The GoodWork Project®: An Overview

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**1.1 Background:**

In every society there are jobs to do. Many of these are jobs that "need doing," in the sense that the society's members depend upon them. One main reason that a society—be it an ant colony or the British Empire—comes together in the first place is to accomplish the tasks that are needed to nurture, regulate, stimulate, and otherwise occupy its members.

Getting jobs done requires work, and work touches all of our lives in a multitude of important ways. Many of us are workers, assigned to jobs that at least someone wants done enough to pay us for our efforts. Those of us who do not work rely on the work of others for their survival, edification, and entertainment. Whichever role we take—worker, consumer, or most likely both—we live or die, rise or fall, gain or lose hope, get led or misled, discouraged or inspired—by the quality of the work that we and others around us do.

As workers, we usually have a number of objectives for our daily toil. The first thing on our minds may be earning a living. In fact, this may be the only thing that we are consciously aware of when we make the effort to show up at our workplaces each day.

But most people have other aspirations for their work as well. In particular, most people want to accomplish something significant in their work, and they take pride in doing their jobs well. People who achieve financial success without satisfying these other aspirations may end up feeling barren and dispirited. When people feel that their current work situations do not allow them to accomplish the job that they believe needs to be done, they often quit; or, worse, they subsist in a demoralized, half-hearted mode, aimed at little more than keeping a paycheck coming in. They feel that they have drifted away from their moorings, that their careers are ending up far from where they had initially hoped they would be. What they lack is a sense that they are accomplishing something that really matters, that something of consequence happens when they go to work each day. They are neither especially proud of the work that they are doing nor of the kinds of workers that they have become.

People who work are not always aware of the forces that ultimately matter to them. While focusing on the "how" questions—how to get a job, how to keep the job, how to get ahead—many forget the "why" questions that they began with: Why take this path? Why aim to achieve this objective? Why behave in this way? Why should we or anyone else care about what we are doing? It is the "why" questions that remind us of our truer aspirations and ambitions. Because everyone, everywhere, wants to live an admirable life, a life of consequence, because we all would like to pass "the tombstone test," the "why" questions cannot be ignored for long without peril to one's personal stability and enduring success. It is like ignoring the rudder on a ship—no matter how much you monitor all the other moving parts, you may end up lost at sea.

In our research enterprise, which we have called GoodWork Project®, we have learned that most workers aspire to do "good work"[1]—they take pride in doing something that matters, that serves society, that enhances the lives of others, and that is accomplished in an ethical manner. What matters to all of us—workers and nonworkers alike—is that the jobs that we rely on get done well, with competence and integrity. We all have a stake in "good work" for the simple reason that we need the goods and services that work bestows upon us, and when those goods are shoddy or the services corrupt, our lives tangibly suffer.

As we have come to construe it, in light of our fifteen-plus years of research, "good work" involves three considerations: l) it is technically Excellent; 2) it is personally meaningful or Engaging; 3) it is carried out in an Ethical way. Work can exhibit 0, 1, 2, or all three Es. Workers should aspire to achieve all three of the Es. As a suggestive visual representation, we think of 'good work' as three intertwined strands of "E"—a triple helix of "ENA".

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[1] "Good work" is formally defined by the three principal investigators of the GoodWork Project as work that is of high quality, socially responsible, and meaningful to the worker.

**Figure 1 - The Triple Helix of GoodWork: Excellence, Ethics, and Engagement**



Excellence  Ethics  Engagement

Fortunately, our need to have "good work" done on our behalf—as consumers or clients

or citizens—is reciprocated by our motivation as workers to try our best to accomplish

"good work." Unfortunately, this reciprocal bond is delicate, with many weak links in the

motivational chain. To make matters worse, there are powerful forces—some timeless,

others unique to our contemporary fix—that can break this bond at a moment's notice,

sometimes before workers even know that the quality of their work is in danger and

before consumers know that their needs are being poorly served.

While "good work" is typically the goal of most workers, formidable obstacles to its

realization exist. Despite our best efforts, internal and external conditions can make

"good work" difficult to do. Pressure to keep costs low and profits high, to do more in

less time, and to fulfill numerous life roles, including those of a parent, a spouse, a friend,

and a worker, can all make cutting corners tempting. Furthermore, in countries with high levels of corruption or illegitimate governmental interference, "good work" may be doubly challenging. Doing "good work" is certainly easier for professionals living in a democratic society that affords opportunity and encourages constructive social efforts. Yet even in such a happy circumstance, "good work" is neither effortless nor assured. It is a perpetual challenge, requiring ethical commitment and skill on the part of each individual worker. And at the time of our writing, greed (always wanting to have more) and fear (of falling behind others, or of losing one's job) are additional obstacles to the pursuit and achievement of good work.

Why is it that, with respect to two individuals working on the same job, one will do "good work" and another won't? And more generally, why is it that during one era an entire profession may be sailing along in smooth waters, earning the respect and perhaps even the gratitude of society at large, while a few decades later the same profession will be seen as a shelter for crooks and clowns? In the last few decades, observers in the United States have noted this trend with reference to the auditing profession. We all have strong intuitive beliefs about why certain people fail at their task, or why certain professions fall into disrepute at times. Unfortunately, our institutions alone are often too fragile, failing to provide the kind of support that would allow us to turn "compromised work"[2] into "good work."

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[2] The term "compromised work" is used for work which is legal, strictly speaking, but distorts or undermines the core values of the profession. (See Gardner, 2005).

For instance, suppose a surgeon drifts off into aimless thought during an operation, carelessly neglecting to use proper medical procedures on a gravely ill patient. Some may assume that the fault lies in the character of the physician and advocate stricter disciplinary measures to prevent such behavior from surfacing again. Others might blame the physician's state of mind; perhaps he was distracted by personal problems, a divorce, or money issues. In this case, stress reduction and therapy might help keep such events from recurring. Still other onlookers might blame systemic conditions that force physicians to work long hours in crowded hospitals. If this last circumstance is the source of the problem, institutional changes will be necessary. And there are many other explanations that could readily be advanced: the doctor had been badly trained and thus had failed to internalize the special duties that bind physicians to patients; or perhaps he had become too greedy; or the medical profession as a whole had become too arrogant to feel any empathy for patients.

If we move from considering the failure to produce "good work" at the level of individuals to the level of entire occupations, again a rather broad range of causes may be reasonably invoked. For instance, in some cities throughout the world, police corruption is a major problem. So what is cause behind these corrupt cops, you may ask. Is it that the occupation of policing attracts a certain category of persons at risk for being corrupted? Is it that the corrupt ones are ill trained, unable to respond to the diverse citizens they are supposed to protect, and to their concerns? Or is the problem to be found outside the police station—among the politicians that control police boards, or in the powerful temptations that drugs and vice present to basically honest policemen, or—perish the

thought—in the broader communities that the police serve? And more generally: is "compromised work" the result of unchecked greed run rampant because the core values of our society have become too weak to counteract selfish forces?

As it happens, all of these explanations—and more—are usually involved in allowing "compromised work" to happen. But are these seemingly very different reasons actually unrelated to each other? And if they are not, what is the specific contribution of each of these causes in a given instance? These are the questions that we consider in greater detail in the sections that follow. First, however, it is useful to consider examples of "good work," as well instances where "good work" is nowhere in sight.

**1.2 Examples of Good and Compromised Work in Different Professional Domains:**

Looking across four professions, we can readily locate examples of individuals who approach their work in ways that earn the gratitude of the broader society, as well as less happy examples of individuals whose work undermines the healthy functioning of society.

Consider, first, the contrasting cases of two journalists. Carol Marin is a television journalist who has won many awards including 14 Emmy awards, and an induction into the Chicago Journalism Hall of Fame in 1992. With little experience, Marin entered journalism as a morning talk show host for a small station in Knoxville, Tennessee. From the start of her journalism career, Marin's talent was evident. While in Knoxville,

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she was promoted several times, eventually to assistant news director, and after five years

left for a job as a news reporter with a larger station in Nashville. This position brought

her wide acclaim, and led to her position as weekend news anchor at WMAQ-TV, an

NBC owned affiliate in Chicago. Marin remained at WMAQ for 19 years where she took

on the esteemed job of co-anchor of the daily 5:00 PM and 10:00 PM newscasts.

In 1997, Marin's supervisors at WMAQ informed her that henceforth she would have a

new co-anchor. The person selected was Jerry Springer, a talk show host who is known

for especially salacious guests and for interviews that sometimes culminate with televised

mayhem. Marin was appalled by this selection, which in her view signaled to the

audience that news and entertainment were indistinguishable. On the air, she denounced

this selection and resigned. The entire newsroom rose in appreciation and applauded her

announcement. The Chicago public also expressed its support for Marin and its

displeasure with Channel 5's decision to hire Springer by turning away from the station.

Shortly thereafter the television station announced that Springer had withdrawn as news

anchor. Since leaving WMAQ, Marin has been an investigative reporter for a CBS

affiliate in Chicago and a contributor to Sixty Minutes II, the national weekly television

news magazine. Marin also hosted a PBS special called "Endgame: Ethics and Values in

America." More recently, she has worked at the Chicago Sun-Times and also served as a

political correspondent for NBC5.

