

FEAR, ANXIETY and the RAT RACE

By Jack Geary

Notes on the Career Management Process and Career Management Programs!

“STUDENT”

In this manual, the definition of the noun “student” is consistent with the accepted definition found in dictionaries. “Student” a scholar, one who studies. “Scholar” a learned woman or man. The term “student” used in this course is not a designation of age level. Over the past twenty years I have worked with high school students who demonstrated more maturity and common street intelligence than some “adults.” It is just that adults have learned to fake their uncertainty more effectively. Consequently, it is expected that a certain that students will exhibit competence and resourcefulness in exploring and researching an educational program and/or career change.

DO NOT SPEND TIME ON THIS PROGRAM!

Please do not waste your time on a Career Management Program unless you are ready to take the initiative in planning your career. The purpose of completing the recommended projects is to help you identify an occupation, career, and educational program and prepare a plan to reach your goal. Consequently, the activities are designed to offer you the opportunity of asking questions and discussing issues that you introduce. There is no hand holding. There is nothing more boring than a “student” who does not ask questions! By the way, most of your competition is not asking important questions. But! A few are. Find them. Associate with them. Surround yourself with ambitious people like yourself.

Students who avoid the research allow fear of the unknown to take over.

LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT

Some individuals who take this course are beginners with no employment experience and perhaps little academic experience. Most individuals who take this course have employment experience and various levels of academic experience. Some individuals have substantial employment experience at high levels of responsibilities, post-graduate degrees, and professional licenses.

This course offers you the opportunity to start where you are located and move on. The structure of the course or skeleton permits each individual to work on his or her unique situation and goals. Consequently, please do not become preoccupied with the status levels of the other students in the group. Concentrate on your own mission, goals and objectives.

WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS?

It is best we find out if you can achieve your expectations in this program before we get started. After previewing this manual, you may think this program is designed for upper level-management types to the exclusion of technical, clerical, administrative, or managerial workers. Put your mind at ease. This program is not targeted to address the needs of any particular classification of worker. Instead, this program is targeted to meet the needs of “ambitious” individuals who want to achieve a sense of purpose in their lives, especially in their work-life and career.

I believe that what you share in common with other individuals in this program are your ambitions, goals, objectives, and challenges. The clarity of your ambitions, goals, and objectives will range from vague notions to clear operational plans. I believe this program will help you translate your ambitions, goals, and objectives into practical, concrete strategies to get the results you want. You are responsible for determining that the results you want are consistent with your values.

Be careful. There is a high probability that you will achieve your goals and objectives if you work hard. The probability factor will increase in your favor to the extent that you invest your time and efforts in working diligently on your objectives. You must not forget that the employer must pay attention to his/her bottom line first. Your bottom line is not the employer’s major concern- nor should it be.

The employer did not establish the business to hire you. The employer established the business to manufacture a product or provide a service. In order to stay in business the employer must realize a competitive yield on his/her equity investment. Operating costs will be incurred, including labor cost, to manufacture the product or deliver the service.

Management is charged with the responsibility of minimizing operating costs or overhead- and labor is overhead, charging the highest price the market will tolerate, and maximizing the spread between prices and operating costs. You must take responsibility for your bottom line- the yield on the investment of your dollars & time to achieve your occupational objective and minimizing the investment of dollars & time in the maintenance of your occupation or career.

HAVE YOU ARRIVED YET?

“IF YOU DO NOT KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING, YOU WILL WIND UP SOMEWHERE ELSE ANYWAY- AND, YOU ARE PROBABLY ALREADY THERE.”

If you do not know where you have been, you may have trouble in figuring out where you want to go. Where you have been may be where you need to remain. If you do not have a conscious awareness of your past, how do you know it did not work? Your past was just seconds ago.

Today is the future that you thought about last year. If you continue to do what you are now doing where will you wind up next year? Look at your calendar and checkbook register. Those diaries will tell you that your past is a collection of events requiring time and expenditures—a representation of your priorities or values.

Why change anything? If you want to change something, first determine what it is you want to change and then estimate the consequences of the change. Keep one foot in the past and the other foot in the future to maintain a balance in the present. Create a vision for yourself but keep your feet on the ground- jumping up now and then helps.

SECONDARY GAINS!

One word of caution, please. You may have access to financial resources from a government entitlement program or a settlement to pay for professional counseling, formal training, on-the-job training, and job seeking assistance. Consequently, you may believe that someone else can find you a job for you. You may believe there are special programs that will identify a job for you without your personal effort.

