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Sapere Aude — Dare to Be Wise: Elbert D. Glover

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Sapere Aude – Dare to Be Wise: Elbert D. Glover

Abstract

Sapere Aude – Dare to Be Wise is a unique editorial conversational interview-type feature. It is an attempt to deep dive into an Academy members' background, formative experience, and education – specifically, to extract factors that contributed to their development and evolution as a professional, as well as their success as a prominent researcher in the health behavior arena. Every Academy member selected has a different story to tell and numerous models for success will emerge from this exploration of the membership. That said, the first of what we hope to be a series of enlightening interviews is Elbert D. Glover, the founder of The Academy.

Keywords

Sapere Aude

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CHILDHOOD

Full name: Elbert David Glover, Jr (aka, glover)

Tell me about where you were born and how you grew up.

This question sets the early underlying phase for what ultimately contributed to overcoming my humble beginnings; consequently, I will deep dive into my childhood as the need to succeed was driven by challenging childhood experiences. I was born at the Kingsville Naval base in Kingsville, Texas where my dad was stationed in the Navy and where he met my mother. As a toddler, we moved to Corpus Christi, Texas. Being the oldest of eight children, at an early age I was delegated a great deal of family responsibility. I was the family babysitter through my preteen years. At age thirteen my mother informed me that due to my years of caring for my seven younger siblings that I had changed more baby diapers than the typical parent changed in a lifetime. Consequently, I was on my own as she now had to devote her limited time to my seven younger siblings. At the time, we used cloth diapers that had to be rinsed and scrubbed in the toilet prior to washing. Disposal diapers were available but too expensive; consequently, I labored with stinky reusable cloth diapers. From years of early babysitting, I learned responsibility – also the value of washing one’s hands frequently.

Growing up in humble beginnings, I was also thrust into a working environment at an early age. We did not own a car, so we walked to the small local neighborhood grocery store for most items and for specific items took a roundtrip taxi to a major grocery chain. Interestingly, while making periodic trips to the neighborhood grocery store the owner took a liking to me. He built me a shoe box and showed me how to shine shoes. As a result, to earn money at age eight or nine after school, I walked the streets shining shoes for a nickel.

The local neighborhood bars were the best dwellings to shine shoes and I quickly learned that intoxicated customers tipped much better than sober ones. From this I learned that hard work could generate income. At that same time, the bars paid a penny for each beer bottle returned; learning to be enterprising, I always searched the neighborhood for discarded empty beer bottles.

Another noteworthy job was hawking newspapers at various street corners. After elementary school I rushed to the Corpus Christi *Caller-Times* to collect a bundle of heavy newspapers then hurried to a busy street corner. The busy corners were where newspapers easily sold through the windows of cars waiting for the red traffic light to change. However, being a small, skinny kid, I was never strong enough to carry my heavy bundle fast enough to position myself at the best-selling street corners; therefore, I had to carry my bundle beyond the best street corners. One day on the way to a street corner, I stopped to rest outside a towering office building. As employees walked into the building, several purchased a newspaper. I sold out quickly. Bingo! Thereafter, I waited until everyone collected their heavy bundles, rushed to the best corners, and once out of sight, I dragged my bundle to the nearest office building and would take the elevator to each floor selling newspapers. I sold every newspaper in a matter of minutes; moreover, I returned several times for additional bundles as there were many office buildings. No one was able to understand how a small, skinny kid sold so many newspapers. From this I learned that working hard was good but working smart was even better.

Two other preteen jobs that fostered firm character were picking cotton and selling fruit out of a truck on the highway. An enormous truck drove daily though my neighborhood gathering up persons who wanted to pick cotton in the fields. One early morning I jumped on the truck and at the end of the day my hands were bleeding. The work was extremely painful as the cotton bulbs contained prickly thorns that penetrated the flesh and caused my hands to bleed relentlessly. Selling fruit out of a truck on

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the highway seemed like it would be easier – however, it wasn't. The fruit stand owner parked his truck just off the busy highway and hung a small tarp to cover the fruit; however, did nothing to protect me from the scorching heat. The natural south Texas summer heat and the heat emanating from the blacktop highway was sweltering. Because of these hazards, I waited for customers under the truck where there was minimal shade. The speeding cars driving past the fruit stand produced a blistering breeze infused with toxic fumes.

