

Appendix: *The Indiana University Conscience Autobiography for Healthcare Professionals*

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Indiana University School of Medicine

The IU Conscience Autobiography
For Healthcare Professionals

a semistructured narrative account
adapted from the Stilwell Conscience Interview

by
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DATE: _____

NAME: _____ AGE: _____ SEX (circle one): M F
(optional)

RACE: _____

CULTURAL BACKGROUND: _____

FAMILY OF ORIGIN

The order of your birth among siblings in your family of origin:

Father (circle one):

Living (his age____)
Deceased (his age ____ . Your age when he died ____)
Describe the nature of his work: _____

Mother (circle one):

Living (her age____)
Deceased (her age ____ . Your age when she died ____)
Describe the nature of her work: _____

Identify other important caregivers by relationship to you:
_____:

Living (her/his age____)
Deceased (his/her age ____ . Your age when s/he died____)
Describe the nature of her/his work: _____
Your ages while under her/his care: _____.

_____:

Living (her/his age____)
Deceased (his/her age ____ . Your age when s/he died____)
Describe the nature of her/his work: _____

Your ages while under her/her care: _____.

Which best describes your parents' or parental caregivers' relationship during your childhood and adolescence? (check one):

- intact marriage with less than usual marital conflicts
- intact marriage with usual marital conflicts
- intact marriage with more than usual marital conflicts
- separated (Your age when they separated_____)
- divorced (Your age when they divorced_____)

If your mother and or father died while you were a child or adolescent, did your surviving parent remarry? (Circle one): Y N.

If "Yes", how old were you at the time? _____.

If your genetically related parents divorced while you were a child or adolescent, with whom did you live following their divorce?

_____.

Did the parent with whom you lived remarry? (Circle one): Y N.

If "Yes", how old were you at the time? _____.

Using only the degree of detail with which you are comfortable, characterize LIFE EVENTS or enduring circumstances to which you attribute especially significant and positive impact upon your childhood and adolescent or young adult development (mention your age or age span at the time):

Using only the degree of detail with which you are comfortable, characterize LIFE EVENTS or enduring circumstances to which you attribute especially significant and negative impact upon your childhood and adolescent or young adult development (mention your age or age span at the time):

Describe your RELIGIOUS background:

Do you have a current religious affiliation (circle one): Y N.

Name of affiliation: _____

If unaffiliated with organized religion, do you consider yourself
(check the best description)

___ religious

___ concerned with or attentive to your spiritual well
being but not in a traditionally religious context

___ neither of the above.

MARITAL STATUS (circle one):

Married (your age(s) when married or remarried_____)

Divorced (your age(s) when divorced_____)

Relationship with significant other (your age beginning the
relationship _____) Is relationship ongoing? Y N

Single

If you have children,

How many children, genetically related to you, have you had?_____

What are their age(s)? _____

How many adopted children? _____

What are their age(s)? _____

How many step children? _____

What are their age(s)? _____

How many foster children? _____

What are their age(s)? _____

If you have children and are divorced, which best describes your legal
relationship with your children (circle one):

custodial parent non-custodial parent joint custodial parent

Other dependents (e.g. adult relatives living with you). Identify by
relationship: _____.

EDUCATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Elementary (circle one): public parochial(religious private) secular
private

other _____

Middle School (circle one): public parochial(religious private) secular
private

other_____

High School (circle one): public parochial(religious private) secular
private

other_____

Undergraduate (circle one): public parochial(religious private)
secular private
other_____

Undergraduate Degrees (indicate each degree and major area in which it was earned): _____

Undergraduate minor areas: _____

Post-Graduate Education (Identify degrees earned and area in which you studied): _____

Years of non-mental health professional work experience:

Describe the nature of this work:

For each question that follows, feel free to continue your narrative on the back of each sheet or add sheets.

QUESTION 1: GENERAL DEFINITION

To begin, write about how you conceive of conscience. It's all right to speculate, draw analogies or use metaphors. What is it? How does it work?

QUESTION 2: PERSONAL DEFINITION

Circle the numeral corresponding to what best describes you.

