

Twenty-Seven IFs in Life on My Path to Becoming a Teacher The First In-between Year - A New Direction and Six IFs

Water Polo Invisibility Erased

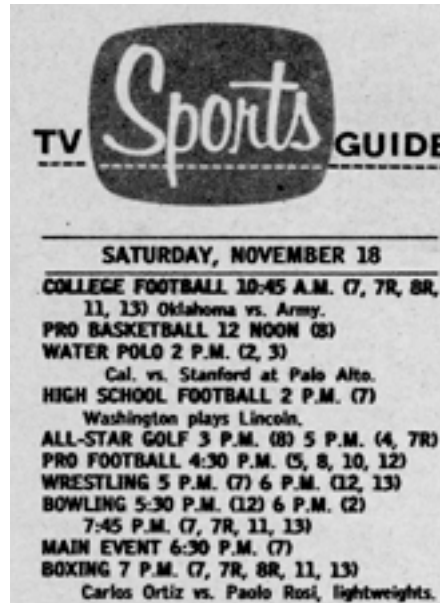
When I was a Junior, there was not a single photo of Stanford's Varsity Water Polo team in that year's Stanford Yearbook. There had also not been a Freshman water polo team to provide replacements for our graduating Seniors.

In my Senior year, our team gained visibility by being included in the Fall Quarter Events calendar, having its games reported on in the Stanford Daily newspaper, and, of course, appearing in that year's Yearbook. A Freshman team now existed and would provide quality replacements for our year's graduating Seniors, of which I was supposed to have been one.

As I indicated in the previous section, the reason I wanted to remain at Stanford for my fifth year was, first and foremost, to play on the same varsity water polo team as my brothers Jack and Bill. However, I also knew that three brothers in the starting lineup of a varsity team would be a publicity department's dream scenario – a definite invisibility eraser.



The three Lortons on the Varsity even caused the Saturday, November 18th, Stanford - California water polo game to be televised – a first for Stanford water polo.



The biggest burst of visibility was Stanford's 1962 Yearbook. There were Varsity and Freshman team pictures and action shots included, of course. However, the biggest burst of visibility was the two-page full-color spread of the Stanford Water Polo team in action that headed the Yearbook's entire Sport Section.



Pictured in the Yearbook's photo are the three Lorton brothers. Jack is the person in all that splashing water. I am the person in the dark hat, arm raised, waiting for the arrival of the ball. Bill is at the far right with his head turned towards me.

Also pictured in the dark hat facing me at the far end of the pool is Pete Pettigrew. Pete is the player from Bill's Freshman team that I said I would mention in this section. Pete was an excellent swimmer who had never played water polo before, but turned out to be a water polo playing natural. He is also someone you can see in the first Top Gun movie. Pete was a Top Gun Pilot in the Navy and was the Top Gun advisor for that Tom Cruise film. After Kelly McGillis rebuffs Tom Cruise in the bar scene, she walks away to sit in a booth with an older gentleman. That older gentleman is our friend Pete in his Top Gun cameo. It turns out there were four future Naval officers splashing about in that picture.

Stanford Number One

In Bill's Freshman year, his team was made up of the players selected from the many Freshmen who responded to the posters I put up in their dorms. The Freshman team the next year was the product of great recruiting. The two best players on that undefeated Freshman team were George Stransky at goalie and Marty Hull at center forward. Both were soon to be the best college players at their positions in the country. When Bill was a Senior, his Stanford Water Polo team was the Number One team in the country. Invisibility now erased completely.

Junior National AAU Championship

As I mentioned in the [Jim Gaughran's IFs for Me](#) section, the Olympic Club affiliation that Jim brought with him to Stanford ensured a water polo life for me long after graduation. As a result of that affiliation, I spent most of the evenings in the Summer following my graduation training with the Olympic Club Water Polo team at Stanford.

Teams that had not placed in the top three at any past national tournament had to go through qualifying rounds to earn a seeding in any current tournament. In that summer, the Junior National AAU Championship was being held at Stanford. While our team was the Olympic Club team and earlier versions of the team had placed in national tournaments, no one on our current team had even competed nationally. Placing in the top three in this tournament would give us the opportunity to gain automatic seeding in future national tournaments.