Due to my large family, humble environment, and both parents always working to make financial ends meet, our family did not have a close or affectionate upbringing. Subsequently, at every grade level, I selected caring teachers to substitute as my parents and to provide the guidance I needed. Teachers unknowingly saved me from a life of crime, violence, substance abuse, and possibly early mortality. Successful people don't do it alone. They are products of particular places, people, and environments and for me that can be traced directly to teachers who came to my emotional rescue.

Not owning a family vehicle, when my dad visited his family in east Texas, he hitchhiked and took me along. Wondering why he took me along; he shared that drivers were more likely to offer a ride to a man when accompanied by a child. Despite the less than stellar upbringing, I believe the strong character that served me well in later years was created by the following: being the first born, given immense childhood responsibility, early demanding childhood work experiences, teacher mentoring, and my poor family environment. I held many other preteen jobs that also contributed to my character growth such as door-to-door doughnut salesman, Mexican candy salesman, service station attendant, and a newspaper route, all to produce money. Success is not a random act, I always felt that I may not have been the smartest person, but I was never afraid of hard work. My primary youthful drive was always money not education. Due to a painful childhood journey, for survival I found myself

turning inward and spending a great deal of time dreaming of a better future.

What did your parents do for a living?

My dad held several blue-collar jobs, the first I recall was at Borden's local dairy as an ice cream maker. We temporarily rented an old apartment next door with only a rusty hurricane fence separating our rental home and the dairy. The neighborhood kids loved my dad as he would periodically hand out free popsicles through the fence to the neighborhood kids.

I also recall my dad training at the local boxing gym where he was a boxer. He participated in the Golden Gloves, and for a short period, fought professionally. Actually, during World War II, he served as boxing entertainment for the troops. However, I most vividly recall my dad working as an employee at Reynolds Metals Company an aluminum company where he tended flowing, molten aluminum pots which paid well because it was extremely hazardous.

The summer between my junior and senior year of high school, I worked as a gopher at Reynolds Metals. I quickly discovered why my dad seemed to always be too tired to toss a football. He tended and walked between the flowing aluminum pots that registered around 1300 degrees Fahrenheit. His work was exhausting, and he was exposed to such massive heat that despite wearing protective gear, fifteen minutes of every hour he had to enter an air-conditioned shelter to cool down. I also came to understand his absence from home as he was always working double shifts to support the family. After two decades of grueling work and immense heat, the work eventually took its toll, and he was physically unable to continue in that position. Fortunately, as a long-time company employee, he was retained as a janitor until retirement. My mother, with a third-grade education, was a barmaid and worked in several local bars serving alcohol. Her work schedule was highly erratic, and she was rarely at home in the evenings. She enjoyed being a barmaid as she was also aware that intoxicated persons tipped well.

What about your education? What kind of educational environment did you grow up in?

My dad was a high school graduate with little regard for education. My mother left grammar school in the third grade; neither parent held education in much esteem. My parents never assisted with homework, inquired about my schoolwork, or encouraged me to attend college. I recall many times my parents suggesting that I quit graduate school as school was interfering with real work. I recall when I told my dad that I wanted to pursue a PhD, he jokingly asked if a PhD stood for a **Post Hole Digger?**

What were your interests in high school?

Being the biracial child of a German/Irish father and a Hispanic mother, I never quite felt like I belonged. I experienced isolation, separateness, discrimination, and a great deal of time alone. I was mostly ignored by classmates until my senior year in high school. As a third grader, I was too small to join the elementary school football team. Undeterred, I visited a neighboring elementary school where they allowed me to join the team. Unbeknownst to either school, I attended one elementary school and played for another. I remained skinny and slow; however, continued in sports as the activities helped build confidence, and some marginal acceptance among classmates. At that time, little did I realize that sports would create my opening to higher education. As a skinny high school student, I enjoyed sports. One of the players on the high school team shared that his father could secure a compound that could help me become a better athlete. I assumed it was similar to protein powder which at the time I was consuming. Later, I learned that it was the premier oral steroid that assisted with muscle development, strength, and muscle size. Suddenly, I found myself muscular, a fast runner, and an excellent athlete. As a late bloomer, I must also attribute the sudden muscle growth and newfound speed not only to the steroid but to maturation. Nonetheless, I was confused that one year earlier I had few friends, but suddenly, as an athlete, it seemed everyone

