



VOCATION WORKBOOK

COLUMBIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Living into your true calling

Living as you were created to be

Living alive and in relationship with God and one another

is the most important calling we have.

This workbook is designed to provide a space to reflect upon the ways you have lived into your vocation in all aspects of your life - through school, employment, volunteer work, and beyond.

We encourage you to write and reflect on anything from mundane tasks to major projects, from interpersonal relationships that flourished and grew to those that were filled with conflict and stagnation, from responsibilities in which you excel to those upon which you rely on others, from collaborative work environments to those where you work alone.

If you work your way through the exercises in this book, you will have resources to draw upon for networking, job search, writing a resume, preparing for an interview, and much more.

If you have additional questions or concerns, feel free to email Katie Ricks, Associate Director of Vocation and Spiritual Formation, at ricksk@CTSnet.edu or schedule an appointment [here](#).

More information about vocation, discernment, ordination, and placement can be found on our [vocation website](#).

*"Don't ask what the world needs.
Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it.
Because what the world needs is
people who have come alive."*

-Howard Thurman

*"Vocation is the place
where our deep gladness
meets the world's deep need."*

-Frederick Buechner

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What is my Vocation? Why am I here?

Vocation isn't a prospective job title, or the answer to the question of whether you're going to serve inside the church or outside of it, or what your family expects, or your friends expect, or your church expects. Vocation is the answer to the question asked by Mary Oliver at the end of her poem, *The Summer Day*: "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life¹?"

Vocation is the place of deep gladness², deep passion, and deep alive³-ness that you live in the service of God and God's people in the world. Your vocation is consistent whether you work in a church or in retail, whether you are volunteering at a non-profit or your child's school, whether you are engaging with your colleagues or your family.

In order to begin to get a handle on what this call to ministry - this vocation - means in your life, you have to know your deepest gladness; you have to know what makes you come alive.

Theologically, we believe our vocation/our "why" /our purpose is inextricably linked to God's unique creation of each one of us. We come to know the person whom God has created us to be through a lifelong process of discernment. We are uniquely and wonderfully made in God's image and granted gifts and passions by a God who loves us and yearns for us to be whole, a God who has dreams and visions about how we might co-create together. The primary focus of vocation is to discern God's dreams and call, within the context of the gifts and passions with which God has graced us. (Identify *who has God created me to be* rather than *who am I*.)

Here at Columbia, students and their spouses have access to subsidized individual and group spiritual direction, which can help you

This is not a journey we engage by ourselves. God created us to be in relationship with God and one another. Community is the only space in which we can learn, grow, develop, and be challenged. Discernment comes from these deep relationships that grow and develop over time.

¹ Mary Oliver, *The Summer Day*, <https://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/133.html>.

² Frederick Buechner, "Vocation is the place where our deep gladness meets the world's deep need."

³ Howard Thurman, "Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

The secular world also has language that describes the process of self-reflection which brings about some of these answers - *Know Your Why* and *Find Your Purpose* are some of the most popular. The resources below have been helpful in framing this conversation for people inside and outside the church. Use them to guide your dreaming and discernment.

Resources

Finding Purpose & Inspiration - Simon Sinek on London Real

How (and why) to find your Purpose? - Jeff Hilimire at Begin the Begin

Know Your Why, Michael Jr.

Start with Why, Simon Sinek TED Talk

Activity

Watch, listen, read, draw, write, pray, and explore the following videos and articles that articulate this secular perspective on vocation. Bring the parts that resonate, surprise, and challenge you into your conversations with God. Then, write a 1-2 sentence description (or Tweet length) of your why - your purpose - at this point in time in your life.

My Vocation / "Why" / Purpose

The Examen

The practice of discernment involves becoming more and more attuned to God's yearnings and desires for us. Discernment necessarily requires spending intentional and deliberate time being present with and listening to God. As you spend this time together, you will come to know God's ways of being and communicating with you, specifically. You will become aware of the movements of God within you - sensing more clearly when you are headed closer to God's dreams and when you are headed further afield.

One of the oldest and most widely used spiritual practices to discern these movements is the Examen - a practice begun by St. Ignatius of Loyola in the 16th century. In its simplest form, the Examen is an exercise in "highs and lows" or "roses and thorns" which some folks use in group meetings to check in with one another. Different variations exist, but the prevailing belief is that paying attention to places of "consolation" and "desolation" guide you towards the path of joy and peace found in following God's call.

Activity

For the next month, spend 10 minutes at the end of your day reflecting on the set of questions below that speaks to you. Make note (in a journal or your phone - whatever works for you) of moments of consolation and desolation that you experience. At the end of the month, take some time to review what you've written - look for patterns, surprises, challenges. Talk with a spiritual director, trusted friend, God about what you've noticed. How could you include this practice in your life going forward? Or, would a different practice work better?

For what moment today am I most grateful?
For what moment today am I least grateful?

When did I give and receive the most love today?
When did I give and receive the least love today?