A Change in Positions

During water polo practices at Stanford that Fall, I had often voluntarily played goalie for our shooting drills. There were two ends of the pool

with a water polo cage at each end, but we only had one goalie. I decided to fill the spot at the empty end of the pool. Jim didn't ask me to do it, and I have no explanation for why I quite often simply chose to put myself in that goalie position. I just liked doing it.

I made a game out of it. For example, if there were eight players arrayed in a line in front of me, parallel with the cage I was defending, I would say to them, "Only two of you will score." The challenge for them was to have more than two of their group of eight score. Each of the eight then took his turn to shoot, and generally, they scored no more times than I said they would. The number I gave them for how many would score was not just a random number I made up. I based the number on who was doing the shooting and from what angle. I knew which players were more accurate. I also knew the players not directly in front of me were much less likely to score because of the angle of their shot.

In the [High School - Senior Year – The Best Year](#) section of this chapter, I listed three names of note of people I met at the Olympic Club who would play a role in my future water polo life. Jim Gaughran was one of the three. The second of the three was Art Lambert. Art was now a local high school coach. He was also assisting Jim that Summer.

What Art told me while I was training with the Olympic Club for the Junior Nationals that Summer was that I should consider a change in positions. I should switch to playing goalie. I mentioned earlier that one of the players who was a Freshman when Bill was a Sophomore was George Stransky, who I also said was soon to be the best college player at his position in the country. George was also our Olympic Club goalie.

Art's suggestion that I switch to goalie was not because the Olympic Club was looking for a better goalie. We both knew there was no better goalie than George Stransky. Art's suggestion was made simply because he thought I would be a rather good goalie. Without Art's suggestion, it never would have occurred to me that I should be a goalie, even though I had frequently put myself in that position.

Since I had on my own frequently appointed myself as goalie during drills anyway, I decided I would give being a goalie a try. I began training myself as a goalie at the pool where I was now working daily as an age-group coach, lifeguard, and pool manager. When I felt I was ready, I went to Jim and asked him to take me off the A-Team and put me on the B-Team for the upcoming Junior Nationals Tournament.

The B-Team I was asking to join was not the B-Team I mentioned in the [College - Senior Year](#) section of this chapter. That B-Team was composed of players who had already completed their college year of

eligibility. The B-Team for which I was asking to be goalie was not even an Olympic Club team. It could not be an Olympic Club team because all its players were still in high school and too young to be Olympic Club members. The name Jim had given that team was Stanford Hills. For the Junior Nationals, I would be the Stanford Hills team goalie.

High school players were part of Jim's Summer program because both he and his brother Bob (Bill's high school coach) were interested in building water polo as a sport at all levels. The team I had now placed myself on was about to compete in the Junior Nationals against some of the best college-level teams in the country. We were most assuredly going to be trounced. So, my first time playing goalie would be for one game only, since we would not make it past the first game we played in the tourney.

Even though I had taken myself off the A-Team and put myself on a team for which a first-round loss was guaranteed, I was really looking forward to seeing how I would do as an actual goalie and not just a pretend one in shooting practices. The guarantee of our losing our one and only tournament game was that the team we ended up being assigned to play was the Olympic Club A-Team, where the very worst player on their team was better than the very best player on ours.

A Goalie and Eventually Another Very Big IF

We lost the game, of course. However, I really did enjoy playing goalie. After the game, I was surprised by how many coaches from other teams approached me and asked me to join their teams as a goalie. The two most notable offers were from the actual Olympic Club B-Team (not then being coached by Jim) and the Inland-NuPike team.

Inland-NuPike was a Southern California team that we regarded as our chief rival in our quest to become the team selected to represent the USA at the 1964 Olympics. USC's First-Team All-League center forward Charlie Bittick was on that team. Bob Horn, the team's coach, had himself been an outstanding goalie in college. He had also played goalie for the USA Team in both the 1956 and 1960 Olympics. For an outstanding goalie like Bob Horn to invite me to join his team as a goalie told me for sure that I really was a goalie.

I was pleased with all the offers, but I would be in Law School at the end of the Summer. The Stanford pool was the best pool for keeping in shape while I was learning to be a lawyer. The Olympic Club and Stanford Hills were the most convenient teams for me to practice with, especially since I was now definitely the Stanford Hills goalie.

Now What?

