



Dear NLSY79 Respondent,

Welcome to the 30th round of the NLSY79!

From your first interview, we have asked you to “Tell Your Story”. And you have. Over the years, you have updated us about your education and training, employment, marriages, children, preparations for retirement, and much more. We thank you.

As you know, one of the great benefits of longitudinal studies like the NLS is their ability to trace sequences of events in people’s lives over time. This ability allows us to better understand the impact that early experiences have on outcomes later in life and to see how the same life events affect individuals in different ways.

In one of his best loved poems, *The Road Not Taken*, the poet Robert Frost considers a fork in the road. Choosing one of two paths, he saves the other “for another day” but then notes that “way leads on to way” and doubts he will ever again be at the same crossroads. Frost could be writing about a longitudinal survey’s distinctive ability to reflect the way an individual’s life story unfolds based on each choice, each ‘crossroad,’ along the way.

And as the years have passed, more and more research has been done using the NLSY79. In fact, over 3,900 journal articles, dissertations, and book chapters have been written using information from the NLSY79. These studies are on topics such as employment, searching for a job, earnings, schooling, health, retirement, and much more. Once research is complete, news organizations see the research and put that information out for the public. The awareness of issues facing yours and younger generations then becomes a catalyst for policy changes.

Finally, let me take a moment to again express my sincere thanks for your past participation in the NLSY79. Your willingness to offer your interview time is what keeps this important study going.

It is my hope that once again you will grant us the privilege of speaking with you and sharing your unique story.

Sincerely,

Keenan Dworak-Fisher

Director, National Longitudinal Surveys
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Road Not Taken

BY ROBERT FROST

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.