

CHAPTER 4

HOW TO FIND AND RESEARCH CAREERS THAT ARE A MATCH FOR YOU

Chapter Objective: *To identify careers, career clusters, and career roles that are a good match for you. To determine your work purpose, who you want to serve and the type of impact you want to make. Learn how to research and explore occupations of interest.*

You have already started thinking about careers that could be a match for your talents, interests, values, passions, goals and types of intelligence. This chapter will go deeper into identifying careers that match who you are and you would feel passionate about doing. A purpose-driven career will bring you the greatest satisfaction if the purpose is one which inspires you. According to Fred Buechner, your true vocation will be, “The place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” In other words you find a need to fill that will bring you joy. This will most likely be a career which you love and do well and will benefit you and others.

You will also be learning to research and explore careers that interest you. It is good to start with several possibilities. As you explore these careers you will be able to narrow them down to a few which interest you and match your personality. Eventually you will be able to list your top three career choices in order of importance to you. Don’t be in too big of a hurry. Take your time. This is a process and a journey of self-discovery. Look at it as an adventure and enjoy the ride. Few people ever get the opportunity for this amount of self-reflection. This is why most people end up in careers which make them unhappy. You, on the other hand, are increasing your self-knowledge and will be able to make an informed career choice. Your awareness of yourself and matching careers will greatly increase the odds you will find a career which you enjoy and do well.

CAREER CLUSTERS: AN EASY WAY TO BEGIN YOUR CAREER EXPLORATION

Career clusters contain occupations in the same field of work that require similar skills. It is easier for you to start by selecting a career cluster that matches you before you narrow it down to choosing a specific career. For example, “Education and Training” is a career cluster. This cluster contains many different occupations which utilize similar skills and abilities.



Here are just a few occupations in the Education and Training career cluster: education administrators, librarians, teachers, school psychologists, coaches and fitness trainers. Once you decide on a career cluster that is a match for you, it will be easier to choose the right education plan that will provide the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a career which is part of the career cluster you have chosen.

O*Net is the nation's primary source of occupational information. It was developed by the U.S. Department of Labor and is part of the public domain. O*Net Online has a database of hundreds of occupations and is available to you at no cost. It allows you to search and explore different occupations and determine if they are a good match for you. O*Net also provides a variety of career exploration tools.

Here is a list of 16 career clusters identified by O*Net:

1. Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
2. Architecture and Construction
3. Arts, A/V Technology and Communication
4. Business, Management, and Administration
5. Education and Training
6. Finance
7. Government and Public Administration
8. Health Science
9. Hospitality and Tourism
10. Human Services
11. Information Technology
12. Public Safety, Corrections and Security
13. Manufacturing
14. Marketing, Sales and Service
15. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
16. Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

Source: The source of the 16 career clusters is U. S. Department of Labor, O*Net Online. National Center for O*Net Development.

To see jobs for each career cluster go to: onetonline.org/find/career.

You will be able to see a breakdown of different categories for each job such as tasks, technical skills, knowledge, skills, abilities, detailed work, activities and work context, interests, work styles, work values, etc.

ACTIVITY 4.1 You have identified your talents, skills, interests, values, Holland Code, problems of interest, favorite working conditions, goals and three top intelligences. Which career clusters match these? For each career cluster place a checkmark in any of the nine boxes that are a match. Then total your checkmarks for each career cluster. Note: An abbreviated version of each cluster is being used below. You are looking for career clusters that would give you the best opportunity to express your talents, skills, interests, etc. If you prefer to work with an electronic PDF version of the chart for Activity 4.1, you can go to upbeatpress.com. See free sample Chapter 4 of this book to find chart.

Career Clusters	Talents	Skills	Interests	Values	Holland Code	Problems in World	Work Conditions	Goals	Three Intelligences	Total
Agriculture										
Architecture										
Arts										
Business										
Education										
Finance										
Government										
Health										
Hospitality										
Human Services										
Information Tech										
Public Safety										
Manufacturing										
Marketing and Sales										
Science, Engineering, and Mathematics										
Transportation										

Source: Developed by Raymond Gerson based on the 16 Career Clusters by O*Net Online.

