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Weston

SECOND EDITION

WHAT COLOR IS YOUR PARACHUTE? *FOR TEENS*

Discovering Yourself,
Defining Your Future

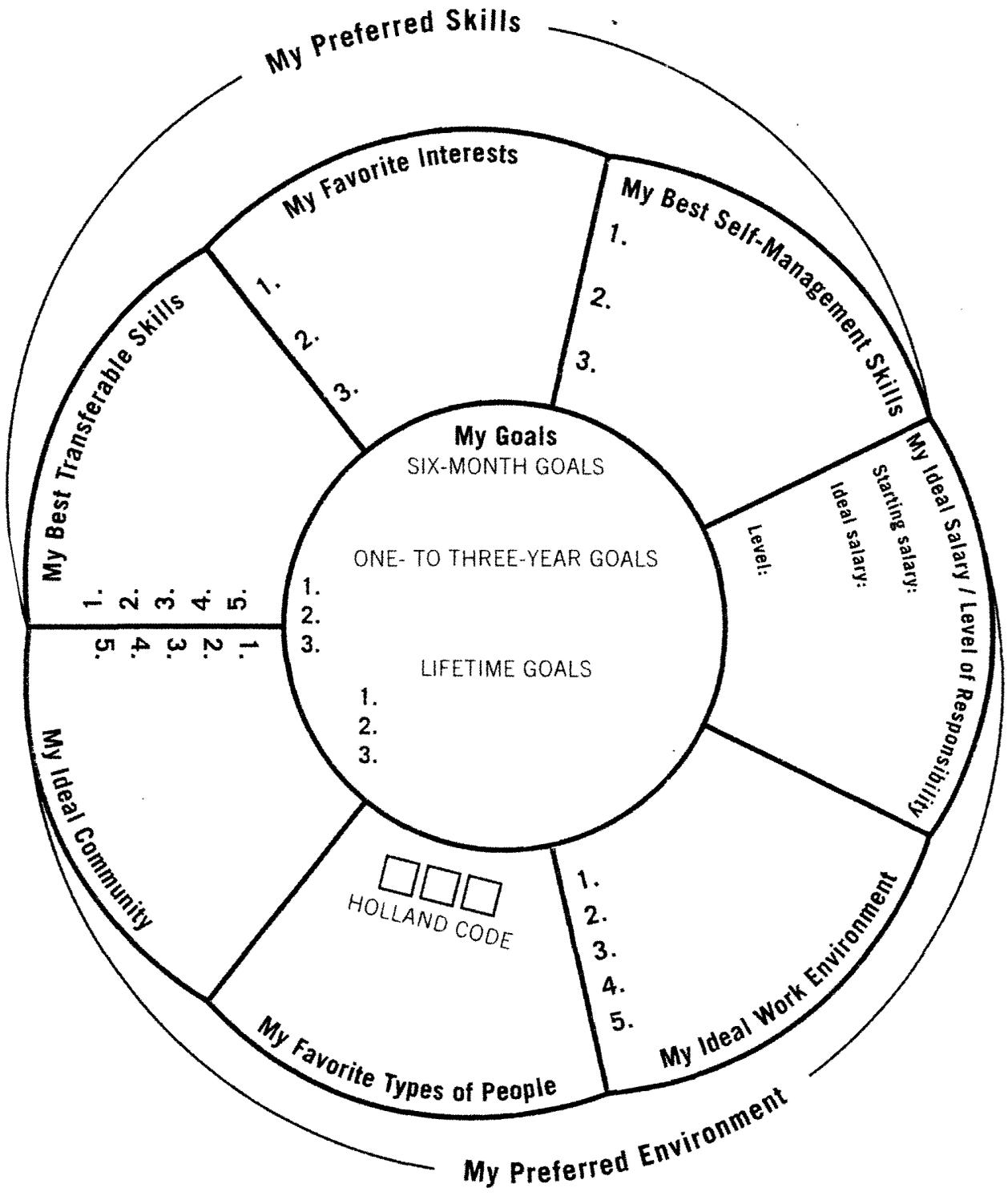


DISCOVERING YOUR DREAM JOB

Hold on to those dreams of being a firefighter or ship captain or doctor or nurse. Don't let others tell you that those are silly dreams. I think so many people end up doing, consciously or not, what others expect of them, or they settle for less because they think achieving their dream is too hard.

—ROB SANDERS,
pediatric physician, age 28

MY PARACHUTE



DO you know what your dream job is? If you have talked with half a dozen people who do that job and you're absolutely sure of what you long to do, that's great. But maybe you aren't so sure. That's fine too. Perhaps your dream job will become clear over time, as it does for many people. Whichever is true for you, we believe that the search for your dream job is very important. Because so much of your adult life will be spent working, finding work you love will help make your whole life more satisfying, gratifying, and fun.

Speaking of fun, that's what the process of finding your dream job can be. You'll become a detective looking for clues in your own life, discovering what matters most to you: what you love to do, who your favorite types of people are, and where you'd like to do what you love to do. As you gather together these clues from your own life, you'll discover the foundation for finding work you love.

Most people don't find their dream job because they think that having their whole dream come true isn't possible. They may pursue just part of it—

whatever they think might come true. The problem is, if you only pursue half your dream, your whole heart won't be in it. You'll pursue that half dream half-heartedly, and half your dream is all that will ever come true.

"I was lucky—
I found what I wanted to
do early in life."
—STEVE JOBS, cofounder
and CEO of Apple

We want you to discover and pursue your whole dream with your whole heart! To do this, we'll begin by asking you three basic questions in part 1 of this book: What do you like to do and what are you good at? Who (that is, what kind of people) do you like to do those things with? Where do you like to do those things? Once you know your what, who, and where, you'll be ready to explore how to find work you'll love. We'll look at the question of *how* in part 3. But before that, in part 2 we'll look at some things you can do right now to get yourself on your way to your dream job.

Before you begin your detective work, though, you may have one other question you'd like answered: Why is this book called *What Color Is Your Parachute? For Teens?* The "for teens" part is clear—it means this book is for you. But what about this "parachute" thing? We use the image of a parachute because a parachute helps you land where you want and need to land. In the case of finding your dream job, your parachute is made up of all your skills, goals, and desires or dreams. Everyone's parachute is a different color because every per-

son's skills, goals, and desires come together in a different way. As you explore the questions what, who, and where (and how, in part 3), you'll list your most important discoveries about yourself on your own parachute (see My Parachute diagram, page v).

You may want to keep your answers in a journal and return to these questions after a few months, after your first job, or after you get some technical training or go on to college. Your answers will change as you accumulate more life and work experience. The answers to some questions may not be very clear now, but they'll become clearer over time. And answers that you're certain of now may remain steady through the years, which will confirm their importance in your life.

When you put all your what, who, and where clues in one place (on your parachute), you'll have a clear word picture to guide you in finding work you'll love. Whatever color it is, your parachute will be designed to help you land in just the right spot in life—in a job you'll love.

What You Love to Do

YOUR FAVORITE INTERESTS AND BEST SKILLS

Why does this first chapter focus on what you love to do? Because what you love to do reveals your interests and your skills. Those favorite interests and skills, especially the skills that you most enjoy using (which we call your “best” skills), are major clues to finding work that you’ll love. Let’s look at your interests first.

Discover Your Favorite Interests

Take a moment and think about how you spend your time. Of the things that you do, what is the most fun? What captures your attention—and your imagination? What is your favorite subject in school? Everyone will have different answers—his or her unique combination of interests. Danika, for example, loves movies. Jeff spends hours on his computer, trying to figure out new ways of doing things. Jessica loves plants and gardening, and Darnel lives and breathes sports—all kinds of sports. So how might these different interests lead Danika, Jeff, Jessica, and Darnel to work they’ll love?

