

*Career On! provides a "roadmap" for your career choices based on who you are. By following my suggestions and using this book as a guide, you will be able to, step by step, smoothly move through the phases to your best career fit. The tool for you to make the best choice is right in front of you in this book.*

# **Career On!**

## **Creating Career Clarity and Confidence and Avoiding a Career Cul-de-sac**

### **Third Edition**

by Orlando E. Blake, PhD CPT

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AI

THIRD EDITION

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Creating  
Career Clarity and Confidence,  
and Avoiding a Career Cul-de-sac

Orlando E. Blake, Ph.D. CPT



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“Dr. Blake has a wonderful sense of humor which he uses to create relationships, generate trust and suggest perspective. He has great skill at the consultative approach. Dr. Blake is an outstanding ‘accomplishment’ coach whether he is coaching employee performance and/or development; career transition; entrepreneurial start-up; or coaching coaches.” – Nancy Adamson, Managing Consultant, Right Management Consultants

“Your advice, services and council were all very helpful. It was particularly helpful to have someone keep me on track during my job search. It’s very beneficial to have someone guide you and help validate that you are doing the right things necessary during a job search. I have a very high opinion of Orlando Blake. Orlando helped me in my executive job search and kept me on track and prepared for what was coming.” – Lyne Borne, VP of Operations, EcoSmart Inc.

“I wish everyone struggling with career and job issues could have the opportunity that I have had to increase my self-awareness and improve my confidence and clarity as I approach the decisions I will be making ahead.” - Mike Eng, U.S. Institute of Environmental Conflict Resolution

“Good balance of theory and practical info – I liked the exercises.” – Heidi Hunt, Assoc. Director, WIC Program

“Thank you for sharing your expertise and adding to my cache of knowledge. I know I’m a better person to have known you.” – Sandra Wolfe, Student

“Excellent, looking forward to the next step...This is very sound methodology...” – Right Management Consultants

“I thoroughly enjoyed your class and feel I got lot out of it. I actually already put some of the strategies to work at my new place. Thanks for doing such a great job.” – Ruben Galvan, Workshop Participant

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“I wish every manager in my organization could have the opportunity to do this program. It is very relevant and will benefit me greatly in the future.” - Lenore Derrick, Director of Regulatory Affairs and Training, ICE, Inc.

“Thanks again for your thoughtful material. I’m doing some follow up on the session with some case studies etc. and there is a lot of interest!” - Cheryl Moreno, HR Manager, Yavapai College

“The employees enjoyed the day and your teaching style...they appreciated learning so much practical information. It would be a pleasure to work with you again” - Beverly Peterson, HR Director, Pulmonetic Systems

“If you only you knew how much you opened my mind on a professional level and personal... I continue to lean more through your website.” - Jennifer Smith, Recreation & Aquatics Manager, City of Douglas

“Very organized and right on the money!” - Ron Lee, Asst. Controller, Wick Communications

“Thank you for all of the inspiration that you have given me. I couldn't have made it as far as I have without your guidance and direction.” - Crystal Hadfield, Student

“I really enjoyed your class...I think you are an incredible professor, and you made that class extremely interesting. That was one of the best classes that I have taken in graduate school. (No, I'm not just saying this for a better grade...it truly was a great class!) Thanks!” - Jenny Baumel, Student

“I had no idea how helpful & crucial this would be. I’m a new and more confident person as I leave today.” - Monica Eng, Therapist

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# INTRODUCTION

Not long ago I gave a talk about the changing world of work to about 150 young adults. As I looked over the crowd, at their earnest faces and wondering stares, I could not help but reflect on when I'd been a graduating student with a master's degree and the world of wonder that was before me.

At the age of 33, when I received my master's with emphasis applied behavioral science, I had been working for more than 18 years. I started working in the family cattle business at 11 years old (my father was not concerned with child labor laws). Then in my teens and early twenties in warehouses loading and unloading produce trucks and train box cars, picking orders in a 40,000 square foot 20 degree below zero frozen foods warehouse, all while working on my undergraduate degree. As I was finishing my bachelor's after 10 years of full time work and part time school, I got my first office job as a heavy engineering construction office manager. Then for that same contractor I transitioned into their first human resources manager (it was called "personnel manager" then) and labor relations negotiator. Now, I thought I knew where I was headed. Well, think again.

Overall, I spent 20 plus years in the corporate world in various executive positions for Fortune 500 companies including filmed entertainment, banking, apparel industries, key executive career transition, organizational and leadership coaching firms. Finally, in 1993, I stepped out of corporate life, started my own consulting practice, and stepped into a doctoral program. Seven years later, I had seven years of entrepreneurship experience and a Ph.D. So, as you can see, my education and career took some unexpected turns; just as your career is likely to do in the years ahead.

My bottom-line message to the students and to you is: If you expect your life to go in a straight line, you are going to be disappointed. Your

professional life will transition through turns and weave a tapestry of many colors.

As organizations restructure and the boundaries of professions and life become more permeable, you will have more opportunities to work in a variety of areas and industries – if you like. For that reason, do not make job security your priority. Instead, always be on the lookout for new employment or business opportunities, and job security will take care of itself.

I was not sure that my message struck a chord with the audience based on the “deer in the headlights” look on their faces. By the end of my presentation, they got it. They recognized that managing their careers would involve far more than simply finding one job and one organization and staying there for the gold watch.

So, what do you think your own future career path holds? Do you think that it’s more likely that you will stay put for the rest of your working life? Or do you think your career path will bob and weave, twist and turn? If I were you, I would bet on the latter.

Continuous change in the economy is causing the content of most people’s jobs to change frequently. It is technology, globalization, transformation of business models, the search for new markets, and core business processes that compel companies to redesign people’s jobs. The fast-to-market push is redesigning the business processes, jobs, and the structure of organizations and their direction in the marketplace.

What’s the message here? Vigilance, training, knowledge transfer, lifelong learning, and an escalating demand for your biggest asset – your brain – is part and parcel of your career success. You must assume more responsibility for maintaining and upgrading your skills and competencies than in previous generations.

You will need to reinvent yourself, your role, your career, and most critically – your self-awareness. Every few years as skill requirements escalate, as the demands and definitions of jobs change, and as your organization goes through change, mergers, acquisitions, downsizing or restructuring, you must adapt to survive and sustain.

Here are some things to begin working on now:

- Polish your management skills.

- Become a good stand-up presenter.
- Be better at measuring performance; yours and the people that you supervise.
- Get acquainted with performance improvement methods, i.e. performance metrics and hard-edge data if you want to move into senior roles in organizations.
- Understand your style and the styles of others. Become more emotionally and socially aware and intelligent.
- Improve your people skills.
- Improve your critical thinking and evaluative skills.
- Consider learning a second language and maybe work overseas. Having an appreciation and understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity is becoming a central workplace requirement.
- Increase your written and oral communication abilities.

If all this appears overwhelming, it doesn't have to be if you become an aggressive lifelong learner and committed student of your workplace. There is little room for coasting along. With constant change and challenges in your job, you will need to develop a much wider and richer portfolio of skills than you might have had 15 or 20 years ago. The more skills you develop today, the more marketable you will be in the future.

## **How to Use This Book**

First, I want to be clear about the purpose of Career On! The book is about creating clarity and confidence in finding and loving a career that is right for you. Please note I wrote the word "career;" not job. Many of us have had jobs on the way to a rewarding and fulfilling career, which in and of itself is not bad thing to do. I learned a lot in the cattle business about people (some people are like cattle, but that is for another book). However, I am providing this book to you to "short cut" the sometimes-painful process of career clarification and job numbing drudgery.

If you pay attention to the process and don't skip any step, when you identify your best career fit, you will enjoy the work you get. The book is organized using the following five basic themes:

## *Career On!*

1. **Background:** This section covers recent research on workplace skills needed for the future, studies about how some people were successful in choosing career, the contributions that Millennials can make to the workplace, the attributes that Millennials contribute to the world of work, and the critical importance of family, school, and community in young adult career choice, and finding meaning in your work life.
2. **Self-analysis.** Take careful stock of what you do best. These exercises will reward you later in life. With a well-formed idea of what you can honestly do best, really enjoy, and want to most you will have a stouter chance of being much more effective in discerning your best career fit.
3. **Research.** Once you decide what it is you really do best you can decide the first steps on the path on which you should head. By doing the research you will start to uncover all the possibilities that may exist in areas of work for which you are most suited. Do the research: many people only skim the surface and miss many career opportunities.
4. **Contacts.** When you have identified career possibilities you will be ready to continue your research by securing informational interviews with people in the careers in which you are interested. At this point it is time to “get out there” and talk to people to get even more information about career possibilities.
5. **Follow-up.** You aren’t successful until you have found your best career fit known as Career Consonance and are actively pursuing work in that field. There are several steps you should take after your interviews to help get the job you want.

