

January 2025

Sapere Aude – Dare to Be Wise: Michael E. Young

Michael Young

Center for Evidence-Based Programming, evidence_based@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://newprairiepress.org/hbr>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

Recommended Citation

Young, Michael (2025) "Sapere Aude – Dare to Be Wise: Michael E. Young," *Health Behavior Research*: Vol. 8: No. 1. <https://doi.org/10.4148/2572-1836.1311>

This Editorial is brought to you for free and open access by New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in Health Behavior Research by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact cads@k-state.edu.

Sapere Aude – Dare to Be Wise: Michael E. Young

Abstract

Sapere Aude – Dare to Be Wise is a unique editorial conversational interview-type feature. It is an attempt to deep dive into an Academy members' background, formative experience, and education – specifically, to extract factors that contributed to their development and evolution as a professional, as well as their success as a prominent researcher in the health behavior arena. Every Academy member selected has a different story to tell and numerous models for success will emerge from this exploration of the membership.

Keywords

Sapere Aude

Sapere Aude — Dare to Be Wise: **05 Michael E. Young**

CHILDHOOD

Full name: Michael Edwin Young

Tell me about where you were born and how you grew up.

I was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma. About the time I turned one, Mom and Dad moved us to Tulsa. I went to elementary school (K-6) and the 7th grade year of junior high in Tulsa. The summer after 7th grade, we moved to the country. This was 20 acres of land about 35 miles from Tulsa. The school had less than 300 kids total in grades K-12. There were 18 of us in our graduating class.

Growing up, Mom and Dad had us in church every Sunday morning, most Sunday nights, and even sometimes on Wednesday nights. When there was a revival, we were there. These would go for at least a week (every night of the week), and often longer. It was at one of those revival services that in response to the evangelist's call, I walked to the front of a fairly large church, made a public profession of faith and was saved from a life of sin, degradation, and addiction to Kool-Aid. I was five.

I was seven, almost eight, when all of the guys at school were signing up for YMCA Kid Baseball. I did too. We had a really good team. We were 20-0 in our league play, then got beat in the Tulsa city playoffs. There were 18 of us on the team. I was clearly the worst player we had. If there had been 25 kids on the team, even 100, I would have been the worst. Many years later, long after my college and semi-pro playing days, and college coaching days were behind me, Dad told me about praying, on a number of occasions, to God about me and baseball. He said, "God, can you please help this kid find something at which he at least has a chance

of being good. We both know, that baseball is not it. It is simply not his game. And God – now he has announced to everyone that he is going to be a pitcher. Help!"

Dad worked from 7 to 3:30, so he was home every day by 4:00. Every day from the time he got home until dark, we played baseball. Long after baseball season was over, and when everyone else had quit playing, we played baseball. It was all baseball, all of the time. Whenever we went anywhere, we took baseball gloves, a few balls, and a bat. You never knew when there would be an opportunity to play catch, get in a little batting practice, or shag some fly balls. I remember one day Dad was so frustrated with my lack of progress, he said something like, "You know it costs five dollars to sign-up for baseball. If things don't improve, I don't think we will be wasting another five dollars next year." Five dollars was a lot of money; it was certainly more than I ever had. I started thinking and planning about how I could earn the five dollars to sign-up for next year.

In spite of frustrations, we both stayed with it. The next year I went from rarely getting in a game, to a starting spot, and at .576, the second highest batting average on the team. That year we not only won our league we came in second place in the city of Tulsa. I continued to play baseball through high school, American Legion ball, college, and some semi-pro ball. Neither Dad, nor I, had ever heard of Albert Bandura, or self-efficacy. I am convinced, however, that any success I have had professionally is due to baseball, a Dad who would not give up on his kid, no matter how badly he played, and that \$5 challenge. When I was in my early 40s, my shrink (you have not arrived until you have your own shrink) asked, "with all of the academic and athletic success you have had, don't you think you have finally earned that five dollars?" Some days I think I may still be trying to earn it.

