best practices as well as contemporary models and methods. In reflecting on the past, present, and future of career counselling, I tell the story of the postmodern, narrative or career construction approach and the model and methods used to advance careers in the 21st century. The meta-reflection concept I propose is based on career construction principles and practices and is aimed at providing a personal and thoughtful examination of repeated reflection in career counselling.

Overall, I try to craft a text that is not just specifically instructive but also more generally so. The theory section includes much that is hands-on and practical. Hopefully, the inclusion of narratives in the practice section will clinch the turning of theory into practice and the narratives will illustrate the complexity and contextuality of partnering with clients toward (re-)designed lives. I explicitly call for research (e.g., exploring the indigenisation of developed-country models and the potential applicability of life stories, life portraits to the construction of meaningful/resilient retirement) and comment about the temporality of career counselling theories/models, thereby ‘seeding’ for research-oriented readers.

The life design counselling model (the first-ever coordinated counselling theory), has liberated us from the shackles imposed on us by an overly positivist approach. Ultimately, therefore, my aim is to demonstrate how Mark Savickas’ counselling for career construction approach can be used by clients to connect life themes in order to construct life portraits under the guidance of counsellors. In **Chapter 1**, I examine the rationale for the book and deal with the question of how to promote ‘best practice’ in career counselling theory and practice. In **Chapter 2**, I elaborate on the need for a new approach to career counselling and discuss the importance of reflecting and reflexivity as integral aspects of 21st century career counselling. This is followed in **Chapter 3** by a discussion of the impact of changes in the world of work globally on theoretical and conceptual frameworks for career counselling in the 21st century. An overview is given of the major events in psychology, career counselling and the economy over the past 120 years (Maree, 2010a, 2010b), and the differences and similarities between positivist and postmodern approaches to career counselling are explained. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the diverse counselling needs of clients. **Chapter 4** covers career construction principles and practices as a framework for generating meta-reflection. I explain the theoretical underpinnings of career construction and related concepts, including existential-phenomenological theory. **Chapter 5** deals with essential features of career construction. Basic aspects of narrative counselling, such as narratability, creating a holding environment, autobiographicity and the value of metaphors in career counselling are covered. The theory and basic constituents of the three early recollections technique are examined in **Chapter 6**. In **Chapter 7**, I explain how the *Career Interest Profile (CIP)* (Maree, 2006; 2008; 2010c; 2012d) can be used as an auxiliary instrument in conjunction with the *Career Construction Interview (CCI)* (Savickas, 2011b; 2013) to elicit the dynamics that regulate clients’ choices (i.e., elicit major life themes or motifs). I then indicate how qualitative and quantitative approaches and techniques can be combined and how the resultant data can best be analyzed to advance the career counselling process. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of rigour in career counselling. **Chapter 8** presents six case studies that demonstrate the value and power of the approach advocated in the book. **Chapter 9**, the final chapter, discusses some limitations of the approach, gives a number of recommendations and offers advice to those intending to use the approach. A glossary of key terms is also provided.

CHAPTER 2

NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH TO CAREER COUNSELLING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Given the dramatic changes in the world of work and careers, a more up-to-date approach is needed to enable career counsellors and their clients to respond adequately to new developments in careers, career choice and career execution. In this chapter, I elaborate on the importance of equipping clients to negotiate career transitions and then discuss the broad functions of personality and career counselling theories. I contend that 20th century approaches to career counselling no longer adequately serve the needs of 21st century people. However, I acknowledge that these approaches do have continued (if diminished) value and power for 21st century career counselling practice. I also explain the value of present-day career counselling theories in enabling clients to focus on the ‘bigger picture’ in their career and life stories. I conclude by discussing the importance of reflecting and reflexivity as integral aspects of 21st century career counselling

2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF EQUIPPING CLIENTS BETTER TO NEGOTIATE CAREER TRANSITIONS

Much has been written about global change (Maree, 2012a) and its impact on career counsellors’ ability to help people choose careers (‘construct themselves’) and also their inability to help clients embrace, celebrate and manage multiple changes satisfactorily, thereby promoting greater work and life satisfaction. Dryden and Vos (1994) maintain that the world is changing four times faster than the situation in schools reflect and Savickas (2006a) warns against equipping clients for a world that no longer exists. “In times of change, the learners inherit the earth while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.” In addition, theoretical counselling approaches as the basis for career counselling practice have been applied in various contexts over many decades, often with little regard for the contexts in which the career counselling takes place.