wanted to be my friend. Because of my athleticism, I received several scholarship offers to play college football. Thank goodness for the scholarship offers as there were no family funds available to attend college; moreover, I had never really contemplated a college education. My plan was always to become a laborer at Reynolds Metals Company like my dad. Sports provided a future. I accepted a football scholarship to attend Texas Tech University.

EDUCATION

Tell me about your experiences getting your undergraduate degree. (i.e. BA/BS, undergraduate degree, college).

After high school, I left home and never slept in that house again. The summer before my freshman year at Texas Tech University, the university athletic department offered me a lucrative job in Yankton, South Dakota working on a pipeline. While in Yankton, I discovered that I enjoyed traveling. Thereafter, I attended college during the academic year and the next two summers, I hitchhiked around the country. Hitchhiking around the country exposed me to many new sights, foods, and luxuries.

Despite enjoying a full scholarship including four free tickets to every football game, I needed funds to function in college. I scalped the tickets for paltry funds; however, I noticed that many freshman football players were not invited to weekend fraternity parties. My entrepreneurial skills kicked in, so I promoted pay-to-attend parties. I collected two dollars, from most freshman football players, rented two joining rooms at a seedy local motel, purchased 190-proof alcohol, Hawaiian punch, paper cups, rented a flowing fountain, and borrowed records and a record player. I mixed the alcohol and punch and allowed it to flow freely from the fountain. You just walked up to the fountain, filled your cup, and enjoyed the music. Although this was a profitable undertaking, I eventually had to stop as the cost for replacing destroyed motel furniture limited my profits.

Attending college was not about securing a quality education but simply a means to enjoy

football. My initial plan was to be a high school coach; however, after my sophomore year, I lost the scholarship due to poor grades. The scholarship loss was a rude awakening as suddenly I found myself seriously contemplating my future. Needing money to continue my education, I gambled seriously on sports, worked in a liquor store, and participated in several seedy ventures to earn money.

An odd motivating factor was, during one Thanksgiving break in college, not having sufficient funds to go home for the holidays, a college friend invited me to his home for the break. His family was very wealthy and had a home in the local country club. I recall he snatched ice from an ice maker in the wall. I was stunned as I had never seen a built-in ice maker, much less one in a private home. Our family always used plastic trays that needed to be filled with tap water and placed in the freezer to create ice. Nonetheless that ice machine privately motivated me to continue my education so that one day, I could own a home ice machine. Another major motivating factor to pursue graduate school was when I accidentally viewed a pay stub of one of my professors. I was stunned as to how much money a university professor could earn. So, I thought “why not me?”

I feel strongly that I was accepted into college based on my athletic ability and not my grades. Nonetheless, my college freshman English teacher, [Dorothy M. Pijan](#) took a liking to me. She shared that I was a smart person; however, not properly educated. She further shared that she wanted to assist me to reach my full potential. Later, I discovered that she would select specific freshman athletes who she felt needed special guidance. As an English teacher she began assisting me with writing and grammar. I owe so much to Dr. Pijan for she was the first college professor who truly saw value in me and helped me become a better person and student; moreover, with her assistance I was able to graduate.

What inspired you to get your master’s degree? (i.e. MA, MS, MPH, master’s degree, college)

Before completing my BA, the accidental viewing of a professor’s check stub was the first time I seriously considered pursuing an advanced degree. For my MA I attended Texas A&I University in Kingsville which was close to Corpus Christi and known today as Texas A&M at Kingsville.

Were there professors, mentors or advisors that made an impression on you during this time?

