CHAPTER 2

THE POWER OF YOU

CREATING A NETWORK OF POSSIBLE WANDERINGS

Not all those who wander are lost.
—**J. R. R. TOLKIEN,** *THE LORD OF THE RINGS*

When you think about the future, do you sometimes feel

Overwhelmed?

Clueless?

Stuck?

Join the crowd. If you're like most college students or recent grads, you've done a lot of different things in your life and sometimes it's hard to know where and how to direct your focus. After all, you certainly don't want to miss anything. But the chaos created by so many interests and experiences can leave you feeling like a pinwheel: spinning in the wind and going nowhere fast.

What if you had a way to organize your past so that you could more clearly see your future?

What if you could discover new empowering information about yourself?

What if there was a simple way to help you identify what makes you special and interesting to employers?

You're one blank piece of paper away.

You already learned from the explanation of chaos theory in chapter 1 that there is always order despite the chaos. You just have to step away from it to see it. The exercise you're about to complete will help you uncover the most important factors in your life so far, and then give you the priceless opportunity to step away from them, look at them from above, and see the connections.

In this chapter, you're going to make a Wandering Map: a simple, yet surprisingly powerful tool for organizing the chaos of your life. It won't serve as a literal map, of course, but it will help you focus on your strengths, identify significant themes and moments in your life, and help you develop your reflective thinking skills as you look to your past to find your future.

MAKING SENSE OF THE CHAOS

Have you ever noticed that the knowledge you acquire in one area of your life can be applied to a completely different setting? You may have already seen that in your classes—how what you study in one class seems to dovetail with what you're learning in another. For instance, you might be studying the behavior and culture of a tribe in anthropology class only to find that the way you're analyzing the tribe could apply to what you're learning in your business class about behavior in a corporation. Your business professor might not ever mention the words *culture* or *anthropology* but you see the connections. When we take what we learn in one sphere of our life and apply it to another, our knowledge and understanding increase substantially and we open the door for creative thinking and brilliant new insights and ideas.

Nobel Laureate Dr. Herbert Simon, who developed the field of

artificial intelligence, discovered the same thing. His degrees in political science and his extensive knowledge of economics, psychology, and computer science gave him the unique vision to see what others had missed. He used the phrase "network of possible wanderings" to describe the value of multidisciplinary perspectives. He said that the more you know about different disciplines and are able see the connections between those disciplines, the more you are able to create innovative solutions to problems. Your mind is able to wander into many territories. Your knowledge of chemistry, for example, might improve your thinking in the field of biology. Or your understanding of poetry might make you a better therapist.

Charles Munger, vice chairman of Berkshire Hathaway and business partner of Warren Buffett, one of the three richest men in the world, calls this approach to thinking "mental latticework" and applies it to investing. He believes that to fully understand the stock market and investments, you need to apply knowledge from disparate fields, including philosophy, physics, psychology, history, economics, biology, and literature. He states that only by understanding the key elements of each of these fields and then pulling them together into a cohesive latticework can one develop what he calls "worldly wisdom," an invaluable means of making intelligent decisions.

The Wandering Map you're about to create has evolved from the thinking behind Herbert Simon's Network of Possible Wanderings, the basic principles of chaos theory, Munger's latticework, and the visual mapping work of Joseph Novak and Tony Buzan. You'd probably rather get started on the map than read a lot of research, but if you'd like to learn more about these ideas, see the References and Resources section at the end of the book. To put it succinctly, the power and value of the Wandering Map lies in its ability to help you

- brainstorm new ways of viewing and understanding your past;
- identify previously hidden themes and threads in your life;
- break away from linear thinking to look for creative connections;
- make meaningful order of the chaos in your life;
- create a powerful vision for planning your future; and
- get excited about your talents, interests, and possible future.

So I have one question for you: *Is it worth thirty minutes of your time and a blank piece of paper to rise above the chaos and find direction?*

Self-discovery requires time and focus. You can't think clearly in the midst of cell phones ringing, e-mails arriving, friends dropping in, worrying about exams, and so on. So to get the most out of this exercise, set aside some time when you won't be interrupted—thirty minutes is great. If possible, leave your room and go to the library or a park or your local coffeehouse—anywhere you won't be disturbed. Let's get started.

SHOW ME THE CHAOS: CREATING YOUR WANDERING MAP

Let's start by getting your brain ready to create this map. This exercise may seem unusual to you, particularly if you're more comfortable making lists or writing outlines. It may even seem kind of silly. Trust me: the students who complain the most at first usually tell me it turns out to be the most valuable activity they have ever tried. So suspend your judgment for a few minutes and give it a try. Keep the following thoughts in mind as you create your Wandering Map:

It will always be a work in progress. You may add items to it anytime you want and we will revisit it in future chapters.

There are no rules, so don't sabotage yourself by creating arbitrary rules, such as

"I must figure out the answer to all my questions."

"I must know by two o'clock this afternoon what I plan to do when I graduate."

"I must make the perfect map that includes absolutely everything that's important."

"I have to be some kind of artist to create this map."

"I should include _____ because my parents think it's important."