Let’s take a look at Danika’s interests first. She loves movies. If she chooses movies (or filmmaking) as a career field, what could she do? Our first thoughts usually go to the obvious: she could be an actress, a screenwriter, or a director—or maybe a movie critic (then she’d get to see lots of movies). But Danika has many more possibilities to choose from. She could be a researcher (especially for historical movies), travel expert (to scout locations), interior designer (to design sets), carpenter (to build sets), painter (for backdrops and the like), costume designer, makeup artist, hair stylist, camera operator, lighting technician, sound mixer or editor, composer (for soundtracks), stunt person, caterer, personal assistant (to the director or cast members), first aid person, secretary, publicist, accountant, or any number of other things.

Danika also loves animals and is really good at training them. She could combine her interests—movies and animals—with her skill in training animals, and become an animal trainer (or “wrangler” as they’re sometimes called) for the film industry. That’s a job most people wouldn’t think of when considering careers in film.

What kind of career might Jeff’s interest in computers lead to? He could be a programmer, do computer repair, or develop video games. Or because he loves art as well as computers, maybe he’ll work with Danika in the film industry as a computer graphics designer (for special effects).

Jessica, because of her interest in plants and gardening, could become a florist, botanist, or developer of plant hybrids, or she might run her own landscape design, lawn maintenance, or plant nursery business. Darnel’s love of sports might lead him to be a professional athlete, a coach, or maybe—because he loves working with kids and has a little brother with cerebral palsy—he might teach adaptive physical education, helping children with physical disabilities get the exercise they need.

As you can see, your interests can lead you in many different directions in your work life. It’s true that interests change with time, age, and exposure to new people, places, and experiences. But it’s also true that your interests now may be with you all your life, so naming your current interests is a great starting place for finding work you’ll love. Let’s take a closer look at your interests now.

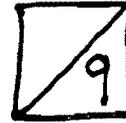
HOW TO FIND WHAT YOU LOVE TO DO: NAMING YOUR INTERESTS

Write your answer to each question on a slip of paper or sticky note.

- When you've got free time, what do you like to do?
- What's your favorite subject in school?
- When you're in the magazine section of your school library or a bookstore, what type of magazine (computer, fashion, sports, and so forth) will you pick up and read first?
- Fill in the blank: When I'm _____, I lose track of time and don't want anyone or anything to disturb me.
- If someone asked you what your favorite interests are, what would you say?
- What are your favorite hobbies, sports, or recreational activities?
- What Internet sites do you have bookmarked? What is the subject matter of those sites?
- What kinds of problems do you like to solve?
- What kinds of questions do your friends or classmates bring to you for help?

After you've answered all the questions, put your answers in a list. Use sticky notes (or experiment with a prioritizing grid at www.groundofyourrownchoosing.com/grid.htm) to make a new list in order of priority (your favorite interest first, second favorite next, and so on). Then write your top three interests in the My Favorite Interests section of My Parachute (page v). If your interests change, be sure to update your parachute.

Good work! You're off to a great start.

**Skills You Enjoy Using**

Your interests are closely tied to your skills, especially the skills that you most enjoy using. We call these your "best" skills because they are your best bet to finding a job that you love. How? It's simple: when you know what your skills are, especially your best skills, you can look for jobs that use those particular skills. It just makes sense that the jobs you are most likely to enjoy will use your favorite skills. Once hired, you're more likely to keep your job if it involves your interests and skills you do well. Why? To succeed in most fields, you have to work long hours. It's hard to succeed if you don't like what you do. You'll want to spend less time at work, not more.

"But I don't have any skills," you say.

Chances are you have more skills than you realize. Often our best skills are so close to us that we're not even aware of them. They come so easily and naturally that we think anybody can do them the way we do. It's true that you

probably don't have as many skills as your older brother or sister has, and they probably don't have as many skills as your parents or favorite teachers have. Skills grow as we grow.

As we gain more life experience, pursue further education, or work at a particular job for an extended period of time, we also gain more skills. But by the time you're a teenager, you've already developed many skills.

Transferable Skills

At its most basic, a skill is a developed aptitude or ability. A skill can range from a basic life skill like being able to turn on a water faucet (which we can't do till we're tall enough to reach the faucet and strong enough to turn the handle) to a more advanced skill like being able to drive a car. (Skills are sometimes called "talents" or "gifts." In this book, we'll use the word "skills.")

There are many different types of skills, and the most basic are transferable skills. Along with your interests, transferable skills are the foundation for knowing what you love to do. Sometimes they're also called "functional" skills because these are skills you do,

such as gathering information or data, or working with people or things. Let's say you like to skateboard. (Skateboarding could be one of the interests you named earlier.) When you skateboard, you work with some "thing" (a skateboard), and skateboarding is what you do with the skateboard. What are your transferable skills? You have hand-eye-foot coordination, physical agility, and exceptional balance, as well as the ability to make split-second decisions and take risks. Nothing limits these skills to skateboarding. They'd be valuable in (that is, transferable to) work as a surfing instructor, lumberjack, search-and-rescue crew member, or any number of other jobs.

Transferable skills can be divided into three different types: physical, mental, and interpersonal. Physical skills primarily use the hands and/or body and generally involve working with things (such as materials, equipment, or objects, like your skateboard). Working with things includes working with nature (plants and animals). Mental skills primarily use the mind and generally

REALITY CHECK

It takes a long time to get good at something. You might as well spend that time involved with something that really interests you. Many successful ventures—such as RoadtripNation, Facebook, and Playing for Change—were started by young entrepreneurs following their interests.

involve working with data, information, numbers, or ideas. Interpersonal skills primarily involve working with people as you serve or help them with their needs or problems. (We call these different types of skills "Skill TIPS"—that is, skills that you use when working with Things, Information/Ideas, or People.) So if one of your skills is skateboarding, your transferable skills include physical skills (hand-eye-foot coordination, agility, balance, and skateboard maneuvering) and mental skills (split-second decision making). Skateboarding can also involve using interpersonal skills, especially if you are on a team, enjoy teaching others how to skateboard, or do specialized tricks and maneuvers.

Why Are My Transferable Skills Important?

Your transferable skills are particularly important as you look for your dream job because they can be transferred from one place to another, to any field or career you choose, regardless of where you first picked them up or how long you've had them. For example, your ability to swim is a skill that can be transferred to—or used in—work as a lifeguard, a swim coach, or a counselor at a summer camp.

DISCOVERY EXERCISE

HOW TO FIND WHAT YOU LOVE TO DO: IDENTIFYING YOUR SKILLS

You begin to identify your skills by looking at your life. Think about projects you have completed, recent problems that you solved, your hobbies, and the activities you do for fun. These can be experiences from your school, volunteer work, paid work, or free time. Select a project or activity you've enjoyed that had an outcome—writing a paper, helping to organize an activity, or learning something new, such as a sport or hobby.

Rich Feller, an international career consultant and author of the book *Knowledge Nomads and the Nervously Employed*, says that 70 percent of our skills come from challenges, 20 percent from watching others, and 10 percent from classes and reading. You may have stories to write from any of those three categories. But if you are stumped about what might make a good skills story, look particularly at challenges you have overcome. Once you've thought of a story, write a short paragraph that describes how you completed your project or worked out a solution to the problem you had.

