CAREER FLOW & DEVELOPMENT
Hope in Action
SECOND EDITION

Spencer Niles, Norman Amundson, Roberta Neault, & Hyung Joon Yoon

cognella
SAN DIEGO
# BRIEF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preface</th>
<th>xi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION I: INTRODUCTION TO HOPE-ACTION THEORY</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: Creating Hope</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: Developing Hope-Action Competencies</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION II: SELF-REFLECTION AND SELF-CLARITY</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3: Pursuing Your Interests (Passions)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4: Mapping Your Skills: Those You Have and Those You Need</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5: Personality Style</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6: Understanding Values Through Workplace Attraction</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 7: Connecting With Others: Social, Emotional, and Financial Support</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION III: VISIONING, GOAL SETTING, AND PLANNING</strong></td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 8: Visioning Future Possibilities</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 9: Goal Setting and Planning</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 10: Connecting to the World of Work: Research, Job Leads, and Trend Spotting</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECTION IV: IMPLEMENTING AND ADAPTING</strong></td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 11: Making the Most of Opportunities</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 12: Turning Possibilities Into Realities</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 13: Engaging the Search: Generating Leads, Networking, Interviewing, and Making a Successful Transition</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 14: Adapting at Present and Future Moments</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Index 215
### DETAILED CONTENTS

**Preface** ................................. xi

**SECTION I: INTRODUCTION TO HOPE-ACTION THEORY** ................................. 1

### CHAPTER 1: Creating Hope .......................... 3

| Objectives | 3 |
| Why Is Hope Important? | 5 |
| Activity 1.1 Goal Identification | 6 |
| Activity 1.2 Values Sorting | 7 |
| Activity 1.3 Hope-Action Thinking | 10 |
| Activity 1.4 Hopeful Career State (HCS) Scale | 11 |
| Summary | 13 |
| Questions for Reflection and Discussion | 13 |
| References | 13 |

### CHAPTER 2: Developing Hope-Action Competencies ............................... 15

| Objectives | 15 |
| Hope-Action Theory | 17 |
| Hope in Educational and Career Planning | 17 |
| Activity 2.1 The Case of Lori | 18 |
| Developing Hope-Action Theory Competencies | 19 |
| Self-Reflection | 19 |
| Activity 2.2 Self-Reflections | 20 |
| Self-Clarity | 20 |
| Activity 2.3 Preoccupation Exercise | 23 |
| Activity 2.4 Role Model Activity | 24 |
| Activity 2.5 Role Model Goal Statement | 25 |
| Using Self-Clarity to Envision Future Possibilities | 26 |
| Visioning | 26 |
| Activity 2.6 Visioning | 27 |
| Summary | 28 |
| Questions for Reflection and Discussion | 28 |
| References | 28 |
| Additional Resources | 29 |
| Hope-Action Inventory | 29 |
| Strategies for Developing Hope-Action Competencies | 29 |

**SECTION II: SELF-REFLECTION AND SELF-CLARITY** ............................... 33

### CHAPTER 3: Pursuing Your Interests (Passions) ............................... 35

| Objectives | 35 |
| Identifying and Analyzing a Full Range of Interests | 36 |
| Activity 3.1 Things I Enjoy Doing | 37 |
| Activity 3.2 Things I Don't Enjoy Doing | 41 |
| Viewing Interests Through the John Holland Lens | 43 |
| Activity 3.3 Using the John Holland System | 44 |
| Viewing Interests as Part of a Larger Centric Wheel Framework | 46 |
| Summary | 47 |
| Questions for Reflection and Discussion | 47 |
| References | 48 |

### CHAPTER 4: Mapping Your Skills: Those You Have and Those You Need ............................... 49

| Objectives | 49 |
| Mapping Accomplishments and Transferable Skills | 51 |
| Activity 4.1 Accomplishment Profile | 51 |
| Activity 4.2 STAR Story | 54 |
| Activity 4.3 Significant Others Questionnaire | 56 |
| Activity 4.4 Data Mining Transferable Skills | 58 |
| Activity 4.5 Skills I Most Want to Use at Work | 60 |
| Benchmarking Skills Against Others | 61 |
| Activity 4.6 Foundational or Essential Skills | 62 |
| Conducting a Gap Analysis | 63 |
| Activity 4.7 Gap Analysis and Skill Development Strategies | 63 |
| Implementing Strategies to Develop the Skills You Need | 64 |
| Activity 4.8 Reframing Criticisms | 64 |
| Prioritizing Skills/Competencies to Showcase | 64 |
### Chapter 5: Personality Style 67

