



SPECIAL TOPIC Job vs. Career

Ross Geller: What's the big deal? I don't see why you're getting so excited. It's only a job.

Rachel Green: Only a job?! Are you kidding? This is the first time in my life I'm actually doing something I care about! This is the first time in my life I'm actually doing something I'm good at!

-Friends NBC Television Series

LOFTIER PURSUITS

What's the difference between a job and a career?

A job can be defined as a specific agreement with an employer to perform assigned tasks for pay. It is a work situation taken for the purpose of earning wages in exchange for the completion of a task or series of tasks. It is a specified duty or responsibility. A job frequently is temporary in nature and the word seldom implies a long-term commitment to a given type of work. A job rarely requires a long training period for mastery of the work assigned.

A career can be defined as one's progress through life, or one's advancement or achievement in a chosen vocation. It is a work experience that you elect to pursue during a significant period of time in life. A career involves a long-term commitment to a given occupational activity. A career requires a significant level of formal education, training, and background for satisfactorily performing in the work area.

Having a career implies that you have prepared for and are building expertise and experience in a chosen field. Your career determines what kinds of work you will do. It serves as a frame of reference for the kinds of jobs you will seek, qualify for and accept. It is also the context in which you will continue to develop new skills and insights. It is worthwhile activity to which you devote your time, energy, resources and emotions. Your career is your life's work, your profession, your vocation, your "calling."

A career orientation is a long-term, more profound commitment. Focusing on one's career is not about preparing for and pursuing one narrowly defined job or occupation. And it's not about settling for just any job or occupation. A career mindset is a broader approach that prepares the individual for an array of possibilities in an ever-changing world.

In a job you seek to be successful, while in a career you seek to be valuable. In a job you look out for yourself; in a career you look after others. In a job you ask how to get from "here" to "there". The focus is on the destination. Meanwhile, in a career you ask whether going "there" is worth it. The focus is on the journey.

In a job you seek to make money. In a career you seek to make a difference. In a job you seek to be powerful, while in a career you seek to lift up and protect the powerless.

In a job you are detached from your deepest longings, while in a career you heed your deepest longings. In a job you expend maximum input and achieve minimal results. In a career you tend to achieve maximum results with minimal input.

In a job you experience more stress than fun. In a career you have lots of fun even when stressed. In a job you enjoy lots of pleasure (money, power, prestige), but not much happiness. In a career you experience true happiness even when things may be unpleasant.

In a job you have a compartmentalized life, while in a career you have an integrated life. In a job you live a life alien to your identity, while in a career you live a life congruent with your identity.

Moreover, a career is a nobler pursuit than a job. One could expect that individuals who possess a sense of purpose and mission might not want to settle for something as uninspiring as a mere job. They might easily conclude that a job doesn't quite satisfy their loftier aspirations in quite the same way as a career. In the final analysis, a career really is a higher calling than a job.

SHORTCUT TO NOWHERE

By Michael Lebeau / Director, BSC Career Center

As each semester draws to a close, and we are no less than a few weeks away from graduation, students start making their way into the Career Center to see about getting a job. For many of those who wander in right before graduation, in desperation mode, this represents the first and only visit they've ever made it to the Career Center. To them, pursuit of their professional goals is nothing more than simple job hunting. Our challenge in the Career Center is to demonstrate to students the huge difference between career planning and job hunting.

For too many of our students, career planning is a foreign concept. Even though they chose to come to college because they saw a link between their college degree and career success, they really are no more serious about their career than to relegate it to mere job hunting.

For most important things in their lives, they know they have to put forth extra effort, plan and prepare, and even do a little research. But, somehow, when it comes to their careers, they suddenly get lazy. They suddenly feel a great need to take all kinds of shortcuts.

Most people, it seems, exert more time and energy planning their vacations, their weddings, and their purchases of automobiles and homes. Most people understand the importance of preparation when it comes to the necessary effort required to participate in sports and athletic competition. But when it comes to their careers, planning is something they generally don't think they need to do. When it comes to the competition of the job market, the desire to exert rigorous effort is missing. When it comes to their careers, it's all about job hunting.

They answer ads in the newspaper, they scan job lists, they post their resumes on the internet, they go through staffing agencies, they rely on on-campus recruiting, and they fill out applications in the HR department. And they have deluded themselves into thinking that they're really doing something.

Career planning, on the other hand, is about setting a career goal and selecting the right major based on that goal. It's about exploring career opportunities and researching various industries and companies. It's about developing an early passion for a cause or an ideal and engaging in worthwhile activities that will help build knowledge, experience, skill and credibility while still in college. It's about knowing what you want to do and pursuing that objective.

Career planning is about not being at the mercy of the job market. It's about being the initiator in the job market, not the responder. It's about being a serious candidate, not just an applicant. It requires a relationship-oriented mindset, not a task-oriented mindset.

As we see our students head out into the job market, we have not observed that they encounter difficulty or failure because the market is bad or because they lack qualifications. The reason they fail is because they lack focus and credibility and because they have replaced real career planning with mindless job hunting.

