Introduction: When I was younger, I visited my Aunt Jan often, although I usually ended up playing with the children next door. All of the children next door lived inside the mind of an adult woman named Anna. Anna suffered from Dissociative Identity Disorder, what was then called multiple personality disorder. Anna’s outcome was not a happy one, and that was largely due to the lack of resources available to provide adequate counseling for her particular psychological need. When I made that realization back then, I was angry at “the system” for lacking these resources, but today I have a different view. Thesis: My goal is to become a psychologist so that I can help people cope with their problems in life. Mapping: You’re mine for the next few minutes, and I’m going to explain which avenue of psychology is the best for my particular dream, I will discuss what it means to be a psychologist—my field in particular, as well as the practical $ and ¢ of psychology as one’s occupation.

Body
I. The need for further research into psychological disorders is great.

A) Take Dissociative Identity Disorder, for example. One of the reasons there are so few effective therapies for DID is that psychologists cannot agree on the true nature of the disorder. Source: According to an article in the Abnormal Psychology Journal, published in 2003 by the APA, many psychologists feel that the different identities are a construct of therapists and society, whereas others believe that they were created in childhood due to abuse. Now, obviously whether an alternate personality is a functioning part of your self defense mechanism—or a socially reinforced delusion—matters tremendously on how to devise a treatment or therapy.

B) The past decade has been spent arguing this issue, but no-one has devised any research that has been able to answer the debate. This is exactly the sort of problem that I want to help resolve in the world of psychology, with extensive research. I’m greedy though, I want to do the research that furthers understanding into the human mind, but I also want to implement the therapy that the research suggests. There’s only one kind of psychologist who does both, and that is a Clinical Psychologist.

Transition
Of course, unless you’ve happened to be reading up in the field of psychology, you might be thinking, “There’s different kinds of psychologists? What’s the difference?”

II.
A) Many psychologists never see patients or offer therapy—but the general public never sees those psychologists. You do hear of their research, however. Next time you’re watching commercials, pay attention to how many say, “Recent research has discovered…” or “Studies show…” Whenever the science involves people, it was a psychologist who conducted that research.
B) Now, a clinical psychologist likely wouldn’t be busy testing to see if eating dairy will help you lose weight—that’s a job for the developmental and experimental psychologists. Clinical psychologists, on the other hand, work more with the public, administering psychological tests, interviewing patients at hospitals, and diagnosing various mental disorders. They can do research as well as devise therapies and strategies for coping with stress. I really feel that as a clinical psychologist, I could best use my strengths and talents to help people. I see myself working at a university conducting research—specifically on mental disorders, that is primarily where my interest lies—and having a part time, independent practice where I offer counseling.

Transition
That is the focus I have for the future. Right now, my focus is on gaining the appropriate training to qualify as a clinical psychologist. Choosing psychology as my career makes the next decade or so of my life a lot more complicated.

III.
A) Practically, I’m looking at a lot of schooling before I can start my career. Source: The Occupational Outlook Handbook states that there are very few things you can do with a Bachelor’s degree in psychology, and those jobs are hard to get. One has more opportunities with a Master’s degree, but I’d have to work under a psychologist with a doctorate in order to do any research. To truly get to where I want to be, I need a PhD in Psychology, which means 8 more years or so of school and a residency—fortunately for me, I love school.

B) You might think that with a PhD, you’d make a lot of money, but the truth is, not really. The average salary for a clinical psychologist, according to the Occupational Handbook, is about 50K a year. More enterprising psychologists make more, but I hardly envision myself in that category.

Transition
My goal in life doesn’t have much to do with money; I want to understand human beings, and why we are the way we are, and I want to use that understanding to benefit others.

Conclusion
A) Tonight I’ve explained to you briefly why I wish to be a clinical psychologist, I’ve taught you maybe one or two things you didn’t know about the different options psychology as a career offers, and I’ve given you a glimpse of what it’s going to take to get me there.

B) I’ve been determined to understand people since I was a young child, and now I’m giving that determination substance. Perhaps my interest in people began when I became friends with Anna, a person whom many people dismissed as being crazy. Perhaps in the future, and with my help, fewer individuals will be dismissed with such labels, and more people will get the help they deserve.
Works Cited