Now give your project, problem, or activity a title. Then answer these questions:

- **Goal or Problem:** What was your goal—that is, what were you trying to accomplish, or what was the problem you were trying to solve?
- **Obstacles:** What made achieving your goal (or solving the problem) difficult? How did you overcome these obstacles?
- **Time Frame:** How long did it take you to achieve your goal or solve your problem?
- **Outcome:** What happened? Did things go as you expected, or did something unexpected happen?

*At least
3 challenges*

Transferable skills are the basic building blocks of any job or career. Most jobs rely on just four to seven main skills. (These groups of skills are sometimes called "skill sets.") That's why it's so important to identify yours. If you know your best transferable skills, you can compare the skills needed in a job with those you do well and enjoy using. This kind of comparison will help you find a job you'll love. The more of your best skills you use in a job, the more likely you will love it.

Need a little inspiration on what kind of story to write? Serena Brewer was a seventeen-year-old high school senior when she wrote the following story.

MY COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

By Serena Brewer • The Athenian School (Danville, CA)

The high school I attended required seniors to design and complete a community service project. My project stemmed from my love of teaching skiing and a unique opportunity that came from a phone call with my dad.

My dad was a school superintendent for a school district near the mountains. One of his schools offered alpine and cross-country skiing to fourth to eighth graders for P.E. credit. The school had a class for Down syndrome kids. I asked if the kids from this class got to go skiing. When my dad said no, I instantly knew what my community service project would be. Most kids who have this syndrome have enough motor coordination to participate in activities like skiing. I wanted to give these kids a chance to have fun in the snow and maybe even ski.

After overcoming his initial resistance, my dad put me in contact with the woman who taught the class for students with Down syndrome and with a family that might be willing to let me work with their kids. I created an outline of what we would do and how I would teach them. I met with the teacher and the family. I convinced the local ski resort to donate ski rentals and access to the rope tow and beginner's area. It turned out that the kids didn't remember much from one lesson to another. But they did experience something new and had fun.

HOW DO TRANSFERABLE SKILLS HELP ME FIND MY DREAM JOB?

Every job has certain core activities or tasks that you do over and over. To do these activities or tasks, you need to have certain skills. If you know what skills you most enjoy using, you'll be able to compare the skills needed in a job to your own best skills. If a job doesn't use three-quarters of your best skills, you won't be happy with it.

My high school was one of a group of schools around the world that emphasize community service. The head of my school submitted my project in a competition. I was amazed when I was chosen to receive an international community service award for my project.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

Goal or Problem: Designing a community service project to meet graduation requirements.

Obstacles: Convincing people that students with Down syndrome could learn to ski and enjoy the snow just like other elementary students; obtaining free ski rentals and ski passes.

Time Frame: Three months (January–March).

Outcome: Five Down syndrome students were able to experience skiing; community service award received.

Are you ready for a little detective work? Good! Let's turn to your life now and begin to identify your skills and, in particular, your best skills.

Discover Your Skills

Now that you've read My Community Service Project, reread your own story. Using the list of Skill TIPs (pages 16–18), identify the skills you use in your story. All of the skills in this list are transferable skills—skills that you can use in many different settings or jobs. You may want to photocopy the Skill TIPs list before you begin so you'll have a fresh copy to use if you want to do this exercise in the future or if you want to share it with a friend.

As you go through the Skill TIPs list, put a check mark in box #1 under each skill that you used in the story you just wrote. For example, if you used the skill "making" in your story (say, you made a dress or a sculpture), put a check mark in box #1 underneath "using my hands" on the Skills with Things page (page 16).

Here are a few of the skills that Serena, who wrote about her community service project, might have selected:

- Skills with Things (physical): motor/physical coordination with my whole body (skiing)
- Skills with Information (mental): imagining, inventing, creating, or designing new ideas (designing a skiing program for students with Down syndrome)

- Skills with People (interpersonal): teaching, training, or designing educational events (teaching skiing to students with Down syndrome and designing the program to teach them to ski)

Now that you've gone through the process and understand how it works, write four more stories so you have a total of five. If you wrote about a project the first time, try writing about something else: teaching your little sister how to ride a bike, learning to ice-skate, dealing with a friend who gossiped about you behind your back. Having five stories will help you find the different kinds of skills you use in different situations. You've already written story #1. Next, for story #2, place check marks in box #2 for each skill you used. Do this for each of the remaining stories, #3, #4, and #5. (If you want, brighten up the list by using colored pens or pencils.) You may find that in each story, you used many different skills—some in the "things" category, others in the "information" category, and still others in the "people" category. If you write one story a day and fill in your skills, then in five days you can know what your best transferable skills are—and you'll have two sections of your parachute done!

DISCOVER YOUR SKILLS

1. Review your story.
2. Identify the skills you used.
3. Check your skills off on the Skill TIPs list (pages 16–18).

Identify Your Best Transferable Skills

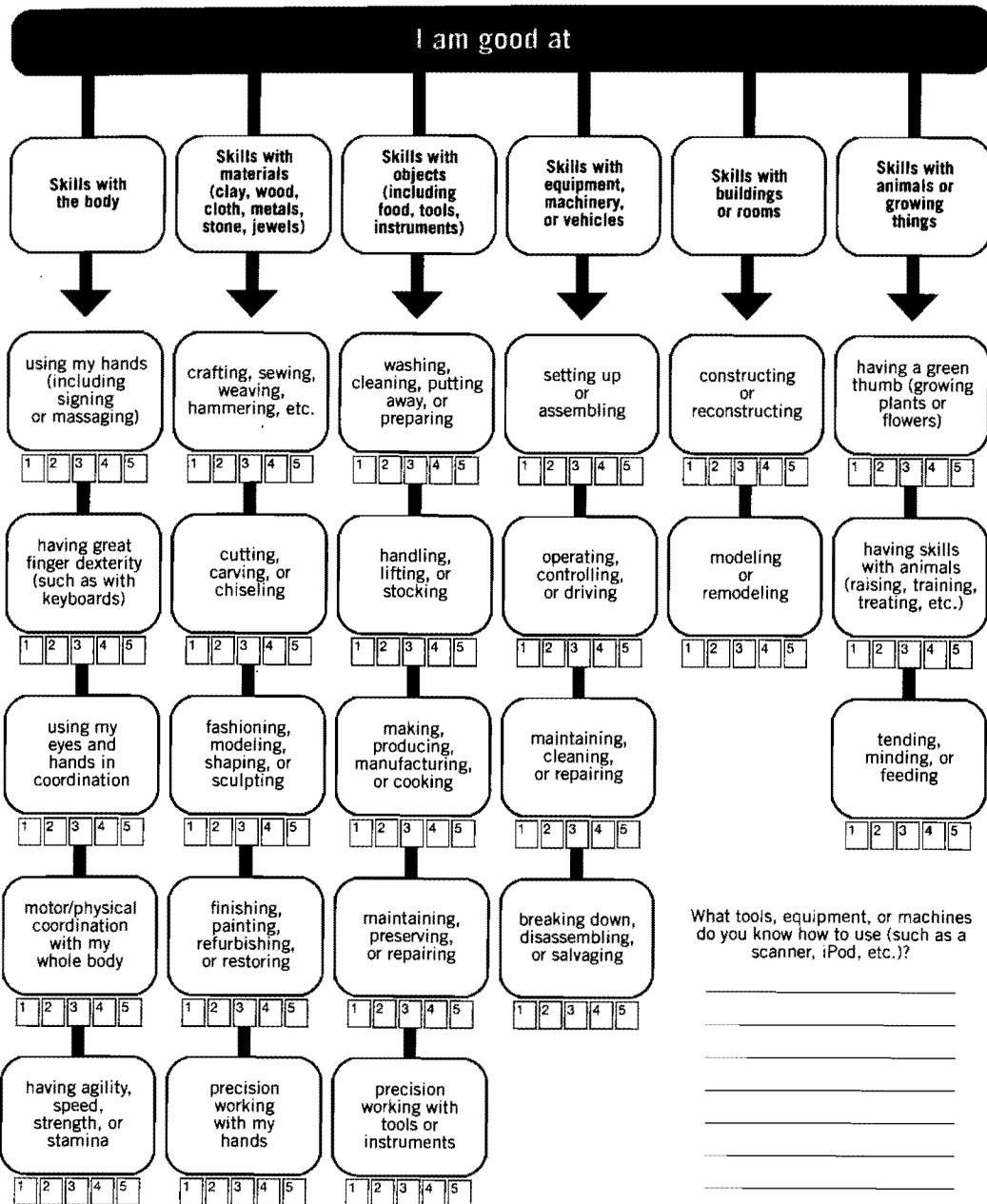
Now we're ready to find which skills are your "best" ones—the ones you most enjoy using. Every job will include some tasks or need a few skills you don't much care for. But to find a job you'll enjoy, you want to know which skills you really like to use and which ones you do well. Think about big chunks of time. What skills do you like enough to use over and over all day long?