Patricia Smith is a talented writer and poet. In the 1980s, she worked as an entertainment writer and news journalist for <u>The Chicago Tribune</u>. In 1990, she relocated to Boston to work for <u>The Boston Globe</u>.  She was the first black woman in the history of <u>The Boston Globe</u> to write a weekly metro column. During her years at <u>The Globe</u>, Smith became an extremely popular columnist. In 1998 she was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Shortly thereafter, rumors began to circulate that Smith's column was a mixture of fact and fantasy. For example, she portrayed poignant characters like a brain tumor victim. Upon investigation, it was discovered that sometimes these persons did not actually exist. At first management defended Smith but as the rumors evolved into an uproar, Smith was pressured into resigning her position. She explained that she had been encouraged by her superiors to develop a new style of writing, without being warned that this style undermined a fundamental principle of journalism—do not invent.  Since her resignation, Smith has continued to write poetry and has taught English at the University level but the world of journalism has lost her unique talents.

Morey Myers is dedicated to the elimination of inequality; this attitude is reflected in his activities as a lawyer and a community leader. After teaching courses at Yale, Haverford, Rutgers, and other prestigious east coast institutions, Myers realized that he could be doing the same for his local community, and he began sharing his time and expertise with the University of Scranton in northeastern Pennsylvania. He initiated a local housing development plan that called upon the support and cooperation of various religious organizations, and after a few years a ghetto of decaying homes was replaced with new housing and new hope. Myers not only recognizes but acts upon the duty he has to

combat disparities in his community and to bring about positive changes that will benefit all of society. Now in his eighties, he continues to practice law in his hometown of Scranton.

Hill and Barlow described itself as a "professional corporation" that dates back to 1899, when Arthur D. Hill envisioned a firm in which the practice of law would be founded on "a commitment to clients, attention to detail, a willingness to challenge conventional wisdom, and service to the community." Among the firm's many services to the community was a high proportion of pro-bono work for those who could not otherwise afford legal services. The values on which the firm was founded were embraced by the firm's 140 lawyers up until December 2002 when this venerable firm announced that it was dissolving its partnership and would close immediately. The meltdown was precipitated by the announcement by the real estate division that it was leaving the firm "for greener pastures." Since the real estate division represented one-third of the lawyers in the firm and in recent years an ever larger percentage of the firm's yearly revenues, the real estate division decided it would be financially advantageous for them to "take their practice elsewhere." The remaining 100 lawyers in the firm felt that the firm could not survive without its broad range of specialties; hourly salaries would have to be cut and the client base would have to shift for this mid-size law firm to survive. Within a matter of hours, interns and associates who had been promised employment with the firm saw their offers revoked. It is doubtful whether the many community services for which the original firm was known can be reconstituted in the new structures that have arisen in the wake of the firms' abrupt dissolution.

Peter[3] is an advanced doctoral student in genetics. One day he noted some strange data that appeared on a public website. He reanalyzed the data, discovered the nature of the flaws, assembled his own correct data, and sent them on to the head of a major national reporting center. Peter was delighted to see his new data posted; but he was extremely distressed to observe that the head of the Center had posted the data on his own, without either thanking Peter or acknowledging the source of the data. When Peter reported this deception to his own doctoral advisers, they all advised him not to complain, but rather to swallow hard, and hope that the head of the Center would one day give him a positive recommendation. Peter felt very disappointed; but he has decided that if he wants to remain in science, he has to keep his own discoveries quiet until he is ready to publish them himself.

Kate is a talented high school biology student. Since an early age, she has loved biology and longed to participate in a prestigious national science competition. Finally her opportunity came. She wanted very much to study learning in mice. But she had heard that the scientific judges in this competition did not award prizes for work with live animals. Intent on winning the prize, Kate made a deliberate decision to hide her methods and to report findings as if they had been based on reanalysis of archival data. She did not tell her adviser what she had done. To her great delight, Kate won one of the awards. Rather than regretting her misrepresentation, Kate defends what she did. In her view, the

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[3] In some cases, names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of participants in the study.

judging standards are at fault. Her goal is to be a successful biologist, come what may, and she is prepared to cut corners if necessary.

Paul Farmer is a physician with a special expertise in infectious diseases. He is also a trained anthropologist. From the beginning of his medical career, Farmer's focus has been on diseases afflicting underserved and destitute communities worldwide, some in the most disadvantaged areas in the world. Farmer strongly believes that, regardless of lifestyle or activities, everyone deserves medical care and assistance. As a medical student, Farmer co-founded and remains director of Partners In Health, a non-profit organization that delivers health care services to poor and sick populations. After receiving his degrees, Farmer and his colleagues set up a clinic in central Haiti and have for over twenty years provided free medical services to poor and diseased families in the community. With colleagues, he has set up similar clinics in sub-Saharan Africa, Peru and Russia.

As a Professor of Medical Anthropology, the co-director of the Program in Infectious Disease and Social Change at Harvard Medical School and an attending physician at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Farmer divides his time between Boston and Haiti where he serves as medical co-director of Clinique Bon Saveur—a charity hospital. Farmer and colleagues accept subsistence wages and split their time (80-hour weeks) between serving the poor and raising funds to maintain their clinics. In 1993, Farmer received a MacArthur Prize Fellowship. With the award money, Farmer established the Institute for Health and Social Justice, an organization which researches the connections

between social and economic inequalities and health outcomes. Farmer has been much praised and rewarded for this charitable work, but because he feels a responsibility to be where the burden of disease is the greatest, he leads a life that is filled with pressures and dangers to himself, his associates, and his family. In 2009, Farmer was selected by former President Bill Clinton as a United Nation Deputy envoy to Haiti and in 2010, he was named to a prestigious University Professorship at Harvard.

Jesse Gelsinger suffered from a rare liver disorder called OTC deficiency. In September 1999, Jesse volunteered for a gene therapy experiment at the University of Pennsylvania. After a heavy dosage of medication, he died. Following his death, it was discovered that rather than receiving the gene therapy intravenously, Jesse had received the therapy directly to the liver. One of the scientists responsible for Jesse Gelsinger's well-being, Dr. James Wilson, admitted to giving the gene therapy directly to the liver, calling it an "oversight."

However, Dr. Wilson was also in a compromised position: he had a financial stake in the company that helped fund the gene therapy product that the lab he ran was testing. An investigation uncovered numerous breaches of federal research rules: for instance, Dr. Wilson withheld key safety data from regulators about the deaths of two monkeys dosed a year earlier with the same adenovirus later used on Jesse Gelsinger. The Food and Drug Administration immediately suspended all gene therapy trials at the Institute for Human Gene Therapy at the University of Pennsylvania. Because there was a conflict of interest for Dr. Wilson, who stood to profit from the experiment through a biotechnology

company he had founded, U.S. regulators closed his gene therapy lab. As far as we can determine, Dr. Wilson disappeared from public view for six years but has now resumed genetics and pharmacological research under supervision.

Four different professions, each with a contrasting set of examples. In the first instance, one sees exemplary members of the profession, confirming the central values of the profession in the face of challenging conditions and doing so in a way that brings credit to themselves, their chosen profession, and the wider society in which they live.  In the complementary, less happy instance, one sees members of the profession behaving in ways that do not do credit to any of these interests. Few individuals would like to live in a society where they could not depend on the quality of the news, the dedication of their legal representation, the reports of scientists, and the judgments of their physicians. And yet, it is clear that in too many cases, leading professionals in the United States (and no doubt elsewhere) are behaving in ways that lead to "compromised work."

The study of good and compromised work is not restricted to the professions. Business also offers examples of "good work." One widely recognized good worker is Aaron Feuerstein, the owner of Malden Mills Industries in Massachusetts, which manufactures climate control fabrics. In 1995 Feuerstein watched a fire destroy three of his factories. At the time Feuerstein publicly vowed not only to rebuild the plants, but also to continue to pay his workers and honor their benefits while reconstruction was occurring. Feuerstein valued his company, which was started by his grandfather in 1906, and remained loyal to the employees that helped to keep him in business. While he could

have reneged on his promise and retired on the insurance money, he stood behind his pledge. Not just smart maneuvering, Feuerstein's proclamation reflected his deeply held principles and ethical codes. (Malden Mills closed down in 2007).

Anita Roddick, the founder of the cosmetic concern The Body Shop, continually aspired to do "good work" in business. (Roddick died in 2007 at the age of 64). Since Roddick opened the first Body Shop in 1976, her primary goal was to create a sense of humaneness in the business world. Roddick and colleagues undertook humanitarian work all over the world from living with poor families in Appalachia, West Virginia to working in refugee camps in Albania. While The Body Shop became a public company consisting of a worldwide network of franchised shops, Roddick continued to play a leading role in the organization until her death; with Roddick as an inspiration, the Body Shop remains focused on social and environmental change. The Body Shop campaigned against human rights abuses and launched The Body Shop Human Rights Award in 2000. The firm also created The Body Shop Foundation, which offers financial support to pioneering organizations in the areas of human and civil rights and environmental and animal protection.

The range of stances toward work is also manifest in spheres of society which, while important, are less prestigious and decidedly less glamorous. Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, and Schwartz (1997) distinguished among three types of hospital orderlies. The ordinary orderly just does his job of sweeping the floor. The career-oriented orderly sees his lowly job chiefly as a stepping stone on a career ladder that will culminate in a

supervisory position. In contrast, the orderly who sees his job as a <u>calling</u> not only carries

out cleaning of excellent quality but also makes an effort to cheer up the patients, for

example, by bringing flowers to those on the cancer ward. We all have experience with

the craftsman who takes the time it needs to do a good job and who uses only materials of

the highest quality, as well as the craftsman who cuts corners with shoddy materials and

inadequate attention. There are teachers and nurses and salespersons who make it clear

that they are just punching the clock; we would much rather be taught by the teachers,

treated by the nurses, or served by the salespersons who care about doing the very best

job that they can.