When did I feel most alive today?
When did I most feel life draining out of me?

What was today's high point?
What was today's low point?

When today did I have the greatest sense of belonging to myself, others, God and the universe?

When did I have the least sense of belonging?

When was I happiest today?
When was I saddest?

**Questions from *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life*, by Dennis Linn, Sheila Fabricant Linn, Matthew Linn.

Elevator Speech or “Pitch”

Once you know (or have an inkling of an understanding of) who and what God has created you to be and do in the world at this point in time, you want to be able to articulate your thoughts clearly and concisely. Having a prepared speech actually enables you to introduce yourself, share about your vocation, and speak about your hopes for future ministry in a way that is authentic and credible.

This speech will become the foundation of your job search - whether you are engaging in networking, crafting a resume, writing a cover letter, or interviewing for a position.

Activity

Create a 5-6 sentence / 15-20 second speech about yourself that grows out of your exploration and discernment.

- Who are you? [Name, Vocation/Why/Purpose]
- What have you done? [How have you lived this so far in your life?]
- What is God calling you to do/be next? [How do you understand God calling you to live this in the future?]

Find a trusted friend - or group of peers - to give you feedback about what they hear, what they want to know more or less about, and whether or not it sounds like you. Ultimately, authenticity and clarity are the most important characteristics of this statement.

My Elevator Speech

Resumes

Each resume you send should be targeted to the specific job / internship / scholarship / award to which you are applying.

From your perspective, you want to know that the position you are seeking matches with your vocation and enables you to share the gifts and skills you have been given (and worked hard for). You want to be able to articulate this understanding in a way that is clear and able to be quickly processed by an employer.

From the perspective of an employer, they want someone with proven experience, passion, and integrity to come in and accomplish the tasks that have been set for the position. With an abundance of applications to read, employers will be quickly looking for specific qualifications and background that are pertinent. They want to read your resume and know why you will be a good fit. They don't want to spend time trying to figure out why you think you are a good fit.

Master Resume

Before you begin crafting your unique resumes, you want to create a Master Resume - a document that contains all the information you will ever want and need to remember about the jobs that you have had. When everything is in one place, you have easy access to details about your work, stories, accomplishments, challenges, names of supervisors and colleagues, and more. The earlier you start this document in your career, the more helpful it is, but you can catch up at anytime.

Initially, you do not need to worry about formatting. Gather all the information together; construct solid language (e.g. action verbs, concise descriptions); and, have several trusted people review your document and give you constructive feedback.

Your Master Resume will take some time to create. Know, though, that the more time you spend on it now, the better and easier your task will be when you reach the point of targeting resumes for specific positions. Include everything you can think of. You never know what will be helpful in the future.

NOTE: It is impossible to overstate the need for others to review your resumes, cover letters, portfolios, Personal Information Forms, LinkedIn page, etc. Small errors mean the difference between your resume getting you an interview and ending up in the recycle bin.

Master Resume Worksheet

HEADING

This is the identifying information at the top of your resume. Ultimately, you will want this information to function like a letterhead. You can use the name heading at the top of your Cover Letter too. It looks clean and your information is easily identifiable.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

*(Make sure you check this email daily, it is appropriate, and it will not be shut down in the middle of a job search.)
(batman4eva@gmail.com - NO! Calvin@CTSnet.edu - NO! JohnCalvin@stableaddress.com - YES!)*

VOCATION/"WHY"/PURPOSE

This won't necessarily show up in your resume; though it's almost guaranteed to show up in an interview and, potentially, a cover letter. Keep a running list of your 2-3 sentence vocation/"why"/purpose statement if and when they change over time. (Be sure to date them and even indicate what prompted you to review your statement.)

QUALIFICATION SUMMARY

A brief synopsis of your most relevant skills/core competencies and experience.

EDUCATION

List all colleges and universities from which you have earned or will earned a degree. After you have graduated from college, you do not need to include your high school. Do not abbreviate the names of the schools or majors - degree abbreviations are fine.

School: _____ City, State: _____

Degree: _____ Graduation Date: _____

Major/Minor: _____ GPA (above 3.0): _____

Major/Minor Coursework: _____

Campus Involvement (clubs/organizations/leadership roles): _____

Honors (Dean’s List, Scholarships): _____

RESEARCH AND CLASS PROJECTS

List research and class projects that are related to your field of interest.

CERTIFICATIONS & LICENSES

List all professional and occupational licenses, certifications, registrations and other credentials.

License: _____ State: _____

Credential Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Complete for all professional associations and/or memberships.

Association/Membership: _____

Membership Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

SKILLS: LANGUAGE, TECHNOLOGY, ARTISTIC, ETC

List all languages in which you are fluent (written and spoken), computer programs, graphic design, art skills, etc.

LEADERSHIP/VOLUNTEER/SERVICE TO THE CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Highlight activities that demonstrate roles in organizations and leadership. Sometimes, the experience that qualifies you for a particular job is what you do outside of paid employment. Complete for each organization with which you have worked.