Name the three career clusters that matched the most of your nine categories in order of your highest scores.

Career Cluster

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

You can go to the O*Net Web site and see many occupations for any career clusters that are of interest. This will help you to get a better idea if your top choices of career clusters are still appealing. It will also provide you with the opportunity to learn more about specific occupations of interest which are part of your favorite career clusters.

ACTIVITY 4.2 Go to www.onetonline.org and find “Occupations.” Click on “Career Clusters.” Choose the most appealing career cluster and see the occupations listed. Identify three jobs that interest you in a specific career cluster. List below the three most important tasks for each of these jobs.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

CAREER EXPLORATION WITH O’NET

ACTIVITY 4.3 For the three to four jobs you identified in Activity 4.2, name each occupation. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being a poor match, 5 being average and 10 being a perfect match, rate your abilities, knowledge, skills and values for each of these jobs.

Occupation 1 _____

A. Abilities _____

B. Knowledge _____

C. Skills _____

D. Work values _____

Occupation 2 _____

A. Abilities _____

B. Knowledge _____

C. Skills _____

D. Work values _____

Occupation 3 _____

A. Abilities _____

B. Knowledge _____

C. Skills _____

D. Work values _____

Occupation 4 _____

A. Abilities _____

B. Knowledge _____

C. Skills _____

D. Work values _____

WORK PURPOSE AND YOUR CAREER

Your work purpose is the effect you want to have through the work you do. It is the foundation and springboard for maximizing your talents and skills. Your work purpose will provide you with the drive and internal motivation to fulfill your potential and make your best contribution. It is more than a job or career. You can fulfill your work purpose in more than one career if you choose. Most people will have several different careers in their lifetime and yet their work purpose might remain the same.

Let's say, for example, that your work purpose is to heal the sick and injured. You could fulfill this purpose in one of several occupations such as: laboratory

STUDENT COMMENT

"I learned about different career clusters and careers in my favorite clusters that I didn't know about. I also discovered my work purpose and created a work purpose statement. I also decided where I wanted to continue my college education and I did that by taking activities in the book and implementing them into my research of different schools."

—Cody Glasscock

STUDENT COMMENT

"I came to this class hoping that I was going to figure out what my college major would be. I desperately needed help figuring this out because I had changed majors many times. I feel that this class helped me to realize what I want to do with my life. The book has many useful tools and tips. The degree I am going for is a major in Psychology with a minor in Forensics. It blew my mind that I could do that."

— *Tiffany Lavender*

scientist finding cures for diseases, engineer creating technology to rehabilitate injuries, nurse, doctor, chiropractor, physical therapist, etc. Once you know your work purpose you can choose a career which aligns with your purpose and which matches you best. Other examples of a work purpose could be to add more beauty to the world, to help athletes reach their highest levels of achievement or to help students to get a good education. You were answering questions earlier in the book about needs and problems you would like to work on and what work would you choose if you

became wealthy. Answers to questions like these can provide clues to your work purpose. Your work purpose is like the glue that binds your talents, skills and other attributes together to serve your particular cause. It is this purpose that will fuel your passion and keep you inspired in spite of obstacles that come between you and your goals.

ACTIVITY 4.4 Brainstorm three examples of work purposes.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

DISCOVERING YOUR WORK PURPOSE

Many of the self-reflection activities that you have been doing can lead to the discovery of a career purpose. Identifying the problems you want to solve or needs you want to fill is one way. You can also ask yourself which purpose would my talents, skills, interests, values and goals best serve? Other questions to consider are: Who do I want to serve and in what setting do I want to work?

Who do you want to serve? Do you prefer to work with the elderly, children, students, teenagers, people with disabilities, the wealthy, the poor, the gifted, prisoners, the ill and injured, retail customers, etc? Where do you want to work? Do you prefer to work in an educational environment, in a scientific laboratory, a government organization, your own business, a private corporation, a small business, a large company, etc? Questions about who you want to serve and which setting you want to work in can help you to determine the aim of your career.