A society that expects "good work" must recognize it and reward it appropriately, where

it occurs. John Gardner, perhaps the leading American public citizen of the 20th century,

memorably declared, "An excellent plumber is infinitely more admirable than an

incompetent philosopher. The society that scorns excellence in plumbing because

plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an

exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes

nor its theories will hold water" (J. Gardner, 1995).

**1.3 The Conditions for "Good Work:"**

How do we go about understanding why some people do "good work" while others cut

corners and fall short? It is probably best to start with an assumption that seems obvious,

but bears repeating: "Good work" is more difficult to achieve than merely adequate or

"compromised work." Things that are more difficult to achieve will be by definition less frequent, because they require more time and more energy. It is generally easier to get by than to excel; it is easier to stop as soon as possible than to go that extra mile. By nature we are programmed to conserve energy—our genes were selected through evolution in part so as to save unnecessary exertion, so as to be ready to confront unexpected tasks. (Some of us, no doubt, were selected to expend energy for tasks that readily yield enjoyment). Consequently the "default option" of much of our natural inheritance is not doing "good work," but rather efficiency, to save time and effort, even if our work suffers as a result.

Given that our genetic instructions have a heavy loading for "taking it easy," humans have had to develop a variety of control mechanisms to make sure that needed tasks were done as well as possible. To understand what makes "good work" possible, we need now to turn our attention to what these controls are. Further, we need to understand how they interact to produce the kind of complex behaviors that we need in order to survive as human beings embedded in a highly abstract technological civilization. Why do pilots usually fly their planes with competence and precision; why do baggage handlers usually find the right plane to put our suitcases in; why is the story of a surgeon who ignores his patient so scandalously offensive? To these questions we now turn.

The answer is not simple. Human behavior is shaped by many conditions that often contradict each other. It is severely constrained by genes—what we can see, feel, desire and understand is written into the chemistry of the brain and the body. Even these genetic

instructions are often at odds with one another, because they evolved at different times, to take care of heterogeneous survival requirements. For instance, testosterone helps males fight and compete in situations where resources are scarce. But too much of it, unleavened by other secretions that facilitate cooperation and nurturance, results in brutish behavior that diminishes the odds of survival and reproduction.

Genetic instructions inevitably conflict with standards that human communities have learned to impose on them. The norms of society often thwart our natural desires, but just as often bring order among conflicting genetic impulses, and make it possible for people to live together in at least a semblance of harmony. So whether a person does good, compromised, or frankly poor work is the result of at least four major forces: (1) What the person brings to the table: genetic traits, early experiences, values learned in the family or the community. (2) What the job itself requires: for the physician it is to care for the patient's health, for the policeman to "serve and protect" the community. (3) The institutional and interpersonal relationships that bind a person to his or her job. The physician's behavior will be in part affected by the policies of Boards of Health, by the expectation of hospitals, by the example of colleagues. (4) Finally, job performance will also be influenced by the rewards, respect, and opportunities provided to the professional by the society at large. For example, doctors might become demoralized and less caring if too much of their autonomy is taken away by HMOs or other agencies that put values foreign to the medical profession—such as producing an even greater profit for stockholders—ahead of the central value of healing.

The way that we see these four controls on behavior impacting "good work" is summarized in Figure 2. The cultural controls derive from what elsewhere we have called the "Domain;" that is, the implicit rules and practices of a profession. The requirements for good surgery are very clear: you amputate the limb or reset the bone without producing excessive trauma or bleeding. Other fields of medicine—such as gastroenterology or psychiatry—may have much less clear outcomes. And other professions will have still vaguer ways of assessing whether work was done well or not. In business ventures, the most frequently cited measure of "good work" is profit. The manager's work is judged by the "bottom line"—regardless of whether the firm is making landmines, cigarettes, pharmaceuticals, or textbooks. But in most endeavors, "good work" involves more than making a profit. The carpenter is expected to make a table that does not collapse; the pilot should be polite and cheerful as well as sober and resourceful. When the requirements of a job get to be quite complex, traditions serve to remind practitioners of their duties, and often these are formally set down into professional codes, such as the physician's Hippocratic Oath.

**Figure 2 - A Graphic Rendition of the Principal Elements of GoodWork**
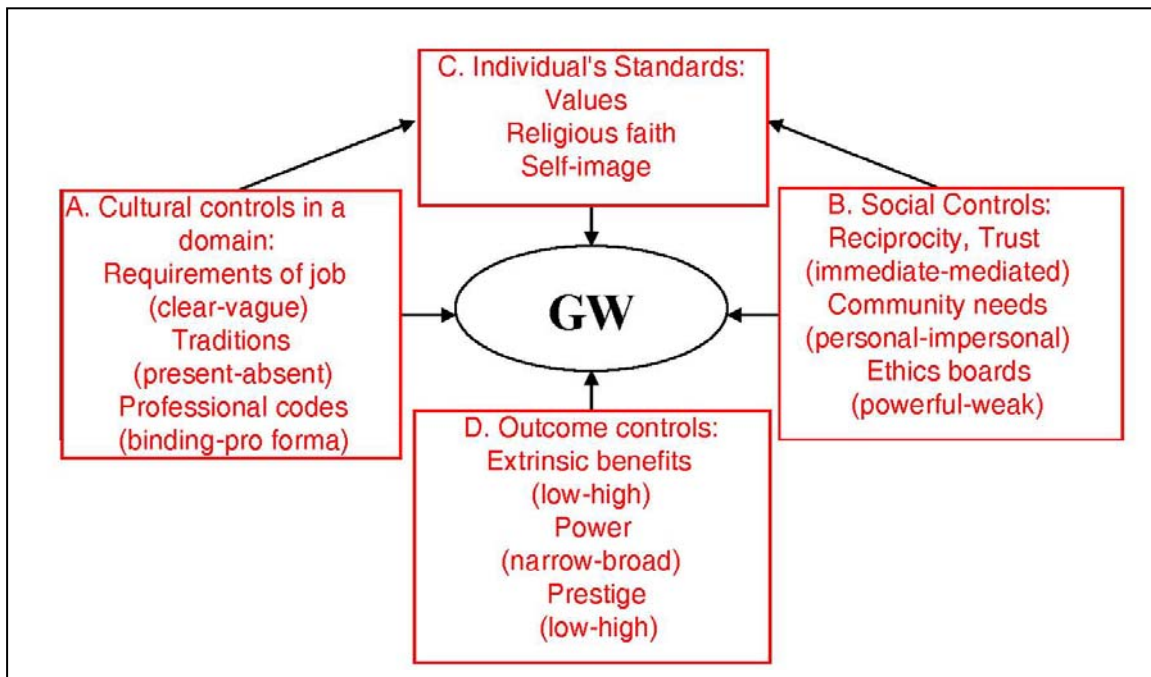


The <u>social controls</u> are the ones that emanate from the "Field," that is, from the group of people working in the same domain. The behavior of doctors is regulated by medical associations, by deans and faculties of medical schools, by influential elders who serve as gatekeepers to the profession in their roles as journal editors, grant officers, heads of research laboratories and research foundations. If everything goes well, the requirements issuing from field and domain will reinforce each other. But sometimes cultural controls and social controls are not well aligned; what the young physician has read in books about what a doctor should do is not what his elder colleagues actually practice. Often the incentives that the field offers—high pay, prestige, secure employment—are not awarded for the most sincere efforts to do "good work," but rather are doled out to those who find

ways to impress, or simply get along with, those who hold positions of authority in the field. Misalignment between cultural and social controls, between what the domain and the field prescribe, frequently makes "compromised work" tempting and "good work" more elusive.

The third component of the "Good Work Model"—personal standards—is influenced by both social and cultural controls. In other words, a professional usually internalizes the requirements of the field and the domain into his or her self-image. A young doctor will come to think of herself as a caring person, one who follows the best practices of medical science to alleviate the suffering of patients. But self-image is based on other behavioral inclinations as well. These include the values one has learned at home, in school, from the media, at the church or temple; they will be influenced by temperament and early experience.

The fourth set of forces is what we call here outcome controls. These refer to the effects of external forces on one's work. For example, in times of war, what it means to do "good work," may differ from its meaning during peacetime. Or when a profession suddenly becomes very well rewarded by society, it may attract people who are only or primarily interested in additional disposable income rather than in doing "good work," thus bringing about a subtle corruption of the profession. (We found this shift to be an issue in genetics—a once obscure scientific specialty that swiftly became a source of high compensation.) The same policeman will have to make more effort to stay honest if hiding the confiscated drugs can net him a million dollars than if the most he can abscond

with are parking-meter coins. Also, at times a certain type of outcome control can pervade an entire society by accident or by a centrally dictated design.

"Good work" is most likely to occur when these four forces all point in the same direction. We have termed this condition "alignment." When professional standards, peer behavior, internal values and social values all tell us to do the same thing, there is no problem. But when conflicts arise between these different instructions, one can get easily confused.

