

“I was so busy working to get IN to college that I never thought about life after college.”

**What's a major?**(from the Princeton Review and College Board websites)

- A major is the area of study that you focus on in college. Typically the first two years of college are filled with “general education” requirements (though you may have already met many of them with your AP/IB credits), your classes in your junior and senior years of college are usually specialized within your specific field. In short, a major is simply an organized collection of classes, either revolving around a subject (like political science), theme (like gender studies), or professional field (like engineering or architecture).
- Not all schools have majors. The ones that do simply have them to insure that students live up to a minimum standard of academic work and pursue a curriculum with some form of intellectual structure before they acquire their bachelors degrees.
- Many colleges are requiring students to declare their majors earlier and earlier, some, like UF & University of California at Berkeley ask students to list their majors when they apply and then again at orientation and you're required to have a major by the middle of your 2nd year. Although you can (and probably will) change your major, it may not be easy.

**Fact:** According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the average college graduate changes jobs once every three years and changes career fields two or three times in their lifetime. So, for those of you who think choosing a college major locks you into a specific career for the rest of your life, think again.

**What's a career?**

Careers, professions, jobs, and vocations all mean essentially the same thing: the particular occupations for which you are trained. Your parents generation had a different understanding of their career and life plans than you may have.

**Deferred Life Plan vs. Whole Life Plan**(from Komisar, *The Monk & The Riddle*)

Many people in generations before yours had “Deferred Life Plans,” they believed that if they just “Did what they had to do” for 20-30 years as an adult they would be able to enjoy a “golden” retirement of leisure and travel. Those of us who are younger realize that waiting until we're old to do what makes us happy is foolish (and unrealistic, as retirement isn't always that happy or exciting). We want a “Whole Life Plan” where we “do what we want to do” and choose careers that excite us and pay the bills. There is a important distinction here: being motivated by a drive or a passion. Drive pushes you toward something you feel obligated to do. Passion pulls you toward something you cannot resist. A little bit of thinking and planning will help you to find an incredible career, where you love what you do because its a reflection of who you are.

**Plan (research, think, and write it down)**

“Just because you're afraid to tell other people about your dreams because they may say that they're stupid or impossible doesn't mean that you shouldn't have goals or write them down.”

Regardless of what you want to do or be, studies show that having a plan is crucial. (Those people who achieve their goals and are happiest are those who took the time to write down a plan – even if it changes dramatically, and it will, research shows that having a plan is the most important predictor of future career success.) (from Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, *Becoming Adult*).

**College-- its not just what you learn in the classroom**

Make the most of your time in college, don't just go to class and regurgitate the lectures on the exams. Claim your education. Take classes with interesting titles. Talk to your professors. Do research. Study Abroad. Join clubs and organizations with students who share your interests (or expand your boundaries and spend time with people who are very different from you). Participate in community service. Explore future career opportunities by doing internships. Find people who have interesting jobs and talk to them. Ask questions.

# Figuring out what you want to do and be is a process

-approach yourself with curiosity rather than rigidity & judgment

## Think about:

### -Your Goals

-What do you hope to accomplish in your lifetime?

-What visions do you have for your future?

-Tools: YOU! Sit down and do some thinking & "soul searching"

### -Your Values

-What is important to you?

-Tools: Life Values Inventory, Values Sorter

### -Your Abilities and Gifts

-What are you capable of doing?

-What unique talents do you have?

-What skills come easily to you?

-Tools: Self Directed Search, Strong Interest Inventory, Holland World of Work, Basic Skills Survey

### -Your Interests

-What subjects, issues and careers are you interested in?

-What can you "see" yourself doing in 10-20 years?

-Tools: Interest Profiler, Keirsey/MBTI

## Suggestions for how to explore majors & careers:

-spend some time reading, researching, and learning about your options (online & in books)

-journal (write in a book or in a blog)

-"try on" majors

-narrow your list of options listing things you know you DON'T want to study in college or do in life

-talk to older friends & cool adults

-do information interviews

-volunteer

-do an internship (or two or three)

-ask for help: guidance counselors, teachers, professors → make mentors

## Remember *The Art of Possibility* (by Zander & Zander)

1. Sit in the front row of your life. Participate!

2. When you make a mistake say: "How Fascinating!"

3. Quiet the "Voice in your head" that says "I can't do it."

-when you hear the voice, respond, "Thank you for sharing. Be quiet, I'm too busy."