Governments and government-sponsored programs cannot create jobs! (Except the people employed by the programs.) You may believe that just acquiring formal training, degrees, or certificates or securing employment with a great employer will automatically take care of your occupational, vocational, or career goals.

This is not true. Formal training is just a small part of Career Management despite the substantial investment of financial, time, and health resources. Unless formal training is tailored to the specific position(s) you have targeted and you demonstrate performance once hired, you take the chance of wasting your time and money. It is true that when a large population sample is surveyed the results show that earnings are highly correlated with educational achievement. However, the statistical or correctional relationship may not be true for you.

WHO DOES THE WORK?

You do! All of it! A competent counselor will expect you to do all of the work in career planning. Beware! No test or computer software program will tell you what occupation or career is best for you.

SOME COMMON MYTHS

The most common myth is that you can develop a career plan after meeting with a “counselor” for two or three sessions- all you need is a resume! A “Career Counselor” can tell you “what’s out there” and “what your options are” without any personal research effort on your part or leaving your chair and TV. (By the way, turn off the TV!) You may think that you do not have the time to develop a career management plan. (Psst! you must make time.)

PROFESSIONAL HELPERS!

(Is this an oxymoron?) Richard Boles in his book titled, *What Color Is Your Parachute?* includes a section about the work needed to make career decisions and how to select a “career” counselor? Please read this advice.

STRATEGIES FOR THE OD & HR PROFESSIONAL

Career Development is an excellent course to learn the basics of career counseling.

Intervention strategies in career counseling range from:
Acceptant (developing rapport);
Catalytic (reinterpret perceptions of facts/research);
Confrontational (challenging ideas and conclusions);
Prescriptive (taking charge when appropriate to move the process forward),
Theories/Principles (encourage analytic, cause-effect principles
To diagnose situations);

Career Development course offers the opportunity to learn the basics of career planning for in house career development.

JUST GET A JOB!

Do you need the Career Management Program or should you just go out and get a job. Maybe you should do this. If you do not believe you need a career management program then why are you reading this manual? The Career Management Program may be worthwhile for you even if you have your career and/or educational plans designed to your complete satisfaction because there is more to career management than the choice of an occupation or educational program.

THE SAGA CONTINUES

Many individuals have worked for over twenty years and have never experienced a job interview or completed a pre-employment application form. These individuals are essentially unprepared for the complexities of seeking work in today’s economy. Unfortunately, these people had “good” jobs until they were dumped on the market. They are economic cripples. They assumed that life throws no curve balls. They never checked out the appeal (marketability) of their skills or upgraded their skills.

These are the individuals who will seek out the “outplacement firms” or other intermediaries such as employment agencies, which perform a valuable service, and need to be, considered along with other job search methods. Using an employment agency or other intermediary, however, to do the work that should be done by the job seeker is counterproductive.

Often the same person who uses employment agencies inappropriately complains about the fee after the agency secured the job. These individuals often lament that the agency did not do anything. (Just secured the job and made the phone calls-which the job seeker did not want to do.) Many workers have only used dispatching services to obtain hourly work. Craft unions that encourage “dispatching services” do not serve their members well because this practice, when used exclusively, does not empower their members.

These same individuals take classes and expect “it” to happen without doing any work, making any sacrifices, or changing their behavior. They ask, “What is required by the instructor?” “What does the instructor want?” “How much work do I have to do?”

They seldom ask, “What do I need to do?” “I have an objective for taking this class and I need your help!” There are times when you need to take the initiative in framing the questions and answering the questions. How could a person minimize fear of confronting people to acquire information, meeting people or new friends, moving ahead of the crowd, and most importantly overcome the fear of researching?

You will find out in this program. One of the most important activities in this program is “research,” “vocational exploration,” “occupational research,” “networking” or whatever you want to call it.

Talk, cute exercises, moving experiences, the latest “counseling model” and motivational talks may cause you to feel good but at some point, you must place your face in front of another person, employer resource, or occupational resource to obtain information to get the answers to the important questions you raise.

NETWORKING FOR EMPLOYMENT

Occupational research in books, magazines, libraries, and computers are not very helpful unless the information is verified directly by personal contact with resources and employers. Yes, at some point you must make a personal contact with another person! Up Front and Personal! Research requires action that places a demand on your time and requires that you set priorities.

If Career Planning were a crime, would your calendar produce the evidence to convict you? In summary, learning how to “frame” relevant questions is an invaluable skill not only in career planning or occupational exploration but also essential in many occupational tasks.

