

# *Career Choices and Changes*

## A Workbook for Discovering Who You Are? What You Want? And How To Get It?

Unlike most other college textbooks, *Career Choices and Changes* is an interactive, experiential program that teaches a **process** for making not only career choices but life choices, as well. It also ignites the intrinsic motivation required to succeed in both post-secondary studies and in the workforce. Students come away from this experience with a productive vision of their future and a quantitative and meaningful 10-year plan for achieving their goals.

Self-directed learners are highly prized in the workplace of today. At the end of each chapter of *Career Choices and Changes*, students will be asked to assess their own learning and understanding of what they have experienced.

### Section one WHO AM I?

#### Checkpoint Chapter 1: Envisioning Your Future *How do you define success?*

You have started thinking about your ideal future, which is the first step toward achieving it. Before you move on, check to make sure that you've reached the goals listed below.

- I realized that success does not come from daydreaming, but from combining a vision with appropriate actions.
- I am beginning to imagine the kind of future that I would find most satisfying.
- I understand that work is more than just a way to earn a living; it is an important part of most people's identity.
- I can now recognize the diversity in individuals' daily accomplishments.
- I am aware of the methods that I typically use to make decisions and can evaluate their effectiveness.
- I learned there are myriad definitions of success, and I realize the one I want to strive to meet is my own.
- I am now on a life-long path toward determining my own personal definition of success.

## Checkpoint

### Chapter 2: Your Personal Profile

*Getting what you want starts with knowing who you are.*

You have now made good progress toward answering the question “Who am I?” which you will continue to investigate throughout your life. You also recognize that knowing yourself well is essential to living the most fulfilling life possible. Make sure you are ready to proceed by confirming that you’ve accomplished the goals below.

- I am starting to outline the many qualities and characteristics that make up my unique identity and understand this self-knowledge is a necessary and ongoing part of any rewarding life.
- I am learning to identify my passions and articulate things that are extremely important to me on an emotional level.
- I clarified which work values are most meaningful in my own life.
- I determined my work behavioral style and understand it as an important trait to consider when evaluating my career interests.
- I identified the strengths that make me unique and valuable, and I am starting to synthesize how my interests, values, and traits relate to education and career choices.
- I understand the standard skills categories, and I’m cataloging the skills I’ve developed over the years.
- I recognized and evaluated my roles, occupations, and vocations.
- I am more aware of the messages—verbal and otherwise—I get from society and from significant people in my life, and I understand how these messages can affect the way I feel about my future or my potential.
- I completed the first draft of my bulls-eye formatted personal profile, with the recognition that I will build on this as I discover more about myself.

## Section two

### WHAT DO I WANT?

## Checkpoint

### Chapter 3: Lifestyles of the Satisfied and Happy

*Keeping your balance and perspective*

You have begun to answer the question “What do I want?” as it relates to your ideal lifestyle. Check that you’ve reached the goals listed below, essential for living a balanced and satisfying life.

- I understand Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and its impact on my identity and self-esteem.

- I started to identify an overall goal or mission for my life.
- I projected myself into the future and recognized the diversity of lifestyle options available to me.
- I started to identify the lifestyle I'd find compatible to my expectations.
- I identified the components of a balanced lifestyle and appreciate the desirability of balancing internal and external, personal and professional, private and public life.
- I experienced the balanced lifestyle evaluation process and realized the effect that outside forces can have on my life and my role in mitigating these.

### Checkpoint

#### Chapter 4: What Cost this Lifestyle?

*Every career choices involves sacrifices and rewards.*

You now have a strong understanding of the costs of any given lifestyle—financial costs, psychological costs, and the costs in terms of commitment to a given career. This knowledge will likely impact your career selection, so take the time to make sure you've mastered the concepts below.

- I completed a comprehensive budget for the lifestyle I aspire to once I complete my education/training.
- I realize just how many financial obligations I have to consider in my budget and understand the effect career choice will have on my lifestyle.
- I factored the salary requirement to support my desired lifestyle.
- I starting identifying careers that will support my desired lifestyle.
- Using the more common budgeting technique—taking a given income and deciding how it should be allocated, I created a hard times budget.
- I discussed some causes of poverty and understand ways in which I might best avoid becoming a poverty statistic myself.
- I explored the myth that money will make me happy.
- I learned that there are sacrifices as well as rewards associated with every job and every lifestyle.
- I recognize the rewards and sacrifices of specific careers as they relate to my work values and realize that values not satisfied on the job can be met with appropriate after-hours activities.
- I recognize the long-term financial payoff of an investment in further education.
- I interviewed friends and acquaintances and gained specific information about the costs and rewards of various jobs.
- I realize that to meet long-term goals I will have to make short-term sacrifices, and I explored a systematic decision-making rubric that can help me attain my goals.