For instance, in the earlier journalism example, it is clear that Patricia Smith was a very good writer who turned out attractive human interest stories. But by the standards of the domain she worked in, her writing was not acceptable. In journalism, adherence to the facts trumps vivid writing. Shakespeare would not be counted as a good journalist if he tried to fob off <u>Macbeth</u> as news reporting. In Smith's case, it seems that the professional failure was not entirely of her own making. During Smith's career, editors and publishers encouraged her imaginative reporting without being sufficiently concerned about the factual basis of her stories. In this way, the field failed to transmit the essential value of the domain of journalism, which is allegiance to truth. Outcome controls may also be implicated in this case. The need for ever greater profits, and for building up an audience of new readers, may have induced the editors to avoid giving Smith timely and needed guidance and feedback.

In conclusion, "good work" is likely to occur when there are clear and strong standards for what constitutes desirable performance: standards that are enforced by a concerned professional community; standards that are internalized in the self-image of practitioners; and standards that are not contradicted by strong external pressure from market, political, or social forces. If all four types of controls are aligned, "good work" is possible, even probable. If the four controls pull in different directions, or one or more are absent, it is likely that the kind of work produced will be shoddy at best, and at worst it will be detrimental to the well-being of the community.

The worst case scenario would involve either a breakdown of one of these sources of control, or a fundamental misalignment among them. For example, it is not a coincidence that some failures of "good work" in business affected mainly firms that were involved in new products or services—such as Enron's fabled "virtual organization"—which had no time and no motivation to develop either cultural or social controls. What compounded the vulnerability of such firms to bad practices was the fact that they made it possible for some individuals to make large profits quickly. This option removed some of the outcome controls that would have encouraged persons—even those with shaky internal standards—to withstand the temptations that all persons in business confront. Similar forces are at play in every profession and occupation, making it difficult to accomplish work that lives up to the best practices of the tradition, work that is socially valuable, and personally rewarding.

**1.4 The GoodWork Project® in Brief**

In 1995, Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi, William Damon, and Howard Gardner, the three
psychologists who served as the initial Principal Investigators on this project, embarked
on an ambitious study of "good work" in American professional life.[4] In due course they
came to pose the following question: How do individuals who desire to do "good
work"—work that is at once excellent in quality and socially responsible—succeed or fail
at a time when market forces are extremely powerful and the search for ever greater
profits pervades the society; there are few if any comparable controlling forces or
counterforces, moderating the market; and our whole sense of time and space is being
altered in our technologically oriented global society? Our chosen method has been to
conduct extensive in-depth interviews with leading professionals across a range of
sectors. In these interviews, we probe for the individual's personal goals, the mission of
the profession, the strategies being used to achieve goals and mission, the obstacles that
are encountered and how they are dealt with, and the individual's reflections on major
trends in the chosen profession. We also probe a number of ancillary areas, which include
formative influences (such as mentors and anti-mentors), the role of religion or spiritual
orientation, attitudes toward technology, and the entities (individuals, groups, standards)
to which the individual feels most responsible. In some cases we also use more targeted
methods, such as an inventory of values and responses to ethical dilemmas.

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[4] The GoodWork Project website is www.goodworkproject.org. An updated list of
papers, presentations, publications, and current initiatives can be found on the site.

By the end of 2007 we had completed studies of journalism, genetics, theater, business, higher education, and philanthropy, and we had also carried out small-scale studies of medicine, law, and precollegiate education. Students in courses on good work have carried out pilot studies of a range of work spheres, ranging from advertising to coaching to service in the military. Yet to be undertaken in systematic fashion are studies of less prestigious professions and work that fall outside the usual definition of a profession (e.g. blue collar workers). So far, the study has taken place primarily in the United States, but our colleague Hans Henrik Knoop has undertaken a parallel study in Scandinavia, and efforts in the GoodWork tradition have now been undertaken in other domains (e.g. nursing) and in other countries (e.g. in the Netherlands and India).

Complementing our study of leading professionals, we have undertaken a second line of study that involves budding young professionals (Fischman, Solomon, Greenspan, Gardner, 2004). We have interviewed secondary school students, college students, those enrolled in professional schools, and individuals in their first job in a number of areas, including theater, biology, journalism, and social entrepreneurship (Barendsen & Gardner, 2004). We also have interviewed some individuals who are at the close of their careers. We consider the most illustrious of these individuals to be "trustees"— individuals who are concerned with the overall health of their domain and its role in society (Gardner and Benjamin, 2005). We dedicated our first collaborative book, Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, Damon, 2001), to John Gardner, the American public servant who exemplified both the role of the good

worker and that of a societal trustee. This initial book explored the work of professionals in the domains of journalism and biogenetic science.

As often happens in the case of ambitious investigations, we have spawned several associated projects. Among those completed, we mention three representative studies:

1. A study of the ways in which key beliefs and practices are transmitted across the generations. We have examined a number of contrasting lineages in journalism, genetics, and dance. A more extensive study of three lineages in genetics is reported in Nakamura et al., 2009.

2. A study of contemplative practices in the professions. We have examined both individuals who are dedicated meditators (Vipassana and various forms of Jewish meditation, for example), and a larger sample of professionals who engage in deep reflection (albeit irregularly and idiosyncratically). (Solomon, 2007).

3. A study of a group of dedicated health workers who have been given an Albert Schweitzer Fellowship to support work with disadvantaged populations. (Schutte, 2002).

By the end of 2006, we had interviewed over 1200 Americans of different ages, engaged in different professions and located across the country. All of these interviews have been transcribed, reviewed, and most have been coded according to procedures developed by the team. The coded transcripts are available for easy reference by our team in a software

program called NUD*IST. (Eventually, we expect to make these data—properly de-

identified—available to qualified researchers). Through this procedure, it is possible to

carry out both quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Results from the various portions of the study have been or will be reported both in the

academic literature and in more popular venues. In what follows, we focus for the most

part on findings that cut across the various individual projects and on the "headlines"

from the individual projects. More detailed discussions of specific findings can be found

in the various books and papers that are listed at the conclusion of this essay, and the

several dozen research reports posted on the project website.

**1.5 Representative Findings:**

*Alignment*: Among the individuals who have agreed to be interviewed for our study, there is clearly a desire to carry out "good work." Most individuals have a clear sense of what it means to be excellent in technical matters, as well as what it means to carry out work that is important in the society. Their own stated values are remarkably similar across domains: what is valued is honesty, fairness, truthfulness, ethical relations with other individuals, and high degrees of competence.

Where this consensus breaks down, however, is in the ease or even the possibility of doing "good work." Professions (or, as we call them "domains") differ enormously in the ease with which it is possible to carry out "good work" in the present climate. As mentioned above, a major factor in facilitating "good work" is the extent to which a profession is well aligned. In alignment, all of the various interest groups basically call for the same kinds of performances; in contrast, when a profession is misaligned, the various interest groups emerge as being at cross-purposes with one another.

In our first pair of studies, genetics and journalism emerged as sharply contrasted on the dimension of alignment. At the end of the 20th century, genetics was well aligned. The individual practitioners, the values of the scientific calling, the current institutions (research labs, government funding), the shareholders of publicly traded companies, and the general public all wanted essentially the same thing: research that leads to longer and

healthier lives. Such alignment by no means ensures "good work": but the absence of stresses and conflicting demands makes it easier for individuals to carry out "good work." As more than one geneticist told us, "the only obstacles I have to face are my own personal limitations."

At the time of our study in the middle and late 1990s, journalism emerged as a poorly aligned, or prototypically misaligned, profession. Most young people enter journalism with the hope of investigating important stories thoroughly, treating subjects fairly, and reporting the stories accurately. But most working journalists feel thwarted at nearly every turn. As they perceive it, the owners of news organizations (large corporations and their shareholders) are interested primarily in greater shareholder profits. Anything that advances the profit center is good; the quality of journalism per se is seen as irrelevant. Added to this state of affairs, the general public is seen as craving stories that are dramatic, scandalous, sensational, and superficial, while abjuring news coverage of issues that are more difficult to understand, or that involve topics or sites that are apparently remote from everyday experience. The internet—still very new at the time of our original study—has rewritten the rules of reporting and due diligence regarding sources. As a result of this massive misalignment, most journalists are frustrated and many claim that they would like to leave the profession.

What keeps this finding from being simply a "good news/bad news" saga? In our view, all alignments and misalignments are temporary. Journalism may be poorly aligned in America in 2000; but it was much better aligned in 1950 and became somewhat more

aligned after the events of September 11, 2001, when many citizens sought accurate, detailed coverage in both the United States and abroad. Genetics may be well aligned in America early in the 21st century; but the decline of available venture capital, controversies over stem cell and cloning research, disappointments at the failure to fulfill the promise of targeted medical treatments based on information gleaned from individual genomes, and the pressures for research that bears directly on bio-terrorism may be catalyzing a less well aligned profession.

Another complexifying point is worth nothing. While, on the average, "good work" is easier to carry out when the sector is well aligned, some individuals are actually motivated by misalignment.These persons spring into action when the various interest groups appear at cross-purposes; such innovators seek to create (or recreate) institutions that honor the core values of the domain. (In recent America history, Ralph Nader exemplifies this category of individuals).  By the same token, apparent (or superficial) alignment may desensitize individuals to potential problems. In our study of genetics, we were surprised to discover that the basic researchers had very little concern with what could go wrong in genetics research.  Should there be a genetics-caused disaster like those that occurred at Chernobyl or Three Mile Island, an apparently idyllic alignment could rapidly disintegrate.

