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ABSTRACT

Integrating one's career as an adult educator with the other parts of one's life is not an easy task for many adult educators. One reason for the difficulty is that there are many facets to this integration process: time, emotionality, conflict, complexity, change, and situational factors. Individuals need to decide what faces or roles are important in their lives and act accordingly. This might include building the necessary support systems to assist in carrying out these decisions. The catch is that it may not be easy to make such definitive decisions and it may be even harder to act on those decisions. In addition, as one's roles and the nature of those roles are usually in a constant flux, one will need to reevaluate the priorities and be willing to accept that one's life patterns will take on a number of forms as one continues to grow and develop. (YLB)

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The Three Faces of Eve (Or Adam):
The Integration of "Our Other Lives" With Our Careers

The integration of our careers as adult educators, whether this work be full or part time, with our "other lives" is for many of us not an easy task. It can and does mean for some a constant juggling of schedules, deadlines, and priorities to somehow make it all fit. For others, even more difficult choices must be made, such as who is to have the primary parenting role to whether or not a marriage or other type of significant relationship can withstand the pressures that two careers often bring to intimate relationships. In thinking and living through this complex and usually ever changing web of forces in our lives, the image of the face or rather faces has been helpful to many. How many different faces, such as professional, spouse, parent, child, do you have? Are some of these faces more clearly outlined, while others seem to fade in the background? Have you worn these same faces for years, or are at least some of these faces very new to you to the point perhaps of seeing one or two of them as strangers or at least as only new acquaintances?

Let's explore further this image of the faces by looking at the various faces of three adult educators, those of Sandra B., Coordinator of Continuing Education at a local community college, Sam M., Director of Training for a large insurance company, and Bonnie R., a part-time ABE teacher with a public school system. Sandra B's first face is that of a very capable administrator of a large urban community college continuing education program. She spends a great deal of time wearing that face, including long evening hours and some weekends. It is a face which she enjoys, although as she has been in this position for the last seven

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years she is becoming restless and has been looking around for a new and more demanding professional face for herself. Sandra also has a second face which is of prime importance to her, that is the face of a single parent of two teenage children. This face has often looked haggard over the past year or so, especially as her youngest just passed through that delightful year of being 13 and knowing more than anyone, especially her. Still, it is a face she loves and devotes many hours to, both in thought and deed. In addition, Sandra has just taken on a somewhat shadowy new face, that of a significant other to a special man in her life. She is still unsure of this relationship, and thus wants to spend more time exploring this new face. Sandra knows this has affected how she feels about her professional face, especially that part which involves working three to four nights a week, plus some weekends.

Sam M. just took on the face of being the director of a large corporate training program. Even though he has had five years of training experience, this is his first managerial level position with the company. He is excited about this new challenge, and yet somewhat apprehensive. This apprehensiveness not only has to do with his professional face, but also with a second and third face that Sam wears, that of husband and father. He is the primary provider for his family, which includes a new baby and a four-year-old. In addition, he enjoys his wife and children, and is afraid this new position will leave him with little time to wear these other two faces, even though they are of prime importance to him. Sam will also be expected to take on a fourth face as part of this new position, that of civic leader. He is looking forward to this new face as it is something he has wanted to do for some

time, although again he is concerned about the time factor, especially the nights and weekend time he will need to devote to this activity.

Bonnie R. has been a teacher for years with a local public school system. Because of her mother's failing health, she has chosen to give up this full time professional face and take on not a new face per se, that of daughter, but one which has a much different character than it had before. Her role as daughter has become full-time for her, as her mother has Alzheimer's disease. As Bonnie still wanted to be involved professionally, she sought out alternative part-time professional jobs, and discovered being an ABE teacher fit well with both her background and schedule. Therefore, she has also taken on another new and yet not unfamiliar professional face, that of part-time teacher. In addition, Bonnie enjoys a number of other faces, that of wife, which is primary to her, and mother, grandmother, active volunteer, and health nut, which are all more secondary faces.

For many adults the integration of these faces into some cohesive whole may be difficult, although at times it is easier than others. One reason for this is that there are many facets to this integration process: time, emotionality, conflict, complexity, change, and situational factors (Baruch, Barnett & Rivers, 1983; Bridges, 1980; Brim & Ruff, 1980; Rosenfeld & Stark, 1987; Schollossberg, 1984). Time involves finding the number of hours per week that we need to just wear each of the faces. Sam M. is a good example of someone who is having a difficult job juggling his time so that he can wear all of his desired faces, especially those of husband and father. He has often wished

lately that there were more hours in a week that he could go through life at this point with little or no sleep.

Interwoven in all three of the cases presented, Sandra B., Sam M. and Bonnie R. is the idea of the emotionality of the faces. Some of our faces primarily evoke positive emotions, others negative, and still others a constant bombardment of both the positive and the negative. For example, although Sandra B. is quite happy with this new face of significant other, she at the same time has begun to resent the number of night and weekend hours she must spend on the job as it takes time away from developing this new relationship. She knows these feelings of resentment, coupled with her sense of restlessness, are beginning to affect her overall functioning on the job.

