

# Profile essay



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Austin Stradinger Writing Profile Feb 6th, 2012 ENG101 Life is a Lesson “

Whatever the day brings you, is a day to be thankful for and make the most of. There’s no one event that’s ever put me on a different course, one that I can say really turned the boat around. ” -Ron Stradinger There were thousands of questions on my mind as I got off work and lugged myself to the residence of my boss. Instead of nervously answering questions, I was preparing to engage in my first interview where I asked them. But, as I walked into his entry and unlaced my leather boots, interview questions were least on my mind.

Instead, my mind was full of self-doubting, nervous questions persistently shaking the foundation of my confidence. “ Do I have the right questions? ”, “ How will he respond? ”, “ What if he doesn’t like the essay? ”, or my biggest wonder, “ How can I translate the most influential person I know, onto paper? ” I have known of my boss’ passion for carpentry and construction since the day I met him, but what I wanted to know was, how this passion was brought forth? I walked through the kitchen towards the living room; the freshly cooked food did nothing to slow my racing mind.

In less than five steps I made my way through the middle of the living room, to seat myself on a loveseat, under any other circumstances I would have been extremely comfortable, but my blood pressure was far too high to be thinking of a couch. Across from me, waiting for his grandson, was a father, grandfather, pastor, and master carpenter, Ron Stradinger. 2 2 The first twins, Ron Stradinger was born alongside his sister Ellie on May 16th, 1947 in the small hospital of Mobridge, SD. The proud parents of four children,

Otto and Lydia Stradinger were local farm owners in the small town of Isabel, SD.

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Being born to small farm owners, Ron loved the outdoors. When asked about his favorite hobby as a young man, he quickly responded “ I loved “ hunting and fishing all around home”, and then as he came to age, “ I worked out on the farm since I was old enough to push in a clutch on our old Ford tractor. ” After reviewing these two statements, it is obvious that Ron spent more time out of doors than in. Ron worked on his family’s farm until he graduated from Isabel High School in 1965. After graduation, Ron Stradinger’s original plans were to attend Bible College to obtain his degree in Ministry.

Life threw him a curveball when he was drafted into the United States’ Air Force where he was an air traffic controller after only two years of school. “ I crammed a four year degree into twelve” he said, but Ron loved his occupation in the Air Force and had a four year career until the Vietnam War ended and the military began downsizing. Because of timing issues with his release from the Air Force, he unfortunately lost his chance to land another air traffic control position. Therefore, after being released from the Air Force, Ron went back to Bible College and obtained his degree in Ministry.

Graduating college brought many changes.

Ron Stradinger did not use his degree in Ministry immediately after graduation. Instead, he went directly into construction, commercial construction to be exact. Instead of choosing what to work on, as a young man in the construction business, Ron was working underneath his

employers on the tasks they assigned. While working in commercial construction, Ron faced many different challenges, but also benefited from his time there. When working in any construction environment there is usually danger involved, Ron Stradinger said “ There was plenty of times where I was almost seriously injured or even killed while working”.

Ron recalled a story to me of one occasion where he was almost killed; working on a commercial sized grain bin made of concrete blocks plastered together. Over sixty feet high on scaffolding, hanging from the wall of the grain bin, Ron was assigned the task of plastering in each concrete block. The concrete blocks were lifted to him via crane and he was required to guide them into place along the top of the grain bin. After guiding in a large concrete block into place, the crane began to move away. As the crane moved from the side of the grain bin, it knocked against Ron’s scaffolding, causing it to teeter and partially fall.

As the scaffolding teetered, Ron fell and was barely able to catch himself from falling over sixty feet to his death. Still, Ron loves construction and has remained in the field to this day. 3 3 While working in commercial construction, Ron Stradinger acquired the knowledge and experience he needed to move away from the commercial industry. Using the knowledge he gained over years of commercial construction, Ron decided to obtain the certification required to teach high school students the craft of building trades and construction.

Teaching construction to high school students was tedious and stressful for him. Students were not interested in the craft and Ron knew it. The students

lacked effort and passion, no matter how much effort he put forth, Ron could not instill his own passion for construction into his students. It became apparent to him that his students did not have the same knack for the outdoors as he himself did as a young man. This caused Ron to end his teaching career short and instead, venture into uncharted waters, small business.

At the age of 60, Ron Stradinger knew it was a long shot to start a small business so late in life. Starting a small business is no easy task. When asked what some of the stresses of owning his own small business were, Ron explained the difficulties of finding and bidding work, how hard it is to consistently please customers with the bids he offers, the different shortcuts he has to take to match what his customers prefer to pay, and especially the problems it could cause his family if he is unable to “make ends meet” and pay his finances.

It nearly brought tears to my eyes when Ron said, “I just want to help my grandson go to college”. Through his own tribulations of owning a small business, Ron is worried about helping his grandson pay for college. 4 4 Though owning his own small business may be a grueling experience, Ron Stradinger has successfully started Stradinger & Sons Construction and has been in operation for the past four years.

Capable of working his own hours, vacationing when he prefers, working on projects he prefers, and dealing with clientele he prefers, it is obvious Ron has the ability to choose his own preferences with his work. Also, Ron claims owning his own small business brings joy and satisfaction to his life, it is

something of his own, he is in control of every aspect and it brings forth a powerful feeling of satisfaction. In my own opinion, this is how everyone's career should end.

Being capable of looking back on one's life and seeing thousands of projects that he himself worked on and completed is exactly what brings joy to Ron Stradinger. In closing I asked Ron if he has any regrets or things he wished he could change, in response he said " I don't have any regrets, there's always things that you would do different or change if you ever could go back and do them, but you just don't dwell on them. We learn from the past, and don't make the mistakes again if they were mistakes, or if they were good how can we improve on them? So regrets? No, I don't have any. Life is a lesson. "