Moving On

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Abstract

Moving on explains a five-stage process of making voluntary change. The first stage begins with a realization that a person is moving toward or away from something and faces a decision to do nothing, perch, or continue on. In the second stage, seeking a right fit, a person explores vehicles for change and uses value-based decision-making to seek a right fit. Acting upon that right fit does not happen until a tipping point is reached, the third stage. Deciding to move toward action or not is a decision made when a person either impromptus, comes to know, or deliberates over information. The fourth stage explains the journey, decisions made and factors that affect decision making, and coping strategies. The fifth stage explains how moving on concludes by evaluating the success, or lack thereof, of moving on.

Keywords: voluntary change process, values, decision-making, coping strategies, classic grounded theory

Introduction

Change is a constant part of life and with change comes many decisions. This study began with an interest in what leads certain individuals to select a specific institution of higher education. However, as I began collecting data and following the grounded theory method, I soon became aware that although grounded theory may start in one substantive area it often leads to the emergence of a broader social process (Glaser, 1998). According to Glaser (1992),

> Grounded theory often starts off with a study located within a structural unit, such as in a particular business, hospital or school. The conceptualization going on in grounded theory automatically leaves the time and place of this unit. The theory is no longer generalized to a unit, but to a process which goes on in many other similar units. (p. 137)

Indeed, this is exactly what happened. The study went from a study about people's choice of higher education institutions to how people move through a process of voluntary change. Thus, the resulting theory is about how people make voluntary change.

Methodology

This classic grounded theory (CGT) study was completed as part of a doctoral degree from Fielding Graduate University where I completed a specialization in classic grounded theory. A grounded theory is useful in identifying people's main concern (or problem) and how they go about resolving (or solving) that concern (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A grounded theory is often identified by its core variable, the one idea (also known as concept or variable) that explains how people resolve (or solve) their main concern (or problem) (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In my theory, moving on is the core variable that explains how people solve their main problem which is how to deal with making voluntary change in their lives.

To start this CGT study, I made every effort to acknowledge and limit any preconceptions concerning the area under study. This was done in an effort to keep an open mind and be able to listen to what others were saying, and read what people in the action scene may be writing as opposed to allowing my own ideas to cloud what the data was showing. If a researcher is unable to set aside preconceived notions, then the researcher risks adding information into the study that has not earned its way in and therefore may unground and invalidate the study (Glaser, 1998). Similarly, prior to data collection and analysis, I did not read literature about the topic of the study. If this were done the researcher's assumptions would have become preconceived and not earn their way into the study; this again, may unground and invalidate the study.

Setting aside preconceptions, the researcher starts data collection. A grand tour question, sometimes phrased as a statement, is used to frame the inquiry. My grand tour statement was, "tell me about your experiences at [name of higher education institution]". This question was asked of three initial participants. Yet, as I analyzed the data, I realized that the information was not only about the process people go through to choose institutions of higher learning but also was more broadly about how people navigated change in their lives. Thus, the grand tour question changed to, "tell me about your experience with change." I used this question with the remaining 14 interviewees, some of whom were in higher education and others were not. I also collected data from newspapers, specifically about people who made difficult involuntary change decisions.

This study used two types of sampling. The first was convenience sampling, which the researcher uses to initiate data collection. The second is called theoretical sampling, which is where the emerging concepts and theories direct the researcher to the next data needed next (Glaser, 1978).

After attaining that first piece of data, I began data analysis. Data analysis, at the beginning, was simply a matter of taking important ideas, which were often descriptive in nature, and giving that idea a conceptual/ theoretical name. This process is called open coding and continues with the initial sets of data until the researcher begins to identify some theoretical patterns in the data (Glaser, 1978). Through continued analysis, I came to understand that there was an issue that people were dealing with and of all the coding that had been done, there was an overarching code that explained how people resolved that issue. It is this code that is known as the core variable; that is the one idea (also known as concept or variable) that explains how people resolve (or solve) their main concern (or problem) (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). At this point I started sampling only for those theoretical ideas that

are important (called theoretical sampling, as noted above) and coded just for those ideas that were related to the core variable (called selective coding).