*"Good Work" Among the Young*: From one "good work" angle, the young persons whom we interviewed are very impressive. They are accomplished; they are informed; they are ambitious. Most have a clear sense of what it means to be a worker of integrity, fairness,

and responsibility; when asked to indicate their personal values, they prioritize the aforementioned traits. What is troubling, however, is that a significant minority of these young persons do not feel that, at this time of their lives, they can <u>afford</u> to be good workers. They are engaged in a race to the top of their respective professions and so they are willing to cut corners in order to preserve their lead. Young journalists will exaggerate the extent to which they have actually confirmed a tip; young scientists will rush into print in order to assure credit; young actors will accept stereotypical but lucrative roles that they would prefer to disdain and decline. In each case, these young workers seem confident that once they have "made it," they can then observe higher standards and raise the overall quality of the domain. They seem unconcerned that they have embarked on a slippery slope of misconduct which may be difficult to reverse (Fischman et al., 2004).

We were troubled to learn that even younger talented students feel extremely stressed by their pursuits and lament the degree of stress in the lives of their friends and family members. We suspect that it is very difficult to carry out "good work" unless one has the opportunity to reflect upon and, if necessary, to reverse course.

*The Widening Circle of Responsibility*: We asked each of our subjects to whom or what they felt principally responsible. The initial response to the question was in itself interesting. Many subjects, especially women, immediately responded by naming their families. Members of minorities, especially African Americans, frequently mentioned their ancestors, including slaves and those who were involved in civil rights movements

(Horn, 2004). Caucasians almost never mentioned their forbears. Senior geneticists were more likely than workers in other sectors to express bewilderment at the question. As we came to understand it, these geneticists have felt so free to do what they want to do, in the way that they want to do it, that the notion of having responsibility to any external agency seemed remote.

At the same time, the veteran geneticists stood out in another way. Pushed to declare who was responsible for the uses of their work—including uses to which they might personally object—these scientists were loathe to think of themselves and other members of their guild. They see themselves as the 'pure' researchers. And so we actually had to invent a new category—"imputed responsibility"—to account for their consensual assertion: it was up to "others"—the society, ordinary citizens, the legislators—to assume responsibility for the implications of findings about stem cells, cloning, and other controversial discoveries and techniques.

Among the other findings was the absence of significant differences across gender in the way in which responsibility was construed, the relatively low invocation of responsibility to God or to one's religious background, and an intriguing distinction between professions like law and journalism, where workers indicate a responsibility to an abstract value (like truth, or justice) and professions like teaching and medicine, where responsibility to other human beings takes priority (Gardner 2007, 2010).

We found support for a hypothesized broadening of the circle of responsibility as subjects grow older. Adolescent subjects see themselves as responsible primarily to themselves, and to those in their immediate circle—parents, other family members, teachers, coaches, friends. Beginning professionals broadened their references to include supervisors, peers, and others from the world of work. Subjects in midlife expressed concern about the health of the domain and the training—or, as frequently, the lack of training—of younger workers. And, as noted, a few of our most senior professionals earned the sobriquet of "trustees"—these individuals worry not only about the health of the domain, but also about its place in the broader society, and the extent to which it contributes to the welfare of the world (Gardner 2007).

*The Distinctive Flavors of Different Domains*: At one time, we happened to be working simultaneously in two domains. As we discussed this work with outsiders, we were amused to encounter the following characterizations. In the case of philanthropy, individuals asked, "When all that you do is give away money to deserving causes, what possible problems might there be in carrying out "good work?" In sharp contrast, in the case of theater, individuals asked: "Why would anyone go into a field where it is virtually guaranteed that one won't be able to earn a living, let alone prosper?"

In fact, however, the outlook of individuals in these domains proved to be far from predictable. Despite the difficulty of earning a living, the actors to whom we spoke stood out in terms of passion or commitment. Whether this result reflects a different kind of person who is attracted to the theater, or a certain degree of cognitive dissonance, is not

certain. In contrast, despite the apparent plushness of their job, grant givers (sometimes

called philanthropoids, to distinguish them from the actual philanthropists) are often

discomfited in their positions. We hypothesize that this is because philanthropy is

certainly a field—with the requisite organizations, publications, meetings and so on—but

it is not yet a domain, with agreed upon standards, values, mission. In the absence of such

agreed-upon norms, it is very difficult for practitioners to gauge their own success or to

get honest feedback from critics and the result and uncertainty may lead to feelings of

anomie (Horn and Gardner, 2006).

Speaking more generally, each of our chosen sectors has its own remarkable topography,

which makes the investigation of each area sui generis. This document is not the place for

a full-fledged summary of these different flavors. We note here a few of the intriguing

distinctions.

The classical professions like law, medicine, architecture, and auditing have clearly set

forth standards and thus violations of "good work" are readily identified. In contrast, two

of the areas that we investigated—business and the arts—are not, strictly speaking,

professions. As such, one encounters quite varied characterizations. Some see business in

professional terms, with business people obligated to serve the community, the

customers, the employees (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, Damon 2004). Others see business

just as an unmodified activity—the only obligations are to make money and not violate

the law (or even, not get caught). By the same token, there are strident disputes within the

arts. On the one hand there are advocates, like actress Anna Deavere Smith, who see the

arts as entailing social responsibilities. At the least, works of art should (in Brechtian fashion) stimulate the audience to reflect on important social and moral issues. On the other side are many artists and critics, like director Robert Brustein, who feel that the arts cannot afford to have any agenda except artistic excellence, and who point to the dangers of social realism and varieties of "agitprop."

Sometimes, important distinctions arise within a domain. Though law is technically a single profession, the varieties of law cut across almost the entire professional spectrum. Cyberlawyers are closer to technological experts than to corporate or criminal lawyers: they are as excited by their new "toys" as are the geneticists. Cyberlawyers expressed enthusiasm for the openness of the Internet along with an imperative to maintain and defend individual 1st amendment rights. The cyberlaw advocates whom we interviewed saw the Internet as the last frontier and were as excited by the historic dimensions of their defense of these rights on the Internet as were the geneticists in their quest to map the human genome. Many cyberlawyers stated that once the Internet issues were resolved, they would likely move on.

Criminal lawyers often selected the specialty that matched or came to capture their own personality: defense attorneys saw themselves as knights-errant, fighting for the underdog; prosecutors saw themselves as defenders of the victims of crime. Some were able to shift from prosecution to defense, but the reverse was less common. Lawyers involved in mergers and acquisitions shared some similarities to the business entrepreneurs in that both entrepreneurs and M&A lawyers highlighted the importance of

problem solving skills and the pleasure of discovering new ways to approach a problem. While most of the corporate lawyers spoke candidly about the demands placed on their time and the fast pace of a market-driven society, lawyers who remain in small towns, and who spend significant amounts of time serving their local community, seem the last holdouts of a bygone era of law—and to turn a phrase of the legal scholar Anthony Kronman (1993), lawyers who have not yet "lost their way" (Marshall and Gardner, 2005).

When we began to investigate higher education, our initial impulse was to interview individuals who had achieved prominence as university faculty or administrators. But we came to realize that in education, individuals come and go, but certain institutions continue to be held up as positive (or, less happily, as negative) examples. Accordingly, we altered our nominating technique to identify a dozen institutions of higher learning that stand out in terms of their judged excellence. What emerged initially are the sharply contrasting sets of values that govern campuses. At top-flight universities, the faculty and their intellectual work with students constitute the major story, and a belief in the importance of diversity for its own sake is emphasized. At community colleges, the assimilation of first generation Americans or college students into mainstream American life dominates the agenda. At historically black colleges, subsequent service to members of the disadvantaged group stands out. All of these exemplary institutions exhibit distinctive identities, which contribute to a strong sense of community. Different heroes, different events, different agendas characterized the interviews at various exemplary schools. The same term takes on different meanings as we move from one institution type

to another. At exemplary community colleges, struggling for resources and faced with continuously expanding demands, creativity is constantly involved, but it is the creativity needed for the institution to survive and thrive, not the creativity of individual student or faculty that may be a consensually assumed value at selective liberal arts colleges and top flight universities (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2005). And, to top it off, the for-profit University of Phoenix, one of the fastest growing institutions of higher learning in history, raises issues such as how best to serve the adult learner, how frequently to assess students, the role of the liberal arts, and the uses and abuses of distance learning. With respect to these issues Phoenix's example is likely to impact institutions of higher learning all over the world (Berg, 2005).

Comparisons of the pressures that individuals face due to market forces can be made across domains and within a single profession. Journalists and doctors discuss the impact of advertising, commodification of professional missions, inflationary costs, bureaucratization, profiteering, rationing of limited resources, and the reorganization of ownership structures. But very few of them mention systemic market forces (e.g. globalization, shifts in legal regulation of ownership, demographic increase and decrease). This absence suggests that it is difficult for some embedded professionals to recognize and address the encroachment of the market on their professional lives. Evidence suggests that professionals who have multiple roles over the course of their careers may achieve keener insights on the effects of a wider range of market forces. (Rubin, 2004) It is also possible that, owing to recent financial collapses, sensitivity to the power of market forces has become more widely understood among professionals.