There was no one who mentored me during my pursuit of the MA. I was primarily responsible for this lack of mentoring as during this time I was married, commuted 100 miles a day to and from school, coached one year at a junior high school, and another year carried a 38 caliber Smith and Wesson as a deputy sheriff in Nueces County, Texas. I had little free time to be mentored. Moreover, my MA graduate program was strictly pedagogy, research was non-existent in my program or in my mind.

What lessons would you say you learned from them that have influenced your educational and professional development?

Outside of my undergraduate experience, no one influenced me at the master’s level as my focus at that time remained the paycheck. I was slowly beginning to think seriously about my education. However, the emphasis remained pedagogy and coaching not research.

Now tell me about your doctorate work. Again, what inspired you to go on, instead of getting a job out of your master’s degree (i.e. doctorate, college).

As I progressed in my education, the dream of a high school football coach was fading; I was now beginning to focus directly on education. I chose to pursue a doctoral health education degree at Texas Woman’s University in Denton, Texas as I believed TWU had the best health education program in the state. However, at the

time TWU was not an option as it was a woman's only school. Consequently, I began my doctoral degree across town at North Texas State University. I selected NTSU for two reasons; first, both TWU and NTSU were located in Denton, only miles apart and second, both shared a doctoral program that allowed students to enroll in classes at either university. Also, I made it loudly known that I planned to pursue legal means to be allowed admission to TWU.

In 1972 TWU became coed and I was allowed entrance. I applied for a graduate assistantship and was denied. Needing funds during my first year at TWU, I applied and was accepted as a full-time janitor at NTSU in the psychology building. My janitorial responsibilities consisted of the third floor and half the second floor. Whereas the other janitor assigned to the building took the day to address his responsibilities, I hurried through my responsibilities and completed my chores within two to three hours. Thereafter, I locked myself in a closet and studied. Being the janitor in the psychology building I occasionally stepped into an ongoing Rogerian, Freudian, or Skinnerian lecture and from the back of the classroom quietly listened. Confused doctoral students did not understand why the janitor in a mean-green uniform was sitting in the classroom. As janitor, I was initially treated poorly; however, once word permeated the building that I was a janitor working on a doctoral degree, I was treated respectfully. Subsequently, I was invited to join some classes and treated with approval and admiration. After that first full year at TWU, I was given a graduate assistantship under one condition. My student paycheck could not list my full name which would identify me as being a male. My checks were to read, E. Glover; consequently, I could be an Emma, Elizabeth, or Emily but not an Elbert.

What factor or set of actors contributed to your pursuing an academic career and becoming a researcher?

The major emphasis in my BA, MA and PhD was pedagogy not research. The decision to

become a researcher occurred after completing my doctoral degree. Becoming a researcher is well documented in a previous HBR publication "[Keeping the Dream Alive: The Back Story.](#)"

Were there professors, mentors or advisors that made an impression on you during this time?

There was only one health education professor at the doctoral level who made a strong impression. [Dr. Donald J. Merki](#), was the Chair and a well-known professor throughout Texas. He was my major professor, mentor, and advisor. I wanted to emulate everything he did. He wrote 15 books, was an excellent teacher, and an outstanding speaker always in demand.

What lessons would you say you learned from them that have influenced your educational and professional development?

Dr. Merki was not particularly a researcher. What I learned from him were teaching and speaking skills. I was not a good speaker as my nerves always got the best of me. One of Dr. Merki's goals was to have students take control of their own lives; consequently, he forced me to face my speaking fears. Moreover, I was aware that I needed to be a good speaker in order to take command of a lecture stage; consequently, I volunteered and accepted every lecture offered. Dr. Merki always received countless speaking invitations; consequently, he coerced me into taking his more casual lectures at elementary schools. Typically, the day of the lecture, I became highly nervous and at times sick. Slowly, lectures became more comfortable. Dr. Merki gradually allowed me to address larger and more educated groups. Little did I know that two decades later, public speaking income would surpass my annual professorial income and that I would deliver lectures to enormous medical groups around the world.

Tell me about the relationship you had with your major advisor.

Dr. Merki had played basketball in college on the east coast; consequently, we both enjoyed

sports, so we initially connected on a sports level. He was a strong teacher with a major commitment to public service. He did not stress research, we both expected I would teach at a small university.

