

NOW WHAT?

A self-reflective guide to help you navigate
your career journey.



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WELCOME!

If you downloaded this guide, it might be because you just graduated from school and aren't sure what to do next. Maybe you've been a stay-at-home parent for the past few years and are now ready to reenter the workforce. Or, maybe it feels like you're having an existential crisis and you no longer want to continue down the path that you're on.

Sound like you? Here's the good news - downloading this guide is your first step to moving past the confusion and **finding your next role.**



First, let's start with some internal reflection.

Chances are, if you are feeling a little lost, the following questions may have already popped into your head and you're not sure how to answer. That's okay! No one will be grading your work. This guide is purely for you. If you don't know how to respond to a prompt right now, skip ahead and the thoughts may come to you as you spend more time reflecting. Use this like a journal – there are no right or wrong answers. Just your thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

What to expect

Be prepared to answer questions like:

- What do you want out of life?
- How do you want to spend your time?
- Are you ready to start a career or continue your education?

Use this guide to work through one of the toughest parts of building your career: defining what you want and how to achieve it.



DISCOVER WHAT YOU KNOW

Your past experiences, like at work or in school, can tell you a lot about what direction to go in moving forward. In this section, think about and compile what you know and what you've already accomplished.

Looking back at your work history, think of your strengths, experience, and skills. Place them in the appropriate box below. Consider any extracurricular activities and organizations you've participated in.

Love It & I'm Great at It

Like It & I'm Good at It

Hate It, But I'm Good at It

Hate It & I'm Bad at It

QUICK QUESTIONS

What about your professional portfolio do you feel needs improvement in terms of knowledge, skills, and experience?

What do you feel is stopping you from achieving your goals?

Who or what kind of work inspires and motivates you?

Evaluate your network and ask yourself: "The people I am going to ask to support me in accomplishing my goals are..." List those people here.

DEFINE WHAT YOU NEED

Now that you've thought about all that you have to offer a future employer, let's think about what you need in a career to help you feel fulfilled.

Use the box below to respond to questions provided on the following page.

A large white rectangular area with a clipped top-left corner, intended for writing responses to questions.



Personal & Professional Values

How do you want to spend your time?
What can you see yourself doing every single day?

Whether it be to society, your community, or your future employer, what do you want to contribute?

What values are most important to you about a potential employer?

When you hear the phrase “dream job,” what comes to mind?



Work-Life Balance / Environment

Do you see yourself working for a large/mid-sized company or a small, family-owned company?

In-person, hybrid, or remote? What about the physical environment: quiet or private workspace, high energy, lights, colors, sitting versus standing desks, etc.

Introvert or extrovert? Do you work better independently or as a team?

What is your learning style and what type of management style do you prefer?

Do you prefer a regular shift? Overnights? Weekends? 4-day workweeks?



Location & Travel

Are you willing to relocate?

How far are you willing to travel for relocation?

Do you want to travel for work? What percentage of your time?

What amount of time are you willing to spend on your commute?

Do you have reliable transportation?



Compensation, Benefits, & Perks

- What's your ideal salary? Consider base plus any bonuses and profit sharing, opportunity for raises, travel expense reimbursement.
- What benefits and perks would outweigh salary? If this is your dream job, would you be willing to take a lower wage?
- Does in-house childcare or vouchers interest you? Is this something that affects you currently? What about in 5 years?
- What benefits are important to you? Think of things like medical, dental, vision, 401(k), life insurance, pet insurance.
- Are perks important to you? Gym membership, phone or internet expense reimbursement. What about ample PTO, vacation time, mental health days, sick days, tuition reimbursement?



Growth & Development

- Where do you see yourself 1 year from now? In 5 years? 10 years?
- What is a short-term goal that you have set for yourself?
- What is a long-term goal that you have set for yourself?
- What steps do you need to take to get you to where you want to be?
- Are there opportunities for growth?



Continued.

Use the box below to respond to the questions provided on the following page.

APPLY IT TO YOUR SEARCH

To-Do List

- Ensure that your professional portfolio is to your liking by updating your resume, editing your social media profiles, and seeking certificates that show what you know.
- Turn your strengths, experience, and skills into keywords. Identify these terms in job descriptions to find positions relevant to you.
- Analyze the aspects that made you want to participate in your extracurricular activities. Consider these values to look for in potential careers.
- Jot down a contact sheet of your support system. This can include academia, colleagues, friends, family, etc. Think of anyone who may be willing to lend you a hand in your career development. Share your goals, ask for references, get additional opinions on your resume, and have someone review your online presence.
- Discover the career pathways of those you admire and determine how they can be applied to your journey. Find mentors to help you navigate these aspirations.
- Imagine your ideal job offer. With that in mind, specify your preferences. Document your expectations (what you consider mandatory), wish list items (what you would like, but can do without), and dealbreakers (what you can't settle for). Refine these notes by comparing your ideas to the current job market.

Expectations: *Must* have

Wish List: *Nice* to have

Dealbreakers: *Can't* have

What's Next? —

Thank you for downloading this guide, and we sincerely hope that it helped you better realize a path forward. Whether you're just starting the process of discovering what to do with your life or have been going down this road for some time, you are not alone in your feelings and thoughts!

The road to self-discovery isn't easy. Everyone is at a different place in the process. There are many different types of careers out there, and all of them can provide a sense of satisfaction and purpose.



Continue using this guide to help you on your career path. **If you need help in the process, reach out to the recruiting experts at The Reserves Network.**

Share with us your interests, experience, and goals. We'll offer opportunities and advice to help you take the next step in your career. With 40 years of building relationships with hundreds of employers, **The Reserves Network knows where the jobs are – even those that are never advertised. We can connect you with the right people.**

We wish you all the best on your journey ahead. Congratulations on taking this first step!

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