*Potential Harms of Philanthropy*: Philanthropy is a matter of giving money away, on its surface a wholly laudatory activity. There seems to be little reason to worry about the possibilities of harm. How could a dose of money possibly hurt someone? Yet philanthropy is an intervention, changing lives in ways that can be as unintended as they are powerful (Damon and Verducci, 2006). It is generally a well-intended intervention—although there can be exceptions, such as when people give money away for purposes of control, power, status, and personal glory. Whatever the intentions, money-granting interventions can leave individuals and communities in worse shape than before the money was granted. Andrew Carnegie, the pioneer of organized philanthropy in the United States, once estimated that 95% of philanthropic dollars were "unwisely spent; so spent, indeed, as to produce the very evils which (the gift) proposes to mitigate or cure" (Carnegie, 1889).

Carnegie was referring to the harm of supporting bad habits that sustain poverty. By now, this particular harm is recognized by most of the people and organizations that give significantly to charity. But other harms can also emanate from philanthropy—some of them, to use Carnegie's metric, at least as grave as the problem that the gift was meant to solve. For example, philanthropy can offer monetary resources to nonprofit organizations with expectations and agendas that divert nonprofits from their stated missions; it can encourage dependency and create an underclass of nonprofits; and it can support research and development efforts with serious detrimental social consequences both here and abroad. Further, when foundation monies are used to change public policies, there is

potential for society's democratic principles to be subverted. These are some among a number of potential harms. While awareness of residual harms may be familiar issues in other public-interest fields such as law and medicine, in our interviews with philanthropists and grantmakers, we noted that few people recognize these concerns as problematic. The understanding that was present was scattered among players and not as pervasive or vivid as is necessary to mitigate doing harm in a reliable manner (Damon and Verducci 2006).

Interestingly, in our other studies of "good work," we have found that one of the markers of a mature domain is a clear sense of the harms that can be done. Our research in philanthropy suggests another picture. Other than undermining the public trust through malfeasance, philanthropists more often than not assume that giving away money is an unproblematic proposition for doing good, and the only downside is related to waste— that is, not using available funds in an efficient way.

*Entrepreneurs and "Good Work:"* Our study of young business entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs, at the beginning of their careers, has yielded considerable insight into entrepreneurship and "good work" (Barendsen, 2004; Barendsen & Gardner, 2004). Since entrepreneurship is commonly associated with the business profession, the conception of the budding business entrepreneur is well defined. Less known, social entrepreneurship is a rising field in which individuals adopt an entrepreneurial approach to implement social reform and systematic societal change (Bornstein 2007). Typically, the goals of social entrepreneurs are quite ambitious: to eradicate poverty, to create a new

labor movement, to equalize education between the haves and have-nots. While many entrepreneurs do aspire to start profitable business ventures, this goal alone does not accurately represent the true nature of entrepreneurship. Because they are so intimately involved in the organizations they have established, the goals entrepreneurs set for themselves are at once personal and professional. Both business and social entrepreneurs are attracted to entrepreneurship because it allows them the freedom to forge their professional visions. They understand themselves as fundamentally different from peers following more traditional paths (in law or medicine, for example). They are passionate individuals seeking to start and grow new organizations. Since entrepreneurship favors innovation and encourages risk taking, it is not surprising that young entrepreneurs have tremendous confidence in their abilities to implement change and view risks as possible opportunities. In their optimistic outlook and sheer determination, they are most similar to the young professional actors we interviewed.

Nested in the business profession, entrepreneurship possesses few formal rules and provides little instruction by way of regulations or limitations to help inform and advise the young professional in training. In addition, there is a powerful primary goal, which centers on profitability and mission fulfillment. Given the lack of professional standards and an emphasis on results, the tensions that business entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs confront are similar. The most notable tension centers on fundraising, which ultimately enables entrepreneurs to sustain their venture and fulfill the organization's mission. Despite this tension, the business entrepreneurs feel a responsibility to employees, to investors, and to family. Social entrepreneurs describe

many of these same responsibilities as well as the strong responsibilities they feel to

social causes. In addition, although certainly aware of market pressures and challenged

by financial restraints, young business and social entrepreneurs are determined to follow

their goals in spite of these difficulties. In fact, many cannot imagine doing anything else.

We endorse the mission and applaud the idealism of social entrepreneurship. Yet given

the pressures that we discovered in our studies of grantees, we are not surprised that some

acclaimed social entrepreneurs have been the subject of criticism. Among others

Muhammud Yunus, the principal architect of microfinance and winner of the Nobel

Peace Prize, and Greg Mortensen, the highly lauded builder of schools in Afghanistan,

have been accused of exaggerated claims and the misuse of funds. While we do not

purport to have knowledge of what actually happened in such cases, we are all too aware

of the pressures on fundraisers that allow laudable ends to justify questionable means.

*Kinds of Lineages:* How does a commitment to doing "good work" in a profession get

transmitted from one generation to the next? We assumed that exemplary practitioners

influence the approach to work adopted by the young people who apprentice with them.

For several different domains, we thus undertook case studies of exemplary practitioners,

their students, and their students' students, to understand how their influence was felt.

We have been struck by the dual influence of many exemplary practitioners who head

lineages. On the one hand, they influence their apprentices directly, demonstrating

through their own conduct that high professional achievement can co-exist with a

dedication to exemplary personal and professional values.  In complementary fashion,

they influence apprentices indirectly, operating behind the scenes. By providing a

collegial group of able peers and cultivating a particular moral climate, they create a

training environment in which apprentices acquire technical skills and knowledge and

also internalize professional norms of conduct such as integrity, cooperativeness, and

honesty. Each tradition additionally bore the distinctive stamp of the lineage head's

personality, professional style, and approach to training (Nakamura et al., 2009).


An unexpected distinction emerged in the domain of dance.  Here one finds traditional

lineages, with a strong paternal or maternal figure who trains and choreographs for the

younger dancers. In contrast to these vertical lineages, however, one also encounters

horizontal lineages. In the latter instance, young people work together, mentoring one

another; even older persons relate to their younger associates as peers, rather than as

more powerful and knowledgeable elders (Keinanen, 2003).


We had not anticipated the power of anti-mentors, "tormentors," or the lack of mentors.

Many subjects mentioned how much they had been influenced by individuals whose

models they disliked or disdained: "Whatever I become, I don't want to be at all like X."

Negative models may be more powerful than is usually acknowledged, and perhaps

especially likely to be cited by individuals who become innovators. When individuals

work in new fields, or pioneer in new roles, they are not able to identify suitable mentors,

even if they should want to. In such cases, they either select paragons (historical figures

with whom they identity), make common cause with other pioneering peers, or even elect

to go it alone. Across the various domains, many professionals, especially the younger ones, identified a lack of "deep mentoring" from individuals in authoritative positions who valued glibness, speed, and flash, rather than honesty, due diligence, and fairness. Unlike the veteran professionals, who spoke of important mentors and paragons in their fields, many of the young professionals lamented the superficial relationship they maintained with their mentors. At times, they spoke of piecing together aspects of different mentors, a practice that we have labeled 'fragmentoring' (Seider and Gardner, 2009) .

*The Contemplative Mind*:  We believe that in most cases, individuals are unlikely to carry out "good work" unless they feel comfortable with whom they are and have time and opportunity to reflect on their mission and to determine whether they are progressing toward its realization. These traits contribute to what we have termed 'engagement.' There are many ways to achieve these states, of course. In one line of our research, we determined to look at the role in work of two types of contemplation: formal meditation practices and more general strategies of deep reflection (Solomon, 2007).

The first group of subjects we interviewed described a range of idiosyncratic routines for deeply reflecting on their work. Subjects report using what are commonly considered mundane activities (gardening, walking, running, commuting, talking with friends, etc.) as opportunities to think through the meaning and purpose of their work, develop new work projects, or solve work problems.

We then interviewed a second group of subjects as a point of comparison—those we knew in advance to be involved in Vipassana or various forms of Jewish meditation. The latter group of subjects used meditation as a psychologically adaptive bridge between prior episodes of great personal distress and newfound meaning and purpose in their professional and personal lives. In both cases, getting on the path to carrying out "good work" is not necessarily direct, but, rather, a series of trials and errors inextricably bound up with one's personal life circumstances.

The word "contemplation" can refer to deep thought or reflection, on the one hand, or meditation, on the other. Our research clearly has shown this to be the case: the first group reflected deeply on their professional lives, while the second group engaged in formal meditation practices. What is the lesson of our research? With respect to a society such as our own that often looks for quick fixes, our findings suggest that there might not be a substitute for the deliberate work of the mind—at its own pace—in ultimately achieving "good work."

*Time Well Spent*: In an effort to explore how individuals today, living in fast changing, highly technological environments make judgments of quality in various spheres of their lives, we learned (to our surprise) that individuals are more interested in "time well spent," than they are in high end technology and luxurious and expensive objects. In fact, individuals with whom we spoke were willing to compromise on objects and services they deemed "high quality," in order to spend time in useful and meaningful ways

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individually and/or with others. In our initial wave of research, we frequently heard about

limited and pressured time to do "good work," which is echoed in later research on what

constitutes a quality life and time well spent.

*Good Collaboration:* As we discovered with reference to GoodWork, "good

collaboration" does not happen without effort and focused attention. We have been

examining the collaborative experiences of forty leaders of nonprofit organizations in

education as well as a new collaboration among three colleges in the greater Boston area.

These studies, still ongoing, have underlined the importance of 1) agreement about the

goals and mission for the collaborative work; 2) an organic, natural formation of mutual

interests; and 3) certain personality traits and leadership skills that prove crucial (e.g.

ability to listen, flexibility and adaptability, willingness to compromise).

