



Career Choices and Changes

A Workbook to Discover Who You Are, What You Want, and How to Get It

Your Path to Personal Success and Self-sufficiency

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Academic Innovations

This book belongs to _____

Started on _____

Completed on _____

I dedicate this work to _____

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NOTE ON THIS EDITION: This volume is a derivative of our earlier book, *CAREER CHOICES: A Guide for Teens and Young Adults: Who Am I? What Do I Want? and How Do I Get It?* It has been rewritten in part and edited throughout to meet the needs of a more mature audience.

We have taken the privilege of substituting certain words in the quotations cited here ("person" instead of "man," "people" instead of "men") to make them more inclusive, with the certainty that, had they been said today, this is how they would have been stated.

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Manufactured in the United States of America

In memory of Dr. Ken Hoyt



Know thyself

SOCRATES

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One of the most common questions asked of children is; What do you want to be when you grow up? Today this question is being asked of young adults and mature workers alike. The U.S. Department of Labor reports that the average worker will change jobs or careers at least seven times in their lifetime. This workbook is designed not only to help you answer that question now, but also to teach you a systematic process for choosing your future career and life direction.

Work plays a large part in all our lives, and this fact underscores the importance of choosing a career that enhances life satisfaction. While work is a way to occupy your time and earn money, it is also a way to define yourself, express yourself, and leave your mark in the world. It may be your major life activity. It will certainly claim much of your time. If you give the matter some serious thought, you can be among the small percentage of workers who say they are “completely satisfied” with their jobs, rather than the majority who, all things considered, would rather be doing something else.

Before you can make a good choice, however, you need to have more information than just the top ten job categories for the coming decade or the average annual salaries for 2,000 different careers. While your earning potential and the projected growth of your industry of choice are certainly things to consider, you need to start with information a bit more fundamental — like who you are and what you want. Once you have this information, you may find dozens of ways



to flourish. Without it, any career decision you make is likely to be less than fully satisfying. That's why this book devotes so much space to helping you find personal answers to these most important questions.

It also focuses on an inescapable fact of life: "All things change except the love of change." Written by an anonymous author nearly four hundred years ago, that statement has never been so true. In twenty-first century America, change is a way of life—like it or not. As a result, success in the contemporary workforce will require flexibility and mastery of a process for dealing with change.

If you don't believe this, ask the former steel or factory workers who, not so long ago, thought they would always have a dependable income. Talk to the white-collar workers who never expected to be standing in line to collect unemployment checks. Speak with the young professionals who grew up thinking they would be at least as prosperous as their parents.

This is a challenging time, but also a time of great opportunity. If there are fewer secure jobs than in previous years, there is more room in the global marketplace and emerging industries for innovation, imaginative endeavors, and entrepreneurial drive. For those with the necessary self-knowledge, skill, and courage, the potential for real job satisfaction has probably never been greater

You are about to embark on one of the most important journeys of your life—that of discovering who you are, what you want, and how to go about making the future you envision a reality. Along the way you'll come to understand that determining your life path is one of the most complex decision-making processes anyone makes. That may be why far too many people have never reached the point of being truly satisfied with their life choices.

The choices you'll be making as you work through the exercises and activities in this book will impact not only your happiness and life satisfaction but also your feelings of self-worth. With patience, an open mind, and hard work, you can master the process and learn to navigate these important choices. When you've finished, you'll have developed a 10-year Plan that will help you realize your dreams and goals.

Your life is defined by the choices *you* make. No matter what path you choose to follow, this process will help to ensure it is your own.

Your Path to Personal Success and Self-sufficiency



Learning the Process Pays Life-long Dividends

You won't choose a "lifetime" career as you work through this book. There is no longer any such thing. You will learn a process that you can use over and over again as you change jobs in a rapidly evolving workplace. Once you've learned its simple secrets, you'll find you can use this process for all major lifestyle decisions. You'll also find yourself better able to adapt and proceed in the face of change, no matter what your chosen career.

In the past, the battle was to get a job. Today, the goal is also to build a satisfying life. We strongly believe that, with meaningful contemplation, appropriate preparation, and the proper attitudes, achieving that goal is within the reach of all.

A couple tips as you proceed through this book:

1. Don't be fooled by the simplistic format. The lighthearted text and non-threatening design are meant to facilitate the contemplation and self-discovery required to make the process meaningful.
2. Start at the beginning and work through each chapter, in sequence, to the end. The insights and the data you gather in the earliest chapters will be explored more fully, enhanced, and used later in the process as you make choices and develop your plan.
3. You may be tempted to sit down and complete all of the activities in a few sittings. As simple as this seems, you must remember that these are important questions requiring reflection and thought. Take whatever time you need.
4. This is not a one-time activity. It is the beginning of a life-long habit. Whenever you learn something new about yourself or encounter a change that impacts your career or lifestyle, revisit this process and update your choices and your **10-year Plan**.

