

Career Connections Series

Myths about Career Planning

The following is a list of some of the more commonly held false assumptions that college students have about the process of career planning.

- The choice of a major or occupation is irreversible. Once you make it, you cannot change your mind.
- There is a single right career for everyone.
- It is not okay to be undecided since being undecided is a sign of immaturity.
- Nobody else is undecided. I am all alone.
- Somewhere there is a test that can tell me what to do with the rest of my life.
- I know other people who have known what they wanted to be since childhood. Something is wrong with me because I cannot be that way.
- Others know what is best for me.
- Somewhere there is an expert who can tell me what to do.
- Everyone must climb the ladder of success even if it means doing things that do not interest you.
- You must thoroughly analyze all aspects of a choice before you implement it, otherwise you are not really prepared.
- People are either successful or complete failures in their career pursuits. There is no in-between.
- Go where the money is, regardless of what kind of work it involves.
- The world of work is changing so rapidly that you really cannot plan for the future.
- We should respect tradition and maintain different types of work for men and women.
- Work is the only real way to personal fulfillment.
- I must choose between really having a career and having a family.
- Women should not compete with men for jobs, especially those that involve creativity, managing others, and decision making. Since they are passive, emotional, and respond to things intuitively, women are just not equipped to handle such situations.
- Life is always unfair. There just seems to be one interested in what I really want to study.
- It is preferable to avoid making a decision than to make the wrong decision rather than the idea that there is no perfectly 'right' decision for any situation.
- Career decisions are irrevocably and of life and death importance ... instead of the idea that it is okay for people to change their decision and the world will not end
- A wrong decision is a failure and this is horrible ... instead of the idea that one makes the best decision with available information, and if in the light of future information it appears another decision would have been more profitable, then one learns and applies this knowledge to future decisions.
- Deciding against an option (e.g., further education) now means I am giving up that option forever instead of the idea that if I really want to do something in the future, I can probably create the opportunity.
- When making career choices, it is important to please the significant other people in my life ... instead of idea that it is important to consider myself first and foremost when making career decisions.
- I assume I do not have the ability to do well the things I want to do ... instead of the idea that I have a unique combination of skills and talents that I can apply to the areas that interest me.
- I have made mistakes in the past which are controlling my actions today instead of believing I can now take control of the decisions which will determine my career path.

- There is one and only one right job for me and true happiness is impossible until I find it instead of the idea that there are a number of jobs with which I could be very happy.
- If I accept a job, I am committed to it even if it becomes boring or unsatisfying ... instead of the notion that I can leave one job and move on to another without acquiring a negative reputation or considering myself a failure as a human being.
- My career can or must meet all of my needs and utilize all of my abilities ... instead of the ideas that my career will satisfy some of my needs as it is and may be adapted to fit me more closely while the balance of my needs can be met elsewhere: family, hobbies, community activities, friendships, etc.
- Acquiring the responsibility of a decision is too much for me to handle instead of seeing myself as a person who daily makes decisions and lives with my consequences.
- My happiness on the job is determined entirely by forces beyond my control (fate, other people, institutional policies) ... rather than the idea that although I may not like a situation, I can control what I choose to do about it.
- If I really "had my head together," I would know exactly "what I want to be when I grow up." instead of the ideas that people make career decisions throughout their lives, and it is okay to be temporarily undecided about my next career decision at any given moment in my life.