There are a few ways you can use this book that will work to your best advantage. Of course, you can read the entire book, digest it and return to do the exercises and implement the career search process.

Or you can dive into the book, read the first part of the book and the background I have written to set up the context of clarifying your career and then plunge into the exercises. By doing this you will get the entire richness and depth of what it is to find a rewarding and complimentary career.

Or, you can cut to the chase and jump into the second half of Career On! by completing the assessments and exercises, you will get the

baseline of establishing a rewarding and satisfying career. The next step is to implement what you have learned. If you want to get what you want – you must take action.

Finally, whatever you choose to do with Career On!, remember this:

**Without the follow through the object of the exercise is lost.**

At the end, you will have the tools, information, and the resources; the rest is up to you.

## CHAPTER 1 AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Why did I write this book? Glad you asked. During the mid and late 1990's I worked for two large consulting firms in Southern California. My role as a key executive career consultant was to provide career transition and leadership coaching services. I remember sitting across the desk from a senior financial executive who had worked for a major newspaper organization for more than 25 years. His newspaper had just been acquired by a Midwest media conglomerate. He was devastated.

During my consulting with him, I gave him a comprehensive array of assessments, provided the assessment reports and interpreted the results. His comment sticks with me to his day, "I wish I had known this 30 years ago. My career choices would have been much different. If someone would have taken the time to help me flesh out and understand more about my preferences and style... who knows what I would have done that would have made me happier with my career."

If this was the only time I heard that, maybe it would have passed out of my memory. But sadly, I heard this over and over from people that spent their lives in unsatisfying careers. The toll that it took on their psyches, home life and sense of self was shown in emotional and physical deterioration.

I am asking you to take a different approach to avoid lamenting your life and career choices. It takes persistence and endurance, but it is worth the effort. The following research will give you an idea of what is driving the future and how to win at the career game.

### Career by the Numbers

A recent study by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and University of Phoenix titled *Life in the 21st Century Workforce: A National Perspective* (published September 2011 and available at <http://education.uschamber.com/publication/life-21st-century->

workforce-national-perspective), paints a picture of the employment landscape and the key dynamics both workers and employers need to consider as they seek to promote excellence in the workplace.

Fifty-three percent of employers say their companies face a significant challenge in recruiting non-managerial employees with the skills, training, and education their company needs. The study results show agreement across both employers and employees that education — including continuing education and advanced degrees — is critical to ensuring workers have the skills necessary to advance in their professions. They also agree that interpersonal skills, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving are important to providing the most benefit to employers and employees alike.

Among the key findings of the study:

- **Heading back to school.** Eight-in-ten employers (80 percent) believe that education is critical to ensuring that workers have the competencies necessary to advance, and 72 percent of the labor pool agrees. U.S. workers also believe that going back to school will have a direct impact on their career: the most common reasons for going back to school are to advance their career (89 percent), increase their salary (89 percent) or gain training for a specific job (88 percent). Moreover, employers believe that increasing the number of workers who complete post-secondary education programs and receive a degree or credential will contribute to the success of their company.
- **Landing a job vs. getting promoted.** In today's workplace, the labor force considers past work experience (50 percent) to be the most important factor when companies are making hiring decisions, outdistancing people management and communication skills (27 percent). However, when it comes to being promoted, workers are more likely to consider people management and communication skills (46 percent) as more important than past work experience (38 percent). Further, employees (77 percent) see continuing education as vitally important for success in their careers.
- **Walking the talk.** Forty-six percent of workforce respondents say their company pays all (17 percent) or some portion (29 percent) of tuition. Meanwhile, 50 percent of employers say they have a tuition assistance program. In addition, 57 percent of employers

interviewed offer flexible schedules to accommodate post-secondary education and training.

- Choosing a program for success. Business leaders place a premium on post-secondary education programs preparing individuals for success in the workplace (56 percent), providing individuals with core academic knowledge and intellectual skills (51 percent) and providing individuals with the workforce skills and knowledge for success in a specific career (50 percent). Conversely, employees place more weight on program elements that affect their day-to-day life; a flexible schedule is the most important attribute for workers (21 percent), while 16 percent say both cost of tuition and practical learning experiences are the most important.

## Drivers of Careers

The Institute for the Future ([www.iftf.org](http://www.iftf.org)) for the University of Phoenix Research Institute published a study the *Future Work Skills 2020*. The report analyzes key drivers that will reshape the landscape of work and identifies key work skills needed in the next 10 years.

Rather than focusing on future jobs, this report looks at future work skills i.e., skills and abilities required across different jobs and work settings. The following summarizes the major findings.

### **Driver 1 Extreme Longevity: Increasing global lifespans change the nature of careers and learning.**

It is estimated that by 2025, the number of Americans over 60 will increase by 70%. Over the next decade we will see the challenge of an aging population come to the forefront. There is a new belief of what it means to age. We will need to examine what a realistic, healthy life span will mean to individuals and institutions.

Individuals will need to reposition their approach to their careers, family life, and education to accommodate this demographic shift. People will work long past 65 to have adequate resources for retirement. Multiple careers will be commonplace and lifelong learning to prepare for occupational change will see major growth. To take advantage of this well-experienced and still vital workforce, organizations and individuals

will need to rethink the traditional career paths in organizations and careers, creating more diversity and flexibility.

**Driver 2 The Rise of Smart Machines and Systems: Workplace automation nudges human workers out of rote, repetitive tasks.**

Over the next decade, new smart machines will enter offices, factories, homes and lives, in numbers we have never seen before. They will become essential to production, teaching, combat, medicine, security, and virtually every domain of our lives. These machines will replace humans in some routine tasks and augment them in others. The largest impact may be less obvious: their very presence among people will force us to confront important questions.

What are humans uniquely good at?

What are human's comparative advantages?

What is our place alongside these machines?

You will have to rethink the content of your work and your work processes in response.

**Driver 3 A Computational World: Massive increases in sensors and processing power make the world a programmable system.**

Every object, every interaction, everything we come into contact with will be converted into "big data." Once we decode the world around us and start seeing it through the lens of data, we will increasingly focus on manipulating the data to achieve desired outcomes.

As a result, whether it is running a business or managing individual health, our work and personal lives will increasingly demand abilities to interact with data. We will need to see patterns in data, make data-based decisions, and use data to plan for desired outcomes.

**Driver 4 New Media Ecology: New communication tools require new media literacies beyond text.**

New multimedia technologies are bringing about a transformation in the way we communicate and interact. New media places new demands on attention and reasoning.

At the same time, our sensibility toward reality and truth is likely to be radically altered by the new media ecosystem. We must learn to

approach content with more skepticism and the realization that what you see today may be different tomorrow.

**Driver 5 Super-Structured Organizations: Social technologies drive new forms of production and value creation.**

To “superstruct” means to create structures that go beyond the basic forms and processes that we know. It means we must collaborate, from the micro to the massive. A new generation of organizational concepts and work skills is coming not from traditional management/organizational theories but from fields such as game theory and design, neuroscience, and positive psychology. These fields will drive the creation of new training, organizational and leadership paradigms and tools.

**Driver 6 Globally Connected World: Increased global interconnectivity puts diversity and adaptability at the center of organizational operations.**

At its most basic level, globalization is the long-term trend toward greater exchanges and integration across geographic and cultural borders. The presence in areas where new competitors are popping up is critical to survival. However, the key is not just to employ people in these locales but also to effectively integrate these local employees and local business processes into the infrastructure of organizations to remain competitive.

The study concludes by outlining the 10 workplace skills needed for the future:

1. **Sense-Making:** ability to find the deeper meaning or significance of what is being expressed.
2. **Social Intelligence:** ability to connect to others in a deep and direct way, to sense and stimulate reactions and desired interactions.
3. **Novel & Adaptive Thinking:** proficiency at thinking and coming up with solutions and responses beyond that which is rote or rule based.
4. **Cross-Cultural Competency:** ability to work in different cultural settings.
5. **Computational Thinking:** ability to translate vast amounts of data into abstract concepts and to understand data-based reasoning.

6. New-Media Literacy: ability to critically assess and develop content that uses new media forms, and to use these media for persuasive communication.
7. “Transdisciplinarity”: literacy in and ability to understand concepts across multiple disciplines.
8. Design Mindset: ability to represent and develop tasks and work processes for desired outcomes.
9. Cognitive Load Management: ability to discriminate and filter information for importance, and to understand how to maximize cognitive functioning using a variety of tools and techniques.
10. Virtual Collaboration: ability to work productively, drive engagement, and demonstrate presence as a member of a virtual team.