**Objectives** 67

**Personal Style Assessment** 68
- Activity 5.1 Personal Style Assessment 68
- Activity 5.2 Strengths and Limitations of Personality Styles 74

**Effective Use, Overuse, and Underuse of Personal Style** 75
- Action Oriented 75
- Influencing 75
- Harmonious 76
- Prudent 76
- People/Task 77
- Introspective/Interactive 77

**Summary** 78

**Questions for Reflection and Discussion** 78

---

### Chapter 6: Understanding Values Through Workplace Attraction 79

**Objectives** 79

**Factors Associated With the Workplace Attractor Model** 80
- Security 80
- Location 81
- Relationships 81
- Recognition 81
- Contribution 81
- Work Fit 81
- Flexibility 81
- Learning 81
- Responsibility 81
- Innovation 81

**Assessing the Relative Importance of Workplace Attractors** 82
- Activity 6.1 The Importance of Workplace Attractors 82
- Activity 6.2 Rank Ordering Workplace Attractors 85
- Activity 6.3 Using a Pyramid to Assess Relative Importance 85

**The Changing Nature of Workplace Attractors** 86
- Activity 6.4 Changing Attractors 87

**Summary** 88

**Questions for Reflection and Discussion** 88

**References** 88

---

### Chapter 7: Connecting With Others: Social, Emotional, and Financial Support 90

**Objectives** 90

**Access Your Allies to Support Your Career-Life Goals** 91
- Activity 7.1 Self-Clarity Themes 92
- Activity 7.2 Learning From Contradictions 93
- Activity 7.3 Integrating Feedback With the Work That Interests You 94

**The Influences of Culture, Community, Attitude, and Expectations** 95
- Activity 7.4 Voices From the Past 95
- Activity 7.5 The Impact of Culture 97
- Activity 7.6 The Impact of Relationships on Careers 98
- Activity 7.7 Hope for the Future 98
- Activity 7.8 Staying Positive at Work 99

**Access Mentors, Coaches, and Guides to Help You Continue to Grow** 100
- Activity 7.9 Identify Potential Mentors 101
- Activity 7.10 Identify Potential Coaches 101
- Activity 7.11 Accessing Guidance 102

**Strategic Impression Management** 104
- Activity 7.12 Impression Management 104

**The Influence of Financial Management on Achieving Career-Life Goals** 106
- Activity 7.13 Job Search/Post-Graduation Expenses 106

**Strengthening Your Supports** 107
- Summary 107

**Questions for Reflection and Discussion** 108

**References** 108

**Additional Resources** 108

---

### Section III: Visioning, Goal Setting, and Planning 113

### Chapter 8: Visioning Future Possibilities 115

**Objectives** 115
Visioning ..................................... 116
Career Flow ................................... 117
    Activity 8.1 Career Flow Assessment ........ 119
Increasing the Probability of Career Flow Occurring .................................... 119
    Activity 8.2 Daryll's Career Flow .......... 120
    Activity 8.3 Your Career Flow .......... 121
Brainstorming Future Possibilities .................................... 123
    Activity 8.4 Brainstorming Activity ...... 123
Personal Vision Statement Guidelines .......... 124
    Vision Statement Examples ................. 125
    Activity 8.5 Your Personal Vision Statement .................................. 125
Summary ..................................... 125
Questions for Reflection and Discussion ...... 126
Reference ..................................... 126
Additional Resources .................................. 126

CHAPTER 9: Goal Setting and Planning .... 127
Objectives .................................... 127
A SMART Goal-Setting Strategy .......... 129
    Activity 9.1 SMART Goal Activity ........ 130
Planning ..................................... 130
    Activity 9.2 Planning Activity ............. 131
Cautions for Goal Setting and Planning .... 132
    Activity 9.3 Valuable Goals Checklist ...... 133
Setting Adaptable Goals and Plans .......... 135
Implementing and Adapting: Warming Up for Section IV .................. 135
Summary ..................................... 135
Questions for Reflection and Discussion .... 136
Additional Resources .................................. 136