I had delayed both my graduation and my admission to Law School to play water polo on the same college team with my brothers Bill and Jack. The delay was one hundred percent worth it. But now what? I was out of school in December, and my classes would not start until September.

There was a possibility that I could be drafted into the military during that January-August time period. My brother Paul had been drafted into the Army quite soon after he graduated. My Draft Board had already required me to take my pre-induction physical in preparation for being drafted. I could not claim a student deferment during that eight-month period because I was not enrolled anywhere as a student. I did let my Draft Board know that I had received my acceptance letter for Stanford Law School in January for classes starting in September. While the Board did not grant me a formal student deferment, it seemed to me that the Board was simply granting it informally. But “it seemed to me” was not a one-hundred percent guarantee that I would not be drafted.

My plan then was to keep driving the Castilleja school bus, of course, and working out at Stanford every day for water polo and getting in shape for the Army. Although my collegiate water polo career had ended, my continued affiliation with the Olympic Club had set my sights on the 1964 Olympic Trials. My Army training consisted of daily long-distance and stadium stair running. Being in good shape for water polo was not the same as being in good shape for Army boot camp.

Get a Job – a Very Big IF

I figured my Castilleja school bus job would be all I needed to do before Summer rolled around, and I ended up lifeguarding somewhere. An hour’s worth of driving, then the rest of the day spent exercising and just hanging out, was a great use of my time. My father had a different plan for me. He told me to get a job. Law School was coming up, and he said he was not going to be helping me out financially if I wasn’t going to contribute anything myself.

Change of plans. I told Coach Jim I was looking for work. Thanks to Jim, I had three job offers within a week. I do not remember what the other two jobs were. I do know they would have been lifeguarding or teaching swimming or something else swimming related. That’s the kind of thing local enterprises would be looking for when contacting the Stanford Swimming Coach.

The job I took was that of an assistant age-group swimming coach for the San Mateo Elks Club. I had taught swimming before, but I had never coached it. The purpose of teaching a child to swim is to provide that child with a skill he or she does not already have. Coaching means

taking a skill a child already possesses and making it a whole lot better. The head coach and my boss for this job was Gaston DeGara.

Gaston DeGara (Gus)

A lesson in History. In October 1956, a student demonstration in Budapest, Hungary, morphed into an uprising against the Russian-backed Communist Government. In November, Russian planes, tanks, and infantry moved in to crush the uprising.

At that time, the Hungarian water polo team, of which Gus was a member, was in a mountain training camp above Budapest. They could hear the gunfire and see smoke rising. The Summer Olympics in Melbourne, Australia, took place in December. Although the uprising had failed, you would not have known it when the Hungarian water polo team played the Russians there. The match was so violent that there was literally blood in the water. A picture of one of the bloodied players appeared in newspapers and magazines throughout the world. The match was called off before it concluded. The Hungarians were declared the victors since they were already ahead four goals to nothing. The Hungarian team went on to win the gold.

After the water polo competition was over, many of the players on the Hungarian team defected to Canada, Gus among them. In 1958, Gus immigrated to California and had been coaching swimming since his arrival. Gus also joined the San Francisco Olympic Club and was one of their better water polo players. It was Gus's Olympic Club connection that prompted him to ask Jim's help in finding him an assistant coach for his Elks Club team.

Gus needed an assistant because he was also coaching an age-group swimming team for the Redwood City Swimming and Tennis Club. This was Gus's first season as coach and director of the Elks Club's swimming program, and I was to be his assistant at both Elks Club positions, with lifeguarding added to the mix.

The Other Two Gus IFs

The very big IF in my life that Gus's hiring me was responsible for will be revealed later in this chapter. Gus was responsible for two other IFs, as well. When Art Lambert suggested to me that I should consider playing goalie, I knew I was missing an essential skill for playing that position that didn't reveal itself when I played goalie for our shooting drills. I did not know how to do the special kick that goalies use. If I wanted to be an actual goalie, that kick I didn't know how to do was essential.

I knew Gus had earned his master's degree in swimming and water polo at Budapest University, so I asked him to teach me that special kick,

which he, of course, did. With Gus as my teacher, I practiced the kick extensively at the Elks Club before declaring myself ready to give playing goalie a try. Had Gus not shown me the kick and had I not had several weeks to practice it, I would not have made the switch to goalie so successfully. That switch to goalie would end up having a major effect on both Mary's and my lives.

