Career & Personal Development

The goal of a Jesuit education is to produce men and women for who discernment is a habit. It is a lifelong project of exploring our experience, naming its meaning, and living in a way that translates this meaning into action.

Our alumni navigate many transitions — personally and professionally — over the course of their lives. As you navigate any transition, it may be helpful to articulate or reconnect with your career and life vision and adopt a bias toward action.

Articulate Your Reflections

Reflection is a kind of reality-testing. To understand our experience and discover its meaning. Reflection is the way we discover and compose the meaning of our experience. Reflection is the way we discover and compose the meaning of our experience. Having a career and life vision gives you the ability to see your work and career — what you do and where you do it — in a way that is personally meaningful, stimulating, inspiring, and fulfilling, and in alignment with who you are. Many successful managers and executives will tell you that they did not have plans for their careers or specific career goals. Rather, they had an idea (an image) and an understanding of what they liked and did not like, as well as some general guidelines for how to lead their work and personal lives.

As such, having a career and life vision is not the same as being able to define a specific job in a specific industry at a specific company. That may be a career goal, but it’s not career vision.

Having a career and life vision is essential for you to find job satisfaction and success. It is a road map for where you want to go, keeping you focused on your long-term objectives, so that you’re not pushed in other directions.

It can be quite challenging to define your career and life vision on your own. A career coach may be the best resource to guide you through this process. It will take time for you to develop your career and life vision, but it’s an investment that will pay dividends over your entire life.

In the end, we hope to be seen as both a premier research university, where people come to better understand the world, as well as a sanctuary for self-reflection, where people come to better understand themselves.
Tools for Developing a Career and Life Vision

Exercise #1: Fast Forward (10 minutes)
In just 10 minutes, write down thoughts on what you would like to have said about you at a dinner honoring you 20, 30, or 40 years from now. Questions to consider include:

- What and/or whom did I impact or change?
- What were my major accomplishments?
- What did I show dedication or commitment to? What was I passionate or enthusiastic about?
- What character traits and values did I consistently demonstrate over my lifetime?
Exercise #2: Peaks and Valleys (10 minutes)

Peaks (3 minutes): Write down a situation in your life — whether you were at work, at home, or elsewhere — when you felt completely energized and fulfilled. What were you doing? Who was present, and what was going on?

Valleys (3 minutes): Write down a situation in your life that you really disliked or found demotivating and unsatisfying. What were you doing? Who was present, and what was going on?

Discussion and reflection (4 minutes): Describe your peaks to a friend or confidant. Ask them to listen for what these stories say about you and about what matters most to you. When did your energy rise or fall? Have them reflect your insights back to you.
Exercise #3: The Jesuit Way (10 minutes)

For Jesuit education, it is not enough to live authentically in the world. We have to participate in the transformation of the world. St. Ignatius encouraged people to identify their individual talents and figure out how the world needs them. Conscious learning begins by choosing to pay attention to our experience.

1. **Be Attentive:** We learn by organizing our experience and appropriating it in the increasingly complex psychological structures by which we engage and make sense of our world.

2. **Be Reflective:** The outcome of paying attention to our experience may be a complex variety of images, unrelated insights, feelings that lead in contradictory directions.

3. **Be Loving:** Being loving requires that we look even more closely at the world around us. It asks the question: *How are we going to act in this world?*

How will you identify and apply your passions, strengths, skills, and talents to help guide your social, academic, and career choices?

What is your plan for the future and who are the people helping you in your reflection process?

Where do your experiences and passions connect with the needs of the world, allowing you to utilize what you are learning at Loyola to be an engaged, global citizen?