Organization: _____

Dates of service: _____

Activities/Responsibilities: _____

HONORS AND AWARDS

List name of award, organization giving the award, and the date given.

ECCLESIAL STANDING

List ordinations, licensure, status in ordination process, etc.

WORK EXPERIENCE AND INTERNSHIPS

Complete for all jobs, internships, supervised ministry experiences, CPE, etc that you have had. You won't necessarily list anything further back than 10-15 years in a unique resume, but having this information will help you remember skills, experiences, and training that you might not otherwise think about when preparing for an interview. Be sure to include how your positions changes and grows over your time at a company/church/organization.

Position(s)/ Title(s): _____

Dates: _____

Address: _____

Supervisor(s): _____

Salary: _____

Job responsibilities and accomplishments (*action verbs, concise phrasing, and qualitative/ quantitative outcomes*): _____

Reflections on position:

What was going on?

- What was happening in the department, the company, industry, economy?
- What were the circumstances surrounding this opportunity?

Why were you promoted/hired?

- What problem did they hire you to solve or goal to attain?
- What were your specific performance expectations?

What problems did you encounter and what did you do about them?

- What cropped up unexpectedly?
- What might have prevented you from doing what you were hired to do?

PUBLICATIONS/SERMONS & PRESENTATIONS/ONLINE PRESENCE

List all published articles, devotionals, books, etc: _____

List all sermons/workshops/presentations for conferences, invited preaching engagements, pulpit supply (if you're a student): _____

Provide links to your online presence (i.e. blog, ePortfolio, podcast, sermons, etc): _____

REFERENCES

Complete for each reference. These will not be listed on your resume. They should be listed in a separate document, entitled "References." When asking someone to be a reference, ensure they can be a POSITIVE reference in terms of your work ethic, academic performance, gifts, skills, and character. Continue to keep up with these people over time, and periodically update your resume with them and confirm they are still willing to serve as a positive reference. Always give them a copy of the job description of the position(s) for which you are applying, and let them know when you are interviewing and when they can/should expect contact from an employer.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Basic Tips

In a resume, the little things matter. Grammatical errors, inconsistencies in language and formatting, and irrelevant information are the difference between an interview and an ignored application. Below are some tips to help you - and your trusted friends - review your resume with a critical eye.

PDF - Always send your resume, cover letter, and any application document in PDF form.

Professional Email Address - Your email address should be your name and a stable email provider - one that does not change when you graduate or leave a job. Your affinity for sports teams, superheroes, or Hogwarts houses should not be evident in your email address.

White Space - One should be able to see the white of the page when looking at your resume. Don't squeeze in so much text that it looks overwhelming to read; similarly, don't have so much white space that it looks like you are trying to compensate for little to say.

Readable Font - One should be able to read your resume (~12 pt font), and it shouldn't be a font like comic sans, chalkboard, or even some kind of script. Keep it simple and accessible.

Reverse Chronological Order - This is ALWAYS the case with education - start with most recent degree and then go backwards. Generally, what you've done more recently is more pertinent to what you're wanting to do next, so you would like other things in reverse order as well. On occasion, God - and life - throw a wrench into your plans, and you'll need to adjust for that, but that is a special occasion.

Most Relevant Information on Page 1 - First of all, your resume can be more than a page. It probably shouldn't be more than two, unless you've got tons of relevant experience and are doing a blend of resume/CV (including publications, preaching events, lectures, etc), which is possible but is unique. Secondly, you can - and should - adjust the order of your resume in order to highlight what you want people to see from the start.

Consistent Layout and Parallel Construction - Everything in your resume should be consistent - from font style to phrasing. Your titles should be the same throughout. Bold and italicized texts should be used intentionally, strategically, consistently, and not distractingly. Sentence/phrasing structures should be the same (i.e. start each bullet point with a strong action verb).

TRAPS:

Grammar and Spelling Errors
Disconnect with Position Sought
Irrelevant Information

Industry Language
Too Many Words

Chronological Resume

There are two basic types of resumes - chronological and functional, as well as some hybrid of both. The Chronological Resume is the one with which you are most familiar. It provides a reverse chronological (most recent first) progression of your work experience. It's an easy to follow career path and highlights the recent and, presumably, most relevant experience.

For those with a linear career progression, this works best. This will work best for students just out of college or early in their career. Second career students are less likely to have this kind of career path and will typically lean towards using a Functional Resume.

PATRICIA MELANSON

43 Broadway, Brooklyn, New York 11277 • (646) 877-4032 • production@melson.com

OBJECTIVE

Position in the field of communications bringing directly related education, experience, and technical skills.