What did your parents do for a living?

Dad was a mechanic for American Airlines at their maintenance center in Tulsa. Before he retired, he was the crew chief on the flight line. This meant he was the person who signed off indicating the plane was ready to go. If something went wrong, he was where the buck stopped.

Mom was a nurse. She worked on and off at one of the hospitals in Tulsa. When we moved to the country, she worked for the Indian Public Health Service at the Indian Hospital in Claremore.

What about your education?

I went to elementary school (K-6) in Tulsa. We had over 800 students. In the fourth grade our teacher, Mrs. Long told Mom, “Mike’s really college material.” Mom took those words to heart, and made it happen. In the sixth grade everyone took an achievement test. Two of the sixth-grade teachers told me that of all of the students who took the test, I had the second highest score. I remember telling them I was a little disappointed that that someone had a higher score. In the seventh grade we were still in Tulsa where I went to a large junior high school. They did not have “gifted and talented” classes, but apparently, based on those achievement test scores in the sixth grade, some of us were fast-tracked to a more challenging academic level. I had no idea this was the case, until one morning our homeroom teacher called us out. This must have been right after the first report card. As a class, she did not think we did as well as we should have, and let us know about it. She said something like, “You know you are in this class because you are the smartest seventh graders we have. It’s time to get with the program and start acting like it.” I thought, “hmm, I bet this is why our 7th grade class seems to have tougher coursework than other seventh graders.”

Starting in the eight grade I went to a small country school. No more advanced academic track. No wide range of course offerings. There were more leadership opportunities. For example, I was president of the 4-H club, president of the junior class, vice-president of the senior class, captain of the basketball team, most athletic, and most likely to succeed. A larger school would have offered a more competitive environment, both academically and athletically. It also would have had football. In a number of ways school would have been better had we not moved. Looking back 60 years now, I have to say, thank goodness we did not stay in Tulsa.

In the 7th grade I had played on the seventh- and eighth-grade football team. We were good. I didn’t play much that fall, but during spring training, at just over 100 pounds, I was running first team guard on offense and first team tackle on defense. The two guys who were second team to me each outweighed me by nearly 40 pounds. When they were seniors, they both made the Oklahoma All-State Football Team and received a scholarship at the two Division-1 universities in the state. I am not saying that had we stayed in Tulsa I would have been a football star. I am saying the chances are I would have played a lot of football. My body has been so beaten up from injuries I sustained in supposedly “non-contact” sports, I hate to think what it would be like with football injuries on top of the ones I already have. One person who had watched me play a lot of basketball once told me. “I really enjoy watching you play. To be honest, you are rarely, if ever, the best player on the court. The thing I like is, you play with total disregard for the safety of your body.” Yes, my beat-up body is so glad I did not play football.

What kind of educational environment did you grow up in?

Mom and Dad both read to me – a lot. We had books, and Mom often took us to the public library, which was not far from the house. I would see Mom reading her nursing journals and books. Dad read the newspaper every day, but not so much books. I remember impressing the girl next door with my great reading skills. We had not yet started school, so I was probably four. I wasn't really reading, I just knew the stories so well, I pretended to read them. A lot of people probably would have thought I was reading instead of remembering. I think the pretend reading made the transition to actual reading fairly easy.

If I indicated an interest in something, both Mom and Dad tried to be supportive. For example, when it came to baseball, either one or both of them were at every game and at every practice for a number of years. I later learned that my pediatrician had told them I had a heart murmur, and that it might not be a good idea to allow me to be involved in sports. They were not going to keep me from playing, but wanted to be there in case I keeled over, so they could quickly get me any medical attention I might need.