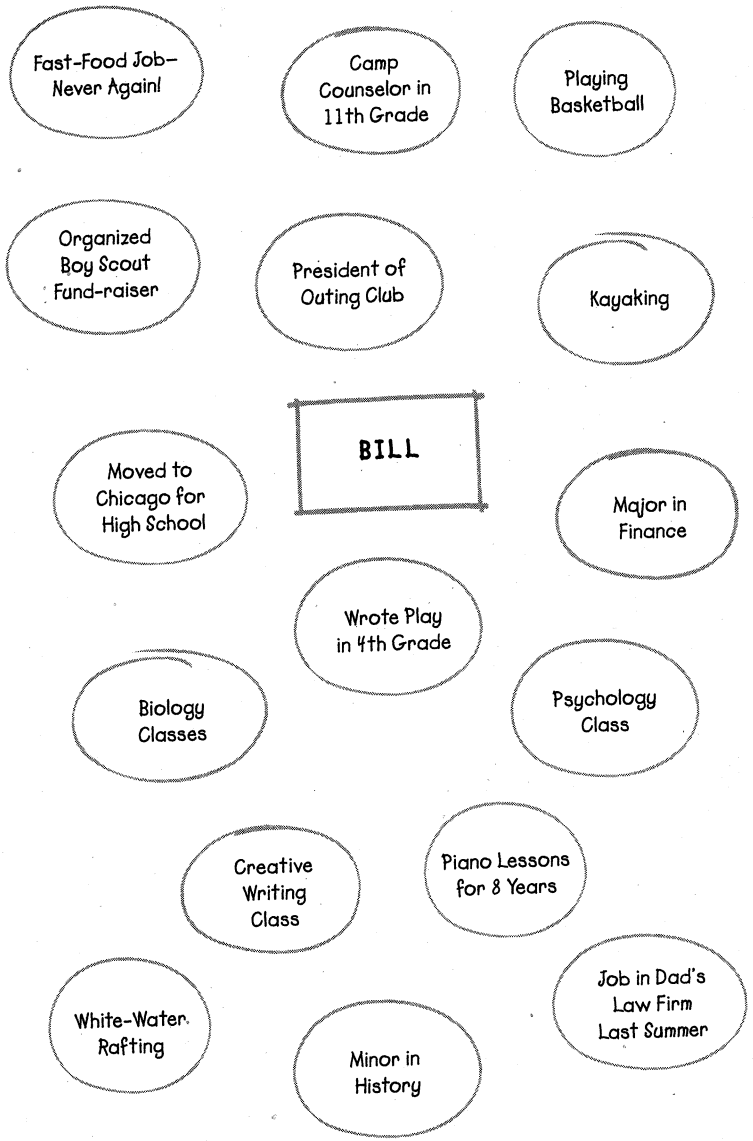
So, unburdened by rules and perfectionist thinking, here we go . . .

First, get a piece of blank paper and something to write with. Legal size paper (8½ by 14 inches) is ideal, but you can also tape together two regular pieces of plain 8½ by 11-inch paper if you wish. Try to avoid using paper with lines because that will increase your tendency to list and organize. You can use regular pencils or pens or colored pens or markers if you'd like. Colored pens have a way of opening your mind to fresh ideas. But don't get hung up here. Plain paper and a pencil or pen will work just fine.

Second, start thinking about all the interesting and significant things you've done or have happened to you. Go back as far in your life as you wish. Here are some suggestions:

- What significant events or experiences can you remember from when you were very young?
- Have you had unique jobs or taken unusual classes?
- Did you have a memorable summer experience?
- What are you most proud of in your life?
- Do you have hobbies you've pursued for a while?
- What awards or honors have you received during your life?
- Can you think of a particularly valuable lesson you've learned? What knowledge do you rely on that you have developed from your experiences or education?
- What successful experiences can you recall?

Third, start writing down your thoughts. At this point you are probably buzzing with ideas. If something has meaning to you, write it down anywhere on the paper. It's important to write what comes to mind, not just what you think is career related. You don't need to write any long explanations; just jot down a few keywords and draw a circle around them. For instance, if you worked at a camp one summer, just write "summer camp counselor" or whatever the position was. If you have read several biographies of Martin Luther King Jr. and find you quote him or follow his beliefs, write down his name. There will be time later to expand your thoughts. You can even draw little pictures if you prefer. The important thing is to just dump everything that's in your head onto the map.



To help you visualize a Wandering Map, here's a sample created by Bill, a senior majoring in finance. You can copy his style or develop your own. Add any shapes or colors or graphics you would like. Notice that there's no rhyme or reason to the key events that Bill selected or the order in which he put them down on paper.

Fourth, as you continue to write down significant aspects of your life, don't try to organize them in any way. Just write them down, draw a circle or other shape around them, and keep going. You can put down ten items or forty items or four hundred items; it's up to you. Here are some ideas to consider:

Objects You Use and/or Enjoy

Computers

Musical instruments

Books

Binoculars

Sports equipment

Telescopes or microscopes

Sailboats

Paintbrushes

Journals

Events in Your Life, Whether a Moment in Time or Lasting for Years

Jobs you've held—awful to wonderful

Classes you've enjoyed

Tutoring a child

Baking cookies for the holidays

Designing a website or creating your Facebook page

Acting in a school play

Running for office in a school election

Playing sports

Creative projects

Adventures/risks you've taken

Assignments, papers, or projects you're proud of

Family heritage/culture

Hobbies

Ideas you have developed

Internships

Places you've lived or traveled

Summer activities or vacations

Volunteer activities

So if you haven't started already, get out your blank piece of paper and start mapping.

Remember:

Quickly write whatever comes to mind and keep going. Get as much as you can on the paper.

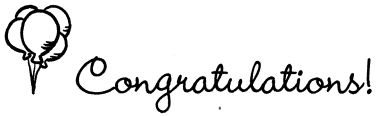
Don't waste time erasing or making it look perfect.

Don't worry about spelling. As long as you can read it, that's all that matters.

Use short words, phrases, or even drawings if you prefer. Draw a circle around each phrase.

Don't censor yourself or try to make the map look a certain way. For instance, if you've been thinking about becoming a lawyer, but you notice you are putting down items more related to music, *don't* start thinking "I'd better put something down that relates to being a lawyer."

Don't worry about organizing your thoughts—just get them down on the paper.



You did it. Does it look a little chaotic and crazy? So many different things—and all seemingly unrelated? Don't worry—we'll fix that soon.

Take another look to see if you want to add anything. Remember, you can always add things at any time and we'll keep building your map throughout the book.