EDUCATION

- Bachelor of Fine Arts, Communications
Yeshiva University, Garden City, New York, 2003
- Associate of Science, Broadcasting
Long Island Community College, Long Island City, New York, 1998

EXPERIENCE

- Production Intern, The Mandy Wilson Show, New York, New York** 2015 - Present
 - Work with producers, Viewer Service, and Audience departments in areas of topic research, guest selection and relations, talent distribution, bookings, audience management and general office support.
 - Provided technical assistance for Control Room engineers during taping sessions.
- Public Relations Assistant, Larry Spitzer, Art, Mexico, East Hampton, New York** 2012 - 2012
 - Actively promoted artist's music and engagements throughout college towns and medical communities.
 - Submitted media kits and other marketing materials, conducted telephone campaigns, and performed internet research to reach local venues.
- Video Operator, Music Television, Communications, Manhattan, New York** 2010 - 2010
 - Reported directly to the Video Production Supervisor with responsibility for managing broadcast reception operations. Formed network channels spanning the East and West Coasts.
 - Coordinated program back-up procedures, transmitted tones, monitored timecode, keyed program titles and graphics, and maintained log reports.
- Production Intern, The David Byrne Show, New York, New York** 9:00 - 12:30
 - Researched, generated, and pre-approved show topic ideas reflecting viewer interests.
 - Conducted pre-show interview by telephone as part of the studio segment selection process.
 - Provided office support in areas of correspondence, filing, mail processing, and filing.
- Production Intern, Media Communications, Shopping, New York** 6:00 - 9:30
 - Assisted in all phases of production process demonstrating a proficiency in camera and lighting techniques, and an ability to work in accordance to floor plans and edit sheets.
- Faculty Assistant, Yeshiva University, Garden City, New York** 6:00 - 9:00
 - Coordinated the computerized scheduling and technical set up of audio and visual equipment.
 - Screened calls, processed equipment repair forms, and maintained departmental logs and files.

COMPUTER SKILLS

- Hardware/Software: Windows 93/Windows, MS Word/Excel, Quick Express, Linux/Python
- Audio: Camera and lighting techniques, analog/digital video editing

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- American Women in Television

*Stock resume sample

Larry William Hibbert
540 6th St., Lubbock, TX, 79404
806-795-0502
Larry.Hibbert@att.net

Executive Profile

Over 15 years of extensive professional experience as a team leader that has the ability to direct complex projects, manage and sell commercial clients. A goal-oriented individual with strong analytical capabilities, able to generate, manage and implement corporate strategy, staff selection of employees, and evaluate the resulting impact on business. Available for immediate hire. See resume for details.

Professional Accomplishments

- Corporate Marketing**
 - Generated, advised and implemented a strategic plan for corporate marketing in order to bring in a 20% increase in new business and a 15% increase in repeat purchases.
 - Delivered a \$200,000 budget and then increased sales to an impressive 125% profit margin.
 - Reviewed, analyzed and implemented corporate strategy, staff selection of employees, and evaluate the resulting impact on business. Available for immediate hire. See resume for details.
- Event Development**
 - Involved in making the development Committee at Texas northern region program by 2006/2007.
 - Managed and directed over 200 volunteers for the 2006 year, more than 1000 hours of work. Resulted in \$102,000 in revenue for service, over a 100% increase.
 - Implemented a comprehensive marketing development plan resulting in an increase in new event staff and repeat revenue from diversified sources.
 - Facilitated rapid change program within 120% gain.
- Personal Management**
 - Managed and directed over 200 volunteers for the 2006 year.
 - Managed and directed over 200 volunteers for the 2006 year.
 - Facilitated, made and implemented a comprehensive staff selection process as a support system.
 - Managed and directed over 200 volunteers for the 2006 year. Resulted in high revenue for service, over a 100% increase.
- Program Delivery**
 - Managed and directed over 200 volunteers for the 2006 year, more than 1000 hours of work. Resulted in \$102,000 in revenue for service, over a 100% increase.
 - Facilitated, made and implemented a comprehensive staff selection process as a support system.
 - Managed and directed over 200 volunteers for the 2006 year. Resulted in high revenue for service, over a 100% increase.
- Marketing**
 - Generated, advised and implemented a strategic plan for corporate marketing in order to bring in a 20% increase in new business and a 15% increase in repeat purchases.
 - Delivered a \$200,000 budget and then increased sales to an impressive 125% profit margin.
 - Reviewed, analyzed and implemented corporate strategy, staff selection of employees, and evaluate the resulting impact on business. Available for immediate hire. See resume for details.

*Stock resume sample

Functional Resume

The Functional Resume is helpful for people who have had career changes and employment gaps. It's also a helpful style of resume to translate ministry work experience into the secular world - or any other kind of skills that need to be translated to a different career path.

Instead of a chronological list of jobs and responsibilities, you will group your skills and experiences into functional categories that can be targeted to a particular position for which you are applying.

Combination Resume

Most likely, your resume will have characteristics of both kinds of resumes, especially within a ministry context. The specific responsibilities for the position to which you are applying will dictate what style you will use.

