

**Joel Grow, Graduate Student, Clinical Psychology, University of Washington**

JG: So, I'm Joel Grow and I'm a grad student here at the University of Washington in clinical psychology.

KVH: Cool. Can you tell us your path to becoming a grad student in clinical psychology?

JG: Yeah. Within clinical psychology people tend to have um, pretty different set of backgrounds so people tend to be a little older um and so I'm even older than average so I had a whole separate career before this. I worked as a computer software engineer and my undergraduate work was actually in computer science and math, through that process it's, I don't know how to say this eloquently, so I, after working at Amazon for a bunch of years doing software development, I decided to go to grad school and so I came to the University of Washington in a masters program for computer science cause I wanted to study um, ways that people use technology so kinda getting it more out into the world, so it could be things like social media, could be things like um, robots. There are all kinds of interesting applications of computer technology and so I started that program and it was pretty interesting and while I was here on campus I actually met a professor in psychology and after talking with him for a while about psychology it ended up matching my interest a lot more than the computer stuff I'd been doing at that time so it actually became a natural transition to switch over to psychology.

KVH: Did you switch from your masters program to a PhD program then?

JG: Yeah I did, although that makes it sound a lot faster than it actually was.

KVH: It's really slowly - yeah we had somebody who did the same thing.

JG: Oh, ok, there were a couple of years for me involved there, so yeah so there was um, the, so I met the professor and um, this is not very coherent. So I ended up um, as part of my work in the computer field before coming to graduate school I did a lot of teaching and I actually taught through the University of Washington computer classes for adults, um out in the community, so I was really interested in how to do something that is out in the world that was kinda my goal. Like I love research, I like science, I kinda like the nuts and bolts of math and even computer work but I also wanted to find a way to be out there in the world doing it. And, so I kinda had teaching as the overarching theme - I had the computer thing that I'd been doing, which was really fun but it was a little bit too, kind of, me and the computer. I kinda wanted to find a way to get more out there in the world doing it. And fortunately there are a lot of ways to do that and at the same time, with all of that, I had been developing my own mindfulness practice outside, just on my own, and when I talked to this professor in psychology, he said hey you can actually study mindfulness, and do it in a way that gets out there in the community working with people. And there's a very rigorous science to it. So it really met all these criteria that I was hoping for, so I had to then go back and go take classes in psychology - as an undergrad - um after I already finished my first degree. So it took a couple of years in there for me to switch from one to the other.

KVH: I find it really interesting in grad school that you can bring in other disciplines and uses of methodologies or ideas into, probably like clinical psychology and also learning and things that we study. It's fascinating.

JG: Definitely, no I think that's absolutely right. The field of psychology broadly, just to stay within this discipline, you know behind me, we have the psychology building with all the faculty members. And we have people that studying everything from bird song to autism to addictive behaviors and PTSD. And you've got um, you know, the brain. There's people that spend their whole time studying neurons. I mean it's really broad and that if I want to go work with one of those people, it's not a problem and that's just within and like you said I could also go outside of this department and we do all the time so it's um, the interdisciplinary work is really interesting. yeah.