The second of the two IFs would not be apparent until my first week aboard the USS Midway. In the first [USS Midway CVA-41](#) section of [Chapter 3 - The Four Years In-Between](#), there is an [Engineering or Deck](#) sub-section. In that section, I explain how my having been Gus's assistant let me choose to be a Deck Division officer rather than receive the Engineering Division assignment that was supposed to be my fate. Deck instead of Engineering was to be a very big IF in my life, for which Gus was directly responsible.

A Busy Summer

My father had told me to get a job. I definitely had one now. Through the months of February and March, I spent my afternoons learning my eventual Elks Club duties and, more specifically, about coaching age-group swimmers. From April through September, I worked full-time, seven days a week, as the Elks Club swim coach, lifeguard, and assistant pool director. I had a total of four days off that Summer so I could participate in the Junior Nationals Water Polo Tournament. From June through the end of August, four or five evenings each week were spent working out with the Olympic Club water polo team at Stanford.

Age-Group Swimming Team and the Lap-Timer

When I first began assisting Gus, the whole team worked out as a single group in the afternoons after school. The problem with this was that the level of swimming talent in the group was too diverse. The team was composed of any child of an Elks Club member who wanted to join, regardless of that child's level of competitive skill.



As one example of the skill disparity, at that point in time, lap timers like the one shown above were used to pace workouts. A lap timer is a stand-alone device, three or four feet tall and visible to all swimmers. The lap timer is used to control the workout. Assume a thirty-swimmer group divided into six groups of five. Each six-person group is placed in its own lane. This workout requires each swimmer to swim a series of fifty yards (two lengths of the pool) with each fifty-yard swim to begin at intervals of a minute and a half. The first person in each group of five begins swimming when the lap timer is started. When the red hand reaches the fifteen-second mark, the next group starts. At the thirty-second mark, group three begins. At the forty-five-second mark, group four begins, and finally, at the sixty-minute mark, group five begins.

The swimmers may be told, for example, to complete their fifty-yard swim in thirty seconds, which would then give them a minute's rest before starting their next fifty-yard swim. Each returning group starts its next fifty-yard swim when its minute and a half is up. The first group starts its second fifty at the thirty-second mark, and so on.

The black hand on the clock measures the minutes of the workout. Assuming the workout is to consist of a set of twenty minute and a half fifties, then when the black hand reaches the thirty-minute mark, that particular lap timer portion of the workout has been completed once all the groups have completed their last fifty.

The Morning Team

As I said earlier, the problem with the Elks Club team was that the level of swimming talent was too diverse. Imagine a swimmer who, when asked to swim fifty yards in thirty or even forty seconds, takes a minute or more to complete that first fifty. It will not be long before that swimmer will not complete his or her fifty in the minute and a half allowed and must start each new fifty with no rest in between. This swimmer will now be swimming endlessly. The swimmers in each lane are theoretically separated from one another by their fifteen-second intervals. However, the better swimmers now have to keep swimming around the endless swimmers who will be clogging their lanes.

I said, "Imagine a swimmer," but this problem was not imaginary. My assignment as Gus's assistant coach was to take care of this problem. "Take care of" did not mean make every slow swimmer magically faster. "Take care of" meant that, once school was out, those slower swimmers and I would have our own separate workout in the mornings before the pool was open to club members. My morning swimmers would now no longer be lane cloggers and would only see Gus in a coaching capacity at our swim meets.

Chase Races

I am not sure what Gus expected me to do with my swimmers. I had the lap timer, of course, but no coaching instructions. I was of the opinion that Gus cared not the slightest bit what kind of workouts I conducted. He just needed the children who had signed up for the team but who didn't have the level of competitive skill needed to be a useful team member to be out of his practices.

A simple rule of thumb – if it's not working, then stop doing it. Obviously, the swimmers who were now my responsibility could not do that lap-timer drill, so I abandoned it. Instead, I introduced my swimmers to a drill I made up that I called "chase races".

Let's assume there are twenty-four swimmers divided into six groups of four, with each group placed in its own lane. When I say "Go!" the first swimmer in each group begins swimming one length of the pool as fast as he or she can. Two seconds after I say "Go!" to the first group of swimmers, I say "Go!" to the second group. Then, another two seconds and the third group gets a "Go!". Then the fourth group gets its "Go!"