Tell me about what you studied as a student, and what led you down that path.

As previously noted, I began college on a football scholarship with the goal of becoming a high school football coach; consequently, physical education was my major. It wasn't until my doctoral education that I abandoned the idea of becoming a high school football coach and selected health education as my new path. Always being a health-conscious individual, I recall thinking what a great major; I am studying content that will contribute to improving my own personal health.

PROFESSIONAL LIFE

Let's move beyond your education time and talk about your career.

One would assume that my research skills were developed in graduate school but that was not my case. When I began my professional career, I was severely lacking in research skills. As a young inexperienced university professor, I noticed that researchers received the bulk of the resources, praise, funds, and promotions. A colleague who influenced me to become a researcher was Dr. Gerald Landwer an exercise physiologist. He challenged my limited research skills by poking fun of my research talents. Humiliated, I took up reading research and statistical books, asking research colleagues for assistance, and became friends with researchers and statisticians. I learned quickly and initially began receiving small grants. Moreover, I always incorporated a statistician into any research project or grant. By adding statisticians to my projects, I asked many questions and acquired much needed knowledge. I began attending conferences and seeking out and interacting with researchers. Quality researchers were difficult to find; consequently, this is when

I first began entertaining the idea of forming an organization of researchers; hence, the *American Academy of Health Behavior* was born on April 1, 1997.

What has been your proudest research or other professional accomplishment to date?

As I became primarily research focused and eventually highly proficient, I secured millions of dollars in pharmacological smoking cessation grants. It is difficult to select one professional favorite accomplishment; however, I am most proud of my tobacco cessation research projects as they have saved millions of lives around the world. I conducted and participated in the pivotal trials with the 4mg nicotine gum, nicotine patch, nicotine inhaler, nicotine nasal spray, bupropion (Zyban) and varenicline (Chantix) all which were approved for use in the U.S. and many parts around the world. However, my greatest professional accomplishment is the founding of the *American Academy of Health Behavior*. As I attended existing health education conferences in my quest for research knowledge, I experienced difficulty in identifying quality research, or persons with a strong and driving interest in research. Consequently, if unable to identify researchers at the various conferences, why not create a new research organization specifically for health education researchers. The health education moniker concept eventually gave way to health behavior. I did not receive collegial encouragement as most colleagues believed my vision would fail; thankfully, they turned out to be wrong. My grants, research, and speaking will soon be forgotten but the *American Academy of Health Behavior* will live in perpetuity which makes me very proud. However, I must thank the thirty-two other professionals who accepted my invitation to join me in forming The Academy. Again, for a more detailed description of the process, tap into the [HBR publication](#). It's a great historical paper on the founding of The Academy.

Were there any projects or studies you thought would lead to something interesting that just didn't pan out?

Having conducted many successful clinical trials, one could easily view me as highly successful researcher because you only read about my successes; however, for every success there were failures. My biggest disappointment was finding the compound varenicline ineffective for weight loss. When we tested varenicline for smoking cessation, the trial was successful, and the drug was approved by the FDA for smoking cessation. The underlying data noted, weight loss in smokers who were dispensed the active compound when compared to placebo. Unfortunately, the drug failed to achieve statistical significance for weight loss. To this day, I still believe varenicline works for weight loss.

Tell me about your philosophy that guides your research chain of inquiry and your other academic pursuits?

In developing my chain of inquiry, the original notion to investigate a specific question begins with the idea, recruiting quality researchers to join me, reviewing the literature, designing the project, conducting the project, analyzing the data, and ultimately publishing the data. In developing the idea, I borrow from successful researchers to improve the design, questions utilized, questionnaires used, and how data were collected, analyzed, and reported. Researchers tend to attend research presentations in their area of inquiry; however, I chose to attend many research presentations that were outside my area of research and not tobacco related. This allowed me to view different and interesting designs, and new ways of collecting, testing, analyzing, reporting data, and delivering unique presentations that I could apply to my current research. I was always searching for a uniquely different approach.

