

Developing Hobbies for a Lifetime

Sandeep Hegde

Abstract

Pursuing a hobby is one ritual every individual is habituated during their early days of childhood and for many later into adulthood as well. A hobby or a leisure activity is generally pursued for pleasure and for creatively occupying one's spare time. For some individuals pursuing a hobby would entail passion for that activity eg: a sport or an adventure activity. Very few individuals would spend time in understanding the significance of pursuing a hobby with respect to one's personality and its implications on a professional career. This research paper purports to achieve this aim. Organizations are now using big data from the internet sites like facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and other social networking websites for recruiting of its employees. Social intelligence is now in-built in the organization's core processes. Knowing employee's hobbies and leisure pursuits help organizations in attracting, recruiting and retaining the right "fit" talent for the organization. This research paper highlights these factors and elaborates on how individuals could develop their hobbies for a lifetime.

Keywords: Hobby; Leisure; Passion; Personality; Personality Traits; Personality Development; Recruitment; Career; Career Anchors; Mid Career Crisis; Learning; Early Childhood.

Introduction

As a Technology Recruiter, I had been asking a very pertinent question to all my prospective employees - "What are your hobbies?" This question has been asked by me several times to many fresh recruits as well as executive level candidates during my interviewing process. You would ask me "Why this Question?" and "What were the responses for this question?"

I would answer the latter first. The responses to the question on one's hobbies were numerous, strange and many times humorous like walking, talking, reading, day dreaming, cycling and one even gave the response as sleeping. Such and many such responses were given to a very simple sounding question.

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Now coming to the former, "Why this question?", "This is a very simple and straight forward sounding question, why do you unfailingly ask the same in all your interviews?". I would answer the query by my golden principle as a recruiter

"Hobbies Depict Human Personality"

Psychologist Gordon Allport (1939) defines personality as "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment" [1,2].

Review of Literature.

The North Western University's Kellogg School of Management Studies, findings of a two-year study of 120 HR Managers, showed that candidates were being selected for personality/culture fit and this was largely based on the hobbies and interest section of their resume. Yes, it seems like synergistic hobbies and interests that were in step with the business were actually shown to be more important than qualifications and experience in the candidate

assessment process [3].

The above mentioned study was conducted by Lauren A. Rivera of the North Western University, Illinois, USA. In her research paper titled "Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms" published in the *American Sociological Review*, 2012, Lauren has mentioned that the notion of cultural fit, or perceived similarity to a firm's existing employee base in leisure pursuits, background, and self-presentation, was a key driver of evaluation across the services firms being surveyed by her. Evaluators described "fit" as being one of the three most important criteria they used to assess candidates in job interviews; more than half reported it was the most important criterion at the job interview stage, rating fit over analytical thinking and communication [4].

Ernst & Young (EY) London, commissioned Longitude Research to conduct an online global survey on the role sports play for female executives in leadership development and teamwork in business. In May 2013, 821 senior managers and executives, 40% of whom were female, from a wide range of industry sectors participated in the survey. All companies have annual revenues in excess of US\$250 million. Approximately 54% of male respondents and 44% of female respondents were C-level, or board-level, executives.

The EY survey shows the important role of sports in the development of leadership skills for female executives and their ability to motivate teams. The EY survey of 821 senior managers and executives (40% female, 60% male) found that in comparing C-level female respondents to other female managers, far more had participated in sports at a higher level. Interestingly, 55% of the C-suite women had played sports at a university level, compared with 39% of other female managers.

The vast majority (90%) of the women surveyed had played sports either at primary and secondary school, or during university or other tertiary education, with this proportion rising to 96% among C-suite women.

The survey also found that almost three-quarters (72%) of women agree that individuals who engage in sports at some level, or have done so, participate more effectively within teams than those who have not had this experience. A similar number (76%) of women also agree that adopting behaviors and techniques from sports to the corporate environment can be an effective way of improving the performance of teams [5].

The above literature review of relevant recent global

research proves that hobbies and other leisure activities have gained importance in recruitment and selection processes of global organizations. Hence, the need for understanding how hobbies could be developed for a lifetime.

Personality Theories

Most psychologists agree that personality includes the behavior patterns a person shows across situations or the psychological characteristics of the person that lead to those patterns (Morgan, 1956).

Psychologists have studied personality in a number of different ways. Theories of personality have emerged based on these studies over a period of time. Some of these Theories are: (Morgan, 1956)

- a. Type and Trait approach, which focuses on people's characteristics like shyness, risk taking, etc.
- b. Dynamic approach, which emphasize on the individuals interactions with the external world.
- c. Learning and behavioral approaches, which emphasize ways in which individuals acquire habits through learning process, also called as basic conditioning.
- d. The humanistic approach, which emphasize the self and the importance of the individual's subjective views of the world [6].