Regardless of the style, you want to have a clean, clear, and focused resume. ALWAYS have more than one trusted person review your resume - hand-in-hand with the job posting. Especially within the ministry context, you want to ensure that one or more of your trusted resume reviewers is a lay person or, better yet, outside of the church. Too often, we use seminary and church jargon that is only understood within the context of seminary. Most of the people doing the hiring have not been to seminary, and they need to be able to understand and know what you are saying.

Creating Your Unique Resume

- 1) Print or create a document with the job description for which you are applying.
- 2) Highlight key job responsibilities, qualifications, and phrases.
- 3) Review your Master Resume, and identify training and experience you have that specifically relates to these areas.
- 4) Craft your Unique Resume around these key areas. Your resume should show what you have done in the past that will help this organization accomplish their goals right now.
- 5) NOTE: Many bigger organizations and universities will have computer programs that search for keywords in your resume. If your resume doesn't have these, it will be discarded automatically. Even when people are reviewing resumes, quick decisions are made based on immediate relevance of your training, experience, and passion for the work for which this particular position calls. You have to make this information obvious and clear.

Transferrable Ministry Skills

Ministry is sometimes referred to as one of the last remaining generalist positions. Here are some ideas for translating work inside of the church to the broader work force.

Conflict Management	Organizational Development	Teaching
Managing Personnel	Crisis and Personal Growth	Instructional Technology
Interpersonal Skills	Counseling	Project Management
Public Speaking	Building Management	Financial Management
Computer Skills	Community Engagement	Caregiving
Leadership Development	Managing Change	Curricula Design
Mentoring and Coaching	Partnership Building	

Cover Letters

Cover letters can be the most difficult and stressful part of the job search process. However, if you have done the work of articulating your vocation, elevator speech, and master resume, as well as identified the specific ways you meet the qualifications of the position to which you are applying, the cover letter should flow much easier.

Basic Tips

Personalize your letter. Never send “To Whom it May Concern” or “Dear Sir/Madame.” You can search a website or call the company to find out the person to whom you would report.

Make a connection with people and organization. What connections do you have with this organization? Is it in your hometown? Do you know someone on their board or that works there already?

Show them who you are - sentences or bullet points. Share a quick story. Mention a quantifiable accomplishment. Do NOT regurgitate your resume.

Show what can you do for them. This will take internet research, conversations with people who know the church/organization, and reading between the lines of a job posting. You want to clearly articulate how you can help this organization/church reach their goals.

Be clear and concise.

Proofread! And, have multiple friends and colleagues proofread.

Structure

There is a traditional four paragraph structure for Cover Letters that can help you get started. (Some people combine paragraph 1 and 2). When you find your style, you might deviate from this basic structure, but all of these parts need to be in there.

- 1) Why are you interested in this job? Do you know anyone there? Do you have a connection to the church/organization?
- 2) Who are you? What are your gifts/passions/experiences that match what they need and are going through? (Talk vocation. Don't review resume!)
- 3) What can you do for them? How do your skills/gifts/passions help them? (Use specific stories/bullet points.)
- 4) Express your eagerness to work with them. Invite further conversation. Let them know how they can reach you.

Networking

Networking is a word that comes with a ton of baggage. It conjures up images of the underside of the business world - a slimy, good-ol-boys network that happens over a game of golf. However, a year ago, I stumbled on a blog post from an old friend, [Jeff Hilimire](#), who is a tremendous entrepreneur and budding philanthropist. He wrote about networking in a way that sounded deeply theological. In the blog post linked above (and listed below), Jeff talks about the need to “connect dots vs collecting dots.” He says that networking isn’t about collecting the most business cards (or contacts in your phone); networking is about building a web of relationships - for yourself and for those around you. Networking is genuine, mutual, and focused on giving - rather than gathering. The stronger this web becomes; the stronger your community becomes.

This sounds a lot like living into God’s unique creation of each of us, as well as building and deepening relationships - our purpose for God creating us. There is no way to survive, much less thrive and create and build, in this world without a web of relationships. Therefore, it would seem that networking is essential to our lives as faithful disciples. It’s not something that only happens in the business world. It’s something that happens wherever two or more are gathered in Christ’s name. We share space, listen, learn what people are passionate about, ask how you can help, and make connections.

Relational Meetings

- 1) **Know yourself** - your gifts and skills and passions.
- 2) **Build a “relational culture”** in your life, meaning that the strength of your relationships guides everything else.
- 3) **Create a Networking Map:** Make a list of all the people you know - and know of - about whom you want to know more. This includes: family, friends, classmates, mentors, neighbors, faculty, conference connections, supervised ministry contacts, supervisors, and alumni.
- 4) **Set up Relational Meetings:** Contact people you admire, who share your values, who are doing the ministry you want to be doing. Set up a 15-20 minute meeting to ask this person questions to get to know them better⁴. Either go to their office or call

⁴Relational Meeting Questions:

- What accomplishment or project are you most proud of?
- What did you learn (especially about yourself) in the process?
- What are you most passionate about?
- What are you most excited about right now?
- What are you working on?
- If money were no object, what would you do with your life?
- What do you do for fun?

them - whatever is easiest for *them*. You might need to set the meeting a few months out, so get started with these early. Tell the person why you're interested in meeting with them. Find common interests. Be patient. Give more than you take — Always ask, **how can I help?**

Activities

The following two activities build on your vocation / "why" / purpose and elevator pitch from earlier in this workbook.