CHAPTER 10: Connecting to the World of Work: Research, Job Leads, and Trend Spotting ............. 137
Objectives .................................... 137
Conduct Occupational Research:
    Background and Emerging Trends .......... 138
    Activity 10.1 Occupational Highlights and Current Trends .................. 139
Use Observations and Networks as Sources of Career Information .......... 140
    Activity 10.2 Informational Interviewing .......... 140
    Conduct Culture Audits ...................... 142
Activity 10.3 Culture Audit ................. 142
Engage in Job Shadowing or Work Experiences .......... 144
Find a Career Focus: Integrate
    Self-Assessment Results and Workplace Information .................. 144
    Activity 10.4 Career Options .......... 145
Communicate Career Goals Using Elevator Statements .......... 146
    Activity 10.5 Elevator Statement .......... 146
Identify Sources of Specific Job Leads .......... 147
    Activity 10.6 Exploring Advertised Jobs .......... 147
    Activity 10.7 Unadvertised Jobs ............. 149
Spot Trends That Will Impact Your Career .......... 149
    Activity 10.8 Changes in Technology .......... 150
    Activity 10.9 Five Trends .......... 151
    Activity 10.10 Logistics of Work .......... 152
    Activity 10.11 Impact of Trends on Careers .......... 153
    Activity 10.12 Impact of the Global Economy .......... 154
Summary ..................................... 154
Questions for Reflection and Discussion .... 155
Reference ..................................... 156
Additional Resources .................................. 156
Appendix: Online Sources of Advertised Jobs .................. 156

SECTION IV: IMPLEMENTING AND ADAPTING .......... 161

CHAPTER 11: Making the Most of Opportunities .......... 163
Objectives .......... 163
Engaging in Passion Projects .......... 164
Club Activities: Finding and Working
    With Like-Minded People .......... 165
    Activity 11.1 Choosing a Club .......... 165
Volunteer Work .......... 166
    Activity 11.2 Developing Skills Through a Volunteer Opportunity .......... 167
Study and Work Abroad .......... 168
    Activity 11.3 Countries to Explore .......... 168
Joining a Professional Community .......... 169
    Activity 11.4 Three Professional Organizations in My Field .......... 169
### Chapter 12: Turning Possibilities Into Realities

**Objectives**
- 173

**Effective Writing**
- 175

**Resumes and Cover Letters**
- 175
  - **Resume Purposes**
  - 175
  - **Activity 12.1 Creating a Targeted Resume**
  - 176
  - **Resume Styles**
  - 177
  - **Cover Letters**
  - 180

**Career Portfolios**
- 181

**Impression Management**
- 182
  - **Paper**
  - 182
  - **Phone**
  - 182
  - **In Person**
  - 182
  - **Online**
  - 183
  - **Activity 12.2 Impression Management: What’s Working? What’s Not?**
  - 183

**Managing References**
- 184

**Summary**
- 185

**Questions for Reflection and Discussion**
- 186

**Reference**
- 186

**Additional Resources**
- 186

### Chapter 13: Engaging the Search: Generating Leads, Networking, Interviewing, and Making a Successful Transition

**Objectives**
- 188

**Generating Work Opportunities**
- 189
  - **Activity 13.1 Contacts and Leads**
  - 190

**Networking Effectively**
- 191

**Mastering the Interview Process**
- 193
  - **Types of Interviews**
  - 193
  - **Activity 13.2 STAR Stories Revisited**
  - 195
  - **Stages in the Interview Process**
  - 196

**Supporting Transitions to Next Career Stages**
- 199
  - **Bridges Transition Model**
  - 200
  - **Activity 13.3 Transitioning Through the Three Zones**
  - 200
  - **Roller Coaster Model**
  - 200

**Summary**
- 201

**Questions for Reflection and Discussion**
- 201

**Reference**
- 201

**Additional Resources**
- 202

### Chapter 14: Adapting at Present and Future Moments

**Objectives**
- 203

**Social and Economic Trends**
- 204

**Plans Interrupted: The Nature of Life**
- 205

**The Problem With Problem Solving**
- 205
  - **Activity 14.1 Creating Versus Problem Solving**
  - 206
  - **Activity 14.2 Applying a Creating Approach**
  - 207

**Perceiving Challenges as Opportunities**
- 208

**Unemployment**
- 208

**Underemployment**
- 209

**Work Challenges Through Mergers and Downsizing**
- 210

**Life Challenges**
- 210

**Summary**
- 210

**Questions for Reflection and Discussion**
- 211

**Reference**
- 211

**Additional Resources**
- 212

**Index**
- 215
This book provides a model that readers can use throughout their lifetimes to engage in educational and career planning. The model we introduce is one that has been tested and used with a variety of populations as diverse as university students, Syrian refugees, unemployed workers, and others. Please note that a significant portion of the content for the second edition is new.

This edition of Career Flow emphasizes the hope-action theory. As a result, the book is more focused. Research using the hope-action theory indicates a strong connection between hope and academic engagement, student retention, success in the job search process, and career goal clarity, to name just a few. Our hope (no pun intended) is that readers will find this book helpful in identifying career goals, putting goals into action, and revising their goals when that is necessary. In essence, hope-action theory provides a framework that readers can use throughout their lives to create careers with meaning and purpose.

