



STEPPING STONES  
CURRICULUM

# EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

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# UNIT ONE: SEARCHING FOR EMPLOYMENT

Looking for a job is one of the hardest things a person can do. No one likes to feel raw, out of their element or rejected after not getting the perfect job they have always wanted, or screwing up the answer to the interview question they never saw coming. To be able to find a job, apply for a job, and keep a job we have to be willing to put ourselves out there. The scariest part is the real possibility that a prospective employer can reject us for what we believe to be our best, by simply glancing at our resume or job application. In Unit One we are going to explore what it means to search for employment and how to keep that search up until you find the exact job you are looking for. We will help you learn to stay true to yourself and your personality while looking for that perfect job. Are you ready? Let's go job hunting!

## WHAT'S IN A PERSONALITY?

Unfortunately, jobs are not a “One-Size-Fits-All.” Not every job that is posted in the newspaper, on Indeed and various other websites online, or at Michigan Works is going to be a good fit for every single person, or for you. Just like clothes come in all shapes and sizes, so do jobs.

So how can you find a job that is suitable for you? You have to find the right size job. You need to figure out exactly who you are. You need to find out what your personality is. What do you like to do? What makes you come alive? Based on your personality you can find a job that suits you.

### **Six Main Types of Personalities**

- ★ Realistic Personalities are results driven. They like to solve problems rather than make decisions or come up with solutions.
- ★ Investigative Personalities like to work alone. They like logic over imagination and have extreme attention to detail.

- ★ Artistic Personalities are creative by nature and have imaginations that go farther than most other people can see. They like to create things rather than completing structured tasks or forms.
- ★ Social Personalities like helping others and they like working with teams. They would rather talk than work with machines or computers.
- ★ Enterprising Personalities are leaders and they like to see projects through to the end.
- ★ Conventional Personalities like rules, procedures, and are very detailed orientated than idea orientated.

Which personality do you think you are? Take a minute to think about it. Make a note of it on a separate piece of paper on what you think your personality might be.

Got it? Okay, now I want you to take a simple quiz. It might confirm what you think or it might totally blow you away!

So here's what you do for the quiz. On a separate piece of paper, number it from 1-48, then write down a number between 1 and 5 on how much you **ENJOY** the activity that is listed for each question.

**1** = Strongly Disagree      **2** = Disagree  
**3** = Neither Agree nor Disagree  
**4** = Agree    **5** = Strongly Agree

1. Test the quality of parts before shipment
2. Study the structure of the human body
3. Conduct a musical choir
4. Give career guidance to people
5. Sell restaurant franchises to individuals
6. Generate the monthly payroll checks for an office
7. Lay brick or tile
8. Study animal behavior
9. Direct a play
10. Do volunteer work at a non-profit organization (like JHM)
11. Sell merchandise at a department store
12. Inventory supplies using a hand-held computer
13. Work on an offshore oil-drilling rig
14. Do research on plants and/or animals

15. Design artwork for magazines
16. Help people who have problems with drugs or alcohol
17. Manage the operations of a hotel
18. Use a computer program to generate customer bills
19. Assemble electronic parts
20. Develop a new medical treatment or procedure
21. Write a song
22. Teach an individual an exercise routine
23. Operate a beauty salon or barber shop
24. Maintain employee records
25. Operate a grinding machine in a factory
26. Conduct biological research
27. Write books or plays
28. Help people with family related problems
29. Manage a development within a large company
30. Compute and record statistical and other numerical data
31. Fix a broken faucet
32. Study whales and other types of marine life
33. Play a musical instrument
34. Supervise the activities of children at camp
35. Manage a clothing store
36. Operate a calculator
37. Assemble products in a factory
38. Work in a biology lab
39. Perform stunts for a movie or television
40. Teach children how to read
41. Sell houses
42. Handle customers' bank transactions
43. Install flooring in houses
44. Make a map of the bottom of an ocean
45. Design sets for plays
46. Help elderly people with their daily activities
47. Run a toy store
48. Keep shipping and receiving records

Add up the following statement numbers and write down the sum of the numbers:

**A. Realistic Personality:**  $1 + 7 + 13 + 19 + 25 + 31 + 37 + 43 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$

**B. Investigative Personality:**  $2 + 8 + 14 + 20 + 26 + 32 + 38 + 44$   
= \_\_\_\_

**C. Artistic Personality:**  $3 + 9 + 15 + 21 + 27 + 33 + 39 + 45$  = \_\_\_\_

**D. Social Personality:**  $4 + 10 + 16 + 22 + 28 + 34 + 40 + 46$  = \_\_\_\_

**E. Enterprising Personality:**  $5 + 11 + 17 + 23 + 29 + 35 + 41 + 47$   
= \_\_\_\_

**F. Conventional Personality:**  $6 + 12 + 18 + 24 + 30 + 36 + 42 + 48$  = \_\_\_\_

The highest score you have is the personality that you have. Do the results shock you? You might have a different dominant personality than you thought you would have. For instance, I am a very creative personality and I would naturally assume that I have an *Artistic Personality*. However, when I took the quiz I was more of a *Conventional Personality* (score of 36) rather than an *Artistic Personality* (score of 28). Does it mean that I can't enjoy a job in the artistic field? Of course not! In fact, I own my own business that focuses on designs and marketing. However, it means that I can also enjoy doing the little things, like billing, receiving, inventory; all things that I also enjoy doing. I use my *Conventional Personality* with an artistic job. In saying that, when you look at your results, don't just focus on your primary personality, focus also on your second and third highest scores, as they all work together. This will help you understand your achievements, goals, and strengths.

So what job should you look for? Well, let's lay out the personality types on more time:

★ A *Realistic Personality* type may enjoy jobs like being a Farmer, Park Ranger, EMT, Firefighter, Truck Driver, Cook, Baker, Auto Technician, Carpenter, Repair Woman, or Mechanic.

★ An *Investigative Personality* type may enjoy jobs like a Computer Systems Analyst, Librarian, Optometrist, Science Professor, Veterinarian, or Mechanic.

★ An *Artistic Personality* type may enjoy jobs like being an Editor, Graphic Designer, High School Drama Teachers, Landscape Architect, Writer, Poet, Singer, or Painter.

★ A *Social Personality* type may like jobs as a Family Practitioner, Personal Coach, Personal Trainer, School Psychologist, Teacher, Fitness Coach, CENA, Public Transportation Driver, or Dental Assistant.

★ An *Enterprising Personality* type may like jobs as an Advertising Sales Agent, Financial Officer, Sales Representative, Sales Manager, Flight Attendant, Real Estate Agent, Chef, Advertising, Education Administer, Public Relations Manager, or Sales.

★ And last, but not least, the *Conventional Personality* type may enjoy a job as an Accountant, Building Inspector, Bank Teller, Claims Adjuster, Police or Fire Dispatcher, Receptionist, Painter, or Telecommunications.

## LOOKING FOR A JOB

Now that you have found your personality type, it is time to start looking for a job or a career you would like to get into. There are several places that you can look:

- ➡ [CareerBuilder.com](https://www.careerbuilder.com)
- ➡ [indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com)
- ➡ Google search for jobs online
- ➡ Help wanted signs in stores, factories, and other businesses, organizations, etc.
- ➡ Michigan Works website or database. May employers use this talent bank when looking for employees. The staff at Michigan Works are also very helpful with developing a resume and in suggesting resources in looking for employment.
- ➡ Job boards at local schools and colleges
- ➡ [ChristianJobs.com](https://www.christianjobs.com)
- ➡ Job Fairs — there are always job fairs every spring and every fall in Northern Michigan. If you find a job fair (held at Castle Farms or the Charlevoix Public Library) you can drive or take the Charlevoix County Transit Bus to check out what is available.

