

time; etc. You can think these through for yourself and testing can help, but it really pays off to get someone who knows how to assist you in looking for patterns or themes.

Hit 2: The world of work. As mentioned earlier, there are many choices available to each of us. The first thing you ought to do is expand your view of the work world. Don't try to eliminate careers for consideration - try to increase your options. Look at things you never thought of before. Broaden your perspective.

Get lots of information about the nature of the work, working conditions, salary, job outlook, good and bad things about the career, how to prepare, etc. There is a lot to learn, but career counselors can tell you where to find the information. While you're learning this stuff, keep asking yourself, "With what I know of myself, can I see me doing this, loving this life?" If the answer is "no," toss it out. If it is "maybe" or "yes", keep it as a possibility.

Hit 3: Obstacles. Here's where it is imperative to open yourself up to a professional, objective counselor who can help you deal with such things as: relocation, negative self-talk, fears, stress, lack of assertiveness, attitudes, finances and more. You must face such issues squarely, honestly and openly. And you must resolve them. Don't try to go it alone.

Hit 4: Decision-making. What kind of decision maker are you? Do you make impetuous decisions? Are you intuitive? Do you use logical and systematic techniques? Do you let others decide for you? Do you put off making decisions until it's almost too late? A career decision ought to be carefully thought out, with fallback options available. You need to know ways to test your decisions with reality. What it all comes down to is that the decision you make must be your own...but you can get help with it.

Conclusion

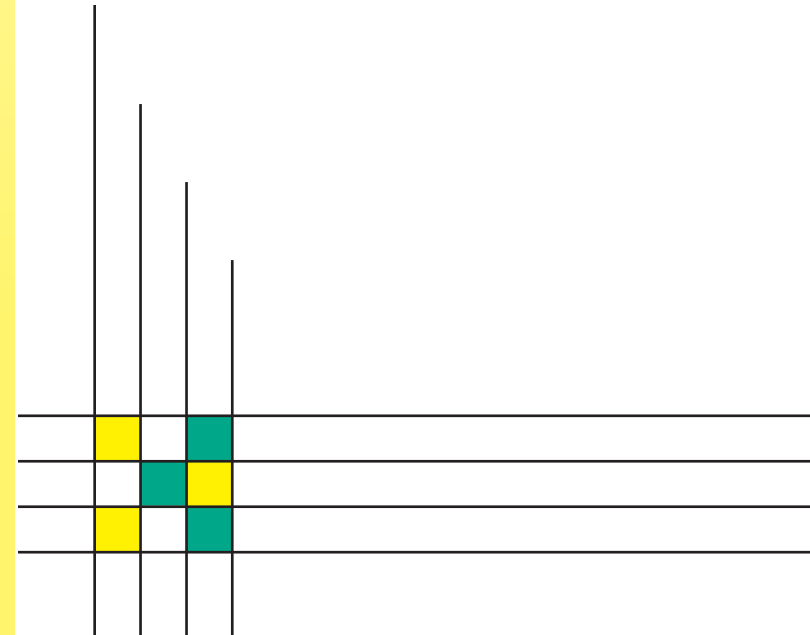
All this sounds very complicated...and it is. But it's possible to get help with the whole process. Make your career choice a real hit, and don't get all stressed out over myths.

For help in this effort, call 398-5471 to make an appointment with a Kirkwood counselor, or to register for one of the Career Decision-Making workshops.

This handout is part of a Self-Help Information Series written by Kirkwood Community College Counselors, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. (319) 398-5471 or 1-800-332-2055, ext. 5471.

Please share this information with family, friends and classmates.

Career Choice



A Hit or Myth Proposition

Making a career or occupational choice can be a rewarding and fulfilling process...but it can also be an unnerving one, primarily because of myths. Some of these myths include:

- 1) There is one best career for me.
- 2) When I choose a career, I am choosing a career for life.
- 3) The people who have jobs they like were just lucky.
- 4) There are some careers that are just for men, others just for women.
- 5) A career must be chosen when you're young.
- 6) I'll take a test and it will tell me what career is best for me.
- 7) No one can help me choose a career.

Myths

These are myths. In other words, they are not true statements. Let's look at each one.

Myth 1: There is one best career for me. The truth is that there are probably a number of careers in which you could be happy and successful, no matter who you are. The problem is that you may not know about some of them. There are 20,000 careers listed by the U.S. government; how many can you name? Occupations can be grouped into clusters and your task is to find a cluster that matches you.

Myth 2: The lifelong commitment. Almost every source in career development predicts that people who enter the job market today will change careers three to five times before they retire.

Myth 3: It's all a matter of luck. Although a little good luck never hurt anyone's chances, the fact is that we make a lot of our own luck by the decisions we make. Good decisions can make you look (and feel) very lucky. You need to learn how to make good decisions.

Myth 4: That's a man's (or woman's) job. This myth is prehistoric nonsense. It is nearly impossible to find a career that is (or should be) for men or women only.

Myth 5: Choose while you're young. People make successful changes in their occupation up to and including their retirement. There's no reason you can't do it, too.

Myth 6: The take-a-test solution. Although some tests or other instruments can be helpful, most of the progress comes in the hard work of going through a process. There are no "quick-fixes."

Myth 7: I've got to go it alone. There are professional career counselors available to help you through the process. "Career choice" is really "career development" and is a lifelong process that you can learn. A trained counselor can teach you the process and help you through it.

Hits

How do you go about making your career choice a hit? The first thing is to have an understanding of a logical, orderly process that you can use the rest of your life. The components of a process that work well are:

- 1) Knowledge of self
- 2) Knowledge of the world of work
- 3) Dealing with blocks or barriers
- 4) Decision making

Hit 1: Self-knowledge. Each of us has some knowledge of ourselves, but to make a good career choice you need to analyze such things as: your interests (what you really enjoy); your values (what's really important to you); your skills (what you are good at); your dreams (what you would be if you could be anything); your limitations (real vs. imagined); your support system (what you've got going for you outside yourself); your energy level; your risk-taking posture; your financial base; your