About the time I started playing baseball, the local paper started carrying a column in their sports section, "you make the call." It gave a scenario involving a situation in a baseball game in which the umpire had to make a decision, based on the rules. We read the scenario, and discussed, well, sometimes argued, about the correct decision. We also read the rule book, over and over. I suspect we both knew the rule book better than any of the other kids playing baseball, any of the coaches, and probably most, if not all, of the umpires.

As a stocking stuffer for Christmas one year, I received a bag of used postage stamps. This was the start of several years of actively

developing a stamp collection. I have devoted little time to it as an adult, but still sometimes purchase the set of U.S. commemorative stamps for that year. I still have the stamp albums I purchased in elementary school and a lot of stamps. No one will get rich from the sale of my collection, but it might be worth a few thousand dollars, and it did help keep me off the streets.

Another year, I received a book about hundreds of interesting activities and hobbies. I picked one – tropical fish. Since then, there have been few times that I did not have more than one aquarium. I am writing this, sitting in my study, where I have two tanks.

Then there was the rocket. Because I was interested in space and rockets, another Christmas I received a rocket that used water and compressed air. It flew really well outside, not so much inside, leaving a good-sized dent in the kitchen ceiling.

One afternoon Dad was trying to get rid of a salesman who was at the door. He said it was the chemistry set that did the trick. The man had overheard my friend and I talking about what chemicals we needed to add to the mix that would produce a bigger explosion. He couldn't wait to get away from us.

The point is, while my parents did not get as deeply involved in other activities as Dad did with baseball, they managed to create an environment that encouraged me to develop different interests and learn a lot about things that I would not have learned in school.

Neither Mom's parents nor Dad's parents had gone to college. I am not even sure that any of my grandparents had finished high school. Mom had gone to a hospital-based nursing school. Dad had joined the Navy and served on an aircraft carrier during World War II. His mechanic work on the planes in the Navy prepared him to work at American Airlines. Both Mom and Dad had older brothers and sisters, but none of them had gone to college.

When I was in elementary school, two of Mom's younger brothers started college. Both had joined the Navy. The older one, Robert, went to school on the GI Bill after his time in the service. The younger one, Carl, took some type of aptitude test, and the Navy decided to send him to college. He received full-time naval pay, but he was also a full-time student. On those weekends when he went home, he would sometimes stop by our house for a visit. I remember one such visit. He was coming in the door, and said, "Ok smart guy, I have a question for you. What is escape velocity?" I said, "if you want a definition, it is the speed an object has to travel to escape the gravitational pull of the planet on which the object is located. For earth, the escape velocity is 25,000 miles per hour, or 7.25 miles per second." He said, "I should have known. I just learned that last week in physics class." I was in the third grade, eight or nine years old. What can I say? I did read a lot. Both Robert and Carl were huge influences on me. If there had ever been any doubt, because of them, I definitely was going to college.

Through Carl, I also learned that college did not necessarily stop once an undergraduate degree was earned. After a degree at the University of Oklahoma, the Navy sent Carl to Cal Berkeley for a Masters degree, then on to MIT for doctoral work.

What were your interests in high school?

I continued to play baseball and basketball – and read. I became a pretty good roller-skater, and earned 4-H awards for my beef cattle project, and my horticulture project. Our plant identification team took first place at the state fair. I think all four of us on our team scored 100%, but the tie breaker for individual places was spelling, so that meant I came in fourth. I did well at things I thought were important, but spelling wasn't one of those things. Living in the country I also did

some farm work – hauling hay, building fences, clearing brush, splitting wood, shoveling wheat, etc. It was not a lot of work, but enough to know that I did not want to do that for a living.

EDUCATION

Tell me about your experiences getting your undergraduate degree. (i.e. BA/BS, undergraduate degree, college).

After high school I went to Bacone College, where I earned an A.A. degree. My choice of Bacone was not based on academic interests but it was because (1) the college had been established for American Indians, (2) and more importantly, they had one of the best baseball programs in the country. I was a pitcher, but I often said I had made Junior College All American at score keeper (not a thing) because I kept the scorebook a lot more than I actually played. We went to the Junior College World Series my freshman year (43-7 won-loss record). According to scouts we had a better team my sophomore year (28-7 – it rained a lot) but lost 1-0 in the regional finals.