As concepts emerged through coding, data was analyzed using constant comparative analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). I wrote notes on how one idea was related to another during open coding; and how one theoretical concept was related to another during selective coding. Glaser and Strauss (1967) called this process of writing about the code comparisons, memoing. Once theoretical saturation was reached (the point where no new variation is found), I organized memos into a theoretical outline, relevant literature was integrated, and the theory was written up.

Moving On

This dissertation started in the area of higher education with an interest in why and how people choose a specific institution of higher learning. Yet, through the constant comparative analysis, it became clear that the emerging theory was not just about the choice of an institution of higher learning but was about how people navigate the process of voluntary change in their lives. The core variable (that one idea that explains how people resolve their issue--in this case, how people deal with voluntary change) is called *moving on*. Moving on explains a five-stage process of making voluntary change. The five stages are: becoming aware of a need for change, seeking a right fit, reaching a tipping point, journeying, and drawing to a close.[1]

Stage One: Becoming Aware

In stage one, people become aware that they want change. This awareness falls on a continuum ranging from people who are unaware that there is the possibility for change to those who feel a need for change is obvious. People who are unaware generally have a feeling of ease about their lives or situations; however, they listen to suggestions. For example, a study participant's friend suggested that she change jobs because the current situation was so awful. The friend said, "you've got to get out" and "you got to find something new." Suggestions, like these, may come in the form of a nudge, which is when someone else is cognizant of the possibility for change and it informs or brings the other person to that awareness. Furthermore, sometimes people who nudge others are actually able to help, including financial assistance as in the case of a benefactor or it may include situations in business where change agents may stimulate aspirations for improvement in clients (Lippit, Watson, and Westley, 1958). No matter the situation, a nudge often occurs when people are unaware of the possibility for change.

Further along the continuum of awareness is when people begin to know that there is a need for change as they feel a desire to move toward or away something. When the awareness for change is obscure, people may be grappling with their self-identity and/or the need for self-improvement including mental, physical, and spiritual or some hidden agenda, such as one participant in the study who was attending college for the social aspect and not

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[1] Note, the topic of change was limited to voluntary change because the data showed that this process is much different than that of involuntary change.

for education. In this example, the participant was attending college to gain a sense of equilibrium in her life.

On the other end of the continuum of awareness is when people know they obviously want change. In this case, as people move toward some change they speak of their wants, desires, and longings. Change for people in this situation is being contemplated to better themselves, bring pleasure to themselves, or bring about transformation. Also, when people know they want change, they may want it because they are moving away from something. In this study, several people spoke of abusive situations they knew they had to get away from. Other offending situations may include boredom, inequality, or injustice. People who are moving away from something speak of complaints they have and needing to make change.

Understanding where one is on the continuum of awareness relates to valuing and timing. Valuing is a behavior people engage in when considering the relative importance of each aspect of their prospective change. As people evaluate each aspect of change that is important to them, they consciously assign a worth or value to that aspect. This is called *weighting*. And, when people subconsciously put a worth or value to an aspect of their change, *instincting* takes place. Additionally, a person evaluates the timing of change. If a person is unaware there is a possibility for change, then that person may not even think about values or timing. However, if a person has started contemplating change then the factors that are valued and the timing of the potential change become very significant. This idea is important because when the prospective change is known by friends and family, those people may actually want to know what is being valued and the time frame under consideration so that they can help (however, sometimes family and friends do not want to help; instead, they block).

As people become aware of the prospect for change and begin to place value on various aspects of their prospective change and evaluate the timing, they decide about moving on. One option is to do nothing, which generally occurs when people are satisfied with their lives and therefore any change would take energy and is generally not deemed, as necessary. Another option is to do nothing for now (perching) and keep the status quo while waiting for the timing to be better to move on. Lastly, people may decide to continue on. If the person decides to move on, then he/she seeks a right fit, which is the next stage in the moving on process.

Stage 2: Seeking a Right Fit

In this second stage of moving on, seeking a right fit, people look for a vehicle for change that will fit and work well for them. A vehicle for change that fits well is a good match for the person; and therefore, is different for each person depending on individual values and appropriate timing. When a vehicle for change works for a person, it situates well into his/her life.

