



LEAD CENTER

SELF-GUIDED DISCOVERY FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

HELPING PEOPLE DISCOVER THEIR OWN PATH
TO EMPLOYMENT

Griffin-Hammis Associates

**In Collaboration with LEAD Center and
U.S. DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy**

The National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities (LEAD) is a collaborative of disability, workforce and economic empowerment organizations led by National Disability Institute with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, Grant No. #OD-23863-12-75-4-11. This document does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.



FORWARD

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the LEAD Center are pleased to release this Facilitator's Guide to Self-Guided Discovery. For many years, ODEP has worked to strengthen the capacity of the nation's workforce development system to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities, using Customized Employment (CE) approaches as a universal strategy. With the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and ongoing systems change efforts like Employment First, formal adoption and implementation of Customized Employment policies and practices are increasingly occurring in state and local agencies to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities and other significant barriers to employment. Customized Employment's signature strategy, Discovery, offers an approach for job seekers with barriers to employment that is consistent with some of the most widely accepted strategies for successful career development.

Every job seeker begins or continues their career with many experiences, circumstances, and purposes that are unique to them. Therefore, everyone's Discovery profile will be just as unique. A variety of Discovery approaches have been designed to match the amount of support a job seeker may need. Some people may require a significant amount of support, benefiting most from an individually facilitated process. Other may do best in small groups, using [Guided Group Discovery](#). Some people may benefit from a self-guided approach, as described in this Guide, to identify their own ideal conditions of employment. When done well, Discovery leads to employment, often with a customized position. For everyone, the process assists job seekers in identifying employment that would be a good fit both for them and for an employer.

This Facilitator's Guide to Self-Guided Discovery adds to the foundation of Discovery approaches and resources. It is an essential user-friendly tool designed to train facilitators to guide people through the Self-Guided Discovery process. This Facilitator's Guide to Self-Guided Discovery would not have been possible without the LEAD Center and Griffin-Hammis Associates/Center for Social Capital. We also are grateful to the state teams that participated in the LEAD Center's Self-Guided Discovery Pilot from Georgia, Arkansas and Rhode Island. Each state team consisted of staff from multiple state and local agencies and organizations including the workforce system, vocational rehabilitation, community employment providers, schools, community colleges, and many other partner community agencies. These teams learned and implemented Self-Guided Discovery strategies to support job seekers with disabilities to take the next step forward in their career.

This Facilitator's Guide to Self-Guided Discovery can be downloaded from the LEAD Center's website at www.leadcenter.org.

Office of Disability Employment Policy
U.S. Department of Labor

INTRODUCTION

This Facilitator's Guide provides a step-by-step guide through each stage of Discovering Personal Genius™ and highlights the ways a self-directed or family-guided approach may differ from a guided or facilitated approach. The similarities between the two approaches are also explored.

Discovering Personal Genius (DPG) is the name given to the Discovery process developed by Griffin-Hammis Associates (GHA). GHA's work builds on the approaches put forth by Marc Gold Associates and others who made foundational contributions to person-centered employment approaches and the concept of Discovery as the first step in Customized Employment. Discovery is a functional assessment designed to learn "who" someone is; it takes inventory of a person's skills, interests, experiences, relationships, etc.; and creates a positive personal employment profile. This positive profile underlies the plan to contact businesses where the job seeker and company both benefit when the individual becomes an employee. In some cases, Discovery may lead someone down the path to self-employment as the best option.

Although we refer to this process as "Self-Guided Discovery," almost everyone will benefit from the assistance of someone who is trained and skilled in these techniques (i.e., someone to help them discover their personal genius and assist them in connecting with a business that could benefit from having that person as an employee). A simple fact is that no one succeeds alone. We all benefit from a second set of eyes or a different perspective. This Facilitator's Guide is designed to provide a format and advice for those who assist people on their discovery journey. The basic format for completing Self-Guided Discovery can be found in "Self-Guided Discovery™: Customized Employment Planning Tools for Individuals & Families," developed by Griffin-Hammis Associates, Inc. which is located in Appendix A of this Guide.

ONLY PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN THOROUGHLY TRAINED AND ARE SKILLED IN THE TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF DISCOVERY SHOULD CONSIDER TAKING ON THE ROLE OF A FACILITATOR.

There are a few organizations you can contact to find professionals who are trained in Customized Employment and Discovery:

- Griffin-Hammis Associates: <http://www.griffinhammis.com>
- Mark Gold and Associates: <http://www.marcgold.com>
- TransCen, Inc.: <https://www.transcen.org>
- Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators: <http://www.acreducators.org>

In addition, facilitating or assisting someone with Self-Guided Discovery is different than facilitating a more guided approach. As stated in Self-Guided Discovery: Customized Employment Planning Tools for Individuals and Families:

"Not everyone requires a great deal of support from an employment consultant to discover his or her own personal genius. In many cases, Discovery can be done effectively by an individual job seeker with minimal guidance and support from an employment consultant, friend, or family member.

For instance, self-directed or self-guided discovery may be applicable for:

- People with a previous career who recently acquired a disability, who are interested in staying at work or returning to work.
- People with a disability who have a college degree, technical certificate, advanced training, or well-developed skills in a specific area.
- Veterans, including War Wounded Veterans, who were trained in specific skills in the military.
- People with sensory disabilities who may fall into one of the categories listed above.
- People who want to control their Discovery and employment planning process, rather than having it facilitated by someone else.
- Job seekers in the Workforce System who have a disability but may not qualify for Vocational Rehabilitation or other government-assisted employment services.

Self-Guided Discovery is also effective for families with sons or daughters ranging from early childhood to their school transition years. One benefit of Self-Guided Discovery for families is the ability to engage in the process over the course of several years. The process can guide families in teaching their child functional skills that are valuable later in life and that enhance employability. The process also guides educational efforts including work experiences, academic s, skills training, after-school employment, and school-to-work transition. Self-Guided Discovery is an effective way to put the control of one's career development squarely in the hands of the job seeker or family."

Self-Guided Discovery begins via an initial consultation with someone **fully trained and competent in Discovery**. That person provides the job seeker/family/friends/paid supports with the framework and necessary materials to get started. That initial consultation also includes an overview of the DPG process and how DPG leads to career or small business development. As the employment seeker or family embarks on their Discovery journey, the Discovery Guide is helpful in reviewing information and generating ideas and other support strategies as requested by the individual or family.

The principle targets of Discovery are:

- To create a career path using Customized Employment
- To create a solid Vocational Profile that includes:
 - Evidence supporting at least 3 Vocational Themes
 - Determining an ecological match (Ideal Conditions of Employment)
 - Listing an individual's Skills and Tasks that other people would find useful (competencies)

Success is enhanced when there are other people assisting with or reviewing the process. Individual job seekers or families might consider inviting strong allies to be part of a Discovery Team. The Team serves exclusively in an advisory role. They contribute by providing information; generating ideas; reviewing the Discovery Staging Record (DSR), which is a series of tracking tools used to stage, structure, capture, and record the major events of Discovery; linking the employment seeker with community resources and more. DSR forms are located in Appendix C. This process does not require a large team or one comprised of professionals. In fact, we recommend minimizing the number of human service professionals on the team. Instead, think about friends, family, and other community members who the individual would consider his/her supporters to help in the process of Discovery.

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF DISCOVERING PERSONAL GENIUS

Discovery is a values-based process. It is critical that those who assist people with their paths of Discovery know and abide by these guiding principles and values. Inspired by the Values and Ethics of WRAP® from the Copeland Center on Wellness and Recovery (<https://copelandcenter.com>), acceptance of and commitment to these values and principles is a prerequisite to the facilitation of Discovery.

1. Each stage of the process supports the premise that there are unlimited ways in the world to make a living and there is a place for everyone to contribute and earn a living.
2. All people are viewed as employable and can make a contribution to the economic well-being of a business.
3. Discovery promotes self-determination, personal responsibility, and self-advocacy as critical elements.
4. Employment is essential to wellness and good health.
5. DPG facilitators provide guidance, not control.
6. The individual job seeker agrees to take action on his/her plan.
7. The individual must be the key decision maker and must own his/her path of discovery.
8. The individual job seeker is treated as an equal.
9. We do not try to change someone, but accept each person as they are.
10. There are no "readiness" qualifications – competence is assumed.
11. Individuals are assisted to explore choices and options, and are not expected to find simple, final answers.
12. All participation is voluntary.
13. It is understood that each person is the expert on him/herself.
14. The focus is on strengths and not on deficits.
15. Clinical, medical, and diagnostic language is avoided.
16. Testing and vocational evaluations are of little or no value.
17. The process emphasizes strategies that are simple and safe for anyone.
18. Difficult feelings and behaviors are seen as normal responses to difficult circumstances.
19. Each person brings creativity and insight to their path of Discovery.
20. No two paths of Discovery will be the same.

THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT VALUE PROVIDED BY PEOPLE WHO ASSIST OTHERS WITH THEIR PATHS OF DISCOVERY. GUIDANCE MEANS:

- Bringing a thorough understanding of Discovery and Customized Employment to the discussion
- Listening without judgment
- Not imposing one's personal values or opinions on the job seeker
- Being precise and clear when communicating
- Offering constructive feedback
- Brainstorming with the job seeker (and team of supporters)
- Seeking clarity (being certain the job seeker is understood)
- Problem solving
- Supporting the decision-making needs of the individual
- Keeping the process on track and moving forward in a timely fashion
- Engaging team members throughout the process
- Following up with the job seeker on timelines, appointments, meetings, etc.
- Assisting with the development of resumes, representational portfolios, etc.
- Using creative means to help individuals list their skills, interests, wellness tools, conditions of employment, etc.
- Focusing on "what gets done" (concrete actions)

FACILITATION

Facilitation is a skill that can be learned and developed through practice. Some people are natural born facilitators. Even so, knowing principles and practices of facilitation is something that even the most accomplished professionals find valuable. Facilitation comes from the French word, facile, which means easy or effortless. The facilitator's job is to make the process easy, understandable, and gratifying.

Skilled facilitators understand that they must follow a set of principles and values that keep the process on track, assure the inclusion of all participants, and focus on the creation of tangible and actionable outcomes.

Successful facilitators must be humble and never forget that:

- They are servants (of a group or, in this case, an individual job seeker).
- They must prepare and plan ahead – a great deal of work will be done outside of meetings with a group or individual.
- They must hone their skills at eliciting input from all concerned – being sure that everyone is heard and that their ideas are recorded.
- They must become expert listeners.
- They must become effective negotiators and look for common ground without compromising individuality.
- They must have the ability to ask good, probing questions.
- They must respect the importance of nuance and subtlety, although you can find clues and direction in the obvious. Most of the richer discoveries reside in the nuances and subtleties of a situation.
- They must learn to work with the person as they are and strive to help each person be their best.
- They must know when enough is enough for meetings and for the process as a whole. Avoid the trap of “over-analysis paralysis.”

Successful negotiation includes:

- Having high expectations for the outcomes of the process.
- Negotiating the power necessary to be effective.
- Remaining neutral on content (mostly), but not neutral on the process.
- Practicing “leadership by consent” (i.e., if a leader naturally appears, the full team, including the job seeker MUST agree).
- Promoting participation within a structured process.
- Effectively dealing with challenges.

The facilitator should be the champion of high expectations. Expect the best and hold everyone to that standard. Skilled facilitators negotiate to create a win-win situation for the job seeker and those gathered to support him/her. A facilitator must know the process of discovery and remain neutral about content without allowing the process to be compromised. Discovery is a structured process that encourages participation. Skilled facilitators know how to elicit participation and deal with the challenges that are bound to arise.



Common Challenges Facilitators Face:

- Recording the individual's and team members' words and asking permission to change them only if it provides more clarity.
- Avoiding taking sides – remember that the job seeker is number one.
- Asking too many questions or asking leading questions.
- Challenging or not challenging assumptions (especially low expectations).
- Avoiding answering content questions.

Facilitation Skills for Self-Guided Discovery

- Think context: How is this person/situation unique?
- Keep the purpose crystal clear – Individualized Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE).
- Use a detailed agenda to guide the work, using the DPG format and forms.
- Make necessary adjustments and go where the information takes you.
- Remember: You are a guide and don't have the final say.

