

Opening New Frontiers -- Creating Hope in the Midst of Chaos



© Clarence De Schiffart 2014

CCPA May 9, 2014



Want a copy of this PPT?

Email:

Clarence.deschiffart@nsc.ca



Today's workshop is focused on:

- Career counselling
- Potential impact of life chaos on one's identity
- Strategies for working with people
- Resources



"May my mind come alive today to the invisible geography that invites me to new frontiers."

John O'Donahue




You cannot tell me who I am, and I cannot tell you who you are. If you do not know your own identity, who is going to identify you? Others can give you a name or number, but they can never tell you who you really are. That is something you yourself can only discover from within.”

Thomas Merton,
No Man Is An Island



The Impact of Chaos in Your Life (Looking back)

- Write a title for an unexpected life event from your past.
- Write how that event contributed to your present life/work situation (the NOW).



It is no longer contentious that people are recognized as complex systems living within a complex world and subject to a complex array of influences including parents, friends, teachers, minority status, culture, media, the economy and so on. Now we recognize that we cannot continue to act as though these factors can be conveniently ignored, or wishfully think that they might cancel each other out.

Jim Bright, Chaos Theory



Faces of Career Development

YouTube Video

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRW_YbEPILO



Experience is a hard teacher. She gives the test first, the lesson afterward.

Anonymous



Progress & Creative Thinking about Living

Embrace complexity and chaos approaches:

- adaptability, creativity, narrative, cultural factors and hope filled approaches.
- teach people not only how to strategize within their life. It isn't about creating a plan!
 - devise, revise, compromise, delay, deploy, reinstate, persist with, abandon, copy, slow down, speed up, swop and reverse! (These are the skills that successful people demonstrate consistently)

As a Career Counsellor/Counsellors, what is it like to work with people who...

- *Appear to have lost their way?*
- *Seem confused about life options?*
- *Do not seem to have a direction in their life/work?*



“Factors” to consider within Chaos

Our careers/lives are:

- Subject to chance events ↑
- Subject to non-linear change
 - sometimes small steps have profound outcomes
 - sometimes changing everything changes nothing
- Unpredictable
 - most people express a degree of surprise/delight or disappointment at where they ended up.

Source:

<http://careersintheory.wordpress.com/2010/09/21/applied-chaos>



Chaos Theory

The Butterfly Effect is the sensitive dependency on initial conditions in which a small change at one place in a deterministic nonlinear system can result in large differences in a later state.



More “Factors” within Chaos Theory

Our careers/lives are subject to continual change.

- Sometimes we experience slow shift that results in us drifting off course without realizing it
- Sometimes our careers/lives have dramatic (fast shift) changes which completely turn our world upside down.

[Source: http://careersintheory.wordpress.com/2010/09/21/applied-chaos](http://careersintheory.wordpress.com/2010/09/21/applied-chaos)

The Ping Pong Balls and Puppies reference

- **Scenario 1:** in a room with a ping pong ball .. Drop it and what can you predict?
- **Scenario 2:** add an electric fan and a eager ball chasing puppy is chasing you? What can you predict?
- **Scenario 3:** add a pack of eager puppies, a series of electric fans, an open window with a howling gale and you are now running on an electric treadmill that is programmed to randomly change speed.