If you're out of time, you can quit now as long as you promise to return for the analysis.

MAKING THE MAGIC HAPPEN: CREATING YOUR NETWORK OF POSSIBLE WANDERINGS

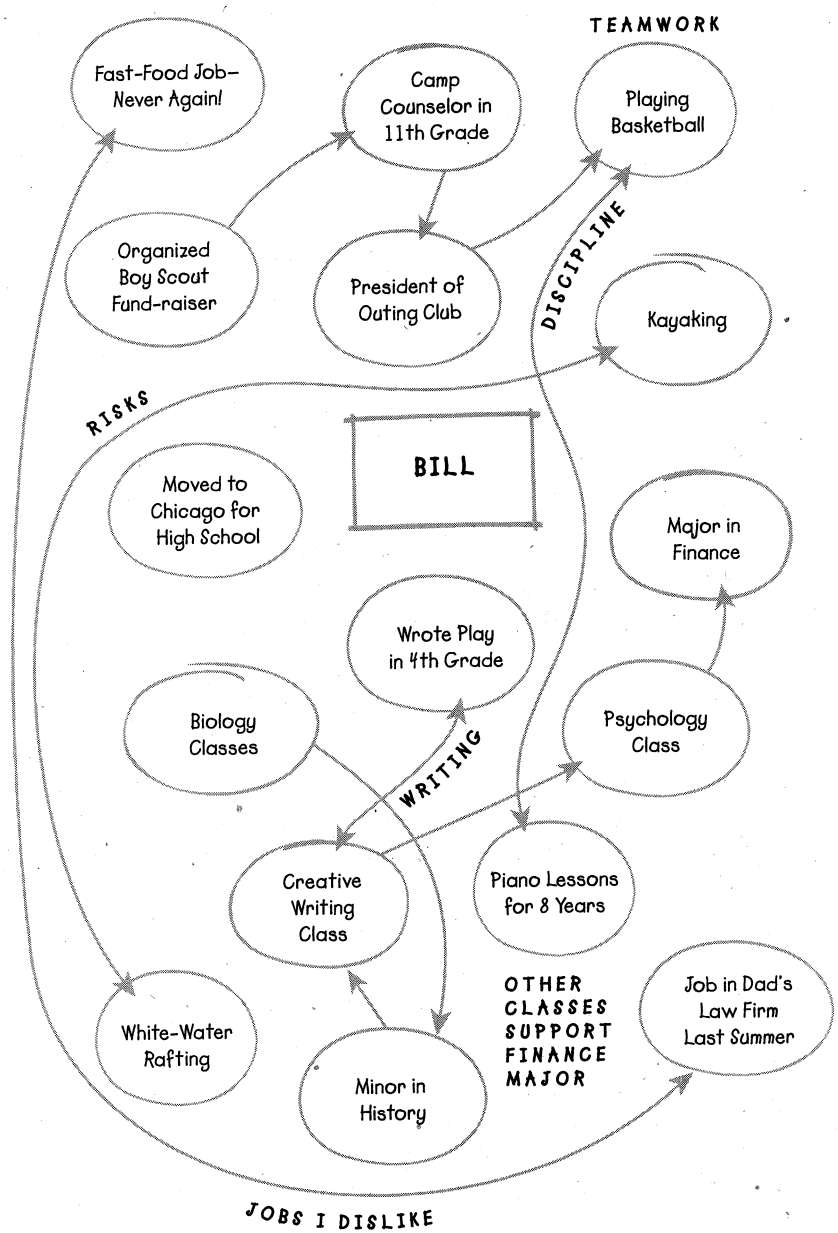
Creativity is connecting the unconnected.
—**JOHN C. MAXWELL,** *THINKING FOR A CHANGE*

Now the fun begins. We're going to step back and look for some connections. If creativity is connecting the unconnected, as author John C. Maxwell says, we're going to be very creative. And trust me, there's a gold mine in here.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE BASIC CATEGORIES

Let's start by making some obvious connections. Look over your map. Would some of the items you wrote down fit into a particular category? For instance, did you list several jobs, vacation spots, friends, or classes you liked? Draw lines on your map to connect the different categories.

On page 30 you'll see how Bill drew his lines to connect the categories.



From this map, Bill can now create a list of categories:

1. Jobs
2. Creativity
3. Money-related items
4. Classes
5. Sports

Write down your list of categories from your Wandering Map. See if you can identify at least five below, or if you prefer, write them on the back of your map or on a separate piece of paper.

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

Are you surprised by your list of categories?
Are there categories you weren't expecting to see?
Is there a pattern to your categories?
Does any one category have a lot of items?
Note anything that you find interesting or possibly significant.