Networking in Three Words or Less by Kathy Sturgis, Ph.D.

1. Give a one word in response to each of the following questions:
 - Who are you?
 - What do you do?
 - Why do you do it?

2. Expand your responses to three words for each question.

3. Does this sound like you? Share with a trusted friend / colleague / mentor.

Networking Bumper Sticker

This is easier to memorize and more conversational than the previous activity. It's a short, benefit-focused statement. How could you state in 5-10 seconds who God has created you to be and do in the world.

Write a Bumper Sticker:

Resources

Collecting dots vs Connecting dots, by Jeff Hilimire

Advice on how to meet people and grow your network, by Jeff Hilimire

Networking in Three Words or Less, by Kathy Sturgis, Ph.D.

never eat alone, by Keith Ferrazzi (book)

One-to-One "Relational Meetings" and Six Practical Applications, ELCA

Interviewing⁵

The following are some basic tips and tricks for interviewing, as well as some techniques for preparing for successful interviews. The most important parts of interviewing are *researching* the organization to which you are applying and *preparing* how to connect your gifts, skills, and passions with the mission and ministry of that organization. You want to specifically explain that you are the best person for this particular job. Therefore, the link between your research and preparation is a critical piece of the process.

Preparing for Interview: Logistics

Interviewing can be a difficult and challenging experience. Many times, you won't know the questions in advance and will have to think on your feet. And, different interviewing styles will have an impact on your comfort level and rapport with the interviewer. All this, however, does not mean that you cannot prepare for the experience. In fact, controlling the things that you *can* control enables you to be more flexible for the ambiguity that is inherent in an interview. The following items fall into the category of controllable:

Professional background - Review your master resume, as well as the unique resume for the particular job. Review this workbook, and be able to share your vocation/"why"/purpose, stories, and specific examples of your gifts. (The section on the [STAR Interview Prep Tool](#) will be quite helpful.)

Organizational Knowledge - Research, research, research. Explore an organization's website, facebook page, twitter feed, instagram, and LinkedIn presence. If they give you references to talk to (i.e. Church Leadership Connection in PC(USA)), call them and ask questions about an organization's strengths and opportunities. Examine your network to see if you know anyone who knows the organization; talk to them. The more you know, the better. In addition, references tell the organization when you call them. This shows that you are truly interested in the job and have an understanding of how to engage professionally.

Materials to Bring - Always bring a printed copy of your resume, cover letter, and references. You can use it to review, if need be, and you will be prepared to hand it to someone who has not seen a copy of it. If you are asked to do a presentation on a particular topic, print out an outline to bring or create a Keynote/Powerpoint display that you can email to the interviewers. This helps them remember you and keep your ideas in mind as they continue with other interviews. Also, there might be occasions where the organization asks you to bring

⁵ Information on Interviewing and STAR Prep Tool came primarily from my training as a Global Career Development Facilitator through the [National Career Development Association](#). I commend their training and work to you for further information about career planning and placement.

something, make sure you have everything set and ready to go the day before (at the very least).

Interview Logistics - If you have an in person interview, map the route to your interview no later than the day before. If you have time, drive there in advance, investigate parking and contingency plans. If you can arrive early and inconspicuously observe the environment, do that, as you can learn a lot that way. Do not arrive to the actual interview location more than 15 minutes in advance. If you have an online interview, test out the system in advance. Make sure you will not be interrupted by roommates, pets, children, etc. Pay attention to what is behind you, as you do not want your setting to be a distraction to the interviewers.

Clothing and appearance - Dress to the organization and the field of work. (Your outfit for a new church development *might* look different than your outfit for the largest church in the denomination. On the other hand, always lean more towards traditional attire, rather than fashionable or showy.). Make sure your hair and nails are groomed well, and your clothes are pressed and shoes polished. Those are the little things that jump out when people are seeking a new team member. NOTE: This is key in a phone interview as well, even though they cannot see you. Studies have shown that you are more likely to be professional in your phone interview if you are dressed professionally.

Preparing for Interview: Questions

- Can you do the job? (Are you qualified?)
- Will you do the job? (Are you motivated?)
- Will you like/love the job and fit in? (Do you have commitment and passion? Will you fit in with the rest of the team and overall company culture?)

These are the questions that the employers have in their head as they interview prospective candidates. When you know this, you can genuinely and truthfully construct your answers to help address these concerns. The more you know about your gifts, skills, and passions, and the more you know about the organization's strengths, opportunities, and dreams, the more you will be able show the employer that you are the best person for each of these roles.

