10 Planning for happenstance

Illustration by Dylan Moriarty (UW-Madison B.S. 2013, History)

"Think of your career as a game."

In 1955, the Parker Brothers company debuted a new family board game meant to capture the postwar optimism and energy of the baby boom generation, for whom the "space age" seemed to offer limitless opportunity. Called simply *Careers,* players competed around a traditional game board, rolling the dice and landing on squares where things would happen to move them closer to or further from victory. As one might predict from a game developed in 1950s America, *Careers* suffered from sex and gender stereotypes that appear ridiculous and offensive today (and the 1970s-era spin-off, *Careers for Girls*, didn't do much to redress this wrong). But even with its cultural biases, *Careers* actually proposed something quite radical: There wasn't simply one idealized route to winning the game of career success. Instead, each player secretly selected their own "success formula" at the start, pursuing their individual goals of "money, fame, and happiness" through workplace endeavors both traditional (farming, "going to sea") and futuristic (uranium prospecting, space travel).

(n.d.)

The three-part self-actualization goal of this humble children's game — balancing wealth and fame with the more intangible category of happiness — was the invention of game author James Cooke Brown (1921-2000). Having earned a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in "sociology, mathematical statistics, and philosophy," Brown went on to author science fiction stories, to campaign for civil rights, and to invent an ambitious computer data representation language called Loglan.

Brown was a liberal arts and sciences graduate if ever there was one — not only reveling in the breadth of study in a way that led him both to literature and social activism, but also burrowing into a depth of disciplinary knowledge that led to the survival of his "Loglan Institute" to this day. And in his humble *Careers* game — reprinted and reissued for decades, even after his death — that ideal of a limitless set of careers, tied not to any one major and delivering a lifetime of rewards not easily reducible to starting salary — it is a college education which enables one to win the game.

**Fold forward on dotted line and
write SUCCESS FORMULA under flap.**

MONEY	FAME	HAPPINESS
$____,000 +	____★s +	____♥s = 60 pts.

CAREER RECORD				SALARY LEVEL	★	♥
Check:	1st	2nd	3rd	0____		
Farming				$1000 ✓		
Business				2000____		
Sea				3000____		
Politics				4000____		
Hollywood				5000____		
Uranium				6000____		
Moon				7000____		
				8000____		
				9000____		
COLLEGE EDUCATION				10,000____		
				11,000____		
Law				12,000____		
				13,000____		
Medicine				14,000____		
Engineering				15,000____	Money score (cash-on-hand) at end of game:	
				16,000____		
Science				17,000____		
				18,000____	$____,000	
College Degree				19,000____	©	

(1955)

Fast-forward from 1955 to 2015. Sixty years later, we're still developing games about the career process, and we're still imbuing them with our hopes and dreams about what a career can mean, along with our anxieties about how difficult it is to build a successful career in an environment of constant economic, technological, and cultural change. Instead of playing *Careers*, today's youth might pick up a copy of *Funemployed*. This game casts one player in the role of an employer and the rest of the players as interview candidates for a job. Of course, the jobs themselves are so varied as to verge on the ridiculous — you might interview as a Secret Agent in one round, and as a Butcher in the next. But what makes the game a challenging exercise in improvisation and performance is the fact that each interviewee must brag about three randomly-selected traits — anything from "Jazz Hands" to "Cold Black Heart." In other words, unlike in *Careers*, where the goal is to simulate a successful life lived well, the goal of *Funemployed* is, well, to just have fun with a situation that everyone understands as stressful, random, and inevitably up to the capricious decision of someone else: the job interview.

(2015)

Interestingly, this career game for the 21st century also came from the imagination of someone educated in the liberal arts and sciences tradition: Anthony Costa, who received his Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and a Master's degree in Economics from the State University of New York, Binghamton. His LinkedIn site tells a story of a career which involved student tutoring in math, English, and social sciences. Originally self-published on the crowdsourced-funding site Kickstarter, and later licensed by toy giant Mattel, *Funemployed* was the first production of his new start-up company, Urban Island Games. (You can download a print-it-yourself copy of the game at **http://www.funemployedgame.com/**)

The point of these examples is not only to suggest that the career of "game designer" can be an interesting and lucrative result of a liberal arts and sciences education (although remember that the digital and physical gaming industry now brings in more revenue than the cinema box office each year). Rather, we can use the example of popular games to see well that each generation — each historical and cultural moment — creates and promotes and wrestles with its own ideas of what a good "career" should mean. So it's not surprising that you should need to wrestle with this idea as well.

