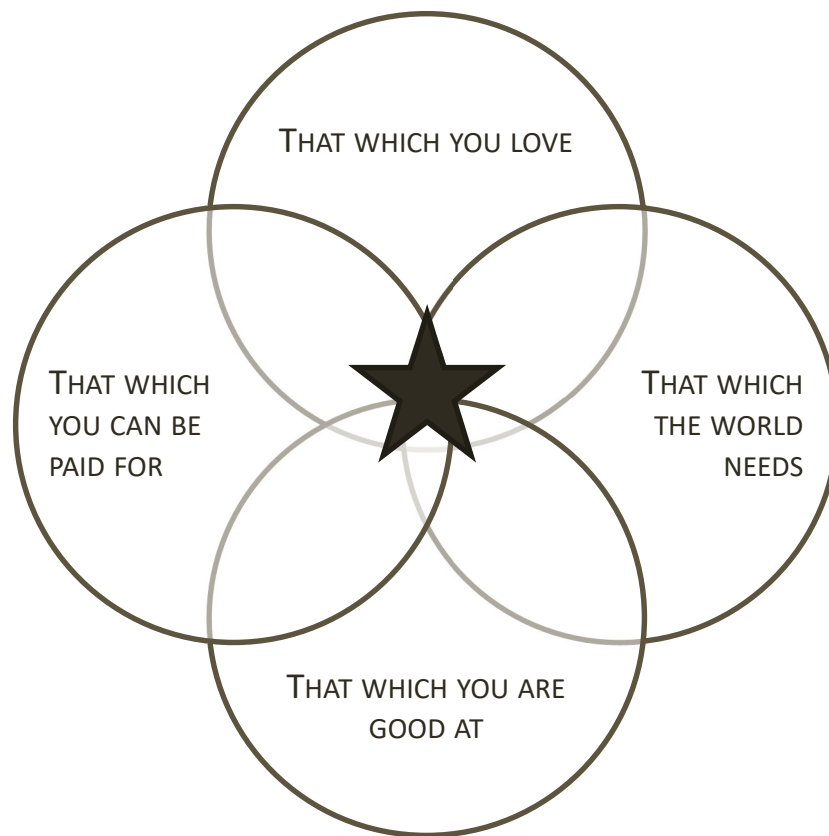


# 1

## Keys to Your Future



*Vocation is where our passion, purpose, skills, and the marketplace collide.*

*Discover Yours!*

## 1.1R Start Here

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This is an exciting journey and I am looking forward to taking it with you. This curriculum is in two parts, starting with Career Exploration. Over the next several weeks, you will be learning more about who you are, your interests, and what you want to do for a career. Right now, that might seem like a big question. It is! But there is a process to choosing a career, and this book will guide you through each step.

Your first two weeks include:

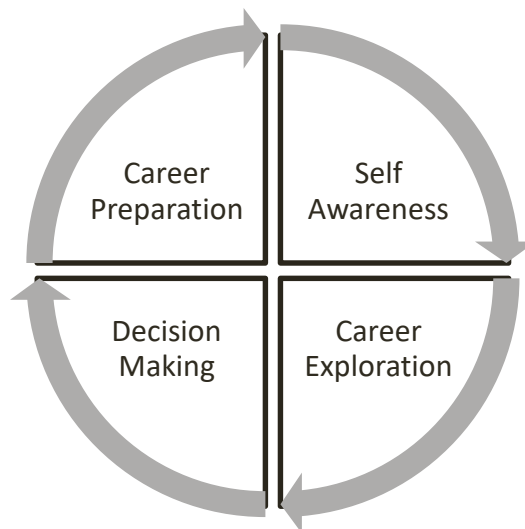
1. Scan the *Table of Contents* and read the *Introduction*.
2. Fill in the *Course Schedule* for Part I, estimating start dates for each unit. Use the number of weeks each unit is expected to take as your guide.
3. Complete Unit 1.
4. In addition to this curriculum, you will learn from reading others' stories. Invest at least 15-30 minutes a day and read a biography of your choice. Select from recommended biography list or one recommended by a mentor (next lesson). Also watch at least one movie from the list.

Millionaire philanthropist Andrew Carnegie said it best. *“As I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say. I just watch what they do. I’ve discovered that the ones I want with me are people who make things happen. They take something average and make it exceptional. They never make excuses – they always find a way to make things happen.”*

### ***It’s a Journey, not a Destination***

Choosing a career might just be one of the most important decisions students can make, yet many will graduate without knowing what their next steps will be. Don’t leave it to chance. Many hope to somehow just stumble into a career idea and trust that it will be a good fit. Not surprisingly, that is not the best way to go about making such an important decision.