ACTIVITY 4.5 List five characteristics of the people you would most like to serve and influence.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

ACTIVITY 4.6 List three characteristics of the type of business or setting in which you want to work.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

HOW YOU WANT TO SERVE

The way that you want to serve and the career field or fields in which you want to make a contribution can help you to determine your work purpose.

What follows is from the book *Zen and the Art of Making a Living* by Laurence G. Boldt. These are career fields for you to review before deciding on your work purpose.

WHAT: THE WAY YOU WANT TO SERVE

The first step to developing your work purpose is to identify what you would like to do by identifying the fields you would most like to make a contribution to. Below are examples of “I want to” statements which express work purposes. You may be able to take one of these as a skeleton of your work purpose statement and amend or adjust it to suit your purposes. You may want to start entirely from scratch, using the statements that follow as a guide in constructing your own work purpose statement. However you arrive at it, your work purpose statement should be your own, reflecting what you most want to express or accomplish.

You may realize that you have more than one work purpose. In that case, pick the one that represents the area you want to focus on most over the next seven to ten years. If you still end up with several areas of focus, rank them and pick one major area of focus. The alphabetical list below is not intended to be complete or exhaustive. It represents just a few of the more common areas in which people with whom we have worked have expressed interest.

- **Agriculture:** I want to produce or advance the production of the foodstuffs that will provide people sustenance and nourishment in a manner that is environmentally sound.
- **Animal Care:** I want to see to it that the animals are protected and treated with care, compassion and dignity.
- **Architecture:** I want to design structures which are at once functional and uplifting to the spirit.
- **Art:** I want to portray, through artistic media, universal truths that uplift and inspire.
- **Business:** I want to provide valuable products and services including: _____
- **Clothing:** I want to design, manufacture or distribute quality clothing that is aesthetically pleasing, comfortable and healthful.

- **Communication:** I want to provide communication technologies and/or services which will help people to achieve their goals.
- **Culinary Arts:** I want to design, prepare and/or produce delicious, nutritious foods. I want to provide an atmosphere which will make eating a fulfilling, even spiritual experience.
- **Defense:** I want to provide for national security and defense. I want to see to it that people are safe, protected and free to pursue happiness in their own way.
- **Economic Development:** I want to assist people in developing a higher standard of living. I want to do so in a manner that respects values of human dignity and ecological balance. I want to insure that economic growth is based on the production of useful goods and services.
- **Education:** I want to train and develop people's minds, character, knowledge and skills. I want to help people to broaden their horizons and deepen their understanding.
- **Energy:** I want to design, develop, or promote safe, efficient, non-polluting and replenishable energy systems until new ones are in place.
- **Engineering:** I want to design, construct or manage road works, water works, building, machinery, etc., which will serve to improve people's quality of life.
- **Entertainment:** I want to provide laughter, drama, song or dance to lighten and enlighten people's lives.
- **Environment:** I want to clean up and protect the environment, and to do all I can to see to that it is kept as safe and pure as possible.
- **Family:** I want to provide services that will strengthen and support family units and family happiness.
- **Government:** I want to work with government institutions to insure that government remains responsive to the people and provides them with the best possible services.
- **Health:** I want to share with people the skill, knowledge, love and energy necessary to care for their health and physical well-being.
- **History:** I want to help people to better understand their past, to see how things have come to be as they are and to understand the great historical processes of change and their consequences.
- **Industry:** I want to manufacture materials which will make people's lives more fulfilling, free and productive.
- **Information Services:** I want to provide people, in an easy to use and readily available form, with the information they need to make informed and effective decisions.
- **Interior Design:** I want to create the kind of interior spaces which elevate people's spirits and bring out the very best in them.
- **Journalism:** I want to inform people about current events and issues. I want to help them to be aware of the people and events which shape their lives.
- **Justice:** I want to protect people's rights and insure that they are treated fairly and with human dignity.
- **Landscaping:** I want to create exterior environments which provide people with upliftment and joy.