Your career game

In this guide we've tried to work through the "rules" of the current career game, and to suggest some of the ways that the experiences you are having at a public research university, in a liberal arts and sciences curriculum, will help you succeed in that game. For example, we've discussed:

- How the **college labor market** is changing, and why your university education helps you enter it — especially a T-shaped liberal education;

- How **critical reflection** — understanding what you've experienced, where you excel, and what you've accomplished — helps your career planning;

- How your **Wisconsin Experience** comprises not only courses and majors, but also extracurricular research, service, cultural, and work experiences;

- How **professional networks** are both connected to and distinct from your other social networks, involving listening, reciprocity, and trust;

- How to **communicate your interest and value** to an outside organization through written, online, and face-to-face techniques; and

- How to **access guidance** about your academic progress, career preparation, and job search from peers, professors, advisers, and alumni.

The key to all of these new rules is that your career game will differ from that of your parents, and from that of the generation that preceded you into the workplace. For example, back in 1978, when a curious student might have consulted the counterculture-sounding *Whole Earth Textbook* for career advice, they would have read the alarming news that "Many students finish college with no real plans, and the first job they get tends to determine the direction of their entire working career, a period that may exceed 40 years" (Pivar 1978). But today's latest research shows clearly that your career game will be more than any single job. In a study published in 2001 but spanning the previous 25 years, scholars who followed a cohort of 170 people found that nearly two thirds of them experienced an unanticipated change in their careers (Pryor et al. 2011). (What's more, more stable career patterns were actually associated with lower levels of career satisfaction.)

More recent statistics show that careers are still changing. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 2004 that one in four workers in the US had been with their current employer for less than a year (Savickas 2012). In 2007, "the Association of American Colleges and Universities reported that Americans change jobs an average of 10 times after the age of 18 years" (Grier-Reed et al. 2010). And more recently, "The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that young adults born in the early 1980s held, on average, six different jobs between the ages of 18 and 26, and by their 27th birthday only 14 percent of college graduates had a job that lasted at least two years" (Selingo 2016).

Many of today's jobs are increasingly tied to short-term, flexible, and project-based teams of experts who assemble to address a key business or social problem and then move on to a new configuration. Many of today's organizations are increasingly structured in similarly shifting cooperative and competitive alignments with their peers, rather than building larger and larger bureaucratic structures themselves.

Some call this the **Hollywood model** of employment: "A project is identified; a team is assembled; it works together for precisely as long as is needed to complete the task; then the team disbands. This short-term, project-based business structure is an alternative to the corporate model, in which capital is spent up front to build a business, which then hires workers for long-term, open-ended jobs that can last for years, even a lifetime. [...] The Hollywood model is now used to build bridges, design apps or start restaurants" (Davidson 2015). Rather than an entertainment label, the founder of LinkedIn, Reid Hoffman (2014), uses a military metaphor for this kind of work, calling it a **tour of duty**: "the tour of duty represents an ethical commitment by employer and employee to a specific mission. We see this approach as a way to incorporate some of the advantages from both lifetime employment and free agency. Like lifetime employment, the tour of duty allows employers and employees to build trust and mutual investment; like free agency, it preserves the flexibility that both employers and employees need to adapt to a rapidly changing world." For example, Hoffman notes that "Google's People Operations (HR) department hires recent college graduates into a structured, twenty-seven-month [...] tour that allows them to try out three different roles in three, nine-month rotations."

The most extreme version of this is the **contingent labor,** or the kind of individual, short-term, relatively low-paid jobs which used to be coordinated by temporary employment agencies but which today might be mediated by companies like Uber and their mobile internet apps, in what is being called the **gig economy** (Irwin 2016). This is more than just individuals switching organizations every few years, or staying with one organization but switching projects every few months; in the gig economy, workers are largely on their own, legally treated as **independent contractors** without the standard benefits of a salaried employee.

gig economy

Short-term, low-skill, and relatively low-paid contingent jobs where workers act as individual contractors assigned tasks algorithmically by digital media companies who use mobile and online apps to act as virtual, realtime temporary employment agencies.

According to the *New York Times*, "the number of Americans using these alternate work arrangements rose 9.4 million from 2005 to 2015" — now representing nearly 16% of the labor force (Irwin 2016).

Employers and entrepreneurs — especially in the new media technology and content industries — often portray such new social relations of work as positive for both the worker and the organization: "flexible" arrangements which allow for more "nimble" global competition, and thus more profit in less time. The good news is that a recent study by economist Henry E. Siu found that "increased mobility in one's 20s leads to higher earnings later in life" for those who can afford to be **occupationally footloose** for a formative period while they acquire skills and experience (Selingo 2016). But while metaphors like "footloose," "Hollywood" and "tour of duty" cast such a work life as fun, glamorous and heroic, we must remember that such arrangements can also be more uncertain, unstable, and unreliable — and thus can be unsatisfying if they don't deliver the promised skill and reputation boost which one needs to find the next paid project.

