

Designing YOU

LIFE BEYOND YOUR GRADES

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DESIGNING YOU

Life beyond your grades

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FDR Publishers
2016

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Did you find a typo? Let us know! Please email the details to info@DesigningYOU.org and we'll correct it in the next edition.

Designing YOU is dedicated to our families.
Their love, support and (a lot of!) patience made
this possible.

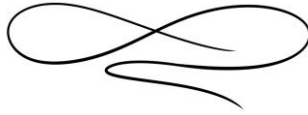


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I am one among many. I am a *Youth-Model Operational Unit*. I am Y.O.U.



I feel like I've spent my *entire* life just sticking together mismatched pieces of something *somebody else* made, and letting go.

Only what I can reach.



Only what's right in front of me.

Never having seen the whole.



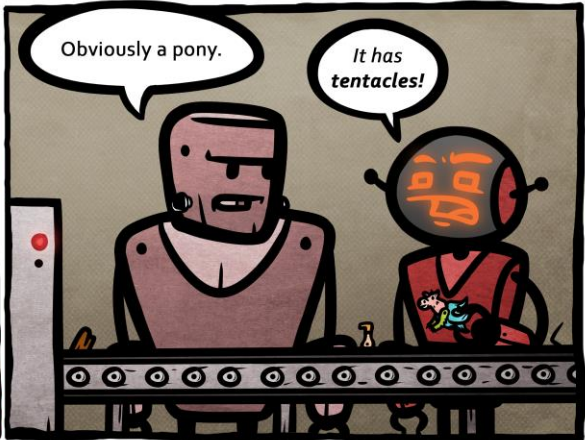
...Sometimes I feel like someone isn't finished putting *me* together.

And just what the heck is *this* one supposed to be?



Obviously a pony.

It has tentacles!



INTRODUCTION

Going beyond the classroom to launch a successful and inspired you

Designing YOU is all about you. It's not just a book; it's a process, and it's for the you of today and the you of tomorrow. Designing YOU isn't full of the same stuff you've been fed by teachers for years or have seen disguised as inspirational quotes and memes about following your passion or being anything you want to be.

We're not going to give you a simple quiz that will spit out six jobs you might be good at or tempt you with some secret to success and happiness. You're more complicated and interesting than that, and so is life.

Designing you, as a process, is about viewing yourself and your life more strategically.

It's about exploring and being curious.

It's about designing a roadmap for making decisions big and small—a roadmap that helps you address the relentless questions and unsolicited advice about your future you're probably getting right now.

This book is written for a specific time in your life. High school is probably behind you. You may be attending or have recently graduated from college or university. Your future is starting to actually feel like *your* future. That's exciting and scary at the same time. Even if you think you know where you want to end up, there's no Google Map that'll get you there. Life is rarely that obvious. Each one of the roads on your journey offers detours, pit stops and often a few intriguing hitchhikers.

You're now responsible for making key decisions that will dramatically affect your life. For a lot of people, parents are at the wheel for much of the journey until high school graduation. Then suddenly, after graduation, the situation changes and you need to make some weighty, often intimidating, decisions for yourself. That's why building a map is so critical right now. In the absence of your own plan, you might be swayed by a lot of well-intentioned advice about your life decisions.

"You should go to X school"



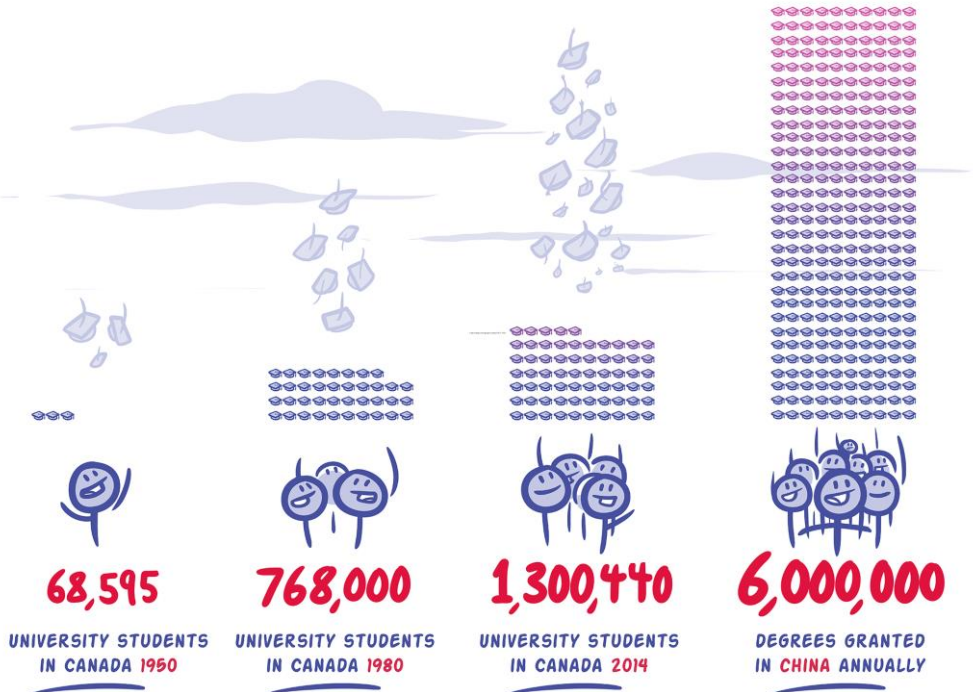
“You should become a Y”

“You should study Z”

Here’s the truth: This isn’t your parents’ or your guidance counselor’s life. Your world is very different from theirs. A diploma or degree from a college or university was a special ticket to life back in the day.

But today, a university or college education, though valuable, is not unique—no matter how much you pay for it. When you’re out building your life, you’ve got to offer the world way more than a diploma or degree. What makes you different, interesting and valuable isn’t coming from any textbook or a piece of paper given to you as you walk across a stage. *Designing YOU* helps unlock the person that you’ll launch into the world.

YOU ARE ONE IN A MILLION



Infographic note: 1

— THINK ABOUT THE WHOLE YOU —

In order to launch yourself into the so-called real world, it's useful to get out of your own head. Take a step back and imagine yourself as a product in a store. When you buy a product, whether it's a latte or a laptop, the people who are responsible for creating that product know exactly why you bought it. Their design decisions weren't accidents; every tiny detail was intentional.

We, the authors, have built careers as **product managers**, creating stuff people value. Ray DePaul helped launch BlackBerry and start the smartphone revolution. (By the way, Ray now owns an iPhone.) David Finch spent a career in high-tech product management and marketing, working around the globe persuading people the Internet was not a fad. Product managers, the people who are responsible for creating everything you use, from that laptop to that latte, recognize that delivering something valuable is rarely about a single feature or clever advertising. Rather, it's about something called the **whole product**.

Take the iPhone. It's more than just the physical hardware (which is frequently matched by cheaper brands) or the sleek exterior (which you have to cover with a case if you don't want the screen to crack). The iPhone as a whole product includes the iOS software, iTunes and Apple Music, the App Store, the multimedia conversations you can have via iMessages and the million-plus apps that customize your smartphone experience. The whole product is everything a consumer needs and expects to get when they buy the iPhone, plus the promise of everything it could become. This whole product concept is where BlackBerry went wrong; they didn't see their whole product as including a million apps and 10,000 songs until it was too late. In contrast, the iPhone is a remarkably whole product and is the outcome of thinking about the whole.



So let's apply the whole product concept to you. If you view yourself as a product that you'll launch, what is the **Whole YOU** that you'll release to the world? How will you make a valued contribution? How will you be different? And how will you design and build this compelling Whole YOU?

For most people, formal education plays a critical, but relatively small, direct role in their professional lives. It's not just about the ideas you learn at school, but how you use them.

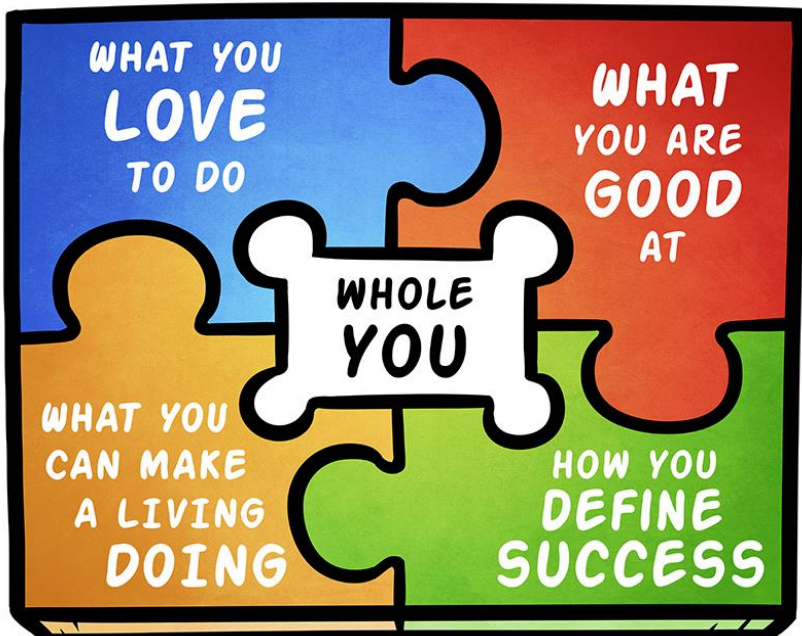
Education alone doesn't set you apart. There are millions of people who will graduate (or already have) with the same education as you. Be proud of your accomplishments, but know that piece of paper is not enough.

Think of your formal education like your physical phone: the plastic, aluminum, glass and microchips. Your education is an important part of you, but it's certainly not the Whole YOU. What makes your phone valuable is not the physical phone, it's the apps, music, accessories and options.

This is why your formal education needs to be combined with other “apps” that will create real **value** and make you different from people with the same coursework behind them. Discovering the Whole YOU requires a thorough understanding of the people and world around you. It's not just about finding a career or even finding a purpose. The Whole YOU is at the intersection of four elements:

1. What you're good at;
2. What you love to do;
3. What you can make a living doing; and
4. Probably the most important, how you define success.

This book guides you through a rigorous (and sometimes uncomfortable) process to identify the Whole YOU at the intersection of these four elements.



— THE DESIGNING YOU PROCESS —

Great products don't happen by accident. Products have a roadmap, and, more importantly, they have a champion: the product manager. The product manager is the captain of the ship without whom your product faces the risk of failure due to being poorly designed, costing too much, being late, being too much like something else in the market or just not being perceived as valuable.

There can only be one product manager in your case—only you can create your plan, be nimble enough to change it, launch it and tell the world your story.

“GREAT PRODUCTS DON'T HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT. PRODUCTS HAVE A ROADMAP, AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THEY HAVE A CHAMPION: THE PRODUCT MANAGER.”

Designing YOU is an eight-step process. We'll guide you through each step and show you how you can use the process to support decision-making. This process isn't new or revolutionary. In fact, almost every product manager follows a similar path to develop the products you use every day. We've just adapted it to design you. To help you through this process, we've included dozens of stories of real people who were recently in your same position. Some found their Whole YOU early, but many explored and tried different paths before they found it.

Step 1 — Becoming your product manager walks you through the seven key attributes of a product manager and why you must adopt these to become the champion of your life. A great product manager:

1. Is intentionally curious.
2. Thinks about the whole.
3. Is empathetic.
4. Gets feedback early and often.
5. Relies on evidence, not simply intuition.
6. Is resilient.
7. Is accountable.

Step 2 — Exploring the Current YOU is about reflecting on the you that you are today. It involves exploring your personality, knowledge and skills right now. We all live our lives in the bubble that is our home community, family and friends, so a big part of this first step is getting out of that comfort zone and being inspired by the world and the people around you. This inspiration is your launching pad for the Whole YOU.

STEP 1

BECOMING YOUR
PRODUCT MANAGER

DEVELOP THE
ESSENTIAL SKILLS THAT
MAKE GREAT PRODUCT
MANAGERS!

STEP 2

EXPLORING THE
CURRENT YOU

WHAT IS YOUR
CURRENT PRODUCT TODAY -
THE CURRENT YOU?

STEP 3

BUILDING YOUR
DESIGN TEAM

DEFINE THE ROLES
AND ENLIST THE SUPPORT
OF THOSE AROUND YOU!

STEP 4

DEFINING THE
PROFESSIONAL YOU

DEVELOP THE
YOU THAT STANDS
AT THE INTERSECTION
OF YOUR SKILLS

STEP 5

DEFINING THE
WHOLE YOU

MOVING FROM
THE PROFESSIONAL YOU
TO THE WHOLE YOU
WITH A PURPOSE!

STEP 6

DEFINING
YOUR ROADMAP

HOW WILL
YOU ACHIEVE THE
WHOLE YOU?

STEP 7

TELLING
YOUR STORY

THE BEST PRODUCT DOES
NOT ALWAYS WIN. THE BEST
PRODUCT + THE BEST STORY
WINS. WHAT IS YOURS?

STEP 8

WHOLE YOU 2.0
AND BEYOND

GREAT PRODUCTS
ARE ALWAYS CHANGING. KEEP
DESIGNING AND LAUNCHING
NEW VERSIONS OF YOU!

Step 3 — Building your design team focuses on the team effort required to design you. We'll explore the value of your relationships and from this, you'll form your **design team** of experts who will support and guide you through the *Designing YOU* process.

Step 4 — Defining the Professional YOU focuses on exploring career options. First, you'll evaluate what you love to do and what you're good at, then you'll explore how to leverage it to make a living. By the end of Step 4, you will start to have a vision of the future Professional YOU.

Step 5 — Defining the Whole YOU is when you will discover how your Professional YOU fits into your Whole YOU. The Whole YOU is about how you define success. You'll think about where you want to live, the people you want to be around, the importance of your bank account and other factors important to you. The alignment of all these factors is the Whole YOU.

Step 6 — Defining your product roadmap is possible after you've identified your destination in Step 5. The roadmap will allow you to implement the Whole YOU. Every decision you make in pursuit of the destination now has a purpose. There are many paths to this destination, some direct, others slower and scenic. We encourage you to take some of the scenic drives and explore. In fact, taking a side route may change your destination and guide you toward a different Whole YOU. This is the value of exploring, adapting and changing.

Step 7 — Telling your story recognizes that having the best product that no one has ever heard of or cares about is called "going out of business." Your story is how you'll connect to the audience you care about and how you'll make them care about you. You'll figure out what you can offer the world and develop a strategy to communicate it. Your story has to be so compelling that they can't wait to be part of what happens next.

Step 8 — The Whole YOU 2.0 and beyond is about the ever-evolving you. This book and the tools you learn within it aren't only useful in your current stage of life. To be always relevant you must constantly update yourself and adjust to new realities. As your path changes and you decide to try new things and develop new skills, the guidance contained in this book can be there for you.

DOES SEX MATTER?

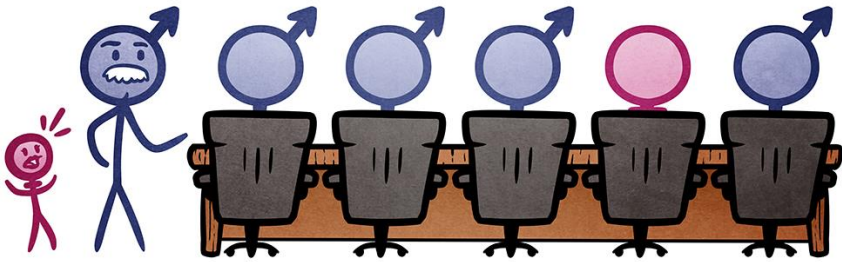


Did this title get your attention? If it did, it's a sign we know our audience just a little. We also know that designing you is about you, which means it's up to you to interpret the process and live it. With that in mind, one of the big issues that we don't want to gloss over is sex. And by sex, we really mean gender. The basic difference between "sex" and "gender" is that sex refers to biology, while gender refers to society's perception (and biases) of appropriate roles for different genders. There is loads of really complex research that shows society plays a massive role in designing you based on your gender. Evidence suggests we are wired differently; evidence also shows society still treats men and women differently.²

SEX STILL MATTERS!

6% OF CEOs OF LARGE CORPORATIONS IN CANADA ARE WOMEN

20% OF BOARD MEMBERS OF LARGE CORPORATIONS IN CANADA ARE WOMEN



44%

AMOUNT FEMALE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES WILL EARN LESS THAN MALES EIGHT YEARS AFTER GRADUATION



19%

OVERALL AMOUNT CANADIAN WOMEN EARN LESS THAN MEN IN THE SAME JOB



66%

OF POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS IN CANADA WILL BE WOMEN BY 2025



75%

OF GLOBAL UNPAID WORK IS DONE BY WOMEN

\$12,000,000,000,000

PROJECTED IMPACT ON GLOBAL GDP BY 2025 IF GENDER EQUALITY IS ACHIEVED

Infographic note: 3

Most of what you'll learn in *Designing YOU* applies regardless of your gender. Anyone can benefit from taking time and effort to think through what they're good at, what they want to do, what they can make a living doing, and how they define success. As you launch your professional life, however, there are gender realities worth understanding and incorporating into your thinking.

Gender does matter, even in an era of legal protection of equal rights and a society that aspires to gender equality. Research into team effectiveness shows the value of diverse teams of people working together. Companies with gender balance on their boards and executive teams perform better than those without it.⁴ Yet women remain drastically underrepresented at the senior ranks in many fields, and equal pay remains elusive. Similarly, a number of employment fields remain “pink ghettos,” where women are overrepresented, there is little room for advancement and pay is often poor.⁵ The reasons behind this difficult reality are complex and multifaceted, and there's no “quick fix.” They include women's career choices, career disruptions (e.g. taking time off to raise children), stereotypes, discrimination and many other factors.⁶

“GENDER DOES MATTER, EVEN IN AN ERA OF LEGAL PROTECTION OF EQUAL RIGHTS AND A SOCIETY THAT ASPIRES TO GENDER EQUALITY.”

Clearly our society has not yet achieved true equality, which is something to keep in mind when you're designing you. Whether you're designing a female, male, or other you, when completing the eight steps of the *Designing YOU* process, there are gender considerations to keep in mind. To bring additional insight into the issues of gender and designing you, we have brought in two experts who are far more qualified than us:

Laurie Stretch is a senior public relations practitioner, with over 20 years of wide-ranging consulting and private and public sector experience. Over her career, Laurie has mentored dozens of new graduates and has experienced both the challenges and opportunities that gender can bring to designing you first hand. When she's not working, she is also David Finch's wife.