- **Law:** I want to write, interpret, or practice legal remedies for human problems, conflicts, or grievances.
- **Life Sciences:** I want to help people better understand and utilize the biological and organic processes of life to further their well-being and minimize the dangers to their health.
- **Management:** I want to manage organizations which serve people's needs and aspirations.
- **Music:** I want to share beauty, joy, understanding and harmony through the vehicle of music.
- **Organization:** I want to help people to be more effective by organizing personnel, material, ideas and financial resources which will facilitate the achievement of their goals.
- **Peace:** I want to promote world peace. I want to further international cooperation, understanding and harmony. I want to exemplify and promote universal love and brotherhood.
- **Performing Arts:** I want to take an active role in portraying the wonder, poignancy, beauty, and drama of the human experience before live audiences.
- **Philosophy:** I want to challenge people to think of the deep and fundamental issues of life. I want to encourage them to examine their beliefs and the effect that holding these ideas has upon themselves and others. I want to share with them the wisdom of the ages.
- **Physical Education:** I want to teach people how to utilize their bodies to maximize efficiency, promote health and longevity and reduce physical stress and tension.
- **Physical Sciences:** I want to help people understand the physical world in which they live and how it can be made to serve them even better.
- **Politics:** I want to help people gain a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.
- **Psychology:** I want to help people better understand their minds and emotions, their motivations, drives and desires. I want to help them understand the power of their minds and emotions to achieve their highest potential.
- **Recreation:** I want to minister to people's spiritual needs. I want to help people to discover who they are, what it is to be, and how to be free.
- **Sports:** I want to help people discover the joys of effort, persistence, cooperation, teamwork and physical development that sports provide.
- **Technology:** I want to design, manufacture or promote technological advances which will help people to achieve a happier, richer, more productive lifestyle.
- **Trade:** I want to promote goodwill and cultural interaction by helping people to trade their products and services with others.
- **Transportation:** I want to help people to get from place to place in a clean, economical and safe manner, and in a way that makes the most efficient and least destructive use of natural resources.

Source: Boldt, Lawrence. *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*. Penguin Group, 1991, p. 170–173. Reprinted with permission.

ACTIVITY 4.7 Now choose the five fields above that interest you the most in order of importance.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

ACTIVITY: 4.8 List the top three of your five choices that best fit your talents, skills, values, intelligences, Holland Code, working conditions, personal traits, needs and problems that appeal to you, and goals. List them in order of the best matches.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Keep in mind that you can sometimes combine more than one field of interest. For example, someone who is attracted to psychology, children and music could consider becoming a music therapist. You can also choose a field as a career and another one as a hobby. For example, someone who is attracted to interior design, but who also likes to act, could make a career of interior design and act in theatrical productions for fun.

Now you have enough information to try coming up with a work purpose statement that is appealing and matches you. You can change your mind or continue tweaking and revising your work purpose until it feels right. Remember this is a process that takes time and you are on a journey. Nothing has to be written in concrete.

WORK PURPOSE STATEMENT

Review the way you want to contribute, who you want to serve and the setting in which you would like to work. Also think about all of the other information you have learned about yourself. Reflect on the career cluster that was the best match for you and needs in the world you want to fill. Also consider the many strengths you have discovered about yourself.

ACTIVITY 4.9 Now write your work purpose statement below:

My work purpose statement is:

Now you can go to the Appendix to your career portfolio and add your work purpose statement. There is a place for it after the Mind Map.



ACTIVITY 4.10 Name three occupations that could serve and fulfill your work purpose.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

ACTIVITY 4.11 Name the three occupations which you want to learn more about. They may be the same as above or different. Choose three occupations that you believe are the best overall match for you. Consider everything you learned about yourself including your talents, goals, work purpose, etc.

My Top Three Choices of Careers to Explore Further

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Now you can go to the Appendix and add these three careers to the Mind Map in your career portfolio. Pencil these in because you may want to change them later after you do more career exploration.



ACTIVITY 4.12 Go online (or to your library for the print version) for the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) at www.bls.gov/ooh. Look up your three careers of interest that you wish to explore further. Learn the following: training needed, skills required, earnings, what workers do on the job, working conditions and job prospects. You can also research these occupations on the O*Net Web site. After you do this research decide if these are still your top three occupations of interest or if you prefer to explore some different ones.