People find and evaluate various vehicles for change for a good match according to a person's values. Hence, the concept value-based decision-making is an evaluative process based on people's values which guide decision making and therefore is what drives the choice for the vehicle for change. There are five aspects of values that inform peoples' choice of what

vehicle for change to use; they include: support, structure, accessibility, comfort, and couponing. The more aspects people value, the more complicated the decision-making becomes leading people to use a sort of cost-benefit analysis way of evaluating their options.

According to the data, support or the lack thereof was the single most important consideration (value) people used when choosing a vehicle for change. When people feel supported, they feel fulfilled and cared for and can more easily make a choice for a vehicle for change. However, if people feel a lack of support, they may not know where to turn for information or may not know how to get things accomplished, leaving a feeling of loneliness which makes choices more difficult. A study participant commented how the support admissions officers, or the lack thereof, influenced his selection of one college over another.

Another aspect people consider when choosing a vehicle for change is how much structure and control, they feel they need. People who need a lot of structure may tend to gravitate toward vehicles for change that offer that structure. Conversely, people who do not need structure may gravitate toward vehicles for change that have less structure. One study participant said he could not care less about what the teachers were doing; he just wanted to be left alone to do his own learning. Additionally, some people like to have control in how their vehicle for change functions, while others do not; and this aspect may affect people's choice in vehicle for change.

Accessibility is another aspect people may consider when choosing a vehicle for change. Cost, duration, and location are three characteristics of accessibility that are often valued; therefore, people seek a price that suits them, and offers the duration and timing they desire, at a location that works for the person.

Another aspect considered when choosing a vehicle for change is level of comfort. Comfort may include physical and/or emotional familiarity with the vehicle for change. Knowing what something looks like or how a system works lends to that familiarity. One participant spoke about looking for a career that emotionally fit into his life. People who value comfort will seek a vehicle for change where comfort is optimized.

Finally, another aspect that influences the selection of a vehicle for change, is whether they are offered a special deal to choose that vehicle for change. This is like the way stores offer coupons to entice people to purchase their items. The lure of the offer may be so enticing that it affects the person's choice in a vehicle for change.

The preceding five aspects are those values that people use when choosing a vehicle for change. However, there are problems that may obstruct people finding their vehicle for change and their right fit. These problems fall into a few categories such as lack of information, in accurate or conflicting information, and the effects of people's preconceptions. Lack of information prohibits people from making good decisions. Inadequate information and inaccurate or conflicting information may have the effect of slowing down the process of choice of vehicles; and may lead to a poor choice. Preconceptions nag at a person and may sway a person to act or do what they think others want. Thus, preconceptions may affect people's choice in a vehicle for change.

Not only do problems obstruct a person's ability to make a choice for vehicle for change, but the effort one must use to justify, either to oneself or to others can affect the choice for vehicle for change. People like to think they are making good decisions; thus, they may start to justify a particular vehicle for change. The energy required to justify may help sway the opinion and choice of vehicle.

Although most people do not look at many options, they do search until they find a match using value-based decision-making. Once people have a good option for their vehicle for change, they may tip toward action.

Stage 3: Reaching a Tipping Point

Reaching the tipping point occurs after people become aware of a desire for change (stage one) and after they have investigated their choices for a vehicle for change (stage two). Reaching a tipping point is that crucial moment in time when people decide to move on and act in an effort to attain their desires. Generally, people will reach their tipping point by using one of three decision-making approaches: impromptuing, coming to know, or deliberating. These three decision-making methods are affected by people's values and timing.

Impromptuing is one approach used to help people decide if they should move on. When people make a quick or spontaneous choice to move toward action, people are making an impromptu decision. When people make an impromptu decision, they use little or no forethought. In this study, one person impromptued her decision to attend a university because it was the same university where she attained her Master of Arts degree.