- ➡ **Local Newspapers.** Some businesses still use the local newspapers to post their openings. So make sure to look at them carefully and as often as you are able.

Make sure that you don't search for a job title only. Different companies have different names or job titles, but have the same descriptions. Always take a second glance at those jobs you would normally discard.

Most online job boards (like CareerBuilder, ChristianJobs, and Indeed) will allow you to sign up to receive email alerts about new job openings that match your criteria.

If you are calling businesses regarding employment, be courteous. Ask to speak with the person in charge of hiring or the Human Resources Department. They are generally the department in charge of hiring employees. When you're making a call as important as looking for employment, it is to your benefit not to have a lot of background noise, such as children playing or loud music. You need to be totally focused on your call and what is being said.

### **More Stressful Jobs**

Make sure that if you can't handle a lot of stress, or are prone to anxiety, that you stay away from these stressful jobs. For those of you who like jobs with a lot of action and constant changes, these jobs will be perfect for you!

- **Assistants - administrative, executive, or personal.** If you aren't an administrative person, don't look for these kinds of jobs. Unfortunately, even if you are administrative, it causes a lot of undo stress as you continuously are bombarded with things at all times, not just when you want them.
- **EMT's - Emergency Medical Technicians.** EMT's work hard. And they work at all hours of the day. You are always on call and you deal with all sorts of situations and diseases. With this job, your life will never be consistent. If you can't handle it, don't look into it.
- **Farmers.** Farmers have very hard physical labor and they also have to constantly rely on Mother Nature, never knowing what is going to come or go.

- **Military Personnel** (Navy, Army, National Guard, Marines, Coast Guard), and **Police Officers**. For those of you who like jobs with a lot of action and constant changes, these jobs will be perfect for you!
- **Flight Attendants**. Sure, you will be able to travel the world, and travel much more than anyone else that you know, but flight attendants are only home about 4 weeks out of the year, traveling all over the world and running to the next flight just as you would if your plane was late. You are also at the beck and call of 200-400 passengers for the duration of a half an hour to a 10 hour flight.
- **Real Estate Agents**. REA's work on commission. If you don't sell a house, you don't get paid.
- **Social Workers**. Social workers are always improving lives, but are also having lives filled with heartache and frustration.
- **Teachers**. Whether a teacher in elementary school, high school, or college, you are constantly prepping, grading papers, coming up with ideas, and dealing with parents. If you really love teaching, you may want to look into this profession. However, if you are just looking for a quick job, I would pass this one by.

## START PREPARING A RESUME

While looking for a job, you can begin preparing a resume. There are many things that go into a resume, so before we assemble it, we need to first gather all of the information. First, get a list of jobs you have worked at over the last 5 to 10 years. If you have had more than 5 jobs, choose the last four that you have had. You don't want to overload your resume with too many things.

Next you want to get the *correct* addresses, phone numbers, and spellings of your supervisor's name for each job. Make sure that you have accurate starting and ending times for each job. You don't need to have the exact day that you started and left, but you should be able to state the month and the year.

Now that you have a list of your past employment, it's time to write down everything that you can remember about what you did



at that job and with what employer. And I do mean **everything!** You probably won't use it all in your resume, but it is a good knowledge base to have and it gives you more to work with when assembling your resume. Use the following format to fill out your job history and what you did at those jobs.

**JOB 1**

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number of Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Starting/Ending Dates: MM / YY to MM / YY

Job Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Follow the same format for the next four jobs you would like to put on your resume.

Now, **write down your accomplishments.** Now that you have your employment history done, it is time to work on your accomplishments. This is one of the hardest parts of the resume process. In writing down your accomplishments, you actually brag about yourself because you want to sell yourself to your potential employer. This can be difficult to do as it is hard to really sell yourself and be proud of what you have accomplished. Let's start writing down some things. Ready? Here we go!

1. What have you done in your past job duties that you have gotten praise for?
2. What have you learned in your past jobs that you can use in your next place of employment?
3. What awards have you gotten over the years?
4. What are you good at?
5. What do you excel at?
6. What do you enjoy doing?

Make sure to BE HONEST. I know that you have heard this before, but it is so, so important. This is **you** that we are talking about here. If you aren't honest, that will show in your job when you aren't able or comfortable doing something you proclaimed you were good at in your resume. If you aren't sure what your talents and skills are, ask your friends and family members what the thing or what they have seen you excel at. If you don't have friends or family close by, the Joppa House staff and/or volunteers, your housemates, or someone else that you trust.

Remember that who you are matters. What you have accomplished matters. The more that you believe that, the more you will be able to say what you are good at and how you will be an asset to the next place of employment you have. Always be positive and stay away from thoughts that are negative.

**Getting a Good Reference.** Most job applications will ask for references. They will ask for both professional and personal references. References, besides bragging about you, are one of the hardest things to come up with, for two reasons.

First, you need people that you know can give you a great reference, but secondly, you need to find references that are going to give you a good reference for the job you are applying for but won't completely sugar coat you.

Make sure that your personal references are not your family members. It is not in good taste to have family members (even extended members such as cousins, aunts, uncles, or grandparents) as references as they are biased towards you.

Case in point is the show, *Everybody Loves Raymond*. In one of the episodes, Raymond's brother, Robert, decides that after 20 years at the New York Police Department he was ready to step it up and apply to be an agent with the FBI. In the middle of Robert's interview the agent in charge received a fax from Robert's mom asking to give Robert the job. Receiving the fax was an immediate check mark against Robert and he didn't get the job. This kind of reaction can happen with any reference that you put on your resume, so you want to carefully consider whom to provide as a reference.

You want to seek references from people who actually know you and your work. Before you put them down, make sure that you ask permission to use them as a reference. You want to be certain that you can count on them to give you a positive reference for the position you are seeking. If they hesitate or say no, move on.

Take the time to think about 3 Personal and 3 Professional references.

Personal:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Professional:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

We will talk more about your references in Unit 2.

## **Forming A Resume**

“While it is always important to have a remarkable resume, a bad economy makes it even more important.”

- Kathy Sweeney, The Creator of *Write Resume* -

If you have a resume already, scrap it. The best way to get employers to see you differentially is to start from scratch. This gives you the chance to rewrite a whole new resume, rearrange what you have had in the past, use a different font, and use a different format.

On your resume, the first thing that you should begin with is a “summary” or an “objective”. This is the first thing that will grab they eye of your potential employer as you need to portray your experience emphasizing how it will help them in their business. You also want to keep in mind as you begin to “keep it simple”. Don’t use fluorescent paper, any crazy fonts, or any graphics unless you include a picture of yourself at the top of your resume.

Now we are going to start putting together the information that you have gathered for your resume. Let's start with listing your work history chronologically, arranged from oldest to most recent.

For each place of employment you will need: The month/year you started, month/year you ended, the name and address of the employer, supervisor, or contact person. Under each place of employment list the skills acquired while working there, such as answering multi-line phone system, scheduling, machine operator, etc.

Include your education level and year completed (high school graduate, GED, certificate of completion, college, etc.). Also list any certifications you have received, such as an auto technician, CENA, medical assistant, and so on. This information will also be needed when you fill out a job application, so keep it handy!

When putting together a resume, either for the first time or starting over again, you want to ditch empty words and vague phrases. Don't use things like, "I am a hard working person," a "people person," or that you are "goal orientated." You want to make your achievements stand out. Show that you are able to produce results. You also want to quantify your accomplishments. In other words you want to be able to say how you are able to do your daily duties and the results that you get from doing them. Show potential employers what assets you can bring to the company. As you prepare your resume remember to include your personal email address, phone number, and address. If you have more than one personal email address, make sure to put the one that you check the most often on your resume/job application.