You have both "can-do" and "want-to" skills. Can-do skills are ones you don't want to use very often. For example, you probably have the skills to wash all the dishes from Thanksgiving dinner for thirty people. But how often would you want to use those skills—all day, every day, once a year, never?

Want-to skills are ones you enjoy using and could do over and over again, several times a day, and not go crazy. It's important to remember that each of us has different can-do and want-to skills. The world needs people with different skills.

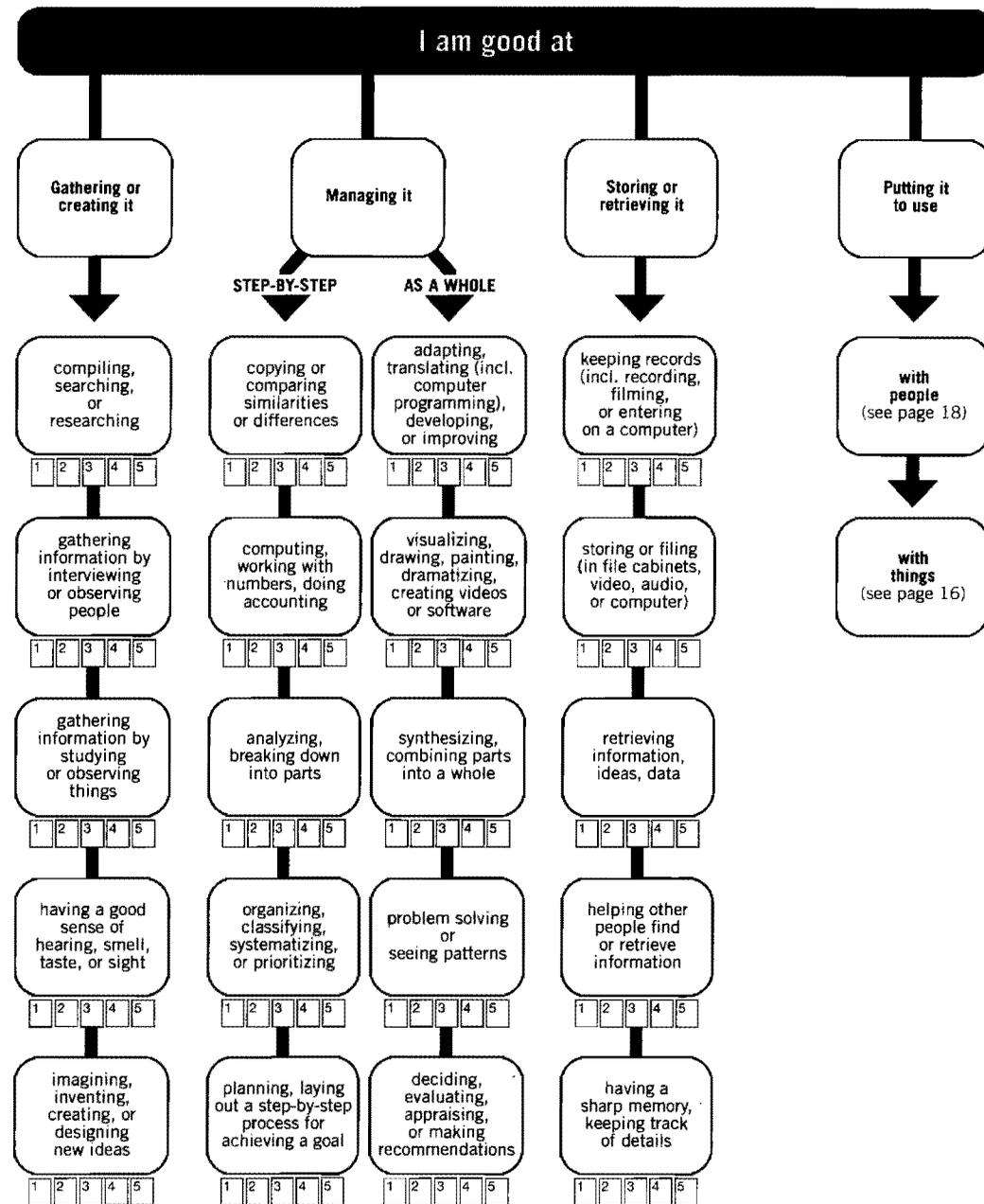
SKILLS WITH THINGS

30

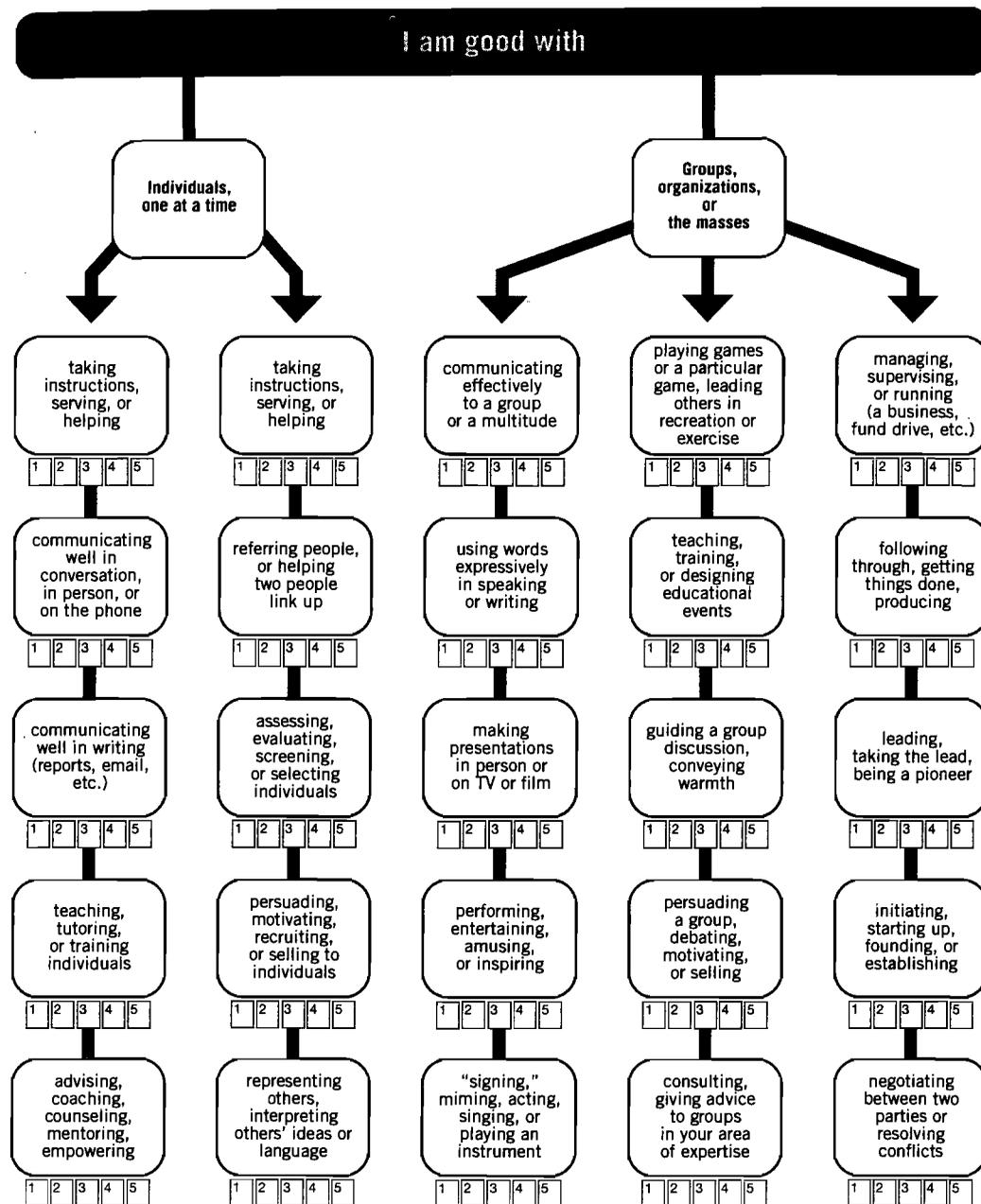
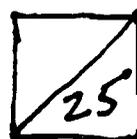


SKILLS WITH INFORMATION

15



SKILLS WITH PEOPLE



Look at your list and see which skills are can-do and which are want-to skills. Cross out your can-do skills—that is, any skills you *can* do but don't really enjoy using.

Some teens ask if they have to be an expert to keep a particular skill on their list. No, not if you like using the skill and have a moderate amount of experience with it. If a skill shows up in three of your five stories and you like using it, keep it on your list. Remember, it's always possible to develop your skills more fully through education, practice, or concentration.

Now, the really fun part: finding your best skills. Go back to the Skill TIPs list. Of the skills that you like to use and that you used in more than one story, select ten that you most enjoy using. Write each one on a slip of paper or sticky note. Look at each skill. Think about how much you want to use that skill. Do you want to use it often or only occasionally in your work? Place these ten skills in order from your most favorite to your least favorite. This can be hard, but give it a try. When you know your best transferable skills, you have an important clue for finding work you love.

Now, look at the top five: these are your best skills. They are an important part of your parachute. Write these five skills in the My Best Transferable Skills section of the My Parachute diagram (page v). (If you want, use colored pens or pencils to add a little color to your parachute!)

For a quick summary of these steps, see the Identify Your Best Transferable Skills sidebar below.

- IDENTIFY YOUR BEST TRANSFERABLE SKILLS** *on a separate piece of paper*
1. Review your list of skills used. Cross out skills you don't enjoy using.
 2. Select ten skills you enjoy using.
 3. Put the skills in order from most favorite to least favorite.
 4. Look at your list of ten skills. The top five are your best transferable skills.
 5. Write those skills in the My Best Transferable Skills section of My Parachute (page v).



DISCOVERY EXERCISE

Identify Your Best Self-Management Skills

In your stories, you may have some bits that don't fit into the skill keys, but you think they might be skills. They probably are. You actually have three different kinds of skills.

Transferable skills are also called functional skills. If something functions, it works. When you work, you're using your transferable skills. The five stories you write and check off on the Skill TIPs list help you discover what your favorites are.

Specific knowledge skills are also called work content skills. These skills are what you must *know* in order to do a certain job or activity. In doing most of your interests or hobbies, you have to know skills specific to that activity. For example, in doing her community service project, Serena had to know enough

about the sport of downhill skiing that she could show the various techniques to others. Specific knowledge skills can be in interests you already have or ones you want to study further. You already filled these in under My Favorite Interests on the My Parachute diagram (page v). It's always good to remember that your interests involve specific skills that could be useful for your career!

