

WISDOM BUILDER #7

HOW DO I DEFINE SUCCESS?

When you look at the experiences on your Wandering Map that you consider successful, how did you define success? Did it involve winning? Helping others? Achieving?

How might you define success in the future? Complete any of these sentences that appeal to you (no need to do them all):

As my life progresses, I will consider myself successful when I

HAVE THIS JOB TITLE: _____

OWN _____

RETIRE AT AGE _____ IN _____ (LOCATION)

USE MY TALENT TO _____

AM IN LOVE WITH _____

SPEND MY TIME _____

VOLUNTEER TO _____

RECEIVE AN AWARD FOR _____

AM ASKED FOR MY AUTOGRAPH BECAUSE I _____

HAVE PURSUED _____

DO _____

HAVE DOLLARS IN THE BANK OR INVESTMENTS IN _____

FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH YOUR OWN IDEAS:

Now, reward yourself for the hard work you've already done, and relish the order you're finding in the chaos. You've mined your past for gold; now you're going to get the most from an extremely valuable possession: your brain.

CHAPTER 3

MENTAL WANDERINGS

**YOUR MIND AND MAJOR WILL
TAKE YOU EVERYWHERE**

The universe is full of magical things, patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper.

—EDEN PHILLPOTTS, *A SHADOW PASSES*

THE VALUE OF THINKING

Two college deans stepped off the curb to cross a street when a pickup truck whizzed by, slowing down just long enough for the passenger to lean out the window, look at the two men, and yell, "Hey, smart guys!" before driving on. The two deans looked at each other, unsure how to react. Was that an insult or a compliment?

Our society sends mixed messages about being smart. From popular movies such as *Dumb and Dumber*, the MTV show *Ridiculousness*, and even books such as the *For Dummies* series, we seem to be much more comfortable putting down our thinking power than promoting it.

What if you possessed a secret power that would change your job search completely? What if that power was in your mind?

It's time to get wise.

College is supposed to be a time for thinking, but again, if you watch movies about the college scene (*Animal House*, anyone?), you sure wouldn't know it. Does a "don't make me think" philosophy mirror your time in college? Have you been acquiring a lot of knowledge and information without thinking of its value? Are you finding it hard to articulate to employers what you have learned or are you not even sure why they'd want to know about your classes? After all, those job openings for philosophers or sociologists have been few and far between.

There's no mixed message in this chapter—**your knowledge and thinking skills are your power**. Employers are begging for intelligent workers who possess and use the right mindsets: specific ways of thinking. The way you choose to think about your classes, your experiences, and your job search is the key to your success in the hiring process and beyond. In the last chapter, you developed your Wandering Map, which highlighted past achievements, talents, and themes running through your life. In this chapter, we're going to *dig deeper and look specifically at the brain power behind those talents and themes*: the mindsets you've developed that will help you ace your interview, get a job, and move up in whatever career path you follow. And if you haven't developed all of these mindsets yet, you will learn enough to start adding them to your repertoire of skills and talents.

RIGHT MIND: THE KEY COMPONENT OF GOOD THINKING

We don't think of thoughts as tangible because we can't see them with our eyes any more than we can see the electricity that powers our computers or the vibrations that travel from our cell phones. Yet your lights turn on and your cell phone rings. Thanks to increasingly powerful medical technology, we are beginning to "see" and measure thoughts—or at least see the parts of the brain that light up when certain thoughts or images are active. And as a result, our

knowledge of the brain and how it thinks is growing exponentially. Your thinking skills are as real and identifiable as your more visible skills, such as athletic, musical, or artistic talents.

If you consider your thoughts to be just as tangible as the book you're holding, then you can examine them and make deliberate choices in how you think. The field of cognitive behavioral psychology has demonstrated that how we think directly influences how we feel. When our attitude changes, our behaviors change, and this in turn influences our performance. So how you choose to think about your classes, your experiences, the job search, and your job directly affects your success before and after graduation.

When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.

—WAYNE DYER, *THE POWER OF INTENTION*

Good thinking will help you change how you interpret a situation. Zen philosophers have a nice phrase for good thinking: right mind. Right mind thinking creates a positive chain of success in whatever endeavors you pursue even when you're in less than desirable situations. Right mind thinking doesn't mean you ignore challenges or pretend that something bad is really good. Instead, you take what is challenging and find a way to mentally approach the challenge so that ultimately you succeed in the situation.

Let's look at this in terms of a common job search situation: you know you need to find an internship, but you can't seem to get started. Here are two tracks your thinking can follow:

	NEGATIVE THINKING	RIGHT MIND THINKING
THOUGHT	"I'm supposed to find an internship even though I don't want to."	"An internship will be a great way to move forward with my career plans."
BELIEF	"I shouldn't have to do this. This is ridiculous. It's a complete waste of time when I'm trying to take classes."	"I am busy, but I want the experience to be valuable."

	NEGATIVE THINKING	RIGHT MIND THINKING
EXPECTATION	"This will be a lot of work and probably hurt my GPA."	"I'm going to see what I can learn through this experience."
ATTITUDE	"There's no point in putting much effort into it. I'm just going to do the minimal amount of work to survive and suffer through the semester until it's over."	"I'm going to make this a personal challenge. I know it's important for my future, even if it's hard now. If nothing else, I'll have a great story for an interviewer about how I survived a difficult semester."
BEHAVIOR	Procrastinate on finding an internship. End up not getting the one you wanted and taking one you're not as interested in.	Show up for the internship on time and ready to work. Seek out guidance and feedback. Go beyond basic duties. Develop a network of possible connections.
PERFORMANCE	Survive but not invited to return for a summer job or other openings.	Invited to apply for a permanent position with the office.
WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED	"I'm helpless and at the mercy of ridiculous rules."	"I'm in control. I can make the best of a difficult situation. I can challenge myself. And I got a job offer!"

Notice that at no time did the right mind thought process become Pollyannaish or lapse into happy talk. The thinker didn't lie to herself and say, "Oh, this internship will be wonderful. I can't wait to do it." Quite the opposite. The thinker took a realistic perspective: "The internship is what it is. It's a necessary component of the job search. I can choose to suffer through it, or I can make the best of it."

Aside from causing pain and leading you down a path to a poor outcome and uninspiring future, negative thinking has a particularly fatal flaw: it presumes you are a fortune-teller. How do you know that you won't suddenly enjoy that experience and end up with a new career path? The right mind thinker understands the power of the butterfly effect and remains open to the possibility that

something good might come from an experience. The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu was onto something when he said, "Know that you don't know. That's superior."

Remember: you're thinking all the time, and the thoughts you choose can propel you forward or hold you back. Take a moment and refer to your Wandering Map. Look at some of your achievements and successes. What thoughts were behind the positive actions you took? What thinking skills did you need to be successful at what you did? If you can name them, write them down on the back of your map or on a separate piece of paper. If you're not so sure, you'll have a chance to process this more thoroughly later in the chapter.

ACTION: THE CORNERSTONE OF WISDOM

There is no try. There is only do. —YODA IN STAR WARS

A comedian once described discovering a magazine totally devoted to running. He said he could understand the first couple of issues—maybe some articles about the best running shoes, suggestions for warm-ups and cooldowns, and maybe even the most scenic places to run. But after the first few issues, he asked, "Shouldn't the magazine just say 'Run!'"

He has a point. We can go on and on about knowledge, wisdom, and mindsets, but without taking action with each mindset, we're wasting time. We have a saying in the South: "I'm fixin' to do that." It's a joke, of course, based on the premise that we all have lots of things we plan to do but haven't done yet. Thinking is the first step, but to get results, you have to take action. In the next section of this chapter, as you focus on ten key mindsets employers are seeking, start considering which mindsets you have already put into action and which ones you want to start using.