There will be times when a facilitator will have to become more involved and assertive when faced with challenges or rough spots. Use the following to guide your decision whether to intervene or not.

- Is the problem serious?
- Will the issue work itself out or require minimal intervention?
- Will the problem get worse if nothing is done?
- How much disruption will intervention cause?
- Will there be a backlash from the intervention?
- Will someone feel slighted or hurt?

The most common circumstances that prompt intervention are when team members are either under or over functioning. A team member who doesn't offer much, or whose body language is closed may be exhibiting signs of "under functioning." Someone who tries to dominate the conversation or is prone to argue with other team members may be "over functioning." In either case, a skilled facilitator should take steps to re-focus the team. This can be done by:

- Carefully reviewing and explaining the purpose of Self-Guided Discovery;
- Reviewing and explaining the roles and expectations of team members;
- Reiterating that time is of the essence and that everyone's time is valuable;
- Making it clear that failure to produce a positive outcome is not an option; and/or
- Focusing on methods and not on personalities.

The job seeker is the most important person in this process. After all, the job seeker is the "self" in "Self-Guided Discovery." There are two rules that guide the process of discovery.

1 It's always about the job seeker.

2 Never break rule one.



Every person who agrees to participate on a Discovery team is also held in high regard. People are invited because they are considered to be a “supporter” of the job seeker and can make a positive contribution to the outcome. Sometimes personalities and passion muddy the water and cause problems. A competent facilitator knows how to intervene in such circumstances while maintaining positive high regard for all participants. Facilitators should recognize even the smallest successes.

Some facilitators need to help people slow down. We all lead busy lives and deal with stress. This often results in a person trying to work faster, which often leads to mistakes, resulting in missed or inaccurate information. A good rule for facilitators is, “When things seem to be going fast – slow down.”

Everyone is there because they want the job seeker to succeed. Believe the best intentions of all team members and contributors until you are proven wrong. Making tasks and assignments relevant, reasonable, and doable helps. Provide examples when necessary, but do not provide answers or solutions. If you need to, re-frame the concern or question to get at it from a different angle.

Using a “parking lot” or “garden” is another way to deal with questions and concerns. A “Parking Lot,” for this purpose, is a sheet of flip chart paper where the team agrees to put aside issues. We like to think of it as a place where you might park an issue that needs to be “towed away” for now. A “Garden,” on the other hand, is a place where you put questions to be asked later or topics that require more information or investigation. In other words, the Garden is place where things are placed that help Discovery grow, while the Parking Lot is more like a junkyard for old ideas and low expectations.

A good facilitator is there to make it easy for people to participate. The role of the facilitator is to manage the process, not to determine the outcome. Managing the process involves:

- Asking who needs help and providing that help, immediately or at a later time;
- Reviewing each step of the process and each section of the SGD Manual;
- Discussing next steps. There will always be next steps (actions), assignments, resource needs, potential delays and roadblocks; and
- Immediately working through potential barriers to progress – not waiting until later.

DEVELOPING PERSONAL SET OF BELIEFS, PRINCIPLES, AND VALUES FOR FACILITATION

Accomplished facilitators develop their own set of Beliefs, Principles, and Values. This will be particularly important for people facilitating both Guided and Self-Guided Discovery. The individuals and families who seek your help often find themselves in emotional, social, and financial situations that are fragile. A skilled facilitator recognizes this and takes great care to build trust, assuring that all participants feel safe and valued. A personal mission statement is good way to jumpstart your list of values and principles.

Take few moments to write out your personal mission statement for facilitating Discovery. This will be your statement of beliefs to guide your journey as a facilitator. The beauty of a mission statement like this is that it can be modified as your skills and experiences as a facilitator grow.

My Personal Mission Statement:

Now, develop a list of your values and principles for facilitating Discovery. There will be some subtle differences between Guided and Self-Guided Discovery, so it's a good idea to begin your list with general Discovery and then add your thoughts on Self-Guided Discovery. Please note that if any of the values and principles you list contradicts the Values and Principles of Discovering Personal Genius, you need to start over or stop facilitating Discovery. *Note: You can find several free mission statement generators online.*

MY VALUES AND PRINCIPLES FOR FACILITATING DISCOVERY

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

4: _____

5: _____

6: _____

7: _____

8: _____

9: _____

10: _____

Your list will grow with your skills and experience, so feel free to add, subtract, and modify your list.



FACILITATING SELF-GUIDED DISCOVERY – STEP BY STEP

Discovery is a very personal process, whether guided or not. A facilitator cannot and may not be the key decision maker, nor should friends, family or other supporters. Only the individual can create his/her own plan of Discovery.

Each step in the Self-Guided Discovery process is clearly described in “Self-Guided Discovery: Customized Employment Planning Tools for Individuals and Families,” Appendix A. The keys for a facilitator helping with Self-Guided Discovery have been discussed throughout this Guide. The job seeker will determine the level of assistance they want from a facilitator and how thoroughly they will use the planning tool.

The following section will look at each part of the process and offer advice to facilitators to help them understand the expected outcome of each step and how to provide guidance to the job seeker to assist them in reaching those outcomes.

BUILDING A PERSONAL PROFILE

The fundamental question for building a personal profile is: “What’s your story?” The target is to help the job seeker create and tell their compelling story. Stories are important because they invite the person hearing or reading the story to become part of it. As facilitators, you will encounter people who are forthcoming and who share all manner of information about themselves. There will be others who may find it difficult to express themselves or have a hard time understanding the reasons why certain information is important. Remember, you’re not looking for intimate details about all aspects of someone’s life, but rather focusing on the pieces that will help someone in the employment arena.

Visiting someone at their home can provide insights that cannot be observed anywhere else. People surround themselves with their “treasures” and other mementos of significance (e.g., photos, art, books, etc.). We call these “The Talking Walls.” Observing and asking about the things people surround themselves with can prompt conversations about personal and family history that may be useful down the road.

The neighborhood where someone lives also provides useful information. Where do people go and what do they do there? The neighborhood and surrounding community are made up of people. Whether it’s about associations, institutions, community resources or businesses the person frequents, they are all made up of people. People are the connection to other people and other things. When working with someone on this process, try to steer the conversation toward the people the job seeker knows or with whom they interact. Job seekers should be encouraged to use the “Relationship Chart” on page 28 of the Self-Guided Discovery Manual in Appendix A, as it is an effective tool for people engaged in Discovery to identify the people in one’s life.

Another great facilitator’s question is: “When are you at your best?” You can follow up with:

- What are you doing when you’re at your best?
- Who are you with?
- Where are you?
- What do you care about the most (or what are you passionate about)?

It is important to help the job seeker tell his/her story in his/her own words. Writing it down, doing an audio recording or a short video are all valid ways to do this. This will be the first draft of the story.

THE FINANCIAL STORY

As we just mentioned, stories are important because they invite the person hearing or reading the story to become part of it. Part of any person's story is their economic situation. According to National Disability Institute (NDI), 70 percent of people with disabilities live at or below the poverty line.

As facilitators, you will likely encounter people who are not sure of how they will pay their next electric bill or put gas in their vehicle. In fact, individuals with disabilities may face a number of challenges related to financial capability that impede their ability to find or maintain a job, including individuals who have financial emergencies that lead to difficulty staying on track with their career goals. Others may need to be educated to understand the myths and facts about earning income, public benefits, and medical benefits. (See Resources at <https://www.realeconomicimpact.org/pages/banking-status-and-financial-behaviors-report-release>).

FINANCIAL CAPABILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Findings from National Disability Institute's analysis of the National Disability Capability Study (<http://www.usfinancialcapability.org/>) show that people with disabilities have lower levels of financial capability than those without disabilities. Also, people of color, women and those with low incomes or low levels of education are more likely to have poor financial capability. Lastly, the study found that disability has an important impact on financial capability, when controlling for other characteristics that might affect the data.

The development of financial capability skills and strategies related to personal savings, asset building, managing credit, and individual budgeting are critical for sustaining financial security. This security, in turn, helps individuals achieve employment outcomes.

ESTABLISHING FINANCIAL GOALS

Financial goals are an often overlooked piece of the employment process or one that is not given enough consideration. This is particularly important for people who receive government benefits. However, each of us should have a clear idea of how much money we need to live the way we prefer and how to save for future goals.

Self-Guided Discovery facilitators are not financial planners, but can play a key role in assisting a job seeker in getting sound financial advice.

Some key questions to move the conversation are:

- How much do you need to live the way you want?
- Where do you want to live?
- How will you get around?
- How will you communicate (phone, etc.)?
- Is there anything you want that you need to save for (e.g., a vacation, home, car, etc.)?

There are several free resources that you can refer a job seeker to that can assist in developing financial goals. Sometimes establishing these goals leads to a person becoming more motivated to work.

National Disability Institute focuses on five key financial stability strategies to help an individual build their financial wellness. These five categories include:

1. Public benefits planning and work supports
2. Employment
3. Free tax preparation
4. Financial literacy and education
5. Asset development

Assisting an individual to move towards financial wellness is best achieved through a holistic approach of accessing tools and resources in each of the key categories. This provides a framework that enhances their pathway to self-sufficiency. Once an individual establishes their goals, a facilitator can guide job seekers to begin to look at each of the five categories, all of which are important to establishing financial goals, to see which programs and tools are available that can help them achieve their goals. (See links to resources in References.)

1 BENEFITS PLANNING & WORK SUPPORTS

The first category for achieving financial wellness is benefits planning and work supports. It is important for job seekers to look at all of the public benefits they can receive, as well as looking at the work supports that are available to them. You might be wondering, what do you consider benefits planning and what do you consider a work support?

Public benefits are those benefits made available by the federal, state or local government to assist people who need help with food, healthcare, and day-to-day expenses. They can include Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), Medicaid, Medicare, HUD Housing subsidies, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), etc.

Work supports are the supports that lead to an increase in job attainment and retention, as well as job advancement. There are a variety of public benefits available to individuals if they qualify, including Social Security Administration Work Incentives, Work Incentive Planning and Assistance, Ticket to Work, and the Family Self-Sufficiency Program.

It is important for an individual to look at each of the public benefits and work support programs to identify the programs for which they are potentially eligible. For those programs from which the individual is already receiving support, it is important to see if they are eligible for any work supports that are attached to those programs that might assist them in reaching their employment and financial goals.

2 EMPLOYMENT

Once an individual understands benefits planning and work supports, we believe that this will lead to better employment outcomes for individuals. This is the second category for financial wellness. We need employment to help us build our wealth.

When we look at employment, we look at full-time, part-time, seasonal, self-employment, competitive, customized, and supported employment. Employment supports can include, but are not limited to:

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) state programs
- Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) state programs
- Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver demonstrations and programs
- SSA – Ticket to Work and Employment Networks (ENs)
- Job Coaches
- American Job Centers (AJCs)
- Individual Placement and Support (IPS) through Behavioral Health Administrations and/or HCBS
- Veterans Affairs
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- School-to-work transition coordinators
- Community rehabilitation programs (CRPs)
- Community mental health programs

3 FREE TAX PREPARATION SERVICES

Free tax preparation is the third strategy to explore that can help an individual achieve their financial goals. Oftentimes, individuals with disabilities may not think that they need to file taxes due to low wages. They also might be afraid to receive a refund for fear that it will impact their public benefits. People can have their taxes done for free, if they qualify, at:

- IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
- My Free Taxes
- Internal Revenue Service
- AARP (See links to Resources in the References section.)

An ABLE account also can assist people in maintaining benefits that are important to them. ABLE Accounts, which are tax-advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities and their families, were created as a result of the passage of the Stephen Beck Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014, better known as the ABLE Act. The beneficiary of the account is the account owner, and income earned by the accounts will not be taxed. ABLE accounts also enable people to exceed the current asset limit of \$2,000 to maintain many means-tested public benefits. Learn more about ABLE accounts by visiting the www.ablenrc.org.

4 FINANCIAL EDUCATION

The fourth strategy that we look at to help an individual achieve their financial wellness goal is Financial Literacy and Education. Financial Literacy is the possession of knowledge and understanding of financial matters. Financial Education tools and services can be found in many places, including NDI, banks, American Job Centers, FDIC, and University Extension offices. (See links to Resources in the References section.)