Whether understood in a positive or negative light, the footloose employee is becoming more and more prevalent. And the knowledge and experience that one needs to bring to any kind of task in any kind of workplace is growing seemingly faster than ever before — not just knowledge about new technologies and new markets, but knowledge about unfamiliar cultures, unexpected crises, untested policy proposals, and unanticipated scientific findings. Thus many scholars of vocational studies argue that "career should now be understood as lifelong progression in learning and work" (Collin et al. 2000). This is an experience that has differentiated the most recent generation to enter the workforce, the **millennials**, from all of the generations that have come before — and as of 2015, those millennials now makes up the largest share of the US workforce (Fry 2015).

US labor force by generation (millions)
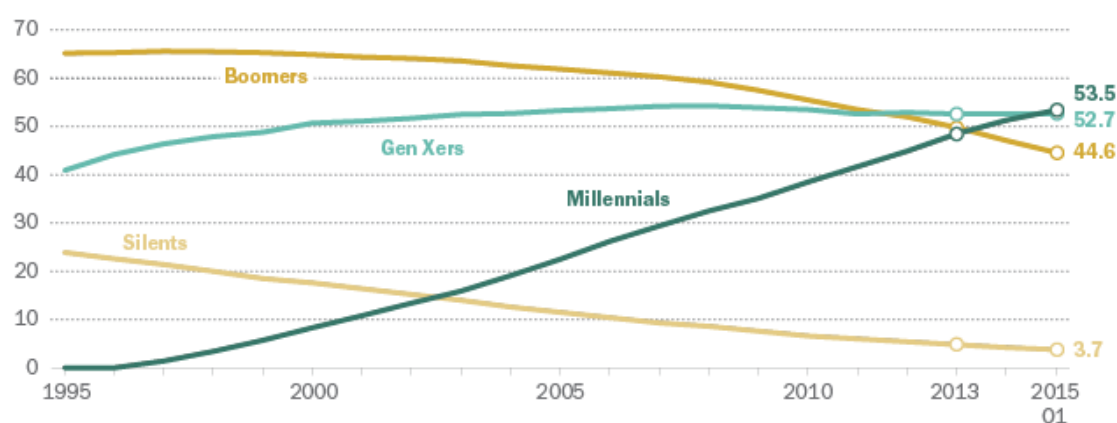
Note: Annual averages plotted 1995-2014. For 2015 the first quarter average of 2015 is shown. Due to data limitations, Silent generation is overestimated from 2008-2015.
Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of monthly 1995-2015 Current Population Surveys, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS)

Pew Research Center (2015)

If you're reading this student guide, you're probably part of the next generation to enter the workforce — the "post millennials," let's say. What does all this mean for *your* generation's shared experience of the world of work? In an article titled "Career patterns for the 21st century," Peggy Simonsen (2002) offered a typology of careers that young workers might pursue in this new environment:

- **Linear careers.** A traditional career path from the 1950s in a for-profit or non-profit organization might have been a linear career — starting with an organization soon after college and then moving up a bureaucratic hierarchy into increasing positions of responsibility, often managing others. But today, though there are still such careers available, "linear careers in the twenty-first century are not likely to be with only one organization. Rather than going to work for a good company and expecting to be employed for life, employees will avoid much of the frustration experienced upon reaching a level in the organization beyond which they cannot move. Individuals who expect to move up in responsibility and compensation in the future will change organizations when they reach a plateau or growth slows." Thus building social networks and learning new skills continues to be important even in a linear career.

- **Expert careers.** Traditionally this might have been a type of linear career referred to as a "dual-ladder" career: instead of growing steadily in responsibility for managing other people, one would grow steadily in some sort of scientific or technical expertise which was crucial to the organization. Simonson argued that "If an expert career pattern is right for you, it will require continuously developing your expertise." And "Like a linear career, an expert career probably will not happen in just one organization."

- **Portfolio careers.** In this kind of career, a person acts as a sort of independent contractor, developing a skill set that can be marketed to many different organizations as one builds their reputation over time. Simonson uses the example of a freelance writer: "Not employed by a single organization, a freelance writer might have regular assignments with one publication, occasional articles published by others, and some consulting work creating PR campaigns or brochures." While such a career pattern might offer freedom and autonomy, it can also hold the risks of contingent labor as described above: "employment by a company as long as necessary, but not full-time, permanent employment [...] with no chance for advancement and typically no company-paid benefits."

- **Lifestyle-driven careers.** In this career pattern, considerations outside of the workplace, whether rooted in hobbies and recreation, volunteer service to the community, or caregiving for children and elders, narrow one's career pursuits into part-time waged work. While this kind of career can be framed as a choice for pursuing "happiness" over "money and fame," at the same time we must remember that caregiving is still highly gendered in modern American society, and often the result not of choice but of

necessity: "Women balancing family and work have been the primary practitioners of lifestyle-driven careers."

- **Sequential careers.** In this pattern, someone leaves a first career entirely and starts a second one — moving from corporate marketing into public education, for example, or moving from academic research into government administration. This can even happen at what used to be an "early retirement age" as people live longer while still engaging with the world of work. "Sometimes they move to completely different areas for the sake of new experience, which typically requires starting in a lower-paying job than the one they left," writes Simonsen. "To avoid stepping back, sequential career builders often move to a related area where their background is valued, though not a direct contribution to the new field."