We try to understand hobby or a leisure activity as one of the factors influencing human personality from the learning and behavioral approach school of psychology. This school of personality theory emerged from experiments in classical conditioning, instrumental conditioning and cognitive learning. Psychologists of this school of thought believed that many of the behaviors that make up personality are conditioned or learned [6].

Sigmund Freud, the psychologist who propounded the psychoanalytic theory believed that the mental development in the child is mostly completed by the early childhood stage. This means that many behaviors that are learned are often as early as childhood. The behavioral approach also assumed that an individual's environment of existence helped in maintenance of these behaviors [6].

Following the learning and behavioral school of psychology, we can elaborate on hobby as one of the learnt behaviors that could be nurtured by one's environment.

The trait theory of personality has been used extensively by psychologists to understand personality and job fit characteristics. Holland (1973)

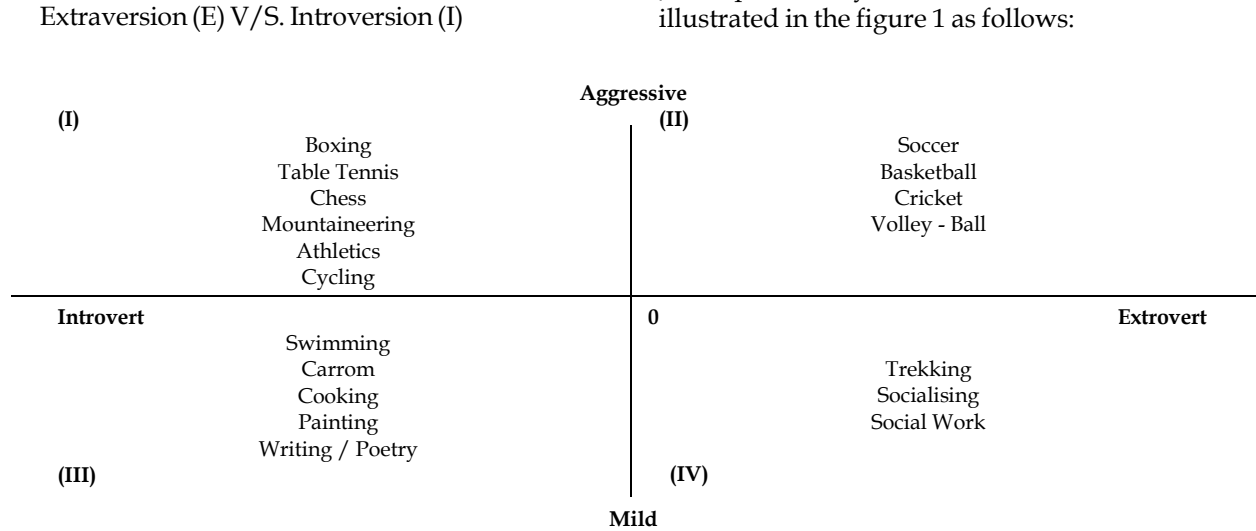
has defined job – personality fit dimensions based on the trait theory [7].

A human personality has 16 factors (16 PF) or dimensions of one’s personality. Psychologist, Raymond Cattell has defined human personality as having 16 personality factors or dimensions based on behavioral patterns. [8] As a recruiter, we look for 4 major personality traits using the 16 personality factors.

Judging (J) V/S. Perceiving (P)
Sensing (S) V/S. Intuiting (N)
Thinking (T) V/S. Feeling (F)

Discussion

We use the following personality chart to place a person in different co-ordinate / quadrant as per his / her personality based on one’s hobbies. This is illustrated in the figure 1 as follows:



Source: Author

Fig. 1: Personality dimension and hobbies

Most of the hobbies would fall under any one quadrant or sometimes may overlap between any two. Let us take a look at what these quadrant depict about

your personality vis-à-vis your hobbies. This is illustrated in the figure 2 below.

