



## TOP 10 STEPS FOR VOCATIONAL DISCERNERS and JOB SEEKERS

Here are some action step suggestions for those seeking a life-giving living, including part-time and summer work, and full-time post-graduation positions.

### **1. Set a time to do your job search and/or to invest in your vocational journey.**

Like anything else, you need to dedicate time and energy to see results. I encourage students to set time blocks, maybe one, two, or three times a week that they reserve for their vocational and job search efforts. That way, when you're stressing about it at another time during the week, you can say, "No. I will stress about this (or take care of this) on Friday afternoon when I said I would."

See below for suggestions on what exactly you should do when you sit down during your reserved time. For active job seekers, I encourage especially Postings, Places, and People (see #s 6, 7, & 8).

### **2. Consider finding a partner who is also seeking a job or putting efforts into vocational discernment.**

They say that you get 50% better results in your workouts if you choose to work out with a partner. I believe the same is true in a job search. It's very valuable to have the accountability and support. You can then use one of the time blocks that you set for yourself and share that time with your partner.

### **3. Get specific about your goals with respect to your next position.**

Do you know what you're looking for? If you haven't gotten specific about it, how will you know if/when you find it? I encourage every job or vocational seeker to write at least a bullet point list of what they want and need out of their next position. Think about it like buying a house and consider the absolute "must-haves" and the "would be nice" items. You can use this list to evaluate potential opportunities that show up. As you're writing your bulleted list, consider:

- Pay
  - How much do you need to be paid? Consider gold standard (i.e. your ideal pay), silver standard (middle of the road pay), and bronze standard (the lowest amount you could be paid and still survive).
- Purpose
  - What do you want the purpose of the work to be, the overall goal of your role, the industry? (i.e. I want to be learning and growing in the area of refugee services, and I want to be as effective as possible).
- Process
  - What do you want to **do** every day? What things do you want to be sure you do regularly? What work and vocational activities are life-giving to you? What

percentage of your day do you want to spend doing these activities? This part is key to satisfaction!

- Place
  - What are your geographic preferences? Where are you willing to go? I usually encourage folks to select 1, 2, or 3 cities or geographic regions in which to focus their energies. This doesn't mean you can't apply to positions in other places, but these are the places you would put most of your energy.
- Promotion
  - How important is it to you that you can move up or around within this company?
- People
  - What kind of people do you want to be working with internally and/or externally?
- Power
  - What strengths or professional super powers do you want to be using in your next role?
- Priorities
  - What level of priority do the items above hold, and what other priorities do you have? Is it most important that you have flexibility to pursue other interests? Do you need to work remotely? Is making a certain amount of money while still working in the field of refugee services? Write that out and be honest about it.

#### **4. Get specific about your bigger vision for your life.**

There are two activities I often encourage for folks exploring their purpose, their calling, their ministry, and the bigger pictures of their lives. You can choose one or both.

1. Sit down and write a journal entry about one specific day of your life ten years from now as you would like it to be. Starting from when you wake up to when you go to sleep, describe this day in detail. Where do you wake up? Who is with you? What do you eat for breakfast? What do you wear? Where do you go for work? What does your work entail? How do you wear your hair? Each of these details is meant to visually answer the question: who are you ten years from now? Or who would you like to be?
2. Write out ten dreams of things you'd really like to do, experience, or accomplish in your lifetime. Life is long, what would it ideally be filled with for you?

These are big questions and can be difficult to answer. Be kind with yourself about it.

#### **5. Try to identify your three avenues for where you're trying to go.**

Name one, two, or three potential vocational avenues you'd like to explore or pursue. For example, (1) pastoral ministry in a church, especially associate pastor roles (2) K-12 teaching positions, and (3) arts-based non-profits. You don't have to be an expert in these options, the goal is to get informed and see if they align with what you have identified you want.

#### **6. Postings: Do some window shopping on job posting sites (and don't forget to try Emory's Handshake).**

When in an active job search, the goal is to (1) identify 3-6 posting sites that suit your needs and (2) identify the keywords and searches that work for you. Check out [Candler's Job Posting Site](#)

**List.** After you've gotten your posting sites and searches down, check posting sites at your reserved times (see #1), and usually no more than 3 times a week. (Postings are not put up and taken down overnight, so it is not generally fruitful to check daily or multiple times a day). Remember to set alerts on job posting sites where possible.

**7. Places: Make a list of potential employers or organizations that would be very exciting to you.**

Start researching organizations in your avenues or fields of interest and see who does what you're interested in doing where you want to do it. Create a list of organizations that excite you and separate it by type of work and geographic location. For example, if your three avenues of exploration are (1) pastoral ministry in a church, i.e. associate pastor roles (2) K-12 teaching positions, and (3) arts-based non-profits, and you want to live in Atlanta or Nashville, the goal would be to come up with a list of organizations in those fields in those two cities.

**8. People: Activate the people in your life on your behalf.**

The goal is to activate your friends and family so they know what you're doing and how they can help. Ideally you want to (1) identify all the folks in your life who know and love you, and (2) you want to let them know that you're exploring and/or pursuing [FILL IN THE BLANK (i.e. exploring associate pastor roles in churches that are known for their social justice ministries in ATL, looking for a summer internship in an arts-based non-profit in Nashville, or you're looking for part-time work to pay the bills while in seminary)]. Then you want to ask if they will (1) keep you in mind if they hear of any cool jobs/postings/opportunities/organizations in your areas of interest, AND (2) introduce you to (or suggest) folks who are working in your areas of interest. Start with the folks you know that know a lot of people in the realms you're most interested in. Don't forget the folks at Candler! You can activate people by sending emails, texts, via phone calls, or even via Facebook posts. It can be surprising what happens when you let people know what your goals are!

**9. Find sources of inspiration.**

Vocational discernment and job searching can be an emotional process. In fact, in most job searches, you are likely to face challenges and, often, rejection. This is all part of the process, and it's important to remember that and to find your wells of inspiration, whether that be scripture, good friends, inspirational videos on YouTube, or whatever works for you.

**10. Thank God for the awesome work already occurring in your life and all the beautiful things coming your way!**

Vocational development and job searching is a journey, and it's important to give thanks and gratitude for all the good occurring already. This can smooth the way for more good things to come. Consider what's working in your life and your vocational discernment process, and consider offering gratitude for that.