This exploratory process will surprise you. It will either send you ricocheting in new directions you've never considered or confirm your current plans. Whether you are starting or completing your education, re-entering the workforce, displaced due to workplace changes, or looking for new professional challenges, taking the time to work through this journal and learn this essential process will pay life-long dividends.

Becoming a Life-long Learner . . .

Life-long learning not only guarantees your success at work but also impacts how satisfied you'll be with life in general. Why? Have you noticed the speed with which everything changes? Just about the time you learn how to program your DVR to capture all your favorite shows, technology advances and you have a new application waiting to be mastered. In the past you may have relied on a call to the airline to book your next flight; now you have the "honor" of paying an additional fee if you can't navigate their online ticketing process.

A lot to keep up with, it's true. The good news is some of the best learning resources are now as close as the nearest computer and as portable as your smart phone.

Using Keyword Searches

During the Scientific Revolution, Sir Francis Bacon believed, "Knowledge is power." As a learner living during an era of technological revolution, power comes from being able to do more than just memorize or reproduce knowledge. Real power comes from an ability to find meaning in the information you encounter and use it **to produce new knowledge or new understanding**.

The last time you wanted to know about something what did you do? Did you go to your bookshelf and pull down an encyclopedia? Visit to your local library? Or did you search for the information online using Google or Bing or watched an informational video that explored the subject using YouTube?

You'll find suggested keywords located at the bottom of pages throughout the book. You can use these keywords to direct an online search for appropriate in-depth resources. The keywords will give you a head start for additional knowledge and skills on the topics presented on that particular page.

The speed that our world changes presents its own learning challenges, but it also presents wonderful learning possibilities. This book—or any book—can only provide a finite amount of information. **Your potential to learn is infinite!**

Means Being a Self-directed Learner

If you are like most people, you want control — control of your learning and, by extension, control of your future. In today's environment, if you want to successfully manage the changes and challenges that come your way, you'll want to be a **self-regulated or self-directed learner**. As a self-directed learner, you'll be aware of your own strengths and weaknesses in learning and you'll employ appropriate strategies or techniques to tackle each learning challenge.

We've added features and tools throughout the book to help you master the important task of becoming a self-directed learner.

Checkpoints

Because the material you are about to encounter requires higher-order thinking skills, (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and creativity), it is difficult to assess what you've learned by traditional testing methods. The answers are uniquely your own — your life, your choices, your plans — and only you know if they're right or wrong.

The Checkpoints at the end of each chapter were designed as a self-assessment. They will prompt you to take a moment to monitor and evaluate your own progress. If you feel confident in your understanding of the concepts and projects, you're ready to move on. If you feel less than certain, you want to go back and work through the corresponding activity or exercise, either on your own or with the help of an instructor, mentor, or learning partner.

Your Skills Inventory Chart and Education Plan

While in school, someone else — a teacher or professor — directs your learning through assignments and lectures. You've probably sat in at least one class and wondered "When am I ever going to use this?"

Well, what if you could create your own **Education Plan**, secure in the knowledge that the courses you take and the skills you learn will payoff in the future?

Beginning in chapter two, you'll start identifying the skills you have and the ones you need to learn in order to be prepared for the career and lifestyle you desire. This list will grow as you complete activities designed to help you discover more about yourself and the career(s) you'd find fulfilling. By the end of this process, through the development of your **Skills Inventory**, you'll have the information you need for a job-winning resume (*the skills you have*). You'll also have a good start of an **Education Plan** that is focused on what you need (*the skills you want to learn*).

Armed with your comprehensive **Education Plan**, you'll be in good shape for your life-long learning journey, gathering the necessary resources along the way to help you get the skills and experience to land the job of your dreams.



My10yearPlan.com®

My 10yearPlan.com®* provides an online planning area where you can enter and expand upon the work from your *Career Choices and Changes* workbook. While the program's content mirrors the nearly 100 *Career Choices and Changes* exercises, the My10yearPlan.com® system's dynamic and interactive structure prompt you to revisit, revise, update, and share the data related to the development your **10-year Plan**. That information is then available for the seamless creation of your own personalized planning documents:

- 10-year Plan Summary Page
- 10-year Plan and Portfolio report
- My Skills Inventory
- My Education Plan

Together these documents provide an overview of the goals you've set for the next decade regarding your education and training, career, finances, and lifestyle choices.

*To order visit www.academicinnovationshighered.com/store

How Do I Benefit from this Extra Step?

Because your **10-year Plan** is online, you can update it as you experience new things, learn more about yourself, and refine your vision of the future. The online format also makes it easy to share your plan with advisors, counselors, teachers, family, friends, and mentors in four different formats.

The **10-year Plan Summary** provides a snapshot of you—your dreams, goals, and plans. Anyone taking five minutes to read this document will know a lot about you: who you are, what you want, and how you plan to go about getting it. Sessions with counselors will be more productive. Family and friends can more effectively support your dreams and goals. Anyone reading your carefully-thought-out plan will be more likely to take you and your goals seriously.

Your **10-year Plan and Portfolio** report is a multi-page document that provides a more detailed picture. An autobiography of sorts, it's a collection of all the work you enter about yourself in an easy-to-read format. As you gain new understanding and update your plan, this dynamic report will be revised automatically.