- **Entrepreneurial careers.** Finally, there is the career path of shepherding a novel idea into a product, service, or organization of its own. But this does not necessarily mean Kickstarting your own board-game company by yourself; Simonsen writes that "Increasingly, larger organizations are recognizing the value of entrepreneurial traits to innovation and creative problem solving inside the company. Gifford Pinchot (1985) calls this 'intrapreneuring': the company provides the equivalent of venture capital, and a small group of employees creates a business plan for an innovative product or service to be developed in-house and brought to market."

Typologies of different kinds of careers like this can be useful in thinking about what kind of work you're searching for and preparing for, especially during such an intense period of career exploration and education as college. But remember that these typologies are only crude summaries; your career will likely move in surprising ways as you build different experiences, choose to prioritize different strengths and interests, expand your own social networks, and encounter different opportunities tied to the changing global context of culture, technology, and imagination over your lifetime.


Playing the long game

As we've tried to emphasize all through this student guide, your career won't be equivalent to your first job out of college — and in fact, your liberal arts and sciences education isn't meant to simply train you for your first job out of college, but for a lifetime of shifting employment and entrepreneurship. But making your initial moves in this career game can be frustrating. Education journalist Jeffrey Selingo (2016) reported recently that "In the 1980s, college graduates achieved financial independence, defined as reaching the median wage, by the time they turned 26, according to Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce. In 2014, they didn't hit that mark until their 30th birthday." Some scholars, like psychologist Jeffrey Arnett,

have even coined a new term to describe this phase in one's life, between age 18 and 25, when college and/or one's first career experiences usually occur: **emerging adulthood**, "a time of life when many different directions remain possible, when little about the future has been decided for certain, when the scope of independent exploration of life's possibilities is greater for most people than it will be at any other period of the life course" (Selingo 2016).

Recall that the mid-century vocational theorists like Donald E. Super talked about developmental careers that unfold in phases, with each phase drawing out different aspects of your talents, and demanding different kinds of responsibilities and learning. Contemporary business consultants are still using this idea. In his recent book *The Career Playbook*, business consultant James Citrin (2015) suggested that there were six phases to the typical professional career. The first three phases were "Aspiration" (one's first few entry-level jobs), "Promise" (involving one's first internal promotion or career switch), and "Momentum" (where one's experience means that they begin to be recruited by other competing organizations).

James Citrin's six career phases

THE SIX PHASES OF YOUR CAREER
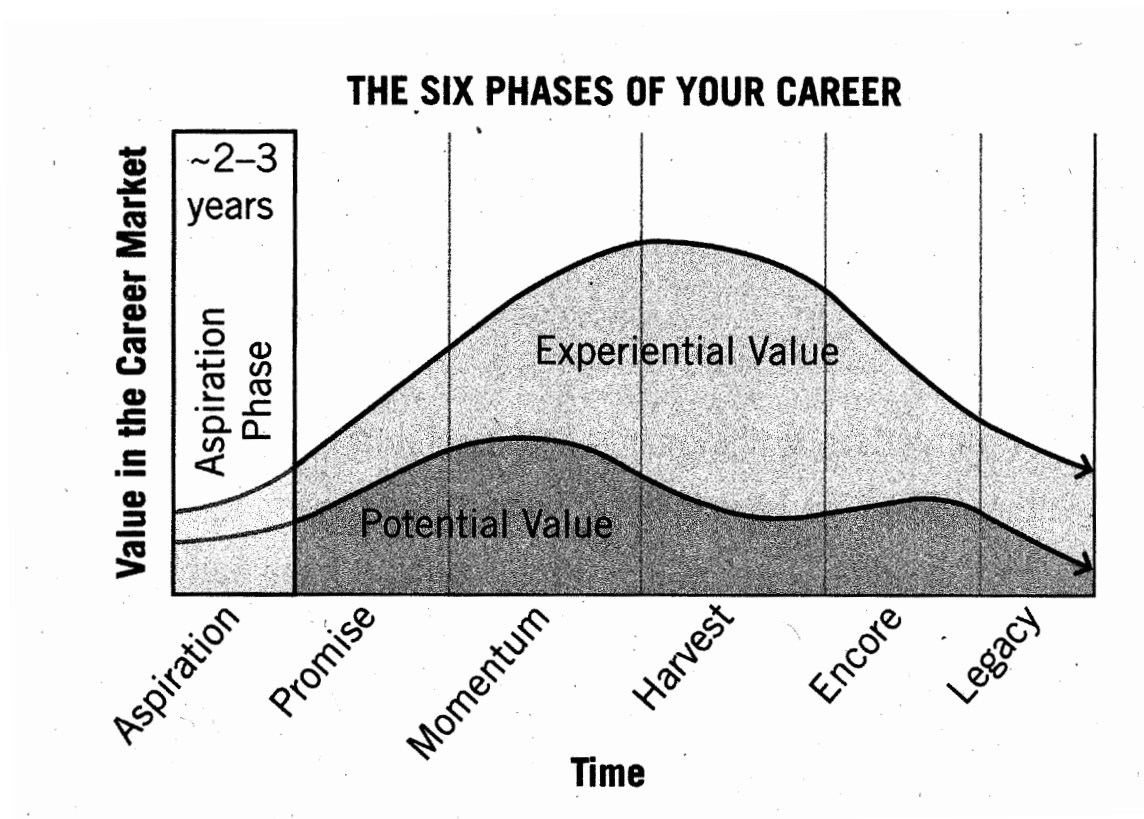
(Citrin 2015)