One day at practice we were shagging fly balls. Coach King was talking to a man behind the backstop. We all knew the man was a scout for the Cincinnati Reds. Coach called my name and waved for me to come to meet with them. I was elated. A major league scout wanted to talk to me. Coach introduced us. The scout asked if I was from Claremore, Oklahoma. I said I had played for their American Legion team. He said he wanted to take a look at Ray Bywaters, who played for Claremore high school, and wanted to know if I could give him directions. It was then I decided that perhaps, since the only major league scout who had wanted to talk to me, just wanted driving directions, I needed a back-up plan just in case this major league baseball thing did not work out.

Academically, I won the biology award. I had a couple of fish tanks in my dorm room. I was raising guppies, but wanted to do some selective breeding. I had read that if you treated the water with testosterone then female guppies would take on male characteristics – especially color. Stop treating the water, the male characteristics would go away, with no apparent negative effect on reproduction. This would be a great help in selecting breeders, but where would I get testosterone? I went to our biology instructor, Robert Eyres, told him what I was doing and asked for his assistance. He helped me get the testosterone. So, my independent out-of-class project, and really strong test scores got me the biology award – I didn't even know the school had such an award.

I received my BA degree from Southwest Baptist College. I went there because they had shown an interest in me playing baseball for them. Our team wasn't nearly as good as the one we had at Bacone, but I got to play a lot more. I majored in biology, and because I thought I might teach biology and coach, my advisor suggested that take a second major, health and physical education.

What inspired you to get your master's degree (i.e. MA, MS, MPH, master's degree, college)?

The uncle of the girl I married, basically saw the world was made of two kinds of people. There were physicians, dentists, and attorneys – real people, and then there was everyone else. He strongly encouraged me to become one of the real people. I did consider medical school. I applied to and was accepted at a couple of law schools. When I asked Dr. Rex Brown (he was the head of the health and physical education department – and the baseball coach) for a letter of recommendation for law school. He said he would be glad to do the recommendation, but asked if law school was really something I

wanted to do. I had to admit, I wasn't sure. He asked, what I thought about a career that would allow me to work on a college campus, and do research. He may have mentioned teaching, but research seemed to appeal to me. He had received his doctoral degree from the University of Arkansas, so he encouraged me to take a good look there. I didn't look anywhere else. Almost before I knew it, I was on assistantship at U of A.

Were there professors, mentors or advisors that made an impression on you during this time?

Robert Eyres the biology instructor at Bacone, really encouraged me. Carl Huser was a biology instructor at Southwest. He was also my academic advisor and encouraged me to add the second major in health and physical education. He and Rex Brown were the two people who are most responsible for steering me in the direction of health education. Ron Boutwell was the speech instructor. The things I learned from him I still use in both writing and speaking. At Arkansas, while working on my Masters degree, George Moore, who taught the research methods course, was the person who provided encouragement to pursue a career in research.

Now tell me about your doctorate work. Again, what inspired you to go on, instead of getting a job out of your master's degree (i.e. doctorate, college).

One of the main reasons I decided to work on my doctorate was that I had not secured a college position. When I was applying for positions, I had not yet completed my master's degree, and had zero experience. I thought a doctorate would enhance my college employment chances. I also realized that to do research at the university level, a doctoral degree was a necessity.

What actor or set of actors contributed to your pursuing an academic career and becoming a researcher?

Faculty members who I have mentioned did have an influence, but in some respects, it seemed like a good thing to do while I was figuring out what I really wanted to do when I grew up. During my doctoral work, I, along with a couple of other grad students, without any involvement by faculty, conducted a few projects and published the results. This work was outside of any course or degree requirement. It was fun. I really enjoyed it.