Make sure to also edit your resume or have someone else edit it. Check for consistency as you work. Be honest, truthful, and act with integrity. If you are not honest in your resume or filling out an application, this will potentially be a reason a prospective employer doesn't hire you or a reason for immediate dismissal after you have been hired and the facts become known.

Draw out the things that you wrote down in your job notes and choose the key words that are specific to the position you are applying for. For instance, if you were/are an accountant, or went to school for accounting, make sure to put key words like: Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, and Month-End Reporting. As you are putting your resume together, you need to list the job duties

you have performed first in paragraph format under the previous or present place of employment, and then incorporate a bulleted list below the paragraph entitled, “Key accomplishments” to list your achievements. **Do not bury your achievements!!!** Remember, your achievements matter. And you matter. What you have done matters.

**Cover Letters.** You are going to want to include a cover letter with your resume whether submitting online or personally handing your resume to a prospective employer. This is the best way to make a good impression or discuss any inconsistencies on your resume. Tailor each letter to a specific job and person. For an example, see the cover page example on the next page.

## EXAMPLE COVER LETTER

12 September 2022

To: Office Manager & Human Resources  
Deluxe Designs  
123 23rd St  
Boise, ID 12345

Re: Marketing Specialist

To Whom It May Concern:

As an avid designer on both Mac and PC, I can't imagine a better job than sharing my enthusiasm with your customers. When I saw your ad in the Boise News for a junior marketing specialist position, I immediately put together the attached resume to send to you. Please consider me of the position.

I am available for interviews on any day of the week of September 22nd. I will give you a call to see when you can meet with me.

Thank you in advance for your time and for considering my resume.

LaRae Stevens

Enclosure: resume

# EXAMPLE RESUME

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## LARAE STEVENS

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### OBJECTIVE

A marketing position that utilizes my writing and graphic design skills, enabling me to make a positive contribution to your business or organization.

### EXPERIENCE

#### EVENTS & MARKETING • ENCOUNTER CHARLEVOIX; CHARLEVOIX, MI – 2022-2023

I lead the non-profit in the learning opportunities they provide to the Catholic Community by providing the event supervision that they need at their large spring and summer events. I create and implement the marketing materials needed for cross-promotion in both digital and printed mediums.

#### CAMPUS SUPERVISOR, JOPPA HOUSE MINISTRIES; CHARLEVOIX, MI – 2021-2023

I helped to supervise and implement learning opportunities for women who were coming out of rehab and entering sober living. I walked beside them as they learned the life skills necessary to become productive citizens in the community.

#### EVENT & MARKETING COORDINATOR, CHARLEVOIX VENETIAN FESTIVAL – 2014-2022

I liaised between the Venetian Festival president and the board of directors, the City of Charlevoix, local and national artists, sound and lighting, and concert promoters to create a facilitate over 100 events over the eight day Festival. I evaluated the needs of the organization, then built and implemented a strategic communication and social media marketing system that effectively broadcasted the Festival's information, its initiatives, and upcoming events across the Festival's social platforms.

#### FUNDRAISING & MARKETING, JOPPA HOUSE MINISTRIES; CHARLEVOIX, MI – 2012-2016

I was in charge of creating fundraising events for the ministry in an effort to raise the yearly budget goals. Created the original logo and the original traditional marketing materials used in the start up of the ministry.

#### ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, THIRD DAY FELLOWSHIP & OUTREACH; CVX, MI – 2010-2015

I oversaw the day-to-day operations of the food pantry and the utility benevolence fund and the marketing. Created the rebranding logo and traditional & digital marketing materials for the ministry.

### EDUCATION

CONCORD ACADEMY BOYNE – HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA, 2003

HOOTSUITE ACADEMY – SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING CERTIFICATION, 2018

BETHEL SCHOOL OF MINISTRY - CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION, 2010

# EXAMPLE RESUME

## SKILLS

- Proficient in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint), Apple Office Suite (Pages, Number, Keynote), as well as the Google Suite (Docs, Sheets, Slides, Forms).
- Proficient in Wordpress web hosting & site creation; as well as the Elementor & Divi Creators.
- Proficient in Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, with intermediate knowledge in Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Lightroom.
- Quick learner and applier of knowledge, integrating it quickly to whatever situation I find myself in.
- Proficient knowledge of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, as well as scheduling applications such as Hootsuite and Meta Business Suite.
- Excellent communication, administrative, and organizational skills.
- Skilled at bringing people together from all different backgrounds to achieve one goal.
- Skilled at creative thinking, and thinking outside of the box, to get things accomplished.
- Innovative thinker and good at thinking on my toes.

## VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

- 2021 to Present ~ St Mary Parish ~ Design, marketing, music ministry, and liturgy
- 202 to 2023 ~ Joppa House Ministry ~ Occasional Bible Study Teacher & Board Member
- 2016 to 2018 ~ Community Reformed Church ~ Music Ministry
- 2015 to 2016 ~ Bridge Drop Charlevoix ~ Marketing Consultant & Board Member
- 2015 to 2018 ~ Challenge Fitness ~ Marketing Consultant & Admin Assistant
- 2011 to 2014 ~ Charlevoix Venetian Festival ~ Worship on the Water Coordinator

# EXAMPLE REFERENCES

## PERSONAL REFERENCES

1. Rachael Martin, Friend of 4 years  
425 E 5th St, Redding, CA 96003  
530-123-4567  
rachael@hotmail.com
2. Mark Walter, Friend and Co-Worker of 12 years  
825 W Garfield Rd, Traverse City, MI 49684  
231-233-1184  
mark@gmail.com
3. Megan Warner, Family Friend  
317 Water St, Grand Rapids, MI 49625  
616-890-1234  
megan4236@gmail.com

## PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

1. Ginger Stevens, Manager of 2 years  
801 State St, Charlevoix, MI 49720  
231-330-2643  
joppahouseministries@gmail.com
2. Taryn Michaels, Manager of 4 years  
06580 Old US 31 S, Charlevoix, MI 49720  
231-123-4567  
manager@businessold31.org
3. Joan Miller, Manager of 11 years  
415 Bridge St, Charlevoix, MI 49720  
231-547-7890  
manager@charlevoixfun.com



# UNIT TWO: PREPARING FOR EMPLOYMENT

In Unit 1 we explored how to search for employment. In this unit we are going to talk about how to “prepare” for employment. We are going to review what goes into preparing for an interview, professionally and personally. The following pages will be available as a resource guide for you. You will have the knowledge and tools you need so you will not have to stress or be anxious when you walk into that first interview.

As we learned in the last unit, we all have different personalities. As you learn these tools, you will find that some will work for you and some will not, depending on your personality and type of job you are interviewing for.

Searching and preparing for employment is such an exciting time. Are you ready!?

## PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

In the previous section we mentioned your resume. This will lead to the interview process if the business you submitted your resume to likes what they see on paper. If you do not have experience interviewing, it is highly recommended that you arrange with someone to do mock or practice interview with. In the next section we will review interview questions that you may need to answer. The local Michigan Works office offers “Preparing for an Interview” classes to assist you with gaining interview skills.

It is important when you are scheduling for an interview that you arrive at least 5 to 10 minutes early, as you do not know if your clock is the same as theirs. By arriving early you are assured you will be on time for your interview. Promptness will be a consideration as you are interviewing for a position.

It is also important to take into account traffic when you leave for an interview, especially in Charlevoix during the summer time. You never know if you may happen upon an accident, or encounter

slow moving traffic, or have to deal with a bridge that is stuck in the up position creating a barrier to get from one side of town to the other. If you are taking public transportation, make sure that you are leaving at the right time. Your potential employer will not take kindly to the excuse of public transportation.