Music at Work

THE MUSIC MAN

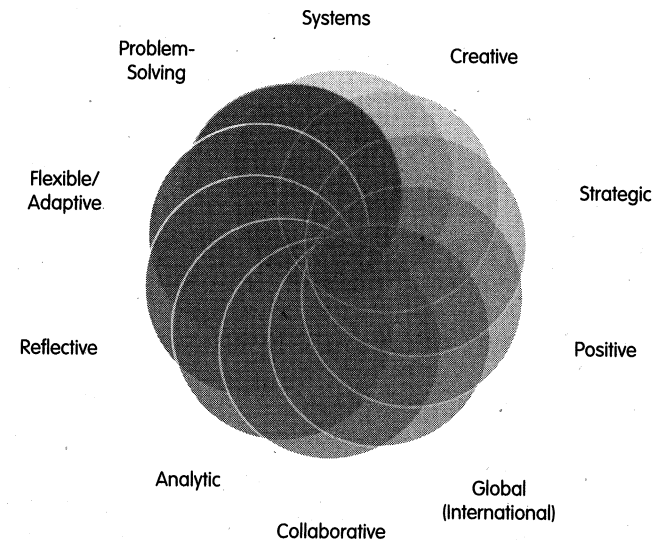
In the musical *The Music Man*, con man bandleader "Professor" Harold Hill promotes the "Think System" to his pupils. Not wanting to let on that he doesn't know how to play an instrument, he tells his students they don't need to practice; they only need to "think the Minuet in G and you will play the Minuet in G." Recent psychological research says he may have been onto something: visualization is an important factor in the learning process. Visualizing yourself successfully making foul shots in basketball leads to a greater percentage of successful shots. And visualizing yourself acing the interview helps as well. The successful job search starts in your head.

The easiest way to start taking action is to start **paying attention**. Teach yourself to develop a cycle of action and reflection throughout the day. Try observing your behavior:

- What would you like to do?
- How much do you talk about doing rather than doing?
- Is there a disconnect between what you think (or say) and what you really do?
- What is the first step you could take toward doing?
- Who or what could help you take action?
- How will you feel when you start taking action?
- Imagine that you have taken the action you wanted—how do you now look or feel?

GOOD THINKING WORTH CULTIVATING: TEN MINDSETS EMPLOYERS ARE SEEKING

So you get the message that thinking is vital to your success in life. But what mindsets would be most helpful? Let's examine ten of them that will ensure your success in the job market and beyond. These mindsets may look intimidating, but in truth you will find that you already know about and practice many of them. You just haven't paid attention to them or thought about mentioning them specifically to employers.



Psychologists and researchers have identified innumerable kinds of "thinking" above and beyond the ten described here. These mindsets are a starting point: a top ten list, if you will, based on years of conversations with employers who are seeking the best talent for their organizations, whether in for-profit, nonprofit, education, government, or entrepreneurial settings. If you have developed other thinking skills or mindsets, by all means note them and be ready to

explain to employers how they would make you the best candidate for the job.

Entire books have been written about these mindsets and others, so in the interest of time, only the elements related to the job search will be covered here. If you want to read more about each mindset, see the References and Resources section located toward the end of the book (pages 325–328).

Each mindset presented is followed by questions that will help you develop and strengthen your thinking. As you read through them, consider how each one becomes more valuable when combined with action. If you find they overlap with one another as in the diagram on the previous page, good for you. They do overlap and the best thinkers use them all and more. And don't forget to get out your Wandering Map to look for the mindsets you used in the past. Although presented linearly here, it's best to think of them as all part of a whole with no one mindset taking precedence over another. They all weave together and support one another.

ARE YOU READY TO GET WISE?

MINDSET 1: THE SYSTEMS MINDSET

The systems mindset can also be called big-picture thinking. It says we have to take different points of view into account to solve a problem or develop an idea, and that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The systems approach allows an organization to see how each component contributes to the strength (or weakness) of a situation. Systems thinking says to connect the dots because everything is connected.

A baseball team, for example, can be considered a "system." How does the performance of one player affect the performance of the team? How important is it that they work together? How does each player view the game? How important are the fans? Does the name of the team help its popularity or cause controversy? And what about the location or quality of the stadium—not to mention unions, salary negotiations, community issues, and so on? Systems thinking

will help create the best possible baseball team by considering all the elements in relation to one another.

Key Systems-Thinking Questions to Ask:

- What do these things have in common?
- How can they work together?
- How does each piece influence the whole?
- What is the perspective of each piece?
- How does the overall structure influence the behavior of its components?
- What is the consequence of a decision in one part of the system on the rest of the system?

Why Would an Employer Care about Systems Thinking?

- Workers who use a systems approach are more likely to see connections between divisions, develop stronger relationships, and see the big picture.
- A systems mindset is vital to an organization's survival. As customers become more concerned about environmental issues, for instance, the company's "good citizenship" in the world can influence the company's bottom line.
- If organizations focus only on one factor or perspective, their decision-making is compromised and limited. Systems thinking results in creative problem-solving.
- Internal effects: organizations are comprised of networks of internal relationships between divisions and departments. The systems approach pulls divisions together so that the human resources department is aware of the sales department, which becomes more aware of the manufacturing process, and so on.
- External effects: organizations have to consider outside forces as well. A company must consider environmental impact and related issues; labor conditions for employees, including their standard of living; the source of its products, including whether and how animals are used; potentially controversial advertising campaigns; geographic locations and climate; political conditions; shareholders; customers, and so forth.

How You Can Develop or Use the Systems Mindset

- You already used a systems mindset when you created your Wandering Map in chapter 2. Chaos theory is an example of a systems perspective.
- Begin noticing connections. How do seemingly disparate parts of your life connect to and influence one another? How do your classes connect? Why is what you learned in psychology helpful in your history class? How did observing your coach settle a rivalry within the team teach you a way to settle a conflict in your residence hall? Why is it important for you to understand someone else's perspective or viewpoint?
- Look at the systems surrounding you. What organizations do you belong to or where have you worked? What kind of systems interact at your college or university? How many different departments or groups exist within the system? What are the outside influences? How could you apply a systems approach to better explain and understand conflicts or problems as well as apply new solutions?
- Take courses that allow you to study complex systems such as anthropology, economics, sociology, or political science, or interdisciplinary courses such as American studies, Asian studies, women's studies, and so on, where you will examine societal problems like poverty or immigration. You know that topics like these can't be studied from only one perspective and why it's silly when a politician proposes a "simple" solution to a complex problem.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your use of the systems mindset?

Never Use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Constantly Use
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If you were going to tell an employer about your strength in systems thinking, what example(s) would you use?

MINDSET 2: THE CREATIVE MINDSET

Quick—answer this question: Are you creative?

How did you answer?

Why?

When I ask this question in classes, only about 50 percent of the students raise their hands. When I ask the others why they don't think they're creative, they usually mention their lack of talent in music, writing, or the arts. But this is a myth and an extremely limited view of creativity. The truth is everyone is, and can be, creative. Creativity, like any other mindset, can be cultivated. You may recall the quote about creativity in chapter 2 that said, "Creativity is connecting the unconnected." Creativity is not only talent in the arts, it's also the ability to view circumstances in a new way, to see what others don't see, find a new solution to a problem, or develop a new product or idea. People who are creative question the status quo and wonder how it could be changed or improved. They are curious. They ask questions such as "What if . . . ?" or "What else . . . ?" or "How can we . . . ?," any of which can lead to new ideas.

Another myth about creativity is the belief that we must have unlimited time and/or money to be creative. We conjure up notions of the wonderful creative projects we could do if only we had all the time and money we needed. But research has shown that creativity actually thrives with moderate limitations (like deadlines or budgets) and decreases when unlimited resources of time and money are provided.

Why Would an Employer Care about Creative Thinking?