Another decision-making approach, coming to know, occurs more slowly. Although coming to know creeps up on people, when they feel it, they have a certainty about it. Coming to know occurs when people just get that feeling that they know what they have to do. Coming to know is almost spiritual as if a higher power is guiding a decision or change. One study participant reported knowing she needed to take care of her dying grandmother. She likened the decision to being almost spiritual because she felt that there must be a purpose in her leaving nursing school and taking on such a responsibility. Thus, people who use coming to know as a decision-making approach value their gut feelings which take precedence. This is like impromptuing; however, impromptuing occurs quickly, while coming to know occurs in a more subtle manner.

The third method people may use to help them decide if they should act is deliberating, which is more thought based. Deliberating requires more time as people need to recognize the events and feelings that are tipping them toward action. People need time to figure out how they will navigate the new experience. People also need time to vacillate, if they feel conflicted, as to whether they want to tip toward action.

When people reach this stage, they have already become aware that change is an option and they have started looking through the choices for a vehicle for change. However, they have not tipped toward action. This stage is about the process of tipping; people will either use the approach of impromptuing, coming to know, or deliberating. People's values and timing affect each of those methods. A tipping point will happen. However, that tipping

point may not be one toward continuing on. In fact, the tip may actually stop the person from moving on when the person no longer feels moving on is in his/her best interest. This stopping may be permanent or temporary; however, it has the effect of stopping the forward motion. People stop for a variety of reasons; they may lack confidence meaning they do not have the wherewithal to move forward. Loneliness, feeling afraid, and being nervous can also stop a person from moving forward. After people reach their tipping point and if they decide to continue on, they begin their journey.

Stage 4: Journeying

Stage four, journeying, explains how people manage their chosen path as they try to maintain the fit of their vehicle for change. Journeys can be smooth sailing, where people progress through their journeys as planned, or full of snags which hinder people and cause people to either divest (leave) or work it out. If people work it out, they use coping strategies which help them move back to smooth sailing.

The factors of support, structure, accessibility, and comfort which were discussed in stage two, seeking a right fit, affect journeying. When these factors are available and used, they make people feel cared for, fulfilled, and aligned with their change. When these factors of support, structure, accessibility, and comfort are available, it leads to smooth sailing; however, when people do not receive the right amount of support, structure, accessibility, and comfort, they may feel unimportant, lonely, and/or off track from their desired change.

As previously mentioned, journeys can either be smooth sailing or full of snags. If a person's journey is smooth sailing, any glitches are dealt with seamlessly as people feel happy and/or content with their journey. However, most people experience smooth sailing and snagging. Snagging is the opposite of smooth sailing and requires people to make decisions.

When snagging, people no longer have a good match as their once good fit is deteriorating. Snags are blocks "that hinder your chances for success" (Dyer, 1984, p. 98) in the change process. An example of snagging from this study, occurred when a person wanted her undergraduate degree but snagged when she could not get her transcripts sent from her high school. Snagging may occur at any time during one's journey and may slow down or stop the journeying. When snagging, people must decide what to do; this decision is based on the factors they value most and how they perceive the support, structure, accessibility, comfort, and couponing, previously discussed. If people use value-based decision-making by considering the aforementioned factors when they snag, people may decide to either work it out or divest.

When snagging, if people choose to work it out, they do so by making do, resolving the issues, coming to a meeting of the minds, acquiescing, or doing it over. When making do, people decide it is easier to block out or ignore the issue than deal with it and perhaps the people involved. Therefore, when people ignore or block out situations, they are making do with what they have. Lindblom (1965) wrote about muddling through as a way for people to deal with bad situations. Juxtaposed to making do is resolving issues. When people resolve issues, they work the problems out and find answers to the offending items. Francisco (2010) wrote about making do as the way people resolve their main concern of dealing with

unsatisfactory situations. One complicating aspect of resolving issues is that sometimes people may need to resolve negative events and/or feelings in their past to move on. Sometimes, as people resolve their issues, they have to come to a meeting of the minds which is when opposing sides come together to form some sort of an agreement or compromise so journeying may continue. When people come to a meeting of the minds, they may have to do a little dealing and bargaining about which Eisenstadt (1970) and Raffanti (2005) wrote. Another method people may use to work it out is simply to acquiesce. Acquiescing allows people to unsnag and move forward. However, acquiescing may continue to affect people because the issue still may be a bother to them. This often leads to holding a grudge, anger or frustration which may lead to a less successful journey. Finally, another method of working it out occurs when a journey is restarted which may take some coaxing from other people and may include a redefinition of either goals or the vehicle for change. In summary, if people decide to work it out, they will do whatever it takes to end the snag and return to their journey.