Citrin argued that workers should pursue different reflective and networking strategies in each phase. In the "Aspiration" phase, meant to be "about discovery and introspection, the process of learning, and the development of knowledge," he claimed "the most important objective is to discover your strengths and interests and to begin learning marketable skills. Try out as many different kinds of tasks and jobs as possible. Get feedback from professors, peers, and mentors who can help you to identify what you are good at-and what you're not good at." His advice was to focus on "writing, thinking critically, listening well, solving problems, and collaborating effectively with others" — precisely the skills of a liberal education.

James Citrin's idealized and balanced career triangle
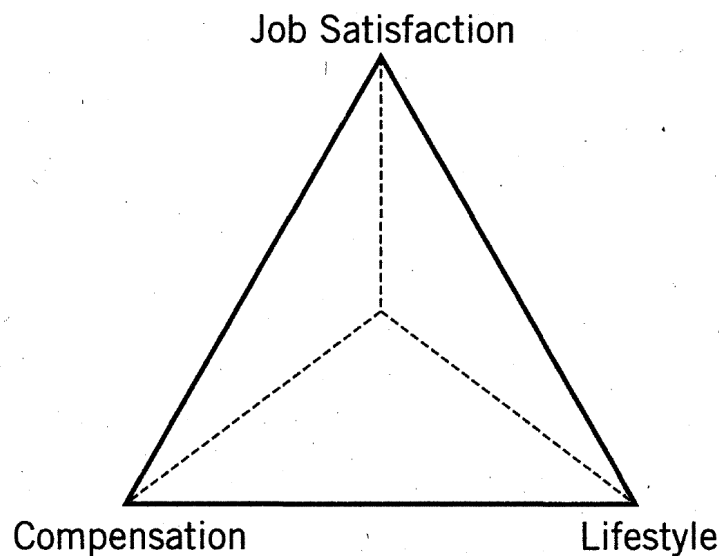
(Citrin 2015)

Interestingly Citrin combined these career phases with a diagram he called the **career triangle** to indicate that one's gratifications from work would likely shift over time, across the axes of salary, intrinsic job satisfaction, and "the lifestyle that your job allows you to lead." He argued "The good news is that you can achieve high marks in all three areas; the bad news is that you can't necessarily have them all now, in the early stages of your career" (Citrin 2015). For Citrin, the career triangle was his own version of the secret formula a player writes down for winning the *Careers* game — though in this case, instead of trying to win the game with a static formula for success, the key is to recognize that your definition of success will evolve over time, in tandem with your career skills, job opportunities, and life choices.

Planning for happenstance

The metaphor of a career as a game can suggest these kinds of systems, diagrams and rules — clear instructions for how the game is played, what is allowed and what is not. But the metaphor of a game also suggests rolling the dice or drawing a card: there's always an element of uncertainty, randomness, or chance. And in fact, survey and case study research on how people actually build their careers indicates that "between 60% and 100% of adolescents and adults report chance events that significantly influenced their career paths" (Pryor et al. 2011).

In response to this reality, vocational theorists have recently developed a new concept to capture this phenomenon: **planned happenstance**. Even the term itself was meant to sound contradictory; as one scholar put it, people pursuing a planned happenstance strategy in their careers "must plan to generate and be receptive to chance opportunities," privileging curiosity, exploration, open-mindedness, persistence, and flexibility in their career reflection and preparation. "Everyone's career is affected by events that could not have been predicted," write Mitchell et al. (1999), so in building our careers we should "acknowledge the pervasive role of unplanned events, take advantage of these events, and actively take action to create these events."

. . . .

planned happenstance

A strategy for building your career that involves preparing for unexpected opportunities by cultivating a flexible and generalizable set of skills and keeping an open mind about the many different fields in which those skills could be used.

. . . .