- Organizations need to grow and move forward to keep up with change, and creative people are invaluable to growth.
- Creative thinkers will help organizations stay ahead of the competition.
- Creative thinkers are the greatest source of innovation and new products.
- Creative thinkers will see solutions where others see only problems.

How You Can Develop or Use the Creative Mindset

- **Make the most of your talents.** If you meet the more traditional definition of creativity and have a talent in music or the arts, how can that skill assist you in the workplace? For instance, if you studied ballet, what are the behind-the-scenes skills of being a ballerina that might help in the workplace? Did you have to have lots of discipline? Good time management skills? Get over your stage fright? Learn to accept limitations?
- **Think of your job search as a creative process.** You express yourself in writing through your résumé, cover letter, and social media activities. You tell creative stories in your interviews. You are the creator of your job search and you are also the canvas. Your performing venue is your life and you are the writer, director, and producer.
- **Lighten up.** Taking yourself too seriously and worrying about being perfect are the greatest stumbling blocks to creativity. Too many talented writers, musicians, inventors, and others quit because they view their work as less than perfect. Remember that if something is worth doing, it's worth doing badly, simply because it's worth doing. With practice you will improve but not become perfect, because nothing is perfect. So silence your inner critic and keep taking chances.
- **Set limits.** Creative types often feel overwhelmed. From the research mentioned earlier, you know that creativity thrives in a moderately controlled environment. One creative aspect of the job search is deciding what career to pursue. Have you seen those ridiculously long lists titled "What You Can Do with a Major In" and followed by two hundred possible careers? Is that helpful? Or is it just overwhelming? Try setting a limit, such as focusing first on careers in a particular category, for example, sports or writing. You've probably heard the saying "Follow your bliss." That's a great idea, but it, too, can be overwhelming. You'll likely be more creative if you set a limit on your bliss. Maybe you'll follow your bliss in New York City. That's the beginning of setting limits that will help you more easily find it.
- **Stretch yourself.** Are you in a rut? Do you follow the same schedule, go to class the same way, hang out with the same friends? Maybe it's time to shake things up a little. Sit in a different location in class. Decide to meet one new person this week. Speak up when you would normally be silent. Be silent when you would normally speak up. Attend a club meeting in a new area. Maybe you're into all the political clubs, so try attending a drama club meeting. The two fields have a lot in common, you know. When you stretch yourself, you'll be

surprised at what you can do and how seemingly disparate activities have much in common.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your use of the creative mindset?

Never Use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Constantly Use
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If you were going to tell an employer about your strength in creative thinking, what example(s) would you use?

MINDSET 3: THE ANALYTIC MINDSET

We use the word *analyze* all the time:

A psychiatrist analyzes a patient.

An engineer analyzes the traffic patterns on the highway.

A stockbroker analyzes the stock market.

In the simplest terms, analysis is a breaking down of the whole into distinct parts. By examining each piece, using logic and reason, the analytic thinker is able to reassemble the pieces into a greater whole that is better understood and valued. Analytic thinking skills help you convert a large problem into a series of smaller parts, thus making it more understandable and workable. Analytic thinking is the key to better understanding and organization. And with analysis often comes synthesis, where you pull your individual thoughts back into a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Why Would an Employer Care about Analytic Thinking?

- Cost-benefit analysis is just one example of a common use of analytic thinking in the workplace. Employers must know how a proposed product, idea, or plan is going to affect the bottom line.
- Analysis of key problems or successes in the workplace can help to ensure their remedy or continuation.
- Analytic thinking is rational and logical and not governed by emotion. Employers need decision makers who examine the details in a situation in an unbiased manner before making a decision.

How You Can Develop or Use the Analytic Mindset

- Analytic thinking is a skill you've likely honed through your classes. You used analytic skills by taking an English course and analyzing a piece of literature. Consider how you developed analytic thinking in other courses.
- Writing a research paper requires analytic thinking as you work through the main problem or thesis. What have you analyzed in your papers?
- Try analyzing a favorite movie. Watch it again and notice the components: the actors selected for the roles, the story, the costumes, the sound effects, the music, the lighting, the scenery, and so forth. Describe the different components and consider why they were chosen. How does thinking this way help your enjoyment of the film?
- Create metaphors to give meaning to a situation. For instance, what might be your metaphor for your job search? Is it a nightmare? Or are you on easy street? Is your future an abyss? Or is it, as the saying goes, "so bright you have to wear shades"? Analyze how your metaphor affects your behavior.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your use of the analytic mindset?

Never Use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Constantly Use
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If you were going to tell an employer about your strength in analytic thinking, what example(s) would you use?

MINDSET 4: THE STRATEGIC MINDSET

A strategic mindset is first and foremost rational, logical, and practical. The strategic mindset incorporates analytic thinking and draws from a systems perspective of looking at the big picture to solve a problem. A strategic mindset provides a specific way of solving problems, often using a method called strategic planning, a common system used by organizations to understand their current position in the marketplace, develop a vision, and plan for the future. Common techniques used in strategic planning are SWOT (an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analyses, goal setting, vision statements, and gap analysis. You will learn how to use SWOT analyses in a later chapter.

Why Would an Employer Care If You Are a Strategic Thinker?

- Strategic thinking can help an organization:
 - set priorities and stick with them;
 - develop focus and keep everyone on the same plan;
 - measure and monitor success and progress;
 - determine what is and isn't working, why it isn't working, and how it can be changed;
 - ensure employee commitment to its plans; and
 - focus on action rather than contemplation.

How You Can Develop or Use the Strategic Mindset

- When you encounter a problem, ask yourself questions such as the following, which will stimulate strategic thinking:
 - What strategy will work best to solve this problem?
 - What challenges do I need to be aware of?
 - What are my strengths?
 - Where do I need to improve?
- Read a book on strategic planning and try applying the approach to an organization you're in.
- Look for courses that teach strategic thinking or planning. You can find them in most business, human resources, or organizational behavior programs.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your use of the strategic mindset?

Never Use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Constantly Use
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If you were going to tell an employer about your strength in strategic thinking, what example(s) would you use?

MINDSET 5: THE POSITIVE MINDSET

The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.

—WILLIAM JAMES

You began learning about the positive mindset when you read about the right mind approach at the beginning of this chapter. Most people misunderstand the positive mindset because it seems at odds with

analytic or critical thinking. Isn't the point of analysis to find the problems? Why would one focus on the positive aspects of a situation? Positive thinking is not "happy talk" or blind optimism in the face of reality. Instead, it is a consistent focus on strengths in any situation: what went right, rather than what is wrong. Positive thinkers are using analytic thinking, but they are analyzing the strengths, the learning, and the desired outcomes instead of the problems.

Since 2000, a new field of positive psychology has evolved to examine what works in people's lives, and the research conducted so far overwhelmingly demonstrates the significance and value of a positive (optimistic) mindset. Dr. Martin Seligman is one of the foremost researchers in the field, and he identifies five elements that are necessary for well-being and happiness: positive emotion, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and achievement or accomplishment. Check the References and Resources section (pages 325–328) for additional information on how to cultivate a more meaningful and fulfilling life using Dr. Seligman's principles.

Positive thinking creates a positive future. Seligman's studies have found that in virtually all professions (with one notable exception), positive thinking or optimism is a major component of success. For example, optimistic sales representatives experience more sales; optimistic teachers are happier and experience more success in the classroom. What's the one exception? Lawyers. Unfortunately, the field of law doesn't reward optimism: it is the nature of lawyers to seek out problems and constantly consider worst-case scenarios. Dr. Seligman has found that this characteristic wreaks havoc on the personal lives of lawyers, and in true optimistic style, he offers remedies for the situation.

Why Would an Employer Care about Your Positive Mindset?