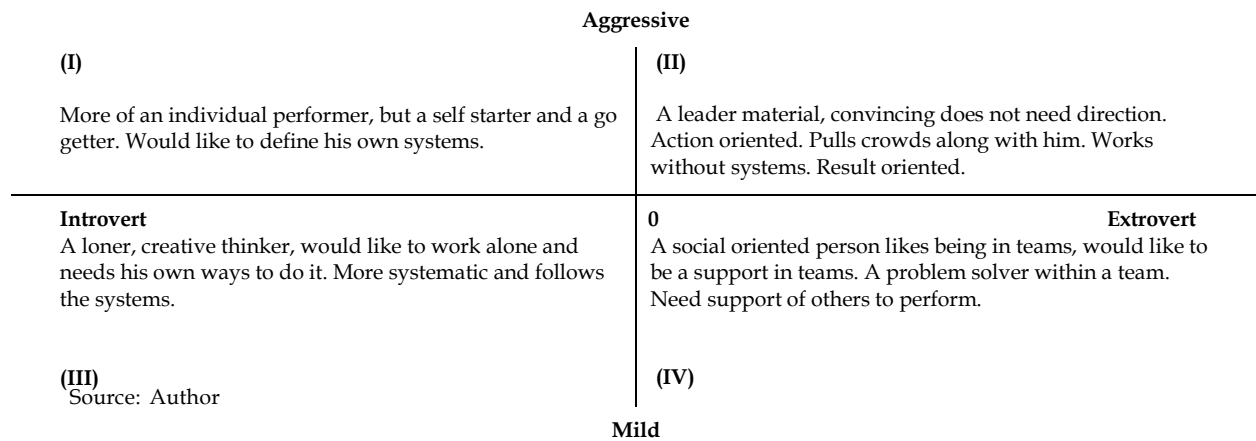


Fig. 2: Hobbies and the individual behaviors.

Based on the above personality quadrants we define a personality – job fitment. This is illustrated

in the figure 3 below.

Aggressive	
<p>(I)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planner / Strategists • Financial Wizards • Quality professionals • Trainers 	<p>(II)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales persons • Marketing Personnel • Union Leaders • Team Leaders • Line Managers
<p>Introvert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advt.& Communication • Creative artists • Copy writers • Playwrights • Researchers • Computer Programmers <p>(III)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">0</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Systems Analyst • HR Professionals • Social Workers • Entertainers • Event Managers • Teachers <p>(IV)</p>
Mild	Extrovert
Source: Author	

Fig. 3: Personality dimension and job fitment

Therefore your hobby indicates to your personality type and that in turn would indicate as to which professions or job type would suit your personality. Therefore as a recruiter I always ask this pertinent question, "What are your hobbies?".

Is it so simple that by asking this simple question and by placing the candidate in one of the quadrants

we can judge him or his personality? The answer is "NO". Judging one's personality based on his hobbies does not end here. We can further understand a few more critical parameters regarding a person from his hobbies. I cite an example of "Emotions" as one of the parameters to judge a person. This is illustrated in figure 4 below.

Aggressive	
<p>(I)</p> <p>Can be self centered, shrewd, less emotional to others feelings. Can face stress but keep to themselves</p>	<p>(II)</p> <p>Least emotional, less sensitive to others, rather rough and tough. Can take stressful situations easily. High emotional stability.</p>
<p>Introvert</p> <p>Low emotional stability. Self sensitive. Cannot face stressful situation with ease. Day dreamers. Can have self pity.</p> <p>(III)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">0</p> <p>Sensitive to others, Empathetic, emotional to others. Caring and respect others feelings. Thoughtful of consequences.</p> <p>(IV)</p>
Mild	Extrovert
Source: Author	

Fig. 4: Emotions as a personality dimension

These and many such critical parameters regarding a personality can be judged by one's hobbies. However there is one more dimension to evaluating a person based on his hobbies i.e.: the depth and breadth of his hobby. This is illustrated in the Figure 5.