Some other thoughts that might arise: Are you emotionally prepared? Do you have distracting thoughts, such as homelessness, sick children, or financial burdens? It is important to set these thoughts aside when you go for an interview. This is part of being mentally prepared. The more you practice an interview, the easier it will be.

If you want to make a good impression on your potential employer you may want to consider sending a thank you card to the interviewer for taking the time to interview you. Even if you do not have the qualification for the position, it will be a positive attribute and show you care. This should be done within two days of your interview.

**Desperation Doesn't Work.** In your interview, don't say that you are willing to take any job; that you are willing to temp first, or when you check-in with your potential employer, don't ask why they haven't called you yet. Don't say that money doesn't matter; money does matter. You are taking the job for the money! In all honesty, you aren't willing to accept any job; you want *this* job. You shouldn't be willing to temp first; you should be willing to train for the open job.

Show that you are the best candidate for the job and the company would be lucky to have you, not vice versa. Always have proof of your accomplishments. In other words, if you have work experience in this field of opportunity, make sure that you have a portfolio of your work and of your accomplishments. Make sure that you also show interest in the company. Get excited about what they have to offer. Ask many questions. Exude excitement at the opportunity to be part of the team!

Practice your interview questions so that you don't blurt out a bad answer. Make a list of reasons why you are the best candidate for the job. Practice them, and take them with you to the interview if you can't remember all of them or feel that you will get tripped

up. Employers like that you are prepared and that you want to be a part of what they offer.

Believe in yourself. You can't convince a hiring manager that you are the best if you don't believe it yourself. You can't start to believe in yourself by taking a look at your best qualities and realizing they are really you.

**Think About Why You Are Hirable.** While practicing anticipated interview questions, think and explore why you are hirable.

1. *Do you have long term potential?* Think of a real life example of your long term potential. Your employer may ask you questions that demonstrate that you are in for the long haul.

2. *Do you have the ability to work well with others?* It is so important to be helpful and involved, understanding the unwritten rules, respectful, reliable, and competent. This is one of the most important questions you will need to answer in the interview process, as 90% of the jobs in this country deal with working in teams.

3. *Are you able to make money?* This question is very important if taking a job at a restaurant or at a gas station where "up-selling" is a number one priority (offering a customer an addition to their purchase, like McDonald's asking if you would like fries with that shake); bringing in more money than just the normal sales in a transaction.

4. *First impressions are lasting ones.* A resume is often the vehicle to either make a good impression. Another great way to have a good first impression is through your job application and references, if the job you are applying for doesn't require a resume.

5. *Do you have good creative problem solving skills?* Someone who gets locked into a set pattern of doing things find it difficult or impossible to adjust. They are a drag on the business as opposed to an asset. If you only have one way of doing things, it may be hard to get a job as a receptionist, personal assistant, or a cashier.

6. *Do you have a strong online presence?* Social networking has become the primary way that people communicate and as we will see shortly, is something that employers look at before

hiring a person, as well as notice while an employee is working for them. Having a strong social networking presence is a great idea to have while looking and maintaining a job. Make sure, however, that you stay away from complaining and negative thoughts. Such things may keep you from being hired, or result in you losing your job.

7. *Do you multi-task?* People who multi-task thrive on a variety of projects. If you multi-task, make it clear to your management that you have a passion for learning new things and volunteer to take on extra work, even if it means putting in additional hours, especially during the first year of employment. This will let your employer see how good you are at your work and can show them that you are a great fit for the company.

8. *Are you enthusiastic? Do you take an initiative?* If you show consistent enthusiasm and take initiative on the job, you will be more likely to be noticed and rewarded.

## THE INTERVIEW

**Interview Questions.** Preparing for an interview is very important. Practicing your interview will help you to mentally prepare for it. Research the company you are interviewing with. Knowing the description of the position you are applying for will help you prepare. Identify your personal strengths: organized, dependable, attention to detail. These are just a few qualities. You may have others to add to the list. It is important to know what you are good at and don't be afraid to list them. Remember you are "presenting" or "selling" yourself to a potential employer.

Practice...practice...practice! Have someone ask you the questions so you can practice answering. Be as true to the person who is practicing with you as you want to be with your potential employer. Here are a few questions you may experience in an employment interview.

► *So, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?* Give a quick rundown of your qualifications. Don't give your entire life history.

- ▶ *Why did you leave your last job?* Say something like, “The Company wasn’t a good fit for my creativity, but I learned that organizations have distinct personalities just like people do. Now I know where I will make a better fit.”
- ▶ *Where do you see yourself in 5 years?* Let the employer know what you are stable and that you will be with the company for the long haul. Even if you are just taking a simple job at a gas station or fast food restaurant; it is important for them to know that you are planning on being around for awhile. It lets them also see that you are dependable.
- ▶ *What are your weaknesses?* Do not respond to this question literally. Identify areas where you can improve and how they will be an asset to your new potential employer.
- ▶ *Why were you laid off?* This is a big one in today’s market as we are seeing lots of layoffs. A possible response might be: “As I’m sure you’re aware, the economy is tight right now and my company felt the effects of it. I am confident, however, that it had nothing to do with my job performance, as exemplified by my accomplishments.”

Questions aren’t limited to just these examples. I would encourage you to research different interview questions. If you know people who work where you applied for a position, you can ask them what they were asked at their interview.

More examples of questions you may be asked are:

- Are you a team player?
- What have you done at a previous place of employment that you are proud of?
- Are you willing to learn new things?

I have friends who have also been asked creative questions, such as:

- ▶ *Why is a manhole cover round?* The interviewee said that the interviewer was looking for something creative. Instead she answered logically and said, “Because it wouldn’t have

sharp edges for people to get in and out and the lid would fit no matter how you put it on.” Her feeling after that question? “I failed miserably, but they still hired me.”

➤ *What was the last book you read? What did it teach you about human nature?* This question surprised the person. They were not expecting it at all and had to think of an answer quickly.

➤ *How has your studio changed over the years?* This question was asked to a photographer. Get ready for this question whether you have owned a business, are coming out of homelessness, or have been through the Joppa House *Stepping Stones* Curriculum. They will want to know all about you and what you have learned through the years.

➤ *I want an orange shake from McDonald's, but McDonald's doesn't have orange shakes. How do you get me what I want?* This friend was in an interview to be a personal assistant. When asked how she responded to that question, her answer was simple: “Incorrectly. Apparently the right answer was to get a vanilla shake and have them mix Hi-C into it.” In the last section it was mentioned that if you aren't able to handle stressful demands, a personal assistant wouldn't be the best job to have. This interview question is a great example of what that is.

➤ *What is your opinion on abortion?* You may get asked controversial questions like this one. Be prepared to answer them and know where you stand on them. Your employer will like your honesty and in your integrity regardless of how you answer.

There is an old saying that goes, “Practice makes perfect.” As you practice these questions, remember that the more you practice you have the better you will do in your interview and the more comfortable you will be in your interview.

**Appearance.** Your appearance is very important to the interview process. Your overall appearance should be clean and neat from head to shoes. Your hair should be clean (washed) and neat (combed, brushed, or styled). Make sure your finger nails are clean when showering. Your clothing should be freshly laundered

and ironed. Tears, holes, stains, or missing buttons will be unacceptable. Your clothing should not be tight (top or bottom); no belly or undergarments showing, or low cut tops without a layering shirt underneath.

Appropriate clothing to consider wearing for an interview would be a nice sweater or blouse. The top should be a solid color or be a nice print; no logo or message tees. Your bottoms should be dress slacks or a skirt (knee length) that are a khaki, blue, black, or grey in color. You may opt for a knee length dress. Low heels or flat shoes are recommended, typically in black, as they will go with almost any outfit. No open toed shoes, sandals, sneakers, or flip flops.