Some Excellent Books on the Job Search:

If, however you just need to find a job quickly to pay the rent read ahead, read Parachute, and read some of the recommended books. Why wait? Just do it! J. Michael Farr covers the details of the job search such as pre-employment application forms, resumes, oral interviews, job development, and others in depth in Job Finding Fast. Other books that I would recommend are:

- The Complete Job-Search Handbook, by Howard Figler, Ph.D.
 - The 40+ Job Hunting Guide, by E. Patricia Birsner
 - The Relocating Spouses Guide to Employment, by Frances Bastress
 - Network Your Way to Job & Career Success, by Ronald L Krannich, & Caryl Krannich
 - Informational Interviewing, by Martha Stoodley
 - The Right Place at the Right Time, by Robert Wedgmann, Ph.D. Robert Chapman, Ph.D.
 - Career Satisfaction and Success, by Bernard Haldane
 - The Ultimate Job Search, by Kristi Michel & John Thomas
- If you follow a tenth of the advice in the books noted above you will secure employment quickly.

WILL POWER, THOUGHTS, AND ACTION

This manual is a collection of ideas that I hope will lead you to action. Many of the ideas expressed in this manual were borrowed from other writers such as Richard Bolles. The manual started by binding together individual handouts used over the years. The manual has no beginning, middle, or end. It is a collection of tools, phrases, thoughts, and ideas that will help you “think” and craft (“will”) your future. Thoughts are things. They are real! There is a “will” and you have on!

The “will” writes Roberto Assagioli, MD, in Psychosynthesis, is an “_essential function of the self and necessary source of origins of all choices, decisions, engagements.” Assagioli asserts that “will power” or intention can regulate and direct activity to a deliberately chosen and affirmed aim. He outlined six stages of will power.

Sixth Stages of “will power:”

- Goal setting, which eventually clarifies your position and values with that of the world/society/community;
- Deliberation, deciding which factor is important;
- Decision making, which involves making choices, countering the tendency to “have your cake and eat it to;”
- Affirmation, the attempt to take risks based on faith;
- Planning, the organizing of activities which requires a pre-visualization of the various steps that must be realized to achieve the ultimate goal;
- Execution, which requires persistence, endurance, and “one-pointedness.”

Assagioli, M.D., Roberto, A Psychosynthesis, Manual of Principles & Techniques, New York, Viking Press, 1965. (So, you thought all the positive motivation books were a recent phenomenon!)

YOUR TIME COMMITMENT

How much time will you need to invest in order to complete assignments? You cannot approach this program like a traditional college course. You need to approach the Career Management Program as if you paid me in advance a professional fee of \$ 2,000 for approximately twenty-four hours of consulting time, within a period of approximately eight to twelve weeks. How would you use your time if you paid me the \$ 2,000? (And no returns!) Would you ask the consultant if you could leave the session early? You will need to complete research activities during regular daytime working hours. Advanced planning is important in this situation especially if you are working full time.

See Chapter 7 in Martha Stoodley's excellent book, *Informational Interviewing*. You have no other choice. You need to be resourceful. If you do not invest the time in your Career Management and/or the job hunt, you will spend you time on something else anyway. You will need as much time as it takes.

CHECK YOUR READINESS TO MAKE DECISIONS

The Career Management program expects that you are interested in achieving something worthwhile, that you need the opportunity and encouragement to attack the problem, and that you need the support to stick to the job until "it" is finished. Individuals who are motivated by specific reasons to act within a definite measurable period make decisions. Individuals who affirm their strengths and recognize their weaknesses make realistic decisions. Individuals who have knowledge and understand the risks achieve results.

Decision-makers take risks. Decision-makers are willing to work with the significant parties involved in a decision to overcome obstacles. They are not "lone-rangers." They anticipate the next step and expect problems. Problems are events that just need solutions. Decision-makers want to speed up the process and follow-through with the details. In summary, decision-makers are motivated, realistic, forthright, timely, and quick.

VISION

Are you ready to create your vision? This program will help you create the vision and keep your feet on the ground. You will be encouraged to begin visualizing the future you want to achieve and developing the plans to get there. The person cannot achieve what the mind cannot first perceive. You will receive assistance in developing the goal, fixing the actions to achieve the goal, and establishing the time-line to measure your progress.

Decisions are not often final or irrevocable. You will need to make decisions with less than 100 percent of the supporting data. All decisions involve a degree of risk.

Perfectionists (those individuals who wait for 100 percent of the supporting data) are incompatible with decision-makers.