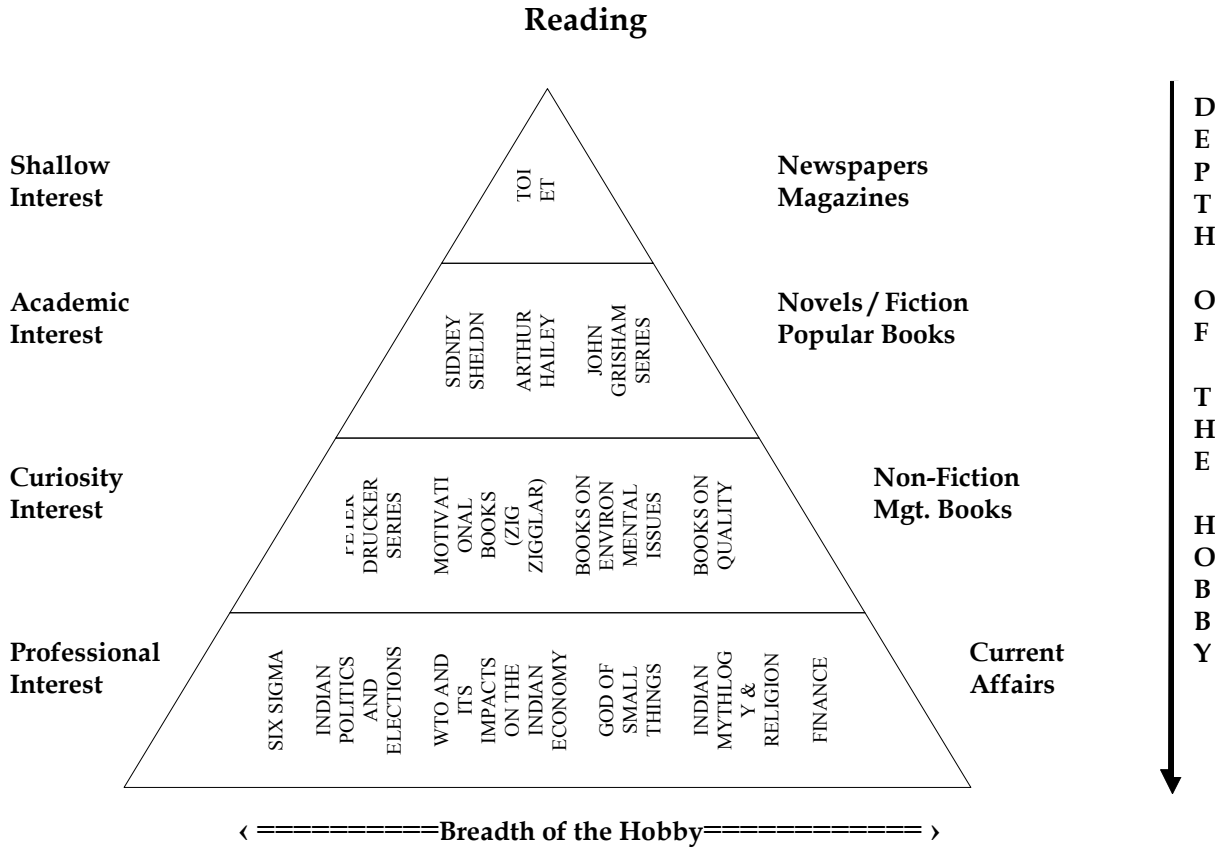
The depth of one's hobby depicts the seriousness in the pursuit of his hobby, one's level of patience and self achievements. This indicates whether the person can tackle problems at a higher levels and whether he would be self motivated to take his responsibilities to a higher level.

On the other hand the breadth of one's hobby indicates his / her exploratory nature. Would he be open to ideas, does the quest for knowledge bring out multiple solutions to problems he faces, level of one's tolerance to others and whether he can work in harmony with others around him.

For understanding these aspects, I generally ask probing questions like "What do you read?", "How frequently do you read?", "Which is the last book you have read?", "Are there any other books by the same author that you have read?", "Which are the other books on this theme that you have read or that

HOBBY : READING

Depth of the Hobby



Source: Author

Fig. 5: The depth and the breadth of a hobby

you have heard of?”. Such probing questions on one’s hobbies give us indicators of the depth as well as the breadth of one’s hobby. Of course the personality depiction by understanding one’s hobby is only an indication to a personality factor/trait which is further judged by asking job related questions or through other modes of investigation like use of tests / Psychometric tools.

Today organizations are recruiting employees from being purely dependent on skills/experience, for assessing candidate ability, to one focused on a candidate’s personality and culture fit, it seems that the hobbies and interest section is in fashion and is taking on greater significance in the candidate assessment process [3].

The Human Development Model

HOBBY {Def} - Leisure pursuit of any activity for non financial gains or for amateur goals.

As hobby is any type of activity carried during

one’s spare time for the sole intention of pleasure, one may wonder what implications it can have on one’s career / profession.