Sometimes when people have lost their fit and are not coping well, the only decision is to divest. When divesting, people do so in three general ways (escaping, bailing out, and/or slowing down) and for four general reasons (losing part of themselves, enabling others, roguing out, and experiencing painful situations). Furthermore, when people divest, it may be permanent or temporary depending on people's experiences while journeying, their goals, and their ability to bring closure to the experience.

The ways people divest are by escaping, bailing out, and/or slowing down. These approaches to divesting occur when fit is being lost which affects the meaning of or manageability of a journey. Escaping allows people to divest. People, who speak of escaping, sometimes discuss escaping from abusive or difficult situations. Others may divest by bailing out which is a quick response to end events when people are unable to cope with their journey. Bailing out eliminates extra responsibilities which have become a strain. While bailing out is quick, some people may prefer an option which happens by slowly backing away from a situation. Leaving may become easier in this slower manner.

Reasons for divesting relate to people losing part of themselves, enabling others, or roguing out in painful situations. When people feel like they are losing part of themselves they may decide to divest. People speak of losing part of themselves when they must compromise their beliefs. One participant spoke of the stress of being a doctor's wife and her loss of identity. A feeling of losing part of oneself may also occur during a lifecycle change for which one is not ready or when a person loses contact with his or her spiritual self. Another reason people may decide to divest is when they enable others. When people allow others to do something that is harmful at the expense of the person giving permission, there is a resultant imbalance. A third reason people may divest is when people rogue out, which comes from the concept of rogue element or someone who clashes with the system in which they are functioning. One participant, who wanted to switch to an honors college, found it very difficult to work within a set system and was seed as a rogue element. In this theory, roguing out occurs when people's personal determination clashes with the system or venue in which the person is journeying. Roguing out may be the reason for divesting. The final reason people may divest is when there are painful situations, including but not limited to abusive situations.

One painful situation occurred when a person in this study realized she was financially broke. She decided to divest from the boyfriend with whom she was making poor financial decisions. In summary, people may choose to divest when they have a good reason.

As mentioned previously, divesting does not have to be permanent. When reinvesting, people seem to be wiser and are more able to make do with what they have, resolve issues, come to agreements, acquiesce (or step aside as needed), and do over (but with more perseverance).

While journeying, people use coping strategies. These include, but are not limited to, support strategies, management strategies, optimizing strategies, calming strategies, and determination strategies.

For some people, support is the single most important indicator of a journey's success. People may find new support systems or reconnect with old ones. In fact, every participant in this study spoke about the critical importance of his or her support systems in accomplishing his or her goal and maintaining balance. Furthermore, participants who did not accomplish their goals, spoke of the lack of support and how that derailed them. Lippet, Watson, and Westley (1958) wrote about the importance of having support during change and how supporters encourage, reduce doubts and hesitation, help maintain a realistic view of change, and help people get through the change. Having support during difficult times or people to talk to is important to smooth sailing and unsnagging as people continue their journey.