Self-management skills are also known as personal traits. These traits describe the unique way you use your skills. Dependable, thorough, energetic, decisive, and compassionate are all self-management skills. For example, one of Serena's traits is that she likes things to be fair. Serena thought the Down

PARACHUTE TIP

You can learn more about self-management skills and their importance to your future career by doing an Internet search. Type the phrase "self management skills" for your search.

To discover your self-management skills, reread your stories. What traits or self-management skills do you see? Write them on sticky notes, then organize them by priority, with your favorite first and so on. Write your top three self-management skills in the My Parachute diagram. As a young worker, you may not have many work content skills or specific kinds of knowledge, but if you are dependable, punctual, and work well with others, you may be able to get hired based on your self-management skills or traits.

DISCOVERY EXERCISE

syndrome students deserved the opportunity to have fun in the snow. Another trait Serena showed was commitment. Even though the students weren't able to improve as skiers, she didn't stop taking them to the snow.

Whew! You've done a lot of hard work in identifying your favorite interests and your best skills. We hope you had fun too. Maybe you learned something about yourself that you didn't know before—or maybe these exercises confirmed something that you sensed, but weren't certain of, about yourself. Now that you know what you love to do—your interests and the skills you love to use—let's take a look, in the next chapter, at what types of people you like to have around you when you do what you love to do.

IF YOU WANT TO EXPLORE FURTHER . . .

Finding Your Dream Job

Richard N. Bolles, *What Color Is Your Parachute?* 2010 (or latest edition). Ten Speed Press, 2009. Also check out the companion website: www.JobHuntersBible.com.

Identifying Your Skills and Planning Your Career

This fun site (the website of European career expert Daniel Porot) will give you lots of information about identifying your skills, planning your career, and searching for jobs. If you want to go right to the skills section, click on the Self-Assessment tab at the bottom left on the home page. www.careergames.com

Although the jobs described at California CareerZone are found in California, some may exist in your state too. The website is fun and informative, and it offers several free career assessments. Be sure to use the Reality Check section. It will help you learn what your ideal life may cost. www.cacareerzone.org

EUREKA.org provides a comprehensive tool for career and college exploration. At a cost of \$30 for an annual subscription, you will be able to explore information on careers, college, financial aid, job search, and starting your own business. <http://eureka.org>

Another site that offers free skills and interest assessments is www.iseek.org.

A free skills assessment that links with suggested occupations can be found at <http://online.onetcenter.org> (click on Skills Search).

Prioritizing: This word means putting items in order of their importance to you. A first priority is what is most important to you. Simple prioritizing can be done by putting each item on a separate sticky note and rearranging them until you have a list that is prioritized. You'll find an online grid and instructions for using one and making custom grids for five to twenty items at the following website (scroll down the far left column for a link to a grid): www.GroundOfYourOwnChoosing.com.