Career exploration is a process, and it requires an investment on your part. These lessons will instruct and guide you through the process. They are proven to help students understand their design and discover best-fit careers. Then, every time you want to make a career decision, you can use this process and make wise and informed career decisions for life.



If you have already made up your mind about an occupation, this process may confirm your decision or illuminate other possibilities. Don't stress. Most students enjoy this process. Follow the directions carefully, page by page. Do not rush or skip over steps. You will gain more by approaching the task thoughtfully and completing each lesson to the best of your ability.

## ***Parents as Partners***

Ultimately, your career decision is up to you. However, the process of career exploration is a partnership between students and parents. Research over the past 20 years indicates that parents play a major role in raising career aspirations for their sons and daughters. Career decision-making skills have been linked to early childhood experiences and role modeling by parents.

During middle school, students can begin to explore their interests and abilities and connect them to careers. In high school, they can turn from exploring to decision-making. There are many ways that parents will contribute to your early career development decisions. Parents are often the primary for shaping your work values and attitudes. Your parents' expectations and support will also significantly contribute to helping you make wise and thoughtful decision. Have you ever heard the phrase, you don't know what you don't know!

Be intentional about inviting your parent to review your lessons, discuss important topics, and help you plan for your future.

## ***Can I Decide as a Teen?***

Students might think that career planning is something that begins once they have entered college. Actually, the best time to decide a career direction is before you graduate high school. That way, you can align your high school classes to meet your goals and plan for what you will do after graduation.

The decisions you make today are not meant to lock you in to one specific career for life. I hope that news comes as a sense of relief. In fact, it is likely that you will have more than one career during your working years. According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, the average person will hold about 6 jobs between ages 18 to 24 and 6 more between the ages of 25 to 50.

Students who delay in making career decisions can make costly mistakes by enrolling in college courses or working in areas that are not good fits. Yet, the research is clear. When your vocation and unique design are in sync, you are more likely to succeed and be happy. Why? Because you are working in areas that interest you and that are suited to your personality traits and your natural abilities.

Making a career decision starts by understanding more about you! Your personality was a part of your person when you were born! Many of the factors that are important in choosing a career direction are already developed by high school. Through reflection exercises, self-assessments, and conversations with your parents, you will understand yourself better.

## ***Is College Required?***

Is college required? The short answer is no. The better, more complete answer is, it depends. It is true that education beyond high school can pay dividends that last a lifetime. And while entry to many careers requires a 4-year college degree, other well-paying jobs prefer candidates who have two-year technical degrees, certifications, or work-related experience. Earning a college degree does not ensure that you will be prepared for employment. It is important to research the preferred or required pathway to achieve your goals.

Making a career decision before entering college can help you get started in the right direction. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that on average, college students change their major at least three times. Choosing a major, and changing it multiple times, can be stressful because students often lose time and money. Slight detours are expected and can even be fun. But roadblocks that cause you to lose money and time, can be frustrating and set you back.

*"It's not what you try once, what attitudes you hold, or what you think about doing. It's what you actually do, every single day."*

*– Cheri Frame, Credits Before College*

## 1.2A Building Your Team

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Throughout this course you will be relying on a team of adults to act as mentors or guides. Your parents will be on your team and will be your primary coach. You will also want to identify 1-3 other adults who know you well, will provide you with feedback, and are willing to share their experience with you.

You will also be learning through the words and stories of authors and movies. The books on the *Companion Reading List* (see the Introduction) are an important part of this course. You are encouraged to read at least 15 minutes a day.

### **Assignment**

- Step 1:** Build your advising team. Start by thinking of people who you value as wise – your parents, pastor, family members, teachers, friends.
  
- Step 2:** Contact each person to ask if they would be willing to be an advisor. Let them know you are taking this course and at times there are lessons where you will be asking them for their feedback. If they agree, record their answers to these questions on the *My Team* template.
  1. (title) *What is your job title? (task) In just one sentence, can you tell me what you do?*
  2. (skills) *What would your employer say is the greatest value that you bring to your job? If they ask what you mean, give an example: Is it a particular skill, or ability, or personality quality? Would you agree? If they are self-employed, ask the same question, but they are their own employer.*
  3. *Do you agree with your employer? Or is there a different value you think you bring?*
  4. Ask each member of your team to recommend a biography or movie title, or even a podcast or TED Talk – something they may have been personally impacted by and would recommend you read or watch that will help you grow in understanding of work, leadership, and entrepreneurship. Add it to your recommended biography and movie list (in the Introduction).
  
- Step 3:** Create a reading schedule for at least one biography from your list. In addition, plan to watch at least one movie from this list.

## My Team

Parent	Job Title
Task	Value
<hr/>	
Name	Job Title
Email	Phone #
Task	Value
<hr/>	
Name	Job Title
Email	Phone #
Task	Value
<hr/>	
Name	Job Title
Email	Phone #
Task	Value