Management, another coping strategy, refers to ways people organize, and try to control their affairs. Some people are good jugglers of their affairs, keeping them in smooth sailing. Yet, when people find they cannot sustain their juggling and when hassles get in the way, they snag. One participant reported feeling she was "dropping the ball" and reaching her "breaking point" when she struggled with attending school and caring for her children. Other people manage their affairs by refueling. Refueling strategies include all the techniques people used to take care of their basic physical and emotional needs so that they may achieve their goal. However, when people do not refuel enough (such as enough nutrition and sleep), they may snag. Another way people organize and control their affairs is by looking back at their journey and reevaluating their choices and making sure they are on the right path to attaining their goals. This behavior is a reviewing strategy. People may reminisce about their journey, remembering events fondly. Therefore, reminiscing is a technique people use to stay in smooth sailing. However, if people start second-guessing themselves and their journey there may be a sense of doubt about their decisions. What-iffing tends to get people stuck. Soloing is another management strategy used to disengage from a situation and go it alone. Oftentimes, when people go solo, they find it easier to work alone to accomplish goals. In this case, they can maintain smooth sailing. Yet, going solo may snag people when they would rather have had support. All of the preceding management strategies are useful for people as they are making progress; yet there is one strategy that entails putting the journey on hold. This management strategy is called halting. People who put their journey on hold simply stop what they are doing, take care of what needs to be done, and then restart the journey.

When smooth sailing or when a person just needs to tweak the journey to get a right fit back, he or she may use optimizing strategies by finding the positives. Finding the positives

helps the person focusing on the good attributes of their endeavor. People who are adept at finding the positives seem to have ways that help them deal with situations and focus on the good, positive aspects. Yet, when people do not find the positives, they may snag. Like finding the positives is discovering redeeming qualities. While finding the positives has to do with actions, redeeming qualities has to do with personal characteristics which may include any qualities of human behavior. Humor is another optimizing technique used to maintain their smooth sailing or unsnagging. People who can find situations funny and positive optimize their journey.

Calming strategies are another way people maintain or regain smooth sailing. Calming strategies include keeping the goal in mind, being certain, embracing newness, trusting the process, and acknowledging that the moving on process is a work in progress. Keeping the goal in mind enables people to stay calm and focused as they smooth sail or work through any difficulties. One participant noted contemplating a dual major which snagged her since it would take so much time and money. Her mentor helped by reminding her of her goal, graduation. People who can keep their goal in mind are more likely to attain it. Another calming technique is being certain and not second-guessing decisions. When people are certain about what they are doing, they do not second-guess themselves and therefore can stay calm and finish their journey. Embracing newness is a calming technique people use. When people give themselves permission to change, they allow for new ways and thoughts to enter their lives. A final calming strategy is called trusting the process, meaning "going with the flow" instead of "banging one's head against the wall." Trusting the process allows people to relax, ease up, or lighten up about a situation. When people trust the process, they learn to cope with this situation by making it easier.

Determination strategies are ways people show that they have the fortitude to make it through a situation. One determination strategy, superhumaning, is to push through and handle the multiple tasks and stresses in a superhuman manner. Superhumaning may promulgate an adrenaline rush where people are successful despite little food or sleep. The person in the study who took care of her dying grandmother, spoke of superhumaning to do what was needed to care for her grandmother despite having little sleep and eating sparsely at times. Another determination technique, hell or high watering, occurs in some situations where people show their stamina and determination along with an attitude of "I'll be damned" if a situation will get the better of me. In essence, they refuse to give up. The determination strategy of being oneself is useful for people who need others to accept them for who they are. Often, when people are themselves, they maintain or regain their smooth sailing journey. Finally, some people have a calm yet determined manner and steadily achieve their goals. This placid determination shows people's incredible fortitude and strength. As people journey, they continually assess whether the journey is going as wanted and can always choose to work it out or to divest.

Stage 5: Drawing to a Close

The fifth and final stage of moving on is called drawing to a close and occurs when people evaluate the success of their experience. Success, being a valued personal quality, is evaluated according to the emotions people have across various factors and informs how

people will move on to their next voluntary change experience. When people's emotions are in sync with their experiences, they have closure and feel successful. Closure is determined by people's views of attaining their desire, their ability to deal with difficulties, and their ability to withstand the toll of journeying. Each of these factors varies for different people depending on what they value and the amount it is valued.