Interestingly, our early findings about GoodWork have proved central in our study of

collaboration. Because of the lack of *alignment* with respect to goals in contemporary

American education, collaborations in this field seem particularly difficult. One of the

most obvious indicators: participants seem to have a hard time clearly defining successful

collaborations and/or unsuccessful collaborations. They describe some positive outcomes

clearly, but these also come along with some negative outcomes as well. Measuring

successes in education also proves difficult because individuals often disagree about

which is more important: education—the final *product* of a collaboration, or the *process*

of collaboration. For some individuals, collaboration can be both successful and

unsuccessful, and perhaps this is because "success" is so difficult to measure. A focus on

short-term, easily quantified goals (test scores, college acceptance returns, retention rates) can limit the focus on long-term, big picture goals for education (e.g. preparing young people for future professional roles, improving the opportunities and lives for those in need).

*Good Play:* As we've extended our research, we've sought to understand the contours of "the good" in domains that were not on our radar screen in the middle 1990s. In the GoodPlay Project, we've explored how young people think about ethics in new media environments (social networks, blogs, massive multiplayer games, and other online communities—cf. James et al., 2009).  Between 2008 and 2011, we conducted interviews with over 100 youth ages 10-25. Our findings suggest that young people adopt individualistic ways of thinking most frequently when they make choices online. More specifically, the dominant approach is concerned with consequences, positive or negative, to the self. For example, when youth consider whether or not to download content illegally, the principal concern is "Will I get into trouble?" or "Will I get a computer virus?" or "Is getting this music worth the risks?" Only rarely do youth make choices out of respect for the artists who created the music. Our interviews also suggest that "moral thinking" –or considering the effects of one's online actions on known others, such as friends–is somewhat prevalent. What we see less often among youth is "ethical thinking"– an abstract, disinterested way of thinking about the impact of online choices for a larger group or community ( Croft, 2011; Davis et al., 2010; Flores & James, 2011; Gilbert, 2009).

As researchers seeking to understand the achievement of "good work" in America (and eventually abroad), we are pleased that our methods appear to have traction and that they yield an ensemble of interesting findings (only a sample of which are reported here). But as citizens of professional geographical communities, we do not feel that we have done our job simply to report these findings. Accordingly, as our project has matured, we have been devoting increasing attention to the question of how we and others can make use of what we have learned. We turn now to these efforts at intervention.

## 2.1 Promoting "Good Work" through Education and Other Strategic Interventions

We have painted a picture of "good work" in our time that looks bright in a few places but bleak in too many others. The background is punctuated with forces that press against the worker's attempt to do well the job that society needs to get done. Severe economic pressures and rapid technological changes present obstacles to workers who aim to accomplish the core purposes of their chosen vocations. The substitution of impersonal global demands for local community ties, the weakening of once-revered cultural institutions, and the loss of common traditions and values, all remove supports that—we believe—once helped workers to withstand corrupting pressures. Under these conditions, the temptation to sell out, to adulterate one's work for the sake of one's personal advancement, to discard the search for meaning in one's work as futile and naively idealistic, can become overwhelming. And while our major studies were carried out before the financial meltdown of September 2008, both the behaviors of powerful agents that caused this meltdown and the plight imposed on millions of their hapless

victims, place good work at even greater risk. As we have recently phrased it, the joint factors of greed and fear constitute powerful counterweights to the pursuit of good work.

In such an atmosphere, it is easy for individuals to feel helpless. Yet we know from our studies that some still find a way to do "good work." In every domain that we have looked at, one finds inspiring examples of work that is competent, socially responsible, driven by moral purpose, and successful in the eyes of those who support and reward work. We can learn from these examples and, even more, we can intervene at several points in the social system to increase people's capacities to do "good work."

There are many points of entry for those who wish to promote "good work." We could persuade ourselves and other consumers to be careful about what we purchase, so as to increase the market for "good work" and decrease the market for "compromised work." We could convince corporate executives to put in place for their employees incentives that encourage "good work" and discourage "compromised work." We could lobby policy makers to regulate or legislate products and services in a manner that fosters "good work." And we could convince workers themselves that it is in their own enlightened interest and feelings of well-being to do good rather than compromised or mediocre work.

The leaders of this project are educators trained in psychology, not policy makers. When we try to intervene in a situation in order to improve it, we aim primarily at individuals— what they know, what they believe, what they are trying to accomplish. But we realize

that this intervention is neither the only, nor necessarily the optimal point of entry. In fact, our preference is to supplement our educational efforts with structural changes in private and public organizations and political entities that provide the right kinds of support to workers who are attempting to do "good work" (Barendsen and Fischman, 2007).

Education is a ground-up enterprise. We try to influence workers' goals, so that they are aligned with the purposes of "good work," and then to help workers pursue those goals effectively by providing the necessary skills and knowledge. If we succeed in our educational efforts, workers will not feel that they need to make trade-offs between "good work" and their own career advancement. They will become capable of achieving both! Indeed, they will understand that the two goals can enhance one another if pursued in a creative and masterful way.

At the same time, we are most likely to make progress if we can arrange structural—or, as necessary, regulatory or statutory-- changes that provide workers with incentives for "good work," and disincentives for "compromised work," changes that empower workers to have more latitude to do "good work" in their jobs, and that entail an explicit mandate to do it from those who have responsibility for the workplace.

In short, to intervene to encourage "good work," we do what we can, and we enter the system wherever and whenever an opportunity opens up. The most effective strategies intervene at both the individual and structural level; they shore up the worker's will and

capacity to do "good work" while at the same time aligning incentives with the aims of "good work" and disjoined from the temptations of "compromised work" (Fischman and Gardner, 2008). In what follows, we outline our principal efforts to this point.

## 2.2 The GoodWork® Toolkit

The GoodWork Toolkit was developed to nurture professional responsibility in young students, as well as in their teachers and school communities. Through conversations, discussions, and debate, this set of tools aims to encourage high quality, socially responsible, and meaningful work. It engages individuals in reflection and conversation about their own work—how to negotiate demands, expectations, and standards in responsible ways. We also seek to challenge certain commonly held assumptions about work (e.g.What is a good professional? Is a good teacher one who inflates grades to get her students into graduate school, or one who is honest with her student, but may pose a challenge for this student to gain admission to a top choice school?). We aim to facilitate discussions with the various interest parties of a school community to develop a common language and come to agreement, or achieve alignment, about what constitutes good work in a particular setting.

The Toolkit features materials and processes that, in our experience, catalyze individuals to care about and carry out good work. Participants are prompted by questions central to understanding the importance of good work in our society:

- How do I define "good work?" How do others define it?

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- What does it take to carry out good work?

- What are my own personal standards? What are the professional standards for excellence and ethics? How can I reconcile different demands from varied stakeholders?

- What are some of the factors that make it difficult to do my best work? What can I do to prepare myself for these challenges?

- How can my community/organization support excellent, ethical, and engaging work?

- Why is good work important to society? To our organization/profession?

- How is my work meaningful to me? What are my goals? What do I want to get out of my work?

- Why is good work important to me as an individual?

The materials that constitute the GoodWork Toolkit are organized into four chapters: 1) What is Good Work; 2) Excellence; 3) Ethics; and 4) Engagement. Each chapter includes narratives and reflective activities on which participants can draw to incorporate GoodWork techniques into their classes, programs, and co-curricular activities and workshops. Over the past few years, we have helped numerous educators and school communities implement the GoodWork Toolkit in their individual classrooms, academic departments, and whole schools. We have led workshops and taught distance learning classes via the Internet. We have also worked with educators (at all levels, including college/university and graduate school) who have developed their own courses based on the ideas of GoodWork. Several of these

activities are described on our website: www.goodworktoolkit.org. We hope that this

site will become a venue for educators all around the world to learn from and

communicate with each other about their independent uses of these materials.

(Indeed, colleagues in the Netherlands have started a "GoodWork Hub" which serves

as a center for individuals who wish to develop their professional quality and

expertise). We are also in the process of gathering data about how students and others

respond to the materials, and whether, after exposure to the Toolkit, individuals

become more attuned to issues involved in carrying out good work.

**2.3"Good Work" in Journalism:**

Following three years of interviewing journalists around the country, we had compiled a

book of strategies—several inches thick—that journalists employ to do "good work" in

the face of often potent obstacles. We sought to share these lessons with other journalists

in the field, but doing so required some help. We encountered an organization of

journalists similarly concerned about their field, the Committee of Concerned Journalists

(CCJ, at www.journalism.org). The Committee, along with its sister organization, the

Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ), had been conducting its own study of the

field of journalism in the form of surveys, content studies, and forums across the country.

Through the forums, the CCJ identified the principles of the field along with the major

problems: in turn, the "good work" line of research had identified some solutions. Working together was a natural. CCJ decided to develop a workshop training model for mid-career journalists—called the "Traveling Curriculum," because the training "travels" to newsrooms—and collaborated with William Damon and colleagues on the creation, implementation, and assessment of the curriculum.

The first question was where to teach "good work." Because only about 25% of professional journalists actually attend journalism school, and because the politics and bureaucracy that exist in any university setting would have slowed us down considerably, we decided to take our educational message straight to the newsrooms. We wanted to, and eventually did, create a curriculum that addressed the standards of the domain and therefore would be appropriate for a news organization of any size or medium.