5 ASSET DEVELOPMENT

The final strategy that we look at is Asset Development. As we have put the other strategies into action, it is important for people to build assets to help them achieve their goals. Assets can include savings, retirement accounts, a home, owning a business, owning a vehicle, etc. Asset development can be supported by having an ABLE Account, PASS Plan (i.e., Plan to Achieve Self-Support), Individual Development Account (IDA), and more (See links to Resources in the References section).

SKILLS, OR WHAT YOU KNOW HOW TO DO

People get hired because they either know how to do something or they have particular knowledge or education. Oftentimes, people have a difficult time coming up with a list of the things they know how to do or the things they know about. Because there are unlimited ways to make a living, one never knows where a particular skill or knowledge may be valued. For instance, someone with a background in chemistry may have trained to work in a particular field but have a blind spot to other industries where chemistry is present, like a distillery. Facilitators should avoid trying to have job seekers identify particular industries or specific businesses at this point – you are just creating a catalog of skills and knowledge.

PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR TO CONSIDER. IT WILL BE A KEY COMPONENT TO HELP THE JOB SEEKER IDENTIFY HIS/HER “IDEAL CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.”

Pages 30-32 in the Self-Guided Discovery Manual in Appendix A provide self-explanatory formats for gathering this information.

IDEAL CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

This section focuses on the conditions of employment that promote a person’s best performance as an employee. There is no definitive list of ideal conditions, but pages 33-36 in the Self-Guided Discovery Manual in Appendix A feature examples of some of the most common conditions.

Facilitators must listen keenly to what is discussed in all conversations for clues to unstated ideal conditions. People may tell you about something they “liked” or “loved,” as well as something they didn’t like or “hated” about a work setting or environment. As a facilitator, you must become a “first class noticer,” and that includes being a “first class listener.” You never know where a clue or insight might be lurking. Sometimes a direct question will not lead to the most useful answer.

STOP AND REFLECT

It is important to take time to reflect on the work you've done to date. It is easy to miss critical bits of information or fail to notice something if you just plow through the process. It is important for the facilitator to get together with the job seeker and review what's been done. This is a chance to stop and reflect before you jump into vocational themes. It is a good time to reflect and ask questions like "Does this reflect who you are?" This will include reviewing and reflecting on parts of the Self-Guided Discovery Manual that the person you are assisting has completed, or helping the person work through parts that are incomplete or have been difficult to complete. It is a time of reflection to determine if the person is on the right track. If they are on the right track, encourage them to keep going. If you need to change direction, do it quickly so that they do not get discouraged. You may also determine the next steps together and set some timelines for completion.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

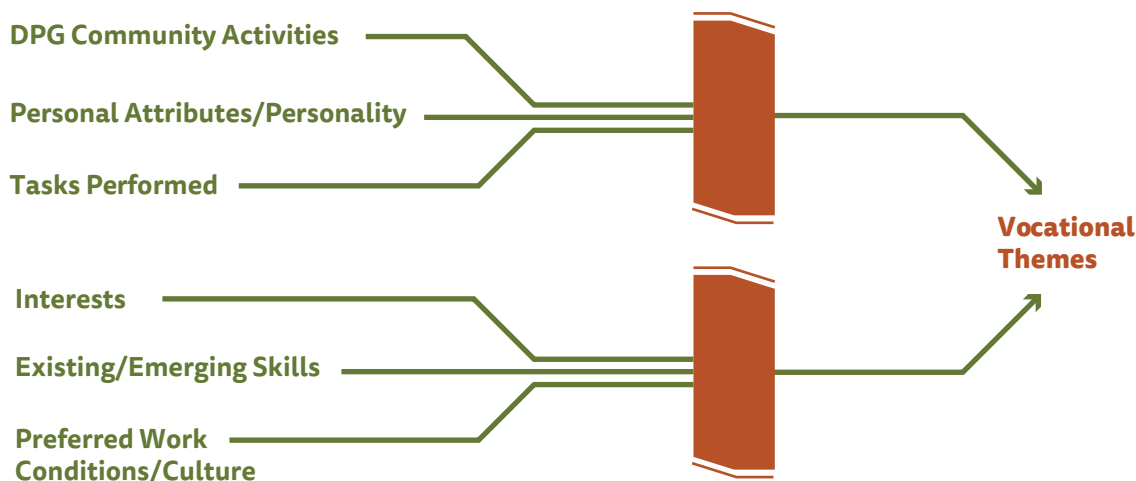
You've already assisted the job seeker in creating the first draft of his/her story by guiding them through the Self-Guided Discovery Manual. Now is the time to build on that first draft and create the next draft of the story, their Personal Narrative (personal story). This will include their strengths, preferences, conditions of employment, experiences, interests, vocational themes, and more. This can be done in writing, audio recording, or video.

VOCATIONAL THEMES™

Discovery is the foundation for employment. Discovery should lead a person to unexpected places and unconventional ideas about the possibilities for employment. It leads them to opportunities that take advantage of their talents and the contributions they can make. Discovery or Discovering Personal Genius is designed to generate no fewer than three overarching Vocational Themes. Themes are not job descriptions; they are large umbrella categories that represent an almost unlimited collection of many jobs, environments, skill sets, and interests.

The role of a facilitator at this point becomes one of helping to analyze the information, look for associations, habits, and emerging trends. The graphic below illustrates the process or pathway for determining vocational themes.

GRIFFIN-HAMMIS ASSOCIATES ELEMENTAL CHART FOR DETERMINING VOCATIONAL THEMES



It is a good practice to draw the top portion of this diagram on a large sheet of paper (e.g., a flip chart). Work with the employment seeker to write down his/her ideas about each of the categories. The visual image is easier for the mind to process and relationships, trends, and habits begin to appear.

Facilitators must become well versed in the use of visuals and practical exercises to enhance participation and promote creative problem solving. This can be crucial when determining Vocational Themes.

Your target is to identify three vocational themes. Consider these as “test themes.” By that, we mean that you will need to do a few things to see if you are on the right track. This is where the item “DPG Activities” in the upper left hand corner of the diagram comes into play. Testing themes may involve talking with someone who works, or is an expert in a particular industry or thematic area, to explore whether or not this is a theme to pursue. The employment seeker should do two or three “research” activities for each thematic area.

Some people will need little or no help to research possibilities (e.g., arranging interviews or site visits to test their thematic ideas). For others, this will be very difficult and they will need a great deal of help and encouragement to proceed. This poses a dilemma for a facilitator. We recommend that the facilitator not take on the responsibility to make calls or arrange interviews on behalf of the job seeker. Rather, you should help the job seeker connect with people or organizations that can provide that support. This step will assist the job seeker in building their personal network and networking skills. Your role is to keep the process moving, not to drive the process.

The Self-Guided Discovery Manual provides step-by-step guidance for completing this part of the process. The Developing Vocational Themes Workbook (Appendix B attached) is another resource for working through this step.

Once themes have been developed and tested, it is time to begin the active job search. Be sure that the following have been completed to direct this process:

- Your personal narrative (story)
- Pictorial or representational portfolios (video, etc.)
- Paper resume (if that makes sense)
- Samples of your work

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FOR THE FACILITATOR

For all intents and purposes, that concludes the formal relationship of the facilitator. Some job seekers will need additional help in scheduling calls and appointments for informational meetings, etc., but that is a different type of assistance. It is not facilitation. A facilitator might be able to assist the job seeker in finding additional support, but remember that this is a “self-guided” approach. If the job seeker requires a significant amount of assistance to complete the Discovery and Job Search processes, they probably were not a candidate for a self-guided approach.

Facilitators should continue to hone their skills. Learn from other more experienced facilitators to gain new insights about questions, exercises, and other tools to improve your facilitation methods and outcomes. Be bold, be inquisitive and, most of all, be respectful of the people you will be assisting in this process.

SELF-GUIDED DISCOVERY REFERENCES

Niemiec, R., Griffin, C.C., & Sickles, R. (2014). *Self-Guided Discovery: Customized Employment Planning Tools for Individuals & Families*. Florence, MT: Griffin-Hammis Associates, Inc.

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CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT AND DISCOVERY REFERENCES

Griffin, C.C., Hammis, D. & Geary, T. (2007). *The Job Developer’s Handbook: Practical Tactics for Customized Employment*, Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Griffin, C.C. & Hammis, D. (2011). *Discovering Personal Genius: Developing Vocational Themes Workbook*. Florence, MT: Griffin-Hammis Associates.

Griffin-Hammis Associates (2012). *Thought Sauce! Hot Ideas for Cool Employment*. Florence, Montana: GHA/CSC. For more information on Discovering Personal Genius, go to Griffin-Hammis.com: <http://www.griffinhammis.com/>.

Marc Gold & Associates Resources: <http://www.marcgold.com/publications/>

EMPLOYMENT

LEAD Center: <http://www.leadcenter.org/>

Disability Employment Initiative: <https://dei.workforcegps.org/>

WINTAC: <http://www.wintac.org/>

FINANCIAL PLANNING RESOURCES

BENEFITS PLANNING & WORK SUPPORTS

Social Security Administration Benefits and Work Support:
<https://www.ssa.gov/redbook/>

SNAP Employment and Training Resource Center:
www.fns.usda.gov/employment-and-training-et-resource-center

Housing Family Self-Sufficiency Program:
https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/fss

FREE TAX PREPARATION

The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) offer free tax help for taxpayers who qualify:
<http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Find-a-Location-for-Free-Tax-Prep>

My Free Taxes: www.myfreetaxes.org

Internal Revenue Service:
<http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Free-Tax-Return-Preparation-for-You-by-Volunteers>

AARP (You don't have to be 50 years of age or older to use AARP free tax preparation services):
https://www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp_taxaide/

FINANCIAL EDUCATION

National Disability Institute:
www.realeconomicimpact.org/financial-education/financial-education-toolkit

FDIC Money Smart:
www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart

Hands on Banking (Wells Fargo):
www.handsonbanking.com

Better Money Habits (Bank of America):
www.bettermoneyhabits.com

ASSET DEVELOPMENT

ABLE National Resource Center:

<http://www.ablenrc.org/>

Individual Development Accounts:

<https://idaresources.acf.hhs.gov/>

Assistive Technology Programs:

<http://www.resna.org/act-programs>

Benefits Planning Query (BPQY):

http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/documents/BPQY_Handbook_Version%205.2_7.19.2012.pdf

Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWICs) and Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA):

<http://choosework.net/resource/jsp/searchByState.jsp>

General Accounting Office (GAO) : <http://www.gao.gov/assets/210/202486.pdf>

Hands on Banking: <http://www.handsonbanking.org/en/>

Money Smart: <https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/index.html>

National Disability Institute. *Banking Status and Financial Behaviors of Adults with Disabilities: Findings from the 2015 FDIC National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked Households*: <https://www.realeconomicimpact.org/pages/banking-status-and-financial-behaviors-report-release>

SSA Trustees Report: <http://www.ssa.gov/oact/trsum/>

Sullivan, M. & Jensen, T. (2013). *Financial Stability & Work Incentive Counseling*. Salem, OR: Oregon Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (contact msullivan@griffinhammis.com for availability)

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Griffin, C.C., Hammis, D., Keeton, B. & Sullivan, M. (2014). *Making Self-Employment Work for People with Disabilities*, 2nd edition. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SELF-GUIDED DISCOVERY

CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT PLANNING
TOOLS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

APPENDIX B

DEVELOPING VOCATIONAL THEMES: WORKBOOK

APPENDIX C

EMPLOYMENT TOOLBOX

APPENDIX A

SELF-GUIDED DISCOVERY

CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT PLANNING TOOLS
FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to the entire Griffin-Hammis Associates/ Center for Social Capital Team for their advice and contributions to this manual and approach.

