And the Thambo Project is... an organization that sprung out of Gustavus’s social justice program, I Am We Are, to spread social justice through the arts. The Thambo project gave me the opportunity to help start a social justice theatre group in Okoboji Iowa over the summer.

Surprises? After our last performances, I was surprised at how many of the participants said that being in the group had changed their lives. We dealt with tough issues through our theatre—rape, abuse, sexuality—and the participants said there was no other place for them to talk about these huge issues that affected them every day. Some of them even said this group gave them something to live for and hope for their futures. It was SO powerful to know that I helped them to find that hope within themselves.

While you can try to measure success in your career empirically—by how much money you made, how many items you sold, or how many papers you filed, you oftentimes can’t measure how you change people’s lives. That unmeasurable connection, however, is what makes any career fulfilling and purposeful. Personal connection is the true measure of success.