Who You Love to Work With

YOUR FAVORITE TYPES OF PEOPLE

Have you ever had a part-time or summer job where your work was actually pretty boring but you still liked going to work? If you've had that kind of job, we bet you liked going to work because you enjoyed the people there. Maybe you worked with friends, or perhaps you had a boss who was friendly and helped you learn new skills, or maybe you met interesting people—customers, clients, patients—every day. If you haven't had a part-time or summer job, maybe you've had some of these same experiences in a class. The class itself may have been boring, but you enjoyed going to class because your friends were there, or the teacher cared about you, or class projects took you outside the classroom, where you met interesting people.

Short of being a total hermit, most every job you'll have as a teen or early twentysomething will surround you with people to one degree or another. Later in your career, you may work from a home office or even out of your suitcase and laptop as you travel the world. But as a young person, a good job can be ruined if you're surrounded by difficult people or people you simply aren't comfortable with, and an ordinary, not-so-interesting job can be fun if you work with people you enjoy.

Finding a dream job involves more than discovering what you love to do; it also means discovering what kinds of people you enjoy working with. Let's do that now by going to a "party"!

THE PARTY

Imagine you've received an invitation to a party of people a little older than you. You don't know any of the people well or at all. ("What kind of party is that?!" you ask. Please bear with us, OK?) Below is an aerial view of the room where the party is taking place. For some reason, people with the same or similar interests have all gathered with each other in different corners of the room.

The following is a brief list of the types of people at the party. The terms Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional refer to particular types of skills and the people who most enjoy using them. Each category includes a few examples of people who might be in that particular group. In the descriptions of these people, you'll probably notice how their interests and skills work together.



Realistic (R): People who like nature, athletics, or tools and machinery. Examples: Tom loves to hike in the mountains and does volunteer trail maintenance. Dee plays on the school soccer team. Paul repairs cars. Louise and Larry build furniture in their father's woodworking shop. Ross grows vegetables for the farmers' market, and Yvette raises dogs to be companion animals for people with disabilities.

Investigative (I): People who are very curious and like to investigate or analyze things. Examples: Jason always wants to know why—why a certain bird is no longer seen in his area, why the brain works the way it does, why one ball team plays better than another. Jessica investigates the best places to take a date—concerts, movies, amusement parks, hiking trails—and writes about them for her school paper. David analyzes everything—from the data in his chemistry experiments to the results of community service projects. Erin, a student council member, wants to figure out why new students have so much difficulty scheduling the classes they need.

Artistic (A): People who are very artistic, imaginative, and innovative. Examples: Ashley draws cartoons. Carlos, Aaron, and Stacy started a band and play at local dances. Daniela designs costumes and sets for school theater productions and is known for being able to create great stuff with few resources. Guy develops his own software for doing computer animation.

Social (S): People who like to help, teach, or serve people. Examples: Isabel, a senior, orients freshmen about life at high school. Steve tutors middle school students in math and English. Keri reads assigned class texts to a blind student. Darin volunteers as a trainer for the school football team, and Bob serves as a peer counselor.

Enterprising (E): People who like to start up projects or organizations, or influence or persuade people. Examples: Dana started a service project where high school students visit the elderly in a convalescent home. Ty, who's running for student body president, persuades people to vote for him. Greg works with kids who are at risk of getting involved with drugs and gangs.

Conventional (C): People who like detailed work and like to complete tasks or projects. Examples: Michael, the treasurer for a service club, keeps detailed financial records of all their fund-raising activities. Kristin works part-time in an insurance office, where she's responsible for keeping all the files up to date. Terri oversees the preparations for the prom, making sure everything that needs to get done gets done.

OK, now you know a little about the kinds of people who'll be at the party. You've just arrived and walk in the front door. (Don't worry about whether you're shy or if you actually have to talk to anyone. That doesn't matter at this party.) Now, we have three questions for you:

1. Which corner of the room would you go to first—that is, which group of people would you most enjoy talking to for the longest time? Write the letter for that corner in the box.
2. After fifteen minutes, everyone else in the corner you chose leaves for another party. Of the groups that still remain, which group would you be drawn to the most? Which people would you most enjoy being with for the longest time? Write the letter for that corner in the box.

3. After fifteen minutes, this group also leaves for another party. You look around and decide where to go next. Of the groups that remain, which one would you most enjoy being with for the longest time? Write the letter for that corner in the box.

The three letters you selected indicate your "Holland Code." The Holland Code is named for Dr. John Holland, a psychologist who did research on "people environments"—that is, the types of people we most like to be with. According to Dr. Holland, everyone has three people environments they prefer from among these six—Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional. By naming whom you'd prefer to talk with at a party, you've identified your favorite people environment.

(Actually, the Party exercise gives only an approximation of your Holland Code. If you want to take a longer test to more accurately determine your Holland Code, go to www.self-directed-search.com.)

Now, turn to My Parachute (page v) and write your Holland Code in the section entitled My Favorite Types of People. You may also want to write a short sentence or two about these types of people. For example, if your Holland Code is IAS, you might write: "I will enjoy my work most if I am surrounded by people who are very curious and like to investigate or analyze things (I), who are also very innovative and creative (A), and who really want to help or serve people (S)."

Now, look over the traits described for each of the three groups of people you chose and see how much of this is also true of you. We often see ourselves best by looking at others. We call this the Mirror Theory. When we describe the people we would most like to be with, in many cases we have also described ourselves. As the old saying goes, "Birds of a feather flock together." What do you think? Do you see yourself in your favorite types of people?

BOSSES AND CLIENTS

Many young adults find it helpful to describe their idea of a good boss. A good boss can be a great mentor. Teachers are very much like bosses. Some of them make you work very hard, but they manage to pull good work out of you, and you learn a lot from them. When you are just starting out, you want a boss you can learn from. Make a list of characteristics of a good boss for you. Prioritize the list.

If you envision yourself in a job where you have customers, clients, or patients, list what kind of people you'd want them to be. For example, let's say you want to be a speech pathologist working with children and teens. Your patients would be "children and teens." Prioritize this list, as well. Once you've figured out your top two or three descriptors from both prioritized lists, write them into the Favorite Types of People section of your Parachute diagram (or if there's no room, draw a line and write it along the bottom of the page).

Using Career Assessments

You may find that your school offers some written career assessments that you can take as part of a career class or career-center orientation. If your school doesn't have a career program or hasn't offered you any assessments by the time you are fifteen, you can find a few options online (see the next page for resources). Either way, if your school has guidance counselors, show them your results and ask them to help you figure out what the results point to for your future. Not asking for that help can make it hard for you to know how to use the results from the assessments. Keep in mind that assessments have limitations: often they will tell you more about the style with which you perform your skills than what your best skills actually are (which is why filling out your Parachute diagram is so important).

No assessment can give you a final, definitive answer about what job would be perfect for you; it can, however, give you helpful clues as to where you should begin your search for your dream job. In the United States, there are currently about twenty thousand job titles out there for you to choose from. Plus, technology and consumer demand create new jobs every year. Assessments should begin with those twenty thousand, and then narrow the territory down for you. Unfortunately, only a few hundred jobs are included in the databases of career assessments from the get-go. The jobs suggested are those chosen in the past by people who answered the assessment's questions the same way you did. So,

MORE CLUES TO YOUR DREAM JOB

Your Holland Code, the three letters you chose in the Party exercise, not only tells you what type of people you enjoy being with, it also provides clues to jobs you might enjoy. For example, if your three letters are RIA (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic), you may find being a police sketch artist or occupational therapist of interest. If your letters are SEC (Social, Enterprising, Conventional), you might enjoy working as a self-employed wedding planner or an event coordinator.