STEP 2: DIG DEEPER BY IDENTIFYING THEMES AND THREADS IN YOUR LIFE

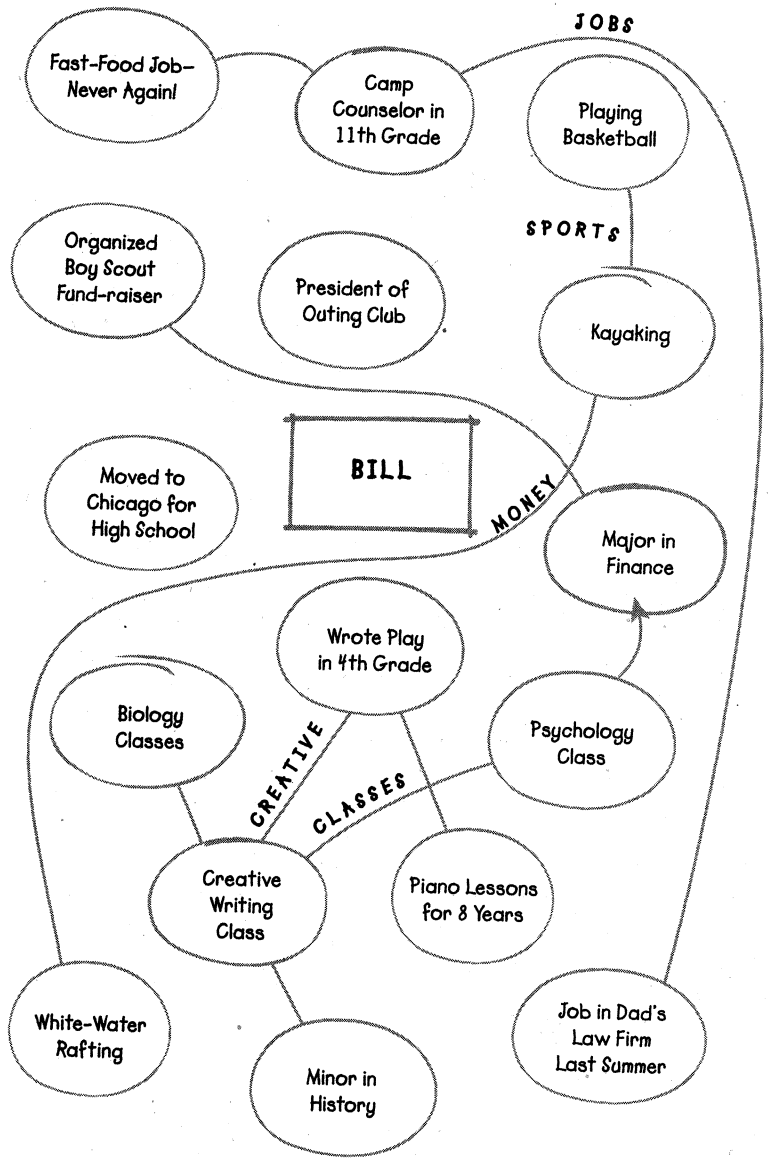
This time you're going to look at your map again, but instead of focusing on the obvious categories you noted above, we're going to dig deeper and apply a five-point analysis of your map. Here's how:

1. What stands out when you look at your map? Identify the one item that "pops" for you.

2. Ask yourself, "What skill or personality trait did I exhibit through that item? What skill or personality trait did I use to succeed in that item?"
3. Now look over the rest of your map: Where else did you use that same skill or personality trait? Draw a line connecting the items that are joined by this particular trait or talent.
4. Write down the skill or trait you identified on the line(s) that connects the items. We're going to call these identified traits and skills your life "themes" or "threads" that run through your life.
5. Repeat these steps for as many items on your map as you would like. The more traits and skills you identify, the stronger your results will be.

If you're stuck or find this confusing, let's revisit Bill's Wandering Map on page 33 to see how he redrew his lines and connected themes and threads rather than categories. After following the five points above, Bill uncovered these themes and threads:

1. **Leadership** is shown by his time in the Boy Scouts, his outing club work, and his role as a camp counselor. Bill has discovered that he likes to be a leader and the person in charge. He had to successfully solve a lot of problems when he was in his leadership roles.
2. **Teamwork** is exemplified by his baseball experience and his work with the outing club. Bill enjoys activities where he can interact with others. He can work alone as well, but he prefers the energy he gets from working closely with others.
3. Bill had to demonstrate **consistency** and **discipline** in practicing the piano and at baseball practice. He learned to deal with a sometimes dull routine. He learned that some things don't come quickly and that learning one small part (like four measures on a line of music) can be a big accomplishment.
4. Notice that Bill has drawn arrows that go from biology to history to creative writing to psychology and then end with his major in finance. He connected them because he realizes that *he learned*



key concepts in these courses that have been valuable to his understanding of finance. He also discovered that he tended to **focus on financial elements** of each subject he was studying, such as when he studied the Great Depression in history class or gambling behavior in psychology.

5. He enjoys **writing,** as illustrated by his taking an elective creative-writing course. This is a long-term thread in his life; he even wrote a play back in elementary school. He likes **being creative,** and writing is relaxing and something he would do even if he weren't paid to do it.

6. **Risk-taking** is shown in his kayaking and white-water rafting hobbies. He believes that his ability to take risks, while at the same time knowing how to remain safe, is a unique skill.

7. Bill is also starting to identify the kind of work he doesn't want: working in a hotel or a law firm. He will want to analyze further the specific aspects of those jobs he didn't like.

Now it's your turn. What new connections can you make? See if you can *identify any themes or threads* that run through your life. For instance:

> You, too, might see examples of an interest in writing: you created a neighborhood newsletter in elementary school, and you got an A in creative writing in high school and are now working on your college newspaper staff.
>
> Maybe you've worked with children in one capacity or another for a long time.
>
> Maybe you do a lot of physical or hands-on activities, such as playing sports or building things.
>
> Maybe you've always been the peacemaker in your family or with your friends.
>
> Maybe you've done lots of activities that involve international themes.

Can you identify at least four or five themes or threads in your Wandering Map? If so, draw lines connecting the different entries on

your map and then make a list of your basic themes below, on the back of your map, or on a separate piece of paper.

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

This part of the process is challenging and it's not always easy to spot the themes and threads that run through your life. If you're stuck, here are some ideas for possible themes and threads:

Achievement/awards	Fun	Negotiating
Analytic thinking	Group or solitary	Patience
Animals	Hobbies	Physically active
Art, music, or drama	Indoors or outdoors	Problem-solving
Communication	Interests or talents	Reading
Computers/technology	Internally or externally rewarded	Research/investigative
Counseling or helping others	Interpersonal/people skills	Responsibility
Creative ideas	Knowledge acquired	Risky or safe
Detail/follow-through	Leadership/ management	Sense of humor
"Doing" or "thinking"	Learning	Staying calm
Empathy	Locations or settings	Strategic thinking
Equipment or tools	Mathematical/financial	Teaching or instructing
Family and family roles		Types of people
Flexibility		

Sometimes your themes can reveal what's important to you. Do any of these themes show up consistently?