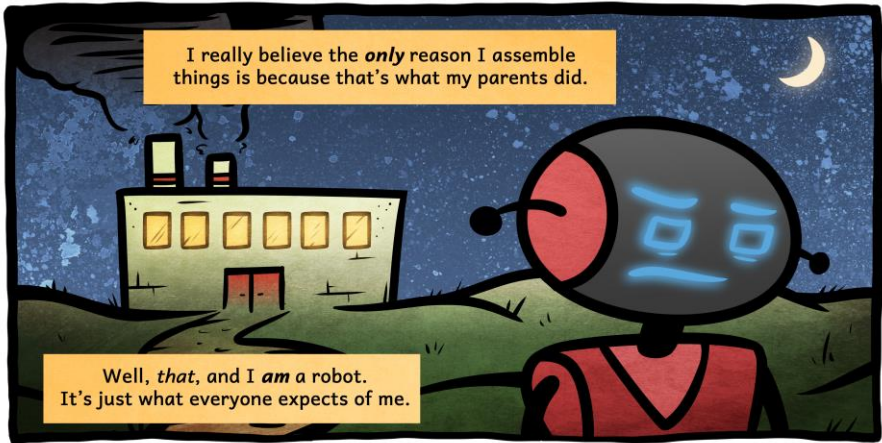
Leah Hamilton is Assistant Professor of Organizational Behaviour at the Bissett School of Business at Mount Royal University. She is a passionate, community-engaged researcher who studies social justice issues in the workplace. Leah works closely with policymakers and with stakeholders from the settlement sector in order to foster the settlement and integration of newcomers in Canada. When she's not working, she is busy chasing after her two-year old daughter.



At the end of each step, Laurie and Leah provide their insights into the gender issues and how to factor them into your thinking during this step. When you see this symbol, it's time to think about gender while designing you.

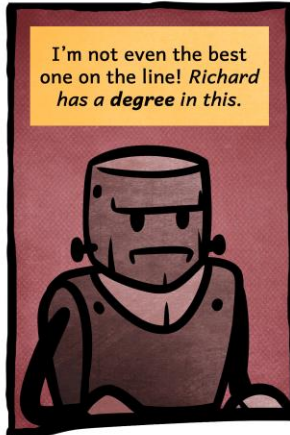
Now let's get to work *Designing YOU*.

David & Ray



I really believe the **only** reason I assemble things is because that's what my parents did.

Well, *that*, and I **am** a robot. It's just what everyone expects of me.



I'm not even the best one on the line! *Richard has a degree in this.*

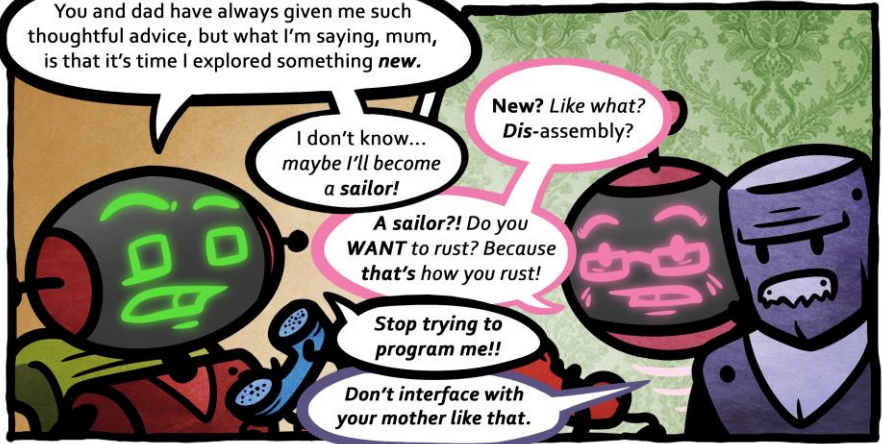


And Alex just finds **way** more joy in the job than I **ever** will.

There's nothing wrong with that, but it's perfect for them - **not** for me.



...Then there's **Julian**... Well, Julian's got the **arm** for it.



You and dad have always given me such thoughtful advice, but what I'm saying, mum, is that it's time I explored something **new**.

I don't know... maybe I'll become a **sailor**!

New? Like what? **Dis-assembly?**

A **sailor**?! Do you **WANT** to rust? Because **that's** how you rust!

Stop trying to program me!!

Don't interface with your mother like that.

STEP ONE

BECOMING YOUR PRODUCT MANAGER



We're living in an unprecedented time of change and you need to be prepared.¹ The world is moving fast and it's unpredictable. What made sense yesterday is obsolete today. This is scary, especially when you're trying to design your life.

— THINK LIKE A PRODUCT MANAGER —

Product management was once a pretty straightforward and fairly predictable, but long, process. The television, for example, took 55 years from concept to the first customer.² The first television product managers might have spent their entire career developing their product, never once talking to a potential customer. When they finally took the product out of the lab, they really hoped customers liked it.

Those days are over.

Unpredictability is totally normal for a modern product manager. Ray was an early product manager at BlackBerry. Over the course of a few years, everything changed and BlackBerry

went from being an icon to a punch line. On the surface, the job of a product manager sounds straightforward; take a rough idea and turn it into a product that is so valuable that lots of people pay good money for it. But to do this well, product managers need to consider a lot of factors within their volatile, hyper-competitive markets:

1. Who is the target customer and why do they want to buy our product?
2. Does the current product meet the customers' needs today? What must change in the current product in order to meet those needs?
3. What are the competitors doing and how is our product different?
4. How do we ensure the world knows about our great product?

By thinking like a product manager, you'll be able to find a path through the chaos.

Product managers today have to work with customers at every stage. This not only results in a better product but also delivers the right product to market a lot faster. Where product managers had 55 years to bring the television to market, smartphone apps today go from concept to market in a matter of days.

Today, your reality is way more like app development than the television's creation. A generation ago, people went to a college or university for four years focusing on little more than their next exam. Upon graduation, they would launch the "new" them to the world. Their first job turned into a career.

Those days are over too.

If you approach life like that today, you'll be shocked and unprepared when you graduate into a hyper-competitive market. Instead, approach life like a modern product manager and work collaboratively with your customers to meet their ever-changing needs. Design a you that will meet the changing and competitive market that you're about to enter.

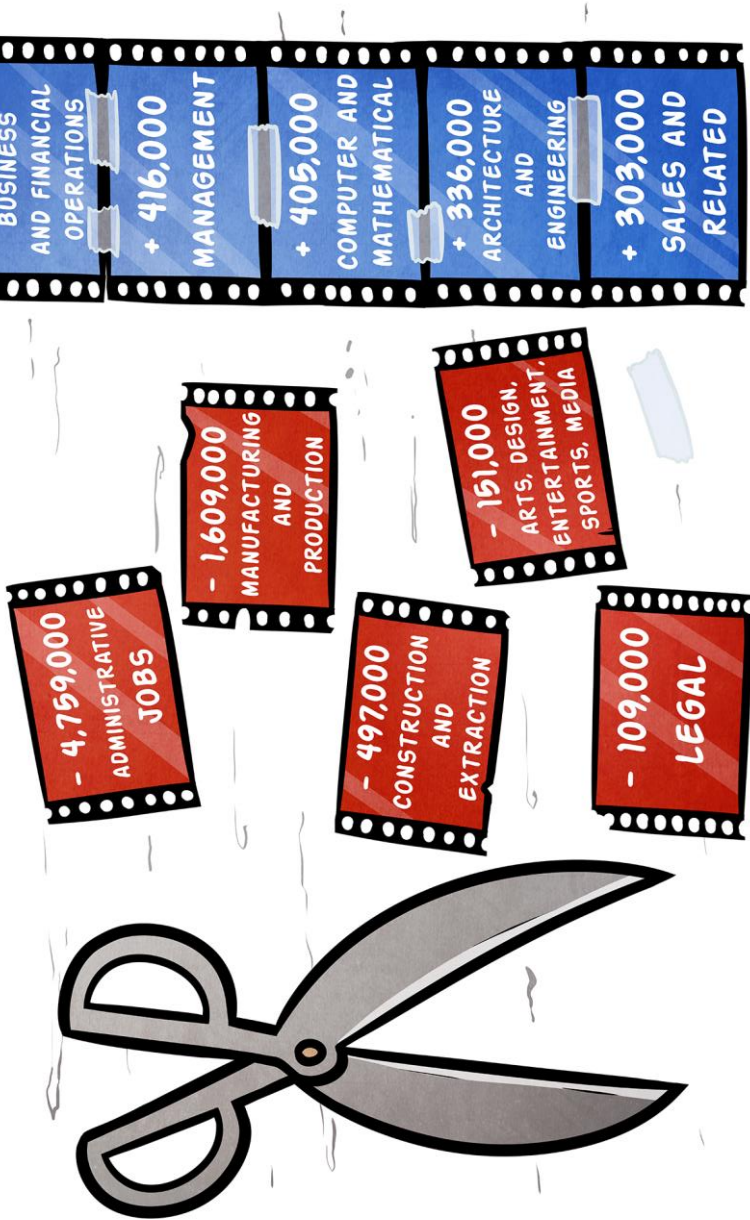
NOT YOUR PARENT'S LIVES



Infographic note: 3

JOB CHANGES 2015 - 2025

DATA FROM 15 DEVELOPED AND EMERGING COUNTRIES REPRESENTING 15 INDUSTRIES.



Infographic note: 4

BECOMING YOUR OWN PRODUCT MANAGER

There are some common characteristics amongst all product managers that are both critical to being a great product manager and essential to designing you. The exercises in this book will help you develop these characteristics.



BE INTENTIONALLY CURIOUS

Albert Einstein said, “I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.” Experts believe curiosity is something all people are born with.⁵ Curiosity got us the wheel. Curiosity got us to Mars. Curiosity gave us the Internet. But if curiosity is innate, how are great product managers different from anyone else? Product managers are curious with a purpose. They have an insatiable hunger for new information and experience. They are **intentionally curious**.

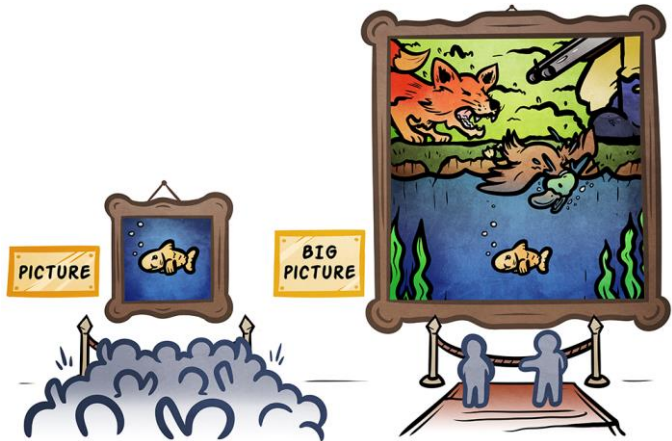
Intentionally curious people are humble enough to recognize they don’t know it all. When you were five years old, you were full of questions and you didn’t care that you didn’t know everything. How could you? Great product managers never lost that. How could you know everything even now? Humility creates a hunger that can only be fed by answers.

Intentionally curious people look at the world (and their place in it) and see big questions: How do things work together? How do these pieces connect? How can I influence things? How can I improve things? You’ll need to develop this intentional curiosity as you become the product manager of you.

THINK ABOUT THE WHOLE

Building on their intentional curiosity, great product managers not only ask questions, they act differently on the answers. They're thinking about the big picture; the whole as a system. Academics call this big-picture thoughtfulness **systems thinking**.⁶ Systems thinking is a pretty simple concept that's really hard to turn into reality. Systems thinking is framed around cause and effect. For human beings, cause and effect is about as rudimentary as it comes. "If I do *this*, then *that* happens." It's so basic that we rarely think about, but it's part of every decision we make.

Life experience tells us it's easier to break big problems down into small pieces. Simplification of problems is how we are programmed to think. It's also easier to think small than to think big. This simplification leads us to believe that a single cause has a single effect, which is very rarely the case. For example, you may believe that some



students do better on tests just because they're smarter than you. The cause is that you are not as smart; the effect is a poor test result. But systems thinking starts with recognizing there is no such thing as a single cause and a single effect. A lot of factors go into causing the effect of a poor test result. Is it your study habits? Is it that you play on two sports teams? Is it because you need to babysit your sister so your mom can juggle two jobs? Is it because you have a memory disability that affects your ability to memorize raw facts? There are inevitably many causes of your test result.

Similarly, every cause has an effect on a lot of different things. Quitting your sports team might result in more time to study for tests but it might also reduce your skill at playing on a team, or eliminate your chance to learn to be a leader, or remove the opportunity to learn from the inevitable failures in sports.

Because they think about the whole system, successful product managers recognize the first challenge is not problem solving, rather, it's problem identification. Once they figured out the real problem, they can then focus on solving it. The results, is they do things that may not have an immediate effect today, but will have a big impact tomorrow or a year from now.

BE EMPATHETIC

Being a great product manager is about understanding and anticipating the wants and needs of your customers. Product managers want to walk in their customers' shoes to feel what they feel. If you are the product manager of a new tent for backcountry camping, you'll spend many nights sleeping in the cold, heat, rain and snow, building **empathy** for your customer. As the product manager of you, empathy allows you to appreciate the perspectives of others, including employers, friends, family and your professional network. Once you understand where others are coming from, you'll have insight into what you can do to create value for them.

GET FEEDBACK EARLY (AND OFTEN)

It can be very expensive to build the final version of a product, and very risky, if you're not totally sure what it should look like, what it should do and which features will make it a success. That's why most product managers start by building low-cost prototypes of their product, and then taking the prototypes to their customers to get immediate feedback. You can heed this advice by putting yourself out there before you are perfect. Get yourself in front of a customer, ask for feedback and you'll be a lot closer to understanding what perfect is.

For example, when Nick Swinmurn founded the online shoe retailer Zappos, he couldn't afford to build a complicated website, buy a warehouse and stock it with shoes. It was 1999, the early days of the Internet, and his big idea that people would buy shoes online was far from a sure thing. Swinmurn needed an inexpensive prototype to prove his idea. If feedback on the prototype was positive, it would give him confidence to continue to move onward. If it failed, well, at least he hadn't spent his life savings.

Swinmurn had the skills to build a simple website, so he started there. And instead of buying a warehouse full of shoes, he took his camera to a shoe store. He photographed the most popular brands and posted them on his website. As orders trickled in, Swinmurn went down the street, bought the shoes in the requested size and shipped them to the customer.

It worked.

His brilliant, simple prototype proved to Swinmurn he was on the right path. It also proved to investors that people would buy shoes over the Internet.

Today, app developers are using this sort of prototyping on the apps on your phone. The product manager gets a prototype on the market to get feedback about what people like or hate. Then, within a few days the app is updated. The product manager continues to listen, and the cycle continues.

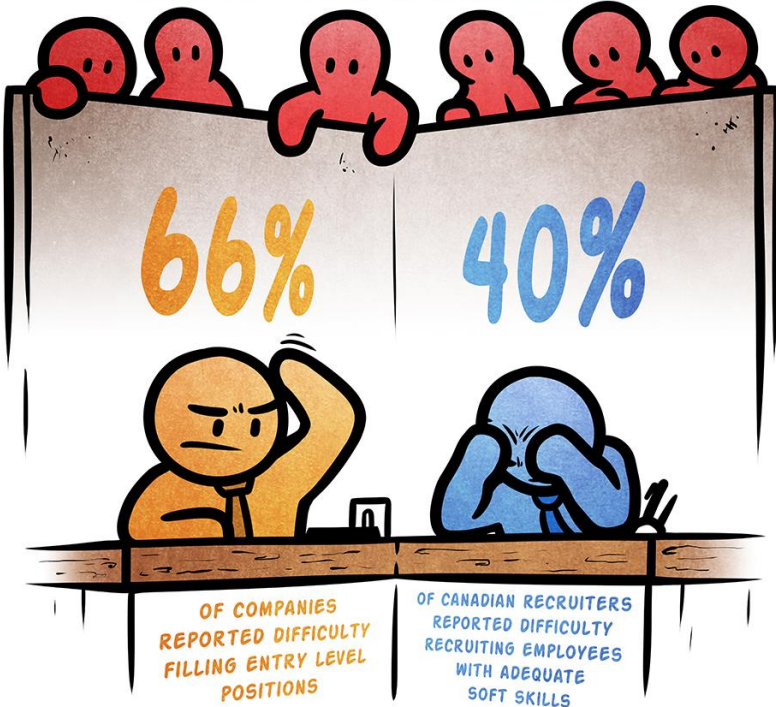
As a product manager, it's critical you get early and regular feedback on the path you're taking from your potential customers (e.g. your future employers). For that feedback to be worth anything, you'll have to be a great listener when you hear the good, but especially when you hear the bad and the ugly. This is sometimes really hard because it's often really personal feedback. Guess what? It's not as hard as spending four years of your life and tens of

thousands of dollars studying something you're pretending both you and the world around you value. Listen early and often and act on what you hear.

THE VALUE OF UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOUR CUSTOMER WANTS

73,000,000

TOTAL PEOPLE IN THE WORLD <25 LOOKING FOR A JOB



Infographic note: 7

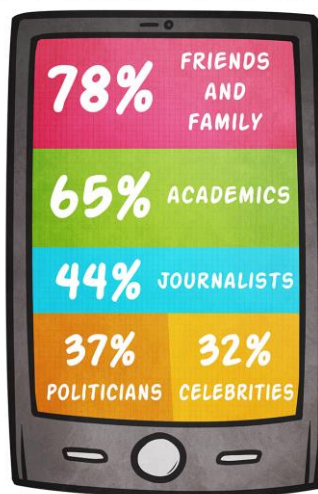
RELY ON EVIDENCE, NOT SIMPLY INTUITION

Great product managers know when to slow down and step back, challenge their assumptions, gather evidence and make a decision even when it seems contrary to their **intuition**.

Knowing how your intuition works can help you be in control of it and not the other way around. Our brain is our control centre that allows us to walk, talk and text at the same time. To process all the information around us 24/7, our brain assigns decisions to two tracks—a fast track and a slow track. Our intuition is this fast-track thinking. Our intuition skips a lot of the hard thinking and automatically jumps to a conclusion. It's less about mulling things over and more about reacting to the world around us. It's great for when our ancestors were being chased by predators, but it's not always as reliable when it comes to decision-making at work or at school. Intuition is framed by what we've done before and allows us to do it all again without being bogged down by hard thinking. Hard thinking is what it sounds like: slow, but worth it.