- As mentioned earlier, research increasingly supports the importance of the positive mindset for success in the workplace. A positive mindset cuts stress, boosts morale, and improves productivity.
- The most successful leaders have positive mindsets, and a positive mindset helps you motivate yourself and others. Motivating workers is an ongoing challenge in many workplaces, and positive psychology research offers valuable advice and solutions.

- Optimistic workers are more resilient, less likely to quit or give up, and more likely to achieve goals and focus on their strengths.
- Individuals with positive mindsets are more likely to take responsibility for themselves and work well independently or in groups.

How You Can Develop or Use the Positive Mindset

- Consider a time when you experienced a setback. How did you overcome it? How have you demonstrated resilience? When faced with a setback, ask yourself: "How would the 'perfect' me at my all-time best handle this situation?"
- What strengths or positive elements did you discover in your Wandering Map? How can you use or build on them today?
- Think about times when you've been "in the flow"—when time just flew by because you were so caught up in your experience. What were you doing? Can you increase the time you spend in the flow now?
- In his book *Authentic Happiness*, Dr. Seligman writes that "the key is not finding the right job; it is finding a job you can make right." He recommends "recrafting" your job by changing the duties to fit your strengths. Think about the various jobs or activities you've enjoyed. How did you make them right through recrafting?
- Name three things that went right today. Better yet, name three things that have gone right with your job search recently. Perhaps reading this book is one of them. What did you do to make them happen?
- Develop an "attitude of gratitude" by focusing on what has worked well in your life. Or try thinking of three things you're grateful for today. You might even want to create a gratitude journal, writing down the large and small things you're grateful for, like that great coffee shop that's located on your way to class or work. By the way, this also works when you can't sleep. Instead of thinking about all the things you need to be doing, or haven't done, focus on the three things that went right during the day.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your use of the positive mindset?

Never Use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Constantly Use
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If you were going to tell an employer about your strength in using a positive mindset, what example(s) would you use?

MINDSET 6: THE GLOBAL (INTERNATIONAL) MINDSET

You'd have to have been living in a cave to have missed all the buzz about globalization. The world seems to shrink every day—we are not on an isolated island, nor should we strive to be. A global mindset goes beyond tolerance of another culture to appreciation and understanding. People with global mindsets go out of their way to study other cultures and languages, and immerse themselves in new places and experiences. The global thinker understands that our worlds are enhanced by appreciating, valuing, and incorporating ideas from other countries and cultures. We even understand ourselves better when we understand others.

Why Would an Employer Care about Your Global Mindset?

- Even small organizations are increasingly international in nature if only because the Internet has created customers or clients from around the world. They have a need for workers with global knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders, in particular, need to have global mindsets to be able to develop far-reaching visions for their organization.
- Workers who can speak other languages and understand and appreciate other cultures are highly prized in the workplace. They already have a strategic advantage over employees who don't possess the same skills and knowledge.
- The organization that is global in its thinking has a strategic and competitive advantage in the marketplace.

How You Can Develop or Use the Global Mindset

- Expand your world: seek opportunities to immerse yourself in people, places, and experiences that are new and out of your

comfort zone. Deliberately seek experiences that you might find uncomfortable and go in with an attitude for learning.

- Study abroad—or better yet, volunteer or work abroad so you are more fully immersed in the culture.
- Seek out students at your school who are not native to your country and listen to their perspective. Ask them what they like about college. What do they dislike? What has been hard about adapting to American culture? What mistaken assumptions do Americans possess about their culture?
- Seek out courses that will teach you about cultures, languages, and international issues. Go with an open-minded attitude and a desire to learn. Consider studying a language that's completely unknown to you, such as an Asian or Middle Eastern language if you're most familiar with European languages. Download a foreign-language podcast and take the first lesson. Understanding someone else's language will help you better understand their culture.
- Immerse yourself in an unfamiliar culture or country by reading books or watching films native to that culture or country.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your use of the global mindset?

Never Use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Constantly Use
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If you were going to tell an employer about your strength in this area, what example(s) would you use?

MINDSET 7: THE COLLABORATIVE MINDSET

The collaborative mindset can be challenging, particularly if you have had negative experiences with teamwork in classes or elsewhere. If you've ever been graded on a team project, you probably know

what I'm referring to. Isn't there always someone on the team who doesn't even show up for the meetings? And doesn't someone always get stuck doing the bulk of the work? Bad experiences with working on teams have created a mental block against teamwork for many people. In fact, teamwork often goes against the classic American mindset of rugged individualism and the romantic image of the lone hero. Consider the classic film *Die Hard*, which is often listed as the quintessential action film. Bruce Willis is the lone hero and the only "teams" in the movie are the evil terrorists and the clueless police force. That is, until toward the end of the film when Bruce teams up with one lone-wolf street cop and the two together outsmart the larger groups. The film demonstrates our love/hate relationship with teams.

On the other hand, many of you have probably experienced good moments of collaboration: the orchestra you played in, the choir you sang in, the athletic team you were on, or the student committee you formed to change a bad policy at your school.

Most people would agree that collaboration is a good thing. After all, most conflict can be boiled down to the simple question: "Why aren't you more like me?" The collaborative mindset responds, "Sure, we're different; so how can we work together?" Good collaborators know that our thinking expands into new areas when we work with and listen to others.

Why Would an Employer Care about Your Collaborative Mindset?

- Employers consistently list teamwork as a vital skill in their organization, regardless of the type of organization.
- Being able to work on a team is a survival skill in the workplace. Workers have to be able to communicate and work together to be efficient.
- Teams are often responsible for the development of new products, innovations, and ideas. Teamwork results in synergy, where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
- Well-functioning teams can eliminate "silo thinking": the failure to take into account the opinions and needs of other groups within the organization.

- Teams foster the sharing of information and cooperation and can draw out the best in each worker.
- By strengthening communication, teams help to foster a culture of trust within an organization.

How You Can Develop or Use the Collaborative Mindset

- Consider when you have been part of a team. Was it a successful experience? What made it a success or failure? What did you learn from working in a team?
- Seek opportunities to be part of a team. Join an organization, attend the meetings, and be an active participant.
- Make a point of listening to and valuing the ideas and opinions of others. Ask yourself, "What could I learn from this person or this group?"

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your use of the collaborative mindset?

Never Use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Constantly Use

If you were going to tell an employer about your strength in this area, what example(s) would you use?

MINDSET 8: THE REFLECTIVE MINDSET

With cell phones, iPads, Instagram, Twitter, video games, the twenty-four-hour news cycle, and so on, the reflective mindset is probably the most challenging, yet ultimately rewarding, mindset to develop. In fact, when surveyed, students often report that it is their least-used mindset, and it is usually in the top five mindsets they

wish to develop. Most of us know the value of taking a moment of reflection particularly when emotions are high—have you ever regretted sending an e-mail or text in a moment of anger? Taking time to reflect helps us make smarter decisions.

A reflective mindset is extremely powerful, and even a small amount of time spent in this mode will yield results exponentially. There are two main challenges to reflective thinking: time and noise. You need to pause your activities and find a quiet setting.

Why Would an Employer Care about the Reflective Mindset?

- A reflective mindset will help you know your true feelings better and make sound decisions. By taking the time to reflect, you can avoid errors in judgment or snap decisions made through emotional reasoning.
- The reflective mindset helps you stay calm and relieves stress, making you a more productive and healthier worker.
- The reflective mindset enhances creativity and makes you more likely to produce ideas and innovations.
- The reflective mindset gives you perspective—you won't jump to conclusions as quickly when you take the time to reflect.

How You Can Develop or Use the Reflective Mindset

- Try using an online meditation site. Download a five-minute podcast of meditative music or watch a meditative video on YouTube. One of the myths about reflective thinking is that you need lots of time—sometimes five or ten minutes is all you need.
- Try writing in a journal or creating a portfolio to reflect on your experiences. Writing down and reflecting on your experiences and your feelings has been scientifically demonstrated to improve happiness and reduce stress.
- Take a creative writing or rhetoric course where you can write opinion or argument papers that will help you reflect on your opinions and thoughts.
- Invite a coworker or fellow student to lunch and talk about what you're doing at work or what you're learning in your classes. Use this time to reflect on what has been most valuable or what you've enjoyed learning or doing.