When it comes to make up, use a light application of make-up and mascara. Try to stay away from bold or bright lipsticks, as a clean and natural look is usually recommended. Try to also wear minimal jewelry. A nice pair of earrings (not too dangly), and a simple necklace (if any) is the best. If you have any other piercings other than the ears, wear something that is small or clear. Many employers do not accept facial piercings, but if you have something that is clear, it shows that you are willing to be respectful and professional.

If you do not have appropriate clothing for an interview, check with one of the resale shops in the area. They have good, inexpensive clothing, some that have never been worn! If you need help with your wardrobe choices, do not be afraid to ask. The people around you want to help you succeed!

### **AVOID EMBARRASSING SITUATIONS.**

When walking into an interview or into work, stay away from potentially embarrassing situations.

❖ **Make sure your zipper is fastened properly.** Ladies, make sure your zipper isn't undone on your pants, skirts, or shirts. Check the buttons to make sure that your buttons aren't undone on your blouse. For those of you with a larger bust, double check your middle buttons as often as you can, or wear a shirt that does not have middle buttons.

❖ **If you are feeling a tickle in your nose, check it out before you go in.** You don't want someone else telling you

that you have a booger hanging out. You need to be the one to check that.

❖ **Use a mirror to double check for food in your teeth.** If you don't have a mirror, use your phone. That front camera for the perfect selfie use is also the perfect teeth checker.

❖ **Make sure your hair isn't messy.** Messy hair is in now-a-days. If you are going for that messy look, be certain that it looks like you styled it that way. If you are not going for that look, straighten your hair. Just running your fingers through your hair will help.

❖ **Before you walk into an interview check to make sure your clothes don't have a stain on them.** Really, you need to do this before you leave your house. Do not wear stained clothes. It gives the impression that you are a messy person and that you didn't put any time in preparing for your interview. That is almost always an automatic "do not hire".

❖ **Check your breath.** If you need refreshment, use a breath mint, not gum. You don't want to go into an interview chewing gum. That is disrupting and isn't good for an employer to see, or hear. The sound of chewing gum and smacking lips is distracting and could also be another automatic "do not hire".

❖ **Take a shower either the night before or the morning of your interview.** Don't go to an interview smelling gross, sweaty, or anything else that makes you look and feel like you don't care about your appearance. You want to walk in looking and smelling good (but not smelling so strong that someone can't stand to be around you) to show that you are serious about wanting a job and starting a career. Do not wear a heavy scented perfume.

❖ **Make sure your clothing choice is appropriate for the job you are interviewing for.** Inappropriate clothing can make or break the interview. You can do this by planning ahead and researching the position you are interviewing for.

### **In the meantime...**

While you are waiting for an interview after submitting your resume, or if you are still looking for a job, check into taking some classes at the local college or workshops in the genre of



employment you would like to have. This is good to add to your resume and/or job application. It is also a good idea to take classes or seminars in an attempt to increase your knowledge and show your potential employer that you are serious.

This is also a great time to touch base with the people you are listing as references. Prepare your references for who may be calling them and ask them to speak consistently about your skills. Having multiple references, you may consider giving a different highlight for each person to talk about if they are contacted. It is also beneficial to ask your references to call you after your potential employer has made inquiry of them. It is okay and a good idea to get an update. Let your references know what happened after your interview, whether positive or negative. Most importantly — thank them for their time!

Now is the opportunity to get your information together that you will need for a job application. Whether you provided a resume or not to a potential employer, you may be asked to fill out an application when you are at your interview.

### **Some of the items you will need to take with you:**

- Driver's License
- Social Security Card and/or number
- Information from your resume
- Reference information (personal and professional references used with permission).
- Your resume and reference information can all be written down ahead of time. Take it with you. That isn't something that will be frowned upon. In fact, it will be appreciated by your employer to know that you were not only prepared, but also that the information you provide will be accurate.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **Online Profiles**

In 2009, 35% of employers said that they used social media to screen employees. Today, 76% of employers screen their

candidates and employees with social media. Here are some statistics taken from the website [theundercoverrecruiter.com](http://theundercoverrecruiter.com)

When asked:

*“During the hiring process, which social networks do you use to screen candidates?”*

- 76% of employers said that they use Facebook
- 53% use X (formerly known as Twitter)
- 48% use LinkedIn

*“Do you look at social networking sites after getting an application?”*

- 47% said yes
- 27% said yes after the initial conversation with the perspective employee
- 15% said yes after detailed conversation with perspective employee
- 4% said yes, but right before making an offer
- 7% said they do not use social media sites to screen

*“Have you ever rejected a candidate because of what you saw about them on a social media networking site?”*

- 69% said yes
- 26% said no
- 5% said they don't use these sites

*“Why have you rejected candidates after what you saw about them on social media networking sites?”*

- 11% - inappropriate photos
- 11% - inappropriate comments
- 9% - posted content about drinking
- 10% - posted content about using drugs
- 11% - negative comments posted about previous employer
- 11% - demonstration of poor communication skills
- 10% - discriminatory comments
- 13% - potential/current employee lying about qualifications
- 7% - sharing confidential information from a previous employer or from their current employer
- Only 7% never rejected a candidate because of

information seen on a social media networking site.

That's a lot of negatives about social media. Here's some positives:

*"Have you ever hired a candidate because of what you saw about them on a social networking site?"*

- 68% said yes
- 27% said no
- 5% said they don't use social to screen

*"Why did you hire those candidates?"*

- 39% - Gave a positive impression of their personality
- 36% - Profile supported their professional qualifications
- 36% - Profile showed candidate was creative
- 33% - Showed solid communication skills
- 33% - Profile showed candidate was well-rounded
- 34% - Candidate had good references posted by others
- 24% - Candidate received awards and accolades
- 18% - Never hired a candidate because of social info

So...clean up the "digital dirt" before you start your job search. Remove inappropriate photos, content, or links. Consider creating your own professional group on sites like Facebook or LinkedIn. This is a great way to establish relationships with recruiters and potential job employers, even if it isn't a high profile job. Keep your gripes offline! Keep the content you post on a positive note for both professional and personal.

Always post your accomplishments. Be selective of who you add as friends. Others can see your friends when searching for you if you do not have that locked down on your Facebook profile. You might also want to monitor comments made by others and utilize the block comment features. Set your profile to private so that only your friends can view it. If you are still employed, don't mention your job search in your tweets, status updates on Facebook, or LinkedIn. Okay, are you ready?? You can do this! I believe in you!

"...treasure what it means to do a day's work."

It's our one and only chance to do something productive today, and it's certainly not available to someone merely because he is the higher bidder. A day's work is your chance to do art, to create a gift, to do something that matters.

As your work gets better and your art becomes more important, competition for your gifts will increase and you'll discover that you can be choosier about whom you give them to."

- *Seth Goden* -

## UNITS THREE: KEEPING EMPLOYMENT

In the last two units we have talked about how to search and prepare for employment. Now we are going to learn how to keep employment. This is actually a lot easier than it sounds. Yep! That means that you can relax. You have completed the searching and the interview process, and have a job. Now you can relax a little bit. In this unit we are going to explore what it means to be happy at work and how to bring positive attention to you at the work place. And it all starts with being on time...

## HOW TO KEEP YOUR JOB

You have gotten through the application and resume process, then the interview process and now you finally have

the job! Now that you have the job, how do you keep it? What kind of things should you do to make the best of your job? Let me tell you that when you first get a job, whether it is your first job or you have been previously employed, it isn't going to be all strawberries and shortcake. No, it is going to be just like anything else; something that you will always have to work at to keep it a good experience.