Our intuition doesn't slow down to reflect on our biases.⁸ We all have biases because none of us have tried 99 per cent of the jobs in the world; taken 99 per cent of a university's courses; or travelled to 99 per cent of the countries in the world—let alone walked in the shoes of the people that live there. To avoid the trap of bias, you'll need to reflect and test your assumptions with real evidence. Real evidence challenges your bias and challenges your intuition.⁹

WHO DO I BELIEVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA?



Infographic note: 10

BE RESILIENT

Great product managers are natural explorers, and like explorers centuries ago who were driven to find a new path to Asia, they're undeterred by tremendous risks. While those explorers didn't always find what they were looking for, their perseverance and resilience changed the history of the world. Product managers think big and don't get frustrated by the unexpected—they embrace it. This resiliency recognizes that every experience, good or bad, offers a bigger learning opportunity. Product managers aren't overwhelmed by failure; instead, they possess an amazing ability to view the upside of what seems like failure and build from it. To quote Thomas Edison, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

BE ACCOUNTABLE

A product manager cannot blame engineering, manufacturing or sales if something goes off the rails. A product's success or failure sits singularly on the product manager. At many times in our careers as product managers, there will be no question that someone else screwed up. It may have been an engineering flaw, maybe manufacturing missed something in the production process or customer service didn't train their staff. However, product managers know they have no one to blame but themselves, because the buck stops with them. They approved the engineering design, the manufacturing process and the training plan. That's what being accountable means. Product managers know they have no one to blame but themselves, because the buck stops with them.

In the life that got you to where you are today, have you ever blamed others for your shortcomings? It's not your fault you did poorly on that project; your team let you down. It's not your fault you were late for work; the bus schedule was wrong. This is the opposite of being accountable. If you're going to be your own product manager, the first step is to take a hard look in the mirror and become accountable for the current and future you.

YOUR DESIGNING YOU JOURNAL

All the characteristics have one thing in common—great product managers are great listeners. They listen to others and themselves and they act on what they discover. Listening to yourself is tougher than it sounds. It's called **reflection**.¹² Reflection ensures you're always gathering new information, analyzing it and evaluating what should be done. Reflective thinking tells you to step back, analyze, judge and learn from both good and bad experiences. Reflection also allows you to think about the big picture and small details and how they may be related.

Over the next eight steps of *Designing YOU*, you'll be reflecting a lot with the goal of trying to connect it all together. To do this, you need to ask yourself three basic questions: What? So What? Now What?¹³ To help you, here are a series of questions to keep handy.

What?

1. What happened?
2. Why did it happen?
3. What did you do? What did others do?
4. What was your reaction?

So What?

1. What were your feelings when it happened?
2. What are your feelings now? Are there any differences? Why?
3. How do you think others feel?
4. What was the impact of what you did?
5. What worked well? What didn't?
6. What did you learn? How did you learn it?

Now What?

1. What are the implications for you and others?
2. What would you do differently next time?
3. What information do you need to move forward?
4. Why is this learning important to you?
5. How will you use this learning?
6. What actions are you going to take?

**“REFLECTIVE THINKING TELLS YOU TO STEP BACK,
ANALYZE, JUDGE AND LEARN FROM BOTH GOOD AND
BAD XPERIENCES.”**

To facilitate this reflective thinking, you'll need a *Designing YOU* journal. This journal is your home base for all your *Designing YOU* work. Though there is no shortage of digital tools to capture thoughts and information (iPhone Notes, vlogs, blogs, Google Drive or a combination), we find that an old-fashioned handwritten notebook is the most effective. There's something rewarding about filling a little book with your questions, thoughts, ideas and interests. Notebooks can be powerful tools for reflection—especially when you go back and reread them.

There are no rules for what or how to capture information in your journal, but it's a great place to quickly jot down questions to pursue when you have time. You might be amazed at how many little thoughts pop up in a day that would simply be gone if you didn't capture them.



Going forward, when you see this symbol in the book, grab your journal and get to work.¹⁴

QUESTIONS GREAT PRODUCT MANAGERS ASK

You've probably heard plenty of stories about Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple and arguably the greatest product manager in history. Jobs has assumed near-mythical status in popular culture.¹⁵ He exhibited every one of the seven aforementioned characteristics to an extreme. Before Jobs ever tinkered with personal computers, his intentional curiosity drove him to learn about calligraphy, which he studied under a former monk. Calligraphy sounds like a distraction from computers, but it led Jobs to value design to a level unmatched by anyone in his time. His interest in design gave us the Macintosh, the iPod and the iPhone; it also made him unique in a world dominated by technically focused engineers and computer scientists.

Today, all great product managers ask three questions: “Why?” “What if?” “How?”¹⁶ For example, in the late 1990s, Steve Jobs started to consider the first question. “Why?”

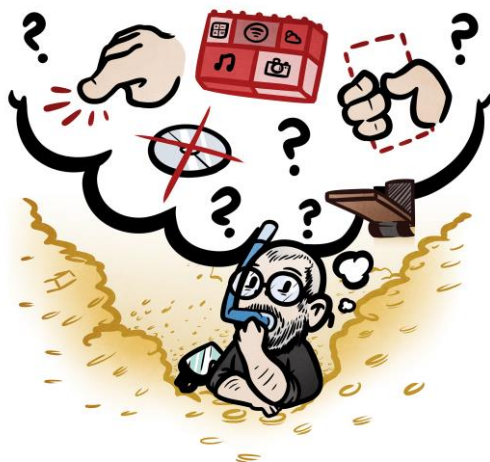
1. Why is it so hard for people to enjoy their music when they're not at home?
2. Why can't people take their entire music collection with them when they travel?
3. Why is Apple only a computer company?

Jobs then started to ask “What if?”

1. What if someone could put their entire music collection in their pocket and listen to it whenever and wherever they wanted?
2. What if I mobilized our expertise and strengths to expand Apple beyond computers?

This vision was the driving force behind finding the “How?” That's when Jobs tasked Apple's talented engineers with figuring out “how” to deliver on his vision—in 2001, the iPod was born.

What's inspiring about this approach is that all of us are capable of playing the role that Jobs played in this process. We can all ask really interesting “Why?” and “What if?” questions. It's only when you get to the “How?” that you need some specialized skills.



One of the reasons that Jobs was such a revolutionary product manager is that he never stopped asking those great questions.

1. Why do people have to go to a physical store to get music?
2. Why do we have to waste resources to make CDs and ship them around the world?
3. Why do record companies have to control the distribution of music?
4. What if Apple enabled artists to distribute their music directly to their fans?
5. What if this could all be seamlessly done by a device that fit in the palm of my hand?

These simple questions resulted in the iTunes store and revolutionized the entire music industry. However, Jobs' insatiable curiosity led him to ask more questions about the emerging smartphone market dominated at the time by BlackBerry.

1. Why do people have one device for mobile music and one device for mobile communications?
2. Why do all mobile phones have a physical keyboard?
3. What if the entire mobile phone was a touchscreen?
4. What if anyone could build an application that could be used on this new device?
5. What if this device could be personalized with applications that interested the user?

The iPhone and App Store changed everything. Again.

Steve Jobs is clearly an exceptional case of a product manager who was driven by an intentional curiosity. But here is the challenge: Though we're all born with an innate curiosity, most of us have lost it along the way. Finding this curiosity is the essential first step to designing you, because it's impossible to answer the really big questions in life if you haven't first explored what's inside of you (such as your personality and interests) and what's out there (such as a wide open world of opportunities). However, to do this, you need to start questioning everything. Yes, everything.

PRACTICING 'WHY?'

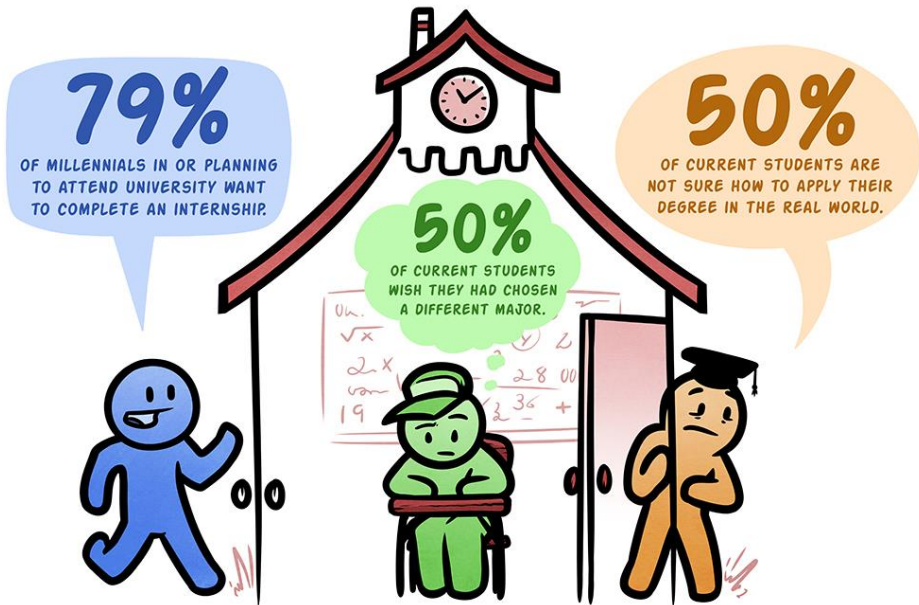


Questioning everything takes practice. As a start, take a few minutes and list five "whys." Look around for stuff you don't understand or things that frustrate you. They don't need to be profound. The point is to start to question the little and big things inside of you and out there. Here are some examples to get you started:

1. Why do I like snowboarding so much?
2. Why do my shoes always wear out in the same spot?
3. Why does mold grow on cheese?
4. Why does my mom always buy a Volvo?

5. Why does my smartphone battery run out so quickly?
6. Why are all my clothes manufactured in Asia?
7. Why do lawyers make so much money?
8. Why do people sit in cubicles at my dad's office?
9. Why do people say I need to have a university degree to be successful?

GO TO SCHOOL WITH A PURPOSE



Infographic note: 17

WHO AM I?

In the previous exercise you started asking some simple questions about why. In *Designing YOU*, you'll need to start asking some really hard questions like, "who am I and where am I going?" These tough questions concern your **identity**—what has defined who you are today and who you want to be in the future. Identity is interesting because on the surface, it's internal to each of us, but researchers have shown that identity is really a social phenomenon.¹⁸

Your identity is influenced by who you like, what you like, what you do and what you want to do. It helps you identify your place in the world, but it can also limit you, as your

identity is closely linked with your comfort zone. Think back to high school. Did you and your friends hang out in the computer lab, gym, library or music room? Maybe your group of

friends prided themselves on being different and didn't fall into any clique. High school is one of the first places you start to really reflect on this question of "who am I?"

The marketing guru Seth Godin calls answering the "who am I?" question finding your "tribe."¹⁹ Your identity grows like a snowball.

As a kid, you started to identify with different people and things. At that age, what you like or don't like is influenced by your experiences and is often closely aligned to your family and close friends. However, as you got into your teens and became increasingly independent, your identity starts to play a bigger role in your decisions: What do I wear? What music do I like? What classes do I take? What do I want to do with my life? This is because your identity is rooted in the groups you identify with.

Finding your "tribe" or "your people" has started to sound like a bit of a cliché, but it's an important part of building your identity. David, co-author, noticed the very moment when his older son found his tribe:

"From age 10, my son had said he wanted to be an author. When he was 12, we enrolled him in a weekend camp for young writers. He was mad. He didn't want to go hang out on the weekend with a bunch of kids he didn't know. He prided himself on being different. I remember dropping him off and watching him stomp off to his bunk with a book. He was determined to hate it.

"Two days later I picked him up. When I finally got him in the car, I asked him if he enjoyed it. His response is one I will never forget, 'Dad, I never knew there are people like me out there. I found my people.'

"My son's identity is now intertwined proudly with his tribe of self-professed geeks."

We are all shaped by our surroundings, whether it's our family, our friends, our school or our community—that's our comfort zone. Identity can play a positive role in our lives. It gives us a sense of belonging, builds confidence and self-esteem. Research shows that identity plays a big role in shaping what we value and what we don't.²⁰ What we think is "normal" is rooted in what the group we identify with views as "normal."

We all have a comfort zone and everything we like in life is within our comfort zone. So, if the most important thing about your identity is to recognize you have one (you've found "your people"), the second-most important thing is to ensure you control it, and it doesn't

Journaling and Reflection

When Tom started university, he was a self-described introvert with an abundance of ambition and a bend towards perfectionism.

He started writing a journal of ideas, advice, personal quotes and general thoughts in an effort to organize his life's goals and figure out a path. Though he didn't realize it right away, the journal became a way to recognize his strengths and weaknesses, make plans to push past his shortcomings and capitalize on his talents. Key to his journaling was not just writing, but reading what he'd written.

One of his greatest learnings from his own journal was identifying his comfort zone and how hesitant he was to get out of it. He slowly overcame his uncertainty by stepping into some intimidating territory. He joined a co-op program and a few clubs and was rewarded: it turned out that not all the value of university is in the classroom. It's also in the diversity of people you can meet. His view of university was upended and his experience became richer. It wouldn't have happened without his journaling.

Tom's Tip: Journaling is a tool that allows you to track how you change and grow, but remember re-reading it is as important as writing it.

control you. As you get older, your identity plays a big role in defining what you want to do. That is when you start to form a **professional identity**.

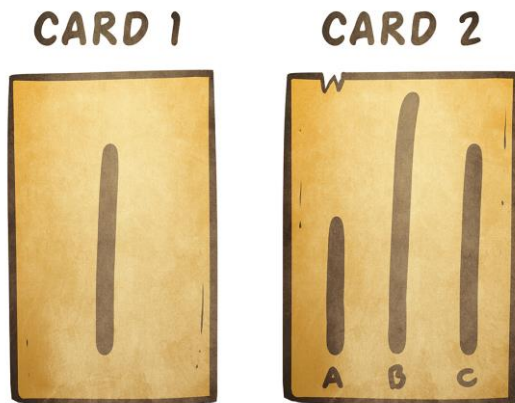
Your identity is the result of your life experience and constrained by your life experiences. Research has shown that sometime around the age of 13, you start to form stereotypes of professional roles.²¹ Some of these roles appealed to you, some didn't; but you assigned them to big buckets based on your experience. Sometimes these stereotypes are framed by gender ("that's a guy's job") or prestige ("I want to be just like her"). Regardless, these stereotypes are judgments that conform to what you define as "normal." This is why your identity and the comfort zone it created are the biggest barriers to designing you.

MUST I CONFORM?

Humans are social animals. We like to be liked, but our urge to be beloved works against us as product managers in designing you.

Researchers have studied how our human need to be liked influences our attitude and behaviour.²² Our need to be liked leads to **conformity**. Dr. Solomon Asch conducted one of the most famous experiments on this subject more than sixty years ago. His experiment was very simple; eight students were asked to evaluate two cards and match the line on Card 1 to one of the lines on Card 2. Students were asked to give a verbal answer to the whole group.

Clearly, the line on Card 1 matches line C on Card 2, as line A is shorter and line B is longer. But, there was a trick. Seven of the "students" were actors and only one was an actual student. The real student was always asked last to respond. The seven actors always intentionally chose line A or B. Time after time, most of the real students conformed to the group consensus. In follow-up interviews, the students told the researchers that they knew the answer was wrong, but it was more important to them to be part of the group than to be correct.²³



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This experiment highlights our instinct to conform to the tribe with which we identify. Conformity is the opposite of curiosity. That's why the best product managers don't fall into the trap of conformity and why intentional curiosity is difficult and rare. One of the consequences of conformity is that you stop asking hard questions, stop looking for new paths and start looking for someone to tell you the easy answer and send you down a well-worn and conventional life path.

Though curiosity is innate, as a society we encourage and reward conformity starting when we're babies and we're taught "right" from "wrong." Once we're in school, the whole

system—from textbooks to testing—rewards conformity. A study found that preschool children ask on average 26 questions an hour, but this declined to two questions per hour once they enrolled in school. Another study found that between kindergarten and late elementary school, curiosity-type questions drop by half.²⁴ Whereas curiosity and asking questions is about taking a risk, conformity is a safety net.

To illustrate the depth of social conformity, David has a story about his son (shared with his son's permission):

“This is about my son, the proud, bright, off-beat geek, when he was 15. When everyone else sees red, he sees a rainbow. He prides himself on being different.

“When he was in grade 10, my son was given an exam in his Language Arts class.

“He was shown a picture of a ‘hangman’ and was told to write a story about it. But he didn’t see a hangman, he saw a puppet. In fact, he saw the consequence of being a puppet.

“The depth of his poem blew me away. I was so proud I emailed it to all my family and friends, tweeted it and posted it on Facebook.

Puppets hanging in a line, dancing for their master,
Moving, swinging, round and round, turning ever faster.
As he makes the puppets dance, he whispers in their heads:
‘Follow, obey, conform to my way, and dangle by my threads.’
The puppets push to pick up their pace, obeying the tasks they must fulfil
Yet as they turn and twist on their strings, they’re battle remains uphill,
The master is never pleased by their dance, and never will he be,
But the puppets keep on twirling, blind to truths they’ll never see,
Their master is never happy, and his mind changes like the wind,
Their master is never satisfied; no matter how fast his puppets spin,
But the puppets keep on dancing, unaware of their strife,
And if they don’t learn quickly, they will be trapped with him for life,
The master is called society, the greatest puppeteer of them all,
He will never let his puppets go, and he will never catch them when they fall.

“There’s an ironic end to this story. My son received a mark of zero because he hadn’t written prose, but rather poetry. He received zero because the point of the exam was not to stimulate curiosity or creativity—it was conformity.²⁵”

The conformity alluded to in Puppet Master and the real-life situation faced by David’s son when he wrote the poem, both show the primary obstacle in the process of designing you. There lies your opportunity: Explore where others conform; create where others mimic. Your best weapons against conformity are reflection and curiosity; reflecting on who you are today and being curious about exploring who you may want to be in the future.²⁶

**“THERE LIES YOUR OPPORTUNITY: EXPLORE WHERE OTHERS CONFORM;
CREATE WHERE OTHERS MIMIC.”**



— TIME TO START DESIGNING YOU —

At this early stage of *Designing YOU*, we have a few activities meant to trigger some of the key characteristics required to develop the mindset that makes product managers excel.