But as these authors caution, planning for happenstance doesn't mean magical thinking or complete reliance on fate: "There is a crucial difference between someone who passively relies on luck to solve problems and someone who is actively searching while remaining open to new and unexpected opportunities" (Mitchell et al. 1999). Another vocational scholar, Wayne Cascio (2010), calls this becoming an **informed opportunist**: one who excels at "combining accurate information with a flexible, opportunistic approach to his or her career." Doing this requires a special skill: a willingness to accept the inevitable compromise and uncertainty of a life-long career-building process, rather than inflexibly pursuing one single, perfect outcome to one's career game. Psychologists refer to this skill as **ambiguity tolerance**. Recently two researchers surveyed 275 undergraduates to assess how their ambiguity tolerance related to their career searches. They found that "Individuals who are tolerant with the inevitable ambiguity in the career decision making process are less likely to have distorted career beliefs and get stuck in [...] the rigid and compulsive pursuit of an optimal choice" at the expense of moving their career forward in unexpected but useful ways whenever the opportunity arises (Xu et al. 2014).

How does one do this in practice? Part of the challenge is asking yourself the right questions when you are reflecting on your college pursuits and your career aspirations. For example, Mitchell et al. (1999) suggest that rather than asking "What is my major?" — which implies a single, definitive answer — students should ask "What questions would I like my education to answer?" — which opens one up to multiple paths to a single goal. Similarly, rather than asking "What career should I pursue?" and hoping to hit upon the one right answer, perhaps a better question would be "What strengths do I want to use in making an impact on the world around me?" which suggests a game board of many different career paths, with many different ways to win.

Thinking about your career path in terms of planned happenstance can be scary; it can seem to take away your own agency — your own responsibility and credit — for your success. Interestingly, though, according to Cornell economist Robert Frank (2016), many of us suffer from a sort of **hindsight bias** that actually attributes our success more to our individual hard work, and less to the good fortune of the circumstances and opportunities provided to us by the hard work of others, than might be warranted: "a growing body of evidence suggests that seeing ourselves as self-made — rather than as talented, hardworking, *and* lucky — leads us to be less generous and public-spirited. It may even make the lucky less likely to support the conditions (such as high-quality public infrastructure and education) that made their own success possible." Perhaps in building a career narrative that acknowledges the role of planned happenstance, we might better appreciate the shared, societal structures — like public research universities — that helped bring that positive happenstance (or luck) into our lives. As Frank notes, "when people are prompted to reflect on their good fortune, they become much more willing to contribute to the common good."

"Do what you love"

In his book *The House of the Dead*, Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky wrote "If one wanted to crush and destroy a man entirely, to mete out to him the most terrible punishment … all one would have to do would be to make him do work that was completely and utterly devoid of usefulness and meaning" (Krznaric 2012). Today that sentiment is still with us. You have probably heard the catch phrase "Do what you love, and the money will follow," taken from the title of a 1987 best-selling New Age self-help book by Marsha Sinetar (McGee 2005). A 2015 survey of adults ages 18 to 34 by the global business consulting firm Deloitte found that 77% of these millennial respondents reported that a "sense of purpose" was the main reason they chose to work for their current employer (Putman 2015).

Given the fact that career-related work will likely represent over half of your adult waking life, organizational scholar Amy Wrzesniewski (2003) argues that it makes sense to seek out a career that appeals not only to **extrinsic**

motivations (like good pay, safe working conditions, and a measure of job security), but also to **intrinsic motivations** (with ample opportunities for advancement, achievement, and recognition, through work that is interesting, creative, and fulfilling). For example, in their 2001 book *Good Work*, cognitive psychologist Howard Gardner and his colleagues found that those who felt they were engaged in "work of expert quality that benefits the broader society" exhibited higher satisfaction with their work than others. They called this simply **good work**: "work that is both excellent in quality and socially responsible".

But as we saw with the century-old vocational theories that tried to clumsily match the measured traits of different persons with the assumed traits of different occupations, one person's motivation may actually be another person's drudgery. More recent research shows that different workers have abundant agency (individual power of choice and action) for interpreting the same kinds of work in different ways: "even in the same job done in the same organization, there are significant differences in how people make meaning of their work" (Wrzesniewski 2003).

As a starting point, consider the three-part typology that Bellah et al. (1985) developed to better explore the meanings that workers make of their careers. In their research, as explained by Wrzesniewski (2003), people classified their work in one of three ways:

- **Work as a job**, focusing on the extrinsic, material benefits of work as underpinning basic survival and leisure time. "The work is simply a means to a financial end that allows people to enjoy their time away from work."

- **Work as a career**, privileging not just the material rewards of salary, but also the responsibility and prestige that come along with salary, such that "the increased pay, prestige, and status that come with promotion and advancement are a dominant focus in their work."

- **Work as a calling**, where neither financial nor prestige rewards are primary — instead, the intrinsic fulfillment of doing the work is what is most important, and "usually associated with the belief that the work contributes to the greater good and makes the world a better place."