- ⇒ Take up a hobby that allows you solitary time to reflect, such as canoeing on a slow river, fly-fishing, or painting. Even coloring in a coloring book or working a jigsaw puzzle can help relax your mind and reduce stress.
- ⇒ Take time to reflect on your day. Ask yourself
 - What did I learn today?
 - What went right?
 - How did I add value to something or someone?
 - What did I encounter today that I'd like to think more about?
 - What could I do differently next time?
 - What is my favorite class so far? If I weren't attending college right now, what would I do instead?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your use of the reflective mindset?

Never Use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Constantly Use
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If you were going to tell an employer about your strength in reflective thinking, what example(s) would you use?

MINDSET 9: THE FLEXIBLE/ADAPTIVE MINDSET

A famous Zen story tells of a farmer whose horse runs away. His neighbors come over and say, "How terrible!" He simply replies, "Maybe, maybe not." The next day the horse returns accompanied by two wild horses. "How wonderful!" the neighbors say. "Maybe, maybe not," he replies. His son tries to ride one of the wild horses but falls and breaks his leg. "How terrible!" say the

neighbors. "Maybe, maybe not," says the farmer. The next day a military officer shows up to round up the men in the village to fight in a war. But the son can't join the military because his leg is broken. "How fortunate!" say the neighbors. The farmer replies, "Maybe, maybe not."

Carol Dweck's excellent book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* identifies two basic mindsets that determine our lives: fixed or growth. Individuals who have fixed mindsets view everything as static and incapable of change. Individuals with growth mindsets focus on what can change and view setbacks as launching pads for new ideas and decisions. In many ways, the flexible mindset epitomizes a growth mindset.

One of the key methods for developing a flexible mindset is to limit judgments and preconceived notions. By detaching yourself from opinions, you are able to listen to information with an open mind and choose your response accordingly. Rigid thinkers often try to place everything in a right or wrong context too quickly and might miss important information.

Flexible thinkers are natural experimenters: curious, alert, and open to change. They don't allow failure or a setback to end their pursuits. Being flexible and adaptable allows you to experiment and roll with the punches. You're more likely to take risks if you know you can cope with whatever the outcome might be.

People often misunderstand Darwin's survival of the fittest theory, assuming that fittest means the biggest or the strongest. It actually means the most adaptable. Just consider how the relatively small cockroach has survived for millions of years through adaptation, not brute force or size. Or how American car manufacturers have suffered from their inability to be flexible and change with the times.

There is nothing wrong with being organized and having a plan. But the advantage of cultivating a flexible mindset is that you can more easily adapt to changes in your environment and be open to new ideas or opportunities. There's a Yiddish proverb, "Mann trakht und Gott lakht," which translates to "Man plans and God laughs." Like chaos theory, it reminds us that we are not always in control of everything no matter how hard we try, so it's important to be able to adjust to whatever situation we're thrown into.

Why Would an Employer Care That You Are Flexible and Adaptable?

- Speed and agility are invaluable in today's working environment. Organizations need to be able to change and react quickly to such factors as global competitiveness, advanced technology, increasing customer expectations, and the changing needs of employees.
- Change is a constant, and flexible workers can go with the flow in fast-changing environments. They are also great at customer service, which demands flexible thinking.
- Flexible thinkers adapt to both adversity and success because they change their techniques or skills accordingly. They manage change rather than let change manage them.
- Workers who are adaptable and flexible ultimately save the organization both money and time. Just think of a bureaucratic organization (the antithesis of flexibility): how much time and money is wasted by employees and supervisors who continue to do their work the same way it's been done for twenty years?

How You Can Develop or Use the Flexible/Adaptive Mindset

- Examine your "rules" about things and shake up your routine. Do you always order the same thing at your local coffee shop? Try something different. Or skip the coffee and put your money in a charity donation jar or give it to a homeless person. What changes occur throughout the day when you make that small change?
- Go to a bookstore but wander into sections you never normally visit. Do you traditionally head toward the true-crime books? Try the computer-book section. Are you a psychology or self-help addict? Visit the mysteries section. A science junkie? Try the art-and-architecture section. Just pull books off the shelf and look at them. Find anything interesting?
- Treat your job search as an opportunity to practice your flexible mindset. How could you change your approach to change your outcome? Where are you being too rigid? And where could you try something new?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your use of the flexible/adaptive mindset?

Never Use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Constantly Use
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If you were going to tell an employer about your strength in this area, what example(s) would you use?

MINDSET 10: THE PROBLEM-SOLVING MINDSET

The problem-solving mindset is closely aligned with action orientation, curiosity, the positive mindset, and the creative mindset. True problem solvers are like dogs on bones—not content to stop until they are sure they've finished. Problem solvers actively seek solutions—and assume that they will find them. They gain their energy by keeping their focus on the outcome and looking for ways to influence it positively.

An entire counseling system built around problem-solving is aptly titled Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT). Practitioners of this type of therapy are active problem solvers and use several techniques with their clients.

- One technique is simply **refusing to buy the problem**. If you think about it, most people who have problems spend a lot of energy convincing you that they have a problem. What if you refused to buy it? What if you simply said, "I'm not buying the problem; I'm going to find a solution."
- Another problem-solving technique in SFBT is to **empower the person while disempowering the problem**. So to help solve a problem, you might focus on times when you didn't have the problem and try to replicate the behavior present at that moment. For instance, if you have a problem with procrastination, it's likely that you are more aware of the times when you procrastinate. What if you focused on the times when you didn't procrastinate and see if you can identify the characteristics of that situation? You might find a solution in your own behavior.

SFBT focuses on past successes and, like chaos theory, encourages you to maintain a state of not-knowing. Not-knowing will keep you open-minded to new solutions.

Why Would an Employer Care about a Problem-Solving Mindset?

- Consultants are paid a lot of money to be problem solvers. Problem-solving is an everyday skill in the work setting.
- Good problem solvers know how to ask the right questions to find the solution. They are willing to take risks and use an action approach. Problem-solving is not a passive activity.
- The problem-solving mindset dovetails with the positive mindset. Problem solvers seldom hear the word no.
- Problem solvers focus on potential and planning, always helping the organization move forward and preventing it from getting stuck.

How You Can Develop or Use the Problem-Solving Mindset

- Come up with creative solutions. Put yourself in someone else's shoes: how would you solve their problems? For instance, do you think you could come up with a better solution for alcohol problems on campus than your dean has devised? Do you think you have a better way to run a career center? If you've thought these problems through, consider meeting with the dean or the director of your career center and share your insights. After all, your thoughtful perspective as a student might just be what they need to create a successful program that would benefit many students.
- Refuse to hear the word *no*. See if you can find another way around the problem. Reframe it as a temporary impediment. Think about how you would handle it if you were working at your all-time best performance level.
- For every problem you identify, see if you can come up with three different solutions.
- Think over a time when a door closed, when you didn't get what you wanted. How did you handle it? What did you do instead?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your use of the problem-solving mindset?

Never Use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Constantly Use
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----------------

If you were going to tell an employer about your strength in this area, what example(s) would you use?

Wow! Great job! This may have been a difficult chapter for you to work through, but soon you will find that taking the time to analyze your mindsets and actively develop them will be invaluable when interviewing for jobs. And if you haven't already, be sure to return to your Wandering Map and list the mindsets you've honed over the years. We'll revisit the knowledge you've gained in this chapter when we cover interviewing in chapter 10. In the meantime, keep thinking about the mindsets you're developing and using. They will come in handy very soon.