What I tell the children in advance is that if they can touch the foot of the swimmer ahead of them in their lane, they get to take that swimmer's place in the starting order for the next chase race. The first swimmer in each group swims as fast as possible to keep his or her foot from being touched. Each swimmer, in turn, swims as fast as possible both to touch the person's foot ahead of them and to keep from being touched by the person chasing them from behind.

After the children sprint one length of the pool while chasing each other, we change the starting order based on the foot-touching and chase race the length of the pool again. We then rest for a minute or so and do another set of back-to-back chase races.

A question that arose once we began the races was, what happens when person number two touches person number one's foot and person number three touches person number two's foot in the same race? Answer: Person number three takes the first position for the next race, and the original person number one moves into the third position.

I adjusted the groups each day. An example of an adjustment – after a few races, the swimmers in fourth place end up not touching anyone else's foot and give up trying to catch anyone. The following day, I would put these slower swimmers in the same group. Now, at least three out of four, if not all four of these slower swimmers, will once again be capable of foot-touching.

I don't know if what I was doing in the chase race drill is obvious. The lap timer workout was to have swimmers complete a fifty-yard (two laps of the pool) swim in thirty or forty seconds and then rest for the time left in the minute and a half swimming cycle. What I was now doing was have my morning swimmers sprint twenty-five yards, rest briefly while deciding the new group order and then sprint the other half of the fifty yards. We would then rest for a minute or two before repeating the cycle.

Sprinting up and back was getting my swimmers in really good shape. As their conditioning improved, I shortened the rest time between our back-to-back races so that the total time we were taking from one set of races to the next one was a minute and a half. We were sprinting down, sprinting back, and resting for at least a minute. Now, we no longer had any lane cloggers.

The chase races are just one example of the different drills I made up to take the place of the drills Gus was using that my swimmers could not do well enough. The drills Gus had been using were the same ones I had used as a swimmer. They had worked just fine for me when I was a swimmer, but I wasn't a swimmer now. I was a coach, and as a coach, it was up to me to find ways that worked with my swimmers.

The Swimming Meets

As I said earlier, my swimmers would now only see Gus in a coaching capacity at our swim meets. That was not important to them. What was important to them was the swimming meets.

For each race, ribbons were awarded for the first, second, and third-place finishers. The ribbons were nice, but my focus as a coach was not on whether any of my swimmers won ribbons. My focus was on each of my swimmers' ability to better his or her previous best time. I carried a clipboard with me at the meets. On that clipboard, I had every one of my swimmers' best times in each event. At the end of each of my swimmers' races, I would let that swimmer know how he or she had done compared with his or her previous best times.

My swimmers were not competing with anyone but themselves. Focusing on their times and not on the ribbons allowed every one of my swimmers to feel a sense of accomplishment, regardless of the place that child finished in the race. My focus was not on each child's winning, but on each child's bettering himself or herself. With the focus on continually bettering one's best, my swimmers rarely won a first, but seconds and thirds soon became commonplace.

In earlier years, the Elks Club conducted its own end-of-season novice meet. The purpose of the novice meet was to give all the swimmers on

the Club's team who had not earned ribbons the opportunity to compete among themselves for end-of-season ribbons. This year, no novice meet was conducted because all but two swimmers on the morning and evening teams had won ribbons in league meets that Summer. The two non-ribbon swimmers had only joined the team in mid-July.

Gus was impressed that my morning swimmers were doing so well at the meets. His view of them was not at all positive when he sent them to me. He told me that he felt he really should come to one of my morning practices to see what I had been doing. He never came.

I Loved Coaching and Interacting with Children

To say I loved coaching would be an understatement. My Castilleja bus driver job ([College-Senior Year](#) section of this chapter) allowed me to learn that I was good at changing behavior. But changing behavior is not the same thing as changing how children feel about themselves.

It was obvious to the children who were sent to me for my morning practices why they had been sent there. They were there because they were not good enough to be on Gus's team. However, once the swimming meets started and the morning and evening groups were one team together at the meets, the morning team could now show the evening team (and Gus as well) they were not the losers that Gus thought they were when he sent them away. They felt really good about themselves, and I felt really good about myself for having brought about that feeling.

