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This is a strange and perhaps at the same time a very appropriate time to be writing this kind of autobiographical piece. It has been a time of transition and some reflection about the course and meaning of it all. I would call it “midlife crisis” if I could admit really being in that very advanced-sounding part of my life. Whatever it is, this reflection is a very real part of day-to-day existence. I spend a large part of my professional life helping leaders and management groups to think more systemically and strategically about what they do. When I reflect on the lack of long-range thinking in my own life and life decisions, it sometimes seems ironic to me that I make a good portion of my living helping management teams and organizations to think and act in ways that are more focused on long-range end results.

I have recently moved from the Boston area to western Massachusetts to share a house and a life with a wonderful woman with whom I have been involved for several years. It’s a big move for a forty-six-year-old single guy. We live in the country, opposite a very user-friendly lake, and near a large academic community. The community includes five colleges, one or two of which were targets of weekend road trips so many years ago. Those institutions and their students look very different now.

I’ve had a successful management consulting practice for some years, working with companies and a range of other organizations, helping them to strengthen and refurbish their cultures, structures, and systems. This work sometimes takes the form of strategic planning, sometimes of development of their management team. In some situations we focus directly on changing the culture or structure for the long term. I’ve been able to create a good balance between large corporations, government, and nonprofits, and between situations in the U.S. and other parts of the world. I recall when I was at Yale not really being able to conceive of a job or career that would really fit my desires for creativity, independence, variety, and the chance for real impact. I guess I have created it, albeit in my own unsystematic way. I have a particular interest in exploring ways to apply what we know about strengthening organizations and organizational systems to resolving some of the seemingly intractable problems of large social conflicts. I’ve been doing more in that direction over the past few years. Once a political science major, I guess, always a political science major.

International activities have been a big part of my life since choosing Spanish many years ago as the easiest way to fulfill the current language requirement. What a primitive and rigid time it was! I went from being youth director on a cruise ship one summer to most of a year in South America as a Yale exchange student, to a year in Israel as a Peace Corps-style volunteer, to consulting over the last ten years in many countries. I have had exciting opportunities to train the top managers of the government of Malawi, to help those involved to review the direction of our AID program in South Africa in the face of many changes, to support companies in their efforts to think and act more globally— international activities have been a big part of my personal and professional life. It also seems quite ironic, as I look back, for a guy who had been only to New York (once) before college, and whose big foreign trip had before junior year been spring break in Nassau, and that by car to Miami. I will never forget Bruce Volpe, Nick Price, and me, and Nick’s brother Phil, crashing in on Arthur Kle- banoff and his brother at the Fontainebleau in Miami on the way. I must admit he handled it well.

Life has been good to me in many ways, if confusing at times. It has become a nice balance between having impact in some important areas and fulfilling a sixties’ ideal of keeping independent and out of the line of fire (back at the lake and the woods); and of stimulation and peace. I confess, as time moves on, I find myself coming down more and more on the side of peace and woods.

At this point in my life I do regret the failure to make some decisions over the years, particularly regarding family. 1 know I couldn’t have tried harder to find the girl of my dreams on those many mixer nights at Pierson College. It still seems unfair to cast inordinate blame on the Pierson social chairman for unfulfilled visions at this point in life. Those little day-to-day decisions can add up to major life choices before one is even aware it is happening, if one is not careful, or has trouble thinking about these kinds of issues in bigger chunks. With regard to many aspects of my college experience and the years thereafter, I can easily get into an “if I only knew then what I think I know now” mode. Then of course I try to convey my great learning to a worthy teenager, who of course pays no attention (what do I know?), and the cycle begins again for a new generation.