

FINDING THE CAREER THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

At the tender age of 14, I was faced with a decision that could have influenced the rest of my adult life for better or worse. It could have influenced my future plans, the home or the car I could choose to buy, and even the type of woman who would choose to marry me! How can such a decision be made at such a young age? Simply put, it can't.

Career days come and go, just as mine did nearly 30 years ago, but many changes are made before and after each one. So if you chose to become a fireman, then later realize you are afraid of heights, don't be alarmed. If there is one thing I have learned through my many professions, it's that change can be good.

Each day that we face, and each challenge that we overcome, forever changes who we are and who we will become. That, in turn, changes what we need out of life to be happy. There was a time in my life when I was care-

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free, and I felt I could conquer the world. Other times I was timid, afraid of what the next day would bring. Throughout the pages of this book, I will share with you everything I have learned in my pursuit of the perfect career. With this knowledge, I wish you the best in finding your professional niche.

So, if you haven't chosen the career that your counselor thought was the perfect fit for you, what career *should* you choose?

This book is meant to be your sidekick, your companion, so use it accordingly. Grab a nice notebook and a pencil that's sharp and start jotting down ideas as we go. What you put into this exercise is what you will get out of it.

First, begin in your new notebook with a list of all the stipulations you have—things you *must have* in a career. An example, do you prefer part-time or full-time? Are working weekends completely out of the question? What about nights? Do you want a career that will pay for schooling? Is health care important? This list can be as short or as long as you need it to be. Save this list; we will use it not only in this chapter, but also in chapter 3, when I'll be discussing the blue and white paths.

Now for the fun part! Flip to the next page in your notebook. It is now time to compile a prospective career list. How can you do this? Start by picking up the phone book closest to you and flipping through the yellow pages section. Grab the smaller one if you live in a big

city, or just look at the categories list in the front. Now start at A and go all the way through the list and picture yourself in each career from airplanes to zoos. Imagine yourself in different situations. How would you feel in them? Ask yourself, “Does this seem to be a fit for me?”

What if you don't have a phone book available? That's okay. Why not then try to go through every career you can think of starting with A. Do your best to compile a comprehensive list. Although it's much easier with the yellow pages!

In your trusty notebook, make note of the jobs that seem to fit you, your personality, or who you want to become. There is no limit to the number you should have, but try to record as many as possible, at least listing 10 to 20.

After this, write in a few of the top companies under your chosen careers. You can use this for research purposes later.

Please take a moment to pause and scan over your new list. Ask yourself, “What skills should I develop to obtain these careers?” Many of these careers you will already be qualified for, some you won't. Mark the ones for which you would need additional training.

Also, if you know someone working in any of the careers on your list, mark down his or her name next to the proper line. Write in all the details you know about each career as briefly as possible.

Daniel Lakstins

Here's an example:

Computer sales some sale and/or computer experience.

Billy Stevens

Best Buy

Radio Shack

Computer programmer vocation school (easy).

Joey Johnson

NEC Systems

Envoy Expressbill Inc.

Cosine Systems, Inc.

Computer software developer vocation school or on the job training

Luxoft

U.S. Government

IRS

It's now time to put your list up against your stipulations. Compare your first page with your list of careers and mark out all the careers that do not fit your stipulations. If you are unsure if they fit, put a question mark by them.

All the careers with no marks will obviously be your first selections, but you may find many on the list that you'll need to research further. Why? Because there are some jobs that may look good at first, but once you're hired, you find are entirely different that what you expected. It may be that after a few weeks you'll end up hating it. For example, when I studied to be an x-ray techni-

cian I had no idea that it involved being stuck in a room without windows all day!

Research – the key to wisdom. With your notebook in tow, get on the most convenient Internet connection you can find. If you don't have the Internet at home, check out your local library. The library is less distracting than a friend's house, and most of the time even less distracting than your own.

Thoroughly research all the remaining careers on your list. How? Use any search engine. Google is a popular choice. Then, type in the name of the careers on your list. Also helpful is to visit the Web sites of the companies you noted in each field.

Meditate and think about all the careers you've listed and all the research you have done. Take a few days, don't rush—just picture yourself in each of these career fields. Dreaming of these careers can be stimulating and will motivate you to accomplish in the field you eventually choose.

At this point you will have most likely narrowed your choices down to just a few. For some of you, these will be obvious. If this is the case with you, feel free to skip ahead to the final chapter and begin preparing your résumé. Although do take time to finish the rest of the book when you're done.

For others, you may feel like you're still back where we started. Don't be alarmed if this is you. There are many

Daniel Lakstins

more chapters to help you find the career path of your dreams. Besides, it took me nearly 30 years to find the one that fit me, so don't feel bad!