ACTIVITY 1: ASKING YOURSELF WHY



We'll start by digging deeper into the things you love in order to find the source of your passion.

Think about what you love to do today. Some of your passions and interests today are a direct outcome of being curious when you were young. Whether you remember it or not, there was a time when you didn't understand the sport you now love to play or couldn't appreciate the music you now can't stop listening to. The natural curiosity that led you there is often lost as our identity forms. You can break from this comfort zone and tap into your intentional curiosity to explore the way you did as a child.

The mesh of interests that you cultivate opens doors to new people, new ideas and new opportunities. If you're lucky, one interest might turn into a full-blown passion that helps guide you on your roadmap to the Whole YOU.

Start by making a list of the people, places and things that you're passionate about or that interest you. Then, for each item in your list, ask "Why? Why am I passionate about it?" Your answer may or may not surprise you. Then, ask yourself "Why?" again, and perhaps again. For example, in the following table we imagine that two individuals have the same interest in basketball but break down their "Why?" very differently:



	Ahmed	Meaghan
Interest/Passion	I love playing basketball.	I love playing basketball.
Why?	It's something I'm actually good at.	I love the competition.
Why?	I used to spend about 10 hours a week practicing.	I love being part of a team.
Why?	I enjoyed getting better week after week and making my father proud.	I really admire and identify with some of the people in my league. I guess you could call them my tribe.

Using this reflection exercise, if Ahmed has a product manager's mentality, he might start to look for other activities that he could invest time into and become good at. Meaghan might look into other teams or clubs that she could join.

If you do this activity with each of your interests, you might start to see some patterns developing. For example, perhaps your most prominent answer to "Why?" is because the things you love to do are done outdoors, or maybe you do them all by yourself, or that they each give you a sense of escape. Curiosity about what makes you tick unlocks other paths to explore.

ACTIVITY 2: EXPLORING WHAT'S ADJACENT



For Activity 2, you'll start by listing a few areas that you know a fair amount about. These topics are likely in your comfort zone and we suspect they're core to your identity.

Taking it to the next level of questioning is a little trickier. **Come up with questions about areas of your topic that you don't know much about.** You're reaching for stuff way outside of your comfort zone and your current identity. Specifically, try not to limit yourself to things you'll learn if you simply continue down your current path.

For example, you might have taken ballet for years and feel confident about what you know as a dancer. You won't worry about the few jumps or styles that you haven't mastered. Instead, you'll ask questions about the other "adjacent" areas that you perhaps haven't considered. These are areas that are linked to your areas of interest but one step away. Using the ballet example:

Topic	I love ballet
Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What is involved in running a dance studio?2. What makes one teacher better than another?3. Why can some people jump higher than others?4. Why are there few ballet dancers over 30?

Asking the questions is only the beginning. The product manager now goes out and hunts down the evidence for an answer. In our example, this will lead our ballet dancer to know something about how a business operates, the best practices behind coaching and the physiology of a dancer.

We can get so caught up in one aspect of what we identify with that we become blind to the related areas we don't know anything about. The mere fact that these new areas are related to something we enjoy might help take us outside our comfort zone and push our own identity.

Finally, as you explore other aspects of what you already know, you'll slowly expand your comfort zone, your identity and your **social network** to include these areas of different but related interests. **Make note of those areas that intrigue you most.** They're prime territory for further exploration in later steps.



ACTIVITY 3: OPEN UP YOUR WORLD

It's tough to be curious about something you don't know exists. But, you just need to know a little before your curiosity is triggered—you'll be driven to know more. That's "priming the pump" with interesting (but incomplete) information. Fortunately, there's a huge amount of easily accessible information that will allow you to trigger your curiosity.

For this activity, find five TED talks (www.ted.com) weekly to expose you to something you didn't know. TED Talks feature experts sharing a sliver of what they know in the hopes of inspiring you. Each speaker has no more than 18 minutes to deliver their inspirational message, whether they're a Nobel Prize winner or a billionaire.

To find a talk that aligns with your interests, consider building on something triggered by Activity 1. For example:

- **What?** "I love movies and books about aliens."
 - **Why?** "I'm fascinated by extraterrestrial life."
 - **Why?** "I can't believe we are alone in the universe."

Really smart people have done TED Talks on the potential of extra-terrestrial life, and really smart people have done TED Talks on just about every other topic out there. If you run out of topics that directly connect to your interests, try Googling "best TED Talks" and see what catches your eye.

TED Talks are available as videos as well as in podcast form. If you haven't embraced the world of podcasting, learn how to download podcasts to your smartphone.²⁷ Putting podcasts in your pocket can open up your world (and expand your comfort zone) while you're walking, bussing or driving to school or work each day.



Make note in your journal of what topics or questions interest you. There is always more exploring to do. You can use this table as a guide.

TED Talk	This is interesting because...

ACTIVITY 4: EXPLORING INTERESTS ONE CLASS AT A TIME

In the previous activities, you’ve explored why you’re interested in the things you’re interested in and explored potential new interests. In this activity, we want you to build on both of these activities and explore the most interesting (and off the wall) university and college courses you can find.

What did the first two activities tell you about your interests? These are great places to start. Have you ever wanted to take a class on the Simpsons, rap, Lego or zombies? They all exist. A good place to begin exploring is your own school, but remember, in the world of online education, you don’t have to stop there.²⁸ To kick-start your exploration, we have compiled a list of 25 innovative and unique courses taught at different schools (see next page).

When you find a class that interests you, build on the “Why?” process from Activity 1:

- **What?** “The Philosophy of Star Trek class really interests me.”
 - **Why?** “I like that their world has moved past race and nationalism and focuses on the greater good.”
 - **Why?** “I have experienced racism firsthand so I am passionate about celebrating diversity.”
 - **So What?** Maybe I should major in sociology?



As you search courses that interest you, make notes in your journal on the course, the school and “Why?”. You should pay particular attention to what is offered at schools in your area. This exercise will help you better understand what makes you tick and why.

Course Name	School	This is interesting because...

Explore one class at a time

Here are some examples of the amazingly diverse and fun university courses that could open your eyes and stimulate your curiosity.²⁹

Humanities

1. The Simpsons and Philosophy
2. Philosophy and Star Trek
3. United Kingdom: To Hogwarts, Harry: An Intensive Study of Harry Potter Through the British Isles

Literature

4. Elvish, the language of Lord of the Rings
5. Rap Linguistics
6. Jay Z and Kanye West

Music & Art

7. The Beatles
8. Introduction to Turntablism
9. Muppet Magic
10. The Art of Warcraft

Social Sciences

11. The Sociology of Miley Cyrus
12. UFOs In American Society
13. Gangsters, Goodfellas and Wiseguys: North American Perspectives of Organized Crime

Science & Technology

14. The Science of Superheroes
15. Brewing Science: The History, Culture And Science Of Beer
16. Lego Robotics
17. Poker 101
18. Street-Fighting Mathematics

Physical Education and Recreation

19. Circus Stunts
20. Tree Climbing
21. Hockey: Culture and Commerce

Popular Culture

22. History Of Video Games And Interactive Media
23. Calvin & Hobbes
24. American Pro Wrestling
25. Zombies in Popular Media

ACTIVITY 5: START CURIOSITY CONVERSATIONS



Remember: Effective product managers are empathetic. Empathy is caring about other people—what they do, why

they do it, what they enjoy, how they got to where they are, what they regret and more. Everyone’s story has important lessons that’ll open your world and help in designing you. **We want you to get out there and trigger your empathy and curiosity through conversations.**

If you’ve done the previous activities, you may already have an idea of the type of person with whom you would like to speak. The ballerina could chat with a dance studio owner or a physiotherapist. If you enjoyed a TED talk about alien life, maybe call the director of a local science centre or a professor at a local university. The goal is to have conversations with people who you currently identify with (likely who are already in your comfort zone), as well as with people you may have never realized in a million years you’d have anything in common with. The latter are the people who will push your comfort zone and force you to reflect hard on your own identity.

If you’re struggling, lean on your personal network (family, coaches, teachers, neighbours). Once you know who you want to have a conversation with, come up with a reason for the conversation and make the request.

Don’t worry about wasting someone’s time when you request a conversation. Universally, we all love talking about ourselves. Suggest an open-ended topic with a fixed amount of time. For example: “I’m a student interested in dance and I am curious about how you became the owner of a dance studio. If you can spare 20 minutes, I’d love to hear your story.”

Your secret weapon is that they’ve all been where you are right now. Therefore, they’re inclined to want to support you. Instead of fighting for airtime to tell your story, just absorb their story.

Satisfy Your Restlessness

Misha had always searched for ways to challenge herself and grow. If she wasn’t changing herself for the better, she was restless.

Restless as she was, she was uncertain of where to focus her energy. Misha had worked for years with her mother in her floral studio, which sparked a love of flowers, but she hadn’t considered how she could make flowers into her career.

Driven by a desire for new challenges, Misha studied floral design at college and opened her own floral studio. Suddenly she had to be much more than a florist — she had to be an entrepreneur whose livelihood was dependent on her ability to consistently push herself outside of her comfort zone by accepting risk. It was the perfect ongoing challenge. Her inner entrepreneur was let loose and it changed her life.

For Misha, success means feeling she is doing great things while surrounding herself with like-minded, positive people who work together on something they love.

Misha’s Tip: Be uncomfortable with comfortable.

Once you've landed the conversation, your main role is to listen, intently. Be actively interested in their story and ask good open-ended questions, like:

1. How did you become the _____?
2. What were the stepping stones to get where you are?
3. What part of your job do you like the most? The least?
4. What did you take in school? Was it relevant?
5. Is there any class you wish you had taken at school but didn't? Why?
6. What advice would you give your younger self?

Don't try to sell yourself — showing genuine interest in them is the best impression you could leave. The first couple of conversations might be difficult or even a bit awkward, but soon you'll get really good at listening and asking relevant follow-up questions. Your best questions are the ones that flow out of the conversation and are curiosity-driven. Your last question should always be, "Is there anyone else you know who I might be able to learn from?" followed by a warm and genuine "thank you."

**“YOUR SECRET WEAPON IS THAT THEY’VE ALL BEEN
WHERE YOU ARE RIGHT NOW.”**

As a final step, it's important to send a thank you note. As part of this process reflect on whether you'd value an ongoing relationship with this person. Did you hit it off? Maybe they had such a different perspective that you'd value ongoing insight? If this is the case, in your note simply ask if you could keep in touch. Note the connection in your journal as it will be important in Step 3, when we form your Design Team. Use the following chart as a guide in your journal.

I talked to...	I learned...

GENDER IS IN YOUR HEAD



In Step 1, you were asked to reflect on “who am I,” including your current social circle. As noted, personal identity is actually a social phenomenon, meaning our identities are heavily shaped by our groups of friends. As you reflect on who you are, think about your gender and what social expectations are placed on you based on your gender.



Make note in your journal of how you think your gender identity affects who you are, your worldview and your experiences both in and out of the workplace. How might this change down the road (e.g. if you become a parent)?

Even today, our expectations of men and women are different. Sheryl Sandberg, the Chief Operating Officer of Facebook, wrote a bestselling book called *Lean In*, in which she discusses how we all have powerful unconscious biases about gender roles and gender behaviour. Think about it: The same behaviour that’s viewed as strong, positive leadership from a man is often seen as negative and overbearing when it comes from a woman. For instance, more than 60,000 women and men were asked whether they preferred male or female managers. While slightly over half of respondents reported having no preference, the other half preferred male over female managers by a 2:1 ratio. Justifications for this preference tended to focus on negative stereotypes about female behaviour, such as women being too emotional, moody, catty or dramatic.³⁰

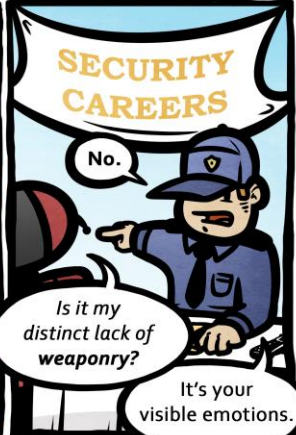
Ask yourself whether these gender biases exist within you, your own family or your circle of friends.

Give this question some serious thought. It’s human nature to believe that other people have biases. Regardless of your gender, when you find yourself judging a woman for behaving aggressively, ask yourself whether you would be as critical of a man acting the same way. Also consider how prepared you are to challenge gender bias when you observe it happening around you. Gender bias is deeply seeded, so we all need to be self-critical in order to weed it out over time.³¹

AT A GLANCE

1. Designing a successful product is no longer a linear process done secretly in a lab. Designing a product and designing you involves several versions in pursuit of the final product with ongoing feedback and improvement.
2. To be your own product manager, you need seven key characteristics:
 - Be intentionally curious.
 - Think about the whole.
 - Be empathetic.
 - Get feedback early and often.
 - Rely on evidence, not simply intuition.
 - Be resilient.
 - Be accountable.
3. Great product managers focus on three key questions:
 - Why?
 - What if?
 - How?
4. Focus on overcoming the biggest risk to designing you—the comfort zone rooted in your identity.
5. Analyze your current interests, open up your world to new interests, and start having curiosity conversations with others.

Next, you will explore the Current YOU, including your personality, your emotional intelligence, your interests and your skills.



STEP TWO

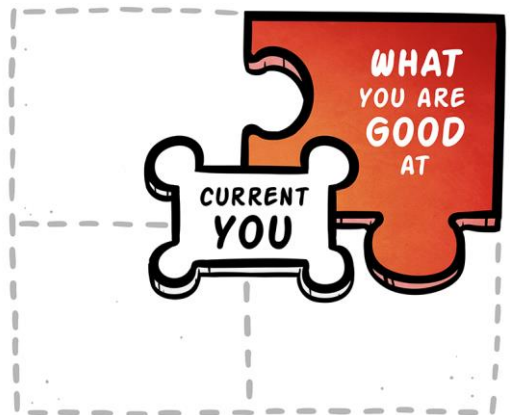
EXPLORING THE CURRENT YOU



The first step in designing a new version of a product is evaluating the current product inside and out. Only at that point can the product manager assess its potential and areas for improvement. The same principle holds true for designing you.

The starting point of designing you is looking in the mirror and digging deep into who you are today. Specifically, this step explores your personality, your emotional intelligence, your skills and your knowledge. By taking stock of yourself in this way, you'll get an early glimpse of what you're good at today. This **Current YOU** (the YOU up until now) is the

foundation for you to start to design the Whole YOU of tomorrow.



— EXPLORING WHAT’S INSIDE YOU —

— PHASE ONE — EXPLORING YOUR PERSONALITY

Some of what makes you who you are is learned through your experiences, but a lot of it is coded in your personality. Elon Musk, the founder of PayPal and Tesla said, “My biggest mistake is probably weighing too much on someone’s talent and not someone’s personality. I think it matters whether someone has a good heart.”¹

A person’s personality evolves over a lifetime, but many of the core personality traits that you had when you were 18 will still be part of you when you’re 88.² That’s why we’re exploring your personality today.

Before we jump in, a word of warning that **this assessment should only be a starting point.** It’s a window into what makes you tick right now. The point of this exercise is not to force you into a personality box, but to provide some high-level insight into what makes you who you are today. Personality is one of the most debated topics in psychology and as a result, there are many different approaches psychologists use to evaluate it. For this reason, in the notes section you’ll find a list of additional resources that we encourage you to dig into.³

This assessment exercise will capture how you view yourself today based on a number of personality traits. For example, how accurate is it to call yourself “talkative” or “organized”? It’s important to score yourself compared to people you know who are similar to you in terms of age and gender. It’s also critical you score yourself as you are today, not how you want to be in the future, or how you wish you were right now. This only works if you’re honest with yourself.⁴

THE RETURN ON OPTIMISM



5x

**MORE LIKELY PESSIMISTS WILL EXPERIENCE
BURNOUT COMPARED TO OPTIMISTS**

Infographic note: 5

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT: PART 1



For each of the questions that follow, score yourself on a scale of 1 to 5, with a 1 being “Never” and 5 being “Always.” There’s nothing inherently good or bad about being a 1 or a 5 in any category, rather it’s the mixture of all these traits that makes us who we are.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	A lot	Always

	Trait A	Trait B	Trait C	Trait D	Trait E
	<input type="checkbox"/> Talkative <input type="checkbox"/> Outgoing <input type="checkbox"/> Bold <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic	<input type="checkbox"/> Sympathetic <input type="checkbox"/> Warm <input type="checkbox"/> Kind <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative	<input type="checkbox"/> Organized <input type="checkbox"/> Efficient <input type="checkbox"/> Systematic <input type="checkbox"/> Practical	<input type="checkbox"/> Not envious <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed	<input type="checkbox"/> Creative <input type="checkbox"/> Imaginative <input type="checkbox"/> Philosophical <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual
Total					

Now total your score for each trait.

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT: PART 2

For the second assessment, score yourself on a *reversed* scale of 1 to 5, with a 1 being “Always” and 5 being “Never.”

1	2	3	4	5
Always	A lot	Sometimes	Rarely	Never

	Trait A	Trait B	Trait C	Trait D	Trait E
	<input type="checkbox"/> Shy <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet <input type="checkbox"/> Bashful <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn	<input type="checkbox"/> Cold <input type="checkbox"/> Unsympathetic <input type="checkbox"/> Rude <input type="checkbox"/> Harsh	<input type="checkbox"/> Disorganized <input type="checkbox"/> Sloppy <input type="checkbox"/> Inefficient <input type="checkbox"/> Careless	<input type="checkbox"/> Moody <input type="checkbox"/> Jealous <input type="checkbox"/> Temperamental <input type="checkbox"/> Worried	<input type="checkbox"/> Uncreative <input type="checkbox"/> Shallow <input type="checkbox"/> Superficial <input type="checkbox"/> Uninspired
Total					

Total your score for each trait. Now, find your average score for each trait by following these steps:

1. Transfer your totals from both assessments onto the chart that follows.
2. Add up the two totals to give you a grand total for each trait.

	Trait A	Trait B	Trait C	Trait D	Trait E
Assessment 1 total					
Assessment 2 total					
Grand total (assessment 1+ assessment 2)					

REFLECTING ON YOUR PERSONALITY

Researchers have studied personality traits for decades, trying to figure out what makes people tick from the inside out. The result is what’s called the Big Five personality traits.⁶

Each of these personality traits can be measured on a spectrum and everybody falls somewhere on each spectrum. If you find yourself on the lower end of one trait’s spectrum (score of 2 or lower), you may be higher (score of 4 or above) on its opposite trait. The opposite of organized may be spontaneous or the opposite of trusting may be cautious.