In Section I, we introduce the essential aspects of hope-action theory. More specifically, in Chapter 1, we introduce the importance of hope in the career and educational planning process. We also discuss ways to create and sustain hope across time. This content provides the foundation for Chapter 2 in which we provide an introductory overview to the key competencies comprising the hope-action theory.

Section II provides a more in-depth look into the crucial process of engaging in self-reflection to develop self-clarity. This process provides a solid foundation for all career and educational planning. The chapters of Section II guide readers through deeper self-exploration and address the topics of passions, skills, personal style, and values (Chapters 3–6). Importantly, Chapter 7 highlights the need for support (e.g., emotional, informational, and financial) in career and educational planning. Support, the common factor emerging in almost all research related to resilience, gets people through challenging times and helps them maintain their engagement in the challenging processes of career and educational planning.

Section III represents a turning point in the book. The steps discussed (vision, goal setting, and planning) in Chapters 8 and 9 are the points in the hope-action theory when the primarily inward process of self-exploration turns outward as the reader learns how to connect self-information to future possibilities. This section culminates with a focus in Chapter 10 on connecting to possibilities through occupational research, integrating self-assessment data, learning how to communicate career goals to others, and making use of trend spotting in career and educational planning.

Section IV moves even more deeply into outward action via the process of implementing decisions and turning possibilities into realities (Chapters 11 and 12, respectively). Chapter 11 highlights how to intentionally make the most of the opportunities connected to career and educational goals. Chapter 12 guides readers in making possibilities realities through effective job searching. Chapter 13 addresses how to generate job leads and work opportunities. We also address how to refine job interview skills and develop social support in the job search process. Finally, Section IV concludes (Chapter 14) by helping readers learn how to use new information they acquire about themselves and occupations as they engage in the ongoing process of career and educational planning.

In essence, the book ends by returning readers to the beginning (self-reflection to develop self-clarity). This cyclical process highlights two essential facts: (a) The self evolves, thus, we are continually making choices and adjusting to the choices we make, and (b) the world of work also evolves over time, making choosing and adjusting to one’s choices continuous requirements. Toward those realities, the hope-action theory is a model that readers can use throughout their lifetimes to engage in productive career and educational planning.
INTRODUCTION TO HOPE-ACTION THEORY
OBJECTIVES

This chapter focuses on the importance of hope in career planning. We introduce the hope-action theory as a strategy for creating and sustaining hope in your career development. After reading and completing activities in this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

- Understand the importance of hope
- Understand how to generate and sustain hope in your career
Alice met with her career counselor at State University to discuss her recently completed summer work experience. She had worked with an accounting firm as an intern between her junior and senior years of college. She was concerned that she often found her workdays boring and not challenging. Entering her first work experience related to her academic major, she expected to find each day to be enjoyable and meaningful. Alice was thrown by this experience. Although there were also many positive moments, there were also moments that were anything but positive. Is this how it was supposed to be? Did her negative experiences mean that she had chosen the wrong career and/or the wrong academic major? She felt panic as she considered these questions while walking to meet with her academic advisor for the first time since she returned to campus following her internship. Although she had entered her internship full of hope, she exited it with more questions than answers and with her hope in doubt.

Alice’s first work experience related to her academic major was a bit of a “shocker.” It raised important questions for her to consider. Although there were positive aspects to it, the less-than-positive experiences shook her confidence and her hope. At the start, she was excited to enter the internship and looked forward to her work. She had hoped that her experience would reinforce her choice of major and career. What she had not planned for were the challenges that she encountered. Alice was having trouble integrating these experiences into her overall understanding of what a work experience should be like. In essence, she had expected things to flow much more smoothly. She was shaken by “the rough waters” she encountered in her internship and their implications for her future plans. Were they signs of a poor career choice? Were they indications of “issues” that she needed to address to become a better prospective employee? What should she think at this point and what should she do? Where she had been hopeful, she now was concerned, skeptical, and questioning her choices. Moreover, she is unclear as to what she should do next and her hopefulness has been replaced by worry.