- I can now evaluate any career I am considering more objectively and determine whether or not that career would be a wise choice for me.

### Checkpoint

#### Chapter 5: Your Ideal Career

*There's more to consider than just the work.*

You have now taken a look at the general characteristics you hope to find in a job. This will eventually help you to identify your ideal career. Before moving forward, confirm that you've achieved each of the goals below.

- I completed a series of questionnaires and identified the specific working conditions and job characteristics that most appeal to me.
- I prioritized the working conditions I would find appealing and I can more succinctly describe the job characteristics of my ideal job.
- I considered the job characteristics that are most important to me and I'm thinking creatively about jobs that meet those requirements.
- I analyzed which skills I'd most like to use in my ideal job.
- I considered a variety of formats for structured or unstructured employment and gauged my level of anxiety tolerance in relation to working.
- I evaluated whether my attitudes, characteristics, and skills are more in line with the role of an employee or entrepreneur.
- I started to sort out my feelings about status as it relates to job selection.

### Checkpoint

#### Chapter 6: Career Research

*Reading about careers isn't enough*

You have now explored a valuable three-step process for learning about and deciding on a career. You have started to narrow down career choices that might suit you best. Before you make that decision in the next chapter, confirm each of the following statements.

- I've understand the 16 career clusters and the types of jobs in each.
- I reviewed and considered my personality traits, financial requirements, ideal working conditions, and projected lifestyle as I begin narrowing down my optimal careers.
- I learned library and online research skills and put them to use in evaluating information about potential careers.
- I completed at least three *Career Interest Surveys* for careers that appeal to me.
- I visualized what it would be like to spend a typical day at the job of my choice.

- I practiced writing a business letter and conducting an interview.
- I saw first-hand what it might be like to spend a day at my chosen career either through job shadowing or volunteering.
- I can identify jobs within an industry that match my work behavioral style.
- I identified a specific job I consider a good match for my personality and work behavioral style.

### Checkpoint

#### Chapter 7: Decision-making

##### *How to choose what's best for you*

Congratulations! You have arrived at a preliminary career decision that you will use as you develop your 10-year plan. Just as importantly, you understand that this career decision can be changed as you continue to learn more about yourself and the world around you. Before you start exploring how to obtain your chosen career, make sure you've mastered the following tasks.

- I clarified the difference between long- and short-term goals, and I recognize the importance of considering my plans for the future when making daily decisions.
- I understand that before evaluating different options I need to identify factors surrounding each option and, with those facts in mind, determine the probable outcomes of each option.
- I learned how to evaluate the pros, cons, and likelihood of success of different choices.
- I completed a systematic decision-making rubric to determine the career that most closely matches my goals and needs.
- I understand that my own resources, wants, and needs should be factored in when making major life decisions, and I know how I can use the decision-making rubric for those choices.
- I evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of my decision-making strategies.
- I know to keep my options open by remaining flexible to changes in myself or in the world around me.

### Section three

## HOW DO I GET IT?

### Checkpoint

#### Chapter 8: Setting Goals and Solving Problems

##### *Skills for successful living*

You have made great progress in making the plans, learning the skills, and acquiring the tools you will need to realize your dreams. Solving problems and setting goals

are two of the most important skills for developing any action plan. Check out the objectives below to ensure that you've met them.

- I learned how to apply problem-solving techniques that involve delaying gratification, accepting responsibility, and striking a balance between pleasure and discipline.
- I learned the process for writing quantitative goals and objectives.
- I have written quantitative goals and objectives of my own including those that relate to my lifestyle goals.
- I understand the cycle of growth and I'm aware of opportunities to expand my goals as I develop new values and ideas for my future.

### Checkpoint

#### Chapter 9: Avoiding Detours and Roadblocks

*The road to success is dotted with many tempting parking places*

We all know that problems and challenges are a fact of life. You have learned strategies that will help you face them head-on to actively overcome them. Since you are responsible for your own life, you recognize that it is up to you to overcome any perceived limitations. These are powerful lessons, so confirm that you've completed the following objectives before moving on.