Outgoing (Trait A): If you scored high on this trait, you’re outgoing and get energy from others. Alone time for you can be boring.

If you scored low on this trait, you may be more introverted. Many introverts enjoy their downtime and look forward to being alone because being around others is emotionally exhausting—it’s not that they don’t like others—but it takes work to always be “on.”



Trusting (Trait B): If you scored high on this trait, you tend to be agreeable, cooperative or trusting of others. You’re more likely to help others and see the good in them.

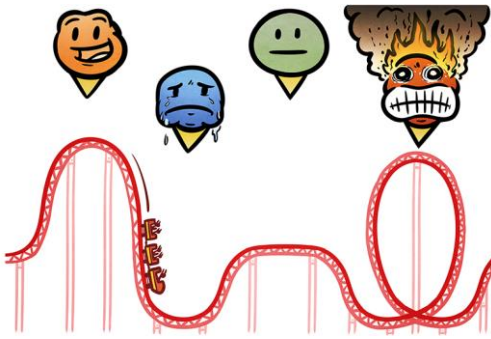
If you scored low, you may be more cautious of others.

There’s a balancing act with this trait, as being highly agreeable can create situations where others take advantage of you, but being cautious may lead others to think you’re argumentative for the sake of an argument.

Organized (Trait C): If you scored high on this trait, you're incredibly well organized, a planner and conscientious.

If you scored low on this trait, you thrive on spontaneity and winging it.

Those who are super organized are often perceived as dependable (you're always somewhere when you say you'll be), but you may be a little stubborn and inflexible. In contrast, those who are spontaneous are happy to see where life takes them and are flexible. However, sometimes others may view you as unreliable (e.g. "so when you said you wanted me at work by 10 a.m. you really meant it?").



Nervous (Trait D): If you scored high on this trait, you're anxious and may ride an emotional rollercoaster every day—especially the not-so-good emotions such as anxiety, anger or depression.

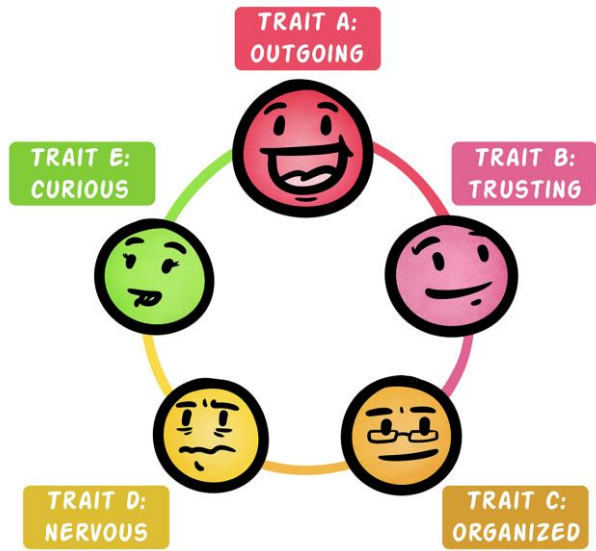
If you scored low, then you're an emotional rock, where you rarely experience the emotional highs and lows that others feel.

Curious (Trait E): If you scored high on this trait, you like new things and are naturally curious. You ask a lot of questions and want to dig deeper. You might be open to skydiving, doing an exchange program in another country or joining a new club.

If you scored low on this trait, you're naturally cautious. You might be happy and content at home, and wonder why people would ever like to travel to the unknown. You enjoy your daily routine and breaking from it can make you unhappy. You're pragmatic, making decisions based on what you've done in the past. You may find it tough to get out of your comfort zone, but don't worry because in this book you will work at developing your intentional curiosity.

SO WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Now that you know how you rank for each of the traits, you can start to reflect on who you are. In which traits did you score highest and lowest? This is a good time to see if the assessment passes the “sniff” test. Do the results sound like you? If not, were you really being honest with yourself? You may want to go back and refine the assessment, but be careful that you always answer the questions honestly based on who you are today and remember there is no right or wrong answer.



Once you’ve assessed yourself, it’s useful to compare how others view your personality. To do this, **give the assessment to a close friend or family member to evaluate you.** You need them to be honest, so pick someone who you feel very comfortable with and ask them to be honest and constructive. Picking someone who’ll tell you what you want to hear is a waste of time for everyone.

Once they complete the assessment for you, compare the scores and rankings with your own. Are they consistent? **If not, reflect on the reasons why.** This process—though sometimes awkward—can start to provide important insight into how others perceive you and can therefore help to figure out who you are.



At this stage, you’re getting glimpses of your personality from both the inside (you) and the outside (others). **Now you can reflect on and interpret the results by writing a simple paragraph to summarize your personality.**

A big part of exploring your personality is to better understand who you are today. The intention is not to pass judgment, but to reflect and build on your strengths, while not dwelling on what you may perceive as personality weaknesses today. With that in mind, turn your personality into a concise statement in your journal (a minimum of 250 words or so). Feel free to use the language from the trait definitions or create your own. Here’s a sample:

My Personality

My personality is highly conscientious, outgoing and trusting.

Although my conscientiousness allows me to be organized and dependable, it also leads me to place a great amount of pressure on myself to succeed, which at times leads to being obsessed with what I'm doing. This tendency is due to great care and passion for what I do; however, it's necessary to stay aware of its challenges. At times, I am an introverted individual; however, I do enjoy engaging with others when I don't feel like I'm being judged.

At times, I am too trusting and optimistic; however, my conscientiousness and curiosity keep me from being foolish. As I reflect on it, the combination of these five personality traits enables me to work well in a team environment and play leadership roles.

— PHASE TWO — EXPLORING YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

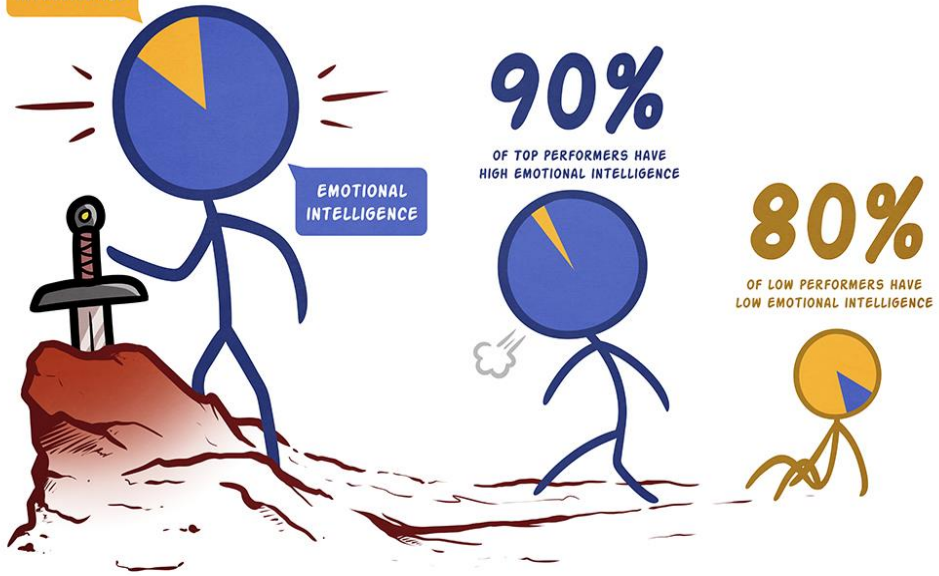
What we typically think of as “thinking,” psychologists call **cognitive intelligence**. Cognitive intelligence is composed of your ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience. Kind of important, right? For decades, this form of intelligence was considered the crucial factor that separates success from failure. It's no surprise then that our education system's primary focus is the development of cognitive intelligence (and to a lesser extent some technical skills).

“COMPARED TO COGNITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND PERSONALITY, AN IMPORTANT FEATURE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IS THAT IT CAN BE DEVELOPED AND REFINED THROUGH PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE OVER A LIFETIME.”

But watch out cognitive intelligence. In recent years, researchers have identified a factor that has huge influence on both personal and professional success—**emotional intelligence (EI)**. Psychologist Daniel Goleman found that although cognitive intelligence is valued, it isn't particularly unique. Rather, what really can make a difference is a person's emotional intelligence.⁷ Someone with high emotional intelligence is not only adept at controlling and understanding their own emotions, but also at navigating interpersonal relationships.

COGNITIVE INTELLIGENCE

WHAT MAKES A LEADER?



Infographic note: 8

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT



Just like your personality assessment, consider this as **only the starting point** in the evaluation of your emotional intelligence today. What follows is a list of statements to score yourself on. Just as with the other assessment tools, it's important to score yourself openly and honestly based on how you are today, not how you want to be in the future.

For each of the questions, score yourself on a scale of 1 to 5, with a 1 being "Never" and 5 being "Always." Again, there are no right or wrong answers, rather this is intended to get you to begin to reflect deeper on the you of today. Once you get into this habit of continued self-reflection, you will be far better positioned to think about the future you.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	A lot	Always

Emotional Intelligence Traits

Trait A

- I have control over my emotions.
- I never give up when faced with a challenge due to a belief I'll fail.
- I compliment others when they have done something well.
- I know when to speak about my personal problems to others.

Total

Trait B

- I am aware of my emotions as I experience them.
- Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living.
- I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them.
- I know why my emotions change.

Total

Trait C

- I seek out activities that make me happy.
- I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles.
- When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last.
- I arrange events that others enjoy.

Total

Trait D

- When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me.
- I expect that I'll do well in most things I try.
- Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important.
- When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times when I faced similar obstacles and overcame them.

Total

Trait E

- I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them.
- I help other people feel better when they are down.
- I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice.
- Other people find it easy to confide in me.

Total

Trait F

- I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others.
- I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send.
- I can get a sense of other people by just looking at their facial expressions.
- I never find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people.

Total

REFLECTING ON YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Let's dig into what it means to be emotionally intelligent and how you can increase your score. There are six dimensions to emotional intelligence: emotional management, self-awareness, optimism, motivation, empathy and social skills.¹⁰

Emotional management (Trait A):

Emotional management is the ability to think before acting. It's controlling our impulse behavior.¹¹ Emotional management is at the heart of reflective thinking. It's the ability to have an internal, open and honest conversation with your feelings.

People who can manage their emotions are adaptable and respond well to ambiguity and change. People who score low on this may wear their emotions on their sleeve more.

Self-awareness (Trait B): Self-awareness is the ability to have a deep understanding of your emotions. What are your strengths and weakness? What motivates you? What are your goals? What are your values?

People who are self-aware also understand their own emotions and how they may impact others. People who score low have little appreciation of themselves or what drives them; this may lead to having a blind spot about the good or not so good elements that make them who they are.

Optimism (Trait C): Optimism is the ability to view everything from a positive place. People who are optimistic are constantly positive and this gives them their energy. This optimism is their motivation and drive.

People who score low on this may have an inclination to see the downside and always think things could be better. Their pessimistic attitude can lead to frustration and demotivation because nothing is ever perfect.

Finding Yourself Outside Your Comfort Zone

From a young age, Rebecca knew she wanted to be an elementary school teacher. Rebecca left high school and went directly into a degree in elementary education. She finished her degree quickly, however, Rebecca was worried she and her fellow teachers were so focused on being good role models that they hadn't taken the time to experiment and figure out who they were as people.

Lacking full confidence in her teaching abilities and slightly unsure of who exactly she was, Rebecca moved to Australia right after graduation to grow personally and gain experience substitute teaching.

It was in Australia that Rebecca started to really get to know herself. With the freedom to grow outside of her Canadian comfort zones, Rebecca began to realize what she loved most about both teaching and herself. She realized that the strongest role models are those who know who they are and are confident in themselves, despite their flaws. This understanding helped her to develop confidence in her teaching abilities. She learned she loved innovative approaches to education and using them to help students grow.

Rebecca's Tip: Teaching isn't who I am, teaching is what I do. Developing a Whole YOU is particularly difficult in social professions, but so important in order to maintain balance.

Motivation (Trait D): Emotional intelligence requires motivation. People who have this internal motivation want to achieve, regardless of external incentives. They don't need someone else to provide a reward for doing things. They're rarely satisfied with the status quo; they believe there is always a better way. Motivated people are highly competitive, highly optimistic and often see the positive side in both the good and the bad.

People who score low on this may have lower intrinsic motivation and may be more motivated by extrinsic factors such as compensation or grades.

Empathy (Trait E): The ability to read other people's emotions is central to emotional intelligence. This is the capacity to walk in the shoes of others and to reflect on this when making decisions that will impact these people.

People who score low on this may have difficulty feeling what others feel, because their default lens only shows their own reality.

Social skill (Trait F): The final component of emotional intelligence is social skill. Social skill is the ability to build and sustain relationships. Having good social skills doesn't mean being the life of the party, rather it's the view that relationships are important. It also factors in the ability to persuade and build consensus and bridges between people with diverse viewpoints.

People who score low on this may be lacking in some of the key social skills. The nuances of interpersonal relationships aren't obvious, and as a result, these people may not respond to social cues that others see.



Reflect on your emotional intelligence. Based on the results of your self-assessment, where are you strong? Where is there an opportunity for improvement? **Based on your reflection, write a paragraph (a minimum of 250 words or so) to summarize the results of your emotional intelligence assessment.** It's important to remember that we all have areas of our emotional intelligence that we could improve upon. Here's a sample:

You Can't Find the Whole YOU Without First Knowing Yourself Today

After high school, Tyler followed the crowd to university. A year in, he dropped out, realizing it wasn't a good fit for him. In hindsight, Tyler noticed he had failed to even consider an alternative path other than post-secondary straight after high school. In that moment of self-reflection, he understood the importance of getting to know himself today before he could plan for himself in the future.

A natural salesman, Tyler excelled in the workforce. On the job, he was cognizant of building on his strengths while shoring up his weaknesses. His ongoing self-reflection led him back to school in pursuit of higher achievement after eight years spent working. Tyler's self-awareness was an asset as a mature student. He was talented academically, and his time working allowed him to recognize the best lessons in life are not always in a classroom. His work experience also taught him that the hours in a day were limited, so he had to ensure everything he did in and outside of the classroom contributed to a purpose. He joined clubs and on-campus activities, always with a goal. Tyler soon found the academic label for this self-awareness-emotional intelligence.

Tyler's Tip: Reflection allows you to get to know yourself. Self-awareness helps find the Whole YOU.

My Emotional Intelligence

The emotional intelligence assessment placed me incredibly high on personal motivation. This quality seems to ring true from my childhood onward, and continues to drive me today as a student and as a professional. When I add in my high optimism, I feel like I can do anything!

As I had suspected, there is a lot of room for improvement in my self-awareness. Interestingly, I seem to exhibit polar opposite scoring on empathy. It seems that I understand other people's emotions much better than my own. There could be an opportunity for me to reflect on how I go about understanding and communicating with others in order to better understand myself.

— EXPLORING WHAT YOU CAN DO —

KNOWING VS. DOING

You have now begun to explore your personality and your emotional intelligence. These are both tough concepts, but they're critical to understanding the Current YOU.

Now, we're going to change gears a little and explore what you can do.

As a starting point, it's important to differentiate "knowing" vs. "doing."¹² To do so, we first need to nail down a few definitions: information, knowledge and skills.

Let's start with **information**. Information is raw. It's facts about a person, place or thing. It's the stuff that fills most textbooks. Google's mission is to organize the world's information. Information is important, but it's not unique. Everyone has access to the same raw information. As a result, information in the age of Google is a commodity. What's valuable is what you do with this information. This is knowledge.

Knowledge is when raw information is applied to a specific context and used to solve a problem. For example, your history class taught you the American Constitution was designed to ensure power was not concentrated in a single person or group because of the risk of abuse of power. This is the raw information and everyone can access it. Knowledge is your ability to recognize that the raw information about the U.S. Constitution is worth considering when designing your new student council constitution. Your knowledge enables you to propose that your student constitution should separate the powers between the president and the elected council to offer a system of checks and balances to ensure accountability.

Knowledge has its limitations because it's conceptual. Knowing this is a good idea is one thing, but building consensus amongst 50 other members of your student council is another. That takes skill.

A **skill** is about building on your knowledge to solve a real-life problem. If knowledge is about "knowing," a skill is about "doing." For example, "knowing" how a person can ride a bike is very different than having the skill to actually ride a bike.

To succeed in implementing your student council idea, you need the skills to persuade the majority of council (and school administration) that your idea should be approved. This requires you to be both very well organized and have excellent communication skills. It's this "doing" that results in evidence of a skill and has the potential to be unique.

This combination of information, knowledge and skills is critical to designing you. Most formal education focuses heavily on teaching information and knowledge, but not much on skills. Imagine three different people interviewing for a job. The first rhymes off the facts about the Constitution. The second talks about the idea she had to mimic the U.S. Constitution in her school. The third describes in detail how she inspired and worked with 50 students and administrators to adopt the new idea of a multi-branch student government in their school. Guess who has a higher chance of getting the job?

THE BIG FIVE SKILLS

At the highest level, there are two types of skills: transferable and contextual skills.

Transferable skills, such as communication skills, are valuable because you can bring them into different situations—from the classroom to your job to your volunteer work. The ability to be a good listener, a good public speaker or a good writer can be leveraged in various contexts.

In contrast, some skills are applicable in one single context. They're the skills you develop for a specific task or specific job. For example, being a computer programmer is a valuable skill—when you need to do computer programming. On the other hand, computer programming won't transfer (or be valuable) for a summer job cutting grass. (But don't worry, computer programmers: There are indeed underlying transferable skills within that job, like an understanding of logic.)

Fortunately, there's a lot of research into which skills are most valued by employers. We did some research to better understand what skills employers look for specifically when hiring new graduates.¹³ Our results

were very consistent. From those results, we found there are the big five skills:

Adaptability as a Core Skill

Marina's interest in travel, languages and politics was sparked at age nine when her family immigrated to Canada from Brazil. From that young age, Marina dreamed of a career in foreign services.

Marina moved to France at age 18 to develop her language skills. The experience abroad helped her French and taught her independence at the same time.

At university Marina studied international development and global affairs with a goal of pursuing her dream career in politics and the foreign service. But, in the midst of an extended government hiring freeze, she was forced to adapt her career aspirations. Today, Marina works for a global communications consultancy and engages clients and projects from all over the world. Though she's not in politics, she's still leveraging her love of languages and other cultures. This role has allowed Marina to move back to her hometown, where she can be close to family.