Were there professors, mentors or advisors that made an impression on you during this time?

In my doctoral work at Texas A&M, Linus Dowell made clear that for university faculty, research and publication was the name of the game. Leonard Ponder emphasized the importance of being “a gentleman and scholar.” From Carl Landiss, my chair, I learned the importance of appearance. He and Dr. Ponder would have definitely agreed with the axiom, “dress for success.” Robert Hurley, greatly improved my writing.

What lessons would you say you learned from them that have influenced your educational and professional development?

I’ll mention one. For some time, I thought Robert Hurley must have been the dumbest man on the planet. He would regularly review material I had written. He would always point out one passage or another, and ask, “what do you mean by that?” I would explain it to him – he was obviously not smart enough to figure it out for himself – and then he would always say, “Oh, if that’s what you mean, then why don’t you say that.” I can be a slow learner. It was a few years after I graduated when I finally realized what he was trying to

tell me. Make your writing clear and direct. You should not have to explain what you have written, and most of the time you won’t have that opportunity. Several years later I had the opportunity to visit with him about this. I began the conversation, much like the beginning of this paragraph. “I used to think you were probably the dumbest man on the planet.” You should have seen his face.

Tell me about the relationship you had with your major advisor.

I think I was the last advisee Dr. Carl Landiss had before he retired as Health and Physical Education Department Chair at [Texas] A&M. At that time, I was the youngest person, at 25, to graduate from the PhD program. Doctoral students always chose who they would like to have serve as their advisor. Not me. Dr. Landiss informed me that he would be my advisor. I think he saw that I had potential, but did not trust other younger, less experienced faculty to provide me with the right kind of guidance or to hold me accountable, if I got a little (ok, sometimes a lot) out of line. Understand, this was a distinguished man that faculty did not just respect. They truly feared him. When he walked into a room, 50 or more people may have been actively engaged in conversations, but immediately, there was dead silence. One summer it seemed there was a brief, but fairly intense, afternoon shower, almost every day. I invariably would be caught in the rain, out in the middle of campus, without an umbrella, and soon looked like a drowned rat. Then the rain stopped. The sun came out. Dr. Landiss would suddenly appear, without a raindrop on him. I came to the only logical conclusion, which was, God must have been afraid to let it rain on him.

Tell me about what you studied as a student, and what led you down that path.

I started thinking about a dissertation topic almost as soon as I arrived at A&M. I was interested in both Indian health and enhancing athletic performance. On the first topic, I had written papers, while working on my master's degree, dealing with Indian education and alcohol use among American Indians. I gave the issue of Indian health much thought but could not visualize how I could design a doable study in this area. I had been a college athlete, so was of course interested in improving performance. The first semester at A&M, for a class project I did a lengthy paper on anabolic steroids. Before the semester was over, I decided that this was my dissertation topic. I completed my dissertation and published two articles based on the results. For whatever reason, that was the end of formal research concerning athletic performance, although I have conducted a number of informal studies, a using single subject (me), repeated measures design.

PROFESSIONAL LIFE

Let's move beyond your education time and talk about your career.

What has been your proudest research or other professional accomplishment to date?

I have been pleased with a number of projects, as well as awards and recognitions. I think our work (not just me, but other colleagues have been involved) in adolescent health, especially the Sex Can Wait curriculum series, and the Keep A Clear Mind drug education program, rank high on the list. Institutionally, at the University of Arkansas, I received the Alumni Award (given to faculty by the Alumni Association) for Distinguished Faculty Achievement in Research & Public Service. The Alumni

Award was the highest award faculty could receive. I was also promoted to the honorific rank of University Professor. At the time I was promoted, there were only 12 of us on the entire campus who held this rank.

Were there any projects or studies you thought would lead to something interesting, that just didn't pan out?