Take one more look through the ten mindsets and answer the following questions:

Which mindsets do I use the most?

Do I see any potential problems with the patterns of my mindsets?

Which mindsets would I like to develop?

What actions can I take in the next twenty-four hours to start developing new mindsets?

WISDOM BUILDER #8

WORDS CREATE WORLDS

Did you know that changing your vocabulary can change your thinking? Language has the power to affect your perception of any situation. Imagine you are describing something as “a complete disaster.” What do you picture in your mind? Now describe the same situation as “annoying.” Big difference, huh?

We often use language that inflates or exaggerates to make something more interesting than it really is. We describe everyday things as “amazing” or small events as “miracles.” While those words won’t likely hurt your everyday experiences, changing some words can help you clarify your feelings. For instance, the word *should*. How often do you use that word, particularly in relation to the job search—as in “I should go to medical school”?

Here’s an experiment: every time you would normally say “should,” change it to “want to.” So now you say, “I want to go to medical school.” That’s a very different sentence and much more powerful. It allows you to stop and think: do I really want to go to medical school? And if you do, you may feel more motivated now because it’s something you want, not something you have to do. Conversely, maybe when you word the sentence that way, you don’t actually want to go to medical school.

Here are some other changes to try:

- Change *can’t* to *won’t*. Instead of saying, “I’d like to look for a job, but I can’t do it right now,” try saying, “I’d like to look for a job, but I won’t do it right now.” This may be a little harder to acknowledge, but it’s honest, and you can decide if you really are choosing not to do something.
- Change *but* to *and*. Maybe you’ve said, “I’d like to look for a job, but I’m taking a really heavy course load right now.” This sounds reasonable, doesn’t it—after all, you’re very busy. It’s a good excuse. But let’s reframe the statement with one simple change: “I’d like to look for a job, and I’m taking a really heavy course load right now.” Do you see how that simple use of the

word *and* opens up the statement to possible solutions? The first statement closes off any chance of change or problem-solving. It also draws into question whether it's really true that you'd like to look for a job or if you're looking for excuses. The second one accepts that you'd like to look for a job and you also have a challenge. You can then start thinking about ways to solve that problem.

- Take a moment to use your reflective thinking skills and examine how often you have connected the words *should*, *but*, *can't*, and *must* to your job search.

Now that we have examined your mindsets, let's look at another important element that greatly influences your mindset, how you think, and how you approach the world: your major.

MAJORS AND MINDSETS: MAKING YOUR EDUCATION RELEVANT TO ANY EMPLOYER

Wherever smart people work, doors are unlocked.

—STEVE WOZNIAK

Did you know that your love of learning could make you a valuable employee? Wise employees are curious—always seeking new information, new ideas, and answers to questions. Employees who value learning will read more about the field in which they are working, will attend and present at conferences, will develop new ideas, and will create value for their employers throughout their careers.

Do you feel as if you have absorbed a lot of knowledge and information about obscure topics but still aren't sure of their value? On the contrary, your academic experiences (regardless of your major) are at the core of your career planning and development. In the classroom you have had the opportunity to acquire knowledge, connect with professors, learn valuable skills, and become exposed to new ideas and experiences you haven't even considered. *Your major is not your end goal; it's a series of classes that will help you accomplish your goal.*

Your classes may represent an element of chaos theory. They have captured your attention, have generated excitement, and are interesting, but they can also be distracting—particularly if you're not quite sure what you can do with them. Many college students and graduates dismiss their education for its presumed lack of marketability. They begin their sentences with apologies, such as "Although I'm not a business major . . ." or "Even though I didn't take any courses in . . ." This approach virtually guarantees that you will not be taken seriously in the job market and that your potential will never be fully realized. *You must have absolute confidence in your degree and your ability to apply it to the marketplace if you're going to persuade employers to hire you.* So as we start examining your education, one rule is required: *no apologies, no regrets, no "if onlys" and no "I should haves"* when it comes to your education.

If you've already selected a major, take a minute to think about

how it has influenced you. What mindsets do you use the most? What topics do you tend to study? Do you look at situations or information differently from other majors? How is your major your mindset? What do you notice about current events or other subjects that reflect the major you've studied?

If you haven't selected a major, which one might fit the way you tend to think? Instead of selecting a major based on career options (because you now know that's not the best idea), have you considered selecting it based on the thinking skills you'd like to develop or strengthen?

Just as an experiment, let's take the classic movie *Good Will Hunting*. How might different majors perceive that film? What aspects might they notice?

Here are some possibilities:

Psychology majors might focus on the therapeutic interactions between Will and his psychologist or the diagnosis of his condition.

Economics majors might take notice of the class structure of Boston and the economic challenges for the working class to acquire a college education.

English majors might focus on the story structure, the plot, or the character development.

Anthropology majors might want to analyze the different subcultures that make up Boston: the clothing they wear; their different speech patterns, their relative acceptance into society.

Math majors might be interested in the formulas and problems Will solves.

Students select their majors for all sorts of reasons. Why did you select yours? At best it was because you enjoyed the professors and what you were learning, but life isn't always that simple. You might have been prevented from pursuing your desired major because it was overcrowded, or your grades weren't strong enough. Maybe you wanted to pursue a particular major but were turned off by its requirements—foreign language or math courses, for example. But now you're starting to wish you had bitten the bullet and taken those

tough classes so you could be in a more competitive position for a job. Perhaps you selected a major that doesn't seem to have a direct career plan or one where the job market is saturated. Maybe you're looking at the list of recruiters coming to your career center and all you see are employers seeking a major you didn't take.

None of that matters. Remember chaos theory: assess what you currently know, don't know, and can learn. Instead of focusing on what you didn't learn yet, what knowledge/learning have you acquired? Sometimes it's hard to see a connection between what you're learning and how that knowledge might be used. You may have even discovered that because your major isn't immediately understood by relatives or friends who took more "practical" subjects in college, it's ridiculed. Liberal arts majors in particular have become the ninety-eight-pound weaklings of the education field, beaten up by the public and media.

But then, last time I checked, this "bracketology" business wasn't easy for anyone. I read the other day that there were 18,446,744,073,709,551,616 possible combinations for filling out a 64-team bracket. For the liberal-arts majors in the crowd, that's, like, a lot.

—JIM ARMSTRONG, DENVER POST

Students in pre-professional majors like accounting are told from day one that their education is relevant to the workplace and are encouraged to think accordingly—constantly applying their theories and knowledge to the workplace. If you took a less career-oriented major, you have not received this same encouragement. In fact, your professors may never have said a word about what you could actually do with the knowledge you were acquiring. If that's your situation, you have some catching up to do. Conversely, those of you who took pre-professional majors like advertising or marketing may find that there aren't enough jobs in the field to support the number of majors. When the first question you're asked in an interview for a position in banking is "You're an advertising major. Why aren't you interviewing for an advertising job?" suddenly your "practical" major seems like a liability. Even management majors can struggle in the job search if they feel they're always competing with finance or accounting majors. Getting the most out of your academic

experience isn't just about attending classes, writing papers, and taking exams. It's about delving into fields of study that will expand your mind and help you develop new connections. Your classroom experience can be the start of a new world and open up career opportunities you didn't even know existed. In the rest of this chapter, we're going to mine your major and your classes for all the valuable knowledge and practical learning you've been acquiring whether you know it or not.

