



CAREER COUNCELLING FOR STUDENTS

Worrying seems like part of the job description for parents. Little kids, little problems; bigger kids ...

As your child grows up the time eventually comes for them to spread their wings and launch into adulthood. Parenting takes a tricky turn. You want what's best for your child and, more often than not, what's best *seems* so obvious (to you, at least)! Yet in their quest for independence, yours input is likely the input they most often dismiss, disregard and discredit.

Enter **Career Coaching** for students.

For many parents, this is a foreign concept and one that may appear frivolous, especially when most high schools are staffed with their own college and career counsellors, and most colleges boast career centres. Both are designed to help your student focus on the next step.

The truth is our children almost never take advantage of these facilities often viewing them as a resource for someone else (i.e. the dumb kids; the clueless kids, the kids who don't know what they want in life).

When parents do become familiar with the myriad benefits that a one-on-one career development coach can offer to help their child in high school or college, other worrying questions enter the equation.

Is it worth the cost? ... Will my child get anything out of it? ... What if it opens doors we'd rather keep closed?

WHEN THE MAKE-BELIEVE QUESTION BECOMES A REAL-LIFE DECISION

"What do you want to be when you grow up?"

It's a question we ask our young children as they dress up as cowboys and princesses. We playfully wince when they "operate" on us as doctors and raise our hands as students in their make-believe classrooms.

By their junior or senior year of high school, students will have taken more rigorous classes and gained broader academic experiences. While that path begins in high school, it extends through university — and beyond.

How well do we really prepare our children to answer this question when the time comes to make real-life decisions?

Apparently, not very well! I am of the view that this particular question should be relegated to the fantasy zone. Our children emerging into the economically active population have a very different perspective of what a job and indeed a career is. This perspective is very different from that of many parents and employers. Research has suggested that many of the jobs that exist today will not be around in the foreseeable future. Many of the employment constructs that so many of us are familiar with today are changing rapidly and will soon be very different in the not-so distant future.

"What do you want to be when you grow up?"

This is a process that is often started in the first grade when children are programmed to begin thinking about that singular career path that they would take for the rest of their life. It is often reinforced in our schools by well-meaning teachers who ask students to "Write down what you want to be when you grow up and draw a picture of it." For some children the answer is simple and clear however for more and more millennial children this question is far from easy or simple to articulate an answer to.

Many young people finish high-school and go on to college and university because that's the formula that is socially acceptable. It is what is expected and so thousands are spent on university/college qualifications.

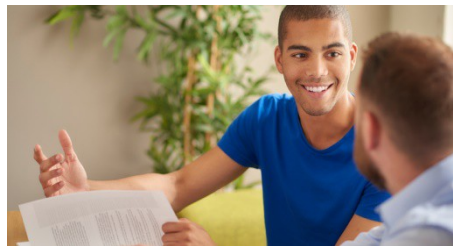
Many figure out during their college/ university years that it is less about "what they **want to be** when they grow up... and more about **what they want to do with their life and how they want to contribute to the world** they live in" that is more important a question to answer.

The new generation is looking for **value and purpose, opportunities for personal development and growth**. They are also very clear that their values matter they are the “giving generation.” Against this backdrop and the myriad research on millennials in the workplace – perhaps it’s time we changed the questions we ask of our children.

Choosing a career that is misaligned with one’s **interests, abilities and values** can lead to challenges ranging from boredom to frustration and despair.

The stakes are too high to merely hope for the best.

Career coaching can benefit students in a variety of phases and circumstances throughout their educational journey.



HOW CAREER COACHING CAN HELP

- o Identify their unique skills/strengths
- o Highlight their passions, values and interests
- o Uncover expectations placed upon them by self and others
- o Develop the language to more accurately communicate what they’re good at and what they like to do
- o Strategize to develop concrete steps that can be taken to further their understanding of careers and jobs that will underpin their core values and beliefs in various industries
- o Increase self-confidence and self-efficacy

It’s never too early — or too late — for career exploration.