Adventure: taking risks, frequent change, trying new things

Challenge: testing skills, seeking stimulating physical/mental experiences

Contribution: making a difference, helping victims, solving problems
Creativity: self-expression, ideas; art, music, and/or drama; beauty
Diversity: being around people from many cultures, appreciating differences
Expertise: possessing knowledge or skills, having authority
Family: nurturing, children, appreciating relatives
Friendship: close friends, collegial environment, friends at work
Harmony: peace, orderliness, calm surroundings, meditation
Health: time for exercise, eating well, safe work environment
Independence: freedom, autonomy, acting on own terms
Joy: pleasure, humor, happiness
Justice: helping society, equality, fairness, important causes
Leadership: organizing, delegating, managing, inspiring, influencing
Learning/knowledge: acquiring education or training, teaching, expertise
Leisure: finding time to relax, pursuing hobbies
Physical work: using your hands, building, physical fitness
Power: exerting personal power, controlling, influencing, assigning
Prestige and recognition: being successful, attaining a high status
Productivity: accomplishing, hardworking; excellence; efficiency
Security: safety, stability, secure job
Spirituality: practicing religion, meditating, spiritual exploration
Variety: different tasks, exploring new territories
Wealth: acquiring money, economic security, high-paying positions

How are you doing? Have you been able to find some new connections? Have you discovered some skills or personality traits that have served you in more than one location? If the preceding lists have helped you identify new themes or threads in your life, be sure to add them to your list.

Or are you finding this challenging—perhaps you can see a few connections, but you're not really seeing a bigger picture? Then move on to Step 3: Share Your Map.

Wandering Off

CAN'T I JUST TAKE A CAREER TEST THAT WILL TELL ME WHAT TO DO?

Does it seem like this chapter has been a lot of work? You're probably wondering why you couldn't just take a test. Career tests have been around for many years and they continue to develop and improve. But no career test can tell you what to do. At best, they take the responses you provide (usually in a forced-choice format, so you can't argue or explain the nuances of your thinking behind the answer), compare those responses with others who work in particular career fields, and then tell you how you compare to those people. For instance, you might find that you answered the questions in a similar manner to veterinarians. Does that mean you should be a veterinarian? Not necessarily. And the tests won't tell you whether you have the skills, education, or talent to be one either. So there are limits to testing.

That said, there are some excellent tests on the market that can provide more information that might be helpful. As long as you're not asking a test to predict your future, you might find some of these tests give you more information about yourself that you can use to your benefit in interviews or graduate school essays. Contact your career center or counseling center to see if they administer them—the fees charged (if any) will be much less than the fees you would pay in a private counseling setting.

Recommended Tests You Can Take in a Career Counseling Setting:

- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
- Strong Interest Inventory
- Career Leader

Excellent Tests You Can Take on Your Own:

- The O*NET test of career interests. www.onetonline.org
- Values in Action www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/
- The Strengths Finder from the book *Now, Discover Your Strengths* by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton. For more information, go to their website: www.gallupstrengthscenter.com.

STEP 3: SHARE YOUR MAP

Try sharing your map with someone who can help you identify more themes or find connections you're missing, such as friends, roommates, classmates, parents, counselors, supervisors, or professors. Review some of the items you placed on the map and tell them why you included them. Ask them if they see any other connections. Tell them you're on a hunt to find hidden treasures in your life.

STEP 4: EXPAND AND COMPLETE YOUR THEME CHART

Complete the chart below (or use a separate piece of paper) by filling in the themes or threads you've identified from your map. Add descriptions or comments that will help you identify what these themes might ultimately mean to you. Your chart allows you to compile up to ten themes. There is no magic number here; it's just a starting point to isolate the themes so having more or fewer themes is fine. And don't judge your themes. It's OK if you write down a theme you don't particularly like or don't wish to continue. *You might even find that a theme that initially seems negative (perhaps you had a difficult childhood or experienced a significant trauma in your life) might actually become a positive theme because of how you overcame it.*

Don't pressure yourself to make any career decisions yet based on your themes, and don't worry if your themes don't seem to be career related. Remember, we're still gathering information.

Themes or Threads

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

7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

If you want, check or highlight the themes that you'd like to continue developing. *Remember that you will be adding to or changing your Wandering Map and themes as you go through the Wise Wanderings system.*

THE WANDERING MAP IN ACTION

You saw Bill's map earlier; here are a few more examples of themes uncovered by college students completing their Wandering Maps:

> *Jim's Wandering Map (pages 40–41) illustrates what chaos theory calls pendulum attractors: His two main interests seem to oppose each other. He enjoys helping others in time of crisis, and he enjoys work related to money and finance. Jim felt pulled by these seemingly opposite themes. He enjoyed working in banks and studying economics, and he had a strong desire to work on Wall Street. He liked the excitement and hustle of the trading floor. At the same time, he had a long history of helping people in need from staffing emergency centers during hurricanes to volunteering at local shelters, to working with the police department's victims unit supporting and consoling the families of crime victims. He could also see himself working in a nonprofit setting because it was important to give back. How could he resolve these seemingly disparate interests? When he analyzed the themes in his experiences, he realized that they shared commonalities: he enjoys taking charge of situations, he is good at dealing with challenges and obstacles, he thrives in chaotic surroundings, and he likes to help people in crisis. Jim ultimately used his knowledge to enroll in a nursing program specializing in emergency and trauma nursing.*

JIM'S WANDERING MAP

Social Service?

