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Parenting on Your Own : Finding the Job You Want

Cooperative Extension, South Dakota State University

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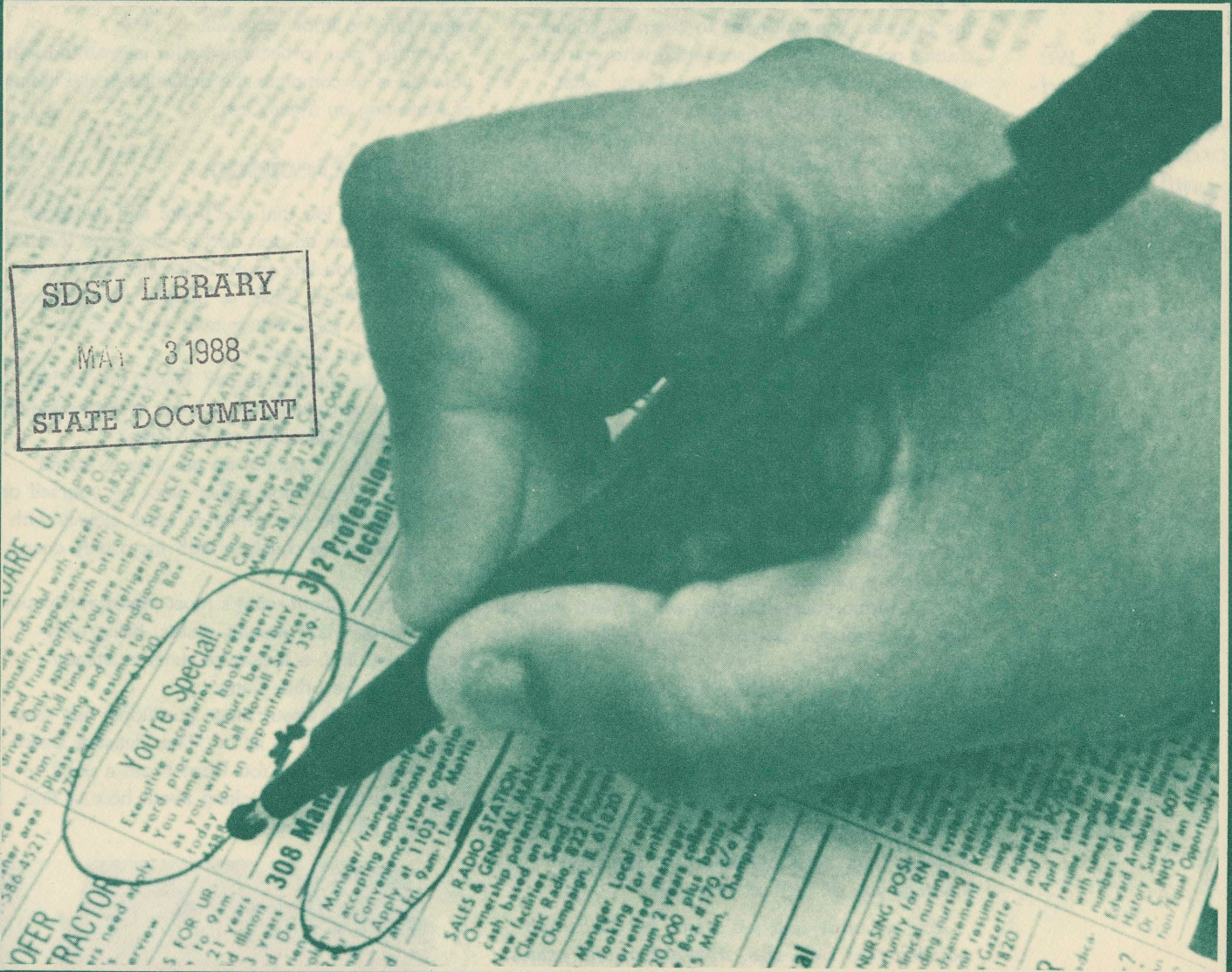
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FINDING THE JOB YOU WANT

Cooperative Extension Service
South Dakota State University
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In the long run, we shape our lives and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are our responsibility.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

Finding “the job” means committing yourself to the process. You will need to begin by concentrating on yourself — discovering who you are, what your skills and interests are, and what things are important to you in a job. You will begin to build confidence by knowing yourself better and deciding what you want for your future.