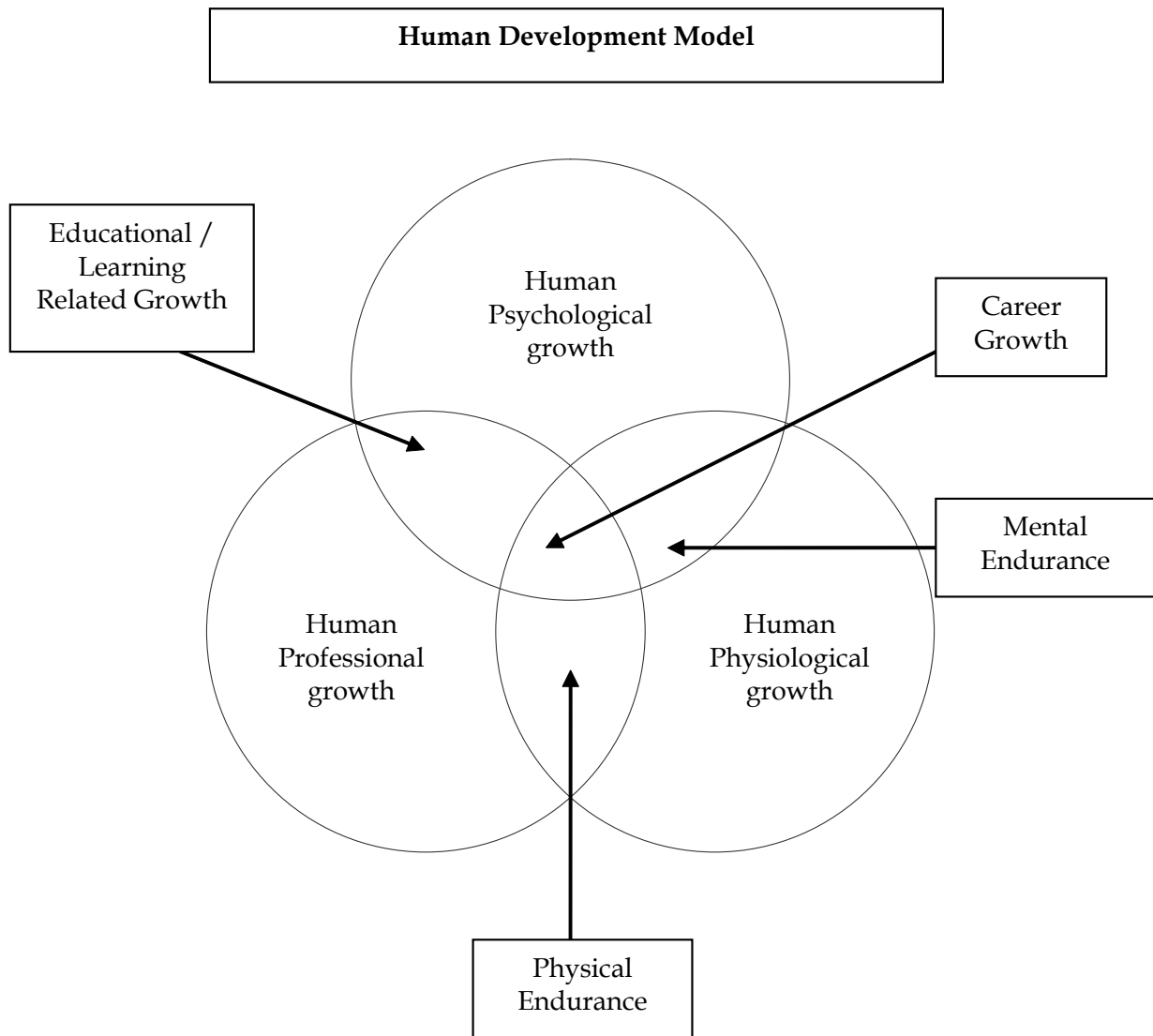
Hence the pivotal question – Why do I need a hobby?

I use an analogy of human development and professional growth chart to highlight the need for a hobby as follows:

The above chart for Human development defines 4 major dimensions for tracing the professional growth for any individual. We would trace these 4 dimensions on two scales viz: human life span and human career path.

According to Erik Erikson’s psychosocial crisis life cycle model, a human life span has 9 phases [9]. We have adapted his model to explain the human life span and the corresponding human career paths associated with each stage.