Special thanks to field reviewers including:

Tricia Jones-Parkin, Utah Division of Services for People with Disabilities

Ashlea Lantz, Candeo, Inc., Iowa

Amy Gonzalez, Tennessee Department of Developmental & Intellectual Disabilities

Tracy Warren, Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities

Patty Cassidy, Griffin-Hammis Associates, Kentucky

Janet Steveley, Griffin-Hammis Associates, Oregon

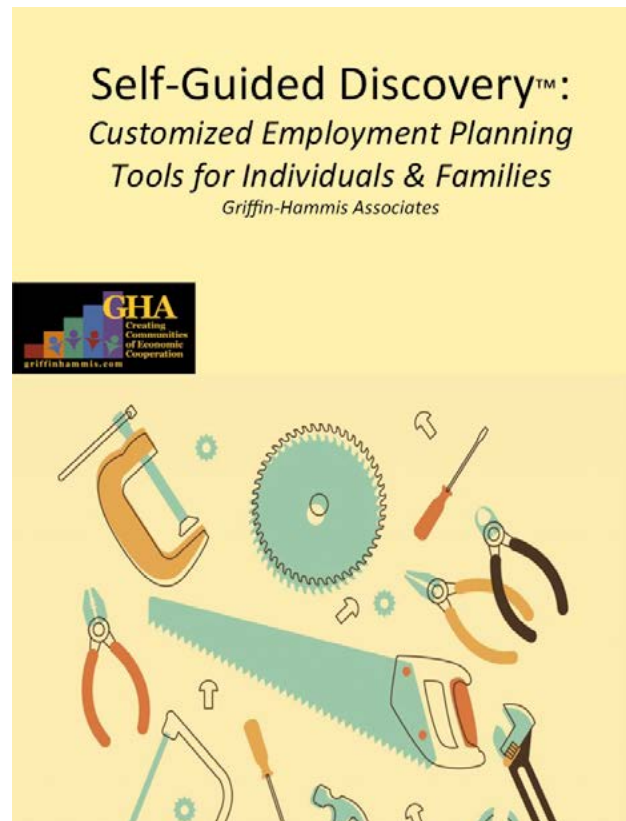
RECOMMENDED CITATION:

Niemiec, R., Griffin, C.C., & Sickles, R. (2014). *Self-Guided Discovery: Customized Employment Planning Tools for Individuals & Families*. Florence, MT: Griffin-Hammis Associates. Copyright ©: GHA, 2014

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“Discovery consists of seeing what everyone has seen and thinking what nobody has thought.”

Dr. Albert Szent-Gyorgyi



SELF-GUIDED DISCOVERY™ - PLANNING GUIDE

The process of securing employment, regardless of the methods one chooses, consists of four distinct but interconnected phases:

1. Assessment
2. Identifying and contacting potential employers
3. Learning a new job (including how to get there, what to wear, etc.)
4. Continued planning for career development or advancement

We, at Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC, focus our attention on a particular set of tools and methods for assisting people in finding employment that fits who they are, what they know and can learn, and provides them with the opportunity to grow as employees and as productive citizens. That process is called "Customized Employment."

Customized Employment (CE) is a flexible process designed to create a personalized employment relationship between a job seeker and a business in a way that meets the needs of both. It begins with the process of Discovery, which identifies an individual job candidate's strengths, work conditions, and interests to better match the business needs of an employer. CE uses unique methods of identifying and contacting potential employers, forsaking many of the sales-oriented approaches used in conventional job development or placement. Customized Employment takes a systematic approach to helping the new employee learn the job and acquire new skills for career advancement. Customized Employment is an individualized approach to employment planning and job development - one-person-at-a-time and one-employer-at-a-time.

Cary Griffin and David Hammis made the case for Customized Employment approaches in their 2012 article: **"The Three Vocational Themes: Going Where the Career Makes Sense."**

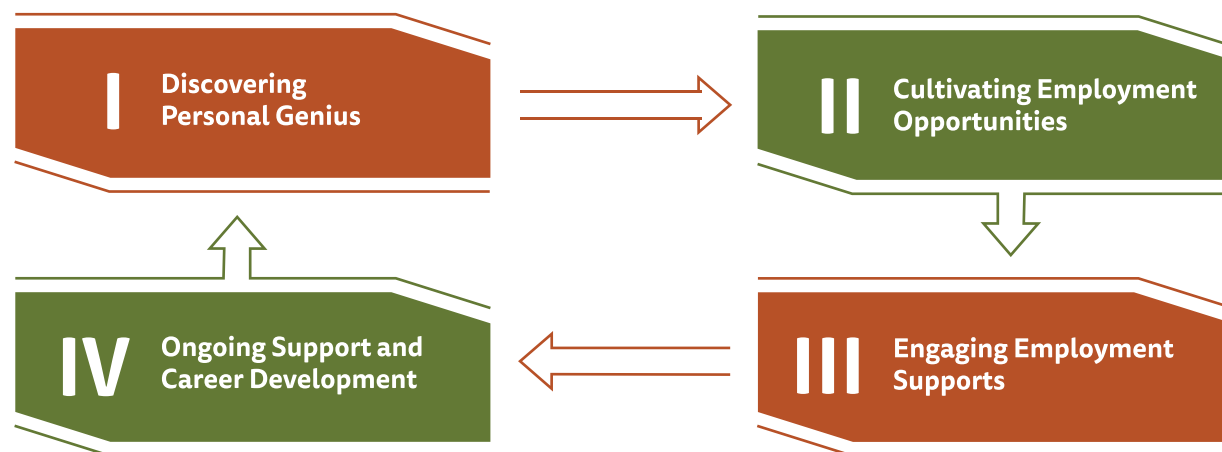
Another major issue is our understanding of community and business. Much of the employment data, practices, and policies surrounding disability systems are faulty; they are based on a big-business view of the world that does not exist. No one is suggesting that IBM, GM, GE, and other Fortune 1000 companies do not have a major impact on our economy, but at the local, functional level, CE is best implemented in the ubiquitous small companies that populate the countryside and contribute over 85 percent of all new jobs. In fact, according to the Kaufman Foundation for Entrepreneurial Leadership, big business generated no new net jobs from 2008-2012. With over 20 million single owner-operator firms out of a total 34.5 million businesses in the United States, and only 34,000 of these businesses having more than 500 employees, small business is the place for employment. But why?

1. Because most small business is undercapitalized, which means they could use talent that helps them generate more revenue. Using a Resource Ownership (Griffin, et al., 2007) strategy that provides tools, skills, and technology that make an individual more productive, is easily funded through SSA Work Incentives or Vocational Rehabilitation, for instance;
2. Because most small businesses do not have Human Resource managers or written job descriptions that have to be changed or circumvented as in larger companies;
3. Because in smaller companies it's much easier to reach the decision maker;

Because small business owners and managers gravitate towards job seekers with similar interests, whereas in bigger companies the HR manager, who likely does not have a shared interest with the job seeker, often stands between making this connection to the production floor. Hiring is personal in a small company. And, people with similar interests are more likely to mentor and coach one another. Artisans, after all, run most small companies, not MBAs. Artisans have and share skills that help employees grow competent, leading to better jobs in the future.

In this planning guide, we discuss the phases of employment using a customized approach, but most of the discussion revolves around the lynchpin of Customized Employment – Discovery. Discovery is a functional assessment designed to learn “who” someone is, takes inventory of that person’s skills, interests, experiences, relationships, etc. and creates a positive personal employment profile. That positive profile underlies the plan to contact businesses where the job seeker and company both benefit when the individual becomes an employee. Or, in some cases, Discovery may lead someone down the path to self-employment as the best option. As mentioned previously, this can only be done one-person-at-a-time. Individualization is what makes the process customized. In many instances, people may require assistance from someone who is trained and skilled in these techniques to help them discover their personal genius and assist them in connecting with a business that could benefit from having that person as an employee. Discovering Personal Genius™ (DPG) is the name given to the Discovery process developed by Griffin-Hammis Associates (GHA). GHA’s work builds on the approaches put forth by Marc Gold Associates and others who made foundational contributions to person-centered employment approaches.

THE PHASES OF CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT



Not everyone requires a great deal of support from an employment consultant to discover his or her own personal genius. In many cases, Discovery can be done effectively by the individual job seeker with minimal guidance and support from an employment consultant, friend, or family member.

FOR INSTANCE, SELF-DIRECTED DISCOVERY MAY BE APPLICABLE FOR:

- People with a previous career who have recently acquired a disability
- People with a disability who have a college degree, technical certificate, or advanced training
- Veterans with disabilities who were trained in specific skills in the military
- People with sensory disabilities who may fall into one of the categories listed above
- People with Asperger's
- Job seekers in the Workforce System who have a disability, but may not qualify for Vocational Rehabilitation or other government assisted employment services

Self-Guided Discovery™ is also effective for families with sons or daughters ranging from early childhood to their School Transition years. One benefit of Self-Guided Discovery for families is the ability to engage in the process over the course of several years. The process can guide families in teaching their child functional skills that are valuable later in life and that enhance employability. The process also guides educational efforts including work experiences, academics, skills training, after-school employment, and school-to-work transition. Self-Guided Discovery is an effective way to put the control of one's career development squarely in the hands of the job seeker or family.

This manual provides a step-by-step guide through each stage of Discovering Personal Genius™ and highlights the ways a self-directed or family-guided approach may differ from a guided or facilitated approach. The similarities between the two approaches are also explored.

Self-Guided Discovery begins via an initial consultation with someone fully trained and competent in Discovery. That person provides the job seeker or family with the framework and necessary materials to get started. That initial consultation also includes an overview of the DPG process and how DPG leads to career or small business development. As the employment seeker or family embarks on their Discovery journey, the Discovery Guide is helpful in reviewing information and generating ideas and other support strategies as requested by the individual or family.

Although we refer to this as "Self-Directed or Self-Guided Discovery," success is enhanced when there are several people assisting with or reviewing the process. Individual job seekers or families might consider inviting strong allies to be part of a Discovery Team. The Team serves exclusively in an advisory role and contribute by: providing information, generating ideas, reviewing the Discovery Staging Record (DSR), linking the employment seeker with community resources, etc. This does not require a team of professionals, in fact, we recommend minimizing the number of human service professionals on the team. Instead, think about friends, family, and other community members who might be able to aid in the process of Discovery.

THE COMPONENTS OF DPG

- Personal Profile
- Financial Goals
- Exploitable Skills
- Ideal Conditions of Employment
- Draft Profile
- Touch Base
- Divining Vocational Themes

As you go through this workbook, fill in the blank spaces. When completed, you will have the foundation to begin your career search. So, let's get going!

BUILDING A PERSONAL PROFILE: HOME AND NEIGHBORHOOD OBSERVATION AND TALKING TO OTHERS

The purpose of this step is for you, the job seeker, to take a good look at the people, places and things that surround you. Who are the people that are most important to you? They might be family or friends.

They might be former co-workers or teachers. If you are a churchgoing person, they might be other members of the congregation or the pastor/minister/rabbi/imam, etc. If there aren't a lot of people in your life, don't worry about it – there isn't a standard for how many people should be on the list.

Think about people willing to help you and to provide honest feedback along the way. They might remember events or accomplishments you have forgotten or take for granted. You never know where a kernel of information might lie that provides the spark igniting an idea. Another reason people are important is because they may become support team members as you begin Discovery. They might offer suggestions about your progress, assist in discovering your Vocational Themes, help you maintain a positive attitude and brainstorm ideas when you begin the actual job search.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN COMPLETING THIS STEP:

Where do you live? Briefly describe the neighborhood or part of town. Are you close to public transportation? What services or amenities do you commonly use in your community (barber, grocery store, gas station, etc.)? Are you a "regular" at these places? Are there neighbors around? Do you know them and have regular interactions with them? Do you know what they do for a living?

Describe your neighborhood:

What services or businesses do you regularly use (stores, barber shop, church, etc.)?

Who are your neighbors? What do they do for a living?

Describe your home or apartment. How do you decorate your space? What pictures, works of art, memorabilia, etc. do you keep around you? What sort of entertainment do you keep around you (TV, stereo, computer, etc.)?

Do you have tools that you regularly use? Carpentry, mechanics, gardening or lawn work, electrical, etc.? When did you last use any of them? When you are using tools, which ones do you prefer?

What chores and activities do you do around the house? Mow the lawn? Do the laundry? Do you do general housekeeping? Cooking? Fix-it projects? Gardening?



When you are most at ease or “in the flow,” what are you doing? Where are you? Who’s around?

Are there family traditions or events that you look forward to? What are your contributions to these events?

After considering the above questions, how might you briefly describe yourself, the employment seeker?