Warren Buffet, business person and philanthropist says, "in looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. And if you don't have the first, the other two will kill you." The most important thing to be in an interview is honest - know what you know and what you don't know, and don't be afraid to share that. Employers are seeking authenticity. And, if you are your authentic self in an interview and a job seems like a good fit, you're guaranteed to be at home. Remember, you are interviewing them too. You want to be sure they will appreciate your gifts, opportunity, and sense of humor.

Sample Basic Interview Questions

Here are some questions to consider and answer in preparation for an interview - or life:

- What brings you the most joy in your work?
- What are the greatest hurdles or challenges?
- What kind of impact do you want to have?
- How's it going — that work of making an impact?
- What is the biggest challenge you have faced in your life?
- How did you handle that challenge?
- How is that challenge still affecting you?
- What role has faith [or community, family, friends, or mentors] played in your life and work?
- What accomplishment or project are you most proud of?
- What assets did you bring to that project?
- What did you learn (especially about yourself) in the process?
- What has created real disappointment for you in terms of wanting to make something happen?
- What were your (especially internal) barriers to success?

Standard Questions:

- 1) *Tell me about yourself.* Share a summary of relevant education and work experience as it relates to *this* job. This is a good time to use your elevator speech.
- 2) *What are your strengths and weaknesses?* Strengths should be easy to articulate, as you know your gifts, skills, and passions. With “weaknesses,” change the language to “opportunities for improvement.” Choose something that is work related but not a critical job task. If you can talk about ways you’ve worked to improve in this area, even better.
- 3) *Why are you leaving your current position? Why did you leave your last job?* Talk about growth, new skills, calling, vocation. Never talk poorly about bosses or co-workers. Never!
- 4) *What attracts you to this position (or organization)?* Research. Research. Research. Talk about how you will help them, how you will contribute.
- 5) *What do you think makes you best qualified for this position?* Combine your gifts, skills, passions with the focus of the position.

- 6) *Who was your best supervisor ever and why? Who was the worst and looking back what could you have done to make that relationship better?* Questions give insight into how the candidate views and responds to supervision. A reflective, responsive answer to the second part of the question could indicate a loyal employee capable of rising above an unpleasant supervisory situation and /or learning from past mistakes. A bitter, critical answer may indicate someone who holds grudges or simply can't get along with certain personality types.
- 7) *Can you describe a typical day at work in your last job?* The main point of the question is to see how the applicant's current or most recent routine compares with the requirements of the job in question. Allows you to sense enthusiasm or interest and verify that the details match the information you already have.
- 8) *What sort of work environment do you prefer? What brings out your best performance?* Question helps in identifying whether this person is going to fit into our community. [For example, if a particular department is team-oriented, you may not need to consider a person who answers that they like to be left alone to do their work.]. People don't usually work at their best in all situations. Candidates who say otherwise are not being honest with you or themselves.
- 9) *How do you handle conflict? Can you give an example of how you handled a workplace conflict in the past?* Question helps to identify that while some people may be naturally easygoing and /or competent in addressing issues before they get out of hand. Candidates who say that they never get into conflict situations are not aware of normal interpersonal dynamics.

Fun/"Trick" Questions

You can prepare for every question you can think of, and there will still be something they ask that will come as a surprise. Interviewers may ask these to get a sense of your personality and /or view how you think on your feet. This is the moment to rely on your knowledge of you, your research of the position, and your unique identity.

Why shouldn't we hire you for this job? This is a time for an authentic and thoughtful answer. This is typically not a question asking for a weakness. Rather, emphasize the specific strengths you have for this unique position. [For example, when I was interviewing for an instructor job at Apple, I was asked a similar question. I knew they were interviewing someone with abundant technical experience, and I knew they were also looking for someone to build a team, so I responded: "If you are looking for the best technical person, who brings a strong background in troubleshooting software and hardware issues, I am not the person for you. If you are looking for someone who can build a team, develop community, and engage with a wide variety of people, then I am the person for you." I got the job.]

What are 5 uses of a stapler, other than stapling papers? Just be creative with a question like this. Have fun. Laugh. Don't take yourself too seriously.

Behavioral Interviewing

Behavioral interviewing is an emerging style that seeks to know how candidates handle work-related experiences. You are expected to respond with specific examples from your previous experience, with the assumption that your past performance is a good indicator of how you will work in the future. This is a particularly useful style of interviewing if you are new to the workforce or are moving into a new vocational path, as you can give examples of how your skills are transferrable. The [STAR Interview Prep Tool](#) is helpful in your preparation process.

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

- Describe a situation when your team members disagreed with your ideas or proposal to handle a circumstance or project.
- What constructive criticism have you received? How did you handle it? How did it affect your relationship with the person?
- Tell me about a time when you worked effectively under pressure.
- Describe a situation when you demonstrated initiative.
- Talk about your most creative solution to a problem; talk about when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you handled a difficult situation with a coworker or customer.
- Describe a situation when you had to make an important decision with limited facts.
- Talk about a situation where you were unable to complete a project on time.
- Tell me about a time when you had to adapt to a difficult situation.
- Take about a goal that you set and the steps you took to achieve it.
- Describe a situation where you prioritized the elements of a complex project or when you got bogged down in the details of a project.
- Talk about when you made a bad decision. What was it and what did you learn from it?