The answers to these questions, to a great degree, depend on how you conceptualize career development. Many times people think about work the same way that they think about relationships. Specifically, that difficult times suggest that one has made a poor choice in a partner or, in Alice’s instance, a career. Although that can be true, it would be unrealistic to expect one’s work (and one’s relationships) to always be blissful and positive. In all careers, there are challenges and rewards. There are times when things go smoothly, perhaps even effortlessly. There are other times, however, when it feels like a constant uphill struggle. There are times of excitement and times of boredom. Thus, in managing your career effectively it is important to be able to handle the positive and the challenging aspects of your work. Alice was struggling with determining which challenges she experienced were normal and which were indications that she had made a poor choice. To be sure, there are times when changing a job (or a partner!) may make the most sense, but, many times, being able to navigate your career experiences effectively depends on having a realistic understanding of work, a confident and positive attitude, and the requisite skills to handle what comes your way. Most of all, you need to maintain a sense of hope about your future.
**Why Is Hope Important?**

Most of us have experienced times when we did not feel very hopeful about our lives. See if you can recall a specific experience when you lacked hope, perhaps even felt hopeless. Try to imagine, just for a moment, the details of that experience. What happened to shake your hopefulness? Like Alice, you may have tried out something and then learned some things about the choice you made that were not what you expected or that you even liked. These experiences may have led you to become unsure about yourself and your career. Continue focusing on your specific hope-challenged experience. How did you feel about yourself in that moment? How confident were you at that time in your ability to do things successfully? What questions did it lead you to ask about yourself and your situation? What was your energy level? Did you feel stuck? Maybe immobilized? Lacking in motivation? Did you lack a sense of direction and purpose in that moment? When our hope is low, these reactions are all possible experiences. Such experiences can derail our momentum and lead us to ask serious questions about who we are and what we want. In the worst case, we can become depressed and feel unable to move forward. In such instances, we sometimes feel as though these more negative feelings will stay with us forever and that there is nothing we can do to shake them. We want our situation and our feelings to shift toward something more positive, but we might not have a strategy for creating this positive change in our lives.

We want you to know that there are proven steps you can take to make positive changes when you experience moments of hopelessness. You can use these steps to increase your hope, identify a goal, chart a direction, and move forward toward your goal with confidence and purpose. There is no superpower required to make this happen! The steps are easy to learn and practice. And, once learned, they will be helpful to you for the rest of your life.

Our goal in this book is to teach you these steps that will help you address any career challenge you will encounter, now and in the future. These steps, which anyone can learn, will feel like a superpower, but, as we noted, they really are not. Having said that, if by using them you feel more confident, more directed, happier, energized, motivated, and like you have a real sense of purpose in your life, then, well, maybe they are steps to a superpower!

A key to having these positive experiences is to understand the nature of hope and why hope is so important.

Research evidence consistently demonstrates that hope is associated with a number of positive outcomes across cultures. Specifically, high hope has been correlated with high levels of job performance, sports performance, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, clarity in career decision making, overall confidence, and academic achievement, to mention just a few of the ways in which hope is important in our lives. Conversely, lack of hope has been correlated with high levels of absenteeism from school and work, disengagement from academics, and higher levels of dropping out of school. So, having a way to create and sustain a sense of hope in your life is a big deal!

There are, however, many interpretations of the term “hope.” Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.) defines hope as “a desire accompanied by expectation of, or belief in, fulfillment.” Hope has been conceptualized in a variety of ways in the counseling literature. For example, Diemer and Blustein (2007) defined career-related hope as involving a person’s commitment to the notion of career and to working in the future, despite experiencing external barriers. Diemer and Blustein’s definition includes having a psychological commitment to working despite the challenges one may encounter in their career development. Others conceptualize hope as a “multidimensional life force characterized by confident yet uncertain expectations of achieving a future good” (Dufault
& Martocchio, 1985, p. 380). Averill, Catlin, and Chon (1990) conceptualize hope as primarily an emotion rather than a cognitive construct. Similarly, Bruininks and Malle (2005) conceptualize hope as an emotion that occurs when an individual is focused on an important positive future outcome, over which he or she has little (but still some) personal control.

Our definition of hope is based on the work of the late Rick Snyder (1994, 2002). Snyder, a clinical psychologist, was one of the world’s leading hope researchers. In Snyder’s approach to hope, he perceived success (both formative and summative success) related to goal pursuit as leading to positive emotions and, conversely, failure leading to negative emotions. High hope people respond differently than low hope people when they encounter impediments to goal achievement. High hope individuals typically respond more positively in such instances (i.e., they are more like to persist toward goal achievement) because they can identify alternative ways to achieve their goals and can adjust their strategies for goal achievement as necessary, while low hope individuals are less successful in this regard (Snyder, 1994). With this in mind, Snyder (2002) defined hope as “the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways” (p. 249). According to this theory, hopeful individuals are more likely to have practical goals for their lives. Moreover, they are able to find different ways to pursue their goals and, importantly, they take sustained actions toward goal achievement. Thus, in Snyder’s model, hope is comprised of three primary components: (a) a goal (or anchor points), (b) thoughts (or pathways) about how to achieve those goals, and (c) the confidence and willingness (agency) to achieve those goals. So, Snyder (2002) conceptualized hope as “primarily a way of thinking, with feelings playing an important, albeit contributory role” (p. 249).