1. Infancy (0 – 3 yrs) Oral age
2. Early Childhood (4 – 8 yrs) pre-puberty



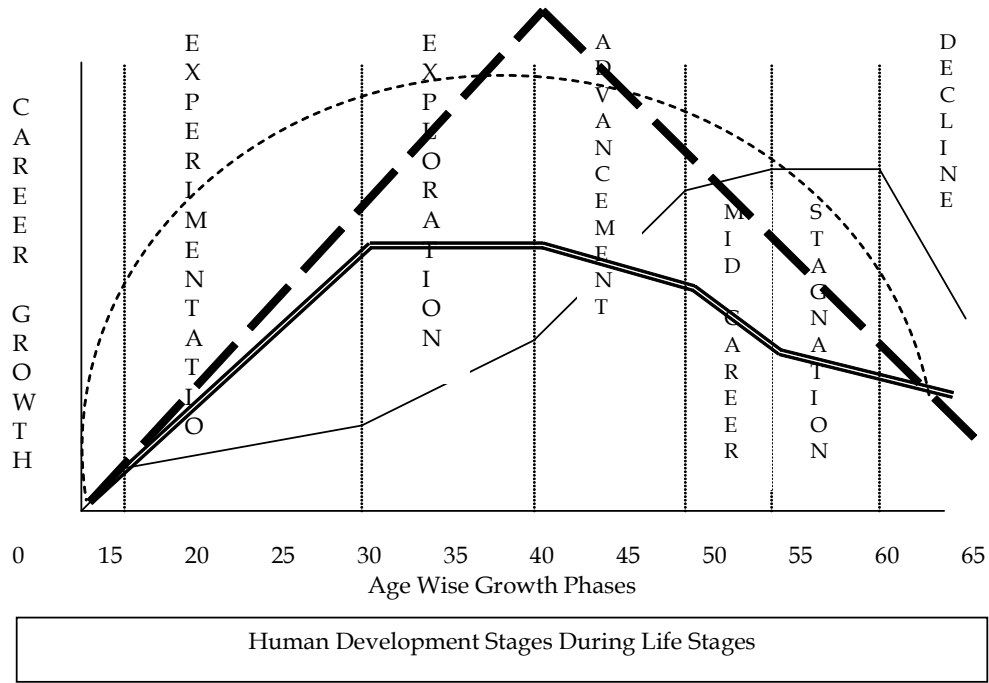
Source: Author

Fig. 6: Human development model

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3. Late Childhood (9 – 12 yrs) onset of puberty | 1. Oral stage (0 – 3 yrs) |
| 4. Adolescence (13 – 19 yrs) Teenage | 2. Early Education Stage (4 – 14 yrs) |
| 5. Early Adulthood (20 – 25 yrs) Masculine | 3. Experimentation Stage (15 – 30 yrs) |
| 6. Mid Adulthood (26 – 36 yrs) Procreation | 4. Career Exploration Stage (30 – 40 yrs) |
| 7. Late Adulthood (37 – 50 yrs) Stability | 5. Career Advancement Stage (41 – 48 yrs) |
| 8. Middle Age (50 – 65 yrs) Decline | 6. Mid Career Stage (49 – 55 yrs) |
| 9. Old age (65 yrs +) Diminish | 7. Stagnation (56 – 60 yrs) |
| | 8. Decline (60+ yrs) |

A human career growth has 8 stages which is adapted from the works of Douglas T. Hall's Life, Career and Learning Stages [11].

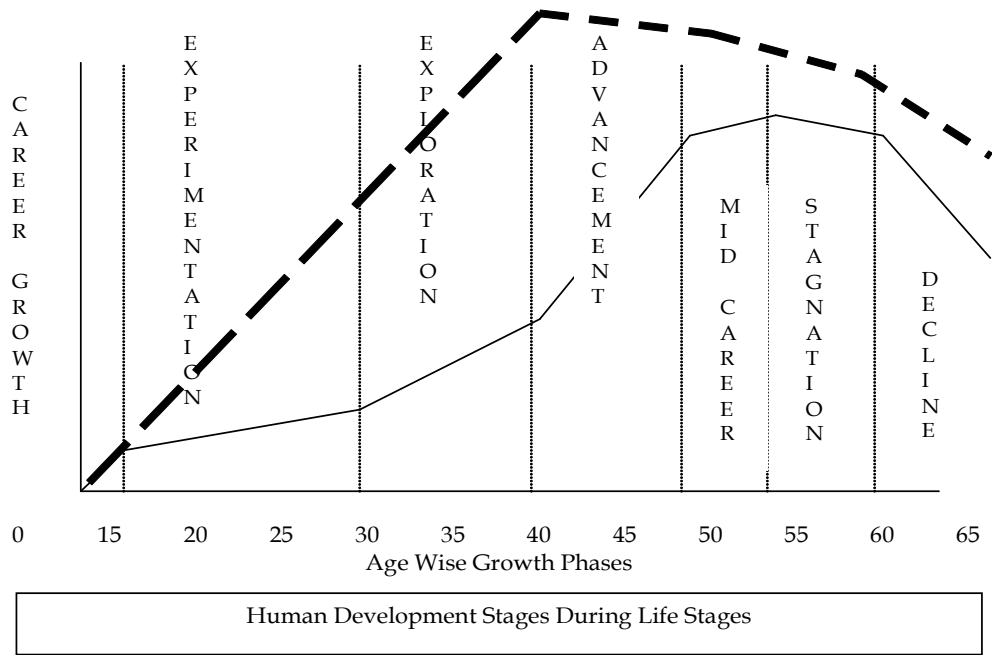
Based on the above chart of Human Development Phases one can notice that vital dimensions like



Physical Endurance Educational Growth Career Growth Mental Endurance

Source: Author

Fig. 7: Human development stages



Physical Endurance Educational Growth Career Growth Mental Endurance

Source: Author

Fig. 8: Mapping Hobby on the Human Development Phases

Physical Endurance, Mental Endurance and Educational / Learning tend to slowly decline over the ageing process in ordinary humans but the Career growth has a steady incline over the ageing process till 55 yrs of an average human being.

A person pursuing a hobby from an early age (8 - 12 yrs) and enhancing this hobby throughout his lifetime can change this normal trend. This can be illustrated from the graph below.

Hobbies: Physical in nature like athletics, swimming, Active participation in variety of Sports.

Another aspect of pursuing a hobby and correlating its benefits with professional career is observed from the performance criterion for a job. This is illustrated in the Table 1.

The hobbies corresponding to each performance criterion vis-à-vis the dimensions of Human Development Phases are illustrated in the Table 2.