Some people value attaining their desire and therefore link success to attainment, while others do not. According to Kolodinsky (1999), people's expectations account for how they respond to the factors affecting their views. Expectations are similar to values; for some people, attaining their desires is critical for completion. These people fall within the hell or high-water category. They are going to do whatever it takes to achieve their desires. However, some people do not view success as attainment of their desire. These people can have success even though they prematurely divest (leave the journey). Divesting may happen when desires change, and people no longer feel in sync with what they are doing. They may feel relief as they come to terms with disparate desires; and therefore, leaving is actually seen as success. People may also leave their journey because they are forced out; yet they may feel closure. This closure may happen when jobs are eliminated, or they do not make the grade and are not good enough to stay. In both situations, people are dismissed. Some people do not see this action as something bad and are able to experience closure.

The degree of difficulty of the moving on experience affects people emotionally and influences whether or not they are able to experience closure. People who can manage the degree of difficulty of their experience speak of smooth sailing. However, when the degree of difficulty is emotionally and/or physically draining, they may snag. If people are able to cope with the snag, they may be able to bring closure to the experience; however, if the snag is beyond people's ability to cope, they may divest which may delay or prevent closure.

Some journeys take a toll on people; and their ability to deal with this toll affects whether they experience closure. The toll may be seen as disillusionment and occurs when people's expectations clash with reality. Being disillusioned may force people to end their journey before it is over. When such an action happens, there can be a physical and/or mental toll on people. People may speak of feeling beaten down with nothing left to give. They may quit and have difficulty bringing the experience to closure.

As just discussed, people view success differently; some come to closure when they attain what they want; others experience closure when they have success in navigating the degree of difficulty of the experience; and others come to closure when they are able to withstand the toll. Each of these leads to an outcome of the moving on experience. When people not only attain their desire but also have closure, they experience a "it is all good" feeling about the experience. Annas (2004) referred to this closure as attaining desire and having satisfaction. Another outcome is when people realize that the journey is but a steppingstone to larger accomplishments. Steppingstones are those actions people endeavor to complete so that they may continue moving on. Vander Linden (2005) wrote that while sometimes people achieve their goal in one experience, other times they need multiple experiences to meet a goal. Another emotional outcome of journeying is when people do not have closure and therefore do not feel success—an outcome called duty-bound. This happens

when people feel obligated to do something and/or when they lack ownership. The obligation tends to weigh heavily on them, and they do not feel true success even if they complete the experience because of their lack of personal investment. Similarly, when people feel the experience was so difficult that upon completion it takes time for them to own the accomplishment, they often do not feel success. Owning an accomplishment means feeling proud of one's success. Yet, when people feel duty-bound, they may not feel pride in their success because they feel brutalized, traumatized, and/or victimized from their experience. These people tend to feel like they have been through an ordeal. For some people who have experienced a rough journey, owning it and experiencing closure may take time. Finally, there are some people whose outcome of journeying is a feeling of failure. These people neither attain their desire nor feel good about the experience. Oftentimes these people speak of the need to heal.

This need for healing is, for some, the first step in preparing for a future. Healing allows people to draw their moving on experience to a close and is accomplished by a multitude of activities and spiritual healings. A few of the ways people may heal are by reinvigorating themselves, speculating about what could have happened, and by going anonymous. Some people heal by reinvigorating their lives and getting away from whatever is snagging them. Other people speak of speculating, considering what life would have been like if events would have been different. By speculating, people are more able to bring closure to a difficult situation. Going anonymous, another way people heal, happens when people pretend they are not themselves and act in ways that are most unlike them. Kuhn (1962) called going anonymous a paradigm shift which people use to heal from past experiences. Another step in preparing for a future is reinvesting or trying again. These steps of healing help people bring their journeys to closure and prepare to move on once again. Some people move on quickly out of fear of being idle; other people take longer to move on. Moving on therefore as a function of desire and previous experience. Thus, the moving on cycle of voluntary change continues as another desire appears.

Discussion

This study started in the area of higher education but transcended the substantive area to include situations where people experience voluntary change in their lives. The topic of change was limited to voluntary change because data showed that this process is much different from that of involuntary change. Therefore, this theory explains people's behavior as they transition through the stages of voluntary change.

In stage 1, people become aware that they want change. Although this awareness may be subtle, people respond to the awareness with the decision to move on, perch, or stop. People's values, along with their need to get the timing right, affect this decision. When people move on, they seek a right fit which is the next stage in the process.