IT'S ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships play a key role in Discovery and Employment. During Discovery, the people who know you best can help you craft your personal narrative, as well as offer advice. Others you know can help you discover community connections, as well as other people who share your interests and talents. In the Customized approach to employment, you learn how to create this relationship chart and use it as a tool to help with your employment development.

This is different from networking. Instead of asking who do you know that's hiring, you are asking who do you know that may share the same Vocational Themes, Interests, and Work Preferences. A critical element of Discovery is getting advice from people who are interested in the same things as you, or who do something you know how to do or are interested in doing. The chart helps direct you to people and places where your interests, talents, and conditions of employment may be present and valued. By talking with many people you are more likely to come up with better ideas about work than you could on your own. The bottom line is we need other people to support us in becoming successful.

Most employment is found through some type of relationship or connection to others. There are direct relationships such as a family member or close friend, and there are also indirect relationships including friends of friends, etc. An important step in the process of Discovery is making a list of people you know, their relationship to you and what they do for a living.

Name	Relationship to Me (<i>friend, family, acquaintance, customer, etc.</i>)	Career/Trade/Interest	Contact Information

Please review this chart and note the people who are most important in your life. Begin your Discovery process by talking with them. Find out what they do for a living, how they got into that line of work, what education or training they received, what advice would they give to someone who wants to pursue a career in that field, etc. Asking for advice is a critical component of DPG. Many people do not know how to help you, but they do know how to give advice and, by doing so, they are actually supporting your career plans.

ESTABLISHING FINANCIAL GOALS

What is work for? The answer seems obvious: “The pay!” However, there is something more important and fundamental involved. The word “work” implies effort towards gaining something or achieving some desired result. We work to attain substantial personal benefit. We work to change lives (ours and those we love), to transform our material circumstances, and so that tomorrow may be better than today.

Specifically, we use work to meet our daily needs, to gain access to the resources needed to pursue our life’s goals, and as a means towards self-sufficiency and financial security. All human beings have the same basic material needs: to not be hungry, and to have access to a safe home and medical care. And while there are slight variations on “the good life” that we wish for ourselves and those we love, most of us agree that the basics of this life involve the freedom of financial options and choice, building and maintaining relationships, and being respected for our contributions to our communities. Some common features of the “good life” include owning a home, a car, starting a family, and going on vacations. We are far more likely to get these things with financial resources and financial security.

Secondary reasons for work include keeping busy or productive, being engaged in meaningful activities, and working with others. These are important considerations, but they are frequently used to justify settling on an employment outcome that does not resemble typical expectations regarding earnings and hours worked. Discovery will account for these and include them as part of your Ideal Conditions of Employment.

Spend some time reflecting on the opening question and a related question: “Where do I want to be financially?” This will provide the purpose and clarity needed to set and maintain direction during Discovery and Customized Job Development. Doing this at the beginning of the Discovery process will assist in the creation of short-term and long-term financial goals, focus attention on the amount of employment earnings needed to pursue these goals, and highlight concerns and misconceptions regarding interactions between public benefit programs (SSI for instance) and paid employment.

Use a financial education and planning tool to assist in the creation of your financial goals. There are many tools to choose from, including the “Financial Stability & Work Incentive Counseling” workbook by Molly Sullivan of Griffin-Hammis Associates, “Hands On Banking” from Wells Fargo, and “Money Smart” from the FDIC (a resource list is provided at the end of this manual).

You’ll find that typical Financial Planning steps include:

1. Engaging in Financial Education
2. Creating a Savings and Spending Plan
3. Reducing and Eliminating Debt
4. Building Credit
5. Building Personal Net Worth

If you receive government benefits such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), or Veterans Benefits it is wise to understand how those benefits factor into your financial goals. There are abundant resources available to help you understand Social Security benefits and explain how employment interacts with them. In some states, online estimators (see: <http://db101.org/>) assist people in planning their employment futures and understanding the relationship between benefits and

earnings. There are similar resources available to veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs and other organizations (read Navigating Government Benefits and Employment: <http://toolkit.vets.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/GP-Benefits-Guidebook.pdf>).

All employment seekers who receive SSA benefits should obtain their Benefits Planning Query (BPQY) from Social Security and seek out benefits planning assistance from a Certified Work Incentive Counselor (CWIC) or through their local Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) project. A list of such resources is located at the end of this manual.

It is also wise to consider the risks of continued dependence on these benefits. There are clear trends towards Americans shouldering ever more personal financial responsibility: student debt; employee contribution retirement plans instead of pensions; and years long Medicaid waiver waitlists across the United States.

In most cases, people are better off and have more money by working as opposed to relying solely on government benefits. There are also a number of work incentives that build personal assets. The most common are: matched savings accounts called Individual Development Accounts (IDAs); Plans to Achieve Self Support (PASS) and Property Essential to Self-Support (PESS) through Social Security; the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program offered by local housing authorities; and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

For families of young people under age 18, it is important to start setting financial goals now. Planning for the future and understanding benefits and employment help to relieve some of the anxiety when thinking about employment and the future. It is also important to note that you can proceed with Discovery before you have all your benefits information. In some cases, it may take several weeks to collect all the relevant information regarding benefits, but keep moving; Discovery is a process that works best when done at a quick and steady pace.

The path out of poverty and toward wealth and financial security must involve paid employment. Bringing employment and poverty to the center of the conversation is an antidote to the “impoverishment of expectations” which most often leaves individuals dependent on systems with fragile futures. Indeed, a 2008 article in *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, “What Is the Goal of Financial Education?,” references a General Accountability Report that states: “We can no longer assume that current federal entitlement programs will continue indefinitely in their present form.”

Employment is the only way to get resources under your control. Self-sufficiency and financial security involves building assets and personal wealth to avoid lifelong poverty and also lessens dependency on publicly-funded safety net programs like Social Security, housing, healthcare, and food benefits.

EXPLOITABLE SKILLS

All of us have skills we learned along the way. Or we received specialized training in a particular line of work or discipline. Some skills are complex like fixing a car, while others may be as simple as making toast. In this section, you begin listing all the things you know how to do. It’s important to focus on “doing” skills rather than “knowing” skills. You’ll get to the knowing part later, but it’s best to start with the most basic skills and work your way to the more complex tasks as you build your list.

EXPLOITABLE SKILLS WORKSHEET

An exploitable skill is one that potentially helps you earn money; it is valued by an employer paying your wage or a customer buying your product. Use the following worksheet to list your exploitable skills. As mentioned in the previous section, you'll want to differentiate between the "doing" skills (typically involving your hands) and the "knowing" skills (typically involving your brain). Consider how you learned the skill and who taught you. This is important for both the doing and the knowing skills. For instance, you might know how to speak another language. Did you learn this at school, at home or some other way? When it comes to "doing" skills, think about tools or other equipment you know how to use. Keep in mind that no skill is insignificant. The more skills you list, the better.

Exploitable Skills - Doing	How did you learn this?	Who taught you?

Exploitable Skills - Knowing	How did you learn this?	Who taught you?

What is your highest level of education?

What diplomas, certificates, or technical endorsements do you have?

As you complete your lists, think about which of these skills you prefer using and which ones are your least favorite. For instance, you may know how to change oil in your car, but don't like getting messy. It's a skill you have, but would prefer not to use it regularly.

Preferred Skills

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

Least Favorite Skills

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

If you were in the military, what skills (mechanical, technical, academic) did you learn that can be applied in civilian life?



PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE

List your prior work experiences. Go as far back as you can, even to part-time jobs that you had as a teenager. As you reflect on these, think about what aspects of the jobs you really liked and which parts you didn't enjoy. If you haven't had many work experiences, that's fine. Any information will be good information. If you are about to embark on your first job, skip this.

Job	What I liked	What I didn't like

IDEAL CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Everyone works better under the right conditions. In this section think about the situations, people, activities, environments and other factors that, when present, make you more productive or feel better about your work situation. We call these "The Ideal Conditions of Employment" (See Callahan & Condon in Griffin, et al. 2007, *The Job Developer's Handbook*). Keep in mind that these conditions are useful in matching you to an employment situation that uses your unique skills, personal attributes, and prior experiences to benefit you and your employer. In some instances, the information gathered in this process may lead toward starting your own business (self-employment), or possibly using Resource Ownership as an employment strategy. Regardless, we're not looking for a "perfect match." Rather the goal is to connect you with employment opportunities that fit you pretty well and lead you on a career path. The better your conditions of employment blend with your skills and knowledge, the better your chance of success.

The following is a list of typical conditions of employment. This list does not represent all possible ideal conditions of employment, but serves as a good starting point.

TYPICAL IDEAL CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

<p>What are your preferred work environments?</p>	<p>Examples might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loud or quiet ● Busy ● Clean ● Orderly ● Lighting (soft, incandescent, fluorescent, natural, dimly or brightly lighted, etc.) ● Windows ● Hard or soft surfaces ● Preferred colors ● Plants ● Stairs or single level ● Other?
<p>Wages and Benefits:</p>	<p>How much do need to earn?</p> <p>What benefits do you want?</p> <p>Other thoughts?</p>
<p>What kind of work pace do you prefer?</p>	<p>Examples might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quick pace ● Slow and easy ● Tight deadlines ● Quality more important than speed ● Other?

<p>How do you prefer to dress for work?</p>	<p>Examples might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business attire (shirt and tie, dresses, etc.) ● Business casual (no tie) ● Casual (jeans) ● Work clothes (includes safety shoes, etc.) ● Uniforms ● Caps/hats/headwear ● Facial hair allowed ● Visible tattoos, piercings, hair coloring ● Other?
<p>Preferred tasks</p>	<p>Do you prefer sitting/sedentary tasks?</p> <p>Do you need to be moving around?</p> <p>Do you prefer using your hands? Tools?</p> <p>Do you like to learn new things?</p>
<p>Distance from home</p>	<p>How far are you willing to travel?</p> <p>How do you get around?</p> <p>How close is public transportation?</p>
<p>Schedule</p>	<p>What is your preferred time of day?</p> <p>Morning, afternoon, evening</p> <p>Days of the week you are prepared to work?</p> <p>Other schedule considerations?</p>
<p>Supervision and Co-workers</p>	<p>What do you look for in a supervisor?</p> <p>What do you look for in co-workers?</p>



Health Considerations	Are there health issues that need to be considered? <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Allergies● Noise● Lighting● Dust● Strong scents● Stamina● Other:
------------------------------	--

We could on and on, but you get the point. Don't worry about coming up with a comprehensive list in one sitting. Once you begin thinking about your conditions of employment, more ideas follow. It's also a good idea to think about situations or conditions that you dislike or make you less productive. Put these on a separate list entitled, "Situations to Avoid."

TOUCHING BASE

Whether you are doing Self-Guided Discovery or someone is guiding you through the process, it is important to touch base with a trained and experienced "Discovery Mentor" along the way. No one really succeeds on his/her own. We all need the advice and input from trusted allies and advisors. Everyone is bound to miss something as they go through this process. Therefore, sharing your progress with others at various stops along the way helps assure greater completeness and a well-rounded profile.

This is the first "official" stop along the way. At this point, share your worksheets and staging record with your Discovery Mentor/Guide. You may wish to share your progress with other trusted allies or team members as well. The purpose is to get additional input or advice. At this point you begin to craft your initial narrative. One of the distinguishing elements of Discovery versus conventional forms of vocational evaluation is that Discovery is designed to find out "who you are." One of the products of Discovery is the "Story of You." As you meet with prospective employers or people from whom you are seeking employment or career advice, you will have to tell them your story. This part of the process is where you craft that story using much of the gathered information.

You will also use this stop to follow up on incomplete information, or you may be introduced to new questions you hadn't considered.



VOCATIONAL THEMES™

One major difference between Discovering Personal Genius (DPG) and other forms of assessment is the identification and development of Vocational Themes™. Conventional assessment and job development strategies often lead to job descriptions or labor market positions. Job Developers waste countless hours scouring the want ads or internet postings for available positions matching the results of traditional vocational testing and evaluation. We know that there are unlimited ways people make a living and that the vast majority of jobs never appear in want ads. Following a job description path generally leads to a dead end or in the job seeker being asked to adapt to an available position rather than finding an employment situation that best fits the person. DPG tosses all this aside and uses the information being gathered to identify and verify themes that lead to employment taking full advantage of the individual's talents, interests, skills, and personality. In this section, we discuss the process of identifying themes and how to use them in an employment search.