I'll mention one. A few years ago, our evaluation team encouraged a non-profit organization to apply for a project that would provide a rigorous evaluation of their teen pregnancy prevention program. We guided the development of the proposal and wrote the proposal's innovative evaluation plan. It was one of 12 projects funded (for about \$5.5 million). We received the evaluation contract, but things just did not click. Even though the funder's project officers made it clear they were impressed with the evaluation work we were doing, the non-profit folks were not. They had no evaluation experience or expertise, but they questioned everything we tried to do. This could have been a great project that would have made a real contribution to the literature, but after about eight months, we were out. We still want to do the project, but need to find the right grantee and the right funding opportunity.

Tell me about your philosophy that guides your research chain of inquiry and your other academic pursuits?

In short; curiosity and opportunity. I ask questions. For example, I wonder about how things work, what factors, that are of interest to me, seem to influence behavior and the decisions people make? How can we help people make decisions that will be of benefit to them and those around them? How do people perceive others? How does new knowledge about a person, influence the way in which other people view that person? What

novel addition can we make to an intervention that will enhance its effectiveness? If we find that an intervention, whether it is one we developed ourselves or one for which we are serving as third-party evaluators, makes a statistically significant difference (and even produces a substantial effect size) in one or more of our outcome variables, will it really have a positive impact on our project participants' long-term (or even short-term) quality of life?

What if funders aren't interested in projects that provide answers to our questions? What are they interested in funding? Can we propose a project, consistent with the funders' priorities, which is of interest to us? Can the project potentially make a contribution to the field? Can we perhaps even build one or more of our questions into the proposal, but still have the focus on what the funder wants? Do we believe we have a reasonable chance of receiving funding? Then, this is an opportunity. If we can't do exactly what we want to do, then we take advantage of existing opportunities.

Note in the previous paragraph I am not using the "royal we." Over the last 10 years the funded projects, with which I have been involved, have been as part of a third-party evaluation team. We find opportunities and work with community organizations to help them develop projects, with a strong evaluation plan, that meets the funders priorities. When the project is funded, our team serves as the outside evaluator.

Inasmuch as you have been successful in disseminating your research, what advice do you have for young professionals who struggle?

I have enough stories and tips about publishing to fill a book, but for this interview let's limit this to one story, and one or two tips. I had two doctoral students who

were working with me on two different writing projects. They each submitted a manuscript to a journal. Even though they submitted to different journals, with different editors they received similar letters regarding their submission. The gist of the letters was that based on the reviewers' comments, the manuscript that had been submitted could not be accepted for publication.

Both editors invited the student to revise her manuscript, taking reviewers' comments into account, and resubmit. The editors were clear, however, there would be no obligation on the part of the journal to accept the revision. The first student was outraged that the reviewers had negative comments about her work and that the editor had decided not to accept her. I walked her through the comments and suggestions – there weren't a lot, and showed her that everything the reviewers wanted, she could provide in a revision. She made the revisions and the journal accepted her manuscript. When the second student received her letter, the reviewer comments were much more extensive. Her reaction? You would have thought she had won the lottery. "They said to revise and resubmit!" She already knew that if she did a good job of addressing the reviewers' concerns, the journal was almost certain to accept her manuscript. That is what happened.

Relatedly, I have visited with several editors about "revise and resubmit" invitations. They all said that the clear majority of authors who receive these invitations do not resubmit. There were a few instances in which the editors were really interested in publishing the manuscript, and finally contacted the authors to ask if they planned to resubmit. The authors said, "No, I didn't think you were interested." The editors asked if the authors had submitted the manuscript elsewhere. The answer was, "No,

since you weren't interested, I didn't think anyone would have an interest.

The moral of the story is, be like the second graduate student. Be happy, and revise and resubmit.

What single best piece of advice would you pass along to a new investigator or student researcher-in-training today?