Unfortunately, too many people spend too much time on mental activity between the ears and seldom act. They speculate on what they think other people are thinking about them. Most people do not think, and when they do think, they are usually not thinking of you. They never consider the consequences of what might happen- never check things out and never reach a conclusion.

ARE YOU READY TO TAKE RISKS

Decision-making is by its nature risk taking. This program will lead you through a series of exercises designed to give you practice in making many small decisions. Be patient. Do not expect to understand everything immediately. It is not possible to know everything that may happen because you are a unique person and what you need to do will be different from what another person needs to do. It took you more than eighteen or more years to get to where you are today, so why do you think that a solution can be developed in eight weeks? When in doubt, however, do something!

WHO COMPLETES THIS PROGRAM?

A variety of interesting people completed this program over the past twenty years. They represented occupations or careers such as, attorney, architect, nurse, teacher, engineer, carpenter, cook, dishwasher, loan processor, and bank officer to name just a few. The participants were high school students, college students, individuals exploring a career change, retired persons, severely to moderately disabled persons, persons returning to the labor market after an absence, counselors seeking in-service training, and counseling interns.

Participants were individuals anticipating a layoff from companies representing a variety of industries, such as, banking, law enforcement, public utility, law, manufacturing, hospitals, and many others. Some participants had recently immigrated to this country, leaving a country that offered unacceptable alternatives, bringing with them a different cultural background, yet asking of themselves the same questions that we all ask?

- Who am I?
- Where am I going?
- What am I good at?
- How do I get there?

Others were industrially injured workers participating in vocational rehabilitation programs or referred by their physician, attorney, therapist, counselor, and minister. Many individuals were interested in developing self-employment ventures or liquidating an existing small business. Spouses, couples, a parent & son/daughter, and once, an entire family took the program together. The ages have ranged from seventeen to sixty-five but the career issues were similar.

One common essential question binds everyone together. Everyone is asking, “What should I do with my life?” There is one essential question that I ask of you repeatedly in different ways, “What actions are you taking to achieve your goals?” The format or structure of this program (hours, books, materials, and activities) when completed provide the opportunity for each person to attack his or her career questions on an individual basis. I repeat important ideas, terms, and concepts in different circumstances to anticipate the varied background of individuals who work on this program. Much of what I know and offer to you is the knowledge acquired from participants who completed this program.

WHO SHOULD TAKE THE PROGRAM

Ambition vs. Age: A Career Management Program is designed for ambitious individuals who need to secure gainful employment and/or select the most appropriate educational or training program. Now, not later. The course will help individuals make smart, heads-up, occupational and career decisions.

Career Management is designed for ambitious persons who want to take charge of where they are going. Ambitious individuals do not want to waste time. They are not interested in “psychobabble” and fad psychology.

Career Management is much, much more, than the personality type indicators, vocational or career interest instruments (tests), color psychology, computerized-interactive software, and the Internet. In some respects, Astrology is as good as most personality and interest “tests” with respect to how the results could be utilized.

Career Management is for you if you want assistance in choosing a major field of study, selecting the most appropriate in-service training, a new occupation, or move ahead in your profession or career.

Fundamentally, however, unless you have an independent source of wealth to draw on for your rent, Career Management has a lot to do with creating wealth and other financial resources, personal productivity or earning yield, leveraging time and achieving the quality of life you want.

Whatever the quality of life or lifestyle you want is will most likely be funded by your job. “Money” is important to fund your quality of life but the career needs to help you with the bigger issue, creating wealth. Creating wealth follows the intent to create wealth. (Period).

You can sign up for programs that may cost you \$ 1000 to \$ 3000 if you like- it is your money. Some individuals may think they must enroll in a “university” program.

Let me tell you a secret of the trade- the location of the class (a community college campus) and other participants in the group (while very helpful) will not make any difference if nothing is happening between your ears.

The program will help individuals who are uncertain about their goals or who need to clarify vocational, occupational, and educational and/or career goals. The course will help industrially injured workers develop a vocational rehabilitation program. This course is open to anyone regardless of age. If you determine that it is in your best interest to invest your time in this program, it is the right decision.

Ambition level is more important than status level. Individuals who have taken this course were high school students, high school graduates, managers, executives, and professionals, and recently terminated supervisors, managers, and executives, and professionals, and spouses of relocated supervisors, managers, executives, and professionals. (If the economy is so good, why is there so much downsizing?) The course is particularly suited to individuals with paid or unpaid employment.