STAR Interview Prep Tool

Identify 3 - 4 skills you anticipate using in a new job.

Using the STAR questions below, identify stories or illustrations that show how you have used these skills in the past.

S - What was the Situation (problem/context) for using this skill?

T - What were the Tasks you were expected to complete?

A - What specific Actions did you take (be concrete)?

R - What were the Results? List outcomes you achieved - specific and measurable.

Questions to ask potential employers

The interview process is a two way street. You need to know if this is a good fit for you - if you have the gifts, skills, and passion for this position and if the environment, ethos, and people fit with your work ethic and commitments. Your questions should build rapport with the interviewers, learn about the culture of the company, glean specifics about the position, and help you understand the hiring process going forward. [Asking about salary and vacation time are typically off limits until an offer is made. Interviewers want to know that you are seeking to know how and if you can contribute positively to the organization.]

Sample Interviewee Questions

- What did you join this organization? How long have you been here?
- What do you like about this organization? What keeps you here?
- What are you most proud of? What worries you the most?
- What are some important traditions here?
- Why is this position open? What happened to the last person who held this position?
- What do you see as the most important skills for this position?
- What do you expect in first 90 days?
- What are top priorities and goals for this position? For this organization?
- What are initiatives that you have tried and failed? What did you learn from them?
- What are the most immediate challenges for this position/this organization? What plans are in place for meeting them?

Interview Follow Up

Always follow up with teams who have interviewed you afterwards. There are debates about whether or not a snail mail or email communication is better. Ultimately, either is better than nothing. If the timeline for hiring is quick, then email might be your only option.

Make sure your follow up communication is unique for each interview. Summarize what you want them to remember about you as they continue through their discernment process.

Social Media, ePortfolio, and LinkedIN

In today's day and age, social media is one of the best and one of the most challenging ways to engage interpersonally in the world. In some ways, social media is a wonderful way of expanding your reach pastorally, as people are frequently willing to post more about what is going on in their life, rather than saying it in person. When you have this information, you can check in with friends, colleagues, parishioners, and mentors, while expanding the depth of your conversations. You can also use social media as a platform for proclaiming your beliefs and convictions about God and about justice in the world. In other ways, you have to be cautious about confidentiality, protection of children and youth, and maintaining a professional image - through your words, your pictures, your videos, and more.

You must take time now - right now! - to review your Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc, and imagine it through the lens of a potential employer. Remove pictures and posts that can only be understood "if you had been there." Intentionally think through a plan about privacy settings and who you will friend/follow as you envision yourself in the professional world.

ePortfolio

For generations, artists, writers, and graphic designers have created portfolios to showcase their work when interviewing for positions, galleries, etc. As the internet has gained a broader and broader reach, online ePortfolios have been even more prominent. Many colleges and universities have used them as a way of assessing student growth and development, as well as a place for students to promote themselves and their work to the broader community.

The ePortfolio is an integral part of Columbia's M.A.P.T. degree. Students are required to create an ePortfolio with the following items and to update it throughout their seminary career: a) a metaphor for your understanding of practical theology, b) statement or project that clearly shows what you believe, c) an indication of where you currently see yourself vocationally at the end of this degree (at this moment), and d) sermons or projects that are related to your vocational path and calling. A well done ePortfolio allows you to share more about who you are - your personality and your gifts - than what an employer would find in a resume or cover letter. This is easily one of the most significant things that MAPT students do for their vocational development at Columbia. I invite you to create your own.

The following are examples from the MAPT program. Just like resumes and cover letters, get friends and colleagues to give you feedback and read for grammatical and spelling errors:

<http://beingmelva.weebly.com>

<https://touchingthewaters.weebly.com>

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a continuously emerging way of making business connections through social media. This is solely a platform for sharing your gifts/skills/passions in your work - both through an online resume and through posting original writings or articles. LinkedIn can serve as a place to build a professional network and/or assist in your job search. Make sure that the language you are clear about your goals before you craft the language. [NOTE: While this can serve as an online resume, you should not use your LinkedIn in place of a resume, unless specifically requested by an organization. Instead, put your LinkedIn profile on your resume, so employers can research you easily. LinkedIn has a tutorial on profiles [here](#).

Tips and Tricks

Be visible:

- Add quality info
- Use keywords
- Create value for network
- Stay active
- Be professional
- Be yourself...be honest

Profile:

- Use recent photo
- Frame well with background
- Ensure excellent picture quality
- Dress professionally

Headline:

- Depends on purpose of LinkedIn - job search or network building.
- Use concise keywords or clever messages.

Summary: (First Person)

- Who are you?
- What do you do?
- Why do you do this?
- How do you provide value?

Work Experiences & Education:

- What did you do?
- What did you accomplish?