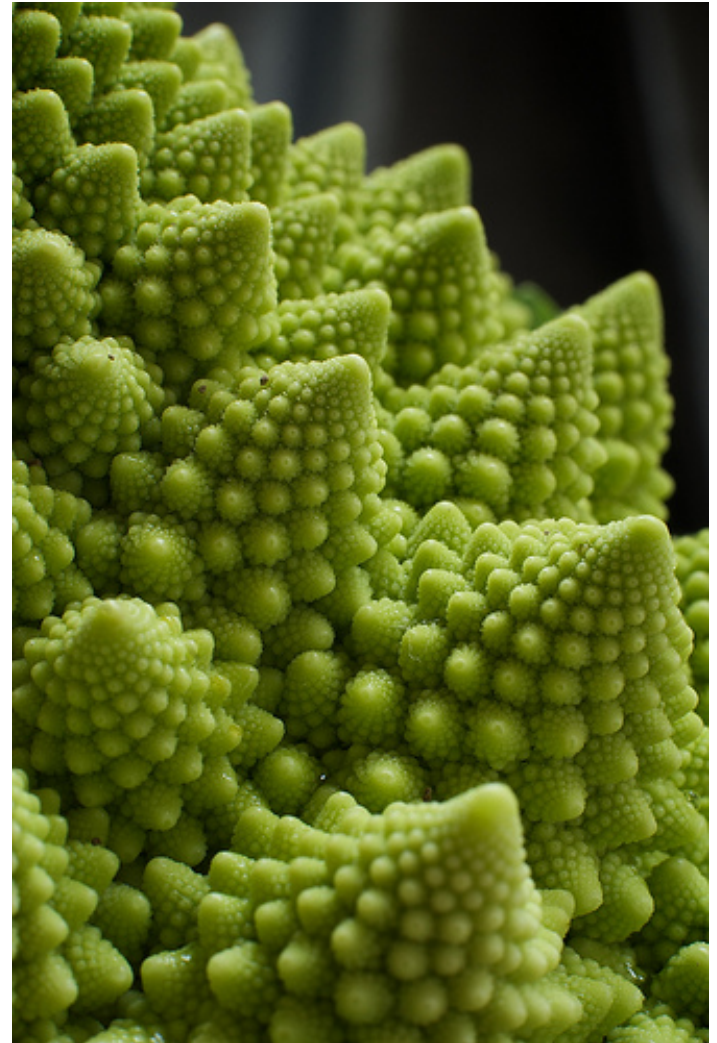
The Ping Pong Balls and Puppies

- Making long term predictions with **Scenario 3** is difficult
- Careers (life/work decisions) are influenced by parents, social and environmental context, gender, age, political and economic climate, interests, abilities, geography, an imperfect world (injustice & justice) and many other events
- Decisions are made consciously and unconsciously

Chaos in Life/Work

When sharing “chaos stories” and the impact it had on one’s life, ask:

- *What was it like for at the time looking back now?*
- *What did you experience (thoughts, emotions)?*
- *What got you through it?*



Chaos in our World

- Speed of technology
- Reshaping of organizations
- Speed and extent of change
- Need of life long learning
- Globalization of both consumer and labour markets
- Increasing contractual nature of work
- Rapidity of technology innovation and its adaptation

- Unplanned events are a normal and necessary component of every career.
- Every action involves some risk.





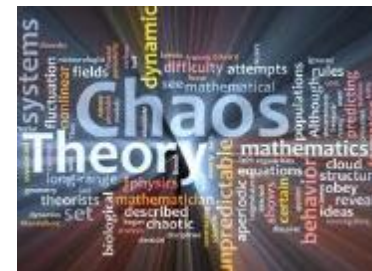
Implications on Career Development?

Shift Happens YouTube video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nkt2escJAQI>

Life/Work Implications

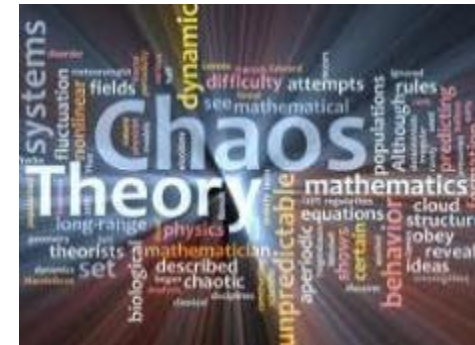
1. Look at each person's entirety. Help them understand the **patterns** and **processes** in his/her life. Orient client **expectations**. *Hope: vision & realities*
2. Try not to "narrow down" conversations to only "career-related" (work) topics. Focus on the **holistic life/work** blend discussion. *Hope: context*.
3. Make use of qualitative approaches by using **narrative, analogy, and metaphor** – creating meaning for the person at their present stage of being and understanding. *Hope: meaning making*



Life/Work Implications

4. Help people make sense of their past behavior and the **unpredictable nature** of a range of influences from the past. *Hope: acceptance*
5. Help people understand and accept the **finite limits** of our human understanding -- accept that all knowledge is open to doubt and revision and open to different interpretations from different perspectives

Hope: open to uncertainty and mystery



Five skills areas:

- **Curiosity**, which means exploring new learning opportunities;
- **Persistence**, which means exerting effort despite setbacks;
- **Flexibility**, which means changing attitudes and circumstances;
- **Optimism**, which means viewing new opportunities as possible and attainable and
- **Risk taking**, which means taking action in the face of uncertain outcomes.

John Krumboltz



We must accept finite disappointment, but never
lose infinite hope.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Resources

- ❖ Norm Amundson's books on Counselling. In particular, *[Active Engagement](#)*, *[Metaphor Making](#)* and *[The Physics of Living](#)*
- ❖ The Complexity Perception Index www.brightandassociates.com.au
- ❖ *[Chaos Theory of Careers](#)*, Jim Bright
- ❖ Where Will You Be?
YouTube video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrpC0pZHUe4>



For additional information or comments

Contact:

Clarence DeSchiffart

902.491.3531

Clarence.deschiffart@nsc.ca