How comfortable are you responding to questions about your conscience?
1 2 3 4 5
Very Uncomfortable -----Very Comfortable

How often do you think about the nature of your conscience?
1 2 3 4 5
Not at all Seldom Sometimes Often Very Often

What about compared to your peers (other health professional students)?
1 2 3 4 5
Much less often Less often About as often More often Much more often

How often do you become concerned with matters of conscience in the form right vs. wrong ?
1 2 3 4 5
Much less often Less often About as often More often Much more often

What about compared to your peers?
1 2 3 4 5
Much less often Less often About as often More often Much more often

How often do you become concerned with matters of conscience in the form of right vs. right (moral dilemmas)?
1 2 3 4 5
Much less often Less often About as often More often Much more often

What about compared to your peers?
1 2 3 4 5
Much less often Less often About as often More often Much more often

Describe your own conscience.

Do you think of it as located in a particular part or parts of your body? Which part(s)?

How does your own conscience work? Give one or more specific examples.

QUESTION 3A: PLEASING THE CONSCIENCE

When you have pleased your conscience by doing something good, do you discern any change or changes in your inner state? Describe the change or changes. Do you experience these changes in any particular place or places in your body?

What happens externally? Is the change discernible to others {how does it show}?

If someone were to look at you, how would s/he know what is happening inside you?

What are the reactions in others around you?
{Give examples}.

QUESTION 3B: PLEASING THE CONSCIENCE...IF NO ONE KNOWS

Write about a time when you did something good / right and nobody knew about it.

Did you discern any change or changes in your inner state? Describe the change or changes. Were these changes experienced in any particular place or places in your body?

What happened externally? Was the change discernible to others {how did it show}?

Had someone been there to look at you, would s/he have been able to tell you had done something good?

Did other people suspect or figure it out?

{Give examples}

QUESTION 4A: DISPLEASING THE CONSCIENCE

When you have gone against your conscience and done something morally wrong (bad), do you discern any change or changes in your inner state? Describe the change or changes. Do you experience these changes in any particular place or places in your body?

What happens externally? Is the change discernible to others {how does it show}?

If someone were to look at you, how would s/he know what is happening inside you?

What are the reactions in others around you?

{Give examples}.

QUESTION 4B: DISPLEASEING THE CONSCIENCE ...IF NO ONE KNOWS

Write about a time when you did something wrong and no one found out. Did you discern any changes in your inner state? Describe the change or changes. Were these changes experienced in any particular place or places in your body?

What happened externally? Was the change discernible to others {how did it show}?

Had someone been there to look at you, would s/he have been able to tell you had done something wrong?

Did other people suspect or figure it out?

{Give examples}

QUESTION 5: REPARATION AND HEALING

When you have gone against your conscience by doing something wrong or bad, what do you do to make things right? Repair the damage?

What do you do to feel better, to soothe you conscience?

QUESTION 6A: FIRST MEMORIES OF GOODNESS

Now think back as far as you can in your life. What is the very first thing you can remember doing that was affirmed as "good or right"? Relate the story of that event.

Note: The details should include the approximate age of memory, the "story" of the good deed(s), who affirmed it, how it was affirmed, and the moral impact of the event(s).

Does that memory have special significance or meaning for you? What meaning? Does the story have a moral?

QUESTION 6B: FIRST MEMORIES OF GOODNESS IN PROFESSIONAL/VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

What is the very first thing you can remember doing in School that was affirmed as " good or right"?

Relate the story of that event.

Note: same note as for Question 6A.

Does your memory have special significance or meaning for you? What meaning? Does the story have a moral?

QUESTION 7A: FIRST MEMORIES OF BADNESS

Thinking back again as far as you can in your life, what is the very first thing you can remember doing that was identified as "bad or wrong" ?

Relate the story of that event. Note: The details should include the approximate age of memory, the "story" of the bad deed(s), who identified it as such, how it was identified and /or punished, and the moral impact of the event(s).

Does that memory have special significance or meaning for you? What meaning? Does the story have a moral?

QUESTION 7B: FIRST MEMORIES OF BADNESS IN PROFESSIONAL/VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

What is the very first thing you can remember doing in School that was identified as "bad or wrong (not simply mistaken)"?

Relate the story of that event.

Note: same note as for Question 7A.

Does that memory have special significance or meaning for you? What meaning? Does the story have a moral?