Job descriptions typically list required duties and qualifications. One benefit of working with small businesses is that many don't have formal job descriptions or an HR department that develops and maintains them. Most job descriptions don't fully include all the aspects of a job, nor do they describe what really goes on in a business. Avoid larger companies because, often, job descriptions are used to screen out applicants.

Vocational Themes are overarching in their capacity and hold almost unlimited numbers of job descriptions. A culinary theme is much larger and contains many more options than does the job description of dishwasher or prep cook. Themes also offer a path toward career advancement and development. Exploring Themes lead to places where a "career makes sense." Themes also lead to places where other people who

DIVINING VOCATIONAL THEMES TAKES A LITTLE TIME AND EFFORT. BEGIN THEME DEVELOPMENT BY USING THE INFORMATION GATHERED TO DATE. THE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THEMES INCLUDE:

- Activities
- Preferred Tasks
- Interests
- Skills
- Ideal Conditions
- Personal Attributes

share similar themes work, or to a business owned by someone with a similar theme.

Review the information you've gathered and start looking for trends or similarities. Are there tasks or activities you do that involve the same sorts of tools or knowledge? For instance, do you often find yourself in situations where you are using power tools? Do you seem to find yourself in leadership positions? Are you always fixing things? Are there any trends in the types of jobs you have had and the tasks associated with them? These considerations represent what you take into consideration as you search for themes.

Please identify at least three broad vocational themes – one is not enough. If you only have one theme and start down that path later to find out you were wrong about the theme, you're back at square one. Identifying three themes gives you more options and, if one is wrong, you still have the other two. Three also

offers the opportunity to mix or cross themes. For instance, someone with a transportation theme and a fashion theme might find themselves connected to the funeral industry where they have nice cars and dress in suits. You never know.

TESTING THE THEMES

While developing themes, it is important to verify them. You do this by conducting informational meetings (interviews) with experts in that field. We sometimes call this “finding the nerds.” In this context, nerd is a term of endearment. You want to have a conversation with someone who is passionate about the thematic area to get an idea of whether you’re on the right track. It is also important to go visit places of employment that match your themes; perhaps set up a quick work trial; find out about their processes, technology, and work conditions. For instance, a young woman with emerging Art and Culinary themes arranged to work with a cake decorator. The activity included decorating cupcakes with different colored frosting.

In another situation, a young man with an emerging Entertainment theme briefly volunteered his time with an inner city youth group to choreograph a musical number with 20 kids ages 8-16. He proved that he did indeed have skills in this area and his experience led him to a job at a local YMCA teaching dance and exercise classes to young children.

It is a good idea to find 2-3 places for each theme to either interview an expert or perform some tasks. Remember that you are not looking for a job at this point. You are gathering more information and advice related to your themes. You will do a similar but more focused activity when it comes to contacting businesses during the more active job seeking stage.

THEME TESTING WORKSHEET

Emerging themes that meld Interests, Talents, and Skills:		
1.		
2.		
3.		
Identify 3 places for each theme where people with similar themes work:		
Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.



Arrange informational meetings at one location for each of the Themes. It is important to note that this type of informational meeting is focused on testing the theme and the ideal conditions of employment (ecological fit). Although it is possible for a job to be offered, this is not the intent of this stage. Should a job offer be made, explore the idea and if it makes sense, follow up. A possible lead-in with the business owner or manager might be: "I am exploring my career options and getting advice from several successful people around town who share many of my interests and skills. Can you tell me about your career and give me some pointers on steps you might take, if you were me and just starting out?"

Notes from interview:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Which themes seem strongest?

Were any new interests/talents revealed to you?

Arrange further informational interviews and/or short (up to ½ a day) work experiences at the following places:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What did you observe or learn?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

CREATE YOUR STORY

Everything to this point has been about gathering and testing information to create your personal employment profile. The employment profile is essentially your story. It will be the foundation of what you will tell prospective employers about yourself. As you are building the narrative, it is important to think about other tools and assists you can use to enhance or illustrate your story.



PICTORIAL OR REPRESENTATIONAL PORTFOLIOS

Pictures speak louder than words, so start taking pictures of you doing the things you know how to do. A great deal of time is spent on creating paper resumes for people with little or no work experience. In these cases, a resume is ineffective. However, putting together a digital pictorial portfolio that highlights your skills and interests is a much better representation of who you are and what you can do. This digital product is similar to the hardcopy picture books many of us used in job development before the advent of personal computers and digital devices.

Short videos may also be used to illustrate your skills and competencies. The advent of smart phones with built in video and still cameras makes the process of assembling a representational portfolio much easier than in years past.

Information on portfolios is found at <http://www.griffinhammis.com/>.

WORK SAMPLES

If you are someone who makes something, sews something, cooks something, etc., then you might consider having samples of your work available when you meet with prospective employers or advisors.

PAPER RESUMES

People who have work histories or have completed higher education or technical training may still benefit from creating a paper resume in addition to a representational portfolio. People who seek careers in the arts, for example, typically present a prospective employer with both a paper resume and a pictorial portfolio of their work, so it's not out of the ordinary. Do what makes the most sense for you and for what your profile indicates may be the best path.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ARE NOW READY TO TAKE THE INFORMATION YOU GATHERED AND YOUR EMPLOYMENT PROFILE AND BEGIN DISCOVERING AND CONNECTING WITH BUSINESSES THAT WILL LEAD TO YOUR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT.

Traditionally this step is called Job Development. The conventional means of job development rely heavily on sales and marketing, scouring want ads or the internet, or doing labor market research. Conventional job development also uses tools including written resumes and completing job applications during the job search.

We prefer to take a more casual approach to job development in which people learn about the myriad of businesses, both large and small, that exist in their communities. A recent study by the Kaufman Foundation on Entrepreneurship estimated that there are over 34.5 million businesses in the United States. They found there were 22 million single owner businesses and over 11 million businesses with 1-19 employees. What is surprising is that there are only about 38,500 businesses in the U.S. with more than 500 employees. Many of the national and state employment initiatives seem to focus on the smallest number of American businesses (500 or more employees) while overlooking the vast majority of small and medium sized companies. It is those companies, many of which are part of the Artisan Economy, that we attempt to

discover and cultivate. We're not saying that working for one of the 38,500 large companies is a bad thing, but they are much harder to get into than the smaller companies that are right around the corner or down the street from you. So, how do you begin?

CULTIVATING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Create the Lists of Twenty™
2. Schedule Informational Meetings
3. Conduct Informational Meetings
4. Determine if Wage or Self-Employment Is Indicated

CREATE THE LISTS OF TWENTY

You have completed a Discovery Staging Record (DSR) form and you have your profile that includes your ideal conditions of employment and your vocational themes. You know your skills and your preferences. Creating the Lists of Twenty consists of taking each of your three themes and identifying twenty places nearby where that theme is present or valued. You will also consider the conditions of employment and skills when building your lists. An effective way to help you tease out places for the list is to take a theme and brainstorm a list of the things that are associated with that theme. For instance, we were working with a young man who had a theme of "death." No, he didn't want to die or kill people, but he was very interested in things related to death. In the brainstorming session, his team came up with over 30 ideas of things related to death. Some of the ideas included: taxidermy, automobiles (shiny Cadillacs and other cars), music, makeup, gardening (particularly flowers), clothing, headstones, movies, Halloween, etc.

It is important to point out that this exercise is best done with a group of people (team) who are committed to the success of the job seeker. Engaging a few people increases the potential for many ideas and we all know that in order to get a great idea, you need a lot of ideas.

Repeat this for each of the three themes. Once you have completed the brainstorming and have the initial list of things related to the theme, the next step is finding places in your community where that thing is done. People we have trained to use this exercise have found it to be very effective in generating lists.

YOU CAN USE A SIMPLE FORMAT LIKE THIS TO CREATE THE LISTS.

Job/Business Development Plan (The Lists of Twenty)		
List of Twenty Places where people with similar Vocational Themes work:		
Theme 1:	Theme 2:	Theme 3:
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.
7.	7.	7.
8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.
10.	10.	10.
11.	11.	11.
12.	12.	12.
13.	13.	13.
14.	14.	14.
15.	15.	15.
16.	16.	16.
17.	17.	17.
18.	18.	18.
19.	19.	19.
20.	20.	20.



SCHEDULE INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS (INTERVIEWS)

After your lists are created, it's time to go out and meet people at the places you have identified. We call these informational meetings or interviews. However, we have learned that when they are called "interviews" they are often confused with a "job interview." These meetings are far from that, because the goal of an informational meeting is information and advice. You will already have done some informational meetings as you were testing the themes to see if you were on the right track. This is pretty much the same, but now you'll be more intentional about the places you are going.

You'll want to talk with the owner, manager, or a key employee to seek advice from that person about the profession they are in and what someone like you can do to learn about it and perhaps pursue the same line of work. People are usually happy to give you advice, but tend to be leery of someone trying to sell them something.

This process attempts to circumvent the HR filter. Human Resource professionals are fine people, but they sometimes know very little about the specific work that is done or how it is done. Only the person who actually does the work can tell you that. In most small businesses, the owner, manager, co-worker, is the same person who makes the hiring decisions. That is the person we want to reach.

Below are some suggestions for setting up informational meetings:

- Start at the bottom of your lists. You will have done some pretty good thinking to get to items 15-20 on the list, so they'll probably be some of the most interesting places.
- Call the business/employer (or go visit) and tell them that you are seeking information about how peoples' careers evolve and gathering ADVICE from employers (ask for managers or owners) on how someone would start a career in their field or line of work.
- Ask for 20 minutes of seat time. Also add, "If there's time, I'd love a tour." We almost always get the total tour. However, it needs to follow the seat time otherwise the chance to bond won't happen and you never get in the back room where most of the tools, techniques, and technology is used. Asking for only 20 to 30 minutes seems to loosen the employers up and, of course, it's all about asking for "their advice." These sessions almost always end up taking 60 to 90 minutes.
- As previously mentioned, we prefer to seek out smaller, artisanal business for this because we want to talk with someone who is actually engaged in the work.
- Ask if there is anyone else in town they recommend you talk to. It is quite common to get a referral to another similar business or a supplier or customer from this initial meeting.
- When you get a referral – follow it even if it means deviating from your list. We have found that the initial Lists of Twenty change frequently because of these referrals. As in sales, it is always preferable to follow a "warm" lead.
- Sometimes it is possible to try to perform some of the tasks at a business to see what it's like. Maybe not today, but a time might be scheduled for a try-out. Don't be afraid to ask.
- Thank the person with whom you met and follow up as appropriate.
- Try to schedule 3-4 meetings per week. The more you do, the more likely you'll run across something that makes sense.

The enemies of a Discovery-based Customized Employment approach are delay and inactivity. The more you can do and the sooner you can do it, the better. Be careful not to take shortcuts. A common error people make is starting to do the formal informational meetings before they have fully developed themes. You don't want to start down a path only to learn that it's the wrong one. The time invested in developing themes that lead to the Lists of Twenty is an important investment for success.

INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS FOR STUDENTS OR YOUTH

A great advantage that young people and students have is time. We all grew up with ideas of what we wanted to do when we became adults. Very few of us actually became what we dreamed about as kids. Our ideas changed as we learned more about what was really out there in the world and how certain professions and tasks fit us better than others. Exposure to a lot of things and opportunities to try out different jobs sets the stage for future employment options. We should be careful not to push a young person into choosing a career path before they have ever had a job. The more you do and experience, the more likely a career path that makes sense will be revealed.

The usual way young people learn about the world of work is through part-time jobs after school, on weekends or during breaks. The great thing about these jobs is that they seldom become life-long employment. They teach us about being an employee, about supervision, responsibility, interacting with co-workers and more. We use those lessons to set the course for our career exploration, training, and employment. Young folks with disabilities should travel that same route, but how?

It all begins with learning to do things. Parents and families should start teaching their children with disabilities to perform tasks at a very early age. No skill is irrelevant so teach kids how to make a bed, mow the lawn, do laundry, or make toast. We know that all people can learn, but it may take some folks longer than others. Expect that children with disabilities will have chores around the house. They may start out needing extra help, but the level of assistance is likely to change over time. Low expectations may be the biggest barrier to employment for people who experience a disability. Starting young with high expectations – the same expectations you would have for children who do not have a disability – increases the potential for employment success.