Big Brother Big Sister

Discipline Practice

Swim Team in High School

Student Economics Association

Social Work Classes

Wrote Grant Proposals for Agency

Keep Calm in Emergencies

Working with Trauma Victims

Katrina Flood Victims

Problem-Solving

Enjoy Trauma Situations

EMS Training

Urban Studies Major

Lifeguard Jobs

Want to Keep This Going No Matter What I Do

Computer Programs

Spanish Minor

Economics Classes

Summer Job at Wells Fargo Bank

Like Logical Decision-Making Under Pressure

2 Years at Wachovia Bank

Like Banking and Finance

Spanish Helpful Everywhere

Enjoy Trauma Situations

Developed Emergency Response Plan

Internship at MTV

Learning Spanish in Mexico

Taught Swimming Lessons

Finance Related

Want to Travel More

Patience

One of the more interesting entries on Danielle's Wandering Map (pages 46–47) is her talent for playing pool, or what chaos theory would call a strange attractor. Danielle learned to play eight ball from her father (they had a table in the basement), and she honed her skills to the point where she regularly beat her older brothers, even when they cheated! She has entered and won many pool tournaments, and even admitted to some hustling in bars to earn money in college. She placed her pool-playing activities on her Wandering Map because it was a significant part of her life, but said it was "kind of silly" because she certainly didn't plan a career as a pool hustler, even though she joked about it always being a good fallback plan. But when she was asked, "What have you learned from playing pool? What do you have to know or understand to be good at it?" she was quick to answer. "You have to think on your feet, you have to strategize constantly—both your own moves and the likely moves of an opponent—you have to stand up to men who think they're better than you, and you have to hold your own independently in a competition when no one else is rooting for you." Hmm. Sounds like pool playing is not a bad skill to have. Danielle then began to look at the rest of her map and quickly discovered other areas where she had to think strategically both in her favorite classes and in her summer jobs. She realized that she had a powerful talent she had never appreciated. After graduation, she started working for a start-up venture helping to design their strategic marketing plans for their growth.

Although their maps aren't included, here are three more examples of the knowledge Wandering Maps can uncover.

Darius created two separate sections on opposite ends of his paper. On the left side, he included all his sports activities. He played on his university's football team, a skill he had been honing his whole life. Not surprisingly, a lot of items on this side of the map involved summer training camps, hours of practice, and so on. On the right side, he placed everything related to school, including his passion for theater and dramatic-arts classes. He particularly enjoyed improvisational comedy and was a member of his college's improv group. When asked why he placed these areas so far apart, he said, "They're not really connected. When I play football, I'm very focused on that. Nothing else comes to mind." I asked him if he often had a plan in mind when he went out on the field. He said, "Absolutely." I asked if his plan ever went awry because of what the opposing team did. He again said, "Absolutely." "And does your skill in improv help out in that situation?" Darius stared at his map for a few seconds and started drawing all sorts of lines and connections between what happened in the football sphere of his life and the rest of his life. "Hey, this is all starting to make sense now. I thought I was weird; you know, liking these really different things. Now I get it. They're not different at all. Football is theater, too." Darius now had an expanded way to view what he'd done and the many strengths he cultivated—and convey that to a potential employer.

Angelina's map illustrates the challenge of being pulled by two disparate groups of people—her family. Her mother is Italian and her father is Armenian. Their respective families did not get along particularly well, so Angelina grew up viewing the two families in separate boxes, virtually unrelated to each other. She loved both sides of her family, but because of the constant conflict between them, she tended to judge each one based on the standards of the other. After completing her Wandering Map and noting the many family-related activities she had placed on it, she discovered that family influences were strong. She started to think about what she had learned from each side of the family. Both sides had actually encouraged strong, loving ties. From the Armenian side of the family she learned the importance of hard work, responsibility, and keeping your word. From the Italian side of her family she learned the importance of enjoying life, taking time for eating and sharing conversations, and appreciating beauty. She realized that she was a blend of these two cultures and could use the strengths of each in the workplace. Angelina began to feel much stronger and less torn by the differences in her family. She learned to make use of the gifts she had acquired from