Source: Institute for the Future for Apollo Research Institute (2011). *Future Work Skills 2020*.

The SCANS report (The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991) is one of the most often discussed presentations on the needs of workers in the twenty-first century. The recommended foundational skills and competencies list is a result of reviews of literature, discussions with experts in business and industry, and an analysis of jobs representative of various economic sectors. The widespread acceptance of the recommendations of the commission is one sign of their validity.

As definitive as the SCANS report is and given the Future Work Skills study, I believe the skills, aptitudes and behavioral competencies should be reorganized as follows:

### **Knowledge/Thinking**

- Thinking skills—reasoning, making decisions, thinking creatively, solving problems, seeing things in the mind's eye, and knowing how to learn
- Information skills—acquiring and evaluating, organizing and maintaining, and interpreting and communicating information
- Systems skills—understanding systems

### **Attitudes/Values**

- Personal qualities—responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, integrity, and honesty

### **Connecting Knowledge & Attitudes to Action**

- Personal qualities—self-management

### **Skills/Behavior**

- Basic skills—reading, writing, speaking, listening, and knowing arithmetic and mathematical concepts
- Resource allocation—time and money

### **Social**

- Interpersonal skills—negotiating, exercising leadership, working with diversity, teaching others new skills, serving clients and customers, and participating as a team member
- Systems skills—monitoring and correcting system performance, and improving and designing systems
- Resource allocation—time, money, materials, space, and staff

### **Technology**

- Information skills—using computers to process information
- Technology utilization skills—selecting technology, applying technology to a task, and maintaining and troubleshooting technology

Adapted from: Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. (1991). What work requires of schools. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.

What do these studies mean to you?

To be successful in the next decade - and beyond - you will need to demonstrate foresight in navigating a rapidly shifting landscape of organizational life and skill requirements.

First, you will need to continually reassess the skills you need as you pay close attention to a changing work landscape.

Second, quickly put together the right resources to develop and update these skills and adapt to new requirements. Your career in the

future will need to be adjustable and flexible and you will need to be a lifelong learner.

## **If You Want to be Successful; Do More of This**

For those of you reading Career On!

- for your young adult child, niece, nephew, or friend, or
- if you are a young adult reading this to help you find the perfect career, or
- If you want to be successful in your own career selection process, the following studies are momentous.

It reinforces that if you are clear about what you want to do and if you work at it, you will be successful.

A recent study confirms that young workers with certain characteristics may weather turbulent times better than their peers. The study identifies three psychological orientations and behaviors that influence employment and career success during the transition to adulthood:

- maintaining high educational aspirations,
- clear career goals, and
- intensive job search are particularly important.

Researchers found that young people who maintained high aspirations and certainty over career goals were better insulated against unemployment between 2007 and 2009. These three characteristics are found to be particularly significant in career decision making. Young adults who maintained high career aspirations and clarity of career goals from age 18 to 30 were more likely to be employed between 2007 and 2009 (when they were 33-36 years old) and to have higher wages in 2009.

Young workers who showed greater indecision in their career goals were less successful in weathering the economic turmoil in the Great Recession. These trends persisted even when educational attainments were measured.

“The factors identified in this study are interrelated amongst themselves and also influence longer-term successes and vulnerabilities during difficult economic times,” said University of Minnesota sociology professor Jeylan Mortimer.

This study relies on data from the Youth Development Study, an ongoing longitudinal study, which began tracking a group of 9th graders from St. Paul, Minn. public schools in 1988. The original sample included 1,010 adolescents. The participants have been surveyed annually since, and now are approximately 37-38 years old. The analysis for the Mortimer/Vuolo study spans the years from when the participants were 18 to 36 years old.

Additional research shows that having a more positive, motivational outlook had a beneficial effect on career quest, especially at the outset of the search. The study “After the Pink Slip” was published in the April/May 2012 issue of *The Academy of Management Journal*.

Staying motivated is always tough, but it certainly gets easier when you start seeing results. That's why keeping your spirits up during a search can be extremely difficult and pays off big time. Led by Connie Wanberg at the University of Minnesota, and also included Jing Zhu from Hong Kong University and Zhen Zhang from Arizona State University, examined the rise and fall of emotions of 177 unemployed jobseekers over 20 weeks.

The findings show that 53 percent of the variance found in motivation control, or the ability to focus on goal pursuit while continuing to overcome obstacles, existed within each person. In other words, the flux reflects the ability to focus on job search activities rather than intrinsic character traits of individuals. The more important influence on maintaining a person's career research activities and increasing the likelihood of success was the person's ability to stay energized and keep negative emotions under control over time.

Clearly the results show that individuals who had a zest for learning, focus, clarity, perseverance, and personal mastery were more likely to have good motivation control than those individuals whose personality was geared toward defensiveness and avoidance of failure. Motivation and the ability to keep self-defeating thoughts at bay are strongly related to the amount of effort devoted to the career search, which in turn is strongly related to success in landing a job.

Overall, the studies provide new evidence that, besides the difficulties of looking for a perfect career, the outcome is to a considerable extent in the individuals' own hands, perhaps more than is commonly thought. The research shows that it particularly helps if individuals establish a strong daily routine.

One more time just in case you glossed over the bottom line of the research:

**If you are clear about what you want to do and if you work at it; you will be successful.**

Sources:

"Weathering the Great Recession: Psychological and Behavioral Trajectories in the Transition from School to Work," Retrieved from [http://www.asanet.org/press/factors\\_that\\_keep\\_young\\_adults\\_employed.cfm](http://www.asanet.org/press/factors_that_keep_young_adults_employed.cfm). The full article can be found: *Developmental Psychology*, 2012, Vol. 48, No. 6, 1759–1773.

Juntunen, C. L., Rasheed Ali, S., and Pietrantonio, K. R. (2013). Social Class, Poverty, and Career Development. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career Development & Counseling: putting theory and research to work* (pp. 245-274). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

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## **Influence of Family, School, and Community**

Ok parents, and those thinking about becoming parents, recognize that you have a lot of influence over your child's success. Many studies detail how you can help and hinder your children's development and attitude toward career and career choice.

Studies show that youth who miss out on an early work experience are more likely to endure later unemployment and less likely to achieve higher levels of career attainment. Everyone needs opportunities in their teen years and young adulthood to experience work and reach the job readiness skills needed for long-term success.

Young people out of school and out of work have been characterized in various ways – as disconnected, vulnerable or opportunity youth. The

data show that the populations struggling the most to enter the workforce and stay in school today are youth who are less educated, come from low-income families and belong to a racial or ethnic minority.

The preceding underscores how critical parental and community interdependence is for young people. Given this framework, individual development takes place within the context of multiple interacting spheres of influence. Family, peers, teachers, and other significant people represent important, crucial influences at the nearest level.

Young adults, through interaction with the context of family, school, and community, learn about and explore careers that ultimately lead to career choice. The interdependence of family, school, and community culture play a critical role in shaping a young person's occupational choice. The economic, social and spiritual circumstances of the broader community color and influence a young person's perceptions of self and appropriate career choices.

Further, much evidence exists that parents influence their children's career development, and that the family provides resources that are significant concerning adolescents' ideas about their future. Families provide financial and emotional support and transmit values, goals, and expectations to their children which can affect the career development process. Several studies clearly prove that:

- Young adults, through interaction with the context of family, school, and community, learn about and explore careers that ultimately lead to career choice.
- The interdependence of family, school, and community culture plays a critical role in shaping the youth's occupational choice.
- The economic and social circumstances of the broader community colored and influenced youth's perceptions of right career choices.
- Youth in communities of more affluence appeared to have more family and school support in career exploration, which resulted in consideration of a wider range of career options.
- Parents, followed by other family members, provided valuable learning experiences through their own role models and supporting activities that assisted in exploring career interests for young people.

- Work-bound youth's parents often taught skills that provided youth with a broader understanding of their own aptitudes, contributing to career choice.
- Young adults are more able to recognize that barriers exist to implementing their future career choices and seek ways to overcome these obstacles with the support of family and community.

Career and family, often seen as competing parts of life, can complement each other, and when young people's goals for the future encompass family and career, the outcome is more likely to be success in both arenas, according to Penn State researchers.

The study clearly showed that individuals tend to end up being more successful in their goal attainment when they are motivated to achieve in both the work and family domains. In effect, work and family should be viewed as allies rather than as competitors. While parents are powerful sources of socialization in acceptable career paths, they often fail to give their children detailed information about careers.