The arrival of the fourth economic wave and the accompanying changes in the 21st century global economy have changed the workplace and prompted changes in the theory and practice of career counselling across the world as well. Given the dramatic changes in the world of work and careers, I believe a more up-to-date approach (or paradigm shift) is needed to enable career counsellors and their clients to respond adequately to new developments in respect of careers, career choice and

career execution. Issues requiring attention include the development of decision-making capacity, indecision, lack of realism, actually doing something about one's situation, finding personal meaning in one's work, designing a successful life and making social contributions (Crites, 1969; Savickas, 2010a).

Savickas (2011a, p. 6) contends that "the applied science of vocational psychology and the profession of career counselling have been asking new questions during the first decade of the 21st century. The questions arise from the demise of jobs. In response to the recurring transitions that they will face as they move from project to project, individuals cannot maintain their employment, so they must maintain their employability."

2.3 BROAD FUNCTIONS OF PERSONALITY AND CAREER COUNSELLING THEORIES

Personality and career counselling theories have two broad functions. Firstly, they are used to explain how people make career choices and to understand the differences in people's career choices. Secondly, they help us facilitate the career choice making of people. Savickas (2011b) argues that we have not had career counselling theories as such in the past. Instead, we have had theories of career choice and development. Looking at the situation in career counselling through this lens, Savickas et al. (2009) assert that 20th century approaches to career counselling no longer adequately serve the needs of 21st century people. Savickas (2011b, 2011c) has consistently maintained that the advent of high modernity and (particularly) of postmodernity has led to necessary changes in the practice and theory of career counselling. Dramatic changes in the social organization of work over the past decades have demanded changed responses from career counselling theoreticians and practitioners.

A rethink of the generally (and often uncritically) accepted 20th century career and vocational theories and strategies is inevitable. The nature of career counsellors' inquiry into 'best practice' in career counselling also warrants reconsideration. Polkinghorne (1992) contends that therapists rarely find research (results) relevant because career counselling practice changes constantly and is bound by context. This is a worrying contention as the general belief is that research nearly always impacts positively on practice. Research must show that counselling strategies are effective in practice before boards of psychology will approve them for use with clients. At the same time, it is generally agreed that assessment instruments lose their validity over time. What was valid 40 years ago may no longer be today. Personally, I believe that new research on all assessment instruments should be published at least at ten-year intervals as a requirement for these instruments to remain on boards of psychology's lists of approved tests.

Contrary to the widely held view that practice follows theory, Savickas (2006a; 2006b; 2010a) maintains that theory follows practice: "Career development specialists have long preferred to move from practice to theory rather than from theory to practice. They base their interventions on methods and materials that have evolved

over time through the pragmatics of practice ... Each model for helping students and clients choose, enter, and succeed in an educational or vocational role must be used flexibly; view them as invitations and possibilities not recipes. This is what I mean by going from practice to theory. Meet the client, determine what she or he wants, and then apply a general model to provide that service” (Savickas, 2010a, pp. xi–xii).

This all gives rise to the question: how much value does 20th century career theory and practice still have for 21st century career counselling?

2.4 INVESTIGATING THE CONTINUED VALUE AND POWER OF 20TH CENTURY CAREER THEORY AND PRACTICE FOR 21ST CENTURY CAREER COUNSELLING PRACTICE

Savickas (2009c) and Savickas et al. (2009) have repeatedly stressed the usefulness of 20th century career counselling theory and practice and have maintained that the essentially quantitative or positivist (test-and-tell or person(ality)-environment fit) approach to career counselling is not inherently ‘bad’ or ‘deficient’. However, the approach was often not appropriately implemented as clients were frequently objectified through the use of scores on aptitude, interest and personality tests to find the ‘best’ fit between them and ‘suitable’ careers. By neglecting the critical subjective facet of career counselling, clients were often disadvantaged.