The program is particularly helpful for individuals who experience the following:

- dissatisfaction with a career, occupation, employment
- status, and/or earnings
- changes in family/spousal circumstances (trailing spouse)
- medical conditions and impairments that may require a
- job or career change
- job loss due to downsizing and plant closure indecision
- new to your community; “trailing” spouse of a relocated employee.

ASSIMILATION

This program is an excellent program for the so called re-entry student, the individual who has limited recent experience in the academic/training environment or the individual who is exploring the pro's and con's of investing in formal education. The course covers the issues that will help you become an intelligent consumer of educational services. This course involves reading a variety of texts and materials, library research, structured and unstructured projects, and many of the mechanics of classroom performance and behavior. Consequently, this program, as well as similar guidance courses offered by a community college, is an excellent first attempt and introduction to the college experience.

PREREQUISITES

An open mind is essential. Your reading comprehension, language skills, ability to use conversational English, and academic skills such as using the library should be at the level needed to handle average to above average junior high school level work. If your skills are weak, the program activities and assignments will just require extra effort and time on your part, and perhaps some assistance.

If your reading comprehension or writing skills are weak, you will need to brush up these areas. Most Community Colleges and Adult Schools have programs that can assist you in brushing up your academic tools skills that are needed to handle college level work.

The activities and assignments of the Career Management Program will also provide you the opportunity to practice your reading and writing skills. The Santa Rosa Junior College offers state of the art services to assist the student who is not ready for college level work.

Basic library research and field research skills are essential career management skills. I have known upper elementary students who produced excellent occupational research. So I know you can handle this course if you invest the effort. Most libraries offer short programs to help you learn how to use their resources. Finally, if you can follow directions and show up you will achieve something in this class.

Your Expectations of the Counselor

Students (*) and people in general have assumptions about the kind of help they need to make occupational, educational, or job choices. We all harbor assumptions about what we expect from the “counselor,” what we may be asked to do, and what will occur in the career counseling process in general.

Many assumptions held by students and some counselors may result in holding unrealistic and false anticipations. When that happens, both the student and the counselor will become dissatisfied. Often both the student and counselor expect outcomes that are more definite and less effort from each party than is reasonable. It is very important that the participants of this program and the counselor hold reasonable assumptions about the expected outcomes. Too often, the counselor is perceived as an expert to the extent that students pay unreasonable attention to the counselor’s opinion, at the expense of the student’s opinion. For instance, students will usually place unjustified attention to computer printouts.

Sometimes individuals will interrupt their vocational research or place less confidence on the anticipated outcome of personal research, based on a computer printout or a computerized program or some other survey. Students are experts regarding their vocational decisions. Their opinions should be given great weight, especially, when their opinions are based on a reasonable degree of research.

***STUDENT** = A state of mind rather than an implication of age level; one who studies; a scholar; anyone making a serious study of a subject.*

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?

Vocational counseling is a focusing process that helps select vocational alternatives while discarding others. Therefore, the greater the student is involved in resolving their problems or concerns the greater likelihood that realistic vocational choices will result. Would you revise your previous statement regarding your expectations for this program at this time? Did you expect that you would just be provided occupational information, lists of educational and training programs, wage and salary facts, a list of occupations that match your “interest?” Did you want someone to tell you what occupation is best for you or “what is out there?”

COMMON FALSE ASSUMPTIONS

A few common false assumptions are outlined below. They will be discussed in more detail as the need arises. A review of these false assumptions is important to start things off with the right point of view.

THE FALSE ASSUMPTIONS:

- There is a single, right occupation for everyone.
- Vocational testing can achieve pinpoint accuracy in a relatively short time without making demands on the student/client/career changer.
- Everyone can find inherent satisfaction in his or her occupation.
- Occupational groups are sufficiently homogeneous to be clearly differentiated from other occupational groups; for example, all engineers are alike.
- Doubts, confusion, uncertainties, lack of commitment, and indecision regarding one’s occupational future are usually superficial.
- Vocational counseling will be a rather impersonal process demanding little of the student in discomfort, commitment, or effort.
- Good vocational counseling can reduce almost to zero the risk in selecting an occupation.
- More education makes a person more effective on the job. (Read Ivar Berg, Education & Jobs: The Great Training Robbery, New York, Praeger, 1971.)

The statements you just read are false. What is your view on each on the statements listed above?