The studies reported here confirm existing knowledge about the great impact that family, school, and community have upon young adults' self-identity and career choice. All come into play in providing input into the adolescents' perception of self, educational efficacy, and vocational interests.

The following key points from the research further explain the impact of and importance of the role of parents and community:

- The studies add to the understanding of the critical role parents play in shaping career choice.
- Through educational expectations and perceptions of occupational appropriateness, parents were found to have key roles in shaping career choices.
- The studies' findings of the impact that the broader context of the school and community environment has in supporting or delaying career decision-making extends the understanding of the importance these individuals have upon adolescents' identity and occupational goals.

Implications:

*Creating Career Clarity and Confidence, and Avoiding a Career Cul-de-sac*

- Engaging parents in understanding the vital role they play in adolescents' occupational choice will challenge the community to become more involved.
- Developing collaborative programs with innovative strategies that engage youth, parents, and community will require youth educators to become effective in managing collaborative partnerships that can help change stakeholder's perceptions of their role in adolescent's career choice.
- Developing programs and strategies that help both parents and youth in exploring a wide range of occupations can open the door to emerging and non-traditional career choices.
- Providing adolescents with learning opportunities in which they are challenged to make sense of situations that they will encounter in various types of employment can provide them with a greater understanding of career options.
- Community-based learning that involves teens in solving real-world workplace problems directly connects them to the reality of various occupations.
- Engaging parents and community in active support of career exploration and choice provides the context that helps adolescents in making successful transitions into adult workplace roles.

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National Communication Association. (2014, February 13). High school students who experience 'job-shadow' opportunities in STEM environments more likely to consider a STEM career path. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved June 21, 2018 from [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/02/140213083453.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/02/140213083453.htm)

## Parents: What You Can and Should Do

The family plays a vital role in many areas of adolescent development. Parents can be both facilitators and inhibitors of their children's psychological development. An important developmental task of adolescence is the growth and exploration of future aspirations and career goals.

Because of the reliance upon family during adolescence, parents have an impact on the development of future aspirations and career choices. A study of high school students published in the *Journal of Applied Communication Research* clearly suggested that professionals, parents and teachers should take steps to expose high schoolers to careers, internships and careers visits. Once students get a detailed picture of what it is like to work in jobs, it can motivate them to overcome difficult obstacles and adopt a career goal.

What can parents do to support and help their young adults, while building the young person's independence, responsibility and self-reliance?

Parents who take a leadership role in their family can take the same actions they would take as leaders in the workplace.

1. Have a vision: A vision of "I just want them to be happy," is vague. Parents who give some thought to defining what they mean more specifically can engage in a discussion with their children to define what it means for them.

Parents want the best for their children. You can be most helpful if you see your role as supporting your student as they navigate the

decision-making process so that they can make choices that are right for them.

2. Guide and encourage necessary actions: Young adults who hear parents say, "Go find a job," often are overwhelmed with a goal this broad.

They have little idea where to even begin, so they grab the first thing that comes along. Working with them to identify what they should be seeking, the steps and resources, timelines needed to succeed, and putting together a written plan can yield productive results. A plan with accountability is important.

Listen for interests, look for skills, and acknowledge values and personality. Some students have an easier time than others in articulating what they like, what is important to them, and what they excel in. If your student seems unsure, talk about personal qualities you see as talents and strengths.

3. Align goals, expectations and resources: Career planning is a bit like going on vacation: when you know the destination (career goal) and know the resources available, you know better how to prepare and what to pack. Discuss your goals, expectations and the resources you will commit to the process.

Review past accomplishments. Initiate a discussion about what your student has accomplished, learned, explored and even abandoned. Ask: what did you learn about yourself from that experience?

4. Be clear about time and cost constraints: If an adult child is living at home while trying to get their life and work on track, they may be accustomed to a different lifestyle. Many parents find that a frank discussion about expected behavior and contributions to the household is important. Negotiate hours and basic lifestyle.

Contributions may include payments from a part-time job toward room and board expenses or regular time spent on household maintenance chores.

5. Communicate often: A young adult child who appears to be unmotivated about finding a career direction or full-time job can be highly frustrating to a parent. Setting the expectation that you will be kept informed about the job search and outcomes is part

of accountability. Following these guidelines helps young adults honor their commitments by creating some predictability.

Talk to your student about their thoughts and ideas about majors or careers based on their interests, skills and values. What do they know about these fields (based on information not hearsay or assumption)? Offer ideas as to how they might gain experience or find out more information.

Don't judge and listen carefully to what they are saying. Before offering your opinion or coming to your own conclusions, get your own information on the majors and careers your student is considering. Many careers and majors have stereotypes attached to them and it can be difficult to discuss these options in an unbiased manner with limited information on your part.

6. Help Them Understand the Value of Networking and Professionalism Networking is an initiative-taking strategy for career success. Students who take advantage of opportunities will have a competitive edge in the job market.

Encourage meaningful use of social media. LinkedIn is rapidly becoming a critical part of professional networking and students can use this tool to connect with not just friends and family members, but also to alumni and other professionals. Sites like Twitter and Facebook can be extremely useful as well. Talk with your student about paying close attention to his/her online persona and how that image affects personal brand. It might affect internship or job opportunities later.

7. Promote career curiosity. When you watch a movie, television or observe someone in a certain career, ask: "What do you think it's like to be in that field?"

Keep in mind that "major" does not equate to "career", and it is not unusual for a student to change majors. Many students change majors after gaining more information about different disciplines and/or career fields of interest. Many students end up doing something very different than they originally planned, so don't overreact when they come up with what seems to be an outrageous or impractical career idea. Chances are plans will develop and change. it's okay to change majors – and careers (Source: National Association of Colleges and Employers).

Following these guidelines helps young adults honor their commitments by creating some predictability.

## **Bill Clarifies His Career Goals**

Bill felt a sense of stagnation and a feeling that he was not going anywhere. This led to a lack of effort in his job. We developed a clearcut set of career goals that he constantly kept in mind that gave him the incentive to put forth extra effort on the job. The following is Bill's list of tasks that he used. He:

1. Investigated alternative career paths through our discussions, using the exercises in *Career On!*, and networking with others.
2. Formulated tentative long-range career goals based on #1.
3. Established in writing what steps that he would take and what attitudes he must have to achieve his goal.
4. Developed an alternative or "second best" career goal.
5. Contrasted the different career goals sub goals he must achieve to reach either of these ultimate goals.
6. Established short range goals based on the longer-term career goals that he established. He outlined where he wanted to be by the end of the next year, in three years, and five years. He identified what steps he would take in the interim to achieve his goals.
7. Prepared a timetable for achievement of his short-range goals.

After he finished this exercise, Bill was able to approach working on his career path with renewed enthusiasm.

## CHAPTER 2 MILLENNIALS: “DON’T STICK US AT THE KIDDIE TABLE.”

If you are a Millennial, you don’t need to read this entire chapter. It has some information and data that you probably already know. However, if you do decide to read this chapter, it may help you understand and appreciate your place in our society. Your place and role in our society is really very remarkable and has the potential to change the world.

I am sure you have seen and read a lot about the four generations in the workplace. I am not going to rehash the rhetoric here. What I do want to do is recognize the issues and highlight the concerns of young adults known as Generation Y or Millennials, born between 1980 and about 2000 (these dates are a little flexible depending on who is counting). Eighty-million strong, they will soon account for the majority of American workers, especially as boomers start to retire.

Why am I doing this? Because I want to help these folks figure out their path before they become a careerist casualty. Millennials are a significant force in the economy and crucial cohort in society. They are dealing with huge career challenges as never before since coming of age during the “Great Recession.”

If you believe what has been said and written about Generation Y or “The Millennials” (or if you are one and believe it) then the bottom line on career choice for you other generations is this:

**Stop trying to figure out Millennials and just include them.**

They’re quick learners and quick to put together information. In that way, they’re an incredible asset to any team. And Millennials also are motivated by work they find meaningful.

Many studies suggest that Millennials place a high importance on personal success and compared to older generations, feel that their success is in their own hands. This is another area where life stage

probably makes a significant difference, particularly because people tend to redefine personal success as they get older.

Further, research shows that Millennials are more cause based in shopping and career choices than the previous generation, which will also impact career choice and satisfaction.

## The Head vs. The Heart

As Gallup's State of the American Workplace study shows, more than half of working Americans feel disengaged. Unenthusiastic, uncommitted, and uninvolved, male and female workers alike are now, more than ever before, unlikely to be "doing what they love" at work.