Implicit in Sandra B.'s emotional pulls is the conflict issue, where one or more of a person's faces are in conflict with one another. These conflicts are not always negative, but may also be positive in terms of wanting to give more time and energy to one or more of the faces. This was so for Bonnie R., in that she wanted to both continue her professional face, and yet at the same time care for her mother full time. She was successful at negotiating this conflict in that she was able to find a satisfying part-time position.

This did not mean that Bonnie R.'s faces became less complex, in fact they seem to become more so, as she continued to juggle a number of both primary and secondary faces, from that of being full-time caregiver for her mother, to making sure she attended her exercise class twice a week. So, too, does this pattern of complexity seem to grow as people age, especially as they reach mid-life when it is not unusual for people

to cope with a number of issues simultaneously such as rearing teenage children and taking care of aging parents, while at the same time holding down a demanding job (Merriam, 1978).

It appears that our faces are constantly changing also, if not in terms of adding or subtracting faces, at least in nature and character, which for some of us may even be more of a drastic change. This proposition holds true for each of the cases, in that Sandra B. has just taken on a new face of significant other; Sam M. has both added one new face, that of community volunteer, and altered two others, those being worker and father; and Bonnie R. has also altered a number of faces, most prominently those of worker and daughter. Some of the changes in our faces may be primarily initiated by us, such as Sandra B.'s new relationship with her significant other, or they may be precipitated by events outside of our control, like the debilitating illness of Bonnie R.'s mother. This feeling of control or lack of control can have a major affect on how we respond to our new or altered faces, especially if we believe that we have had to continually change or alter our faces due to events that have been beyond our control (Brim & Ruff, 1980).

Added to these facets, which are primarily personal in nature, are the situational factors which are imbedded in the job itself. As with the facet of change, these situational factors may or may not be in our control. For example, Sam M. has found himself in a situation where the unwritten expectation is that new managers will be at work no later than eight (and earlier if possible), and that he should not leave the office until at least six or seven, even though normal closing is five. These long hours at the office, coupled with a 45-minute commute, leaves him

very little time for interaction with his family, especially as he often carries work home. Sam is unsure whether he wants "to buck this system," even though he knows that some of his most creative and productive work is done in the late evening after the rest of his family is in bed. In addition, similar to the emotionality aspect of the faces, the situational factors can also be positive or negative, in that they can inhibit or foster the integration of the faces. Sandra B., for example, has found her new job situation to be extremely supportive of her current situation. The director of her program is more than willing to find substitutes or even cover her classes for a short time-period if Sandra feels she must stay with her mother during crises periods, or when the part-time caretakers just do not show up at the last minute.

Is there any one best way or magic formula for integrating the various faces of our lives? The response to that question is no, as the way we choose to live our lives is very different from individual to individual (Baruch, Barnett & Rivers, 1983). Still, there are things we can do to manage and integrate these faces into some kind of feeling of wholeness. First, we need to make conscious decisions as to what is important in our lives (Super, 1980). Once this is done, then we can act on these choices, both in our professional and personal lives. For example, if Sam M. really values more time with his family, perhaps he could negotiate with his boss, with the guarantee that his quality work will continue, that he not spend the extra unwritten hours at the office. This would mean some extra late nights for him, but also could mean having more time to spend with his family. In addition, he might think

about moving closer to his office so that he could lessen his commuting time.

Second, once our decisions are made and our actions taken, we need to find support systems to help us successfully carry out those choices. This means building and or strengthening relationships we have with those who can provide emotional and/or actual assistance in carrying through these choices (Daloz, 1987; Schlossberg, 1987). Let's go back to the example of Sandra B. and assume she has decided to change her professional face. She has chosen to return to teaching at the community college, but at the same time peruse a doctoral degree, so she can advance in her career as an administrator in higher education. Her shift in focus has not lessened her time commitment per week, but rather has allowed her to rearrange her time to better fit her other life commitments. In addition, she feels very positive about perusing new career opportunities by obtaining an advanced degree. Before embarking on such a drastic change in her life, she gained the support of her children (as this would mean a fairly drastic cut in income), and her new significant other (from whom she received tremendous emotional support). She also investigated thoroughly this new face of being a student, including finding some informal networks of students like herself.

In summary, integrating our career face as adult educators with the other parts of our lives is not an easy task for many of us. We first need to understand the many facets of the integration process: time, emotionality, conflict, complexity, change, and situational factors. Then we need to decide what faces are important in our lives and act accordingly, including building the necessary support systems to assist

us in carrying out these decisions. There is a catch to this of course. It may not be that easy to make such definitive decisions, and even harder to act on those decisions. In addition, as our faces and the nature of those faces are usually in a constant state of flux, we will need to continually rethink which faces are really important to us, and be willing to accept that our life patterns will take on a number of forms as we continue to grow and develop.

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