Develop a good idea of where you want your career to go, and then take steps to make that happen. For example, do you want to have a career at a top-tier research university, with lots of NIH funding, and little if any teaching responsibilities? If that's what you want, then it probably makes good sense to, as a doctoral student, work with faculty who are doing work similar to the work you want to do, and who have already secured substantial NIH funding. Then do a post-doc, again with someone who is doing what you want to do, and who has lots of NIH funding.

What if you want to have a career that does involve substantial research, but is not all research, all the time? Again, it may make sense to work with someone who seems to be doing what you want to do. This person will have published extensively, and will have received external funding, but will not be the person who is solely focused on the next NIH grant.

Describe the most courageous thing you have had to do in your academic career—perhaps something that put you at risk for the sake of standing up for a principle.

This would be the work we did in abstinence education. An AAHB Founding member and Fellow once told me that he, like a lot of other people, had real concerns about Sex Can Wait, our abstinence education curriculum series, until he actually read it. He said “this is a more comprehensive sexuality education program than a lot of the programs that are

promoted as comprehensive.” Conservatives called us “Godless.” Health educators and sexuality educators who didn't know me personally, thought I was an extreme right-wing crazy. The Governor of Arkansas wrote a letter to all our state legislators calling me a liar. At a public meeting a State Representative threatened to beat the crap out of me. We made front-page headlines on that one. That representative also campaigned for reelection saying that we were promoting a curriculum that encouraged young people to avoid pregnancy by engaging in homosexual behavior. Focus on the Family and other conservative groups made complaints to the University about me and about a research project we were conducting. The University President and Provost tried to have the IRB withdraw approval for our study. Their idea was to then have us (colleague Bill Bailey and I) write everyone we had attempted to survey, and apologize to them for trying to involve them in a study that did not have IRB approval. If we did write the apology letters, they could fire us for research misconduct. If we refused to write the letters, they could fire us for insubordination. Fortunately, the Dean of the Graduate School, who oversaw the IRB, and the IRB members stood their ground and refused to withdraw approval.

We documented our concerns about abstinence education and the specific issues noted above, as well as related concerns in two journal articles: (1) Bailey W, Young M, Knickerbocker C, Doan T. A cautionary tale about conducting research on abstinence education: How do state abstinence coordinators define “sexual activity?” *American Journal of Health Education*, 2002;33(5):290-296, and (2) Young M. What's wrong with abstinence education. *American Journal of Health Studies*, 2004;19:148-156.

When your professional career ends, how would you like to be remembered?

Good question. I would like to think that at least some of my work has contributed to the professional literature, and that my work with doctoral students, my willingness to speak out on controversial issues, and our curricula, have made a difference in the lives of young people. Perhaps the people that do remember me, will say, “He did make a difference. The world is a little better because he was here.”

Professionals in any field have been known to say there is a price for success. To what extent has that been your experience in the academic world?

They are right. In my case, I have two divorces to show for it. I can’t really put all the blame on my career, but the fact is that to achieve a high degree of success takes a lot hard work and a lot of time. It doesn’t just happen. You have to make it happen. This leaves less time for family. It is possible to be successful in both arenas. Just like a successful productive research career doesn’t just happen, neither does a successful marriage or family life just take care of itself. Too often, as in my case, spouses and kids are short-changed.

On a related note, most of us could make a lot more money if we took a career avenue outside the academic world. Things were tight for us when I was at Auburn University. At the first of the month, I received my paycheck, paid all of the bills, and nothing was left – nothing – with about 30 days until the next pay day. I tried a number of side hustles to supplement my income. I finally settled on recycling aluminum beer cans. At that time, Coke cans were not made from aluminum. I made a deal with two bars not far from our house. I would take out their trash to their dumpster early every morning, and I could keep whatever was in the trash.

Most weeks I moved 200 pounds of cans. Some days when I arrived, someone else had already taken out the trash. I could still get the cans but had to get in the dumpster to sort things out. On Saturday and Sunday mornings I cleaned up the parking lots at a couple of other bars and sometimes raided their dumpsters. When I had an opportunity to go back to the University of Arkansas as a faculty member, I jumped on it. I didn’t get rich, but at least I didn’t have to go dumpster diving to support my family.