Table 1: Performance criterion for a job

Knowledge (K)	Abilities (A)	Skills (S)	Habit (H)
Learning inculcate for a job or education Hobbies: reading	Aptitude required for a task to be performed Hobbies: indoor sports like Chess, Carrom, etc.	Competence in performing a task Hobbies: Sports related to Speed like athletics, Aquatics, etc.	Attitudinal factors affecting job performance Hobbies: Team based Sports or Sports related to Team performance.

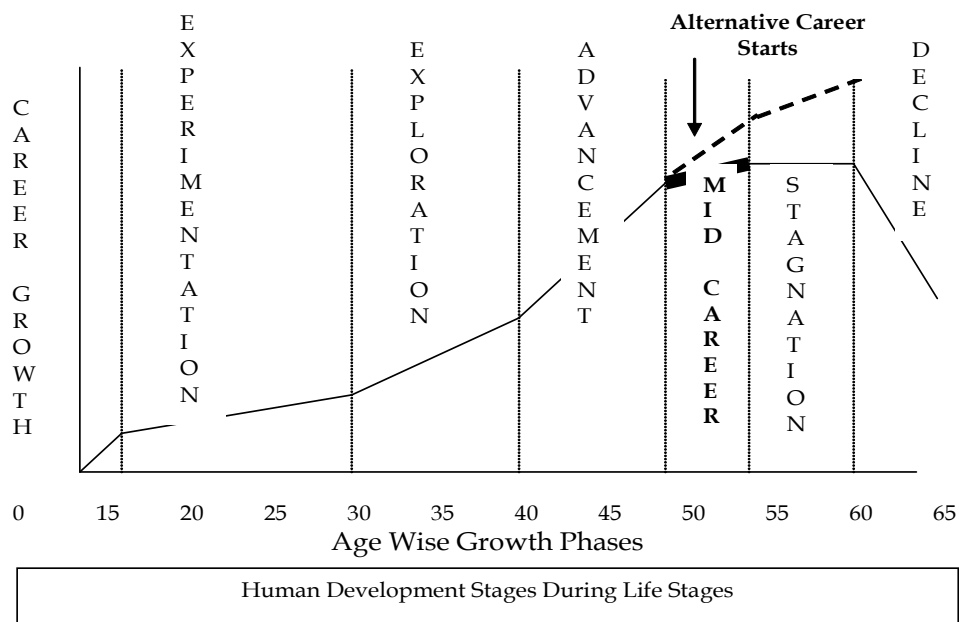
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Table 2: Performance criterion vis-à-vis the dimensions of Human Development Phases

Job / Dev	Knowledge (K)	Abilities (A)	Skills (S)	Habit (H)
Learning Related Growth	• Numismatics • Reading	• Reading		
Physical Endurance			• Swimming • Basketball	• Outdoor Sports which are team based
Mental Endurance			• Chess • Painting	• Table tennis

play-for-female-executives (Assessed on 31/05/2016).

Source: Author



Source: Author

Fig. 9: Mid career crisis

The Mid Career Crisis Syndrome

The above graph indicates that during career phase of an individual there comes a time when he / she is encountered with a problem of career paths slowing down pace or reaching a point where the individual stagnates in his job / profession. This may be due to reasons beyond his control (e.g.: recession in the economy). At this point a hobby or any amateur pursuits can get to be handy for an individual as a start point for a new career. E.g. a person pursuing any sports as a hobby, if having an expertise in the sport can use his skills for coaching entry level sports enthusiasts. Thus coaching can become his new career option.

The above facts highlight the need to develop your hobbies for a lifetime, as you never know when you

may need it as a second career option during your professional career!!!

Developing one's hobby is both thrilling as well as challenging. For that one has to take one's hobby seriously.

Judging by the seriousness of one's hobby, several dimensions of personality can be viewed in the light of the same. Table 3 depicts the dimensions of personality that helps in developing one's hobby. The table is based on Chris Argyris' early research which explored the impact of formal organizational structures, control systems and management on individuals and how they responded and adapted to them. This research resulted in the books *Personality and Organization* (1957) and *Integrating the Individual and the Organization* (1964) [10].

Table 3: Dimensions of personality and developing hobbies

Immaturity Characteristics	Maturity Characteristics	How Hobbies Help In Behavioral Changes
Passivity	Activity	Pursuing a hobby can be viewed as a task by itself. A serious hobbyist is generally more active than an idler. Pursuing a hobby can keep an individual occupied throughout his spare time. This charges an individual to work actively throughout.
Dependence	Independence	Pursuing a hobby by one's choice can inculcate a sense of personal freedom of choice of task.
Few ways of behaving	Diverse behavior	Hobbies can bring out the creative personality in an individual. Reflexive thinking and team work can bring about positive personal changes.
Shallow Interests	Deep Interests	Pursuing a hobby itself indicates to the fact that the individual can have deep interests.
Short term perspectives	Long term perspectives	Lifelong pursuits of hobbies require planning and execution not only in terms of time and energy but also financially.
Subordinate position	Super ordinate position	Hobbies like sports, outdoor activities can bring out the leadership traits in an individual.
Lack of self awareness	Self awareness and control	Through pursuit of hobbies an individual can assess his own strengths and weaknesses.