### **A FEW TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR JOB:**

- \* **Try and make the job work.** Always ask yourself if you could be doing things differently. After a few months or a year, if you don't feel like you are a good fit in your position, talk to your employer and see if there is another position you could try within the company. Being open and honest is the best way to move up and be recognized.
- \* **Work hard.** Focusing on your job and giving your employer the time you are getting paid for is something that will get you noticed. Most employers won't mind if you spend some time on Facebook or checking texts on your phone, but if you spend too much time being distracted by your life outside of work you could be the first one to be fired when making down-sizing decisions. Working hard shows that you want to keep your job, no matter what.
- \* **Be on time.** By "be on time" I mean be 10-minutes early. If you are scheduled for work at 9:00 am and you show up at 9:00 am, you are already late. This is especially true for shift changes. You are expected to punch in and be at your station at the scheduled time, not walking in and putting your bags away at that time. The same goes for lunch hours. Don't take more than you are scheduled. Watch your time. Make certain you know how long you have been gone and how much time you have left. Don't take a lot of sick time or leave early every day. These habits will not win any points with your boss.
- \* **Be a team player.** Employees who don't get along well with others, who gossip, and those who are unwilling to help aren't going to be appreciated.
- \* **Be flexible and offer to help.** Flexibility is a key component and keeping your job. When your employer

needs someone to change shifts, cover weekends, put in overtime, or work a different schedule on short notice, you may be asked to work. If you say yes and are able to change your schedule the opportunity to volunteer as your schedule permits is a huge blessing to your boss and those you work with.

\* **Don't complain. Keep your thoughts to yourself.** Not a single person in the world likes complainers, no matter how legitimate the complaints are. If you don't like your job, there are many people in today's economy that would jump at the chance to have a job. Even if you hate your job, keep it to yourself, close friends, or your family. If you tell the world, it can get into the hands of the wrong person and it can cost you our job. Posting your complaints on social media can also cost you your job. Even if you are irritated, keep your posts positive.

## **BECOME HAPPY AT WORK**

“For every minute you are angry,  
you lose sixty seconds of happiness.”

*- Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Not every job is going to have perks for their employees. Not every job is going to be easy. Some places are going to have amazing benefits and be the best job you could imagine. Others will not. So what can you do to be happy at work? You have to choose to be happy at work.

Happiness is a choice. You have to choose to be happy at work. It sounds simple, but it can be difficult to put into action. The first step is to think positive about your work. Dwell (let your thoughts be consumed) on those things at work that you like. While at work avoid negative people — especially those who like to gossip. Find coworkers you like and those that you enjoy. Spend time with them. Your choices will define your experience and you can choose to be happy at work.

Choose to do something that you love every single day. Whether you like your current job or not, you can find something in your work that you love and that you love to do every day that you are there. I know that might be hard to believe, but it is true. I

sued to have a job at a local fast food restaurant that I loathed. I didn't like being there. The environment was toxic and I hated the fact that I had to serve "heart attacks" in a box. However, there was one thing that I enjoyed more than anything else: being the runner. I loved putting orders together that were on the screen. I loved making the drinks that had to go out the window. I enjoyed being able to help all of the different stations and areas in the restaurant, especially when I didn't have to deal with customers personally (I'm not a social personality). I prided myself on being the fastest runner at the restaurant. Even if I was only the runner of five minutes my mood would shift and I would feel like I was worth something to the restaurant.

When you take on a new job, take charge of your professional and personal development. It is not your employer's job to pursue you in order for you to move up the corporate ladder or teach you something new that isn't directly related to your job, it's yours! You are the person who has the most to gain by continuing your professional development. You can continue your development by asking for specific and meaningful help from your boss on how to better do your job in a way that can develop your own plan and goals. When you grow you have the most to gain.

Become knowledgeable of what is happening at work and take responsibility for it. You may not always be able to receive direct communication or information about what is going on with your company, the department projects, or your coworkers. Seek out the information you need to work effectively. If you are a passive person who waits for the boss to fill you up with knowledge, you aren't going to get what you want and you are going to become unhappy very quickly. Develop the information network you want and use it. You can even ask for a weekly meeting with your boss to ask him/her questions and learn from them. Be in charge of the information you receive.

Ask for feedback frequently. Be open to that feedback, positive or negative, even if you feel good about your performance and would like some acknowledgment. Know exactly what you are doing and how you're doing it. If you are not positive about your work, think about improving it and making a sincere contribution. If you are doing well, the feedback should be affirming. If you aren't doing well, it won't be affirming. You can develop yourself from the

feedback you get. If your feedback isn't positive, don't give up. Change what you can and ask again.

Only make commitments that you are keep. One of the biggest causes of work stress and unhappiness in the work place is failing to keep a commitment. Create a system of organization and find a plan that enables you to assess your ability to complete the requested commitment. If you don't have time, then don't volunteer.

**Avoid Negativity.** Avoid negative conversations. Avoid gossip. Avoid unhappy people as much as possible. You can feel that you are a positive person, but just having one negative person around you can have a huge impact on the way that you think.

**Get some courage...**professional courage that is! If you are like most of the people in this world, you probably don't like conflict. Most conflict in today's world is understood as scary, harmful, and hurtful. But meaningful conflict can cause people to listen to and consider different ideas. It enables people to examine their alternatives and may result in increased participation and ownership of decisions and goals.

**Make friends!** Take time to get to know the people at your employment. You don't have to hang out with them outside of work, but being able to enjoy the people you work with brings less stress and makes you feel like you are part of a team. Networking with your coworkers brings support to one another's ideas. It brings more resources to draw from. It promotes sharing and caring for each other.

\*Insert Attitude Image\*

## WOMEN'S FASHION IN THE WORKPLACE

A lot of employers are now requiring their employees to wear uniforms. Wearing a uniform is great because you know exactly what you need to wear and can be traded in when you leave. But what do you do when you get an office job or a job that requires a "business casual" uniform? Let's explore.

When you get dressed for work your goal is to project a professional image, what employment level or career path you are



in. Styles, colors, lengths, and the fit of your fashion choices will speak volumes about your ability to do your job. If you are serious about your job, you should be more concerned with looking professional than looking cute or trendy. The more distracting your clothing or piece of jewelry is the less appropriate it is for an office.

### **GUIDELINES FOR BUSINESS ATTIRE:**

- Watch your colors. Traditional career colors include red (an aggressive image), navy (trustworthy image), gray (conservative image), and black (chic image). Most of these colors work well with pant suits, skirts, and shoes and mix well with softer more feminine colors that are appropriate like light blue, lilac, light pink, and ivory. Loud colors like hot pink and wild prints are riskier in the office, but if you are creative you can pull them off. For example, you can wear a bright color or a print with a black blazer or vest, which will take down the vibrancy but still show the color.
- Chandelier earrings, stacks of bangles, and other large jewelry are distracting. Choose stud earrings or single bracelets instead.
- Slouchy handbags look sloppy. Choose structured styles that project an image that is neater and has the appearance of being organized.
- Strive for a polished image: manicured nails, run-free, pantyhose, scuff-free shoes, and neat hair.
- Pants need to be fitted but not too tight and free of visible panty lines. Skirts, especially pencil skirts, should be loose enough to be able to sit down comfortably. Jackets should be buttoned, and blouses shouldn't gap between the buttonholes.

### **FASHION CAREER KILLERS:**

- **Too Sexy** - Do not wear see-through lace, miniskirts, spaghetti straps, sheer sundresses, or strappy stiletto shoes.
- **Too Casual** - Do not wear jeans, shorts, t-shirts, hats, or sneakers.
- **Too Sloppy** - Do not wear wrinkled clothing, too many layers, or baggy-fit clothing.

Local thrift shops have good quality clothes at a low price that will be perfect to wear in any situation.