If you need help with powerful teaching techniques for a person who has difficulty learning or experiences a cognitive disability, explore the tools and techniques of systematic instruction. These are strong teaching strategies that almost anyone can master. (Access the online class through: <http://griffinhammis.academy.reliaslearning.com/creating-community-careers-online-courses.aspx>).

Most of us started working as teenagers. This is a good time to engage students with disabilities in career exploration. Two exercises that families and teachers can do with young folks are variations of the informational meetings discussed earlier.

1 FAMILY INTERVIEWS

The first exercise is for the young person to interview 10 people their family knows about what they do for a living. This can include family members, but we suggest that it not be exclusively family members. Be sure to include some friends of the family as well.

The interview would consist of these questions:

- What do you do for a living?
- How long have you done it?
- How did you get your job or get started?
- What training or education did you have?
- Is this what you thought you'd be doing?
- What advice would you give someone who is interested in the same job or profession?

The responses should be video or sound recorded or outlined with written notes.

2 LOCAL BUSINESS INTERVIEWS

The next exercise is very similar except that this time the young person will be interviewing 10 local business owners. It is preferable if the businesses are those that the family frequents (hair salon, mechanic, baker, etc.). Do not go to more than one of the same business. For instance, if you know a local baker, one bakery will be enough. Ask the same questions as above. You can always add a question or two about being a business owner or starting a business, but the main thrust is to learn about the ways that people make a living. Record the responses.

These two simple exercises have the potential to expose the young person to 20 different professions or careers. These represent more options than are typically presented to young people with disabilities before they leave school. In some instances, businesses have offered a part-time job to the person. You never know what might come of it, but we do know that if you do nothing, nothing will happen.

POST INFORMATIONAL MEETING DEBRIEF

Following each informational meeting it is a good idea to record what happened. If you're not too good at writing, you can use a voice recorder or get some help. The following form may be useful in keeping a record of your informational meetings.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW DEBRIEFING

Name of Business:
Name of Person Interviewed:
What does s/he do there?
What does this business do?



How long has it been around?
How did the person you interviewed get into this line of work?
What skills did you observe being used?
What skills are important to be successful in this industry or line of work?
What did you learn about: Competitors: Trends: Expansion/Technology:
Who else can you talk to about businesses like this?

WAGE OR SELF-EMPLOYMENT?

Although the primary target for this manual is wage employment (working as an employee for wages), Discovery can indicate self-employment or micro-enterprise as an option. As with wage employment, themes, conditions of employment, skills, and interests must be considered when going down the self-employment path. A valuable resource on self-employment is:

Griffin, C.C., Hammis, D., Keeton, B. & Sullivan, M. (2014). *Making Self-Employment Work for People with Disabilities*, 2nd edition. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

REMAIN FOCUSED AND STAY ON TRACK

There is no way to predict how long it might take before getting a job offer. You could be lucky and land a job quickly, but for most people, it takes some time. The Lists of Twenty will help you if you let them. The places on the Lists are there because they make sense based upon your themes, your conditions of employment, and your skills and interests. Don't give up. That job may be waiting at the next business you meet. If you need help or encouragement, check in with your team or your Discovery mentor or advisor. You CAN do this and be successful.



ENGAGING EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS – OPTIONAL SECTION

Discovering Personal Genius establishes the foundation of Customized Employment. It is a functional community-based assessment strategy that is designed to get someone into the workforce relatively quickly, into a job that makes sense for the job seeker and leads to career advancement. It does that because, unlike traditional assessments, DPG is connected to each phase of the Customized Employment process. DPG identifies conditions of employment, skills and interests, and vocational themes. It also reveals the supports both on and off the job that an individual may need to be successful. No assessment can identify all the needs a person has, but DPG identifies many of the supports a person needs to be successful. Because of this thorough, functional assessment, DPG guides job development. DPG and the Customized Employment strategies will take you to places where the themes and career makes sense. Because of that approach, many of the anticipated employment supports will already be in place. There will always be specific conditions for every job and work environment. A useful tool to help think about employment supports is a Job Analysis Record. Not everyone needs this level of analysis, but it can help organize thoughts about what happens before and after you begin your new employment. This is an optional section of the manual, but may be helpful in anticipating workplace supports, technology, and instructional needs.

JOB ANALYSIS RECORD

Instructions: This form is used to capture the major task steps of each job or project. The recorder should pay particular attention to how the tasks are typically performed, any accommodations (enhancements), technology, or specialized training strategies that should be employed with the new employee. The tasks sets are to be recorded as “projects” so that a discrete training format can be established for each. (For a complete form, visit griffinhammis.com or [The Job Developer’s Handbook](#)).

Name of Worker:	Date Initiated/Date Completed: /
Company:	Contact Person/Supervisor:
Phone/E-mail:	Person Complete JAR:
Proposed Job Title:	
Major Tasks or Projects:	
Proposed Work Hours/Days per Week:	
Anticipated Pay Rate/Benefits:	
Comments/Considerations:	

Culture of the Company: Record observations regarding the rites and rituals of the company: e.g., dress code, commonly used language/slang that may be helpful to understand, work hours, break times, lunch behavior, initiation rituals for new hires, social interactions, carpooling, etc.

A. Project/Task/Job One Description:

Task Steps:

Quality Measures:

Tools Required:

Speed & Accuracy Considerations:

Natural Instructors/Supervision:

Task Duration:

Task Acquisition Concerns:

B. Project/Task/Job Two Description:

Task Steps:

Quality Measures:

Tools Required:

Speed & Accuracy Considerations:

Natural Instructors/Supervision:

Task Duration:

Task Acquisition Concerns:

C. Project/Task/Job Three Description:

Task Steps:

Quality Measures:

Tools Required:

Speed & Accuracy Considerations:

Natural Instructors/Supervision:

Task Duration:

Task Acquisition Concerns:



D. Project/Task/Job Four Description:

Task Steps:

Quality Measures:

Tools Required:

Speed & Accuracy Considerations:

Natural Instructors/Supervision:

Task Duration:

Task Acquisition Concerns:

E. Project/Task/Job Five Description:

Task Steps:

Quality Measures:

Tools Required:

Speed & Accuracy Considerations:

Natural Instructors/Supervision:

Task Duration:

Task Acquisition Concerns:



ONGOING SUPPORT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The final phase of Customized Employment is Ongoing Support and Career Development. Most Americans will have several jobs during their employment lifetime and perhaps a few career changes along the way. Your profile doesn't end when you've completed the Discovery phase. In fact, it grows and changes during each step of the process. As you learn more about yourself or your loved one, this information should be added to the profile. As an employee, you will learn more about your preferred conditions of employment, supervision, co-workers and company cultures, your profile will change accordingly.

While on the job you may be assigned new responsibilities and tasks. Should you need help with learning those tasks, you will know where to turn and those who might help you will have a good idea about how to teach you.

You may find a different job or a new career track is in order. Your profile will help you with either of those because it will be current. Conventional assessments happen once and stay with you forever. The profile created through DPG and the Customized Processes change as you change.

Good luck. If you follow these steps you will have a much better chance of achieving your goal of quality employment and a better quality of life.

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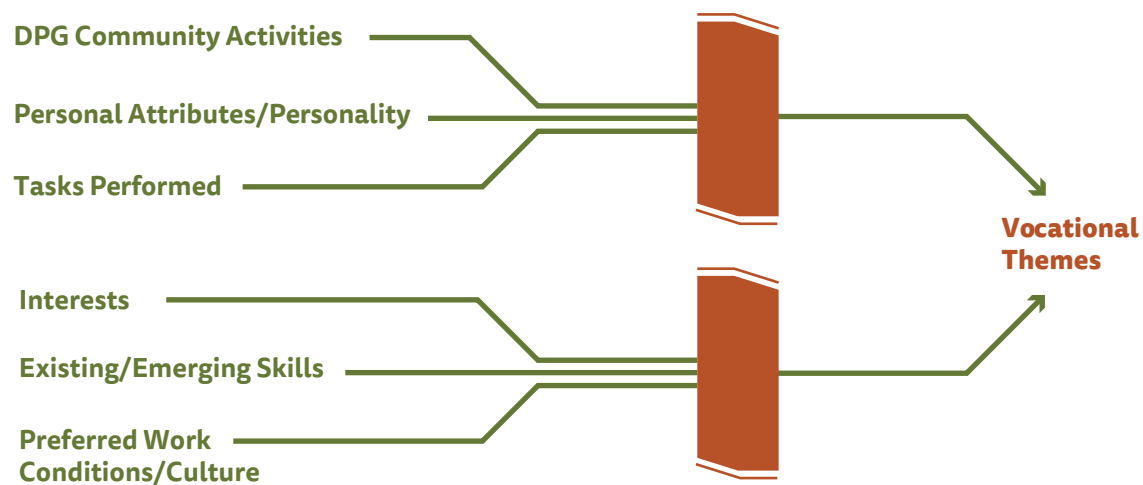
APPENDIX B

DEVELOPING VOCATIONAL THEMES WORKBOOK



This workbook is a discussion guide for those designing and overseeing Discovering Personal Genius (DPG)[™] activities in order to capture critical elements for review by a Customized Employment (CE) team, employment seekers, family members, or any and all folks involved in establishing the vocational plan. CE and DPG are used throughout the U.S. for adults and transition-age youth served by state and local Special Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Developmental Disability and Mental Health agencies, for Veterans with service-related disabilities, and as part of the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) mandate of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunities Act (WIOA).

GRIFFIN-HAMMIS ASSOCIATES ELEMENTAL CHART FOR DETERMINING VOCATIONAL THEMES



This workbook supplements the Discovery Staging Record (DSR) (available at griffinhammis.com) and is meant to foster team conversation through the gathering of non-speculative observational data during DPG activities. Discussing the basic elements here, including the individual DPG Activities, the Tasks the individual performs (with and without assistance), their Interests, the Skills they exhibit and those that can be built upon, their personal Attributes and Characteristics, and the Conditions of employment and the Work Cultures providing the best, most natural fit, helps discern the overarching Vocational Themes[™]. These themes lead us to developing the Lists of Twenty[™] places in our community “where the theme and career make sense.”

Training in DPG and CE is highly recommended before using this tool.