In this second stage, people look for a vehicle for change that will fit and work well for them. Although most people do not look at many options, they do search until they find a match using value-based decision-making. Once they have a good option for their vehicle for change, they may tip toward action.

The tipping point is the third stage and may be arrived at by impromptuing, making a quick or spontaneous decision; coming to know, which occurs subtly in an almost creeping manner; or deliberating, which is thought based and requires time. Even though people may tip toward action, not all people start their journey. Sometimes, people decide to stop and not journey because they no longer feel there is a right fit. Other times, they may continue onward.

When people continue onward, they journey. In this fourth stage, people aim for smooth sailing; however, sometimes they snag. The factors of support, structure, accessibility, and comfort will affect their journey. As long as the journey is progressing well, people stay in smooth sailing; yet, when they snag people use the coping strategies to work it out and move back to smooth sailing or divest and give up their journey.

In stage 5 the moving on experience draws to a close. Not all experiences close with people attaining their goals and this evokes differing responses. Sometimes this may suit them; yet sometimes this may not. People's ability to draw their moving on experience to a closure that suits them is important as it can affect their next moving on experience. Hence, the cycle of moving on starts again as people become cognizant of another desire.

Implications for Practice

This article began with the comment that change is a constant part of life and with change comes many decisions. Grounded theories are supposed to have predictive capabilities and it is the hope of these authors that the theory of moving on is useful. Moving on explains patterns of behavior used by individuals who are making voluntary change. As the theory started in the area of higher education, it may be noted that this theory could be used by college advisors to assess how their students are acclimating to college or indeed various aspects of the college experience. Advisors who know what to look for and how to unsnag struggling students are valuable to colleges as they help keep matriculation low and income high. The theory can be used by individuals who are navigating some change process by helping them become consciously aware of the process and what to expect along the way. This conscious awareness may help individuals navigate the process more smoothly. Furthermore, the theory can also help organizations, which strive to be vehicles for change by identifying and optimizing factors that contribute to smooth sailing. For example, the need for support was indicated as essential and knowing this can be used by organizations to gather or provide necessary support for smooth sailing. The possibilities for theoretical implications is endless and limited only by people's imaginations.

Limitations and Future Research

Grounded theory, as a research design, is only limited by the researcher's ability. If the researcher is lacking in ability to conduct interviews, he or she may not be able to gain useful information or indeed may unground the work. However, we had long, detailed interviews where every effort was made not to use leading questions and tried to only use topics suggested by the interviewee (thus not ungrounding the work). Furthermore, we did not use our own data in the theory so we would not feel biased toward it. Remember any biases can underground a researcher's work. A second area where a researcher may lack ability is in

taking empirical evidence and coding it conceptually. To be able to do this well, we took courses in coding and memoing and spent hours with honing the skills. Another area where the grounded theorist may lack ability is in taking codes and memos and turning them into a rich theoretical write-up. Again, coursework was taken and with special tutoring in this area so to feel confident.

Two key areas stand out for future research. The first is a grounded theory on involuntary change. While some data were collected on involuntary change, it became apparent that people going through involuntary change go through a different process than those who go through voluntary change. Another area for further research is on the concept of value-based decision-making and the contexts and extent to which people use this decision-making method in various other aspects of life.

Conclusion

This theory of moving on as the process people go through to make voluntary change in their lives is not totally unique. Literature of similar concepts were integrated into the theory. However, the concept of value-based decision-making is novel, and we are humbled to offer it as a contribution to not only the lay person but also to those people in sociological circles. If people can start to think of voluntary change as a way of thinking through those values that mean the most to them and the weights which are significant for each value, then better decisions will be made (or maybe at the very least, people will understand why they make the decisions they do). Thus, people who want to buy homes or decide on which job to take will have a way to think through those values which are important to them. In contrast, people who constantly choose the wrong partner or other ill-made decisions will also have a way to look at what values lead to those bad decisions and may begin to understand those values and decisions that need to change in order to be more successful in that arena. The theory of moving on and the concept of value-based decision-making are indeed the hallmarks of what people can use to navigate voluntary change in their lives.

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