You may decide you need to go back to school, move to another community to get the work you want, or take an entry-level job and begin the climb up your career ladder. Whatever strategy you decide on, you can do it!

In this publication we will focus on some specific job-readiness skills. Remember — you already have a lot going for you.

Getting to Know Yourself

It is a common belief that a job search begins with combing the daily want ads or with filling out a job application. Actually, the best place to start is within yourself. Begin with a hard look at what you feel is important to you in life and in a job.

Career choices are most satisfying when they are compatible with your personal characteristics. These include:

- Tasks you do or have done well.
- Outstanding character traits.
- The job conditions you want.
- Things that catch and hold your attention.
- Things you do well or very well.

You can start your job search by closely pinpointing your successes, strengths, career values, interests, and abilities. One way to do this is to write a brief autobiography. Describe the things you do well, what you value or feel strongly about, what you enjoy doing, how you spend your time, and what you want the future to include. Take time to really think about who you are and what you feel. After completing your autobiography, set it aside for a few days and then go back to it and list all your personal successes, strengths, career values, interests, and

abilities. You may find that you have never really taken time to know yourself.

Another way to become better acquainted with yourself is to complete the activities in this issue of *Parenting on Your Own*.

The Big Decision

You want a job that you’ll like and feel good about. But how do you decide which job that is?

What do you like to do best? Do you like to work with things, ideas, or people? Do you prefer to do the same things over and over, or many different things?

Where do you like to be? Would you rather be indoors or outside? In a quiet or active place? Working in a busy office or at home?

What kinds of people do you like to spend time with? Would you rather work by yourself or with others? Do you prefer to work closely with supervisors or to check in with them only occasionally?

Also think about what’s most important to you in your work. Is it money, status, being with people you like, a feeling of success, steady work, or some other thing.

As you think about these questions, you may want to take time to fill in “The Pleasure Detector” and “What Do You Want From a Job?”

It’s time to begin thinking about how to find the right job for you.





The Pleasure Detector

In the spaces provided, check (✓) the activities that really give you pleasure now or that you think would if you tried them.

I like . . .

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> to give parties | <input type="checkbox"/> to counsel families |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to travel | <input type="checkbox"/> to have a lot of people around |
| <input type="checkbox"/> solving puzzles | <input type="checkbox"/> to collect art |
| <input type="checkbox"/> giving advice | <input type="checkbox"/> to read |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sports | <input type="checkbox"/> listening to music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> working alone | <input type="checkbox"/> raising money for charity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> going to the theater | <input type="checkbox"/> important people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to take risks | <input type="checkbox"/> repairing furniture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to do research | <input type="checkbox"/> to teach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to be my own boss | <input type="checkbox"/> to sell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to attend meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> to analyze research reports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to persuade people | <input type="checkbox"/> taking care of animals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> older people | <input type="checkbox"/> to work at night |
| <input type="checkbox"/> routine, orderly tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> office work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to sing or act | <input type="checkbox"/> taking care of children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> taking care of sick people | <input type="checkbox"/> to do things outdoors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to arrange furniture | <input type="checkbox"/> building things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to decorate houses | <input type="checkbox"/> big cities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to live in a small town | <input type="checkbox"/> problems in biology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> doing physical labor | <input type="checkbox"/> navigating a sailboat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> preparing a gourmet meal | <input type="checkbox"/> interviewing people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> finding bargains | <input type="checkbox"/> sewing clothes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> working with numbers | <input type="checkbox"/> supervising people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> negotiating a contract | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> designing clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> to drive a car | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |



Now select the five items that give or would give you the most pleasure and list them below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What jobs can you think of that would give you some of these pleasures?

What Do You Want From a Job?

Rank the following job qualities from 1 to 17 in order of their importance to you. (One would be most important; 17, least important.)

- _____ Money
- _____ Growth potential
- _____ Pleasant environment
- _____ Job security
- _____ Closeness to home
- _____ Good fringe benefits
- _____ Promotional possibilities
- _____ Status or prestige
- _____ Regular hours
- _____ Flexible hours
- _____ Opportunities to travel
- _____ Friendly co-workers
- _____ Freedom in choices of dress and life style
- _____ Chance for self-expression
- _____ Chance to use education
- _____ Diversity of tasks
- _____ Belief in the purpose of the organization

As you think about what job is best for you, evaluate it based on the factors you have chosen as most important. For instance, if you ranked "closeness to home" as number 1, you will probably want to rule out all jobs located more than five or ten miles from home.