Should you pursue your passion or strive toward a secure living?

A recent study published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* finds that the two goals are not mutually exclusive – in fact, each feeds the other. Young people with strong callings are more likely to take risks, persist, and ultimately get jobs in their chosen fields, satisfying both their personal and professional career needs. The researchers also found that those who show a passion for these interests in their teens are more likely to be successful later on, regardless of their inherent talent.

I believe everyone should read the very poignant reflections from the Harvard Business School M.B.A. graduating class of 2010. Whether you are a Millennial or not, these quotes will provide some very moving sentiments and thoughts on our society and career choice. You can contemplate what this means to you as you carve out a satisfying career.

In a recent article in Harvard Business Review, Clayton M. Christensen, wrote "How Will You Measure Your Life?" (<http://hbr.org/2010/07/how-will-you-measure-your-life/ar/1>):

On the last day of class, I ask my students to turn those theoretical lenses on themselves, to find cogent answers to three questions: First, how can I be sure that I'll be happy in my career? Second, how can I be sure that my relationships with my spouse and my family become an enduring source of happiness? Third, how can I be sure I'll stay out of jail? Though the last question sounds lighthearted, it's not. Two of the 32 people in my

Rhodes Scholar class spent time in jail. Jeff Skilling of Enron fame was a classmate of mine at HBS. These were good guys—but something in their lives sent them off in the wrong direction.

The answers to Christensen's questions from the Harvard Business School 2010 M.B.A graduation class were extremely illuminating and sincere. The following are some of their responses. They clearly represent the common themes:

"I came to business school knowing exactly what I wanted to do—and I'm leaving choosing the exact opposite. I've worked in the private sector all my life, because everyone always told me that's where smart people are. But I've decided to try government and see if I can find more meaning there."

"I used to think that industry was very safe. The recession has shown us that nothing is safe."

"You could see a shift happening at HBS. Money used to be number one in the job search... You start to forget what the drivers of happiness are and what things are really important. A lot of people on campus see money differently now. They think, 'What's the minimum I need to have, and what else drives my life?' instead of 'What's the place where I can get the maximum of both?'"

"The financial crisis helped me realize that you have to do what you really love in life. My current vision of success is based on the impact I can have, the experiences I can gain, and the happiness I can find personally, much more so than the pursuit of money or prestige. My main motivations are (1) to be with my family and people I care about; (2) to do something fun, exciting, and impactful; and (3) to pursue a long-term career in entrepreneurship, where I can build companies that change the way the world works."

"The recession has made us step back and take stock of how lucky we are. The crisis to us is 'Are we going to have a job by April?' Crisis to a lot of people is 'Are we going to stay in our home?'"

Clayton M. Christensen (cchristensen@hbs.edu) is the Robert and Jane Cizik Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School. He is the author of the book, *How Will You Measure Your Life*.

The message is clear for all of us. Your choices and successful pursuit of a profession is only one way to achieve your purpose. But without a purpose, life can become hollow. Think about how you will measure the meaning of your life as you create your career path. The ways you use your personal time, energy, and talent ultimately shape your life's strategy and personal sense of accomplishment.

There is a lot of information on the Internet about the characteristics of Millennials and the issues that they face. And much has been written about the five generations in the workplace and how each generation perceives the other. If you want to read more about Generation Y or the Millennial Generation, here are some of my favorite resources:

"Millennials Confident. Connected. Open to Change." Pew Research Center, 2010.

"The New Greatest Generation: Why Millennials Will Save Us All," by Joel Stein. *Time*, May 20, 2013, pp. 26-34.

"Why Millennial Workers Aren't As Useless As You Thought," by Jenna Goudreau, *Forbes*. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jennagoudreau/2012/05/17/the-10-most-important-things-ive-learned-about-working-in-my-20s/>

*Boomerang Kids* by Carl Pickhardt, Ph.D., (2011) Sourcebooks, Inc.

*Millennial Impact Report 2012*, by Achieve and Johnson, Grossnickle and Associates.

*Plugged In: the Generation Y guide to Thriving at Work* by Tamara Erickson, (2009) Harvard Business Review Press.

*Slouching Toward Adulthood: observations from the not-so-empty nest* by Sally Koslow, (2012) Penguin Books Ltd.

Why We Need To Take 20-Somethings Seriously By Jenna Goudreau, *Forbes*. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jennagoudreau/>

"For Millennials, Parenthood Trumps Marriage," Pew Research Center, February 2011.

Shoshana Dobrow Riza, Daniel Heller. Follow your heart or your head? A longitudinal study of the facilitating role of calling and ability in the pursuit of a challenging career. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2015; 100 (3): 695 DOI: 10.1037/a0038011

## CHAPTER 3 FINDING “THE ONE THING”

For some of you, this chapter may appear to be a bit preachy. Yet, it is still true, and it follows nicely from the previous chapter. If you have not seen the film “City Slickers,” there is a classic scene where the characters played Jack Palance (Curly) and Billy Crystal talk about the meaning of life.

Palance asks Crystal, “Do you know what the secret to life is?”

Crystal, “No what?”

Palance holds up his index finger and says, “This.”

Crystal responds, “Your finger?”

“One thing. Just one thing. You stick to that and everything else don’t mean s\*#!” Palance responds.

“That’s great. But what’s the one thing?” Crystal asks.

Palance points to Crystal with his index finger, “That’s what you’ve got to figure out.”

Crystal quizzically looks at his index finger and ponders.

Michael Ray teaches for Stanford University’s M.B.A. program. His book, *The Highest Goal*, asks us to consider a similar question: What is the highest goal for ourselves? If you live for the highest goal, you consciously notice the larger aspects of life. He offers the following seven ways to live your highest goal:

1. Go beyond passion and success. Most of us “suboptimize,” that is, we go for the short-term and transitory. Go beyond these lesser goals to use the gift of life you have been given.
2. Travel your own path. You can create your own path by simply paying attention to your own best performance—the critical incidents in your life—when you feel most your Self, in flow and in tune with the highest goal. Remember the experience of these

times, apply what works to new situations and keep improving your path to the highest goal.

3. Live with the highest goal. Because everything in the world is a connected system, you can't beat it, you can only join it.
4. Find true prosperity. The more you express and experience your highest qualities, the more you are filled with a rich feeling of self-worth, and the wealthier you will become in the truest sense.
5. Turn fears into breakthroughs. When you have the grounding of the highest goal, you can see your fears for what they are. Learn from them and turn their energy into breakthroughs and opportunities of the most lasting kind.
6. Relate from your heart. I define "compassion" as seeing the highest in your Self first and then seeing the highest in others. If you have a full, rich feeling of self-worth, you have already taken the first step toward having compassion.
7. Experience synergy in every moment. You can achieve synergy—a much more dynamic state than balance—among the parts of your life by developing organizing structures based on your highest goal and by getting into the flow of intuitive decision-making.
8. Become a generative leader. Generative leaders pass along their experience of the highest goal and ignite creativity in others. Share the fruits of your quest for the highest goal with others and spread its effect in a beneficial spiral.

Source: Adapted from Ray, M. (2004) *The Highest Goal: the secret that sustains you in every moment*, Introduction, pp. 3-15.

As you consider your career choice and options, think about what Curly and Michael Ray are telling us. Your career is not a journey of adding skills and knowledge, but one of taking away barriers to creative potential. The premise: there is no such thing as an "uncreative person," but only those whose creativity is covered up.

You have a trunk of creative treasure in your attic. All you have to do is a disciplined spring cleaning—tossing aside all the junk covering up the treasure box—so that you can open it up and look inside. The very point of all this career stuff is the fundamental challenge:

***Make your life itself a creative work of art.***

In my book, *Life's Path: make a choice that brings you happiness*, I explain that there are two approaches to life. The first, followed by most people, is the "paint by numbers kit" approach to life. You do what other people say. You follow a well-traveled path. You stay within the lines. Then you end up with a nice, pretty—and unimaginative—picture.

The second, followed by a few, is to start with a blank canvas and try to paint a masterpiece. It is a riskier path, a harder path, a path filled with ambiguity and creative choice. But it is the only way to make your life itself a creative work of art. To paint a masterpiece requires a clear concept. For you and me it is a place to begin, a guiding framework in the absence of the comforting numbers and lines in the "connect the dots" kit. That guiding frame of reference is the highest goal and the "one thing."

What higher aspiration and purpose can you pursue with a passion that you can endure and gain strength for the stress and drudgery needed for the attainment of worthwhile and meaningful work?