Inasmuch as you have been successful in disseminating your research, what advice do

you have for young professionals who struggle?

Before you go out on your own or if struggling with research, attach yourself to a successful research mentor and learn as much as you can. Remember I had little to no research training in my graduate programs. I became a successful researcher due to my determination and drive which occurred after completion of my PhD. Once you have the idea, recruit a team of quality researchers including a statistician or two. Statisticians allow you to conduct a high level of research and allow you to learn from their expertise. I could not have published in the most prestigious journals without possessing accurate and quality statistics to support the research. Quality research is no longer the domain of the lone genius but has come to rely increasingly on teamwork and organization. You can achieve more with a team than you can on your own. Moreover, when you associate with researchers, you think and act like a researcher. You not only learn a great deal, but you will always walk away inspired.

What single best piece of advice would you pass along to a new investigator or student researcher-in-training today?

Ultimately, it's about achieving your goal not only setting a goal. Any good idea is like a wheelbarrow, it goes nowhere unless you push it. Your graduation or current training can easily be a steppingstone for more successes to come; however, success doesn't come easily so work hard, don't be afraid to accept challenges, never ever stop believing in yourself, and *if* you stay focused, you can achieve anything. Moreover, no one achieves greatness by becoming a generalist. The way to the next level is focus. My dissertation was on tobacco cessation and tobacco cessation remained my focus for 40+ years.

Describe the most courageous thing you have had to do in your academic career—perhaps something that put you at risk for the sake of standing up for a principle.

Once again, the founding of the *American Academy of Health Behavior* was my courageous undertaking. I had to defy common wisdom, skeptical colleagues who argued that we already had too many health organizations, the misperception that I was creating not an elite group, but a group of elitists, and that it was simply not possible. The number of times I heard the word “no” was deafening. At conferences, I evolved into a research salesman to win over naysayers. Interestingly, many of the naysayers eventually joined The Academy and two became research laureates. Despite all the negativity I remained focused and stuck to my plan to create a research organization.

When your professional career ends, how would you like to be remembered?

It’s been said that truth is the cry of many, but the game of few; consequently, I would like to be remembered as an honest person as it connotes integrity and truthfulness. Unfortunately, honesty and truthfulness can sometimes be hurtful to others. Moreover, I would also like to be remembered as being successful, not for what I accomplished but for the distance I traveled. My journey began with humble beginnings and culminated with much more than I ever envisioned. I did not become successful as many might believe in spite of my humble beginnings; I became successful because of my humble beginnings.

Professionals in any field have been known to say there is a price for success. To what extent has that been your experience in the academic world?

It is difficult to transition from a good researcher to an excellent researcher in the average workday. There is no question that my early years cost me a marriage, quality time with my two sons, and isolation from friends and colleagues. I always subscribed to the notion that he who travels alone travels the fastest. Therefore, in my race to succeed there was little time for family and friends. This misperception contributed to my professional

success but was counterproductive for developing intimate relationships. I was so focused that I recall living only a block from my campus office and instead of going home, many nights I slept on an air mattress in my office as I did not want to spend a valuable minute away from my research. I was too busy to take the time to develop family ties or personal relationships. My few friends were always professional friends and once we completed our research project, I was so eager to move on to the next project that I failed to continue to foster these friendships. I have learned that I can remain focused and maintain a balance between research, family, and friends.

LIFE OUTSIDE OF ACADEMIA

Who are the people outside of your professional world who have impacted your life and what have some of those impacts been?

The person who has impacted my life the most outside my professional world is my current wife, Penny. My relationship with her is the most intimate and honest relationship I have ever experienced. Over time Penny rounded my sharp edges and made me a more sensitive, considerate, caring, and accepting person. Through our evening wine tastings, she forced me to slow down, enjoy and build a relationship. There was a time in my professional life that I suffered from the “impostor syndrome.” I was never sure that I was good enough, or perhaps they made a mistake hiring me. Will they discover I am an imposter? Do they know my background? Penny happens to be a counselor who helped me move beyond my difficult childhood and to be accepting of my professional success. It is difficult to envision my life before or without her. I gradually learned to be extremely secure in insecure situations.