Suggestions for Learning What Jobs Are Available

If you have been out of the job market for some time, you may feel that you know little or nothing about what kinds of jobs are available in your community. To help you become better acquainted with the current employment/business situation, consider the following suggestions.

- The business pages or articles in daily newspapers give information about businesses that are expanding, merging, relocating, and hiring. Most dailies provide special business coverage at least one day a week.
- Personal visits to businesses are well worth the time and effort. These visits will give you a

chance to learn more about specific jobs and businesses in your community.

- The telephone book can give you an overview of the types of businesses and jobs that are available. In addition, the local chamber of commerce may have a listing of businesses and contact persons.
- Your local job service (state employment office) can provide information about jobs with growth potential and the salary you can expect for various careers. A job service will also be able to tell you what jobs are available now in your community and what they pay.
- The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* is the single best written source for career information. It is updated annually and gives job descriptions, qualifications, salaries, and the expected demand for all kinds of jobs. Public libraries have copies in their reference rooms. This reference will help you in making long-term career decisions.
- Word of mouth may be the best way to learn about the job market. Talk to everyone. Let friends, neighbors, relatives — everyone — know you are looking for a job. You will get a lot of help and insight from those around you.

Conducting the Job Search

Keep in mind that getting a job is a job in itself.

You may have already found this to be true. Or maybe you are just beginning to think about finding a job. Being prepared and well organized while conducting your job search will make it less frustrating and time consuming.

As you begin the job search, prepare yourself with several copies of your resume; all pertinent information that is needed to complete job application forms; current information about the job market in your area; and a listing of employment resources to help you with your search.

There are many resources available to you in your job search. This chart lists five important resources. As you use these resources, keep track of what you have done and what you need to do in the future. Then update the chart in two weeks to measure your progress.



"The majority of workers hear about their current jobs from friends and relatives."

Employment Resources to Help Me

Today's date: _____ Update: _____

Employment resource	What I have done	What I need to do	What I have done	What I need to do
---------------------	------------------	-------------------	------------------	-------------------

Word of mouth	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

Want ads	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

Yellow pages in phone book	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

State employment service	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

Private and public employment services	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

Other	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____



"When I knew I had to go to work, I rented a typewriter and practiced for a summer to get my skills up."



Gaining Momentum in Finding a Job

What does it take to get the job you want? Action! Don't wait for the job to find you — go after it! Begin by setting three goals for your job search and career planning. And when you've reached your goals, be sure to reward yourself. Use the "Contract for Looking Ahead" below to list your goals.

Examples of goals include: enroll in a community college word-processing course this semester; go to the library to read the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and select five occupations you'd like to learn more about; or have an appointment with a counselor at the job service and discuss job opportunities in your community.

Contract for Looking Ahead

I, _____, as a mature person, understand that I have many skills, talents, abilities, and strengths. With these many assets, I am capable of making changes that I want in order to continually improve the quality of my life and my family's life.

Today, I make this contract with myself to successfully accomplish three goals that will help me in my job search and career planning.

Goal _____

Estimated date for completion: _____

Goal _____

Estimated date for completion: _____

Goal _____

Estimated date for completion: _____

Upon completing these three goals, I will reward myself by _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Witness: _____



For Further Reading

Berman, E. *Re-entering*. New York: Playboy Paperbacks, 1980.

Bolles, R. N. *What Color Is Your Parachute?* Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1984. (Paperback.)

Campbell, D. *If You Don't Know Where You're Going, You'll Probably End Up Somewhere Else*. Allen, TX: Argus Communications, 1974. (Paperback.)

The student was prepared by Jane A. Scherer, Program Coordinator, Career Acknowledgment is also given to the parents and children who enthusiastically shared their experiences through photographs and personal responses.

Parenting On Your Own is made possible by grants from the Career Foundation and the Youth Career Office of Vocational Technical Education.

Parenting On Your Own is a self-paced, individualized program designed to meet the needs of single parents. The program is available to parents of Career Foundation students through the Career Foundation.

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For Further Reading

Robert Hughes, Jr. and Jane A. Scherer, University of Illinois, project coordinators, Illinois. For more information on single parenting, contact your county Extension agent/home economics or Extension Home Economics, SDSU, Box 2275A, Brookings, SD 57007.

This circular was prepared by Jane A. Scherer, Program Coordinator, CHEP. Acknowledgment is also given to the parents and children who enthusiastically shared their experiences through photographs and personal responses.

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