## TEMP-TO-HIRE JOBS

If you are working with the Michigan Works office or Kelly Services, you will find that jobs at local factories are temporary jobs. After 90 days or so, they will lay off those that were brought in as “temps” or temporary employees. Some of those temp jobs, however, can turn into permanent jobs. If you are offered a temp-to-hire job, you may think that they may be too risky, as there is no guarantee that you will get that permanent job, but if you take the job you might find a long lasting or career job.

Mindset is everything when it comes to temporary job. If your job performance reflects that you know you will be there for a short time, you will only be there for a short while. From the start of day one you need to treat this job like it is a permanent one. Always put your best foot forward. Be sure that you come to work on time, stay as late as you need to complete your assignments, and go beyond each of your assignments to show that you have commitment and enthusiasm.

Make sure you follow the dress code. You want your employer to know that you take the job seriously. The best way to do is to dress according to the dress code. Never be more casual than the standard or too dressed up than you are required to be. In factory positions, attention to your dress can communicate that you have dedication and shows that you fit in well with the culture that the company has.

Take time to learn about the company and demonstrate your investment in the job. Know your company’s history, the culture, and the mission. Demonstrate a concern for the future of the company and let your employer know that you are in it for the long haul.

# I HATE MY JOB!

“I hate my job, I hate my company, and I hate my boss!”

Going to work with these thoughts in your head is hard to do. Why would you want to spend every day someplace when you hate it? It is so hard to keep those thoughts in your mind without letting them out. These thoughts can easily get onto Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), or any other social media sites. A derogatory post will ultimately get you fired if it gets into the wrong hands.

If you hate your job, keep it to yourself. Do not tell the world and do not tell your co-workers. If you have to tell someone, talk to very close friends and family. As we learned in *Preparing for Employment*, employers may use the internet to check up on their employees. What we didn't explore is the fact that your Tweets show up in a Google search. If you aren't careful about your Facebook settings (as we talked about in the last unit) updates will show up in the Google searches, falling into the hands of someone you don't want to see it.

If you are in the situation where you think that you hate your job, don't feel down or get down about yourself. It happens to all of us from one time or another. The job might not be what you expected. Perhaps your job might be okay, but your boss and/or co-workers are awful. Maybe you are fed up with the schedule, your customers, or something else. If you are in this place, it is actually a good thing. It will let you know where you can figure out what to do next! You can change your circumstances, you can change your thinking, and you can change your feelings.

If you hate your job so much you want to quit, **don't!** You don't want to resign hastily and not have another job lined up. Begin to consider your options to make the job work. Ask yourself:

- ☒ Is there anything you could be doing differently to be happier at work?
- ☒ Could you ask for a transfer to a different store or have a shift change?
- ☒ Is there anything that would make a difference that could convince you to stay at your job?

If there is no way you can stay, that's fine. At least you know. Don't quit your job yet though, no matter how much you hate it. It may be easier to find a job when you are already employed. You will not be eligible for unemployment if you quit. Take the time to update your resume and your LinkedIn profile if you have one. Get new references lined up. Like we talked about in Unit 1, *Searching for Employment*, the more prepared you are before you start looking, the easier the job search will be.

## SEARCHING WHILE EMPLOYED

When you are employed, you can be open about searching for a new job. When you are currently employed, however, you need to look quietly and discretely. Don't broadcast the fact that you are searching for a new job for the same reason that you need to be quiet about hating your job.

Go through the steps we talked about in Unit 1 to look for a new job. Start applying for jobs on your own computer (do not use your company computer). Keep in mind that it might take awhile to find a new position with a new employer. Be prepared for the long haul.

Before you make the decision to quit make absolutely, 100% sure that you are making the right decision. Once you make the decision to leave, and have told your employer that you are going to leave, someone will be hired to replace you and there will be no opportunity for you to come back. It is important for you to know that when you put in your two-week notice your employer does not have to honor that two weeks. You have made your decision to leave and while you need to abide by your two week notice, they do not.

### Moving On

When it is time for you to resign from your job, you are going to want to shout it from the top of the tallest building in your city with the biggest microphone that you can find. Again, **don't**. Companies check references. They ask about previous employers in interviews and what you say truly matters. No one is going to

hire you with a chip on your shoulder; especially if you make it known that you disliked your previous employer.

When you get ready to resign, do it gracefully. Give your two-week notice and offer to help during this time of transition to help train a new candidate. (\*Note: some companies require more than a two week notice when resigning. Make sure you know what is in your company handbook.\*). Do whatever you can to leave without any hard feelings. By doing that you can ensure that you will be better focused on your new job and have a better experience the next time.

When writing your resignation letter, keep it short. Don't say much more than the fact that you are leaving. Emphasize the positive. Talk about how the company has benefited you, but that it is time to move on. Do not be negative. You want to leave on good terms.

If you have worked for a job where you received sick days, special leave days, or a 401k, check with the Human Resources Department on what benefits you will receive when you leave.

Return any property that belongs to the company that you have in your possession:

- ✿ Keys
- ✿ Documents
- ✿ Computers
- ✿ Phones
- ✿ Uniforms
- ✿ Anything else that doesn't belong to you
- ✿ If you don't return what is not yours, you may be held responsible for those missing items

When you leave, remember to say goodbye. Send a farewell message to your coworkers and let them know that you re moving on to a new position, starting a new job, retiring, or doing something else with your life. In today's age, it is very appropriate to send an email "farewell" message. You can include your contact information to stay in touch if you would like. Be certain to not brag about your new job, and don't be negative; just say goodbye.

# UNIT FOUR: GED AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

## WRITTEN BY: PEGGY EVANS

We have been looking at chapters about employment. Now we are going to look at a chapter on GED (General Education Development) and Continuing Education. In this section we will discover that those dreams and goals we had as children are not impossible to reach. Through education we can become whatever we can dream.

First, we will learn about GED in Michigan: what a GED certificate is, what it can mean for you, how to earn your GED, eligibility and registration information, scoring and testing, and links on the web regarding information about getting your GED in Michigan.

Educational opportunities are all around us. Some employers have on-the-job training for some jobs, some employers require a high school diploma or GED certificate, and some require a college degree.

We have opportunities in our area for meeting most employment and educational requirements. There are colleges within driving distance of Charlevoix, a school of cosmetology, and a school for medical and dental assistant and technicians, and a school for nursing assistants and nursing aids.

Some of the local businesses do train their employees: title companies train closers and examiner (they help you get your Michigan license), survey offices usually train their technicians and assist them in getting their license, real estate offices train their receptionists and secretaries, and banks offer training for tellers and some other positions. Also, area hospitals train for surgical technicians and other jobs in medical, housekeeping, and other departments. It is important to check with the employer about training for jobs that are listed in classified ads or postings.

Scholarships, grants, and financial aid are available for GED, college, and vocational training. Information and websites which

can help you find for your educational opportunities have been included in this chapter.

Dreams and goals can take us to the stars, but we have to put our foot on the first rung of the ladder. The first rung of the ladder is improving our education. Take the tools you will find in this chapter and put them to work making those dreams and aspirations come true.

## GED / CONTINUING EDUCATION

When we were children, it was exciting to think about what we wanted to be when we grew up. One day it would be a nurse, the next a teacher, an actress, model, policeman, hair dresser, make-up artist, lawyer, baker, chef, secretary, doctor, pilot, stewardess, veterinarian, or, whatever role model we had at the time. It was fun to pretend to be any or all things that we wanted to be or do. We had our dreams and goals. We may have changed them, but we had them.

Now that we are adults and we realize that our childhood dreams and goals didn't take the same path through life that we did. Hmm...what's up with that? We took a right turn on a side road and our education and dreams kept going in a straight line. Sometimes we just quit school; other times there were underlying reasons that made it difficult to continue going to school. The older we get, the harder we believe it is to go back to school and study. We let our dreams and goals sit and gather dust.