- I examined common excuses people use for not doing what they can or want to do. I evaluated those reasons and determined what might be done to avoid using them myself.
- I started to evaluate my own excuses and look at them in a new way. By accepting responsibility for my problems, I am also opening new avenues for solving them.
- After reviewing some unsettling statistics regarding poverty, earnings, and retirement, I better understand how I can address these in my own life.
- I examined some common problems and, by projecting into the future, I've considered possible long-term consequences of present actions. I personalized the effect of dropping out of school on my eventual job satisfaction.
- I comprehend the financial costs of bad habits, both current and long term.
- I understand how flexibility and salary impact the ability to mix career and family, and recognize that women would do well to consider careers not traditionally pursued by females.
- I learned evaluation techniques that I can use before impulsively abandoning a dream or plan.
- I am learning to overcome fears I may have by imagining myself as successful at that which makes me anxious.
- I learned a hierarchical approach to conquering those anxieties that might limit my goals for the future.

- I started the process of a 10-year plan by making long-range plans for someone who could reasonably be expected to fail due to lack of resources.
- I observed that taking calculated risks is an important skill.

### Checkpoint

#### Chapter 10: Attitude is Everything

##### *Learning to accentuate the positive*

You have begun to develop the attitudes that will lead you to your own definition of success. It may take practice to fully integrate these new attitudes, but you will find that the payoff is well worth it. Check below to make sure you'll have all the tools needed.

- I understand the power of affirmation in changing self-limiting attitudes.
- I wrote my own affirmations to keep me on track to meet my goals.
- I recognize the characteristics and attitudes of excellence.
- I realize that aggressive action may be necessary to achieve some goals. I clarified the concept of the work ethic and can recognize it in others as well as in myself.
- I strategized ways to improve work habits to insure job security and promotion.
- I recognize the attitudes most in demand for workers—now and in the future.
- I developed an action plan to change any self-limiting attitudes.
- I identified the attitudes and skills needed to compete in this ever-changing world of the 21st century.
- I recognize the dignity in all work.

### Checkpoint

#### Chapter 11: Your Skills Inventory

##### *The precursor for your Education Plan*

By now, you've recognized that it's the skills at your disposal and your ability to articulate them that will open doors for you in your career. You've recorded the skills you currently have and those you need for your chosen career in a Skills Inventory. Make sure you haven't missed anything using the checklist below.

- I realize that I must continually add skills throughout my life to remain competitive in my field.
- I've created a Skills Inventory that I will update regularly and share with my college advisors, potential employers, career counselors and peers.
- I've identified the skills I've gained from work and formal education in addition to those I've gained from my volunteer work, hobbies, and other experiences.

- ❑ I've figured out which skills I'll need for my chosen career, including those I already have and those I need to learn.
- ❑ I know that, due to the interconnected nature of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century world, I'll likely need to cultivate additional skills to be competitive in the global economy and I'll need to stay current on international events.
- ❑ I've taken stock of my technology-related skills and added these to my Skills Inventory.
- ❑ I'm prepared to be flexible in the face of constant change.
- ❑ I've decided on two or three back-up careers just in case I have more trouble than I anticipated getting a job in my first choice career or I decide that first choice career is not for me, after all.
- ❑ I understand that developing transferable skills will be even more important than developing career-related skills since it is likely that I will eventually change jobs or industries.
- ❑ I've also discovered how many skills are transferrable between jobs.
- ❑ I've drafted an Education Plan for learning the skills I've determined I'll need to acquire.

### Checkpoint

#### Chapter 12: Study Skills for the Life-Long Learner

##### *Developing your Learning Plans*

You have now discovered the necessity of being a self-directed, life-long learner in the modern workplace and experienced a wide variety of resources and techniques for learning new things. Most importantly, you understand that anyone has the ability to learn if they are motivated by a future goal and willing to put in the effort. Before you start working toward achieving the learning goal you set, look over the following checklist to review all the tools presented in this chapter.