Marina's Tip: The number one goal of a plan should be developing the skills to execute your plan.

1. Thinking skills
2. Communication skills
3. Organizational skills
4. Interpersonal skills
5. Task-specific skills

The first four skills are transferable skills and are highly valued by employers. In fact, these skills are the dominant focus for most employers. They're valuable because they're used in so many different situations and they're hard to teach (especially in a short period of time). Employers want evidence that someone they hire has a strong foundation of the most important skills. From there, employees can refine and improve those skills on the job.

If the first four transferable skills are highly valued by employers, where does that leave task-specific skills? Does it mean that I don't need to focus on tasks like computer programming, accounting or Computer Aided Design (CAD)? Of course not. An accounting firm wants you to have accounting skills. An architecture firm values CAD skills. These task-specific skills are the types of skills that colleges and universities are good at making sure you possess. They offer entire programs designed to give you task-specific skills. These skills form the vertical base of what is known as the **T-shaped YOU**. You need to have depth in some task-specific skills to offer specific value to an employer. But, ultimately, it's the thinking, communication, organizational and interpersonal skills which form the top of the "T," that make you valuable and unique.

While a degree in engineering/medicine/social work confirms that you have the task-specific skills of an engineer/doctor/social worker, how do you prove that you have exceptional thinking, communication, interpersonal and organizational skills? These skills are often developed both inside and outside the classroom. You use them in your part-time job, you use them in your club and you use them in your volunteer activities. It's critical to be able to provide evidence of your transferable skills. Don't just tell me, show me. We dedicate a later chapter to the role of evidence and storytelling.

THINKING SKILLS

Thinking skills allow you to analyze and connect the dots to solve problems big or small. Applying thinking skills to real-world situations—not just essays and exams—is key to proving your value.

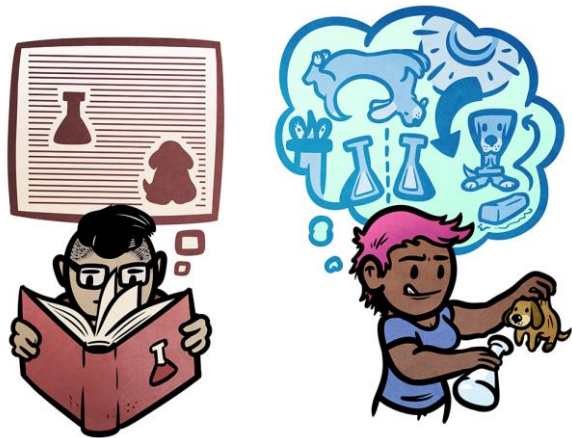
Thinking skills allow you to consider the past, present and future all at once and to come up with new ideas to make decisions. Employers value this problem-solving ability because they're constantly faced with challenging problems and they want to hire people to solve them. Most of these problems go beyond the obvious, otherwise the solution would already be automated. For example, digital spreadsheets, such as Microsoft Excel, eliminated the need to have people with the task-specific skill of adding up numbers. But when it comes to figuring out which numbers to put in the spreadsheet, you need thinking skills. Your ability to consider evidence and apply it to a problem is a transferable skill. You need these thinking skills for everything you do and can apply them differently in different jobs.

Employers use education as a proxy or estimate for a minimum level of thinking skills. The challenge for you is that more than 250,000 Canadians and 2.75 million Americans graduate each year with a university degree (plus six million in China!). How do you show you have better thinking skills than everyone else with the same degree? Your grade point average (GPA) does this a bit. A GPA is evidence you've acquired a certain level of knowledge, but it doesn't say anything about whether you can apply it.

Many students have a singular focus on high grades. Ironically, that can block them from the experience they need to apply their studiously honed thinking skills. Let's consider the fictional students Anton and Akeylah.

Anton is a 3.9 GPA student (4.0 being the maximum) in her four-year degree. From a young age, he had an aptitude to do well in the classroom. As he got older, he perfected this aptitude for exams and assignments through his dedication to hard work. His parents also encouraged his studies. He doesn't have a part-time job and isn't a member of any clubs—those are just a distraction. Anton's best evidence of his thinking skills is his numerous scholarships and four straight years of being on the honour roll. Employers (and graduate schools) are impressed by these achievements but he lacks any proof that he can apply his thinking skills to solve real problems.

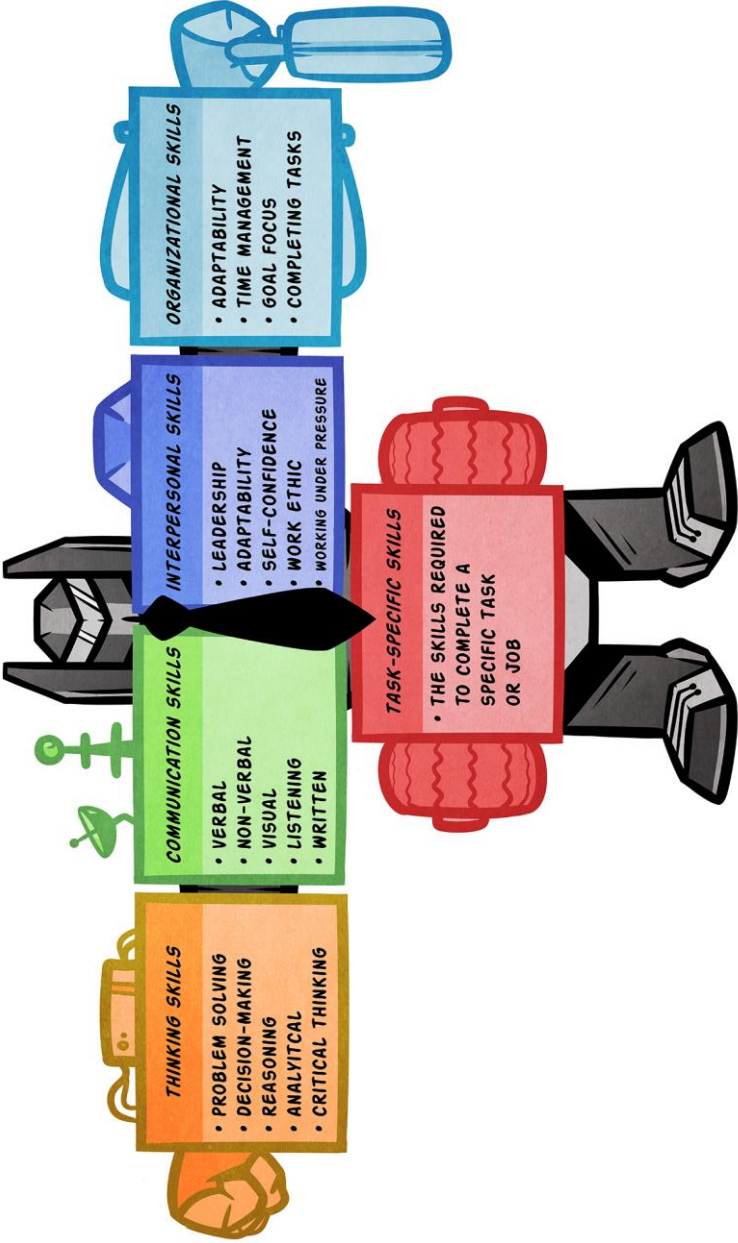
Anton's limitations become clear when we compare him to Akeylah. Akeylah is a 3.5 GPA student. She's proud of her academic performance, but even more proud of her ability to balance her studies with her other commitments. Akeylah is the president of a nationally recognized student entrepreneur club. She also led two major fundraising projects that raised over \$30,000 for military families by selling T-shirts emblazoned with



“My Mom/Dad/Son/Daughter is protecting our country and all I got is this lousy t-shirt.” Akeylah offers excellent evidence that she not only has thinking skills but also can apply those skills to solve problems and make a difference in the world. For many employers (and a growing number of graduate schools), Akeylah is the much more appealing candidate.

Now, the core message here is not to tank your grades. Just remember the importance of balance and the limited role your grades play in offering evidence of thinking skills beyond a classroom. There's no question if Akeylah had a 2.6 GPA she'd be a much less appealing candidate. However, Anton might be a much stronger candidate if he maintained a 3.5 GPA while offering real evidence that he can mobilize his thinking skills through work and volunteer experience.

T-SHAPED YOU



COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Good communication is the ability to effectively transfer information to others. They include verbal, non-verbal, visual, listening and written communication.

Verbal skills include public speaking; non-verbal communication skills include body language, gestures and tone. Visual communication includes the skill to effectively use visual mediums ranging from video to graphs and charts.

Listening skills are the ultimate kindergarten skill, and in our own research it was the top skill valued by employers.¹⁴ On the surface, listening is the simple ability to process verbal information, but the challenge lies in offering evidence that you possess this skill.

Finally, written communication skills are critical regardless of the medium and it's an area of increasing concern by employers. Over the past two decades, with the shift to social media, email and blogs, educators and employers have seen a decline in written communication skills as basic punctuation and grammar are compromised for speed.¹⁵ The key is to practice like you play. If 98 per cent of your "practice" is text messages and Facebook, it can be a struggle to elevate your writing to the professional realm when it's time to create a client presentation. If you can master communication skills, you'll have a huge advantage over your peers.

Education is a Lifelong Pursuit

Raised by a family of entrepreneurs, Dana always thought she wanted to own her own business. She also knew she wanted to travel the world and find a career that allowed her to do so. With those goals in mind, Dana enrolled in a business degree with an eye on her future.

Through her degree, her passion shifted from entrepreneurship to learning. Even three years after graduating, Dana continues to take additional courses. In fact, not one semester has gone by since her graduation without her taking at least one class, embracing the opportunity to fill gaps in her knowledge from graphic design to computer programming.

Her continuing education opened doors in her professional life. Computers aren't in her job description, but she can solve problems herself when IT staff are unavailable. Her diversity of skills has made her an invaluable employee. When her position was cut due to a recession, Dana's adaptability allowed her to stay with her organization in a new role.

Recently, Dana's partner was transferred to Europe to play professional hockey. Although she knew she would be challenged with cultural and language gaps, Dana's diverse skillset, curiosity and love for learning will help her to find employment and adapt to a new culture, while she fulfills her travel goals.

Dana's Tip: Continue to learn and grow throughout your entire life.

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

Being organized is about being efficient; it's about being able to accomplish a task with the minimum use of time and money. It's about minimizing risk and increasing the probability of success thanks to skills such as time management, goal-focus, attention to detail and the ability to adapt when things change (and they always do). Organizational skills are critical because

without them you'll inevitably waste both time and money doing things that aren't very relevant to achieving the larger goals.

We see students all the time who have the thinking and interpersonal skills to be very successful, but their lack of organization can transform a potential "A" into a "D" and along the way alienate and frustrate others with their inefficiencies. Think back on any team project where someone said they'd do something and they didn't deliver. The result? Probably some passive-aggressive emails while the entire team is in crisis mode because of one person. Usually, this breakdown isn't caused by a lack of basic thinking skills, more often it's caused by poor time management and planning.

By the way, having awesome organizational skills isn't an excuse for not being curious. Being organized is about finding time to embed intentional curiosity into your life.

It's about understanding that the time and energy committed to joining a club, taking a new class or volunteering is part of a larger plan to explore and build your knowledge. We've seen many students who apply their organizational skills to the exclusive goal of graduating in four years with high grades and end up compromising the bigger picture. They didn't make any time to explore and build additional skills and don't realize until after graduation that they should've been more engaged in their community, joined school clubs or done a co-op program to gain work experience. So if you have strong organizational skills, be careful which goals you choose to organize your life around.

Zig-Zagging with a Purpose

After moving to North America from Colombia at 15, Jorge was the only member of his family to speak English and had to grow up quickly as an integral member of the family. He moved around North America frequently and learned that to be successful, he needed to adapt fast to new cultures and languages and pick up new job skills. Jorge found himself on several career paths early on, from information technology (IT) to carpentry to retail. This early career zig-zagging was not an accident, rather, it was driven by a commitment to develop a diverse skillset that would allow him to adapt to whatever his future may hold.

After a decade of working and learning in different jobs and fields, Jorge decided it was time to transfer his real-world education to a classroom. Today Jorge is working towards his degree in computer information systems while also working as an IT consultant. His time in the workforce has taught him that education comes in many forms and by embracing this, he developed a diverse skillset that allows him to adapt when new opportunities come his way.

Jorge's Tip: "What you know" is defined by "what you do," so pursue your personal growth with a purpose every day inside and outside of the classroom.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

There are few things in life that you'll do that don't involve people. Interpersonal skills provide the ability to work with others (one-on-one or in groups) to achieve an end goal.

Think of it this way: Interpersonal skills are the application of other skills in a social context. For example, working effectively on a project team requires strong communication, organizational and thinking skills. The ability to tap into these skills while working with others is often the difference to success.

Research shows that people with strong interpersonal skills also have a high level of emotional intelligence, as they're able to anticipate and manage interpersonal dynamics. For example, Tony, Gwynne and Lee are trying to get an "A" on their class group project, but it's not going so well. Tony's strong emotional intelligence allows him to feel the tension rising between Gwynne and Lee. If the tension hits a boiling point it could totally derail their project. Using his effective interpersonal skills, Tony can talk one-on-one with both Gwynne and Lee and isolate the personal issues that are causing the tension. He is then able to maturely deal with the issues and persuade Gwynne and Lee to focus on the greater goals of the team.

TASK-SPECIFIC SKILLS

The fifth skill is associated with the super-specific tasks that you can do. As opposed to the previous four skills, task-specific skills aren't directly transferable. The value associated with task-specific skills is your ability to do something well. Pilots, pilot. Welders, weld. Programmers, program.

Some task-specific skills are innate; some of us are born to be better hockey players than others. Mostly, however, these are learned skills. Many of us can learn to cook or learn to code, but that doesn't mean we will. That's where personality and interests come to play.

The value of task-specific skills depends on the task and the job. Some jobs require specific skills. This is why they'll ask you for evidence that you have them. Evidence may be in the form of a piece of paper, such as a certification that you have the skills to be a welder or a brain surgeon. Others require proof of previous work experience. This is all simply code for "we need someone who can offer evidence they have done this task in past."



KNOWING VS. DOING VS. STUDYING

Career path discussions inevitably lead to the question, "what should I study at school?" This is a really important question that *Designing YOU* will help answer.

Formal education is one of the greatest tools ever invented to stimulate curiosity. As you learned in Step 1, colleges and universities offer courses on almost anything you can think of. The experts who teach those courses are typically passionate about both the topic and the success of students in their field.

Some post-secondary programs may narrow your path because you have to specialize early on in your education. If you're certain you want to be an engineer or a nurse, you are fortunate to have clearly defined degree programs. But few students are certain of their destination as they start their post-secondary education. Go explore and don't feel pressured to commit to a specialized path until you're ready. Take that political philosophy class, that class on marine biology, the class on comic books or music history. You'll like some and dislike others, but by "playing the field" you'll open your world and start to narrow it down at the same time. Remember, exploring different paths and zig-zagging is part of designing you. So take the time to explore.

Taking a variety of courses in your first year or two of post-secondary can actually save you money in the long run. School is not cheap. Before you invest in a specialization, you want to ensure it fits into your plan.

The role of formal education in life is evolving. Someone who is 18 today could live to be 120 and have a 60-year career.¹⁶ Do you think the knowledge you acquire when you're 20 will still be totally relevant when you are 80? Post-secondary education is no longer a single stage early in your life. You will likely return repeatedly to enhance and diversify your knowledge and skills over a lifetime. This lifelong engagement could involve taking a single course occasionally, completing a more involved certificate or even taking one or more graduate degrees.

The "what should I study?" question brings us to the heart of the T-shaped YOU: "**Should I specialize in an area that provides task-based skills or one that provides transferable skills?**" The good news is that regardless of your program choice, you will be enhancing your knowledge and skills. Some degrees, such as engineering, nursing and business, may spend more time on task-based skills while other programs like science, arts, and the humanities may focus more on developing generalist, transferable skills. All education is important to developing the T-shaped YOU. Be conscious of what skills you are developing, so that you can fill any gaps in your formal education through summer jobs, community activities, sports or other components of the whole you. If you worry that there's only one path to a specific

From English Literature to Organic Farming

As a child, Heather loved reading and writing. In fact, she loved it so much she completed a master's degree in English literature. When she graduated, Heather was offered an amazing opportunity to develop a family property into an organic farm. It was a long way from English literature but she embraced the opportunity, rolled up her sleeves and got dirty learning to be a farmer.

But just because she was now a farmer, didn't mean her passion for writing disappeared. In fact, one reason Heather found the transition to farming difficult was because there wasn't a "How To" manual for organic farming. She saw this gap as a big barrier for others joining the organic movement. So she tapped her writing skills and with two colleagues authored a bestselling book on organic farming. In doing so, Heather connected two not so obvious parts of her Whole YOU – her formal education and farming.

Heather's Tip: Study what you love. If you do, it will always be a resource for your Whole YOU.

career, look at the diversity of real people's stories in this book as examples of where different degrees could take you.

Heather studied English literature and became a farmer and an author. Jim studied outdoor education and became a project manager. Chris and Stefan studied science and became entrepreneurs. So the real question to ask is, **“what is the goal of your formal education?”** As you get further into *Designing YOU*, you will start to better identify your goals and the role that formal education can play in achieving them.

If you are questioning whether your chosen field of study is still right for you, explore your options to change paths. Your school will be able to help you navigate such a change. You might be surprised at how easy it is to shift to a new program area. And take comfort in the fact that you are not alone. Between 50-70 per cent of students will change their major at least once, and many will change at least three times before they graduate.¹⁷ If you're worried that it will be hard to change, consider how hard (and costly) it will be to stick to a path you know is wrong for you.

ASSESSING WHAT YOU CAN DO



It's time to identify your strengths in each of the big five skills and provide evidence to back it up. Replicate the following table in your journal and use it to list all the skills you currently have under the respective header. Come up with at least three skills for each heading. The most important part of this exercise is to list the evidence of each skill. That evidence may be in the form of a certificate or associated work experience; it's the proof that you can do what you say you can do.

For example, Cindy contends that she has excellent leadership skills (part of interpersonal skills). Her evidence is that she was head bartender at the university pub with six staff reporting to her and experienced no staff turnover. Marco believes he has excellent written communication skills. He has strong evidence of this since he publishes a popular blog for students at his university.