THE VALID ASSUMPTIONS:

The Career Management Program is not based on the false assumptions just listed above. I believe that the following statements are valid:

- Different individuals need or want different things to help them make occupational decisions.
- Participation in this program may not be the best activity for you at this time- but what can you lose by trying it out for eight weeks.
- The results of vocational counseling depend on the active involvement of the person seeking advice. No pain, no gain.
- Difficulty making occupational decisions often stems from a number of circumstances within an individual's life.
- You may need services other than the activities in this program.
- Participants of this program need to perceive clearly the importance of personalities in occupational performance and success. This factor may be the most critical in making satisfactory vocational choices.
- Several aspects of personality that are very important include; the ability to think ahead; set tangible goals; break down goals into smaller projects; prioritize projects; give each project a specific time limit; complete projects or goals within scheduled time limits; and, when necessary, modify or change goals, projects, or time limits based on experience and additional knowledge.
- Vocational counseling is rarely a matter of a person making a final occupational choice but rather a matter of considering several occupational possibilities for further exploration.
- Desired occupational or career choices often require that the individual secure jobs that have a high predictability of eventually leading to their desired occupation and long-term objectives.
- Job performance is determined more by personality characteristics and environmental conditions than educational achievements. (Eli Ginzberg, Ph.D.)

QUALITY OF LIFE GOALS

This program is designed to help you achieve more than short-term, immediate, practical employment, educational, and self-development objectives. Short-term objectives need to be based on long-term goals. Long-term personal goals need to be consistent with your values and broad social objectives.

The Career Management Program provides the flexibility needed to develop personal goals in the context of a larger society and the responsibility we have to that society.

The Career Management Program will provide you the opportunity to:

- Explore your potential and develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in a free society;
- Develop practical and achievable plans that will help you reach economic freedom;
- Identify the lower division requirements of universities and colleges consistent with your needs;
- Research your educational plans and goals in order to minimize misdirection and avoid enrollment in inappropriate programs, transfer classes, and academic or occupational majors;
- Obtain the job content or technical skills related to entry-level employment, vocational retraining, and job advancement;
- Research the labor market so you can identify the specific job-content skills you need to secure employment consistent with your goals;
- Identify skills that must be mastered before attempting more advanced academic or occupational training;
- Brushing up on the skills needed to function in academic and occupational programs;
- Use the facilities and programs of local Community;
- Colleges and Adult Schools to brush up your academic tool skills;
- Overcome obstacles and explore options that can minimize the negative impact of obstacles.

WHAT DO YOU DO AFTER THE PROGRAM?

Would you expect to be able to repair a late model car or perform the duties of a registered nurse after just eight weeks of training and/or practice? Probably not! Then, you should not expect that career decisions, including decisions as to the selection of a best job, occupation, and employment could be made in a few weeks.

Six to twelve weeks, however, is often enough time to determine the next step to take, identify practical and immediate employment objectives, learn occupational research skills, practice research skills, and learn and/or practice job seeking or job development skills. If a career is a sequential series of jobs, positions, tasks, or responsibilities, then it is true that you must start somewhere. It is a fact that you have already started long before this class.

Do you have, at this time, definite plans for the next six (6) to twelve (12) months? What are your plans the remainder of this week? What do you have scheduled in your calendar for tomorrow?

SELF ESTEEM OR POSITIVE SELF CONCEPT

This program recognizes that career management relies on the interplay of two essential factors. First, that holding yourself in high esteem or self worth is a fundamental ingredient needed for career planning. Second, a positive self-concept is the result of achieving many small steps that make up a competent, goal-oriented behavior or Action. The act of thinking is “action” and the body responds physiologically to thoughts (measurable cognitive activity). “Garbage in-garbage out.”

“Thoughts are things.” Sticks and stones may break your bones but names . . . (words/thoughts) will shape your attitude.

UNREST, CAREER, JOB, AND LIFE

Despite your age, you may from time to time experience unexplainable difficulties in doing the most simple of tasks, responsibilities, or activities that were previously done without much effort. This phenomenon often associated with a medical crisis or life stage transition may also be triggered by a change of occupation, layoff, promotion, firing, graduation, (anticipating graduation), or any event that changes the status quo. It does not matter whether the event has a positive or negative impact on your life. Sometimes, these events have no direct influence on your occupation or career.

Yet... sometimes they do!

Sometimes the events themselves involve the “career.” Chances are that your educational, occupational, or career plans are at risk when other aspects of your life not directly related to your career or occupation are disrupted. These events are referred to as Career Unrest. This program recognizes that the emotional labor, economic disruption, disorientation, and anxiety associated with the life crisis can stall and perhaps derail career-planning efforts. This program provides a coping strategy when things are coming apart (regarding your career concerns) and nothing is going as planned.