Hopefully, those of you who are reading this have worked at universities that pay you enough to support yourself and your family. I personally think a career at a university that allows you freedom and flexibility to carve out your research/scholarship niche, is a noble calling. For those of us who would like to earn more than our basic university pay, it is often possible to develop entrepreneurship activities that complement our university work.

LIFE OUTSIDE OF ACADEMIA***Who are the people outside of your professional world who have impacted your life and what have some of those impacts been?***

The most impactful has been my wife, Carol. Without her I am not sure what would have become of me.

What are some leisure time activities for which you have a passion?

I love to read and generally have one or more books with me, even when I leave the house. I just finished *The Alexandria Link* by Steve Barry and am currently reading *Say More* by Jen Psaki. I also buy books and sell them online. The biggest percentage mark-up sale was a first edition of *Lonesome Dove*. I bought it for \$1.35 at a Salvation Army thrift

store and sold it in a few hours after posting it on Amazon for \$135. The most profit on a single sale was a set of the complete works of Mark Twain, published in the 1930s. I purchased the set for \$40 and sold it for \$245. Book sales do not comprise a big part of our retirement income, but I do make a few dollars and it is something I enjoy.

Many years ago, when I was a young man of 66, I competed in the Arkansas state body building championships. I was the oldest competitor there. I continue to enjoy working out and lift weights and/or do cardio exercise nearly every day. Additionally, in my opinion, there is little that can beat a day on the river whitewater kayaking/canoeing. Now in my mid 70s, I still have two kayaks, but those days on the river may be behind me.

If you could spend an evening with anyone, living or dead, contemporary character or historical figure, who would it be and what would you want to talk about?

I have thought a lot about this question, for several years, long before there was a Dare to be Wise interview. I finally decided on Jesus. We would talk about: (1) how he sees himself, relative to the way he is presented in the Bible, (2) what he thinks about contemporary religious leaders and organized Christianity, and (3) what he expects of us.

What would you be doing if you had not worked in academia?

What would my career have been, if not what I have been doing? Probably not baseball. I was a good, but not major league caliber, college pitcher. I did get admitted to the law schools to which I applied, but instead went to grad school. I had given thought to concentrating on Indian law, and working on behalf of Native Americans. Perhaps that is what I would have done, civil rights work, mainly with Native Americans.

Which three books outside of academia would you recommend for others to read and why?

I am including *The Bible* on my list of three. There are about 2.4 billion people in the world who claim to follow Christianity and another 18 million Jews. The Bible has probably had a greater impact historically on humanity than any other book. Religiosity has been shown to be related to several health behaviors. So, setting one's personal religious affiliation or beliefs aside, an understanding of this book and religious beliefs, may actually be of some professional value to health behavior researchers. A second book on my list is *Outliers: The Story of Success*, by Malcolm Gladwell. Two key concepts are: (1) The 10,000-hour rule – that is to become truly expert in an area requires 10,000 hours of practice, and (2) Understanding that highly successful people have capitalized on opportunities, advantages, and cultural factors to move beyond much of the competition. The third book is *Framed: Astonishing True Stories of Wrongful Convictions* by John Grisham (one of my favorite authors) and Jim McCloskey. This book should be required reading for everyone, but especially those who work in law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

Share something about yourself that you believe is misunderstood by others.

I think that people who know of me, but don't really know me, if they think about me at all, probably think I am a social and political conservative. That is not the case. I may not be a left-wing extremist, but I am definitely politically left of center.

Editor's note.

Dr. Young was one of the original 33 founders; moreover, he was named a Research Fellow in 1999.

Elbert D. Glover and Robert J. McDermott are the Feature Editors of *Sapere Aude*.