Set yourself on a path to find a happy, productive connection between passion (what you love to do), clear sense of self (what were you put here on this earth to do), and economics (what can you make a living at). You will discover the path to your highest goal and the "one thing" - perhaps, through the pages of this book.

## CHAPTER 4 THE “WAY” TO YOUR BEST CAREERS

This chapter is adapted from my book: *Life’s Path*.

*Cheshire-Puss, "... said Alice, "would you tell me, please which way I ought to go from here?"*

*"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.*

*"I don't much care where..." said Alice."*

*Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.*

*"So long as I get somewhere," Alice added as an explanation.*

*"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."*

*Lewis Carroll, Alice Adventures in Wonderland*

Which way should you go from here?

This would be a much easier question to answer if you could see the future. Unfortunately, predicting the economic, social and political events that will impact the rapidly changing world of work is virtually impossible. So, like Alice, you may be hoping to get “somewhere” but have found that the path is uncertain.

While your career destiny may be uncertain, you can begin (today!) engaging in a strategic process that will help you take advantage of both planned and unplanned events that will lead to a satisfying and fulfilling career.

Begin by considering your interests, skills, and values. Interests tell you what direction to pursue; skills tell you how long it will take you to get there; and values tell you whether or not the journey is worth taking.

*“In a matter of a few years we have moved from an uptight culture in a dynamic economy to a dynamic culture set in an uptight economy.” -*

Daniel Yankelovich, *New Rules*

Do you think that quote from Daniel Yankelovich exemplifies today’s career landscape? As I am writing this in 2014 (and updating it 2018), I think it does. It was written in 1982.

Just like you’ve heard many times over the last few years, “this is not your parents’ career.” It should be obvious that you shouldn’t expect that 40-year retirement watch either. We no longer live in a world of the “lifetime career.” Nor can one job serve as a reliable source of income.

The writing has been on the wall for a long time. In 1994 William Bridges wrote *Job Shift, How To Prosper In A Workplace Without Jobs*; In 1995 Jeremy Rifkin wrote *The End of Work: the decline of the global labor force and the dawn of the post-market era*; In 2001, Daniel Pink followed with *Free Agent Nation*; In 2007 Cliff Hakim wrote *Rethinking Work: Are You Ready to Take Charge?*

Marci Alboher also explained that one of the most important trends to arise in the world of work in her book *One Person/Multiple Careers* is the “slash” career choice. Alboher encourages and lives the concept of the *Slash* career: one person-multiple careers - such as the lawyer/chef, surgeon/writer or writer/teacher. How many different skills, interests or roles can you leverage to create different careers and income sources? Whether they are complimentary or not, when one falls away, which may be out of choice or not, you will have ongoing sources of income.

However, the current career landscape was expertly foretold by Beverly Potter, Ph.D. in 1984 in *The Way of the Rōnin: a guide to career strategy*. The “Way” is a non-linear approach to career for the new realities of the world we all face.

The word *rōnin* literally means "wave man". At the end of the feudal period in Japan, many samurai became *rōnin* when armies were disbanded. It then came to be used for a samurai who had lost his master. Think of *rōnin* this way: Have Skills, Will Travel.

A *Rōnin* does not hold to the prescribed track, the corporate ladder as his or her master. By shredding specializations and getting off the fast track you can develop your potential more completely and fully. You will develop a wide base of experience, become more adaptable, and be

more prepared to survive more changes and perhaps even more turbulent times. But you will also have more choice to manage your life.

Potter makes a salient point:

***Finding your life's work most compatible to your true nature without first analyzing your occupational temperament is chancy.***

An ill-fitting career choice is like wearing shoes that are too tight; it is hard to get around, they pinch, you can't think of anything else but getting out of those shoes and you will feel tired at the end of the day.

As you master yourself, you will become more adept at structuring the career you choose and the work you enjoy. You will be in flow and increasingly handle inevitable ambiguity and vaguely defined projects – creative work.

In the end, the “slashes” and the Rōnin show us that all the talk we hear about work/life boundaries is nonsense. The most satisfied people never talk about “leaving work at work.” What they have in common are careers fueled by their passions, whether or not those careers make sense to anyone else. They are typically people who forge ahead, not worrying about how it will all come together.

Be wary of the tendency to use only “ability” as the measure in making career choices. There is a danger in using what you can do as the sole determinant of what you ought to do. If there is anything you can learn from the “slash careerists,” Rōnin and the new career frontier - no career choice is forever.

The remaining chapters of Career On! are dedicated to helping you find and clarify your interests, skills, and values while you chart your course to personal career fulfillment.

## CHAPTER 5 TAKING CHARGE OF CAREER CHOICE

This chapter is adapted from my book: *Life's Path*.

*I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor.*

*Henry David Thoreau*

Looking for and considering the “right” career for you is daunting and can be frightening. It is more than looking for a job. It is a serious commitment of time and energy to make a choice that you really enjoy. You need a high level of motivation to navigate the ins and outs and weather the frustrations and disappointment that may be between you and the career or job choice you want.

Stop and think a moment about your career. In the normal routine of life, you will spend eight hours a day, five days a week, and 48 weeks a year for as much as 40 years working at one job or another. Why not do everything in your power to make it as rewarding as possible?

By developing yourself, you make several things happen. First, you take an active role in achieving future success in the workplace. This in turn will help ensure your future happiness. Second, if you are happy and successful in your career, your employer or your business will benefit. The future success of any organization rests largely on the capabilities of its employees. If you are unhappy and unsuccessful, everyone will lose.

Who is ultimately responsible for developing your career? The truth is it is not up to your supervisor or manager. It is not up to the Human Resources department. It is not up to your mother, father, siblings or your friends. It is up to you.

## *Career On!*

There are a variety of opportunities to aid you in that search. Help is available to set career goals, expand educational horizons, strengthen your technical skills and build your commitment to your chosen career field.

However, the bottom line is that the opportunities available are only valuable if used. You must take the responsibility for using resources for career development.

Career On! is one of the resources designed to help you develop a fulfilling career. The contents are designed to be a "roadmap" for your career development. This roadmap will lead you from where you are now through where you want to be, and how you can get there. Career On! concludes with strategies for sustaining your efforts for the long haul. After you have completed Career On!, keep it handy for use as a "how to" guide and a reference manual in developing your career.

As you work your way through this chapter it is important that you complete all the activities in each section. If a section's information is not complete, much of the effectiveness of the module will be lost. Each section builds on the previous section. If you feel more space is needed, simply copy the forms and continue. Be completely honest in all areas. Remember no one will see the information that you record within this book unless you choose to show someone.

All of us have made decisions about our life to please others. It might be our career decisions, life partnering decisions or other aspects of our lives. For this exercise, please outline some decisions you made where you placed other people's needs before your own.

Decision:

Who was I trying to please?

## **Kathleen's Story**

After being asked to consider, "What would do you need to change to live the life of your dreams?" Kathleen noticed that her dreams were filled with threats of all sorts. She was frightened and feared that she was hurting herself.

She meditated on this and concluded that the threats were about her mother. She was trying to please her mother. She discovered that she needed to cut the umbilical cord and stop relying on her mother as a salvation. She realized that she did not need to sever the relationship, just change it. The threats were actually warnings about her own metaphorical death if she continued to rely on her mother for a lifeline. Kathleen had to discover her own life and take control of her own happiness. She had to claim her own identity and find her own place in the world.

Kathleen's demon was the internalized voice of her mother who criticized and belittled her for her dreams. Mom did not need to understand how Kathleen was changing the nature of the relationship, but Kathleen had to assert herself. She had to speak up with her own

voice and seek her own sense of happiness and success. Mom had to deal with her own demons.

Our problems come from the early wounds of our spirit. We will never heal the wounded child. But we can build an inner parent of our choice. We must be healed by building an inner parent that is healthy and nurturing. We need to give ourselves permission to be in a healthy relationship with ourselves. I know it all seems to be tenuous. And it is. However, as we go through our daily lives, our passion about our vision will sustain us.

A way to cultivate our unique gifts is to remain sensitive to other people's needs, stay in our own power and stretch ourselves to try new things. There is more than one right answer: All the dogs barking up the wrong tree don't make it the right tree.

Many of us, however, are vision disabled. We have a lack of vision producing ability. Vision block is like writer's block. The solution is to collaborate. Find a collaborator. Don't be alone in searching and doing.

Please answer the following questions:

What are my unique gifts?

What is the single most powerful gift I have to contribute?

If I wanted to make a difference in the world, what would that be?

What is the right career for me?

What is the right kind of life for me?

How would I describe my purpose in life?

If I became outrageous, what would I do?

If I lived with complete power, what would I do?