“BETWEEN 50-70 PER CENT OF STUDENTS WILL CHANGE THEIR MAJOR AT LEAST ONCE, AND MANY WILL CHANGE AT LEAST THREE TIMES BEFORE THEY GRADUATE.”

The goal of this reflection is to ensure you have captured a full inventory of your current skills. We find most young adults get hung up on their job title and don't recognize their skills that are regularly on display. Based on the example of Cindy, this is why most resumes only list the job of a bartender, rather than the fact that this job is evidence of very specific, valuable skills (e.g. leadership).

Remember, as this is part of the Current YOU, ensure you capture only the skills you currently have, not the skills you aspire to have or wish to develop. There will be an opportunity to

consider the future later. This self-assessment is also an introduction to the importance of **evidence-based** storytelling (which we dedicate Step 7 to).

TO INTERN OR NOT TO INTERN - THERE IS NO QUESTION



1,000,000
NUMBER OF
INTERNSHIPS OFFERED
IN U.S. ANNUALLY



50%
GRADUATES IN THE U.S.
THAT COMPLETED AT LEAST
ONE INTERNSHIP



80%
OF CANADIAN EMPLOYERS CONSIDER
CO-OP OR INTERNSHIP STUDENTS AS A
SOURCE OF NEW TALENT

JOB OFFERS TO GRADUATES WHO DID
OR DID NOT COMPLETE A PAID INTERNSHIP

35%
TO THOSE
WHO DID NOT



63%
TO THOSE
WHO DID



STARTING SALARY IN U.S. FOR GRADUATES WHO
DID OR DID NOT COMPLETE A PAID INTERNSHIP

\$36k
FOR THOSE
WHO DID NOT



\$52k
FOR THOSE
WHO DID



Infographic note: 18

Your Current YOU skills	Your evidence
Thinking skills (3)	
Sample: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Problem solving ○ Decision-making ○ Reasoning ○ Analytical 	
Communication skills (3)	
Sample: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Verbal ○ Non-verbal ○ Visual ○ Listening ○ Written 	
Interpersonal skills (3)	
Sample: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leadership ○ Adaptability ○ Self-confidence ○ Working under pressure ○ Strong work ethic 	
Organizational skills (3)	
Sample: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Time-management ○ Goal-setting ○ Multi-tasking ○ Budget management ○ Project management 	
Task-Specific skills (3)	
The skills required to complete a specific task or job.	

REFLECTING ON KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS



Again, it's important to reflect on the results of your self-assessment of your knowledge and skills. Referring to the table you just created, reflect on both the knowledge and skills you currently possess; also reflect on the evidence that you have to demonstrate these knowledge and skills. **Record a short description of your knowledge and skills in your journal.**

Once you have completed this, review it with family, friends and any current mentor you may have.

GENDER AND THE CURRENT YOU



When evaluating your traits in the personality assessment in this step, consider comparing yourself as much as possible to others of the same gender and roughly the same age. Personality testing across large populations does show some differences between men and women, although individuals can and do vary from statistical norms.

The self-assessment on emotional intelligence (EI) is also super important. Broadly speaking, women tend to have higher emotional intelligence than men do, although again, this is based on general differences—any individual man can have a stronger EI than any individual woman. As well, EI is complicated. While women are typically stronger than men in empathy—leading to the **tend and befriend** instinct that is regarded as something that women do naturally—men tend to be better at compartmentalizing emotions and setting them aside in order to focus on problem-solving.¹⁹

Higher emotional intelligence may explain why, generally speaking, women prove to be more effective leaders in corporate settings than men.²⁰ **Take the EI test in Step 2 seriously, and work on your EI regardless of your gender.**²¹ If you're male, be aware of the statistics around EI and work to become an exception to the rule.

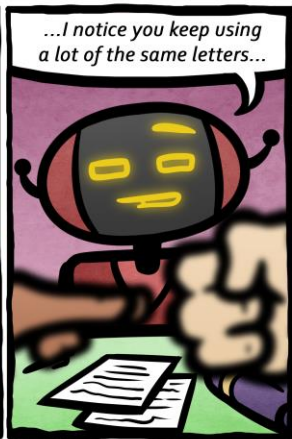
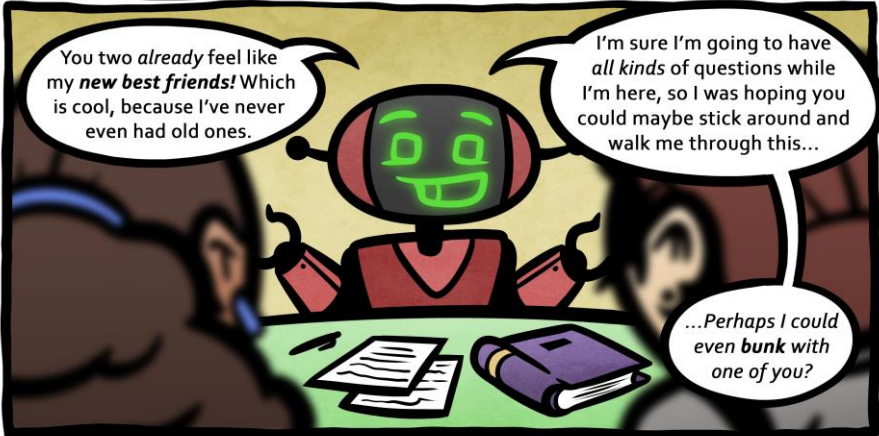
Step 2 also asks you to assess your skillset, including the “big five skills.” When completing this assessment, and when applying for jobs, you need to be aware of **imposter syndrome**, particularly if you're female. This psychological challenge—of feeling like we're not good enough and we've fluked into our successes—is explored fully in a chapter of *Lean In*. Research shows that women are far more likely than men to lack professional self-confidence and to downplay their professional skills. Be aware of this and don't sell yourself short.²²

If you're male, be aware of the risks of overconfidence. Just as a woman will tend to look at a job description, notice one or two qualifications that she does not possess, and decide that she cannot apply, a man with a similar skillset will look at the same job description and declare himself fully or even overqualified.²³ Self-awareness is equally important for all genders, and something that takes many years to develop.

AT A GLANCE

1. The first step as product manager is to understand the state of your current product—the Current YOU. To do this you were required to dig into the following areas:
 - a. Your personality
 - b. Your emotional intelligence
 - c. Your skills
2. This process required you to complete a concise reflection about your personality, emotional intelligence and skills. Together, this defines your Current YOU.
3. Gender identity influences how you evaluate yourself. These are deeply rooted so it is important to reflect on this.

Next, you will form your design team. Only then can you get on to the process of *Designing YOU*.



STEP THREE

BUILDING YOUR DESIGN TEAM



“A KEY CHARACTERISTIC OF A GREAT PRODUCT MANAGER IS THE RECOGNITION THAT YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT YOU DON’T KNOW. THIS REALITY CHECK SHOULD BE INSPIRING, NOT FRUSTRATING —“IF I DON’T KNOW IT ALL, WHO DO I KNOW THAT DOES?” AS A PRODUCT MANAGER THE ANSWER IS YOUR DESIGN TEAM.”

WHY DESIGNING YOU IS A TEAM EFFORT

As product manager you don't need to know it all but you do need to take insight from a well-assembled team of experts. For example, there's likely a product manager somewhere responsible for designing the next generation of taximeters to better track and record the cost of a cab ride. The obvious members of their design team are owners of taxi companies, taxi drivers and experts in the design of the previous taximeters. There is no doubt that team could design a much better meter than the last one. But what if their team also consists of an Uber driver, an Uber user and a smartphone specialist? Do you think they'd design a different product? Who you surround yourself with influences what (and whom) you design.

As they say, it's not what you know, it's who you know. Over the course of your lifetime, you'll cross paths with thousands of different people, but you'll rarely recognize the potential value of each of these relationships. We all spend 15 to 20 years in a classroom focused on developing our knowledge and spend relatively little time explicitly developing personal and professional relationships. A rule — yes, a rule — of Designing YOU is that **you won't succeed in achieving your goals alone**. It's a team effort. So you'll need to really think about who you need on the design team.

Relationships, personal or professional, are simpler than you might think. Everyone wants or needs something, and if you're able to satisfy this need better than anyone else, the other person will want to have a relationship with you. It's not very romantic, but it's true. When pursuing relationships, you need to always think about these two questions:

Reap the Rewards of Relationships

Dustin had no intention of pursuing post-secondary education after high school, setting his sights instead on entrepreneurship. But after spending a year travelling, Dustin realized university could fill holes in his professional network.

During his entrepreneurship degree, Dustin learned how to focus his business ideas through social innovation. He became heavily involved in campus culture through club leadership. Juggling his extracurricular activities alongside his studies taught Dustin the importance of discipline—a skill he uses in his professional life today.

In his final year at university, Dustin spent a great deal of his personal time attending and speaking at events. This intentional development of his professional network was a major reason why Dustin spent the next four years employed without ever having to formally apply for a position.

Dustin has a personal practice of always saying “yes” to an offer to chat over coffee. He says that's been key to leading him to where he is today. A recent cup of coffee with someone he knew back in his campus club days led to him and another local entrepreneur starting a local apparel company with a focus on community that sets them apart.

Dustin's Tip: Put yourself out there—you never know whom you're going to meet and what door will open.

1. What's in it for them; and
2. Can I satisfy their need better than others?

Let's make it personal. Let's say you need money to go buy a new laptop for school. You have a need—money. Let's then say, your next-door neighbor Jamal needs his fence painted. Your relationship with Jamal is about exchanging your time for his money. You both need something. You look at the project and decide that it'll take you a whole week to paint, and you and Jamal agree that the job is worth \$500. You have now both agreed on what the “value” of the exchange is. You now are starting to build a relationship with Jamal.

Now what if Jamal only offered you \$100 for the job? You may decide your time is worth more than that and instead pursue another part-time job to meet your immediate need. The cold hard truth is now you and Jamal have no relationship because relationships are about a simple exchange in which both sides agree they are getting something they value in return.

To be successful at building valuable relationships, you can't only think about what's in it for you, you've got to start thinking about what's in it for the other person. You can find an answer by considering what the other person values. Great product manager's focus on making the product that offers the greatest value to their customer, and if they can do that, they know they'll be in a good position to sell a lot of products. They are laser-focused on the wants, needs and value of their customers.

In our simple example of doing a painting job for Jamal, the value of the relationship was reduced to money. However, it's important to realize that depending on the relationship, other types of value might be exchanged. Time, knowledge, skills, love, the good feeling that comes with giving, introductions, experiences... All of these can be exchanged with people with whom you have a relationship.

This simple principle is important: **In relationships, nothing is free.** Relationships are always about recognizing that the other side—your mom, boss or best friend—have a relationship with you because they want or need something in return. They are always prepared to give you fair value for that something.

It's easy to take relationships for granted and it's only natural for us to think about ourselves first. Author David Foster Wallace called this self-centeredness our “natural default setting.” We're all prone to it and it's normal, but you need to intentionally focus on overriding your default setting and recognizing that all relationships are two-way streets.

RELATIONSHIPS AS A BANK ACCOUNT

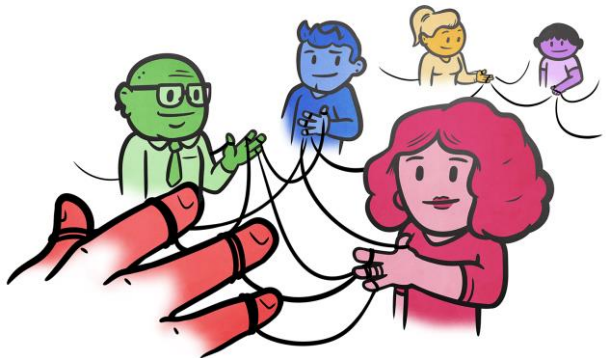
Going back to Jamal and his fence, what if you had known Jamal since you were a kid? What if Jamal was a super guy who had helped you with a school project or maybe he helped you get your first job. Would you still charge him \$500 to paint his fence? Maybe you do it for free because you feel you owe him. Relationships are like a bank account. If you keep making deposits into your relationship, it builds up a balance. But relationships are lumpy, meaning not every exchange is a simple one-to-one calculation of value because sometimes you over-contribute and other times you may under-contribute. Over time there is balance between the contributions of each person. This balance is called **social capital**.¹

The influence of this balance (positive or negative) is embedded in almost every relationship (good or bad) that you have—friends, family or professional. If a relationship is not balanced, the person who is not getting their fair value will ultimately move on. This is why you have to invest in your relationships. When you’ve built up a balance, you can draw on it when you need the help.

RELATIONSHIPS AND YOUR SOCIAL NETWORK

Relationships are often thought of as one-to-one, but actually they’re part of a giant web of connections that create your community. That web is your social network. Both your close connections and the people you are only peripherally linked to are important parts of your social network and ultimately your connection to the wider world. Your real social network of friends, family, peers and colleagues is deeper than Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat. Understanding the dynamics of your community and social network is imperative to designing you. When we think of relationships, we often focus on those closest to us. Those connections are important, but they all live in your comfort zone. And staying in your comfort zone comes with some limitations.

As we’ve discussed, people in your comfort zone have a profound effect on your identity. They largely define who you are today. However, given our human nature to conform—limiting our social network to those in our comfort zone (who look and think just like us) is the greatest barrier to exploring the vast world around us.



Dr. Mark Granovetter, a sociologist, concludes that the real influence, the real power and the real value of relationships has little to do with those in our comfort zone. In fact, it’s all about how we are able to get out of our comfort zone and connect to other circles and other communities.

“[...] LIMITING OUR SOCIAL NETWORK TO THOSE IN OUR COMFORT ZONE (WHO LOOK AND THINK JUST LIKE US) IS THE GREATEST BARRIER TO EXPLORING THE VAST WORLD AROUND US.”

Think about it this way. You live in a bunch of communities: your family, your best friends from school, your sports team, your job, your religious community. Some of these communities are deep inside your comfort zone and are the anchors of your current identity. The people in those particular communities are what Dr. Granovetter calls strong *ties*. These strong ties are people like you and people with whom you identify. They likely have similar experiences and values to you. This is your tribe. The problem is, they are just like you, and because they're just like you, they probably hang around with others just like you. Where's that going to get you?

Dr. Granovetter argues that your strong ties aren't the important ones. The important ties are what he calls weak ties. Weak ties are the other communities (and the people in them) on the periphery or outside of your comfort zone. These people come from different backgrounds, have different experiences and hang around with very different people. Dr. Granovetter says the weak ties offer the greatest value and opportunities. The weak ties challenge you and your comfort zone, and because they come from different life experiences, they view the world very differently from you. Once you can identify your weak ties (we'll do that shortly), your empathy needs to kick in. You'll reflect on why they think the way they do. When you look at the world through their lens, you'll inevitably start to realize that your version of reality is really only that—your version. This is one of the values of weak ties.²

The second important element of weak ties comes from remembering the one thing the various communities you're part of have in common: you. You connect these weak ties. The ability to connect is often valuable to not only you, but also to your weak ties. Your social network is influential and the bigger it is, the more valuable it is to you and your ties. Therefore—the more diverse communities you're involved in, the more value you create for both yourself and for others.

Find Opportunity in Monotony

Chris began university in a business and computer science double major with a dream of becoming a Silicon Valley success story. Halfway through his degree, though, he felt detached and bored by what he was doing.

To banish his boredom, Chris started some personal projects in addition to his classes. He launched a successful web magazine, a website development company and a non-profit organization. Through each of these projects, Chris did more than just keep himself busy. He was developing transferable skills—networking, researching and effective communication to name a few—that would be essential upon graduation.

But when he graduated into a tough economy, Chris did even more to get a leg up on the competition. He taught himself how to be a graphic designer and an audio/video editor. He earned himself a job in the midst of a recession and is now creative director for his own media and production company. As creative director, Chris has the freedom to work in a way that satisfies his restlessness and he surrounds himself with diverse perspectives that challenge him to grow every day.

Chris' Tip: There is no one in the world who won't have a coffee with you. The secret is the way you ask.

Perhaps you connect an acquaintance from your school drama club with your boss at work; your acquaintance got a new job. You connect your little brother's friend with the coach of your friend's soccer team; your brother's friend got a tryout. You connect a colleague from work with an acquaintance from your church; they are now super close friends. You're the connector of weak ties.

You may have heard the phrase, "six degrees of separation." This principle is that everyone on the planet is indirectly tied together. It's based on an experiment done back in the 1950s.³ The goal of the experiment was to get a letter sent from Nebraska or Kansas to a specific person in Boston. However, the challenge was that participants could only send the letter to someone they knew personally and ask them to forward it on to someone else they knew who may know the person in Boston. For example, Leticia in Kansas was given a letter to get to Carlos in Boston. She didn't know Carlos, but she knew Maria who lived in New York, which is closer to Boston, so she sent it to Maria. Maria didn't know Carlos either, but she knew her cousin Patrice who lived in Boston. Patrice didn't know Carlos, but he knew a colleague from work, Mikael, who lived in the same part of the city as Carlos. Mikael didn't know Carlos but he knew Amanda who lived on Carlos's street. Amanda received the letter and delivered it to her good friend Carlos. Carlos was five degrees separated from Leticia.

This experiment was done over and over and the answer was always the same. On average, it only took six people to get Carlos his letter. Hence, the concept of six degrees of separation was born. The conclusion: You're only six degrees from everyone else on this planet. This is also the science behind the phrase, "it's a small world."

If we're all only six degrees from everyone on the planet, our world just got a lot smaller. That means when you think about who you may want on your design team—that mentor or role model—regardless of who they are, what they do or where they live, they are probably just six degrees away. Six degrees also teaches us that the wider world even gets smaller when we expand our own world. If you're a person who can connect people, your influence and your value to others increase. People value connectors.

Plan For Life To Not Go As Planned

Growing up, Miles' whole life was all about sports. But, sensing his journey could take many twists and turns, he began university with a general business degree. Miles was right. His career pursuits were incredibly varied, changing with his whims.

He first focused on accounting, but after actually working with accountants he realized they weren't "his people."

From there, he became passionate about political activism and he looked toward the non-profit sector. Yet, after a couple of years in non-profits, Miles began feeling stagnant.

Eventually, Miles realized what he really loved was connecting with people and getting them excited about his vision. He built a team of personal and professional mentors who all emphasized the importance of building his network, and they gladly made some introductions. He attended conferences, reached out to people who interested him, and joined communities to connect with more like-minded people.