I mentioned earlier that I worked full-time, seven days a week at the Elks Club. I should also add that I never minded having no days off. I loved my job. I loved coaching. However, coaching was just my early morning job. As both lifeguard and pool director, I was at the pool all day long. And all day long, I loved my interactions with all the children, not just the ones I coached.

I could practice changing behavior there, too. A little boy named Mike was constantly being benched for his misbehavior. After observing him for a while, I could see why he was always getting into trouble, and it was something easy for me to fix. I told the older of his two sisters that the next time Mike got in trouble, I would bench her instead. She said that I was being unfair, but she knew that I meant it. Mike was never again benched that Summer. He was also voted the most improved swimmer on the Elks Club team.

There was a five-year-old girl who was a very good swimmer, but she was afraid to jump off the diving board. I knew this because Gus was the person her parents asked to get her to jump off the board, and he could not get her to do it. One day, while she and her sister were waiting for

their mother to pick them up, I talked to her about the diving board, why it was so scary, and what it would be like to jump off of it. The whole time I was talking to her, she didn't say a word. She just kept smiling. The next day, when her mother brought the two sisters to the pool, the mother said her five-year-old daughter wanted to jump off the diving board to me. I got in the water in front of the board, and she simply walked to the end of the board and jumped off to me with no hesitation.

I loved what I was doing. My days were filled with five-year-olds, Mikes, and all kinds of other interactions with children. I was having so much fun that I didn't even notice the absence of days off.

Law School Time

Once the school year began for the children on the Elks Club team, my time there ended. It was now time for me to begin my Law School preparations. In advance of the start of classes, I moved into the Law School dorm and purchased all my first-quarter Law School books.

As I said in the [Bob](#) section of [Chapter 1](#), when I took my Law School books to the check-out counter at the Stanford Book Store, the woman there told me the books I had were not for Freshmen, they were only for students enrolled in Law School. I had to convince her that I was a Law School student before she would ring up the sale. I might have looked a little young, but I never could figure out why she thought I looked young enough to be a Freshman.

But Then...

Everything was now ready for the beginning of my Law School life. Books bought, bed made, clothes hanging up or tucked away in bureau drawers, Law School classes to begin on Monday. But then I found myself thinking that, although the law school seminars I had taken had been fun (see the [Law School Seminars](#) sub-section of the [College - Junior Year](#) section of this chapter) and I liked the thinking involved in analyzing briefs, coaching had not just been fun, it was something that I really loved doing.

What I loved about coaching was that it gave me an opportunity to change how children felt about themselves. I know Gus did not see coaching the same way I did. If he had, then he never would have dumped his less skilled swimmers off on me. However, Gus still needed an assistant. If I continued as Gus's assistant, I could also continue coaching Gus's cast-offs.

Gus's focus was on producing winners. However, for a team to triumph as a team, first-place finishers are not enough. Teams don't win without the support of the second and third-place finishers. The Elks Club

swimming team had done quite well that Summer because it had a mix of Gus's first-place swimmers and my morning team's second and third-place finishers.

Gus could keep his focus on producing individual champions. I would have my focus be on the team's winning. When the team is the focus and not just the champion swimmers, then everyone on the team can feel like a winner. My focus would also continue to be on having each child measure his or her achievement by his or her own personal improvement. When accomplishments are measured that way, every child can experience a sense of accomplishment, and all the children, not just the first-place finishers, can feel good about themselves.

Fifth-Grade

I knew Gus would welcome me back as his assistant. However, I would need a job to supplement my income while my swimmers were in school. Becoming an elementary school teacher was the perfect side job for me.

The reason I wanted to become a teacher, in addition to becoming a coach, was because I now understood that I was quite good at changing children's feelings about themselves. My Sophomore year of depression was what was now turning my desire to be a lawyer into my much stronger desire to be an age-group swimming coach and an elementary school teacher. I could do what no one had done for me. I could keep children from being the child I had been.

What grade would I pick to teach? Fifth-grade, of course, the grade that marked the beginning of my Sophomore year depression.

The First Day of Law School

Sitting in the Law School dorm over the weekend, I contemplated my options. Everyone expected me to start Law School on Monday, but no one was forcing me to go. It was my life and my decision.

On Monday, the first day of Law School, I walked over to Law School from my dorm and officially dropped out. I then walked over to the Stanford School of Education and told the people there I had just dropped out of Law School because I wanted to become an elementary school teacher. I asked, "Can I come here instead?" The answer was a simple "Yes."