4. Live in Radiating Possibility.

5. Instead of worrying about winning/losing or success/failure, invent a New Game:

"I am a contribution."

***It's never too late to be what you might have been.*** (George Eliot)

***Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does.*** (Margaret Mead)

***Let the world change you... and you can change the world.*** (Motorcycle Diaries)

***What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?*** (Unknown)

***Be the change you wish to see in the world.*** (Gandhi)

## For more information, please contact:

Kristin E. Joos, Ph.D. • Windows of Opportunity: Educational, College Admissions, and Career Counseling, Consulting, and Coaching • 352.316.9196 • kristin@windowsofopportunity.org

## How to Find the right College, Choose a Major, and Pursue a Career (with as little stress, pressure, and worry as possible)

### Resources & Information

#### Books

*This Book is Not Required* by Inge Bell. Pine Forge Press, 2004. ISBN: 1412910110

*Where Do I Go from Here? Getting a Life After High School* by Esther Drill. Penguin Press, 2004. ISBN: 0142002143

*What Color Is Your Parachute? 2004: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers* by Richard Bolles

*Zen and the Art of Making a Living: A Practical Guide to Creative Career Design* by Laurence G. Boldt

*What Should I Do with My Life* by Po Bronson

*The Career Guide for Creative and Unconventional People* by Carol Eikleberry. Ten Speed Press, 1999. ISBN: 1580080758

*Making a Living While Making a Difference* by Melissa Everett

*Careers for Good Samaritans & Other Humanitarian Types* by Marjorie Eberts

*Colleges that Change Lives* by Loren Pope. Penguin Books, 2000. ISBN: 0140296166 (also online at [www.ctcl.com](http://www.ctcl.com) and their companion site: <http://www.collegesofdistinction.com/>)

*Cool Colleges: For the Hyper-Intelligent, Self-Directed, Late Blooming, and Just Plain Different* by Donald Asher, 2000. ISBN: 1580081509

#### Websites

Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students - tons of info about careers & colleges (you can log in and view your highschool & college transcript, see your Bright Futures eligibility, apply for schools in the state of Florida, and take tests to help you figure out what careers interest you most) [www.facts.org](http://www.facts.org)

What can I do with a major in:

<http://content.monstertrak.monster.com/tools/careerconverter/>

<http://www.uncwil.edu/stuaff/career/Majors/>

<http://www.udel.edu/CSC/mrk.html>

Resources for exploring majors & careers from UF, UCF, & FSU:

UF: <http://crc.ufl.edu/UFGuide/index.php> & <http://www.crc.ufl.edu/services/Choosing/index.php>

UCF: [http://www.ucf.edu/catalog/current/Academic\\_Degrees\\_Majors\\_and\\_Minors/index.html](http://www.ucf.edu/catalog/current/Academic_Degrees_Majors_and_Minors/index.html)

<http://www.crc.ucf.edu/student/careerdev/choosingmajors.html>

FSU: <http://www.career.fsu.edu/ccis/matchmajor/matchmenu.html>

Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>

You're a What? <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/ooqindex.htm#J>

College Board - home of the SAT, AP, and SAT II tests. You can register, check your scores & search schools [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

National Association for College Admissions Counseling - click on "students" then click on "An Internet Road Map for the College-Bound Student": [www.nacac.com](http://www.nacac.com)

The Princeton Review Counselor-o-Matic search tool:

<http://www.princetonreview.com/college/research/advsearch/match.asp>

College search by type: <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/Search.asp>

Fiske Guide to Colleges & Universities

<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/cofiske.htm> & <http://www.fiskeguide.com/>

US News & World Report Best Colleges 2004

[http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/rankindex\\_brief.php](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/rankindex_brief.php)

#### For more information, please contact:

Kristin E. Joos, Ph.D. • Windows of Opportunity: Educational, College Admissions, and Career Counseling, Consulting, and Coaching • 352.316.9196 • [kristin@windowsofopportunity.org](mailto:kristin@windowsofopportunity.org)