## GED IN MICHIGAN

Drum roll, please. It is not too late to pick up those dreams and goals, dust them off, and start working toward your own success! If you haven't received your high school diploma, you might consider getting your GED. The American Council on Education (ACE) designs the General Educational Development test. It is made up of five individual subject tests. These tests determine that your knowledge and skills are equivalent to those of a graduating high

school senior. Most universities and employers accept GED credentials. The really good news about GED in Michigan is that GED in-person classes are offered through the Petoskey Michigan Works! Office, and the East Jordan Michigan Works! Learning Lab. There are also classes and interactive study options that you can take advantage of online.

**Earning your GED in Michigan.** GED testing in Michigan is administered under the authority of the Office of Adult Education. There are many sites throughout the state where the test is given. The test covers five subjects which take approximately 7 1/2 hours to complete. The test covers language arts in reading, language arts in writing, social studies, science, and mathematics. Michigan offers the test in English and Spanish. If needed, you can combine the two languages to be able to pass your test. The cost for the test, in-person or online, is \$43.50. You must pay by debit or credit card at the time of scheduling your test.

Michigan requires you to be 18 years old at the time of testing and that your high school class has already graduated. You may register at a local testing center, by contacting your local adult education program, or by going to <https://www.ged.com>.

**Scoring and Testing.** In order to pass the GED test, Michigan requires that you get an average of 450 across all five tests, with no individual test score below 410. Michigan awards the Hobbit School Equivalency Certificate to test takers who successfully pass the GED exam.

If you fail one of the tests, you may retake it at the discretion of the chief examiner. However, it is recommended that you enroll in a preparatory program and wait six months before retesting. Preparatory supplies, as well as GED practice tests, can be found on the GED Academy's website; <https://www.ged.com>.

The GED exam can be taken online, as can studying. In the State of Michigan, GED testing is overseen by the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor, and Economic Growth, Office of Adult Education, and GED Testing. The Michigan GED exam can be taken online, or at a local GED testing center.

More than 60 percent of GED test-takers plan to go on to college. The GED exam can help you to get there! 98% of colleges



and universities in the United States accept the GED credential, though some colleges require additional tests, such as the SAT or the ACT. Check with the admissions offices of the college(s) you are interested in for their requirements.

**College Opportunities.** One of the great advantages of living in the United States is having the opportunity to attend college. There are vocational schools, also called trade schools, cosmetology schools, medical and dental assistant & technician schools, culinary schools, business schools, and academic schools. Once you decide on a career goal, look for a school that can help you get your degree in your chosen field. Sometimes it is best to go to a community college and take the basic classes you need, then transfer to a college that specializes in your field: medicine, engineering, law. Start where you are comfortable and progress as you become confident in your knowledge and study skills.

Part time status and online classes now make it easier to go to school and keep a job at the same time. Be sure to check for part time and online classes when you research the educational institution you would like to attend. Some universities are affiliated with community colleges to provide degree programs locally. This means that you can limit your travel and still get that bachelor or master degree.

North Central Michigan College in Petoskey, Michigan, is a good starting point for you to achieve your career goal. They offer many degree programs and are willing to help you find your potential and ideal career choice.

Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City is also a very good college.

Lake Superior State University has a regional center in Petoskey on the North Central Michigan College Campus.

All have excellent staff willing to assist you with information about their school, their enrollment requirements, registration, and financial aid.

Other schools in the Charlevoix area include: Spring Arbor University (4 year college), Up North School of Cosmetology, Northern Cairn LLC (Medical & Dental Assistants & Technicians), Grandvue Medical Care Facility (CNA certificates).

Some employers provide training for employees. Check with potential employers to find out if they provide training and/or educational assistance for employment. Some local title companies have done this in the past and local survey companies have offered funding for education associated with the field of surveying. Some engineering firms have also offered assistance for interested employees. Research your educational institutions for education and assistance, but also research employers. Some are very willing to work with those who are serious about a career in their profession.

## SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, FINANCIAL AID, STUDENT SUCCESS

You have made your decision to go to school. You have examined your aspirations and have set your career goals. You have enrolled in the school of college of your choice. What's next? The registration office will ask you for tuition to pay for your education. Most schools and colleges have a Financial Aid Officer who will assist you with tuition fees for classes, labs, and equipment.

Before you apply for school and are waiting to hear from the admissions office you can apply for Financial Aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online. FAFSA can be accessed at: <https://www.studentaid.gov>.

To receive federal student aid, a student must be qualified to study at the post-secondary level. A student qualifies academically if he/she has the following:

- 1.** A high school diploma; or
- 2.** A recognized equivalent of a high school diploma, typically a GED certificate; or
- 3.** Completed home schooling; or
- 4.** Passed a US Department of Education approved Ability to Benefit test.

Some colleges administer a COMPASS test to determine ability to benefit and course placement. Passing scores are determined by the US Department of Education.

Eligibility requirements vary from program to program and college to college. Financial award are determined and disbursed in compliance with established federal, state, and institutional requirements and guidelines. You must also apply for aid each academic year you wish to receive consideration. Financial aid is usually awarded in the following order: 1) Grants; 2) Scholarships; 3) Work/Study; 4) Loans. A school's financial aid office determines the type and amount of financial aid.

Each student application is reviewed and aid is awarded based on the student's eligibility, funding, availability, and program regulation. Need-based aid programs include federal and state grants, loans, and work study programs and some scholarship programs. Other financial aid guidelines, rules, requirements, and disclosures can be found at: <https://www.studentaid.gov>.

State of Michigan Financial Aid Programs can be found either at your school of choices financial aid office or you can review their grants and scholarships and requirements on their website.

## CAREER GOALS

If you've never been to college, or started but never finished, then it is time to improve your skills or knowledge and find a new career or path for your life. Look into getting a GED certificate if you don't have a high school diploma. Research careers and the need for various jobs and what the requirements are for that career path. Find the right school for your career intentions. Ask employers to recommend schools that provide education and training for your goals. Ask employers if their company provides assistance for education regarding that profession. Use the Federal and State financial websites for financial assistance with college tuition. Talk to the school's financial aid staff and school counselors to find help with financial aid and finding the career goals for which you have knowledge and skills.

Once you have a career goal in mind, you may think the requirements are too tough after checking out the college

requirements for that particular profession and just give up. But, you are not a quitter! You just may need to adjust your career goals. If you want to be a lawyer and the process seems too long or full of classes that you know you cannot take, adjust your thinking and look towards the requirements for becoming a paralegal or a legal secretary. Later, when you are more familiar with law, you may decide that you can be an attorney and go back to school. The same applies to other professions: engineers need a lot of chemistry and mathematics; surveyors just need a lot of math, but not as much as engineers. School counselors can be a big help in assisting you in your career goals and which courses of study you need to take to achieve your goal.

This principle can also work the other way. You may think that you only want to be an assistant, but find that school or college is not as hard as you thought. In this case, you can always upgrade your goals and your curriculum. Again, the school counselor will be able to help you with your decision.

Another person or persons who can help you are your Joppa House staff and volunteers, and your close friends. They can help you evaluate your strengths and weaknesses. Strengths may be those you already know you have and some that others may help you to see in yourself. Weaknesses are just strengths waiting to be exercised. Remember, you want people to be honest with you, but you don't need people who will only tear you down. Be fair yet gentle with yourself.

Try making a list of the dreams and aspirations that you have for yourself from childhood and now. When you have finished that list, make one of the career goals that you need to set to become who and what you want to become in life. Find the school that best fits these goals, and then begin your journey not your future. You may change along the way as you grow. That is okay. We all grow and we grow at different rates. Give yourself a chance and see what wonders you can do.

An old proverb says, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." You have taken the first step; now keep walking. This is the first step of the rest of your life.