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I was drafted in June of ’69 in Montgomery, Alabama. Having accepted the risk of service in Vietnam, I was shocked when a medical examiner dismissed me with a i-Y classification for a weak ankle. Three months later I found myself in New York City doing corporate banking at Chemical Bank. New York was a place where I could grow, and during the seventies my interests ranged broadly to martial arts, EST, communal living, Ayn Rand, Libertarianism, banjo, and an M.B.A. at night at New York University.

In the middle eighties I focused my energies more on work and career. I left my job as a Vice President in corporate finance at Chemical Bank and moved to T. Rowe Price in Baltimore, where I now head a partnership that invests in financially distressed companies (an activity we affectionately call “vulture investing”). I was married for four years in the early seventies (no children), and I now have an unmarried but committed family relationship with Constance (an editor in New York), daughter Aimee (seventeen), and son Francois (eight).

At this point in my life, I’m happy with the extent to which I’m professionally respected and financially secure. I’m not rich. Not powerful. Not famous. My dreams are about space colonization (Physicist Gerard O’Neil’s idea of a manmade habitat orbiting the earth), immortality (through medical/technological advances), and a breakthrough in mind science or religion that enables us to reclaim lives now wasted in drug addiction, mental illness, and meaningless jobs.

My strongest ties to Yale are the experiences I shared with my roommates and classmates. It was these experiences and relationships which made my education—not the course content or the instruction. When I look back on those years at Yale, I wistfully see the confidence we had in change and the passion we had for developing our broadest potential. Something I didn’t appreciate then, and for a while during the seventies, was the powerful need I had to build a secure place in the world from which to be “effective.” Years of career building later, I’m now wondering how much effectiveness is really enough. What’s really important to achieve in the time I have left? What should be changed?