

CAREER PLANNING

You all are at the verge of career planning. From all of you standing here how many have thought of the specified careers they want to be in and working hard for it? And how many still are thinking what they want to be in life? Career planning is an exercise that is well worth the time invested in it because it sets you going on the path that leads to where you would like to go. Often most people get stuck at the very beginning of the planning process itself. There seem to be too many choices that are throwing themselves at you with all kinds of material gains, fame and wealth, comfort and luxury, glamour and beauty. From acting to singing, writing to banking, software programming to business, choices confuse you. Naturally feelings of self-doubt might creep in at this stage. Am I good enough for that, you may ask, or how do I become successful at this. After some time of pondering over many career paths you may end up thinking that maybe you are no good for any of these things after all.

Not being able to visualize your desired result leads to results not happening. Goals are reached when you decide what you want, and then take action to get it. Without an end in mind, you will wander aimlessly; and as long as you are aimless, you will be wasting time. You will feel lost. All of life's journeys begin with the phrase, "I want". "I want" is a very powerful phrase. It gives a vision or a picture of where you see yourself in the future. Your picture of success will give you purpose, power, and excitement.

It is most important to know your individual strengths and weaknesses. Sit down and assess yourself honestly. Think of all your accomplishments, of all the compliments you got, of all the work that really inspired you, of the times when you worked with passion at and jot them all down. You will find that as you note down your victories, your achievements etc a pattern will emerge. Now list out things that motivate you that you aspire for, your dreams - things you would want more than anything else in the world. Find your fit between the person you are and the dream you wish to achieve. As this picture gets clearer you become more aware, confident and purposeful. Based on your aspiration level and your aptitude, you can also identify the careers that offer the kind of lifestyle or returns that you wish. If you wish to frequently travel and be in command of a dynamic business you can zero down to careers in marketing with a goal to set up your own firm or to head a large company (the same may not be possible if you inherently like to paint for long hours). It is best to be honest with yourself at this stage because most people take decisions based on glamorous misconceptions about certain careers and later change them. For example if you wish to be an airhostess, check out the sources available to the kind of work that is associated with being an airhostess. Only if you really enjoy doing that kind of work and the rewards that come with it must you opt for it. Else look further for what really fits you. Growth, rewards, recognition and most importantly job satisfaction and a good quality of life come from one thing -loving your job.

Having decided on a particular direction, build competencies. Specific careers need specific education and training. Whichever area you choose to be in, you will fare well if you strive to be the best in it. Leave your individual brand on it. Learn the ropes by acquiring information, by taking up courses, by taking up internships and summer jobs. So please work on that, a pleasing and well-mannered personality, a professional work ethic and good inter-personal skills. Work on these important soft skills along with as you plan your career.

A final word! If you have a goal then be clear about it and start walking towards it. You will learn along the way. You will acquire skills and competencies that help you along. The important thing is to start the journey.

So, what do you say? You only have one life to live, so it might as well be a life you love!

Good luck!