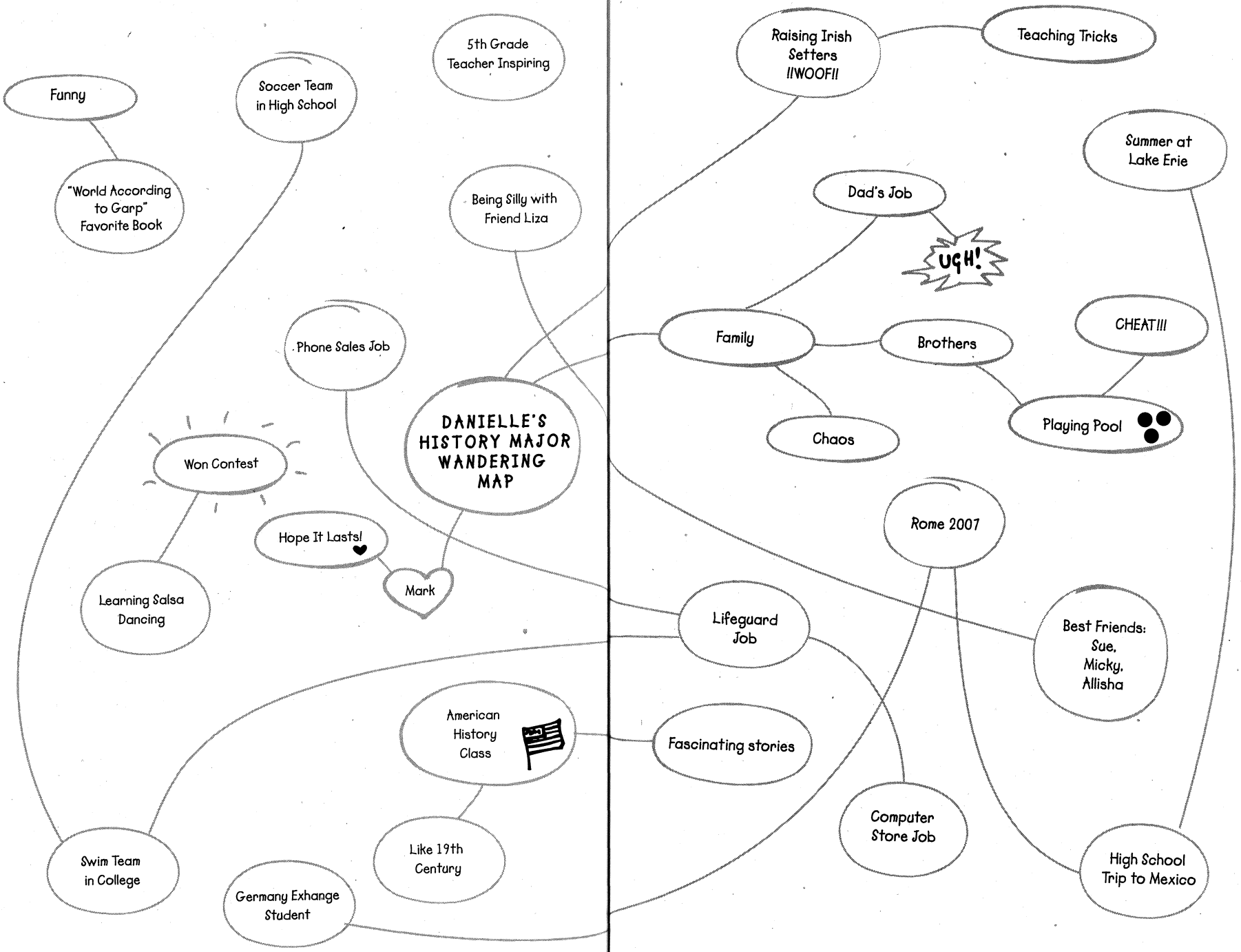
each and to understand how different cultures could conflict and yet, if given the proper mindset, could learn to value differences and get along. She ultimately decided to enroll in law school, and she is planning a career in mediation.

Rachel discovered that her themes were writing, travel, imagination, ethnography, and enjoying change. Even though writing was a strong theme, she decided she couldn't be a journalist because she found the structure of journalistic writing too limiting. She prefers the ethnographical style she learned in her anthropology major, which allows creativity and can delve into the unknown and unseen—two themes she finds fascinating. She decided to join the Peace Corps and use her time to learn more about herself through experiencing immersion in another culture.

Remember, your map is designed to help you identify key themes, skills, interests, values, and other important aspects of your life, but it is not meant to point you directly to a career. If you find career-related themes at this point, by all means feel free to pursue them. But if you don't see a career path from your map, don't worry. You have been mining for gold, and you have already uncovered nuggets even if you aren't sure how you'll use them or what their value might be.

Your Wandering Map is just the start of your process and soon you will be combining the information you've uncovered in this chapter with the knowledge you'll acquire in the next few chapters to begin designing your plans for a captivating and compelling future. Before you leave your Wandering Map, consider the following questions:

1. What would happen if a miracle occurred tonight and suddenly you could see more themes? What would they be?
2. What two or three items are you most proud of? What skills or behaviors did you use to accomplish them? Can you begin thinking of ways to use those skills or behaviors now or in a work setting? Why would an employer value those skills or behaviors?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being least important and 10 being most important, which theme would you rank as the most important? Why?
4. If you knew you couldn't fail, which one of these themes would you keep pursuing?
5. What theme would you like to take a step toward pursuing in the next twenty-four hours? What step would you take?


DANIELLE'S HISTORY MAJOR WANDERING MAP
Funny
"World According to Garp" Favorite Book
Soccer Team in High School
5th Grade Teacher Inspiring
Being Silly with Friend Liza
Phone Sales Job
Won Contest
Learning Salsa Dancing
Hope It Lasts!
Mark
Swim Team in College
American History Class
Like 19th Century
Germany Exhange Student
Raising Irish Setters !!WOOF!!
Teaching Tricks
Summer at Lake Erie
Dad's Job
UGH!
Family
Brothers
CHEAT!!!
Chaos
Playing Pool
Rome 2007
Lifeguard Job
Best Friends: Sue, Micky, Allisha
Fascinating stories
Computer Store Job
High School Trip to Mexico

WISDOM BUILDER #4

UNCOVERING YOUR DELIs

Harvard professors Timothy Butler and James Waldroop, cofounders of Career Leader, a business-career assessment tool, have identified what they call Deeply Embedded Life Interests ("DELIs") that greatly influence career satisfaction. These are not hobbies or passing interests but genuine passions that fit your personality, and they found that people are more motivated and excited about their work when they get to use these lifelong traits and talents. They identified eight key DELIs that are particularly relevant to careers. Many people combine two or three to create interesting career plans. Take a look at your Wandering Map and see if you identify any of these in your background:

Application of technology describes individuals who enjoy learning about and working with the latest technical equipment, including developing new apps, creating software programs, and using computers to complete their work. They often have a strong mechanical bent and enjoy taking things apart and putting them back together. Did computers or other technical activities show up on your map?

People who like **quantitative analysis** think mathematically. They like creating spreadsheets, working with statistics, and solving quantitative problems. They use math as a key means for problem-solving and believe that everything can be measured. Is this the type of thinking you enjoy? Where do quantitative activities show up on your map?

Are you someone who enjoys looking at the big picture? Do you like to think about things and apply solutions to problems? Are you always wondering about the "why" of something? Are you a good abstract thinker? Then you probably have **theory development and conceptual thinking** as one of your DELIs. Where in your map does this trait show up?

People who value **creative production** enjoy coming up with new ideas, creating projects, and designing plans, and they are

often artistic or an appreciator of creativity. Are you a creative type? Where can you find creative production on your map?