Cochran (1997) used appropriate narrative strategies and techniques to enable clients to play meaningful roles in their own life stories. He argued that the narrative approach to career counselling enabled career counsellors and clients to deal with personal meanings and the ‘private logic’ (Hester, 2004) as well as ‘guiding fictions’ (Adler, 1972) “in general and hidden reasons for occupational interest in particular” (Savickas, 2009d, p. 188) during the process of career counselling. While acknowledged in the ‘traditional’, objective approach to career counselling practice, the subjective facet received inadequate attention.

2.5 VALUE OF PRESENT-DAY CAREER COUNSELLING THEORIES: FOCUSING ON THE BIGGER PICTURE

Present-day career counselling theories hold that work can help people discover their identities, construct holding environments for themselves and for others and deal with pain in their lives (achieve self-completion). This is done by discovering personal and social meaning in their lives and healing themselves through social contributions (Savickas, 2002; 2005). Savickas (2006a; 2006b; 2007a) has shown how different theories can be merged by blending narrative and psychodynamic approaches with differential and developmental approaches to create an all-embracing theory (i.e., career construction theory; see Chapters 4, 5 and 6) that enables counsellors to respond to and deal with change and the impact of change. The *CCI* (Savickas, 2005) (see Chapter 4), which is based on career construction theory, is supported by the philosophy underpinning the narrative paradigm.



Two photographs demonstrating the notion of a “crossroads”.

2.6 REFLECTING AND REFLEXIVITY AS INTEGRAL ASPECTS OF 21ST CENTURY CAREER COUNSELLING

Kuenzli (2006, p. 27) argues that “[t]he ability to reflect critically on our clinical practice ... is a vital element of a healthy professional practice”. According to Finlay and Gough (2003, p. ix), reflection denotes “thinking about’ something **after** the event” (emphasis added) while reflexivity denotes “a more immediate, dynamic and continuing self-awareness”. Schon (1987), in referring to therapists’ therapeutic conversations, argues for the incorporation in therapeutic intervention of reflexivity (which involves reflection-in-action, i.e., reflection on certain matters during the action or while acting) (Kuenzli, 2006; Schon, 1987) as well as reflection-on-action (retrospective thinking or thinking after the action or event). For these authors, ‘critical self-reflection’ (p. ix) encapsulates both ends of the reflection-reflexivity spectrum. Reflection-for-action (Farrell, 2004; Killion & Todnew, 1991), conversely, is pro-active or pre-emptive and denotes reflection for a particular action. In this regard, Hedges (2010) asserts that it may be helpful to videotape or voice record conversations with clients in order to augment and facilitate reflection by both client and therapist. Transcripts of video- or audiotapes or digital voice recordings present an ideal opportunity for therapists to obtain feedback from clients. Clients can also take them home to listen to themselves and reflect on the intervention.

2.7 SUMMARY

Far-reaching changes have impacted the world of work and careers. In this chapter, I have argued in favour of a more up-to-date approach to help career counsellors and their clients respond adequately to these changes. It is our task, as counsellors, to equip our clients to deal with repeated career transitions. To fulfil this task, we need to rethink our current theoretical and conceptual frameworks for interpreting career-related behaviour and for planning our intervention in ever-changing contexts. Twentieth century approaches nevertheless still have value for 21st century career counselling practice. My thesis, however, is that the value of present-day career counselling theories lies primarily in their ability to enable clients to focus on the bigger picture in their lives. The next chapter, Chapter 3, covers the effect of changes in the world of work on theoretical and conceptual frameworks for career counselling.

NOTE

- ¹ This principle applies throughout the book: early recollections, anecdotes or memories may often not be true, but this does not minimize their significance in the life of the client and their importance during the counselling session. Clients generally remember and share the smaller and larger stories they need to share at that given point in time.