If I lived playfully, what would I do?

Your task now is to reinvent yourself. Look for something important to do. Something so compelling that you are willing to do try it over and over until you are satisfied with the outcome. “Be” first – develop a vision then act.

Act as if:

- You have/had self esteem
- You could/or

Then:

- Take small steps. As Kaizen (the Japanese continuous improvement process) tells us, small steps accumulate.

Make believe you are astoundingly valuable. You may just become extraordinary. So, if you want to be effective and find meaning in your career, just focus, do the exercises in this book and then do something about it.

## CHAPTER 13 WHERE DO I WANT TO BE?

Destination is defined as a place to which one is journeying. In this case you need to decide your career destination. To do this successfully, you need to establish goals. These goals help you stay on track and achieve a desired result—whether it is a new home, more education, a different lifestyle, a new sport, or in this case a rewarding career. The goals need to be both long term (five years or more) and short term (less than five years).

The first step in setting up goals is to take note of things that interest you, think about your desires, dreams, and ask yourself some pressing questions:

What do I want out of life?

What do I want to do in five, ten, fifteen years?

Is there something special I want to change in the way I look, feel, relax, or my lifestyle?

Do I want a new home, more money, another car, children?

Your goals must have the following elements to be meaningful for you:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Tangible
- Realistic
- Controllable

One of my clients came to me during a Leader's Path retreat looking confident and enthusiastic. She told me that she was clear about what she was going for in her personal development and change process. She held out a piece of paper to me and proudly exclaimed, "Look!"

On her Goal Worksheet, there were three words,

“Manage Meetings Better.”

I looked down, concerned, and a bit bewildered. Turning the coffee stained document over, I looked for more evidence of heartfelt exploration and deep thought that penetrated to the quietest most desolate regions of her soul. She had been working hard and I did not want to consume her passionate sense of accomplishment with empty sounding words.

So, I spoke, “Okay...let’s see here... what are the first things you are going to do to manage meetings better?”

She looked at me like, “What do you mean.” Then she said, “What do you mean? I will do what is necessary to manage meetings better. You know... all the things that should be done.”

Stepping back a bit, “Yeah, I know what I would do. Do you know what you would do?” That was the wrong question.

“Yes.” She said with confidence.

“Okay look. We talked about values during the first day...” She nodded tentatively, agreeing, and reflecting. “And we agreed that it is important to build evaluation into what we are working toward, so we know when we have arrived at Realization Station, the place where we know we have achieved what we set out to achieve.” Again, she nodded in agreement. “So, managing meetings better is your goal, the objectives are the things you will do as steps to get to the goal. They are the metrics you use to see how far you have come.”

Okay, **breakthrough!** However, she said, “But I know what I am going to do” as she drew lines of demarcation with her boot in the red clay beneath her feet. Ah yes, resistance.

“Yes, you do. But think of this process as an opportunity to write down how you will achieve what you want, your values while you are doing it, the exact process you are using to get there, and how you will know and appreciate success. Then you will look back on the process to see if it works as well as if it doesn’t and be able to reflect and learn. Also, remember the journal I asked you to record your thoughts and feelings in. Well, this is your journal of achievement, your record of success and more importantly – your thoughts and feelings about what you are learning.”

I was done and so was she. She agreed. Afterward, the seminar was over, and she returned to her business. One month passed. She called me and said that she took my advice and wrote down her values about meetings, the overall goal for meeting management, the specific objectives along the path to achieving her goal, and how she knew she had arrived at Realization Station – the place she wanted to be. It worked for her, and she felt better about the outcome she had identified in her goal worksheet. Even more importantly she was able to see how far she had come, reflect on her feelings and learnings recorded in the journal, and take immense steps for her own growth and risk taking.

For me, this was a lesson in clarity and communication. We want change to happen right now! We believe that we have done everything we need to do, and we are certain of the steps to get the outcome we want. Then, when it doesn't happen, or we get something else, we are disappointed. It is critical to your successful change that you clearly identify goals and objectives.

The broader statement of purpose is the goal. The more precise aims to achieve goals are the objectives. Let's take the example above: "Manage Meetings Better." This is the goal. You might also have the goal of improving the quality of meetings in your organization, to protect and support the self-confidence of the people attending. The objectives would be the steps you would take to ensure how the process occurs, what the format is, what the ground rules are, etc.

## **Writing Objectives**

As you think about your own personal change and overarching goal, consider categorizing your objectives into three categories: Planning Objectives, Learning Objectives, and Process Objectives.

### **Planning Objectives examples:**

- You will begin by a certain date.
- You will end the first part of your development plan when you reach an important date, attain skills, or you will phase out of a harmful relationship.
- You identify the resources and information you will need and obtain them by a date.

- Attain clarity about what you want

### Learning Objectives example:

- What do you want to learn (knowledge) and be able to do (skills)?
- For instance – define the difference between process and content and know how to handle each during the meeting. Describe and understand eight common meeting problems and how to solve them.

### Process Objectives examples:

- You assume greater responsibility for your own learning and growth
- Develop confidence in doing what needs to be done
- Enjoy working toward your goal
- Share information and joy
- Be a better communicator and collaborator

For example, here are some sample goal statements:

- To generate \$10,000.00 more than my annual salary by December 31, 2010, by taking a part time job selling vacuum cleaners in the tri-state area, starting August 26, 2009, working one night per week.
- To earn 100% of my annual bonus of \$20,000.00 by December 31, 2010, by achieving all four of my measurable goals on time as agreed with my manager.
- I will lose one pound each week until I have lost 20 pounds, in 20 weeks beginning August 26, 2010.
- I will tell my husband things I like about him at least three times per week.
- When I become angry at my wife, I will count to ten before I calmly state how I feel.
- I will come in 30 minutes early each morning to organize my workplace to help with my promotion.

- I will make an appointment with my immediate supervisor every two weeks to ask for feedback about my work performance.

## **Some Hints in Setting Goals**

### **Long-Term Career Goals**

- Look at an organization chart. What jobs look interesting? Ask yourself, "Would I like to do that?"
- Talk to your manager. Ask for information as to what the job or jobs entails. "Do I have the skills?"
- Talk to people that are doing that job now. They can give you insight into the job.
- Check job postings and job descriptions. "What is available?"
- Define the job. What are the requirements and functions of that job? "Do I have what it takes to fill the position?"
- Are there interim steps along the way? "Can I REALLY go from a technical assistant to department manager in one job move?"

### **Make the Goals Realistic**

- Not so large that you become overwhelmed.
- Is this REALLY what I want to do?
- Does this conflict with my basic behavior?

Here are some examples:

- The job requires public speaking. I HATE public speaking.
- The job requires a lot of math skills. I love to do math activities.
- The job has long hours of sitting doing repetitive tasks. I have a very difficult time sitting still.

### **Prioritize the Goals**

- Most interesting

- Easiest to achieve

### Break the Goals Into Objectives

"Eat the elephant one bite at a time"!

Sometimes a goal may seem overwhelming (get a college degree). Break it into a smaller piece (enroll and complete first semester) that will seem more manageable.

Use the chart below to list your goals and objectives. After the list is complete, prioritize the goals as to importance.

1 = very important

2 = important

3 = not important

Priority	Goals and/or Objectives	Date I Want to Achieve
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	

Priority	Goals and/or Objectives	Date I Want to Achieve
	6.	
	7.	
	8.	
	9.	
	10.	

After the goals are established and prioritized, commit yourself to accomplishing them by the date you set. Remember that enthusiasm, excitement, and tough mindedness go a long way to success.

Be aware of some factors that are defeating in accomplishing goals. These are:

### **Fear**

- Of success
- Of failure

## **Procrastination**

- Putting off until tomorrow
- Seeming to be busy without actually accomplishing anything

## **Mediocrity**

- Comfortable in present situation
- Not wanting to "rock the boat"
- Feel safe
- Lonely
- Frightened of future
- Too much television
- Too many video games
- Settling for less than the best

At this point you need to compare the information that you wrote down in the "Where Am I Now" section to the goals you have established. Identify areas that you need to develop. Check to see if you have the skills, background, knowledge, experiences, etc. that are required to meet your goals.

## **Goal Accomplishment**

To meet you short term, medium term and long range career goals, it is necessary to measure your progress:

1. Ask yourself, "What do I want to get accomplished (today) (this week) etc.?"
  - a. Record these and at the end of the day or week, compare what was accomplished with your predictions.
2. Revise your predictions for future days/ weeks until you become more proficient at goal setting.

Recording your work plan ahead of time will help you better organize your time so you can meet your goals.

If not... maybe college or... maybe not? Ultimately, How Do You Get There?