Counseling and mentoring are traits often valued by liberal arts students and lifelong learners. You enjoy teaching and training and assisting with individual growth. You value relationships highly in work settings, seeking to guide and support others. Is this a trait that fits you? Where can you find examples on your map?

Management is a popular career choice, and **managing people and relationships** is a skill set many college students want to develop. More than counseling or mentoring, this area focuses on producing positive outcomes through supervising and controlling people individually and in teams. Where in your map have you been a manager or leader? How did you learn to bring out the best in your organization?

If you like to run projects and organizations and make decisions, then **enterprise control** might be one of your DELIs. Entrepreneurs fit this type, as do individuals who want to be in charge of whatever they are involved in.

Finally, are you a word person? Do you like to persuade or influence others through your writing or through speaking? Then **influence through language and ideas** might be your primary DELI. Review your map and see if you can find examples of this trait.

Finding any of these DELIs on your Wandering Map is a great discovery because these are skills highly sought after by employers. To learn more about these DELIs, and how they can help you in your career, refer to the References and Resources section (pages 325–328).

WISDOM BUILDER #5

GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR STUDY-ABROAD EXPERIENCE: WHAT GRADUATES HAVE DISCOVERED

Many students and recent graduates include their study-abroad experience in their Wandering Maps. When surveyed about their college experiences, graduates almost always rank their study-abroad experience as one of the best and most fulfilling times in their lives. They cite the unexpected benefits they received from the experience and the many skills and talents they acquired, almost without realizing it. Here's a list of the common strengths graduates say they acquired through the study-abroad experience:

- Established rapport with individuals from other cultures
- Functioned well in ambiguous situations and handled difficult situations
- Achieved goals (despite lots of challenges)
- Showed initiative and took risks
- Managed time well enough to both study and travel
- Responsible for all personal actions (no one else to rely on)
- Learned the language quickly
- Learned to be comfortable while relocating often in a job
- Learned through listening and observing
- Developed good decision-making skills . . . after making some errors

How might this list of skills interest an employer? Can you think of some skills you derived, or might get, from studying abroad? Make some notes here: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

WISDOM BUILDER #6

HOW DO MY RELATIVES FIT INTO MY CAREER PLANS?

Another common component of a Wandering Map is the influence of family. Your parents and other relatives can be influential sources of information and attitudes about careers. Whether it's a family business or career such as medicine, performing arts, and the law, it's not uncommon for family traditions to develop around careers. What you need to decide is whether your family's career field works for you. Here are some questions to consider as you think about the influence of your family:

- What do my parents say about their work?
- Did they choose their careers or did circumstances influence them?
- Would they do the same work again?
- Is there a career field that runs through my family?
- Am I interested in continuing this family tradition?
- What will happen if I do or don't follow the tradition?
- What suggestions or advice have my parents given me about my career?
- What are my siblings doing?
- Do they enjoy the careers they're in? Why or why not?
- What advice or guidance have they given me?
- What assumptions about work might I have made based on what I heard or observed in my family?

Summarize any significant messages you've received about work from your family: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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*

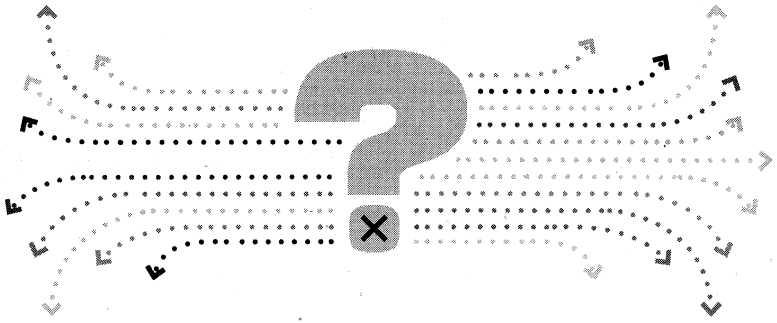
THE VALUE OF THINKING

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?

YOU MAJORED IN WHAT



DESIGNING YOUR PATH *from* COLLEGE *to* CAREER

KATHARINE BROOKS, ED.D.

A PLUME BOOK

PLUME
An imprint of Penguin Random House LLC
375 Hudson Street
New York, New York 10014

First Plume Printing, April 2010

A new and updated edition.
20 19

Copyright © 2017 by Katharine Brooks
All rights reserved

The individual experiences recounted in this book are true. However, names and descriptive details have been changed to protect the identities of the people involved.

REGISTERED TRADEMARK—MARCA REGISTRADA

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS HAS CATALOGUED THE VIKING EDITION AS FOLLOWS:
Brooks, Katharine.
You majored in what? / Katharine Brooks.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 9780670020829 (hc)
ISBN 9780452296008 (pbk)
1. Job hunting—United States. 2. Employment interviewing—United States. 3. College graduates—Employment—United States. 4. College majors—United States. I. Title.
HF5382.75.U6B755 2010
650.14—dc22 2008046687

Printed in the United States of America
Original hardcover design by Sabrina Bowers

Penguin supports copyright. Copyright fuels creativity, encourages diverse voices, promotes free speech, and creates a vibrant culture. Thank you for buying an authorized edition of this book and for complying with copyright laws by not reproducing, scanning, or distributing any part of it in any form without permission. You are supporting writers and allowing Penguin to continue to publish books for every reader.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

While the author has made every effort to provide accurate telephone numbers and Internet addresses at the time of publication, neither the publisher nor the author assumes any responsibility for errors, or for changes that occur after publication. Further, the publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this book via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

Books are available at quantity discounts when used to promote products or services. For information please write to Premium Marketing Division, Penguin Random House, 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014.

To my parents and teachers,
on whose shoulders I stand:

infinite gratitude for shaping and guiding
my work and my life.

And

to singer, songwriter, friend, and Daydream Believer
John Stewart (1939–2008):

thanks for providing the soundtrack.