Our curriculum featured participant discussion balanced with lectures by distinguished journalists. Instruction introduced and concluded each section, but a considerable amount of time was set aside for trainee debate. During large group deliberations, presenters interjected the essential lessons and tools and served as magnets pulling discussions in the desired direction, emphasizing important issues and downplaying less relevant ones. As an operating principle, we asked editors to select 25 to 30 people from their newsrooms to participate in the workshops. We encouraged the editors to select people from a variety of ranks and roles. We expected the exchange of ideas across levels and positions would be stimulating; it turned out to be one of the workshops' greatest assets.

The curriculum now consists of twelve modules. Each module is designed to last around 3 hours: a brief introduction of the topic, a small group activity, a large group activity, and a wrap-up with the presenters sharing some of the strategies other journalists have employed to meet the challenge presented. In addition to the tools we share, we leave participants with thick notebooks full of other strategies and resources, such as the CCJ web site URL with links to a catalogue of tactics and ideas put forth by other journalists.

Each module centers on a different aspect of "good work" in journalism. The first one that we created, in response to a request from a newspaper, was a module on bias. Beyond simply addressing the issue of political bias, the module broadens the definition to include life experiences, personal beliefs, attitudes, and values that influence one's reporting. The module does not negate individuals' own perspectives, but emphasizes that journalists should be aware of these potentially influential forces and employ methods to minimize their influence. Reporters aren't objective, but their methods should be. Other modules cover verification, business pressure, engagement and proportionality, and investigative journalism.

During the years in which the Travelling Curriculum was active, the team conducted workshops in almost 200 print, broadcast, and Internet newsrooms. It trained over 3000 journalists, and the reception to the workshops was consistently positive. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that the workshops were well-received and, at least within the time frame of the examination, had enduring effects on both individual and newsroom

practices. Participants consistently rated the workshop as stimulating, useful, informative, worthwhile, memorable, enjoyable, and thought provoking. Presenters returned to many of the newsrooms six months to one year later and spent a day conducting one-on-one interviews with the workshop attendees a year earlier. Through these follow-up visits, we learned that the workshops had indeed had a lasting impact.

## 2.4  Courses Focused on Good Work

In addition to the two major initiatives just described, various members of our team and colleagues at other educational institutions have instituted courses that are built upon or integrate materials from the GoodWork Project. We list here a range of courses that have come to our attention—some of these courses were given once or twice, others are recurring.

- Communication in Organizations. Colorado State University

- Entrepreneurship and Good Work: Engineering Dreams. Brown University

- Ethics and Professional Identity: What is Good Work? Georgetown Law School, r

- Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet. Harvard Graduate School of

   Education

- GoodWork® Toolkit Course. Harvard Project Zero Classroom

- The GoodPlay Project: Exploring Ethics and Digital Life. Future of Learning

    Institute and Harvard Project Zero Classroom

- Integration of Liberal Studies. San Jose State

- Engineers of the Future: Architects of Dreams. Brown Universit.

- Good Work in the Global Era. New York University.

- Meaningful Work in a Meaningful Life. Colby College

- Professional Communication. Colorado State University.

- Teaching Grounded in Wisdom: Lessons Learned from Inspiring Professionals.

    Harvard Project Zero Classroom

**2.5 New Initiatives:**

At present most of our attention is focused on the research into new domains and

practices, the application of our ideas and the expansion of successful initiatives.

**The Developing Minds and Digital Media (DM2) Project** investigates the intersection

of human development and digital media in both cognitive and social domains. We seek

to identify how today's young people differ from youth who came of age before cell

phones, Facebook, virtual realities, multiuser games, and Twitter. In the tradition of the

GoodWork and GoodPlay projects, DM2 interviewed veteran professionals working with

young people across a variety of domains and invited them to reflect on changes they have observed in youth over time. We are now investigating changes in young people's creative productions through a content analysis of student fiction writing from 1990 to 2011.

Website:   http://www.goodworkproject.org/research/dm2

Contact: Katie Davis, Project Manager

**The GoodPlay Project** is an empirical study of the ethical character of young people's activities in the new digital media, including online games, social networking sites, blogs, and other virtual communities. Through qualitative interviews with youth ages 10-25 and with parents and teachers, we have been exploring the ethical fault-lines that surface online, including those related to identity, privacy, ownership and authorship, credibility, and participation. Based on this research, and in collaboration with partners such as Common Sense Media and Project New Media Literacies, we've developed classroom materials focused on digital ethics and citizenship.

Website: http://www.goodworkproject.org/research/goodplay/

Contact: Carrie James, Research Director

**The Trust & Trustworthiness Project** is an investigation of how young people think of issues of trust as they carry out their school work, participate in different communities, and eventually take on new roles and responsibilities—particularly civic ones—in  the

broader society. Between 2006 and 2010, we conducted interviews and focus groups with over 80 young people, including a subsample of civically engaged youth.  In 2011, we embarked on a study of the ways in which immigrant youth perceive, trust (or distrust), and engage with key civic institutions. In this study, a pilot phase for a more comprehensive study, we are carrying out in-depth interviews of first- and second-generation Latino and Asian immigrant youth (ages 18-25). We are examining their 'trust conceptions' with respect to four important civic spheres: justice, education, religion, and the news media.  We anticipate that findings from our pilot study will inform the work of other scholars of migration and policy.


Websites: http://www.goodworkproject.org/research/trust/

http://www.goodworkproject.org/research/immigrant-trust/

Contact: Carrie James, Research Director


**Good Participation:**

In the Good Participation study, we are exploring how young people's civic and political participation and notions of citizenship may be influenced by new digital media (blogs, social networks, Twitter, etc.). The research team is conducting in-depth interviews with youth who are engaged in explicitly civic and/or political activities, including members or leaders of organized groups; participants in less formal networks that have a strong online component; and highly motivated individuals or "social entrepreneurs" who have launched their own efforts.

Website: http://www.goodworkproject.org/research/goodparticipation/

Contact: Carrie James, Research Director


**The Quality Project:** Innovations change the nature of work in people's lives. Most recently, rapid advances in technology have changed the ways in which people work. Though these changes can quicken the speed and broaden the resources with which people can work and play, produce and consume, it is important to consider whether the care, attentiveness, precision, and ultimate quality of the work being produced is at risk of being diminished. What are the many ways (both positive and negative) in which quality of work is impacted by these changes in industry? Does quality matter and if so, how can we encourage people to care about it? Through in-depth interviews and surveys of individuals at different ages and in various lines of work, as well as through an analysis of research and literature already produced, we seek to explore answers to these questions. In our most recent work, we compare findings in the US with five other countries: Brazil, Germany, Indonesia, China, and India. We have also prepared a publication that surveys how quality has been conceptualized and realized over time.


Contacts: Wendy Fischman, Project Manager; Lynn Barendsen, Project Manager


**Good Collaboration: Successful and Unsuccessful Collaboration:** We set out to explore the topic of collaboration—specifically the factors that lead to successful collaboration and those that make collaboration challenging. Our research on collaboration in non-profit education is designed to answer questions that should

ultimately help our colleagues in education. In particular, we seek to understand how collaborations form, the ways in which collaborations are maintained and evolve over time, how success in collaboration is defined and measured, and the positive (as well as negative) outcomes of collaborative work in education, as well as its consequences for the broader society.

To begin with we studied a range of collaborations among non-profit organizations in education. In each case, we start with the "emic," how the people whom we have interviewed define collaboration (e.g. goals, obstacles, strategies, outcomes); ultimately we employ the "etic:" what we, as researchers, deem to be successful collaboration. In phase one, we studied 40 leaders and participants in nonprofit organizations in education. More recently, we have begun an in-depth study of a nascent collaboration among three higher education institutions in the Greater Boston area; this ambitious effort ultimately hopes to create a "university-like setting" for its students and faculty on each campus.

Contacts: Wendy Fischman, Project Manager and Lynn Barendsen, Project Manager

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## 3. Conclusion

In its decade and a half of operation, the GoodWork Project® has developed methods for investigating work across several domains, carried out studies and data analyses in these domains, and published numerous books and articles. We have had the opportunity to present our findings to colleagues in many forums in the United States and abroad. Collaborative efforts are well underway in Scandinavia and beginning in other regions; in 2003 the original Good Work book was selected as one of the most important books published in Hong Kong. Finally, interventions are well under way in a number of realms; we expect to develop new domain-appropriate interventions and to respond as best we can to the many requests for help that we receive from workers in the United States and abroad.

We face a number of challenges. To begin with, we need to supplement our reports on individual domains with cross-domain (and, eventually, cross-national) comparisons. Second, we need to complement our focus on 'high-end' professions with equivalent knowledge across the occupational spectrum. Third, we need to develop appropriate collaborations with practitioners in the domains that we have studied, as well as domains where we do not have the expertise or resources to carry out intensive individual interviews and analyses.

The need for "good work" is as great as ever and, alas, the forces that operate against "good work" show no signs of abating. Somewhat regretfully, we state our belief that

there is little danger that our project will soon become unnecessary, many reasons to expect that it will be in greater need than ever before. The current plague of 'fear and greed' in the United States, and perhaps elsewhere, constitutes a formidable challenge to the achievement of good work. Of course, there are human problems that are as important as the ones that we are investigating, but the research team feels that this is the most important contemporary problem that we ourselves can address in a significant way. We remain as enthusiastic as we were in the middle 1990s, and we welcome collaborators to join our endeavor.

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