

editor's page

The Costume Box

In my house is a costume box from which my two sons get occasional help in trying out new roles. It contains mostly garments and props that help overcome human limitations: a red cape with which to be less earthbound, a breastplate to repel harmful rays, a military hat (the cloth kind that looks like a No. 10 envelope) and jackets with enough insignia on them to impersonate several officers at a time, a gruesome mask and wig to enjoy the power of monsters and a clip-on moustache and a battered fedora for general rakishness.

For several years I tried to influence my sons' choice of roles. I pointed with pride to my sister the carpenter. I read to them about women who became surgeons and men who liked to care for children. I protested the ease with which they could turn anything from a breadstick to a vacuum cleaner attachment into a sword, a lazer gun or some other piece of aggressive technology. I sighed to see how often their cadre of stuffed animals was pressed into service as subordinates and victims.

It took a long time for me to appreciate what they were doing and to stand back and let them be swaggering, heroic or bellicose. As they were learning the difference between human and superhuman, I was learning about how roles are perceived and how they change and about how to put different kinds of hats into the costume box but not to force anyone to wear them.

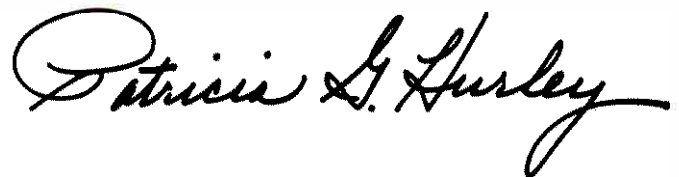
This issue of the *Journal* includes a feature on career development, which to my way of thinking is a sort of costume box for adults. I don't mean to suggest that career development is a game or a fantasy, but that it is a process of self-revelation and a process of decisions about what to do and be within one's limits aided by one's potential.

The articles in our feature distinguish between the career development efforts of individuals and institutions, a distinction that the contributing editors, Zandy Leibowitz and Tom Gutteridge, felt was important. As the economy narrows job horizons and factors such as dual career couples become significant, job holders must develop careers within institutions and even within specific roles and titles, presenting the institutions with new tasks of meaningful career

development. Conversations with Tim Hall, Ed Schein and Marlys Hanson about the future of career development made me wonder if it is jobs themselves or the choices we make about them that most influence career development. Is it the costumes in the box or the selection of a cape rather than a jacket that matters most?

Career development also involves change, about which a great deal has been said, especially in the last 20 years as change has speeded up at a rate that's past ignoring. Aristotle, and part of the world for centuries after him, believed that things that were immutable were superior to those that could change. We feel differently about change, having been able to find value in it and having experienced its stunning swiftness. We are efficient at controlling and directing the process of change. We can predict it, intend it, label it and quantify it. We know how to divide it into manageable parts and how to ride its crest and survive. We even have experts, career development specialists among them, to guide, facilitate and teach change. We know all this about change, and yet it can still take us by surprise.

This was brought home to me quite recently. The *Journal* cover has just been through some changes, accompanied by a certain amount of discomfiture that should have been expected but wasn't. It reminded me that magazines are a mutable process. They too are the result of revelations and decisions about what to do and be and how that should look and sound. In this respect, it's a process that is like career development or like the roles my children try out. You might say that the *Journal* has taken something new out of the costume box.



—Editor