The point of this framework is not to crudely classify every occupation into one of these three categories, but to demonstrate that any particular kind of work might be understood by some people as a job, and by others as a calling. In fact, Cheney et al. (2010) argue that "a sense of both individual and social satisfaction" are necessary for something to be a "calling": "If you work only to fulfill personal goals, whether to get rich or to indulge in whim, it's not your calling. If, on the other hand, you altruistically sacrifice your own interests to take care of those in dire need but get no sense of personal satisfaction from doing so, that's not your calling either. The key, then, is to find the intersection of the two perspectives."

Of course, the material, political, and economic aspects of different kinds of work still matter here; we can and should continue to push for safer working environments, democratic participation in decision-making, and fairer wages, without imagining that people should just change their attitudes about dangerous, disempowering, or exploitative jobs. But at the same time we must recognize that pride and value can and should be found in all kinds of work — and part of a critical reflection process in building a career is getting to know what kinds of work bring you just those positive senses of identity and accomplishment. As Todd Putman, management consultant and author of the 2015 book *Be More,* put it, "It takes a lot of self-reflection and a clear understanding of what matters to you most to tease out your own definition of meaningful work." Psychologist Angela Duckworth, author of the 2015 book *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance,* offers similar advice to "foster your passion" rather than "follow your passion": "Don't panic if you can't think of a career path that's a perfect fit. In large part, this is because interests are not just discovered, they're developed."
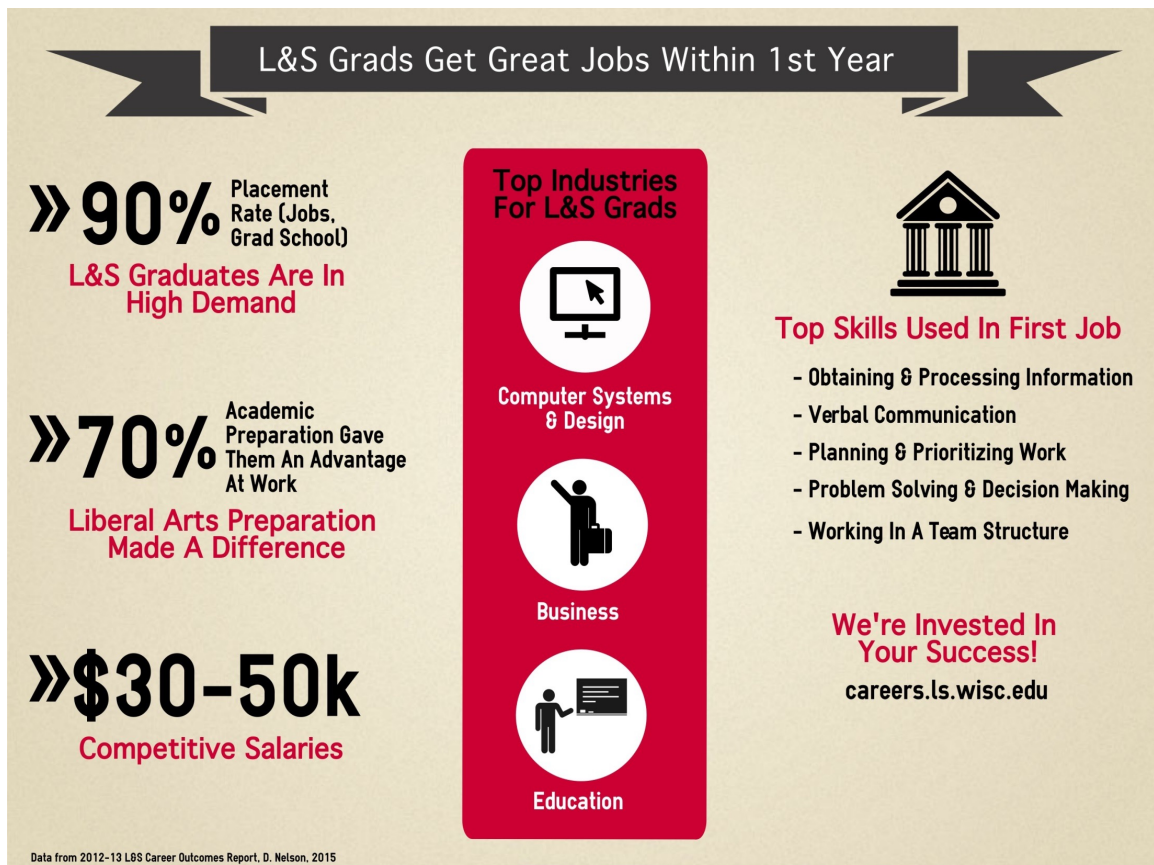
Fortunately, deciding whether a particular job might lead to your ultimate calling is not something you have to figure out at the start of your career game; in fact, the research suggests that your outlook on how you find meaning from work will change as your career grows. For example, in one study of how younger and older workers differ in their career attitudes, researchers who asked, "To whom or what do you feel responsible in your work?" found that "as individuals age, their sense of responsibility seems to grow" (Gardner 2007). In particular, "the youngest subjects express responsibility to those immediately around them; the oldest subjects (at least in the select population with which we were working) consider themselves responsible for the health of a profession or even the broader society" (Barendsen et al. 2010). A recent research study reported in the *MIT Sloan Management Review* (Bailey & Madden 2016) found similar results: "People did not just talk about themselves when they talked about meaningful work; they talked about the impact or relevance their work had for other individuals, groups, or the wider environment." Importantly, such awareness and appreciation of the power of work did not equate in a simplistic way to "happiness," but to a more poignant awareness: "People often found their work to be full of meaning at moments associated with mixed, uncomfortable, or even painful thoughts and feelings, not just a sense of unalloyed joy and happiness." (Remember when we talked about understanding the "human condition" as part of your liberal arts and sciences education in chapter 2?)