# CHAPTER 18 JOB INTERVIEWING

I am including this chapter on job interviewing as a public service to you career clarifiers and researchers. Why? Because at some point during your career clarification process you will be at the point of applying for a job. Or, more than likely, you will have put out so much positive energy and superb effort into looking for the perfect career for yourself, someone will ask you to interview for a job. So here goes, the best way to get the job is to give a great interview.

Sweaty palms time...you have a job interview! This is something you really wanted – you have a foot in the door. Now the problem is how to make a great impression.

Whether:

- You are a candidate for a new job at a new company or,
- You are already an employee of your company, and you want to move ahead; you still must go through the interview process for a new position within the organization.

This interview can make or break your chance at the job. The old adage about "you never get another chance to make a first impression" certainly can be true.

The very first step toward success is PREPARE. Do not go into a job interview without having done your homework. Much of your preparation has already been done in the previous section about your background and accomplishments. Use this information to convince a prospective employer that you are unique and bring special skills to the workplace.

In the space provided, answer the following questions. They're designed to help you prepare for a job interview. You may want to refer back to previous sections for information.

1. What type of jobs interest you? List at least three.

- 1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

2. What skills or abilities do you have that make you a valuable worker? If you know your skills, interests, and abilities and can talk about them with confidence, this may be your ticket to getting the job you want. Be prepared to provide examples of your best skills and abilities.

#### EXAMPLES

- Able to get along with others
- Enjoy making presentations
- Hard working
- Dependable
- Willing to go the extra distance to get a job done
- Interested in computers
- Analyzing problems

1.

2.

3.

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4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

4. List the courses you have taken, schools attended, degrees and certificates you have earned. This listing should include on-the-job training courses, military, business, vocational, etc.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

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5. Know your goals. What do you want to be doing five years from now? Set short-term, intermediate-term, and long-term goals.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

Another area of preparation is: Know About the Organization You Are Applying To or The Organization You Are Working For:

- History
- Products and services

- Business methods
- Philosophy
- Reputation
- Organizational structure
- Locations
- Prospects for growth
- Standing in the industry and field

To get this information:

- Send for annual reports, check newspaper articles, business magazines and periodicals, New York Times index, College Placement Annual, computer/internet databases, professional societies, etc.
- Contact various individuals: family, friends, associates, reference librarians, teachers, industry experts, placement personnel, individuals employed by the organization, etc.

You also need to:

- Bring a sample of your work--if possible
  - Make a copy just in case you need to leave the sample
- Rehearse your answers
  - Use a mirror, family member, tape recorder, etc.
- Review your work history
  - In the stress of the moment you may forget employment, details of the responsibilities of your various jobs, accomplishments in previous jobs, reasons for leaving, etc.
- Write down your questions and concerns
  - This will help you remember important information that you need to know
  - It shows a professional, thorough approach

The next step is the actual interview. Here are some helpful hints to make the most of your opportunity.

Ok, I know to some of you, this may appear to be “Old School,” dated and perhaps silly. First, I work with a lot of businesses and executives, so I hear a lot about how decision makers view applicants and make hiring decisions. Yes, there is a lot of bombast about the different generations in the workplace, ill prepared and disheveled applicants, applicants that are not clear about what they want to do, and applicants that can’t articulate their accomplishments or abilities related to the job for which they are applying.

Further, for young adults, in many situations the hiring manager is a member of the “older generation” and he or she will make a hiring decision based on how you present yourself and how you fit into the job requirements. I want you to be clear about this...

First, you get hired for only two reasons:

1. They like you and the hiring person believes you will fit into the organizational culture, and
2. You meet all or most of the job requirements.

Second, the process and methods that I am describing really works in your favor by setting you apart or by developing your personal brand. Enough said; you choose what fits your needs and interests.

Third, others reading this section might think, “Yeah, I already know this.” No problem, use this as a check list or a reminder of how to prepare for your job interview.

Finally, some of you will think, “This is lame.” Some of you will think that this is a waste of your time and effort and things do not really happen this way. Again, no problem; use it or don’t at your own risk. It comes from my experience as a consultant to organizations and as an executive coach.

### **Here is the job interview preparation list:**

- Be on time. If need be, go to the site of the interview before the actual date to see where the place is located and how long it takes to get there. Plan to arrive no more than 15 minutes early.

If you are earlier than this, go take a walk until it is time. On the other hand, if you know you are going to be late, call the office to apologize for the beyond-your-control occurrence and give them an estimated time of when you will be there. Being late will not be "the kiss of death" for your job chances, unless you don't call.

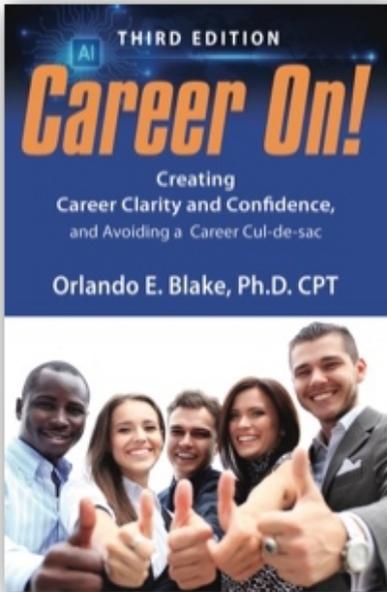
- Dress properly. One adage is to dress as your new supervisor would dress, only neater. Whatever you wear for the interview, make certain the biggest impression should come from your mouth, your résumé, and your cover letter, not from the color of your shirt, the length of your dress, or the style of your shoe. Whatever you do, make sure:
  - Clothes are clean, pressed, and conservative
  - Make-up not too heavy
  - Fingernails clean and trimmed
  - Neat hairstyle
  - Shoes shined
  - No strong perfume or cologne (the best candidate is one with no smell)
  - No faddish clothes or flashy jewelry, unless it is appropriate for the culture of the company, and you will know that from your research
  - Breath is fresh
- Offer a firm handshake at the beginning and end of the interview. Do not give the interviewer a limp, damp handshake, and do not crush the interviewer's hand. If the person is wearing rings or has arthritis, a too firm handshake can be painful. If you are not comfortable shaking hands, practice with family and friends until you are confident.
- Make eye contact. If you are not used to looking people in the eye, practice with the mirror, a family member, or friend to develop a comfort level and confidence with eye contact. When you speak, speak to the interviewer's eyes. It might be effective to occasionally look away, but only if it comes naturally.

- Posture and habits. Body language delivers strong messages about you. When you sit, sit up straight or lean slightly forward to show interest. Keep your hands still and don't fidget in your seat. Do not chew gum. Smile whenever possible.
- Be friendly. The first person you may encounter is the secretary. Always be polite, professional, and respectful. Many interviewers will ask their secretary's opinion on the candidate. Greet the interviewer by name and with a handshake. The old rule on "always use last names" may no longer apply. There is a new culture in business that is stressing first names. If in doubt, or until instructed otherwise, "Mr." or "Ms." is a safe way to go.
- Seating. Most interviewers will ask you to be seated. However, if the invitation is not extended, do not sit until the interviewer does. If there are several choices of seats, the one closest to the interviewer without being too close would be appropriate. Do not take too long or ask when making this decision.
- Privacy. Be friendly with the interviewer, but not personal. The personal objects in the room are not topics of conversation unless the interviewer brings them up. If you are left alone, do not get up and roam around the office, especially behind the interviewer's desk, stay put. The only objects of interest should be the magazines left out or the pictures on the wall.
- Voice. Be aware of the tone of your voice; keep your hands (and feet) from your mouth. Use complete sentences in a clear, audible voice. Avoid slang. Do not ramble or mumble; this shows lack of confidence and/or fuzzy thinking.
- Be an attentive listener. Listen to what the interviewer is asking before you start thinking about an answer. Watch for clues or cues, verbal and nonverbal, as to when to start talking or when to stop talking. Do not interrupt the interviewer; wait for him/her to finish. If you do not understand the question, rephrase the question back to the interviewer. Be aware of what is really being asked.

It is always unnerving to walk into a situation in which you don't know what is going to be asked. There are a few questions in an interview that you can expect in some form. As you answer the sample questions, try to







*Career On! provides a "roadmap" for your career choices based on who you are. By following my suggestions and using this book as a guide, you will be able to, step by step, smoothly move through the phases to your best career fit. The tool for you to make the best choice is right in front of you in this book.*

# **Career On!**

## **Creating Career Clarity and Confidence and Avoiding a Career Cul-de-sac**

### **Third Edition**

by Orlando E. Blake, PhD CPT

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