What are some leisure time activities for which you have a passion?

Travel is a passion and I have visited all the continents with the exception of Antarctica. I’ve

made plans to visit Antarctica; however, constantly change my mind as I am fearful of the Drake Passage, a highly dangerous crossing you must complete in order to arrive at Antarctica. Also, I am always searching for excellent wines and recently wrote a humorous book entitled, *Ready, Set, Whine! – Musings of a Wino*.

If you could spend an evening with anyone, living or dead, contemporary character or historical figure, who would it be and what would you want to talk about?

Twenty years ago, in an interview I noted John Bradley, one of the six individuals in the most famous World War II photo, raising the American flag on Iwo Jima. I would have liked to discuss the true story behind the memorialized photo that came to symbolize courage and the spirit of the Marines. However, in 2016, the Marines announced publicly that Bradley was not in the photograph, that he had been incorrectly identified. This was highly disappointing; consequently, today my childhood hero, Muhammad Ali is whom I would love to spend an evening with. However, I am positive I would not be talking with Muhammad; but would instead be listening for he was so inspirational as he did it his way.

If you weren't doing what you are doing career-wise, what would you be doing?

Probably a businessperson. In addition to founding The Academy, I founded three journals, the *American Journal of Health Behavior*, co-founded *Tobacco Regulatory Science* and co-founded *Health Behavior and Policy Review*. Owning businesses created a great deal of business acumen. I possess excellent insight into creating opportunities for generating money due to my humble beginnings where I was initially driven to identify ways to earn and accumulate capital. The number of times I have been told that I would be a successful businessperson is staggering. I value the freedom that results from the accomplishments more than the

accomplishments themselves. I celebrate the outcomes but am more motivated by the process than solely the outcome.

Which three books outside of academia would you recommend for others to read and why?

Twenty years ago, I recommended *An Actor Prepares* by Stanislavski because I was a very shy person, and the book was a staple among aspiring actors. From this book, I learned to utilize acting skills to act like a dynamic speaker which in turn provided me the comfort to speak confidently. Essentially, I was an introvert acting like an extroverted speaker. Today, I am very fond of Malcom Gladwell whom I quote incessantly; consequently, I would suggest three of his books. *Outliers*, *The Tipping Point*, and *David and Goliath*. These books speak to the fact that it is the little things that make the difference and provide support and understanding on how underdogs and misfits can take on the giants. So much of the book speaks directly to my background, success, and how to overcome adversity.

Share something about yourself that you believe is misunderstood by others.

I believe that my honesty is sometimes misunderstood and viewed as rude or mean which is not my intent. I have no control over how others view my honesty; however, I need to learn to filter my thoughts. Moreover, I am still learning that how you say something is more important than what you have to say. I am learning to express the same thoughts in a less harsh way. Also, I sometimes have trouble with white lies that are told in order to be polite or to stop someone from being upset by the truth. I am learning it is sometimes better to say nothing.

Gladwell has written that we tend to write off people prematurely who are different for we are too much in awe of those who succeed and far too dismissive of those who fail. The story line is always the same; the hero is born into less than modest circumstances and by virtue of his own grit and talent fights his way to the top.

What is frequently lost in this scenario is that no one gets to the top by his or her own accord; there were always people along the way that assist. I cannot thank enough the local grocer who built me the shoe shine box and taught me to shine shoes; all the teachers along the way who were my substitute parents; the freshman English teacher who taught me proper grammar and writing and boosted my vocabulary; the professor who forced me to perform lectures; the exercise physiologist who made fun of research; the countless of others who gave me a major push forward and; of course, my wife Penny who made me a better person. She helped me understand how to interact with people in a positive manner and that I needed to be a friend to have friends. Essentially, she helped me do a better job of navigating the world.

My ultimate success was not my extraordinary talents but the extraordinary opportunities these wonderful helpers presented to me. Successful people don't do it alone, they are a product of interactions with others and the environment presented. Luckily, I was fortunate to recognize these opportunities and able to seize them.

**Elbert D. Glover and Robert J. McDermott
are the Feature Editors of *Sapere Aude*.**