Snyder’s definition of hope is very different than the more common belief that hope is simply wishful thinking. Undoubtedly, you have heard someone say something like “I hope things turn out okay.” There is nothing wrong with wishing for positive outcomes. Jiminy Cricket told Pinocchio that “when you wish upon a star your dreams come true.” Unfortunately, just wishing for an outcome rarely generates the outcome you desire. More usually some action has to happen for the positive outcomes you desire to become a reality. Wishing thinking just by itself is far too passive. It suggests that there is nothing for you to do to increase the probability of a desired outcome occurring. That is not the sort of hope we suggest you rely on. Rather, we recommend a view that aligns with Snyder’s, which is much more action oriented. In this approach, you must be motivated to take intentional actions to achieve an important and specific goal.

**ACTIVITY 1.1 Goal Identification**

Rather than continuing to read at this point, we ask that you take time to identify a specific goal that is important to you, one that will require some effort on your part but also one that you have a realistic probability of achieving in the next month.

Goals are important because they provide a purpose and direction for you. It is the difference between getting in your car and driving with no destination in mind and having a clear destination in mind. Once you identify a goal you have a direction to move toward. Goals anchor purposive behavior.

Goals can be short term or long term. They can big (for example, to earn a PhD) or small (to be well prepared for an exam next week). They must, however, be important to you. An important goal should be connected to your values. Try to identify the values that are embedded in the
goal you just identified. Values can be things such as making a positive difference in the world; helping others; earning a high income; using abilities; having time for family and friends; living in a healthy way (exercising, eating right, etc.); being in charge of your time; traveling; having a family; being creative; academic achievement; prestige; working hard; doing things that are interesting to you; following rules; and so on. Knowing which values are most important to you is important. Your goals should connect to your important values whenever this is possible; otherwise, it will not be a goal that you care about and you will not be motivated to achieve it. That said, it is true that some goals only connect to your values indirectly. For example, some people struggle with taking general education courses in college because they do not see a direct connection to their interests and goals. In most instances, however, these courses are required for graduation. In these situations, the best some can do is to understand that while a particular requirement is not connected to values in an obvious way, it is necessary to achieve a goal that is valued: graduation from college.

**ACTIVITY 1.2 Values Sorting**

Use the list that follows to identify your most important values. Limit your selection of values to no more than five by placing an “X” next to the value. Although there may be other values on the list that are important to you, limiting your list to five forces you to identify your most valued values. Feel free to use the “other” option to list a value that is important to you (in your top five) but that is not on the list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values List</th>
<th>Values List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_____ Good family relationships</td>
<td>_____ Associating with people I like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Financial security</td>
<td>_____ Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Job security</td>
<td>_____ Freedom to live where I choose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ A world that is free of discrimination</td>
<td>_____ Leisure time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Creativity</td>
<td>_____ Fame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Having a set routine</td>
<td>_____ Strong religious faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Time by myself</td>
<td>_____ Good health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Community activities</td>
<td>_____ Adventure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Physical activities</td>
<td>_____ World peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ An attractive physical appearance</td>
<td>_____ A beautiful home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Variety</td>
<td>_____ Having children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Power</td>
<td>_____ Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Recognition</td>
<td>_____ Helping others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Prestige</td>
<td>_____ Economic rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ Freedom from stress</td>
<td>_____ Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now, review your top-five list and try to place them in order of priority from 1 to 5. Write the name of the value next to the appropriate number and then define it for yourself. For example, I may value “economic rewards” and define that as having a job in which I earn $50,000 per year, but someone else may define it as earning no less than $100,000 per year. What matters is how you define it. Take the time to provide your definition. This is an important step; do not skip it.

**Values Definitions**

(1 = most important)

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

Now, reflect on the goal you identified. How well does the goal you identified connect to your values? If several of your top values connect to your goal, then you are likely to be more motivated to achieve that goal. If not, then you may want to revise your goal so that it is more connected to what is important to you. Finally, try to translate your definition of your most important values into a narrative statement that describes a potential career goal for you to strive toward. For example, if you value autonomy, creativity, economic rewards, good physical health, and helping others, your narrative statement could be something like the following:

I desire a career in which I will work independently, have the opportunity to create something to help others, earn a salary of at least $75,000 per year, and have enough free time for activities such as yoga and rock climbing.