Source: Author

Developing Hobby using the Step Ladder Approach (SLA)

How do I develop my Hobby?

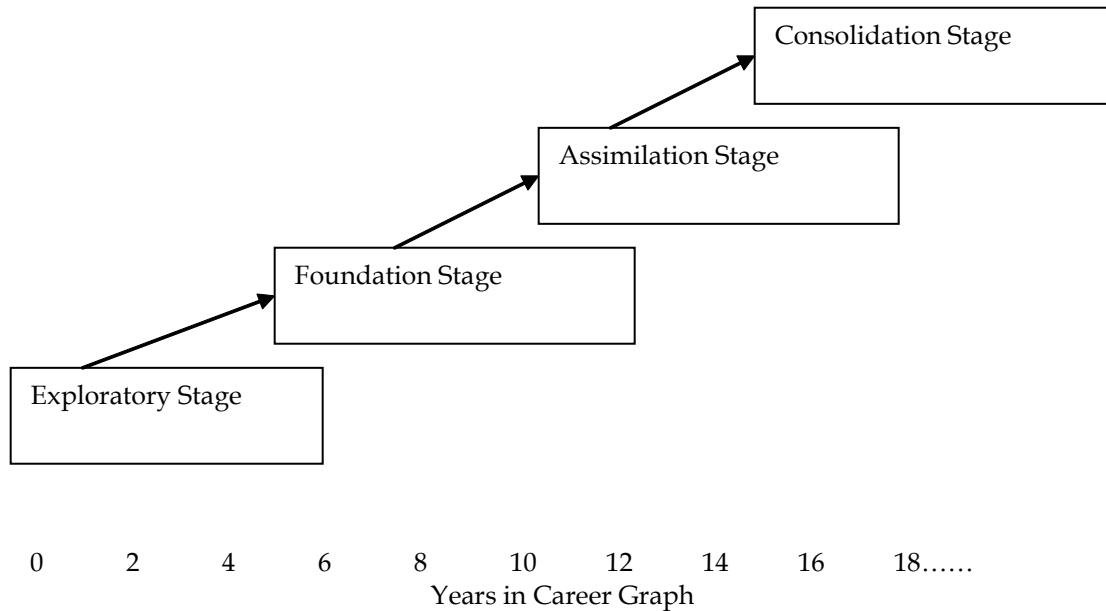
- For starts, understand your personality - What type of person are you? Shy, timid, outgoing, aggressive, mild, introvert..... Depending on your personality you can choose the type of hobby that best suits your temperament. For assistance in understanding this you may consult a Psychologist / Counsellor or take a Psychometric Test on Interest Inventories / MBTI (Myers - Brigg Type Indicator).
- Once you decide to pursue a hobby, find out whether you can cope up with the intricacies of

the same like financial implications, time constraints, Physical exertions, etc that would go along all the way while you pursue your hobby. Remember, you need to sustain your interest in your hobby from a long term perspective.

- Pursue your hobby in a STEP LADDER APPROACH (SLA). Figure 10 below illustrates a step by step approach to developing one's hobby.

Exploratory Stage

This is the first step in your ladder towards pursuing a hobby. This step can be taken during your initial years of academic life and may continue till you reach your threshold of your first job.



Source: Author

Fig. 10: Step ladder approach (SLA)

During this stage one explores various hobbies and finds out which hobby may suit one's temperament. Based on this insight you may decide or narrow down on a few hobbies of your choice. During this stage one should find out how the hobby can help you in your career phases (See Career Growth Chart above).

Foundation Stage

The seriousness in pursuing one's hobbies begins during this stage. Joining hobby classes or hobby clubs or forums helps one in laying a strong foundation in pursuing a lifelong hobby.

Assimilation Stage

Achieving success in your hobby areas like some recognition, awards, medals, citations etc helps in pursuing the hobby in a professional way. At this stage one may even convert the hobby into a profession if one wishes. This could become one's second career in the making.

Consolidation Stage

The finale of one's achievement could culminate into a platform where one could hand hold others in the similar field. Guiding, coaching or mentoring others to pursue similar hobbies could help one to develop a hobby for a lifetime.

Conclusions

It's human nature to resist any activity which puts some pressure (physical or mental) on the individual. But the same person may never resist the activity which may be of one's liking. These activities which we love doing or pursuing, called as our hobbies help us relax and derive pleasure from doing it. If one takes it a little seriously one may excel in that area, which may result in an alternative career option for that individual.

In today's world full of stress and lower job satisfaction, one needs to keep his / her career options open. Change has to happen. A serious outlook to one's hobbies could facilitate change in one's life.

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