Sometimes the problems you experience are not associated with the career but with the specific job situation or employer such as relationships with job tasks, supervisors or co-workers.

This program can help resolve this type of problem before it begins to contaminate your career or profession. These events are referred to as Job Unrest. Sometimes problems have their roots in your personal life, not in the career or the job. These events are referred to as Life Unrest. This program is not designed to help you with these issues directly.

NETWORK THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND ACTIONS

You need to begin constructing a network of thoughts, feelings, and actions linked to an image of what you want to become and what you want to achieve. Laboring on these activities gradually builds or strengthens self-esteem when they are associated with action. This program uses simple, widely accepted powerful tools to help you focus your energy and thoughts. For example, this program relies on the daily journal and the components of achievement motivation. This program is not a quick fix for those that are interested in becoming pseudo enlightened.

FOCUSING

Your concern with Career Management suggests that you may be seriously motivated to develop long-term plans to achieve important goals. The career or sequence of occupational choices is a significant factor in most long-term plans or goals and probably yours too. Training, and in some instances general education is a significant part of occupational choice but often overemphasized and given the wrong priority. The common thread running through “planning” is “decision making.” The essential force or factor behind the ability to make decisions is the ability to focus energy, time, and money on activities that are most likely to lead you to achieving your goal. The assumption here is that there must be both an immediate objective and a long-term goal.

Your intuitive sensor (subconscious) will notice your behavior that is characterized by timeliness and attention to detail- your ability to focus. When timeliness and attention to detail are absent, there is often a feeling of confusion, self-doubt, loss of selflessness, disorientation, and anger. To “focus” means to eliminate from view the inconsequential and to bring into clear view only that which is important. What is “important” can only be determined by using a measuring stick or standard. The “standard” is established by setting goals based on your values.

“Values” are inferred from behavior, not good intentions. If you want to know what you value, analyze your calendar and checkbook. More often than not, “focusing,” “decision-making,” and “management” require the ability to eliminate, discard, or remove from consideration whatever is not related to achieving your plan. When an individual is “focusing” and making decisions, they are aware of their use of time, details, and the specifics. They feel centered, relaxed, and in control.

The Career Management Program will provide you the opportunity to learn how to focus and track your time and activities in a purposeful manner. In other words, practice, practice, and practice.

To learn how to improve your ability to focus is simple, but it takes work and constant attention. Focusing requires attention even when you “don’t wanna do it.” This is what we meant by discipline.

You can tell when you are focusing because you will have the feeling that you know what you are doing, where you are going, and have the confidence that you are moving towards a goal. This is what Career Planning is all about.

AIMING

Career Management begins by building a clear achievement plan (Aim) that includes the “role” you want to play in your success story. Success is defined as reaching your goals and objectives. Once you begin to focus on the direction you want to take you Aim to lock onto the target. The “career” is the “route” that has the best possible chance of leading you toward what you are aiming for.

The “job” or “occupational” choice is the “vehicle” that has the best possible chance of taking you along the chosen “route” quickly and efficiently. The occupational choice must be discarded whenever it fails or loses its ability to help you move towards your goals. Sometimes the career, occupation, or job may not be able to help you reach your “aim” or goal. In this situation, you may want to select a career, occupation, or job that at least does not interfere with other activities or actions that can help you achieve the “aim” or goal.

Vocational training programs, on-the-job training, in-service training, self-initiated training, college majors, specific subject-matter programs, and educational/training institutions are just “tools” that will help you operate your “vehicle.”

The choice of the “route,” “vehicle,” “training program,” and “institution” are secondary to your overall objective or Aim. The primary objective of the career management program is to provide you the opportunity for coming up with questions related to your goals. Your questions will help you obtain information needed to make decisions and choices. Questions will help you select the activities or actions that will lead you towards your objective, goal, or Aim.

The work that you do in answering your own questions will make the difference in your level of success with this program. Although you will complete structured exercises, read specific material in recommended books and complete assigned research you must bring to the tasks an emotional commitment to make the assignments work for you. All of the activities will help trigger ideas, frame additional questions, make your goal statements more precise, and sharpen the focus on your Aim.

Your work product (assignments, research, and questions) is the “textbook” for the Career Management Program. Do not expect to just attend the program session each week, sit and listen in the class, and do nothing between program sessions. Do not just be a mindless “air breather.”

Career Management begins by starting with your Aim and working backwards. The only elements that you can control the most are your Aim, your achievement thoughts, your feelings of success and failure, and your actions (behavior).