If this kind of meaningful career is what you seek, you're in luck. As we have seen from the broad statistics on college labor market outcomes, being UW-Madison graduates, you will already be well-positioned to find challenging, rewarding, and poignant work that builds on both the breadth and depth of your college education, no matter how the world of work continues to change in the future. After all, according to *Money* magazine, there's a reason that

UW-Madison "ranks in the top 10 when it comes to producing chief executive officers for the country's biggest firms" (Novak 2016).

Our most recent data on post-graduation plans of College of Letters and Science graduates demonstrates that your liberal arts and sciences education will provide a great foundation for a successful career. According to Associate Dean Rebekah Paré, director of SuccessWorks, "The **placement rate** for our students is about 90 percent within the first year – on a par with the School of Business and the College of Engineering." And employers have noticed: "The number of employers here recruiting this year doubled from last year" (Schneider 2016).

UW-Madison post-graduation outcomes, 2013

L&S Grads Get Great Jobs Within 1st Year

» **90%** Placement Rate (Jobs, Grad School)
L&S Graduates Are In High Demand

» **70%** Academic Preparation Gave Them An Advantage At Work
Liberal Arts Preparation Made A Difference

» **$30-50k**
Competitive Salaries

Top Industries For L&S Grads

Computer Systems & Design

Business

Education

Top Skills Used In First Job

- Obtaining & Processing Information
- Verbal Communication
- Planning & Prioritizing Work
- Problem Solving & Decision Making
- Working In A Team Structure

We're Invested In Your Success!
careers.ls.wisc.edu

Data from 2012-13 L&S Career Outcomes Report, D. Nelson, 2015

UW-Madison (2013)

The motto of SuccessWorks at L&S is that, when it comes to your career journey, "we launch our students higher, sooner." We hope you have found value in launching your own career journey through this student guide. Your career game is just beginning — enjoy the challenge!

1. What is the "Hollywood model" of employment, and how does it differ from the so-called "gig economy"?

2. How does a "portfolio career" differ from a "linear career"? What are some positives and negatives of each of these career paths?

3. What period of life is represented by the term "emerging adulthood" and how is that period of maturity unique?

4. What is the "career triangle"? Which aspects of this triangle do you think will matter most to you as you begin your career?

5. What does "planned happenstance" mean and how can one possibly "plan" for "happenstance"?

6. What does it mean to think of a career as a "calling" rather than simply a "job"? Is this meaning the same for everyone?

7. What is the placement rate (percentage going on to employment or graduate school) of UW-Madison L&S graduates after the first year?

READ MORE ABOUT IT

Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, *Aspiring Adults Adrift: Tentative Transitions of College Graduates* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014). A study of college graduates that demonstrates how greater attention to time on task and high impact practices during college resulted in career benefits on the job market later.

George Cheney, Daniel J. Lair, Dean Ritz, Brenden E. Kendall, *Just a Job? Communication, Ethics, and Professional Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Useful historical and philosophical essay on making work less of a compulsion and more of a calling.

Robert H. Frank, *Success and Luck: Good Fortune and the Myth of Meritocracy* (Princeton University Press, 2016). Reminds us that "In recent years, social scientists have discovered that chance events play a much larger role in important life outcomes than most people once imagined."

Howard Gardner, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and William Damon, *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet* (New York: Basic Books, 2001). Psychology study of workplace motivation and satisfaction through doing work that benefits the wider world.

Kathleen E. Mitchell, Al S. Levin and John D. Krumboltz, "Planned happenstance: Constructing unexpected career opportunities," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 77 (1999). Outlines the "planned happenstance" theory of career reflection.

Jean M. Twenge and Stacy M. Campbell, "Generation Me and the changing world of work," *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work* (2010). Uses data from studies of generational differences in psychological traits and attitudes to explain how "millennials" behave in the workplace.

Amy Wrzesniewski, "Finding positive meaning in work," in Kim S. Cameron, Jane E. Dutton, and Robert E. Quinn, eds., *Positive Organizational Scholarship: Foundations of a New Discipline* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2003). How work affects our lives and how to construct meaning out of whatever work we find ourselves in.