You can explore job possibilities using your Holland Code at cacareerzone.org, where Holland Codes are given for numerous job descriptions. Although this site is for jobs found in California (there is no national site quite like it), if you come across several jobs you like, do your own research to find out whether there are similar jobs where you live—or where you want to live. You can use your three-letter Holland Code to research job possibilities on many websites and in other job-hunting resources. The great thing about this approach is that you may discover interesting jobs you might never have thought of doing, or even jobs you never knew existed.

you'll get a limited list of jobs based on your interests. Still, it's a place to start. Do some research on the Internet or in books like the occupational guides in the library. Learn a bit about each job that's suggested before nixing it. And don't get discouraged if you don't like any of the suggestions you get. Do a little bit of thinking. In what field are the jobs that were suggested for you? Does this field interest you, even if the particular jobs suggested don't? There might be other jobs in this field that would use all your skills. Through research and networking (which we'll explore later in the book), you can find the right job for you.

IF YOU WANT TO EXPLORE FURTHER . . .

The Holland Code

The Party exercise gives an approximation of your Holland Code. If you want to take a longer test to more accurately determine your Holland Code, you can take the Self-Directed Search (SDS), developed by Dr. Holland. The SDS online costs \$9.95, and it will take you approximately fifteen minutes to complete. You'll get a personalized report on your computer screen (which you can print out) that lists the occupations and fields of study that most closely match your interests. www.self-directed-search.com

If you would like quick, free online assessments (based on Dr. Holland's work) to find jobs you might be interested in, check out www.cacareerzone.org and www.career.missouri.edu/students/explore/thecareerinterestsgame.php.

The EUREKA site provides a variety of job-search resources, including job possibilities for various Holland Codes. For a \$30 fee, you gain access to all that EUREKA offers. Your school may subscribe to EUREKA and you may also be able to gain free access through a counselor, teacher, or adviser. <http://eureka.org>

Career Assessments

You can learn about the usefulness and limitations of career assessments and find links to online assessments at www.jobhuntersbible.com/counseling.

3

Where You Love to Be

YOUR IDEAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

Your heart has its own geography, where it prefers to be. That may be by a mountain stream. It may be in the Alps. It may be in the hustle and bustle of the streets of Shanghai or New York. It may be on an Oregon farm. It may be a beach town. Or it might be right where you are now—in your own hometown, in your own backyard, at your high school. Maybe what you'd really love to do is return there someday as a teacher.

Your heart knows the places that it loves. That's what we'll be exploring in this chapter, because finding where you love to be is connected with doing what you love to do and who you want to do it with. It's an important part of being happy with your whole life, not just a small part of it. It's living your whole dream, not just half (or less) of it.

There are lots of ways to consider where you want to be. We'll explore two: your ideal work environment and your ideal community (which includes geographical location). We'll be asking you a lot of questions. You may have answers to some of them and none to others. Maybe you won't even have answers to most of the questions. That's OK. Answer what you can—we're

certain you'll have some answers—and just keep the rest of the questions in the back of your mind. Questions, even when you don't know the answer, can help you notice new things or think about things in a way you hadn't thought about them before. For example, if we ask, "Would you rather work outside or indoors?" and you aren't sure, you may start to notice what types of jobs are done indoors or outdoors, or jobs that combine both indoor and outdoor work. Maybe you'd be fine working indoors all the time, but you'd want to live in an area where you could go skiing or surfing on the weekend.

Use the answers you do have as a foundation for further exploration of where you'd love to be—to live, to work, to play. Your answers will change over time, as you visit places you've never been before, as you go to technical school or college, or as you experience your first job. All of these experiences will help you learn what, who, and where is most important in your life.

Each person's ideal working conditions are different. Let's start by exploring something you may never have thought about before: your ideal work environment and what makes it just right for you.

Your Work Environment

When you begin working, roughly one-quarter of your time each week will be at your job. Many a person has gotten what they thought would be their ideal job, only to find that even though they are doing what they most want to do, the workplace is so uncomfortable they must quit. Your work environment needs to be one not only in which you feel comfortable but in which you can thrive. We use the term "environment" here because your ideal "where" includes more than just the location (office, laboratory, farm) where you do your work. The environment also includes, among many other things, your work space (desk, cubicle, lab space, five-hundred-acre ranch, machine shop), physical conditions (windows or no windows, natural or fluorescent lighting, noisy or quiet), atmosphere (formal, casual, amount of contact with people, working style), company size (small, large, local, national, international), and clothing (uniform, suit, jeans).

If you've already had some work experience or if you've visited various workplaces (for example, where your parents work, your doctor's office, your school), think about what you liked or didn't like. Another way to approach this is to think about where you like to study—in a quiet library or in your bedroom with the CD player on, alone or with a group, and so on. Where do you feel

YOUR IDEAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

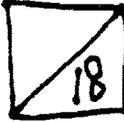
Answer the following questions as best you can. Because there are a lot of questions, don't try to answer them all at once. Set a timer for ten to fifteen minutes. Answer as many questions as you can during that time. If you're enjoying the exercise when the timer goes off, set it for another ten to fifteen minutes. Another option is to answer some of the questions now, then come back again in a week or two and answer some more. By then, you may have noticed things that you aren't aware of right now. Also, if you think of something not included here, be sure to put that on your list too.

*or
the
next
day*

Location

Where would you most like to work . . .

- Indoors or outdoors?
- In an office building? In a machine shop? On a ranch? At your home? Somewhere else?
- In an urban, suburban, or rural area?
- In many locations or one spot (travel or no travel)?

**Work Space**

What kind of space would you most enjoy . . .

- A cubicle in a large room with lots of other people in their own cubicles?
- Your own desk in a private office?
- Lots of variety—at a desk, in your car, at clients' locations, on airplanes, in hotels?
- A classroom, laboratory, hospital?
- Garage or workshop?
- Outdoors—golf course? ranch? barn? forest? under the sea?
- A place with everything you need—all the latest tools or technology and necessary supplies—or a place where you need to be creative with limited resources, supplies, and equipment?

Physical Conditions

Do you prefer . . .

- Fancy and upscale, moderately nice, or does it not matter?
- Windows that open and close or a climate-controlled building?
- Natural or artificial light?
- A light or dark environment?
- Comfortable temperature or varied temperatures?
- Safe or risky?

Atmosphere

Do you prefer . . .

- Noisy or quiet?
- Calm or bustling?
- Formal or casual—for example, do you want to call your coworkers "Ms. Smith" and "Mr. Jones," or do you prefer that everyone is on a first-name basis?
- Lots of contact with coworkers or very little?
- Lots of contact with the public (clients, patients, customers) or very little?
- Working by yourself with minimal contact with others or working frequently or constantly with others?
- A hierarchical setting (where the boss tells everyone what to do) or a collaborative setting (where the staff works together to determine goals, priorities, and workload)?

Size/Type of Business

Do you prefer . . .

- Large or small? (Think about what "large" and "small" mean to you.)
- Locally owned, national chain, or multinational?
- Knowing all your colleagues and customers or always having a chance to meet someone new?
- A for-profit or nonprofit organization?
- Running your own business?

Clothing

What would you like to wear at work . . .

- A suit?
- Trendy clothes?
- Casual, comfortable clothes?
- Jeans and a casual shirt?
- A uniform (for example, military, firefighter, police officer, waiter/waitress)?
- A lab coat?
- Different clothes for different aspects of your job (for example, a suit when meeting an important client, casual clothes for regular days in the office)?
- Whatever you want to wear?
- Something else?

