



Psychology Lessons That Transcend Generations

In his seminar Personal and Social Change, psychology professor Albert Bandura talks about his famous theory of self-efficacy—how people's beliefs in their capabilities affect their lives—but also about how a chance encounter can forever alter someone's existence.

Sitting beside the window in the spring-quarter course was a man, his beard dappled with grey, whose journey illustrates both phenomena. Ricardo Muñoz left the foothills of Peru for San Francisco's Mission District when he was just 10. Hard work, perseverance and the encouragement of his father, who had a sixth-grade education, led him to Stanford.

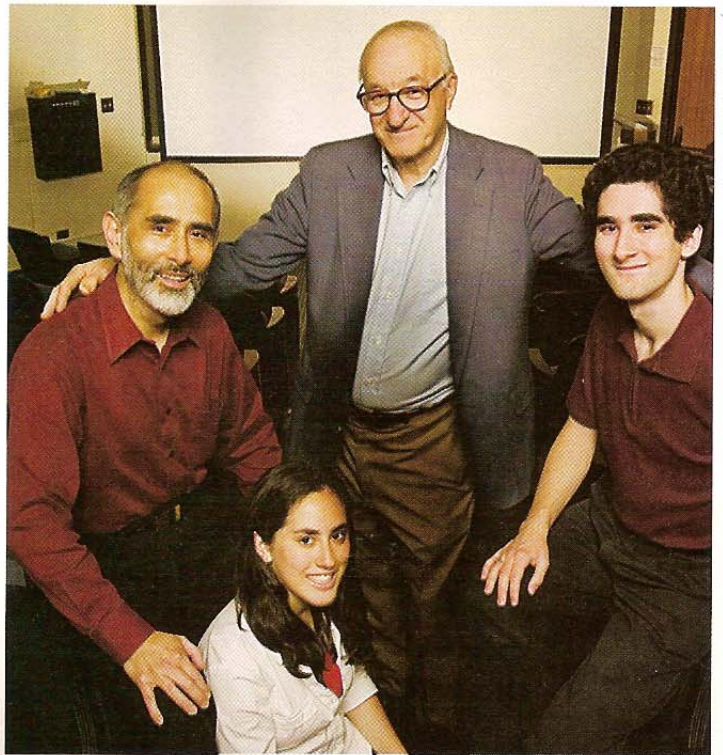
There Muñoz, '72, happened to meet Bandura. After another professor had declined to supervise his honors thesis, the young man was walking down the hallway and saw Bandura sitting at his desk with his door open. Muñoz approached the eminent psychologist and found a thesis adviser and lifelong influence.

These tales and the power of Bandura's ideas were familiar to two other members of Bandura's seminar: Muñoz's children, Rodrigo, '05, and Aubrey, '08. Growing up, they say, they internalized the concept of self-efficacy. When Rodrigo, a psychology major who graduated in June, enrolled in Bandura's seminar, his father and sister decided to join him—33 years after Ricardo had first taken the seminar. "It's such a pleasure for them both to hear it from the man who taught it to me," he says.

The kids sat beside their father in the packed seminar room and nudged him when they heard ideas that sounded like those they were raised on. Rodrigo wrote a paper, "Memoirs of a Guinea Pig," about his parents' use of psychology tenets. Take the theory that it's easier to master a big task if you break it into subtasks. When the Muñoz children were young, dinnertime included a game-like practice of

analogies in preparation for an exam years away: the SAT. When the time came, Rodrigo and Aubrey earned perfect verbal scores.

Muñoz uses what he learned from Bandura in his professional life, too. After earning a PhD at the University of Oregon, he became a professor at UC-San Francisco and chief psychologist at San Francisco General Hospital. He specializes in the prevention and treatment of depression and its impact on other public health issues. One current project is a smoking-cessation program offered online in Spanish and English.



FULL CIRCLE: Muñoz, left, returned to take a seminar from Bandura, top, this time with his kids.