

How would you describe your area of study to your grandmother?

I often use meaningful quotes when describing counseling. If my grandmother were still alive, I would share the following quote by Virginia Satir, "Life is not what it's supposed to be. It's what it is. The way you cope with it is what makes the difference." I believe counselors act as guides, facilitating a positive relationship where the client is able to improve their coping skills.

What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?

To pursue licensure as a professional counselor and improve my counseling skills. Like all fields, counseling is dynamic and one must re-visit, re-think, and update their learning regularly.

Do you think there is any value in social networking with other graduate students in non-related fields?

Sure, I believe relationships make life meaningful. The greater the variety of individuals we interact with the greater our understanding, compassion, and open-mindedness. I think it is helpful to expand our horizons beyond our field of study to challenge our sensibilities.

What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?

Listening to music, gardening (getting my hands dirty), bird watching, communing with nature, sleep (I try to get 8 hours), following the weather, and spending time with my wife and two children. I also try to avoid excessive email checking and texting, as I find it adds to my stress.

What is the last book you read strictly for pleasure and how long ago was it?

Last week I finished *The Snowman*, a thriller by Jo Nesbø, a Norwegian author. I love a good scare. I just began another one by Nesbø called *The Redbreast*. I am also currently reading *Life on the Mississippi* by Mark Twain. Twain's description of the river and his existential pondering is timeless.

Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.

My first grade teacher, Mrs. Hamner, was very significant. She encouraged me despite my reserved and introverted disposition. Someone else could have as easily ignored or dismissed the quiet kid. She encouraged me a lot and instilled a love of learning. I accredit much of my academic success to this early positive experience.

What surprised you the most about graduate school?

Not that much. It involves a huge commitment as well as sacrifice– but I already knew that. Despite the demands, the Counselor Education Department is very supportive. I truly believe the professors want to see their students succeed.

If travel to Mars happens in your lifetime, would you want to be one of the scientists on board? If yes, what would you contribute to the mission?

No way. I am a homebody and a family man. I couldn't stand being away from my family and the beautiful mountains of Southwestern VA that long.

What is your favorite comfort food and why? How often do you consume it?

Pizza – awesome carb rush. My wife and I get some pie every week or two.

If you hadn't been admitted to graduate school, what do you think you would be doing right now?

Working at my current job and applying, again, to grad school.

When do you expect to complete your degree?

I should be finished at the end of July, 2012.