DECISION POINTS IN YOUR CHILD’S CAREER JOURNEY



From high school through career launch, students face a variety “decision points.”

This process isn’t necessarily linear furthermore, as students gain deeper insights into who they are — and how they want to contribute to the world they live in as adults:-

Students frequently consider the following questions at various stages during their high-school and college/university years; these are questions that a career coach can help them explore.

High school

- What do I want to be when I grow up and how do I get from here to there?
- What am I good at? What do I like to do?
- Is college right for me? Are there other options?
- How should I frame my college search? What factors top my list of criteria?

Early college

- What major should I choose?
- What classes should I take?
- Should I sign up for clubs or participate in other non-academic activities?

Mid college

- Help! How do I know if I chose the wrong major — and is it too late to change?
- Should I start applying for internships? Where do I begin?
- What can I do with my major?

Late college

- What can I do with my major? (again or still)
- I know what I want ... how do I get there?
- Is grad school the next best step?

After dropping/failing out of college

- What steps can I take to regain control of my future?
- How can I get over feeling like a failure?

- Should I consider returning to college?
- What career options are available to me without a college degree?

During time off (e.g., gap year, unexpected emergency, medical leave)

- Is college/returning to college the right choice for me? If so, when?
- Have I learned something important about myself during this time off that impacts my major or intended career?

Career launch

- What's the right job for me?
- How can I use my major to find the right job?
- Should I wait for “the right job” or take any job?
- How can I prepare for a successful job search?

The career coaching process is the same — yet different — for students, depending on their age, level of school and circumstances.

WILL CAREER COACHING FOR MY CHILD OPEN A CAN OF WORMS?

We often hear parents express concerns that their child is already half way through that degree, and that exploring career options at this point would open too many doors, a can of worms they'd rather keep closed.

One of a parents' biggest fear in bringing their child in for career coaching is that the potential that s/he'd choose something altogether different and that the majority of their college credits would be “wasted” is very real. There is of course the issue of the money already spent.

Career coaching can help students in this predicament by identifying how their college credits, as well as accumulated skills and experiences can be applied in a variety of ways.

It may be true that a different profession is what emerges out of the process; however, in many cases, the student develops a new orientation, and switching majors may not be necessary. While career coaching does open options, it's not just about job options. It also opens one's perspectives on what is possible / achievable.

While it may be true that a ‘can of worms’ could be opened, I've had clients who are in their 30s and have cycled through a couple of jobs

express how they wish they would have looked more closely/deliberately at their choice of major while in college, when they first had that gut feeling that something wasn't quite right. They recognize that it would have saved them a decade or so of frustration and feeling lost.

WHAT IF WE WIND UP WHERE WE STARTED?

On the flip side, some parents tell us that they worry about “spending money for nothing” if, at the end of the engagement, their student finds that they are already on track to do what they are best suited for.

There is no price tag on peace of mind.



Sometimes addressing and dealing with doubts and uncertainty is all that is needed to solidify decisions to pursue a particular career and reinforces the readiness to move forward with confidence. Career Coaching can pave the way to a clearer understanding of interests, abilities, skills and values — and provide the tools to deftly deal with future decision points.

CAREER COACHING FOR YOUR STUDENT: RISK OR SAFETY NET?

Ignorance is rarely bliss. And it's particularly true when it comes to making choices around college and career.

During the years leading up to — and through — college, you and your child have a unique opportunity to partner together to conduct research, explore options and make informed decisions.

Work is a space we inhabit for a large portion of our time — in minutes, days and years.

It is often how we define ourselves and it can be the place where we are given chances to grow and develop.

Equipping your child with the tools of self-knowledge can empower them to purposely obtain work roles that allow them to contribute in a

meaningful way — and lead to a deeply rewarding and satisfying career path.

While, as with any type of uncharted journey, career exploration carries a certain level of risk, it pales in comparison to the risk of leaving your child's career decision to chance.