Your statement only needs to incorporate your values; do not worry about identifying a specific occupation. That can happen later. For now, it is enough to capture your values, as you define them, in your narrative statement. This provides a starting place for further reflection and visioning—steps we will discuss later in the book.
Now, look back over what you have written. Are there ways that you are expressing each of these values in your life currently? If not, what can you do to change this? If you value living a healthy lifestyle, for example, what is your diet like? How often do you exercise? Are there changes you can make so that your life more fully reflects what you value? Identify any specific change you can make to increase the degree to which you express your important values in your life. Changes tend to be either to do more of something or to do less of something. One example could be something like increasing the number of days you exercise each week from two to four. Or, you could decide to eat less red meat and more salads. As you identify specific changes, you are identifying **pathways** toward achieving your goal, which in this case is increasing the degree to which you express your important values in your life activities. Pathways are specific steps you can take in your life to increase the probability of goal achievement. Try to break your steps into small and specific steps. For instance, if I decide to increase my exercise time each week but do not belong to a gym (and want to exercise at a gym), I will first need to decide which gym I will join. This sounds obvious, but each step must be divided into smaller steps so that you have clear and specific pathways toward each goal.

Once you identify the steps you can take toward goal achievement, you must ask yourself two questions related to each specific step or pathway you have identified. First, for each step ask yourself how confident you are that you can successfully complete that step. Rate your confidence on a scale of 1 (not confident that you can successfully complete the step) to 5 (completely confident that you can successfully complete the step). If you rate yourself 3 or lower, then you may find it helpful to discuss this with a career advisor or counselor. The focus of the conversation could be what you can do to increase your confidence. You could also examine whether your rating is accurate. That is, do you need to increase your capacity to successfully complete the steps or is your rating more fear based and not a true reflection of your ability to complete the steps you identified? You may also consider whether there are smaller steps you could take that will increase your confidence as you successfully complete them. You might decide, for instance, that while going to the gym four times per week is the eventual goal, starting with two or three times per week is more realistic and a better next step for you to take.

The second question you must ask yourself related to taking the steps you have identified to achieve your goal is whether you are likely to actually take the steps. This question relates to how motivated you are to achieve your goal. You may, for example, be completely confident that you can successfully complete the steps you identified but lack the motivation to do so. Again, rate yourself on a scale of 1 (not motivated at all) to 5 (completely motivated to take the steps you identified). If you rate yourself a 3 or lower, then it is important to consider whether the goal you identified needs to be adjusted so that it is one you are more motivated to achieve. In this case, consider again whether the goal captures qualities you truly value. Look for ways to adjust your goal so that it is more connected to your values. You also may want to discuss with a career advisor or career counselor ways to increase your motivation. It may be helpful to think about whether your beliefs are limiting your motivation. Some beliefs can be self-sabotaging (e.g., “If I take the steps I identified and am successful, others might not approve, so I will not try,” or “If I take the steps I identified and it does not work out the way I want it to, then I will be a failure”). False beliefs such as these are artificially self-limiting and fear based. Learning how to counter them with more positive, realistic, and accurate beliefs is important. For example, if you are reluctant to take the steps you identified because you fear “failure,” then you may find it helpful to redefine “failure” to focus on “learning.” If you take a step and the result is not what you wanted, then you learn...
important information about yourself and the goal you had identified. When you incorporate this learning into self-understanding and use it to create a new goal, you are, in fact, moving forward in positive and adaptable ways.

When it comes to career decision making, many people think you have to “know” before you can “do.” Their thinking is that you must have all the information you need and even a sort of guarantee that a choice will be the “right one” before proceeding with a decision. This is typically an impossible goal to achieve. The fact is that it is not until you actually “do” something that you truly “know” or understand what the choice is like. There is always a knowledge gap when you implement a decision. When you are actually living in the decision—when you do it—then you have the information you need to know if the decision was an appropriate one for you. The information you gain by implementing your decision allows you to reflect on the new situation you are in and whether it is wise for you to continue with this decision or use the new information you have acquired to inform you regarding a next choice. Viewing decision making from this perspective is very different than operating from the belief that you are a failure if you make a choice and you subsequently choose to move on to another choice. In fact, taking action and learning from that action is what all “successful” people do! This point is so essential to learn that we will remind you of it throughout this book. For now, trust us, this is a very important shift that most people need to make in how they evaluate their actions.

When you have a goal defined, strategies to achieve your goal clearly clarified, the confidence that you can implement those strategies successfully, and the motivation to do so hope is inevitable. Try it out as an experiment.