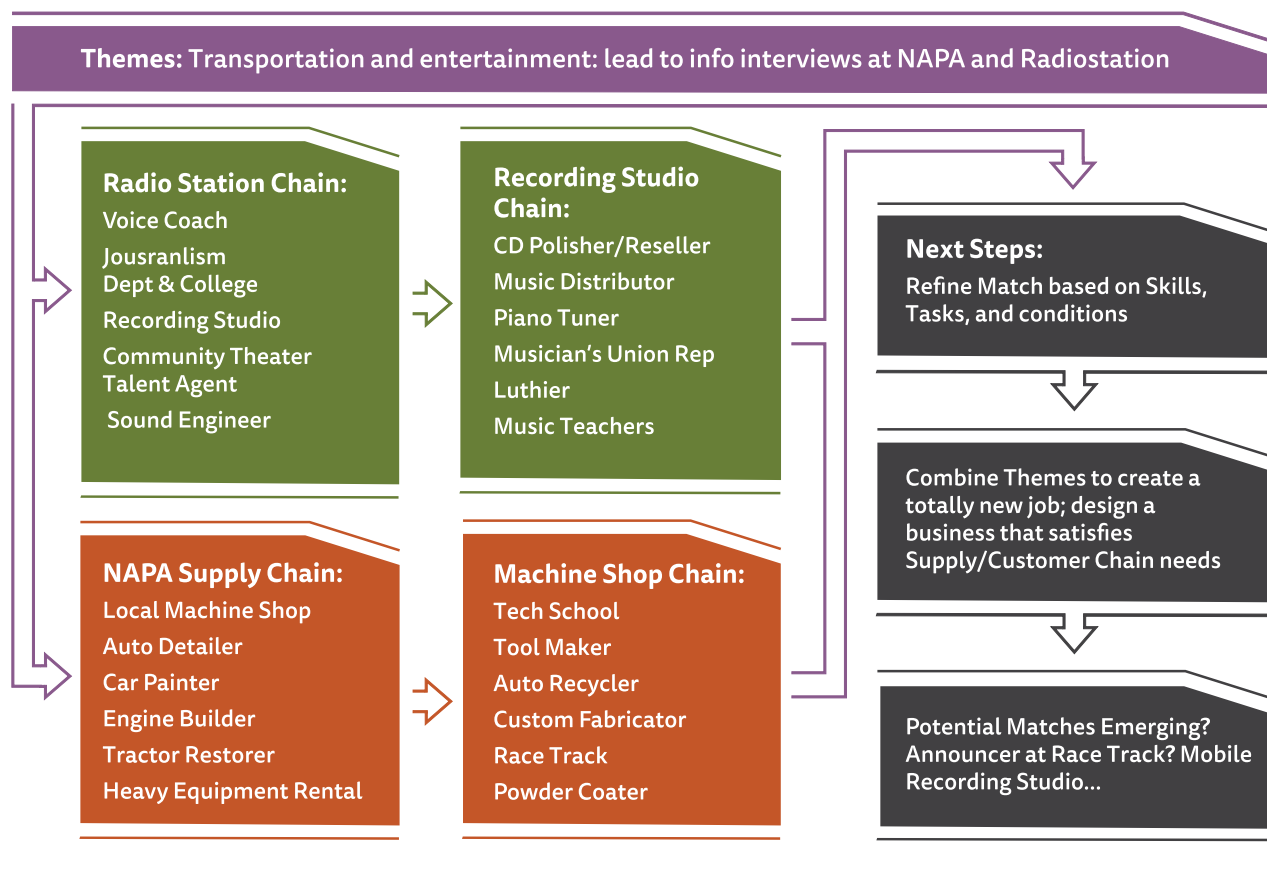
THIS WORKBOOK IS DESIGNED FOR TAKING NOTES BEFORE AND DURING DPG TEAM MEETINGS; THE WORKBOOK IS NOT MEANT TO BE ANOTHER REPORT...USE IT TO INFORM TEAM CONVERSATION AND ACTIONS.

Recap: Discovering Personal Genius (DPG) is designed to generate no fewer than 3 overarching Vocational Themes. Themes are not job descriptions. They are large umbrella categories that represent an almost unlimited collection of many jobs, environments, skills/task sets, and interests. Too often someone may have an interest in say, flowers. The stereotypical job suggestion is likely to be: Work in a greenhouse or assist at a florist shop. This is very limiting for both the individual and the person charged with managing the career search. By thinking through the theme a bit, supported by DPG evidence of current skills, tasks that can potentially be taught/learned, and interests, as well as work environments and cultures that fit the person, a broader, richer palette of opportunity emerges. By slowing down the process just a bit; performing activities in school, home or community that further illustrate the employment seeker's resident or emerging skills; engaging a team for ideas; and exploring the community using informational interviews, work try-outs, and/or paid internships, creative options emerge. And while none of us will ever be well-versed in the intricacies of even a miniscule number of companies in our communities, the good news is that skills and tasks often transcend industry sectors. Someone who can wash a dish can also wash a helicopter part in a solvent tank. The DPG process pulls us into the community to see the myriad places where similar skills and ecological fitment are found.

So, someone who helps their parents grow flowers in the family garden demonstrates that they know how to water the flowers, how to prune back dead leaves, and how to hoe weeds. This might mean, although additional Discovery is warranted, that there is an Agricultural Theme. This is not a flower or a plant theme; that would be too narrow. The same skills used in flower gardening are used across many types of agriculture (and within other themes too). The flower garden, after all, is likely the only place the opportunity to learn and perform these tasks has occurred. In fact, DPG challenges us to consider that this might not be an interest of the person at all. Perhaps this is just one of the only activities accessible to the individual. Still, the skills they have (watering, weeding, trimming) are relevant in many work environments and should not be dismissed. The DPG process helps clarify where both interests and skills lie.

If Agriculture is indeed determined to be a Theme through various DPG activities (e.g., a positive work tryout on a weeding team at the Botanical Gardens; trimming trees within the backyard), then a List of Twenty is developed for that one theme. One strong suggestion when initially exploring Vocational Themes is to put off-limits those jobs and places already considered stereotypical, and instead search out local companies or organizations where people with similar Themes work as trades-people, skilled workers, or artisans; environments where employees are more likely to help co-workers learn their trade and new skills and tasks; where a career path may blossom. So, for someone with an emerging Animal Theme, skip the Humane Society, the pet store, and the local kennel, and dig deeper into the fabric of community commerce to find the taxidermist, pet photographer, the horse chiropractor, or the animal vitamin supplement maker. In the case of an emerging Agriculture Theme, abandon the local greenhouse or lawn mowing service and instead seek out the organic goat cheese maker, the beekeepers, and the topsoil recovery services. Interview them, get the details of their operations, and use their supply chains to mine more precise and diverse job development opportunities. A little exploration leads to increased creativity in finding, adapting, and creating new work options. The chart below illustrates the process of interviewing business managers with Themes matching those of an employment seeker and following the supply chains to reveal many possible options in a small community.

LINKING DISCOVERY & CUSTOMIZED JOB DEVELOPMENT: SUPPLY & CUSTOMER CHAIN MINING



ACTIVITIES:

Briefly detail the DPG Activities observed to date. Discuss why they were chosen and what they revealed. What additional Activities are planned; what additional activities seem warranted?

Activity 1: _____

Activity 2: _____

Activity 3: _____

Activity 4: _____

Activity 5: _____

Add additional pages for more Activities

TASKS:

In each of the Activities listed above, please describe the Tasks the individual performed during each (Note that a Task is a series of actions that complete a process: Changing the spark plug in a lawn mower is a task). Discuss the quality of the work performed; teaching and support strategies; where (and where else) these tasks are likely to be valued; new tasks that might be useful to introduce/teach.

Task 1:

Task 2:

Task 3:

Task 4:

Task 5:

Add additional pages for more Tasks

SKILLS:

For the Tasks listed above, describe the discrete Skills exhibited during each (Note that a Skill is a learned/practiced action that contributes to the completion of a Task: Selecting the correct wrench and setting the gap of the spark plug are both discrete skills used when tuning up the lawn mower). Discuss the level of skill demonstrated; teaching and support strategies; where (and where else) these skills may be valued; new skills that might be useful to teach; and other skills the person has that are obvious or assumed even if not observed.

Skill 1: _____

Skill 2: _____

Skill 3: _____

Skill 4: _____

Skill 5: _____

Skill 6: _____

Skill 7: _____

Skill 8: _____

Skill 9: _____

Skill 10: _____

Add additional pages for more Skills

INTERESTS:

The dictionary defines an interest as an activity that diverts or amuses or stimulates. The steps of DPG are designed to illuminate interests and the analogous skills and tasks involved. Interests are important because being engaged augments skill development, but interests alone are not enough to build a job on; skills, even emerging ones, should also be in evidence. One discovers their interests through repeated exposure with family, friends, educational opportunities, and through personal exploration. Often, for individuals with significant disabilities, choices are limited and what appear as interests are actually the choices of others. List the Interests revealed through DPG observations and conversations. When discussing, match Interests with skills and tasks to help clarify where the career makes sense. Note that Interests often tend to be more like job descriptions than overarching Themes. For instance, an Interest in fly fishing may lead to the Vocational Theme of Water, or Nature, or Animals, or Sports, or perhaps Problem-Solving.

Interest 1: _____

Evidence of Interest: _____

Interest 2: _____

Evidence of Interest: _____

Interest 3: _____

Evidence of Interest: _____

Interest 4: _____

Evidence of Interest: _____

Add additional pages for more Interests

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES:

Describe the person, in an objective manner, in terms of personality or behavioral qualities they demonstrate. Be especially careful not to speculate, just report on what's been observed. Use these attributes as a guide to the type of environment most suitable/preferable for employment, and to determine what works and what doesn't work for the individual. Punctuality, style of dress, and sense of humor are common attributes. Note that attributes often inform the Conditions of Employment.

Attribute 1: _____

Attribute 2: _____

Attribute 3: _____

Attribute 4: _____

Attribute 5: _____

Attribute 6: _____

Attribute 7: _____

Attribute 8: _____

Attribute 9: _____

Attribute 10: _____

Add additional pages for more Attributes

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT/WORK CULTURES:

These are the considerations for good worksite fitment and include such elements as: pay and benefits expected, preferred work hours, performance of specific tasks and the use of particular skills, regularity and intensity of supervision, etc. In almost any workplace, substantial deviation from the cultural norm of expected traits and performance may inhibit acceptance and inclusion, so knowing the Conditions and Cultural preferences of the individual minimizes bad job match. Note that the discussion again returns to asking: Where might folks with similar conditions work; where might such conditions be negotiated; where might this work culture exist in our community?

Condition 1: _____

Condition 2: _____

Condition 3: _____

Condition 4: _____

Work Culture Element 1: _____

Work Culture Element 2: _____

Work Culture Element 3: _____

Work Culture Element 4: _____

Add additional pages for more Conditions/Cultural Elements

VOCATIONAL THEMES:

Based on the evidence collected and discussed so far, what are the solid themes; what are the emerging themes; what information do you need to solidify the list of Three Vocational Themes?

Solid Vocational Themes:

- 1: _____
- 2: _____
- 3: _____

Emerging Vocational Themes:

- 1: _____
- 2: _____
- 3: _____

What information and activities are needed to settle on the final list of Vocational Themes?

- 1: _____

- 2: _____

- 3: _____

- 4: _____

COMMON VOCATIONAL THEMES:

Note this is not all-inclusive, nor is this a checklist. Many of these themes are related and all have varying iterations. For example, employment for someone with a strong Advocacy Theme could range in career areas from Disability, Law Enforcement, and Nursing to Environmental Activism, Cheerleading, Highway Safety, and Space Exploration. Combining two or more themes often helps clarify themes, refine career development, and yield strong and unique options for employment. When developing a Vocational Theme, use a word or two that represents all the concepts described in this workbook - Interests, Discovery Activities, Tasks Performed, Skills, Personal Attributes, Conditions/Work Culture – easy to say, not so simple to do! Try not to use words that already represent a work industry or job title, like Healthcare or Nursing, Accounting or Bookkeeping, Carpentry, and Publishing or Writer, unless the individual’s team understands the term to mean more than just that particular industry or job title. The Vocational Theme should help the team develop lists of various businesses where people who share a similar theme work, and not just in a particular type of business or industry.

For example, “Construction” could limit the team’s Lists of Twenty to just the Construction Industry (building), unless the team understands that the person’s demonstrated interests, skills, and tasks may really reflect “Working with His Hands;” a Hospitality Theme could limit the team to build a List of Twenty with businesses from the Food and Beverage Industry, unless the team really understands that the term Hospitality (or perhaps Customer Service) to mean “Welcoming/Caring for Others.” Vocational Themes are not simply taken from a list, but developed for each individual based on the unique aspects of the individual and community. Always use words that broaden the businesses to be included in the Lists of Twenty, not narrow them.

Common Vocational Themes		
Organization	Children	Art
Agriculture	Advocacy	Geography
Construction	Outdoors/Nature	Leadership
Entertainment	Cleanliness	Communications
Transportation	Culinary	Water
Medicine/Health Care	History	Travel
Customer Service/Hospitality	Fashion	Military
Curiosity/Problem-Solving	Mathematics	Science
Technology/Computers	Politics	Logistics
Athletics/Recreation	Mechanical	Religion/Spirituality

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APPENDIX C

EMPLOYMENT TOOL BOX



PEOPLE ARE YOUR MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE

Building a Relationship Map

Name	How I Know Them	What They Do for a Living	Contact Info

Where Do You Belong?

Associations	Institutions*	Civic Resources	Businesses

* Schools, churches, government entities, medical facilities, nonprofits, etc.

What Do You Know How to Do?

Skills that others would find useful.

Skill - Doing	How Did You Learn This?	Who Taught You?

No Skill Is Insignificant

What Do You Know About?

Knowledge that others would find useful.

Knowledge	How Did You Learn This?	Who Taught You?

No Knowledge Is Insignificant



My Ideal Conditions of Employment

These things improve my chances of success on the job.