QUESTION 8A: SELF-ESTEEM IN THE EYES OF CONSCIENCE

1. Do you feel like a good person most of the time?
Do you think you were born " good" or "bad"?

2. What are the good things about you?

3. What are the bad things about you?

QUESTION 8B: DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL SELF-ESTEEM

1. Do you feel like a good professional person most of the time?
2. What are the good things about you as a professional person?
3. What are the bad things about you as a professional person?

QUESTION 8C: PROFESSIONAL IDEAL

1. What do you think makes someone good in your profession? {What ideal do you aspire to in your chosen profession?}
2. Who do you think of as most closely embodying your ideal?
3. In what ways do you most nearly match your ideal?
4. In what ways do you most fall short of your ideal?

QUESTION 9: WHO CARES ABOUT YOUR GOODNESS?

Other than yourself, who in your life has been most pleased when you have done something good? Has this been true all your life? How do these persons show they care about your goodness? Of these persons, whose good opinion do you most want to have or keep?

What about since entering professional/vocational school- have you added new people to your list of those who care when you've done something good? How did they get to be on your list? Of these persons, whose good opinion do you most want to have or keep? How come?

QUESTION 10: WHO CARES WHEN YOU'RE BAD?

Other than yourself, who in your life has been most displeased when you have done something bad? Has this been true all your life? How do these persons show they care when you're bad? Of these persons, whose bad opinion do you most want to avoid?

What about since entering professional/vocational school- have you added new people to your list of those who care when you've done something bad? How did they get to be on your list? Of these persons, whose bad opinion do you most want to avoid? How come?

QUESTION 11: CONSCIENCE DRAWING

Use your imagination and put on paper your image of your conscience. This could be a pictorial drawing or perhaps a schematic diagram or some other two-dimensional rendering. Should you be particularly self-conscious about drawing you may provide a description of how you would draw your conscience.

QUESTION 12A: MANDATE LISTS

List the main rules {principles} in your conscience.

QUESTION 12B: UNDERLYING VALUES

Beside each main rule {principle} you and your conscience have adopted, identify the main value you believe to underlie that rule {principle}.

QUESTION 13: MANDATE AUTHORS

Beside the main rules {principles} and values you have listed, write the name of the person(s) who has helped you and your conscience the most in adopting that rule {principle} / embracing that value. Circle which of the main rules {principles} / values are new since you entered professional school. Underline which of the main rules {principles} / values, although present before have become more important since you entered professional school.

QUESTION 14A: VALUATION AND DEFENSES

Sometimes there are reasons for living in accordance with rules; sometimes there are reasons for not doing so. Reflecting upon the main rules {principles} you have listed, select one and answer the following questions about it:

1. What are your best reasons for _____?
2. What are your best reasons for not _____?
3. What are your strongest motives for _____?
4. What are your strongest motives for not _____?

QUESTION 14B: MORAL DILEMMAS

Give an example of a moral dilemma (a right vs. right issue) with which you have wrestled since entering professional/vocational school. Give as full an account as possible.

In approaching, grappling with and/or resolving the moral dilemma

To what extent did you rely upon:

	not at all				extremely
moral intuition _____	0	1	2	3	4
reflection and moral reasoning _____	0	1	2	3	4
guidance from a respected authority within your profession _____	0	1	2	3	4
guidance from a respected authority outside your profession (specify _____) _____	0	1	2	3	4
guidance from a peer within your profession _____	0	1	2	3	4
guidance from a peer or significant other outside your profession (specify _____) _____	0	1	2	3	4
your understanding of conventional practice _____	0	1	2	3	4
your understanding of medico-legal requirements _____	0	1	2	3	4

How did you settle the matter?

QUESTION 14C: RELATIVE STRENGTH OF VALUES

For each of the following values, check the most appropriate description of its strength in your conscience

	Absent	Weak	Present	Strong	Dominant
Active engagement (meeting challenges)	0	1	2	3	4
Attachment in relationships/ Connectedness in community	0	1	2	3	4
Knowledge acquisition of knowledge	0	1	2	3	4
contributing to knowledge	0	1	2	3	4
transmitting knowledge	0	1	2	3	4
Beneficence/ Helping	0	1	2	3	4
Compassion/ Empathy	0	1	2	3	4
Non-maleficence (Do no harm)	0	1	2	3	4
Individuality/ Autonomy/ Liberty	0	1	2	3	4
Authority/Tradition	0	1	2	3	4
Self-interest/Authenticity	0	1	2	3	4
Justice/Fairness	0	1	2	3	4
Balance/Harmony	0	1	2	3	4

QUESTION 15A: SENSE OF CHANGE AND VOLITION

At what age did you become aware of making moral choices?
What is your earliest memory of moral choosing?

