

Folks want doctor, son wants to follow Rodney Dangerfield

By Pat Clark

Every two or three months I get a call from one of my parents asking me what I am going to be when I finally grow up. The last couple have been feeble efforts on their part; they seem to recognize by now that they have a bright, young failure on their hands. But ten years ago, when they first started whispering words like "engineer" and "doctor" and "lawyer" in my ear, they meant business:

"Son," my father would say, "I don't care what you do with your life (a lie if I ever heard one) but remember, no matter how bad times get for people in other fields, there will always be work for a good doctor."

"Which good doctor are you talking about?" I'd ask.

"Never mind. I'll get back to you on this before you graduate from high school."

humor

It's hard for me to imagine somebody really big, say, Sigmund Freud, hashing out career possibilities with his father. Just guessing, I'd have to think that Mom and Dad Freud learned early on that little Sigmund wasn't your every day job-seeker:

Hey Sig, let's talk

"My boy Sigmund, isn't it about time we had that little talk?"

"Sure father, you just lie down on the couch there and tell me all about yourself."

"Son, it's not about me, it's about you. Your future."

Sigmund scribbles a few notes in a little pad, humming to himself as he does so. "Why don't you tell me a little about your childhood?" he says.

"I did not come here to talk about my childhood, I came to talk about your adulthood, Sigmund, you are getting to an age where you are going to have to think about your direction in life, your career opportunities."

"Father," says Sigmund, closing his notebook, "do you see in me an opportunity to succeed in areas where you have failed?"

Mr. Freud the elder sits down on the couch. "Failed? Where have I failed?"

"That is not something I can answer. But, if we can just tap into the vast, uncharted depths of your unconscious mind we can find out why you have developed this obsession with my future. Now if you'll just lay down on the couch and tell me a little about yourself, we can get



something done."

Mr. Freud starts to recline, then stops. "Son, when did we give you permission to move the living room couch into your bedroom?"

"We'll talk about it later, dad."

"Of course . . . Let's see, I think it all started when I was a child. I remember a dream about a tunnel . . ."

And suppose Rodney Dangerfield's father had asked him what he was going to be when he grew up:

"How you doing, Rodney?"

Rodney straightens his tie, and says,

"Sure, I'm okay now, but you should have seen me last week. I went out to the beach to watch the tide roll in. Took one look at me and rolled right back out . . . so I decided to go bicycling instead. Yeah, my bicycle; gives me nothing but trouble . . ."

"Son, if I can interrupt just a minute,"

"But dad, you can't stop me now, I'm on a roll! If this routine works we can move out of this house and you won't have to make me sleep on the kitchen floor to scare the cockroaches anymore. I'm tellin' ya' dad, this is a tough neighborhood . . ."

I never get no . . .

"I know son, and I want you to get out of it. I want you to have a decent job, and live in a decent neighborhood, where you can get some respect."

"Right dad, respect; I tellin' ya'. I never get no respect . . ."

You just know Howard Cosell was ready with an answer when his father asked him what he was going to be when he grew up:

"Howie, are you in there?" says Mr. Cosell the elder, rapping with his knuckles on Howard's bedroom door.

"This is Howard Cosell reporting," says Howard through the door, his trademark voice already fully developed at the tender age of nine. "Tonight my father is going to try to talk me into being a lawyer, and I'm going to try to defend my decision to be a broadcaster in a scheduled two-hour bout that promises to be a great fight. But first, let's meet my father, up close and personal."

"Son, I . . .," says Mr. Cosell, but that's all he gets out before the door opens. His son Howard is standing by the door in a mustard-yellow blazer, talking into a microphone.

"I'm here with Mr. Cosell, a great fighter in his own right but a decided underdog in the battle tonight. Dad, what do you feel you must do strategically speaking to talk me into going to law school?"

"I plan to hit you with the income and respectability factors, and keep jabbing with the family pride routine to wear you down. I expect a good, tough fight that will probably go the distance."

"Thank you dad, and good luck tonight."

Women juggle careers, marriage for success

By Lori McGinnis

The career woman. She may be thought of as a determined pursuer who forsakes marriage to take it to the top.

Not necessarily. Nowadays a woman is less hesitant to mix a career and marriage.

Barb Kerr, a counselor for UNL's Women's Resource Center and an assistant professor of educational psychology, reinforced this idea.

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"Women have traditionally been taught to see a conflict between career and marriage," Kerr said. But that tradition is not as common anymore, she said. "After all, men don't have a conflict between a career and marriage."

Judy Weseley, a member of a professional women's group, had a similar view. In the past, when a woman got married she was expected to give up a career for housekeeping and child rearing, she said.

But when a man married, people expected he would have a career that would come first, she said.

That expectation has changed, Weseley said. Neither person should have the sole financial responsibility to support the family, she said, adding that she knows few couples who can afford to live on one income.

Need money want career

Kerr also said many women work because of financial need. But others, especially today's college women, are career-minded. Some even postpone marriage and having children until a career is established, she said.

Kerr said she tries to be a role model by showing couples that a woman can successfully have a career and a marriage. Kerr, who said she is happily married and expecting a baby this summer, said her career isn't a deterrent to her home life. In fact, her career is a basis for her marriage with her husband, who also is a counseling psychologist.

However, careers can be a deterrent if a couple doesn't tell each other before marriage what they want out of life.

David Jacobs, a psychological counselor at the university counseling center, said a couple must talk about their wishes, wants and expectations of a career before marriage. They should then be evaluated to see how they fit into a life with the other person.

For instance, a husband may want his wife to follow him wherever he may go in his life, but he may not tell her that for fear she would disagree. A couple needs to put "their cards on the table," Jacobs said.

Two-career family has problems

Similarly, Frank Hallgren, director of career planning and placement at UNL, said a couple needs to discuss their priorities.

"I urge people to think of the consequences of the dual career family and have those careers well defined and priorities well defined before they go into the labor market," Hallgren said. Good career planning can diminish conflict between a career and a marriage, he said.

Kerr also said the issue should not be avoided when expressing career desires. Consideration, courtesy and equality are important in working out conflicts. An egalitarian marriage, where both partners are completely equal, works best, she said.

"I don't think a marriage works when one person has special privileges," Kerr said.

The majority of marriage problems are caused from one partner not being treated equally by the other, she said. Problems arise in a marriage when the couple "ignores the injustice" of one achieving and the other not, she said.

"I know more marriages that break up from that than any other issue," she said.

A major conflict can arise when one wishes to take an out-of-town job, but the other is happy and wants to stay put.

Kerr said this conflict usually can be worked out if the couple compares the benefits and disadvantages as a couple and as individuals.

Resentment or jealousy may occur if one career comes before the other, Kerr said, which can be more damaging to the marriage than an extramarital involvement

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with another person.

Despite the need for equal careers, Kerr said in most marriages, the man's career is treated as most important.

"Women's work compared to men's work is undervalued," Kerr said. Facts show that while men may have upward mobile jobs, women are often stuck in dead-end jobs.

This may cause resentment at some point in the marriage. This is related to the divorce rate, she said.