Students can take charge of the direction of lives. They can learn to manage their careers. They can be successful in their pursuit of a rewarding profession if they will begin early enough devoting the necessary time and energy to the process. They must not wait until the last minute.

YOUR LIFE'S WORK

By Laurence Boldt / *How to Find the Work You Love*

I first got into the career field because I recognized how central work is to the happiness of the individual and the character of any society. Work offers the individual the opportunity to share acts of love and beauty, to see goodness reflected in the image of his or her work. Since work is what we do with most of our waking lives, we must, if we count life valuable, consider what we are working for. For all too many, work is drudgery, the thing to do to pay the bills, or a mad chase for material wealth and social status. I saw how bored, alienated, under-challenged, or over-stressed so many are in their work, and how their unhappiness at work affects families, friends, and communities. It seemed to me that the popular conception of work as principally a matter of economics and social status was at the heart of the matter. Many individual tragedies of alienation, emptiness, and despair, as well as community, national, and global problems seemed to be aggravated, if not caused, by this conception of work.

A growing number of people are expecting to find a place for their heart and soul in their work, a place to express their unique talents and abilities. They want a greater sense of joy and meaning in their work. Your life's work is the work you were born to do -- the most appropriate vehicle through which to express your unique talents and abilities. More than a job or a career, it is your special gift to humanity. Traditionally, your life's work was called a *vocation*, a word which literally means *calling*. The work you love -- your calling or life's work -- is your unique and living answer to the question, *what am I here to do on this earth?*

SOUL AT WORK

By Thomas Moore / *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*

In all the work we do... the job and career... impenetrable mysteries are involved. In our work we find deep pleasure, meaning, fulfillment, and a way to make a living. When the unique character of our soul blends with the character and quality of our work, we find a sweet blend of nature and effort that heals many wounds. Finding the right work often appears to be the panacea that will finally make life worth living. A career gives us our very identity and offers a profound sense of meaning and purpose in life. What we do in life is the most important factor in expressing our individuality. The work we do reveals our values, vision, longings and desires, ethical sensitivity, and passions... the greater part of our soul.

MEANINGFULNESS IN WORK

By Laurence Boldt / *How to Find the Work You Love*

Meaningfulness begins with recognizing that you are not alone, that you are part of the human community, that everything you do sends a ripple through the entire human family. Allow your natural compassion to suggest creative ways that you can serve. Meaning is not found in acquisition, but in feeling ourselves a part of something greater. To the extent that your work takes into account the needs of the world, it will be meaningful. To the extent that through it you express your unique talents, it will be joyful.

VIRTUE OF WORK

"In emphasizing the importance of seeking meaningful work and acknowledging dignity in all work, it is natural to also promote the virtue of working hard. It is a logical extension of the concept of worthwhile work to celebrate diligence in labor, a strong work ethic, and an industrious attitude. If we feel a true connectedness to the work we perform, we can experience great satisfaction in doing hard work."

- MICHAEL LEBEAU / Career Counselor

"*What are you going to be when you grow up? What is your work in the world going to be? What will be your works?* These are not fundamentally questions about jobs and pay, but questions about life. Work is applied effort; it is whatever we put ourselves into, whatever we expend our energy on for the sake of accomplishing or achieving something. Work in this fundamental sense is not what we do *for* a living but what we do *with* our living."

- WILLIAM BENNETT / *The Book of Virtues*

"I wish to preach not the doctrine of ignoble ease but the doctrine of the strenuous life; the life of toil and effort; of labor and strife; to preach that highest form of success which comes not to the one who desires mere easy peace but to the one who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph."

-THEODORE ROOSEVELT / *In Praise of the Strenuous Life*

"Work is applied effort toward some end. The most satisfying work involves directing our efforts toward achieving ends that we ourselves endorse as worthy expressions of our talent and character."

- WILLIAM BENNETT / *The Book of Virtues*

"Happiness, as Aristotle long ago pointed out, resides in activity, both physical and mental. It resides in doing things that one can take pride in doing well, and hence that one can *enjoy* doing. It is a great mistake to identify enjoyment with mere amusement or relaxation or entertainment. Life's greatest joys are not what one does *apart from* the work of one's life, but *with* the work of one's life. Those who have missed the joy of work, of a job well done, have missed something very important."

- WILLIAM BENNETT / *The Book of Virtues*

ON THE JOB

"Success is not defined exclusively in economic terms but includes the opportunity to express your innate talents and abilities, to be creatively engaged, to feel as though you are making a meaningful difference, and to integrate your spiritual values with the everyday business of working and making a living."

-LAURENCE BOLDT / Author of *How To Find The Work You Love*

"We offer up a third of our lives to work -- more time than we give to any other single activity except sleep -- and our feelings about it are woven into our image of ourselves and others. Work -- some form of sustained, disciplined activity - is necessary for human happiness."

-MICHAEL SPRING / *The American Way of Working*

"When you have a job, it is important to do your best to keep it and to seek opportunities for growth... Few things are more important than your own career and life satisfaction... It is important to take charge of your career and your life by periodically evaluating where you have been, where you are, and where you are going."

-HECKLINGER & BLACK / *Training for Life*



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