

Kevin Simonson Interview:

How would you describe your area of study to your grandmother?

I enjoy hearing folks tell their story. I believe there is power in allowing folks who are marginalized the opportunity to be heard. As a counseling psychologist in training, I have come to appreciate, above all, the therapeutic relationship. That is, the genuine connection between the therapist and the client.

What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?

I enjoy challenges. Higher education has given me the opportunity to grow as a scholar and a practitioner. In addition, higher education has allowed me to grow personally. That is, I believe I know how I want to live my life. Prior to my doctoral work at RU, I knew part of what I wanted to do in life. Now, I have a clearer course to navigate. The options which my degree will afford will open new doors of possibility.

Do you think there is any value in social networking with other graduate students in non-related fields?

Absolutely. Counseling Psychology as a discipline works hand in hand with many other professionals (e.g., researchers, social workers) in order to provide holistic care. In addition, social networking is often a stepping stone toward employment. The world in which we live is a combination of who you know, as well as what you know.

What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?

For the past 10 years, I have been studying the craft of violin making. I have found the process of building violins to be therapeutic and restorative. In 2004, I apprenticed under a violin maker in the Canadian Maritimes. Working side by side with this master influenced my life profoundly. Violin making is a lifelong learning experience. The journey requires years of training, study and long days and nights exploring the depths of the creation process. I look forward to engaging in this process throughout my life.

What is the last book you read strictly for pleasure and how long ago was it?

Over winter break, I re-read my favorite book. It's a biographical novel by Irving Stone titled *The Agony and the Ecstasy*. This novel tells the story of Michelangelo's life as a sculptor, painter, and architect. As an artist, this book is inspiring.

Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.

This past year while counseling at Radford University Student Counseling Services, under the supervision of Dr. Hamilton, I enjoyed getting to know him as a mentor, colleague, and supervisor. As a result of working with him, I feel confident and empowered to do well when I attend internship in September.

What surprised you the most about graduate school?

What surprised me the most about graduate school were the relationships I formed with my peers. While in the trenches of daily doctoral work, only your peers know and truly understand the agony and turmoil one endures. I have no doubt these friendships will last a lifetime.

If travel to Mars happens in your lifetime, would you want to be one of the scientists on board?

No. I have a fear of heights.

What is your favorite comfort food and why? How often do you consume it?

Oh this is an easy one, cheese. In my fridge right now, alphabetically listed, I have blue cheese, brie, feta, goat cheese (but unfortunately not from my goats), gruyere, parmesan, mozzarella, and sharp cheddar.

If you hadn't been admitted to graduate school, what do you think you would be doing right now?

Nestled in the woods somewhere in Vermont, building fiddles.

When do you expect to complete your degree?

Summer 2012