Write each of your answers on a small slip of paper or sticky note, then put them in order of what is most important to you. (You may want to include one or two items from each of the categories—Location, Work Space, and so on.) Select the five factors that are most important to you. Write these in the My Ideal Work Environment section of My Parachute (page v).

comfortable or uncomfortable? Where would you like to spend more time? The same job (or very similar jobs) can happen in many different environments—some you would love, some you would hate! So let's start exploring what's just right for you.

Your Ideal Community

Everyone has different ideas of what makes a great place to live. If you love to ski, you'll want to be within reasonable distance of the mountains. If you love to surf, you'll want to live near the coast. Another person may want to live near a lake or river, or in the desert. You may want to live near good friends or family. Or, if you have excellent foreign language skills (or want to develop them), you may want to live in a foreign country.

And, more directly related to their jobs, some people want to work within a few blocks of a mass-transit stop. Others want to drive to work and therefore want lots of parking. Some people might want their gym or favorite coffee bar nearby, a grocery store located on the route home from work, or a park close enough for eating lunch or taking a walk. What characteristics do you want in the community where you'll live and work?

YOUR IDEAL COMMUNITY*

Geographical Features

Do you want to live . . .

- In or near the mountains? near the coast? in the desert? on the plains?
- In a small town (less than 5,000 people), a medium-sized city (5,000–20,000), a large city (20,000–500,000), a major metropolitan area (500,000 or larger)?
- In a rural area with a town or city within a reasonable distance or in an isolated area, far from "civilization"?

People

Do you prefer . . .

- A good mix of age, ethnic, economic, and religious groups?
- Mostly people your own age or in your own ethnic, economic, or religious group?
- Living where you already have friends or family or in a place where everyone is new?



Neighborhood/Housing

Do you prefer living . . .

- In a subdivision?
- In an apartment or condominium?
- In a single-family home that doesn't look like everyone else's?

Culture

What is important to you . . .

- Good bookstores, art galleries, libraries, and museums?
- Movie theaters?
- Music, dance, and the arts?
- A local semipro or pro sports team?

Educational Opportunities

What is important to you . . .

- Personal enrichment classes?
- Professional development classes?
- A college or university?

Recreation

What would you like your community to have . . .

- Good parks?
- Bike paths, walking/hiking trails?
- Community sports leagues and facilities?

Commuting

What is important to you . . .

- Commute by car?
- Ability to take mass transit to work?
- Being able to walk or bike to work?

Write the answers to these questions about Your Ideal Community on small slips of paper or sticky notes and put them in order of their importance to you. Then select the top five characteristics and write them in the My Ideal Community section of My Parachute (page v).

* The categories and items on this list are not your only choices. We hope that these suggestions will stimulate additional ideas about what makes a community an ideal one for you. You can also get great ideas by using the categories to brainstorm with a group of friends.

Your Ideal Salary and Level of Responsibility

The last part of your work environment involves determining what level of responsibility you want—both when you first start to work and ultimately—as well as your level of compensation. Your salary level can affect your ideal location, based on what you can afford in what area of the country, and your level of responsibility can affect which people you interact with and in what way.

Because a job finances your life, it's important to know the salary ranges for the different jobs that interest you. There are websites that can help you estimate the annual income you need to have for various lifestyles. Salary information is often very general. Career literature usually quotes a national average of the salaries of all people doing that work. To help you make decisions, you'll need to know starting salaries and what more experienced people earn in the parts of the country (or the world) where you most want to live or where there is high demand for the work you want to do.

People generally will tell you how much they paid for something, but most don't like talking about what they earn. Asking people "What's your salary?" or "How much do you earn?" is taboo. If you keep your questions away from their

personal earnings, most people you talk with will help you get accurate salary information. You can ask less direct questions, such as, "The average starting salary nationally is \$41,750 a year. Are local starting salaries similar?" or "I've read that the average annual salary for an experienced worker is about \$63,000. What is the salary range for

HELPFUL SITES FOR SALARY INFO

www.collegegrad.com

www.eureka.org

www.salary.com (note that this site charges a fee for reports beyond basic information)

an experienced worker in this area?" Starting and average wages for lots of occupations can be found online (see sidebar). If you are interested in jobs that involve sales, this type of work usually pays a base salary plus commissions. You need to know that starting base salary so you can figure out if you could survive on the base salary, given your debts and monthly expenses.

The force that drives salaries up or down is supply and demand. If there is a great supply of workers with certain skills, but little demand for workers with those skills, the salary for that work will be low. Salaries rise when there aren't enough workers (supply) to meet the demand. The ideal situation is to find jobs that you like a lot and that are in high demand. If you can't find both

in the same kind of work, you'll have to figure out whether it's more important to you to have a steady income or work in a field that absolutely fascinates you but may not pay so well.

YOUR IDEAL SALARY AND LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY



Some people want to earn as much money as they can. Others want to earn enough to take care of themselves, but still have time for hobbies and friends. Ask yourself,

"What salary do I want to make when I get out of school?"

"What salary do I hope to be making after five years of experience?"

"What do I want my top salary to be?"

"What jobs that interest me pay what I hope to earn?"

You can learn about salaries for jobs by reading job descriptions at career information sites like online.onetcenter.org or cacareerzone.org. Find people doing these jobs and confirm the starting or average salaries in your area or where you'd like to live. Then figure out your ideal salary, which is the amount it will take to finance your preferred lifestyle. If you don't know what your preferred lifestyle might cost, websites like www.californiarealitycheck.com and www.jumpstartcoalition.org/realitycheck can help you figure it out. Write your likely starting salary and your ideal salary on your Parachute diagram in the section labeled Salary. This is your salary range.

Finally, let's think about what level of responsibility appeals most to you. Do you want to be an employee, salesperson, supervisor, or manager—or do you want to own the place? Some people might call this the job's "level of worry." If you don't want the worries of work to follow you home, choose your level carefully. And if you manage your career well, although you may start out at one point—say, entry level—over time you can gain the education and experience you need to advance. Briefly summarize what level of responsibility you want and write that on your Parachute diagram.

IF YOU WANT TO EXPLORE FURTHER . . .

Work Environment

If you're interested in learning more about the working conditions for particular jobs, check out the Occupational Outlook Handbook, which can be found at this website: www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm.

This website has free resources and a survey to help you identify your ideal workplace: www.theworkplacereview.com/Detective_Guidebook.php.

Geographical Location or Community

Want to investigate places that you'd like to live? Visit these websites:

www.bestplaces.net/fybp

www.findutopia.com

www.findyourspot.com



If you'd like to live abroad, see Elizabeth Kruempelmann's *The Global Citizen: A Guide to Creating an International Life and Career* (Ten Speed Press, 2004). In some fields, international experience may qualify you for a higher starting salary.

Interested in checking out various geographical locations with short-term jobs? See Michael Landes's *The Back Door Guide to Short-Term Job Adventures*, 4th ed. (Ten Speed Press, 2005).

Volunteer work is another way to learn about different places. The following books will help you learn more about international volunteer opportunities:

Bill McMillon, *Volunteer Vacations: Short-Term Adventures That Will Benefit You and Others*, revised 10th ed. (Chicago Review Press, 2009)

Joseph Collins, *How to Live Your Dream of Volunteering Overseas* (Penguin, 2001)

Charlotte Hindel et. al., *Volunteer: A Traveler's Guide to Making a Difference around the World* (Lonely Planet, 2007)

If part of your life's dream includes working your way around the world, plan your adventure using a book like Susan Griffith's *Work Your Way around the World*, 13th ed. (Crimson Publishing, 2008).