I mentioned in the [Now What?](#) sub-section that there was a possibility I could be drafted into the military. My brother Paul had been drafted into the Army quite soon after he graduated, and I had already had my pre-induction physical. I would not be drafted while I was enrolled in the School of Education because I would have a student deferment.

However, I could count on being drafted once I graduated. I did not want to earn my teaching credential and then have to wait two years to use it. So, I asked the people at the School of Education if they would put my acceptance on hold for two years while I got my military obligation out of the way. The answer was still a simple “Yes.”

The Four Years In-Between

My brother Jack graduated in June. It was now September. He had spent his summer focused both on Olympic Club water polo and on enjoying a life of leisure. He had not yet decided on a career path. I suggested to Jack that we both get our military obligations out of the way before making our career choices. He agreed.

Our older brother Paul told us life as an Army Private was not all that great. An officer’s life was much better. So, Jack and I applied to Naval Officer Candidate School (OCS) and were accepted, and a whole new group of IFs was in the making.

Being drafted as an Army Private meant two years of military service. Opting to be an officer meant three years in the military instead of two. However, the life of an order-giver was much more appealing than the life of an order-follower, so the extra year was worth it.

1962 through 1966 - A Life-Changing Experience

I applied to the Stanford School of Education in the Fall of 1962. Of course, I did not start my teacher training in 1962. I started it in 1966 when my military service ended. This is a book of IFs. That four-year span between the Fall of 1962 and the Fall of 1966 changed forever the kind of teacher I was to become. The story of the life-changing IFs of those four years is told in [Chapter 3 - The Four Years In-Between](#).

The Six IFs

IF Art Lambert had not suggested that I consider playing goalie.

IF Gus had not taught me the goalie skills I needed before making the switch.

IF the praise I received for that first game had not convinced me I really was a goalie

Then neither Mary nor I would have written any of our books, and there never would have been a Center for Innovation in Education. Why this is so is explained in [Chapter 5 – The Twenty-Two IFs of The Interns’ Years](#) and in several of the sections of [Chapter 9 - The Yearly History of a Change in Plans](#).

IF my father had not said, “Get a job”.

IF Gus had not hired me as his assistant coach.

IF Gus had not given me the freedom to coach in any way I wished.

Then I would have become a lawyer and not a teacher.
Then I would not have been given my choice of assignments when I reported to the USS Midway (Explained in the [Engineering](#) sub-section of the [U.S.S. Midway CVA-41](#) section of [Chapter 3](#)).

IFs Build Upon IFs

In the [High School - Sophomore Year](#) section of this chapter, the [F. W. Woolworth's](#) IF is an example of IFs building upon IFs. IF I had not quit the Woolworth's job, then I would not have joined my brothers' age group swimming team and learned that I was so good at swimming the newly introduced butterfly stroke. My being so good at butterfly, combined with a Junior year IF, is what caused me to end up playing water polo instead of football.

In the [High School - Junior Year](#) section of this chapter, the [Unnecessary Injury's](#) IF is another example of IFs building upon IFs. IF I had not been injured and then resented the coach's treatment of me when I was again able to practice, I would have continued my football playing ambitions. The Woolworth's butterfly stroke IF gave me a swimming team option.

Without the butterfly, I would not have been on an undefeated medley relay team. There would have been no relay teammates to invite me to join their fraternity at Stanford. No teammate to give me the Castilleja school bus job. No fraternity brother to inadvertently challenge me to apply to Law School as a Junior. I would have played football at Stanford, not water polo. Most likely, there would have been no Sophomore depression, since I would have joined an Eating Club, not a fraternity. No delayed graduation to play water polo with my brothers. And likely no plans for a career path after graduation.

I would have fulfilled my military obligation as a Marine because I really liked the uniform. When I visited the Marine recruiting office to check out options for fulfilling my military obligation, the recruiter told me my duty stations would be either San Diego or Guam. Neither station would have permitted me to keep playing water polo with my team while I was in the service. I opted for the Navy because there was a Naval Station in Alameda, only thirty miles from Stanford. With no water polo, then either San Diego or Guam would have been fine with me and my Marine uniform.

IFs build upon IFs. Without the two IFs above, none of the other IFs in this chapter would have happened.