**ACTIVITY 1.3 Hope-Action Thinking**

Identify a clear goal that you would like to achieve in the next 2–3 weeks. Make sure the goal is specific, clear (this will help you know if you have actually achieved the goal), and achievable. Write it in the space provided.

**Goal:**

**Pathways:** Identify the specific steps you can take to achieve your goal.

**Confidence:** On a scale from 1 (not confident at all) to 5 (completely confident) rate your level of confidence that you can complete the pathways you identified. If you rate yourself at 4 or 5, then you should proceed to take the steps you identified. If you rate yourself at 3 or below, you should discuss this with a career advisor or career counselor.
Motivation: On a scale of 1 (not motivated) to 5 (highly motivated) rate how motivated you are to complete the pathways you identified. If you rate yourself a 4 or 5, then you should proceed to take the steps you identified. If you rate yourself at 3 or below, you should discuss this with a career advisor or career counselor.

ACTIVITY 1.4  Hopeful Career State (HCS) Scale

Hopeful Career State (HCS) Scale was developed to measure your current degree of hopefulness. Follow the directions to learn more about your current situation in relation to your future career. Yoon et al. (2019) found that the higher your score is, the more engaged you will be at work. Greater work engagement connects to greater job satisfaction. In addition, by completing the activities provided in this book you will also increase your hopefulness.

Directions

For each item, rate how true each of the statements is for you using the response scale shown. For example, if the statement is somewhat true for you, put the number 3 in the blank.

**Definitely false: 1  Somewhat false: 2  Somewhat true: 3  Definitely true: 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My current work (and/or education) will be helpful for my future career.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My current work (and/or education) will enable me to be a better worker in the future.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel that I am getting closer to better career opportunities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I can think of new employment options because of my current job (and/or program of study).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My current job (and/or education) provides resources (e.g., skill development, network, finances) for next steps in my career journey.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What I am doing now will help me to build a better career future.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What I am doing now is helping me to build skills and experience for the future.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. What I am doing now is an important step in my career journey.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I am hopeful that what I am doing now will help me in my career journey.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean score (Total score)
Scoring Instructions

1. Add up your scores for each of the HCS items to determine your total score for the nine items.

2. Divide your total score by nine in order to identify your mean or average score.

3. Record the mean score in the mean score section of the following table. The “Meaning and Action Steps” section of the table helps you understand your current score and explains how this book can help you create hope and develop your career.

Understanding Your Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOUR SCORE (X)</th>
<th>MEANING AND ACTION STEPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X ≤ 2.5</td>
<td>You perceive that your current situation in relation to your career development is not hopeful. You are having difficulties identifying future career options. You may be wondering how your current education and/or work situation connects to future possibilities. There is good news! This book will help you become more hopeful about your situation as you increase your self-understanding and then use this increased understanding to envision future possibilities. Actively implementing action items that you will generate while completing the activities in this book will enhance your hopefulness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 &lt; X &lt; 3.5</td>
<td>You experience a mix of positives and challenges in your current situation. There is good news for you! This book will help you see the opportunities in your current situation. Specifically, the activities in this book will help you identify ways to turn your current challenges into learning opportunities that you can use to inform your next choice. This approach is key to making good decisions. This book will guide you through the process of increasing your self-understanding, using your increased self-understanding to envision a future you are excited about, and then making plans that will lead you to implementing a decision that will provide you with additional information about yourself and future possibilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

We need hope to move forward positively in our lives. Many of us have times in our lives when hope is hard to muster. In these times, planning for our future seems pointless. We feel stuck and unmotivated at these times. There are, however, strategies for generating and sustaining hope in our lives. These strategies are easily learned and can be quickly applied. This chapter reviews those steps. We encourage you to try them out. See the difference they can make for you. Hope fuels planning and our goal in this book is to not only fuel your planning but to help you develop a plan. The steps we will teach you in subsequent chapters, just like the strategies we have addressed in this chapter, are lifelong steps you can take to put your hope into action.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Identify three goals to achieve in the next 7 days. Identify specific steps to take in order to achieve each of these goals. Review these steps with a mentor, teacher, career advisor, or trusted friend. Ask them if they know of additional steps you could take to achieve each of your goals. Consider all the possibilities. Then, choose specific steps to take. Before you do, however, ask yourself if you are confident that you can complete the steps you identified successfully. Then ask whether you are truly motivated to take the steps. Discuss your responses with a mentor, teacher, career advisor, or trusted friend.

2. Be intentional about saying three positive things to yourself about yourself over the next week. Practice this once in the morning and once in the evening. Pay attention to what this experience is like for you. Consider recording your thoughts in a journal. Note how you feel throughout the week.

References


