



Because in both cases they were over-generous in investing their considerable expertise in us, in our project. They were *with* us in it.

But there's more... We had a straight-up all-star cast working on this project: John Keller helped us create the "Cape May Motivation Model," Walter Dick provided advice when we were in the course design phase, Roger Kaufman was involved with the needs assessment, James Pershing helped us develop our analysis tools, and many others pitched in, as well. They helped a group of young Coast Guard officers—all recent graduates of their respective programs—to completely redesign the Coast Guard's accession system. Why would they do that?

I think the best answer is that they were *generous professionals*. They believed in what they did, they believed in its efficacy, and they thought it would be of value to share their expertise, their wisdom. It is quite humbling, even now, to consider their generosity.

I'll be honest, I do not default to that type of professional generosity, but it is something to which I aspire.

Time has passed, and I have no idea what is going on with that system we designed today. But I know this: the generosity of those giants made our solutions demonstrably better than they would otherwise have been. I am so thankful to have been mentored, if only for a moment, by such experts.

But, lest you think I am just reminiscing here, I have a more direct purpose in this essay:

I propose that you and I commit to a generous professionalism. I'm not talking about "giving back" (though that is appropriate), I'm talking about a paradigm shift—a professional lifestyle—a way of conducting ourselves not primarily because of duty, but because of the joy of it.

What if we all were generous with our time and our expertise? I could provide many specific ideas for action, but won't. I will simply say this, what we do as instructional designers is great, the expertise we develop over time is valuable, there are great things to be done with it.

It is wonderful when giants stoop to help, but it is also good when we do. I sometimes wonder, were they giants because they stooped, or was it their habit of stooping to help others that made them giants?