English at Work

WHAT MOBY DICK AND ESPN HAVE IN COMMON

Are you sitting in English class wondering why the professor is making such a big deal out of *Moby Dick*? It's just a story. And how about that film professor who spends hours analyzing *Citizen Kane*? It's just a movie. We spend so much time and energy analyzing works of art, music, films, and books because analyzing them enriches our experience and understanding. We learn new information. We have a deeper understanding of the author or the plot. We learn to pay attention, notice details, find meaning, and maybe even understand ourselves better. So if you're thinking it's a waste of time to analyze works of literature, consider this: How many hours are spent on ESPN analyzing a football game? What about all those pregame and postgame shows? The commentators who pick apart the game, analyze the players and their moves, and how a mistake likely happened because a rookie was playing? It's just a football game, right? Right. And that's why English, film studies, and other courses could prepare you for a great career in sports broadcasting. Or analyzing world events for CNN.

Wandering Off

I'M DOOMED IF MY GRADES AREN'T PERFECT

Before we move forward, let's pause for a quick discussion of a common concern for students: grades. Never confuse grades and learning. Yes, it's easy to make a superficial argument that you learned more in a course where you received an A than in a course where you received a C. But as you probably already know, it's not that simple, as Angelo discovered:

I had to take a science class, and I wasn't very good at science in high school. I thought I had hit the jackpot when I learned that a particular anthropology class counted for the science requirement. I knew I could handle anthropology. Well, within two weeks I was in over my head. It was fascinating—kind of like the CSI stuff on TV—and I was learning a lot, but it was all so foreign to me. For my final exam, I had to enter a room that contained nothing but old—and I mean old—bones laid out on several tables. I had to identify whether they were animal or human, their gender, their age, and so forth. I have never worked so hard in my life. I got a B minus and it was the hardest grade I ever earned. I'm more proud of that grade than the A's I had in other courses. When employers ask me if I can handle challenges, I tell them about the feeling I had when I walked into a room full of bones. They always laugh and tell me they admire my perseverance. And then we talk about the differences between anthropological reality and what's on TV.

Most studies reveal that ultimately there is little correlation between your college grade point average (GPA) and the salary you receive or how successful you are in your career. And once you're in the workplace, your GPA will continue to have less impact, except perhaps for highly academic employers such as institutions of higher education or think tanks. But it is also true that the higher your grade point average, the more opportunities will be available to you. Many prestigious programs, including White House internships, FBI programs, pharmaceutical sales positions, Wall Street jobs, and so on, screen candidates by

You Majored in What?

GPA. And obviously, the better your grades, the better the graduate or professional school you will be able to attend. Good grades give you more freedom to select opportunities.

Does this mean if you don't have a perfect GPA, you're sunk? Of course not. There are numerous examples of successful people who had poor grades or even dropped out of college. Your GPA is just one factor in the employment and graduate school process, and there are lots of ways to compensate. It still makes sense to go for the best grades you can within reason, but you are in college to learn, so don't avoid classes just because you might not get the best grade.

You've been working hard in your classes—studying, writing papers, taking tests, and so on. Isn't it time your courses did something for you? Let's take a few minutes to analyze the courses you've been taking as well as your major and find ways to articulate their value to potential employers. Let's create a Major Map.

MAPPING YOUR MAJOR: MAKING YOUR MAJOR WORK FOR YOU IN THE WORKPLACE

Your major contains a vast amount of information ready to be mined. And you're well skilled at mining hidden knowledge by now. All you have to do is make another map: this time it's a Major Map. Knowing what's special about your major and being a strong advocate of what you learned can set yourself apart from your classmates in the job search. So get out that blank piece of paper and your pens, pencils, or crayons: it's time to analyze your major.

STEP 1:

In the center of your paper write the name of your major and draw a circle around it.

STEP 2:

Scatter the following words on your paper, drawing a circle around each one:

Courses

Skills

Theories or ideas

Interesting items

Knowledge

Related courses from other departments

Career-related knowledge or skills

Add extra circles if you want to create additional categories.

STEP 3:

Use each word as a prompt, and jot down ideas related to them. Draw circles around the words you put on the map. Write as much as you can, filling in everything you know about your major. Try to recall important activities: presentations you gave, papers you wrote, and projects you developed.

STEP 4:

If you're stuck, consider doing this exercise with other students in your major. Sometimes your classmates will think of things you forgot or didn't consider important.

STEP 5:

When you're done, take a step back and look at your map.

- What pops out for you?
- What is the most interesting part of the map? What "speaks" to you?

- Ask yourself: “What does it take to be a great _____ major at my school?” Have you listed those traits or skills? If not, add them.
- How have you done something unique with your major? Be sure that’s on the map.
- How have you tailored it to fit your interests?
 - Did you take a series of courses that focused on a particular aspect of the major? Why? What did you enjoy about them?
 - What skills did you learn?

STEP 6:

Pull your thoughts together. What are the most important aspects of your major? If you had to identify three characteristics you’ve developed or acquired from your major, what would they be?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

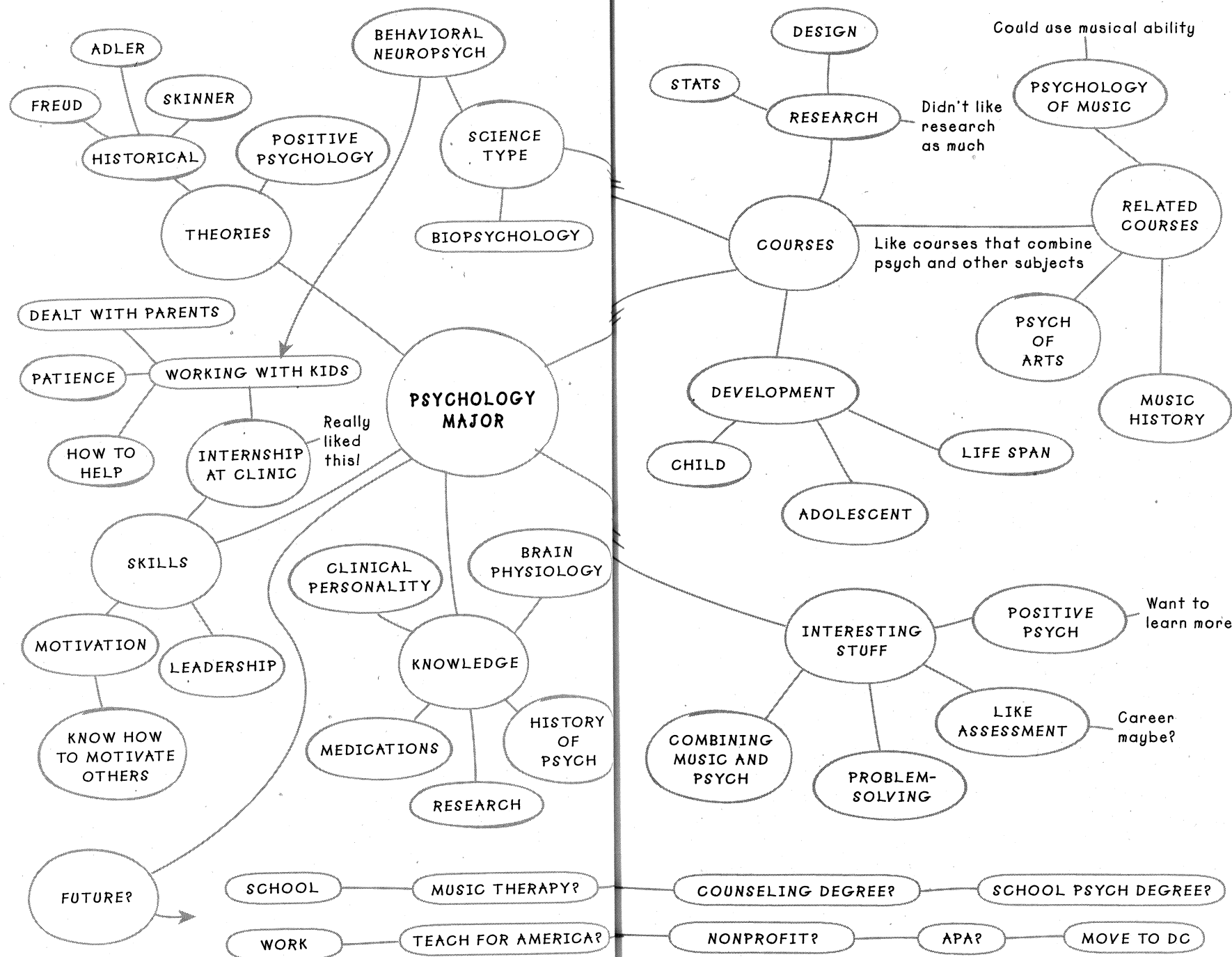
Take a look at the sample Major Map for a psychology major on pages 94–95.