You are learning how to research occupations of interest online or through the library. Librarians can also point you to the best resources. Once you have determined your top three choices of occupations by reviewing written information, there is more that you can do to further explore these careers. This is what we will be covering next.

LABOR MARKET RESEARCH

You can find out which careers are projected to grow in demand, stay about the same, and shrink. In other words, some jobs are projected to grow and be hot and some are projected decline. A few might become obsolete. This can also vary depending on the location that you choose. Your state employment office can usually provide



you with local job market information, including data about job growth and salaries. On a national level you can do labor market research on Web sites like www.bls.gov (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics) or O*Net Online <http://online.onecenter.org>.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

The purpose of an informational interview is to learn more about a particular career, job or company that is of interest to you. Unlike a job interview, you are the interviewer. You are conducting an informational interview with someone who is working in a career or job that you want to know more about. This is an excellent follow-up to your online and library research. You will be informed, but still want to learn more.

Informational interviews are most effective when you talk with more than one person in the same field of work. After conducting the informational interviews you might decide that this work is not for you or the information may help you confirm that this is the career you want to pursue.

STUDENT COMMENT

“This class has been extremely helpful in my search to find my long lost career. This process has helped me to grow stronger as a person and help me to find who I really am inside. After all these years of listening to what everyone else expected of me, I feel like I now know who I am and what I am capable of.”

—Sarah Nitchman

You can go online and find many questions to ask during an informational interview. Then develop a few of your own. Think about what you really want and need to know to decide if this career is the one for you.

How do you find the people to interview? One way is to ask people who you know if they can refer you to someone who works in your field of interest. You can also call them directly; let them know you are interested in learning more about their career field

and make an appointment to get together. It is best to do the interview in person. Let them know when you are setting the appointment that you will not take up more than 30 minutes of their time. After the meeting always send them a thank-you note.

Here are a few examples of questions that can be asked during an informational interview:

1. How did you get into this type of work?
2. What do you like best about it? Least about it?
3. What do you consider to be the greatest rewards of this work?
4. What experience and skills are needed?
5. What types of problems are you engaged in resolving?
6. What are your major responsibilities?
7. What education is usually required?
8. What are the day-to-day working conditions like?
9. What type of training and advancement potential is available?
10. How much money do people in this field typically earn?
11. What is your advice for someone who is considering entering this field of work?
12. These are my strongest skills and talents-----. Where would they best fit in this career?

ACTIVITY 4.13 Practice conducting an informational interview with a friend or classmate before doing the real thing. Interview your partner about a job that he or she is familiar with or has done. Then switch roles letting your partner interview you about a job that you know a lot about.

JOB SHADOWING

Job shadowing allows you to follow a person on the job for a half or full day. People who you conducted your informational interviews with are one possible source for job shadowing. You might be able to find a mentor to not only job shadow, but who will provide guidance to you over a longer period of time.

To shadow a mentor you can also look into The National Job Show Coalition. Students get to shadow a mentor in their workplace. For more information you can go to: www.jobshadow.org.

Student Life, Clubs, and Organizations

Extra-curricular activities at school can help you to learn more and prepare for some careers. For example, if you are interested in journalism you could work on your school paper as an editor, writer or in another capacity. If you aspire to be a leader and strong communicator you could take on leadership positions in campus organizations. Think about clubs at your school that would provide you with experience related to your career of interest or skills that you can build and then include on your resume.

STUDENT COMMENT

“This book gave me many tools to prepare and focus my direction in choosing a career and major. I wholeheartedly recommend this book and career exploration class. I would be lost without this valuable information.”

— *Trish Rollins*

ACTIVITY 4.14 “Identify and list three student organizations on your campus that you are willing to explore.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

COURSEWORK

You can take required and elective courses that can give you a taste of different careers and help you gain knowledge and skills that you will need. Use the Career Clusters Web site to find recommended pathways of study for your career goal. You can also use some class assignments to gather information that you need. For example, if you have a school paper to write on a subject of your choice you can choose a subject or career that you want to investigate. Or you might interview someone who works in that career and write about your findings. If you aspire to be in a field that demands excellent public speaking skills you can take speech classes in high school and college.