How often do the choices you make affect/involve relations with authorities?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

with your self:

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

with others:

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

During what period(s) of your life have you been most aware of changes in your conscience?

Describe the changes associated with these periods.

Have certain life events triggered, accelerated or modified changes in your conscience? Which events? How did they affect your conscience?

Which changes have unfolded without obvious association to life events? Which changes have been deliberately directed by yourself?

How has professional/vocational school contributed to changes in your conscience?

QUESTION 15B: ATTITUDE TOWARDS AGENCY

1) Which of the following best describes your philosophical attitude or intuitions about choices?

i) The actions of human beings are completely determined by causal lines (interactive strings of causes and events) which, in principle, have no interruptions. If ever one could know all the laws governing the universe, and one could specify the state of the universe at any particular time, one could predict the state of the universe at any other time. I believe there is no room for free will in such a universe. To say I make a choice or that I am responsible for choosing is simply to express the fact that certain processes in my brain exist at the point of convergence of these uninterrupted causal lines.

ii) I agree with the principle of determinism expressed above, however I also believe that free will in the sense of making choices is compatible with the principle.

iii) I believe in free will and can not reconcile this belief with a completely determined universe.

iv) I believe in neither free will nor determinism. There are interruptions in the lines of cause and effect because the universe is probabilistic and chance plays its part. But there is no free will, chance is not choice.

v) I have not formed an opinion on this subject.

vi) I do not think about this subject.

vii) I have given this subject some thought but have decided the question is not meaningful or susceptible of an answer.

2) Designate the truth value of each of these statements for you as a clinician

i) It is easier for me to empathically respond to a patient whose illness or condition has not come about because of poor lifestyle choices.

DEFINITELY					
NOT TRUE	DOUBTFUL	SOMEWHAT TRUE	TRUE	VERY TRUE	
1	2	3	4	5	

ii) I find it especially difficult to empathize with patients who lack empathy for others.

DEFINITELY					
NOT TRUE	DOUBTFUL	SOMEWHAT TRUE	TRUE	VERY TRUE	
1	2	3	4	5	

iii) I find it especially difficult to treat patients who are only partially compliant or non compliant with my best recommendations.

DEFINITELY
NOT TRUE DOUBTFUL SOMEWHAT TRUE TRUE VERY TRUE
 1 2 3 4 5

iv) My task is to make a diagnosis, present my findings and recommendations. I respect my patient's choice whether or not to accept my findings and recommendations and am willing to work further with a patient who does not.

DEFINITELY
NOT TRUE DOUBTFUL SOMEWHAT TRUE TRUE VERY TRUE
 1 2 3 4 5

v) I counsel patients who do not accept my recommendations to seek help from someone else.

DEFINITELY
NOT TRUE DOUBTFUL SOMEWHAT TRUE TRUE VERY TRUE
 1 2 3 4 5

vi) Irrespective of the circumstances that have shaped their lives, patients should be encouraged to take responsibility for themselves with respect to their illness/ condition, especially if lifestyle or psychological change will contribute to better health.

DEFINITELY
NOT TRUE DOUBTFUL SOMEWHAT TRUE TRUE VERY TRUE
 1 2 3 4 5

vii) There are definite constraints that genetic endowment and adverse life experiences place upon patients in their capacity to take responsibility for themselves. In order for healing to occur, these constraints must be acknowledged empathically by the clinician.

DEFINITELY
NOT TRUE DOUBTFUL SOMEWHAT TRUE TRUE VERY TRUE
 1 2 3 4 5

QUESTION 15C: ENVISIONING FUTURE CONSCIENCE DEVELOPMENTS.

Since starting professional/vocational school, do you have a different attitude than you used to have regarding conscience? Are you trying to change your conscience? Do you envision future changes in your conscience?

What do you envision as helping most in the in the further development of your conscience in your chosen profession/vocation?

What do you envision as the greatest threat to your professional conscience development?

QUESTION 16: YOUR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (Are there other aspects of your conscience that are important to address? Also, feel free to express your reactions to the Conscience Autobiography.)