- ❑ I understand that I will need to constantly learn new things in order to keep up with unceasing changes in technology, the workplace and lifestyles.
- ❑ I've begun to explore the wealth of learning opportunities aside from formal education.
- ❑ I see the benefit in "learning by doing," putting my new knowledge into practice as soon as possible to improve my comprehension.
- ❑ I've developed my first Learning Plan after setting a goal to learn a skill I'll need in my future career.
- ❑ I've identified my motivation for learning that skill, which will allow me to take ownership of the learning process.
- ❑ I realize that anyone can learn and that my success in life will be more of a function of the effort I put in and long-range thinking than any natural ability.
- ❑ I've written affirmations to build my confidence in my potential to learn.

- I've learned the steps to becoming a self-directed learner, "Research, Read, Reflect, Recall," so that I can continue to learn new skills throughout my life.
- I've *researched* the learning tools and settings that would make the most sense for my learning goal.
- I've improved my *reading* strategies and determined alternative methods of learning if I struggle with reading.
- I've begun *reflecting* on what I've read and I'm taking notes with the intention of better retaining new information.
- I recognize the importance of learning for the long term, since the information I take in will only be useful if I know it well enough to use it.
- I'll demonstrate my expertise by being ready to *recall* what I've learned whether is on a on an exam, in an interview, or in a presentation.
- I understand that preparation is key for doing well and I've created a plan to overcome any apprehension or anxiety I may have about these situations.
- I've learned new time management strategies so that I'll have time to achieve my learning goal.
- I've formalized a *Learning Plan* to achieve my learning goal and will continue to do one for each of the skills I need to learn. My *Learning Plans* are a subset of my *Education Plan*.

### Checkpoint

#### Chapter 13: Making Changes

##### *The inevitable process*

You have come to understand that change is inevitable in life and have learned strategies for making smart choices when the need for change arises. Check that you've accomplished all of the goals listed below.

- I assessed my attitude toward change and, if necessary, have made progress toward improving it.
- I learned to analyze change as it relates to my work and personal values and to the economic realities in my life.
- I understand the difference between the need for a job change and the need for personal changes.
- I learned about planning for changes, financially and emotionally.
- I know how to choose an optimal time to make a self-imposed change.
- I learned to identify individuals who can support my change process.
- I learned that a variety of issues impact job satisfaction and that identifying the true problem is an important first step in the change process.
- I observed that change may require me to re-prioritize life goals and daily responsibilities.
- I considered options for career changes.
- I developed a plan for change, if a change is indeed in order.

Checkpoint  
Chapter 14: Beginning the Job Search  
*Just Do it!*

You have now been introduced to some of the most basic job hunting skills—writing resumes, locating jobs, filling out job applications, and succeeding in informational and job interviews. If you haven't already, you'll certainly want to consult other resources for more in-depth information and tools, particularly those found online. Check that you've learned these basics concepts listed below.

- I researched online the different formats for resumes.
- I researched online the format for writing a “winning” resume.
- I wrote my own resume.
- I know how to conduct an informational interview.
- I am familiar with the dos and don'ts of job interviews as well as some questions that I can expect to be asked.
- I practiced filling out a job application.
- I gained insight on dealing with rejection and accepting a job.

Checkpoint  
Chapter 15: Where Do You Go from Here?  
*Writing your 10-year plan of action.*

You now should have the resources you need to move forward. You have gathered the information and developed the skills to write a comprehensive and meaningful 10-year plan that is personalized to your own unique goals, personality, and mission in life. You have also learned decision-making techniques that will continue to help you throughout your life as you encounter change. Make sure you've covered all of the following topics, and you'll be on your way!

- I conducted a final review of my Personal Profile Chart, *Career Interest Surveys* and decision-making rubrics to determine the career that most closely matches me and my plans for the future. I conducted online research and understand the various education and job training opportunities that are available to me, particularly for my chosen career field.
- I not only developed an Education and Training 10-Year Plan, but I also understand that life-long learning is necessary in the 21st century.
- I recognize the importance of delaying gratification by identifying the sacrifices and commitments required to achieve the greatest reward.
- I wrote affirmations to empower me as I overcome fears that might hold me back from achieving my dream job.
- I identified things I can do now to avoid roadblocks I'm likely to encounter.

- I defined my 10-year goal and wrote my 10-year action plan to get there, taking education, living arrangements, employment, and finances into account.
- I acknowledge my responsibility to ask for help when I need it and I know how to recognize potential mentors when I meet them.
- I refined my own personal definition of success.
- I confirmed or refined my own personal mission statement and understand the role it plays in guiding me through future choices and changes.