

Erin Brill

Mr. Speice

Independent Study and Mentorship 3B

2 February 2018

Interview Assessment #8

Name of Professional: Robert Ackerman Ph.D.

Profession/Title: Associate Professor

Business/Company Name: University of Texas at Dallas

Date of Interview: December 1, 2017

On December 1, 2017, I conducted a phone interview with Dr. Ackerman of the University of Texas at Dallas. Dr. Ackerman was very friendly and seemed genuinely interested in helping me with my ISM journey. Although he was quite amiable, this phone interview was not as helpful as the face-to-face interviews because it was not in-person and it was relatively short. However, I was still able to learn a lot from him.

I started the interview off by asking Dr. Ackerman about his daily responsibilities as an associate professor. He told me that he conducts research, teaches, attends conferences, and serves on committees. This all sounds appealing to me. I love working in laboratories and I like teaching students. I am currently employed as a math instructor at Mathnasium, and I enjoy teaching the students there. I can only imagine how much better it would be to teach a course

that you are passionate about. He said he loves the autonomy present in his job. He currently teaches graduate statistics at the university.

I also inquired about the best qualities for someone interested in a medical research field. Dr. Ackerman recommends being conscientious, loyal, systematic, and genuinely curious. I personally believe that I fit this description. I have a strong work ethic and have so many questions that I want to answer about how the human body and brain work.

It is always nice to hear advice from a professional who has been through high school and college. In regards to high school, Dr. Ackerman told me to start looking into summer internships at universities in order to get my foot in the door for future research opportunities. I have decided to follow Dr. Ackerman's advice. I am currently applying for a summer research opportunity at UT Southwestern. As for college and graduate school, he told me to make the most of it and take opportunities, but not to overload myself. He told me to be persistent, even in the face of tough work and long hours.

After reading a little bit about Dr. Ackerman's work on the UTD website, I decided to ask him about it over the phone in order to gain a greater understanding of his current and past projects. Dr. Ackerman told me that he works primarily as a personality psychologist. This interested me because my original work is a personality study. He looks at how personality traits change and impact relationships over time. He is also looking into narcissism and antagonistic traits.

During the interview, I told Dr. Ackerman about my original work idea and I asked him for advice. He told me to use the most accurate personality test that I could find. Specifically, he recommended the Big Five personality assessment. He also told me that it was going to be

difficult to avoid survey bias, but to attempt a random sample selection. His recommendation to use the Big Five personality assessment matched with the recommendations of the other professors I talked to, so I decided to follow that advice and look into that personality test.

Overall, this interview went pretty well. It was short, but I was still able to learn a lot from Dr. Ackerman. I look forward to following his advice and seeing the outcome of my original work.