After doing several Major Maps, students have made some interesting observations:

History majors found that a key element for them was a never-ending search for “the truth.” They found it was also imperative to be keenly curious about everything. They could spend hours of intense focus on one project if necessary.

English majors found that their major was extremely relevant and valuable to both work and life. They noted that to be a good English major you needed to be both classical and progressive. You need to know where writing has been (that there is much to learn from the classics) and where writing is going (blogs and Tweets, for example). They would be especially good in a multicultural workplace where appreciating and understanding different cultures is imperative.

Economics majors noted its far-reaching stance in business, politics, and solving social problems. They discovered that economics majors needed to embrace complexity, be very good at math, and be strong problem solvers. They also had to digest large amounts of information and distill it to the main points.



WISDOM BUILDER #9

SELLING YOUR MAJOR TO YOUR FUTURE EMPLOYER

Now that you've analyzed your major and discovered new sources of knowledge and power in your experience, you'll need to be able to communicate its value to future employers. Try putting yourself in the mind of an employer: will the employer know as much about your major as you do? Not likely. The worst assumption you can make is that your interviewer already knows everything about your major. In fact, it's possible that not only is your interviewer not familiar with your major, he or she may even harbor negative or inaccurate views of it. So you need to become a star salesperson for your major.

A key piece of information you'll need to learn is your interviewer's college major. It's easy enough to discover: when you are about to say something about your major, simply ask, "By the way, what was your major?" and respond positively regardless of the response. Once you know the interviewer's major, you can adjust your approach in the interview. For example, if the recruiter understands your major (that is, she majored in it herself or hires a lot of people with your major), then emphasize what was special about what you studied or learned. What made you a better major than others who took the same subject?

On the other hand, if your interviewer majored in a subject other than yours, or doesn't usually hire individuals with your major, then you need to educate him or her on the value of your major. For example, some schools offer a geography major. For those who aren't familiar with the college-level study of geography, their last memory might be a geography class in middle school where they had to memorize all the states in alphabetical order. So their opinion of a geography major may not be too high. They may not know that a geography major has taken an interdisciplinary course of study with roots in sciences and the social sciences, and usually has strong skills related to GPS

tracking systems, or would be a great urban planner. Or take a cognitive science major, a relatively new major. Many interviewers assume that it's the same as a psychology major. If you're a cognitive science major, then you know that's not a correct analysis, so be prepared to explain the key elements of your major and how they are valuable to the job you're applying for.

Even majors that are commonly known, such as English and history, are still going to require explanation to an employer who took only the one required English or history class in his or her academic career. In fact, he or she may have hated the course, so you're going to have to present what you found valuable about it.

Here are some ideas for promoting your major to an employer:

ENGLISH	<p>Did you study literature written from a particular ethnic, cultural, or other unique perspective? What did you learn from that perspective? How could your knowledge apply to the increasingly diverse workplace?</p> <p>What characters did you analyze? What did you learn about those characters? How might your ability to understand characters affect your ability to work with others?</p> <p>Consider how Langston Hughes's poetry often speaks to the hard work of the laborer and would help managers better appreciate the life challenges of the people who work for them.</p> <p>Arthur Miller's play <i>Death of a Salesman</i> is an interesting study of the role of the salesperson in a company and the need for strong training and human resource services.</p>
BIOLOGY	<p>How would you apply the scientific method in the workplace?</p> <p>Why is it important to follow a logical thinking process and pay attention to details?</p> <p>How do you analyze a situation?</p> <p>When decisions are made, can you determine if they are based on sound research or on hypotheses, beliefs, or guesses?</p>

SOCIOLOGY	<p>Did you study the concept of social Darwinism? How could that theory be applied to a workplace?</p> <p>Why and how do certain organizations survive while others fail?</p> <p>Consider structural functionalism. What structures exist in a company because they serve a purpose?</p> <p>What structures have outlived their purpose? Is the company able to see this? If so, how does it go about changing the situation?</p> <p>How does self-fulfilling prophecy apply to the stock market?</p>
ECONOMICS	<p>How does Pareto's 80/20 rule apply to the workplace? What could it say about productivity in the workplace?</p> <p>How does the law of supply and demand apply to the career field you're seeking?</p> <p>How would you apply empirical investigation to your work?</p>
ANTHROPOLOGY	<p>How do the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the managers and workers influence a workplace?</p> <p>How does the presence or absence of a union affect an organization's culture?</p> <p>How do the different groups within an organization communicate with one another?</p> <p>What are the key rituals or culture within the organization?</p> <p>How do they reinforce the organization's mission or vision?</p>
PSYCHOLOGY	<p>What do you know about motivation?</p> <p>What factors influence an individual's behavior?</p> <p>How might the concept of extinction apply in the workplace?</p> <p>How could cognitive behavioral techniques be applied in the workplace?</p> <p>How could your knowledge of psychology help you reduce stress in your employees?</p>
HISTORY	<p>What period did you study? What significant events and changes occurred then? How did it influence today's situations? What did society learn from the events?</p> <p>History teaches us to pay attention to who's in charge and the scope of their influence. The same holds true in the workplace. Who's in charge and how do they lead? What factors influence their decisions?</p> <p>Studying Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches can teach you a lot about charismatic leadership and its role in rallying individuals to a cause or mission. You can even learn about the value of rhetoric and inspired communication.</p>

Below are two steps you can take to prepare for questions about your major:

1. To better sell your major to your future interviewer, *what knowledge, mindsets, or approach would someone with your major bring to a workplace?* Don't worry if you don't know the kind of job you're applying these skills to yet; for the moment you can answer generically.

2. Take advantage of your classroom experiences to create stories that will show your knowledge, ability to learn, mindsets, or other important factors. Try using what you learned in your classes (the actual subjects, the metalearning, the mindsets, the challenges you faced, and the skills or character traits you developed, such as perseverance or grit) to answer these typical interview questions:

Why did you choose your major? It doesn't really relate to this job.

Why didn't you major in _____ if you were going to apply for this job in _____?

What skills beyond the traditional writing, research, and/or communication skills have you acquired as a function of your major?

Congratulations on finishing the first stage of the Wise Wanderings system!

At this point, you should have a clear, concrete, and positive view of the talents and skills you will bring to the workplace. You should also be able to articulate the value of your education, regardless of your major.

Let's summarize what you've learned from the "Discover Your Strengths" section:

Key themes and threads from your Wandering Map:

Key strengths, talents, or skills:

Key mindsets you plan to describe to potential employers or graduate schools:

Key strengths and value of your courses, major, and/or education:

Key interests:

Of course, **THE QUESTION** still haunts. What are you going to do with all this knowledge? Don't worry: all will be revealed in the next section.

Here are some final questions to consider before you move on:

1. When you're at your all-time best, what are you doing?
2. Describe a high point or peak experience in your life.
3. What are you most proud of? What traits or strengths does your answer reveal?
4. What challenges have you overcome, and how did you do that?
5. How do you learn best?
6. What do you think made you stand out in your application to college?
7. What inspires you?
8. What do you want more of?
9. Out of everything you have learned about yourself in this section, what stands out as most important or significant for you?
10. Now that you've identified all these strengths, how do you plan to keep building them?