You and your concerns are the “subject matter” of the Career Management Program. So, make yourself interesting and exciting. What is your AIM?

ARE YOU READY TO WORK ON YOUR GOALS?

This program emphasizes your progress in coming-to-grips with taking the time to think through and prepare a written statement of your long-term goals, short-term objectives, and immediate action plans needed to ensure that your daily activities, efforts, and resources are consistent with your long-term goals. The program will require you to prioritize your time because you will need to commit time to fieldwork projects in order to fulfill your expectations for this program. There are definite skills required to complete vocational training, college-level courses or in-service training successfully. These skills are often called study skills. Study skills are to the student what organizational and time management skills are to the manager.

Time management is essential to succeed on the job and in the classroom. You will learn and practice organization & time management skills. How would you assess your time management skills? (Do you have a notebook and daily calendar on you right now?) Are you waiting for other people in your life to change before you make a decision to do something?

Are you hearing yourself say that you need to get some aspect of your life in order before you make a decision to do something? Too Bad! You will probably never make a decision to do anything. While we are on the subject of self-talk, I recommend that you read books by Shad Helmstetter, such as What Do You Say When You Talk To Your Self, & You Can Excel In Time Of Change.

FEAR, ANXIETY - THE RAT RACE

If you made a list of the sources of problems related to making a career or occupational choice, I would suggest that the lack of a clear, long-term goal would be at the top of that list. Second on the list would be ignorance of the sources of labor market and vocational information. Third, and the point of this discussion, would be fear of researching. People just do not know enough about occupations, industries, employers, and sources of labor market information. People demonstrate that they are comfortable with their fear and ignorance.

They avoid the anxiety (much of it normal) that is associated with personally obtaining information, especially from “people.” For example, very often people accept a job offer. Then after working a few weeks, they determine if they like the job rather than make the effort to evaluate the employment offer before starting the job. Investigating the job offer, however, requires confrontation, analysis, and negotiation. Confrontation and negotiation raise the level of anxiety.

Avoiding the anxiety pulls the trigger that starts the rat race!

THE LISTS!

Did you ever wonder why so many people are the victims of scams, frauds, swindles or dissatisfied with the services or products they purchase? People would rather pay an “intermediary” ten- percent or more of their annual salary to secure a qualified job lead rather than contact an employer directly. Do you know how “intermediaries” obtain job leads? (They use the Yellow Pages.) Many people seeking vocational services think there are special lists of jobs requiring reduced physical demands waiting to be filled.

Many people think that the vocational counselor is a person who maintains this list. Some people think that the job of a vocational, career, guidance or rehabilitation counselor is to contact the employer in advance, sell the client, and then schedule an appointment—lay out the red carpet so to speak. Give me a break! Why do people think that they can get a job without investing their own time and personal effort? There are no free lists. However, there are companies and agencies that will charge for a list.

SUCCESSFUL CAREER & OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES

In this course you do, decide, and act. This is not a lecture course. It is assumed that you must make decisions quickly and get on with your life. It is also assumed that you will invest the necessary time to complete the work needed to help you make appropriate decisions- so clear your calendar. The activities recommended in this course, if completed, will help you make successful educational and career choices. However, no one can guarantee that you will make best occupational or career choice within the timeframe of this course or any timeframe for that matter. However, you will achieve positive results with heads-up career planning.

Advance planning will help alert you to the minefields, help you avoid inappropriate choices, and position you to take advantage of unintended consequences of good luck. Good luck happens, too! Your effort in completing the recommended assignments will be catalytic towards helping you achieve the results you want.

Since the assignments are directed toward achieving your goals and not the “mentors,” I am quite sure you will attempt the best job within your capability. Life is not so neat and structured. Most of the time, in your career, you will need to self-initiate assignments, structure your time and resources, choose your benchmark, and monitor your progress to achieve the goals set by your employer, customer, or client.

You must establish an internal reward system. Grades are important in many courses but internal motivation & rewards are more important, if not the essential motivator, in this program. External motivation, such as grades, when inappropriate, however, can become a leash. Leashes are also attached to the source of the external reward- the person(s) or ideas that pull the leash. It is unlikely that you want a leash and someone pulling that leash or your chain.

For this reason, it is essential that internal motives drive career planning. The assignments will supplement your self-initiated activities and compliment your resourcefulness, your intuition, and your creativity. The probability that you will achieve the quality-of-life according to you want, will be in direct proportion to the degree of your internal motivation. You will be assigned projects that must be completed on your own.