INTERNSHIPS, VOLUNTEER WORK, AND PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

Check with your school to see if paid or unpaid internships are available. You will usually have supervision and mentoring to help you learn skills that are needed in this career field. Counselors at your school will know about available internships that are related to your career choices.

Sometimes you can find summer or part-time employment related to your career of interest. You might be able to convince an employer to provide an opportunity for on-the-job training.

Volunteer work in a related career field can be a great way to find out if this career is of interest to you. You can also make important contacts and build skills to put on your resume. I have known people who obtained a good job and beat out other job applicants with more education because they had acquired hands-on skills from volunteering.

When you graduate you will probably have competition for the job you want. If it comes down to an employer choosing you or another candidate, little things can make the difference. For example, if all things are equal, but you have some experience through volunteering, an internship, or part-time employment you are likely to get the job.

HOW TO CHOOSE A COLLEGE MAJOR

You are ahead of the game because of the work you have already started doing in this book. Once a student identifies careers that are a good match the next step is to find college majors that are a good fit for those careers.

You have started the career development process by:

- Assessing your interests, skills and values.
- Considering your personality type and appropriate working environments.
- Identifying occupations to explore.
- Reading about those occupations and requirements in the Occupational Outlook Handbook or O*Net.

You can also:

- Consider what were your best and worse subjects in high school.
- Consider which parts of any jobs you have done which were enjoyable and which parts you disliked.
- Take an online career assessment. For example, many colleges offer career assessments such as “Discover.” It allows you to search by occupations to find appropriate college majors.

Here are more tips:

- Talk with a high school guidance counselor if you are in high school.
- See an academic advisor or counselor if you are in college.

- Talk to students in majors that interest you.
- Talk to professors who teach in departments of interest.
- Interview people who work in careers that interest you for their advice and to determine what their majors were.
- Consider degree requirements for majors that interest you. Are you willing and able to meet these requirements and to go to school that long?
- Consider labor market projections. Will jobs in this field be in-demand in your preferred geographic locations?
- Consider earning potential. Will it be enough to meet your needs and desires?
- Use college catalogs as a resource to find a college major.
- Look at books on how to find a college major.
- The *Princeton Review* online can be a resource. Go to their website, www.princetonreview.com. and click on the College button, then click on Find Schools & Majors link, and then select Majors Search. You can view profiles of over 200 majors.
- Students often change majors as they take courses, do research, learn more about possible occupations and/or realize that career opportunities will develop regardless of the major/degree that is earned. So don't panic if you decide that your first declared major or career choice is not the one for you.

In this chapter you have learned a lot more about yourself and which careers would be a good match for your personality. It is wise to have several options and continue exploring your career choices until you feel ready to narrow your choice down to one which you wish to pursue.

SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS IN CHAPTER 4

- ✍ Find a need to fill that becomes a career you love and do well.
- ✍ Career clusters contain occupations that require similar skills and are a good place to begin exploring careers of interest.
- ✍ Your work purpose is revealed by determining the effect you want to have through your work.
- ✍ Informational interviewing, internships, job shadowing, volunteering and part-time employment can be used as ways to learn more about careers that interest you and to gain experience.

RESOURCES FOR CAREER EXPLORATION

- ✍ O*Net mentioned previously is a great Web site for researching careers of interest. <https://www.onetonline.org>.
- ✍ Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) is another good Web site for career exploration and doing labor market research. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>
- ✍ Discover Career Assessment mentioned before can be used to look up college majors that match careers of interest or vice versa. <https://www.act.org>

 Job shadowing www.jobshadow.com.

Now an important question to ask is, “How do I make my career goal happen? Once I acquire the education, training, knowledge and skills that I need for my chosen career, how do I get the job I want?”

In the next chapter you will be learning how to put together a good resume, cover letter and will learn job search strategies to help you obtain your dream career and job.