My Skills Inventory expands on the **Skills Inventory** chart you'll create beginning in chapter 11. My10yearPlan.com® easily tracks the skills identified as those you have and those you want to acquire. Because the inventory is a fully integrated part of the system, skills can be linked to specific career options and can be sorted and selected based on the career path you decide to follow.

My Education Plan will evolve from your **Skills Inventory** chart. As you identify your chosen career paths, the necessity for certain skills, particularly those that are transferable, will become apparent. Using this knowledge, you'll build your life-long Education Plan.

The career you choose for your initial **10-year Plan** is meant for the duration of the course, not necessarily for the rest of your life. As you discover careers that hold even more interest, the online nature of My10yearPlan.com® allows you convenient and secure access so you can easily re-work some key activities and keep your plan current as you change and grow.

How to Use My10yearPlan.com® and the *Career Choices and Changes* Workbook Together

It's important to remember that your workbook and My10yearPlan.com® are designed to work together in a two-step process.

1. After the classroom or online discussion and the personal reflection that follows your reading of *Career Choices and Changes*, complete the activities and exercises in your workbook using your initial thoughts, ideas, and plans.
2. Then, when you have access to the Internet, enter your data into your online 10-year Plan for each of the corresponding activities. These are listed by chapter and appear in the same order as in the textbook.

Here are some important points to remember:

- Complete the activity in your workbook first.
- Like most of your writing assignments, the work from your *Career Choices and Changes* workbook will go through a number of different editorial stages. Think of your workbook as the place where you'll create your draft for each activity and think of My10yearPlan.com® as the place for you to review, revise, edit, and polish your draft.
- After you've completed the activity in your workbook, login to your My10yearPlan.com® account and enter your information online. This can happen whenever you have access to the Internet — whether it's during class time, between classes in the library or career center, or at home during the evening.
- Before you just start typing away, take a moment and read through the responses you've written in your workbook. Maybe you've given the activity more thought since you first completed it. Do your answers still seem like the best possible response? If so, go ahead and enter the information into My10yearPlan.com® as written. If not, you might want to update your answer as you type.
- Keep in mind that the information you input into the activity pages of My10yearPlan.com® will flow into your **10-year Plan Summary Page** and your **10-year Plan and Portfolio** report. This is your chance to pay attention to your spelling, check for typos, and make sure you've answered in complete sentences when appropriate. Because you'll want to print and use parts of your portfolio for job interviews, scholarship interviews, performance reviews, and more, you'll want to make sure that your spelling, grammar, and punctuation are correct.
- Many instructors will use your **10-year Plan Summary Page** and your **10-year Plan and Portfolio** report as part of your final grade, so make sure you're always putting your best work into My10yearPlan.com®. That way your grade will reflect all of the thought and hard work devoted to this process and your final product will be something you'll be proud to share with the special people in your life.
- If you've completed online interest inventories and/or personality tests such as those found in your career center or on the Department of Labor websites, you already know that these tools provide interesting but very general information. The results often have some validity and serve to either confirm information you already know or contradict it so completely that you dismiss it out of hand. Wrapping your mind around how to make use of these broad conclusions can be frustrating. However, once you learn and complete the comprehensive process of developing your 10-year plan advocated in *Career Choices and Changes* and My10yearPlan.com®, you'll understand how to apply this information. When you've reached that point in the process it may be valuable to review these surveys again from a more informed and self-aware perspective.

Review Stops Help You Develop a Life-long Habit

As you work through the *Career Choices and Changes* activities and enter them into My10yearPlan.com®, you are embarking on one of the most important and complex decision-making processes of your life. You're determining not only how you want to spend the majority of your waking hours for the forty-plus years of your career, but also how to structure a lifestyle that is uniquely yours. This requires contemplation, reflection, flexibility, and research.

Throughout your process of developing your online **10-year Plan**, you will encounter a variety of *Review Stops* in the form of the Contemplation Wizard, the Change Coach, Power Search, and the Success and Self-sufficiency Path. **These have been strategically placed to remind you to pause and consider earlier information or decisions you've made.** Each time you encounter one of these *Review Stops*, the system will help you look back at previous activities and build on your self-knowledge in order to make new, more complex choices and decisions. Think of these prompts as a friend reminding you to step back for a moment and take a look at that wonderful, multifaceted being... YOU.

Technology is a wonderful thing, especially when it allows us to streamline or eliminate tedious processes or tasks that, when done the "old-fashioned way," would take much longer. However, you don't want to overlook the role your own brainpower should play in the process of planning your unique life. Don't be in a hurry or get impatient. The *Review Stops* enhance the decision-making process by coaching and guiding you to reach the depth of self-reflection and critical thinking necessary to make meaningful choices. From their example you will develop a life-long habit that can propel you to a self-actualizing life of your own design. Their assistance, in the end, will lead to a **10-year Plan** that will help you determine, articulate, and then realize your most cherished goals and dreams.