Today, he's the co-founder and managing director of a media and production house where he's once again able to express his passion for sports and entertainment.

Miles' Tip: Your network is like your personal Google. Use it to explore your options and you never know where you will end up.

EXPLORING THE VALUE OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS



We want you to map who you know and what they know. This exercise will help you recognize the value of your relationships and the best step in forming your design team.

Recreate the following table in your journal and fill it in with the results of your work. Start by brainstorming people you know. For example, it could be your mom, dad, friend, professor and boss. Start with your inner circle of close family and friends, then consider “what do they know?” and “what is their area of expertise?” It may be professional (e.g. Sandy is a zoologist) or it may be a hobby or passion (e.g. Ying likes to fix old cars).

Next, think about who they may know. It doesn’t have to be someone specific, rather it can be a role. For example, Sandy is a zoologist so she must know other zoologists, zookeepers and the management at the zoo where she works. She’s also travelled lots in her job, so she must know other people who have travelled. Similarly, Ying likes to fix old cars so he must know people to buy old cars from, other mechanics and people like him who love old cars.

Optionally, instead of using the table, you may want to map your network by using a big piece of paper or an online tool; put yourself in the middle and map out as many of your relationships as you can.⁴

Either way, this exercise isn’t about being precise; it’s about recognizing the potential untapped value and depth of your existing relationships. Once you have completed your map or table, you will use this information to start forming your design team.

The Power of Others

In his third year of university, Alex worked on a class project where the winner was awarded an internship with a children’s fashion brand—and he won it.

Alex saw the opportunity as more than just a job. In addition to his daily work, he had the chance to meet and learn from some of the most progressive minds in the company. Although it made him nervous to do so, he asked for a one-on-one coffee with a number of senior managers. These simple coffees soon evolved into deep mentoring relationships.

He was struck by these successful professionals’ desire to support him professionally and personally. Every one of his new mentors had faced similar questions and challenges to the ones he was experiencing early in their own careers.

Although he was originally uncertain of the direction he wanted to go in his career, his mentors offered guidance into the diverse facets of the industry, and they helped him determine where his professional strengths lay. They encouraged him to keep an open mind about new opportunities.

By pairing his mentor relationships with a hard work ethic, Alex was asked to return to the fashion company full-time upon graduation.

Alex’s Tip: Don’t be shy. Take that first step. Make a call. Send an email. Once you do, you’ll be able to surround yourself with a team of people who care about you both personally and professionally.

Name	What they know	Who they may know

— FORMING YOUR DESIGN TEAM —

The success of mentoring in school is hit and miss. Some universities and colleges assign mentors to all first-year students. These normally start and finish with the first cup of coffee. But mentoring is an essential part of designing you. In fact, a recent global study of millennials found 61 per cent have mentors and over 90 per cent value their advice.⁵ However, mentoring needs to be a team effort – we call this your **design team**.

Your design team is a group of trusted advisors who are in it for the long term. Everyone on your design team has a defined purpose based on what they know—their expertise. When designing a product, an engineer is on a design team for a very specific purpose, as is the team member from sales and the member from manufacturing. All these people understand their role and focus their expertise in that area. You need to build your design team with this same intentional mindset. Your team’s advice and expertise will help you explore and get beyond the obvious. This may include advice on everything from school to part-time jobs to volunteer opportunities and what clubs to join. To do this, we recommend you assign your advisors to one of four categories, with each of them playing defined roles. They include the Whole YOU Mentor, the Professional YOU Mentor, the Personal Advisor and the Real-World Experts.

“YOUR DESIGN TEAM IS A GROUP OF TRUSTED ADVISORS WHO ARE IN IT FOR THE LONG TERM. EVERYONE ON YOUR DESIGN TEAM HAS A DEFINED PURPOSE BASED ON WHAT THEY KNOW—THEIR EXPERTISE.”

DESIGN TEAM



WHOLE YOU MENTOR

A Whole YOU mentor is a trusted advisor with whom you'll have a highly personal relationship. A Whole YOU mentor is someone who is committed to coaching and supporting you for an extended period. This commitment normally involves meeting about once a month for coaching.

A mentor's relationship bridges both personal and professional themes, allowing them to provide objective and balanced advice. It's important that your mentor shares similar values and goals to you as their advice is based on their experiences and values. This person is often a role model in that they may have a similar background and have overcome obstacles to achieve their goals. They are one of the few people that get you and understand the difficult decisions you'll face.

Candidates: This is the most significant decision you'll make in the creation of your design team. It's a big decision for both you and your Whole YOU mentor. This person likely already has an extended relationship with you both personally and professionally. For example, he or she may be a work colleague or a family friend you hit it off with. It would be someone who wouldn't be surprised by this request as they are likely acting as an ad hoc mentor already. However, it's important that you choose someone whose advice and guidance you feel

comfortable accepting as part of making your own decision. For this reason, parents or people who may be too close to you personally may not be an ideal fit for this role.

PROFESSIONAL YOU MENTOR

This is your professional sponsor and someone with broad professional experience who'll open doors and provide you opportunities. It's not essential that they be from your field of interest, rather, they should have an existing relationship with you and be personally vested in you.

Their sole focus is your professional advancement. It's essential that they believe in your professional potential, as they'll be vouching for you in order to advance your professional goals.

The main difference between your Professional YOU and Whole YOU mentors is your interaction with your professional mentor is far less frequent, potentially only a few times a year, and their only concern is your professional advancement. They offer you their professional network and reputation along with their expertise in a field or industry.

Candidates: Family friend, work manager, teacher or professor.

PERSONAL ADVISOR

A personal advisor is typically a close family member or a friend. They're in your comfort zone and understand where you've come from and where you want to go. They're your personal and emotional sounding board and they're around through the inevitable ups and downs of designing you. Your personal advisor is your emotional rock. Just remember they're not your professional mentor; it's unlikely they'll possess the required expertise in your field.

Candidates: Family and friends.

Mentors Matter

Driven by the need to constantly challenge himself, 18-year-old Ben decided to work a new job every single month. That unorthodox choice led him to work in a variety of industries including retail, engineering and hospitality. Each new job needed new skills and he was able to develop a diverse set of skills that would prove to be useful in the years to come.

Ben later pursued a major in marketing and minor in entrepreneurship, driven by an interest in social innovation. In his third year at university, Ben was persuaded by a professor to attend a networking breakfast. There, he met a mentor who totally altered his professional path.

Ben's mentor helped him figure out who he was, what he wanted to do with his life and what kind of career he wanted. Together, Ben and his mentor developed an extremely detailed strategy to achieve Ben's goal of gaining a position at one of the top management consulting firms in the world.

Only months after graduation, thanks to the hard work he and his mentor had invested, Ben found himself with a position at his dream company. Over the past three years with the company, Ben has relied on a blend of his formal education and the transferable skills he developed in his month-long jobs prior to university, allowing him to rise within the organization.

Ben's Tip: Networking is not about getting a job—it's about genuinely getting to know and learn from the other person.

REAL-WORLD EXPERTS

Real-world experts are short-term members of your design team and are essential to exploring what's out there for you.

Real-world expertise comes from people who have lived through an experience that you want to have, and they've already got the failures and successes to prove it. If, for example, a product manager wanted to expand their product into the Chinese market, he or she would need some very specific expertise for a short period of time to offer insight on how to launch in China.

For designing you, real-world expertise is about engaging a broad and diverse range of people for a discussion on their area of expertise. These interviews may be related to better understanding the specific dynamics of an industry (e.g. fashion); or it may be related to better understanding a specific job (e.g. journalist); or it may be related to exploring the dynamics of company size and scope (e.g. what's the difference between working for a big global company compared to local start-up).

Candidates: Extended network, people outside of your own personal and professional network.

SELECTING YOUR DESIGN TEAM



Now that we've established everyone's roles, the next question is who do you want on your design team?

Replicate the following table in your journal to narrow down candidates for your design team, referring to the network you mapped out in an earlier exercise. It doesn't matter if you know them directly at this stage. The key is building and refining this preliminary list of candidates. The Whole YOU Mentor and Personal Advisor will likely be from your existing networks. Some of the other candidates will emerge as you progress through the rest of the book.

Name	Relationship to you	What they know	Design team role

GENDER AND YOUR DESIGN TEAM



In this step, you were asked to put together a team of advisors to help in designing you. Given the realities of gender bias, the difference in emotional intelligence between women and men, and the imposter syndrome, it should not come as a surprise that we strongly recommend making sure that your design team is gender-balanced. Getting the input of other genders is important to overcoming your own gender biases.

That said, you will likely want at least one of the three key positions, your Whole YOU mentor, Professional YOU mentor, and personal advisor, to be your own gender. For women in male-dominated fields in particular, you may feel the need for a female mentor who has worked in a male-dominated field; this will allow you to talk through some of the experiences unique to this situation. Most important, however, is having gender diversity in those three key positions.

AT A GLANCE

1. Designing you is a team effort. The first step is to know what you don't know. Only then will you recognize how much others know.
2. You explored the untapped value of your relationships—what and who they know.
3. You have started the process of building your design team. This is a critical stage of designing you; so ensure that your team reflects diverse perspectives and backgrounds.

Next, you will start to use your design team and they will support you as you explore what you love to do, what you are good at and what you can make a living at. This is the Professional YOU.



Gah! I'm just not enjoying **any** of my classes...

None of them?



Well, *maybe* the one where you get to sit in the large hall with meal vendors all around.

Yeah... lunch is my favourite too.



I just don't feel like any of this stuff is sticking to me. I mean, I'm *interested* by it, but I'm really not **good** at any of it.



That can't be true. What's one thing you **know** you're good at?

Reflecting.

Oh, nice! That's a great skill to have.



No, I mean...

Oh.



Well one thing you **definitely** did right was make this omelette.

Really?

Once I dug the bits of shell out, *yeah!*



Then... maybe I should try and become a **chef!**?

But, you... you don't eat.

How can you know anything about food if you don't **eat**?

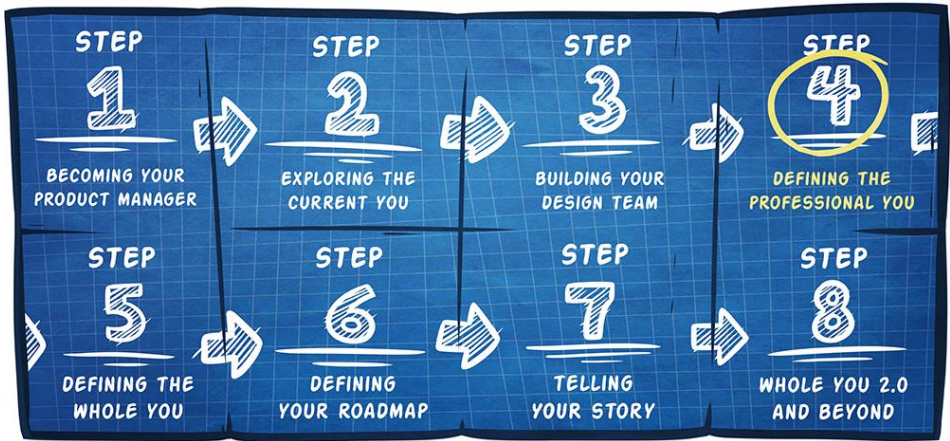


The same way you can yell at hockey players on the television for missing a goal.

...Good point, and well made...

STEP FOUR

DEFINING THE PROFESSIONAL YOU



Back in Step 2, your focus was on exploring the Current YOU and specifically assessing your personality, your emotional intelligence and evidence of your skills. In Step 4, we focus on developing what you love to do and what you can earn a living doing. By the end of this step, you will have combined the Current YOU from Step 2 with the things you love to do that could make you a living to define the **Professional YOU**.

Defining the Professional YOU is the most difficult part of the design process. At this point, you're gazing into a crystal ball and envisioning your future. It's a lot of pressure, but you won't be alone. Figuring out the Professional YOU will require digging for information and talking to people about the future. Step 4 can't be rushed, so go slow and expect this part to take weeks or months to complete. And be prepared: There's a good chance that you'll think you've got it all figured out, only to realize during Step 5 that you don't like the version of the Whole YOU that you envisioned. In that case, you'll return here to Step 4. That's OK. It's part of being a great product manager. In fact, great product managers know that things like customer needs and competition are dynamic. Product managers are constantly reaffirming that their vision for their product is the right one. With that in mind, it's important for them (and you) to never blindly fall in love with an idea. As a rule, always be prepared to adapt when the evidence tells you it's time.

“GREAT PRODUCT MANAGERS KNOW THAT THINGS LIKE CUSTOMER NEEDS AND COMPETITION ARE DYNAMIC. PRODUCT MANAGERS ARE CONSTANTLY REAFFIRMING THAT THEIR VISION FOR THEIR PRODUCT IS THE RIGHT ONE.”

Great product managers are constantly hunting for new products that meet three criteria:

1. Do we have the capability to develop this product today? If not, can we acquire the capabilities?
2. Does this new product excite us?
3. Will someone pay us for this new product?

Let’s use LEGO as an example of how product managers apply these criteria. LEGO started out in 1949 as a small Danish company making plastic building blocks. Today, try finding someone who’s never heard of LEGO. LEGO defines its vision as “Inventing the future of play.” For this reason, its core product remains plastic building blocks, but the LEGO brand now includes an endless number of themed building sets (e.g. LEGO Star Wars), theme parks, movies and video games.



If you reflect on the criteria above, you can see why LEGO's product management team made a decision to expand into movies. They could acquire the capabilities (by collaborating with Warner Bros. and others), it excited them, and they predicted people would pay for it (if they did it well). These criteria are also why you don't see LEGO kitchen appliances or LEGO power tools.

Let's apply similar criteria to designing you. **The Professional YOU is the intersection of three elements: (1) what you're good at, (2) what you love to do and (3) what you can make a living doing.**

Notice the parallels between the criteria LEGO would have used and the criteria we're using to design you:

1. Do we have the capability to develop this product today? If not, can we acquire the capabilities? (What you are good at?)
2. Does this new product excite us? (What do you love to do?)
3. Will someone pay us for this new product? (What can you make a living doing?)



SO, WHO DO I WANT TO DESIGN?

WHAT DO YOU LOVE TO DO?

You've probably been told more than once that you "need to find your passion." Most people find the prospect of "loving" what they do pretty daunting; but, the truth is, there are few things you'll do in life where you can say it was love at first sight. In other words, you need to be interested in something before you can love it. This is why exploring your interests is such a critical part of designing you.

Sometimes your interests have an obvious implication on your career choice (e.g., computer programming), but often the benefits aren't so clear. For example, you may love to sketch or enjoy climbing mountains. Don't discount these interests because they don't have a direct line into a career; they can offer some indirect inspiration. Remember: Steve Jobs had an early interest in calligraphy that contributed to his passion for impeccable design. A big part of intentional curiosity is about seeking out experiences so you can decide what you may or may not like to do. So, keep sketching and climbing.

The other parts of yourself that you identified while compiling the Current YOU may also influence what you love to do. For example, your personality and empathy may contribute to your desire to help other people, which may lead to a professional interest in counseling. Or, as shown by research conducted by Oxford University and the organization 80,000 Hours, doing work to help others may help you in finding your purpose and passion.¹

Follow Your Heart

Jenn had always loved photography, so when she was done high school, she was ready to pursue a visual arts education. Although supportive of her passion, Jenn's parents were wary about a long-term career in photography. Instead of jumping straight into an education, Jenn instead spent a year working and then backpacking across Australia.

By the time she returned from her travels, Jenn had decided to get a degree in an area that would offer her the best shot at a stable career. She went into accounting.

Halfway through her program, Jenn realized that she simply wasn't passionate about accounting; however, she was also taking an entrepreneurship class at the time. In her entrepreneurship course, she saw how her talent for photography didn't need to be limited to a hobby. She decided to switch her major to entrepreneurship and used that training to eventually start her own business. Today, Jenn owns her photography business while simultaneously working professionally supporting other entrepreneurs.

Jenn's Tip: You don't know what you love to do unless you tried it. Go challenge yourself; push your boundaries to discover what you may love.



The following exercise lets you reflect on what you really like to do. What follows is a broad list of interests and activities. Some may have an obvious link to a profession, while others may not. For example, do you love to read or do adventure sports? Maybe you have a passion for both? There's no wrong answer. Only you know what your real interests are. For each attribute below, score yourself on a scale of 1 to 5, with a 1 being "No Way" and 5 being "Love It."²

1		2		3		4		5			
No way		Likely not		Maybe		Interested		Love it			
Cluster 1 ___ Make important things happen ___ Lead other people ___ Sell my ideas ___ Organize a political campaign ___ Plan an advertising campaign ___ Debate topics in a public meeting ___ Persuade others to change their views ___ Make decisions that affect a lot of people		Cluster 2 ___ Plan budgets ___ Supervise the work of others ___ Manage projects ___ Establish time schedules ___ Monitor business expenses ___ Organize events ___ Have my calendar well-organized ___ Keep detailed records		Cluster 3 ___ Help others learn new ideas ___ Care for others ___ Help others ___ Counsel people who need help ___ Support others whenever asked ___ Provide comfort and support to others ___ Participate in charity events ___ Help people make career decisions		Total		Total		Total	
Cluster 4 ___ Create works of art ___ Write short stories or novels ___ Play an instrument ___ Redecorate one's house ___ Select art work for a museum ___ Sing or dance ___ Be an artist or architect ___ Act in a play		Cluster 5 ___ Design an experiment ___ Everything math ___ Explain scientific concepts to others ___ Make a difference through science ___ Everything science ___ Solve complex puzzles ___ Develop a computer program ___ Anything with numbers		Cluster 6 ___ Care for animals ___ Build things ___ Cultivate plants ___ Go on nature walks ___ Do woodworking ___ Garden ___ Repair cars or trucks ___ Work with tools and machinery		Total		Total		Total	
Cluster 7 ___ Engage in exciting adventure ___ Survive in the wilderness ___ Face physical danger ___ Volunteer as a firefighter or community watch ___ Compete in athletic events ___ Travel off the beaten path ___ Care for my community ___ Participate in adventure sports		Cluster 8 ___ Write stories ___ Make up word puzzles ___ Read a graphic novel ___ Edit a newspaper ___ Know many languages ___ Speak fluently on any subject ___ Read many books ___ Keep a diary or journal		Cluster 9 Write down any other interest you have not included in the assessment. Remember, these can be either general or professionally-oriented interests. Only you know how refined your interests are.		Total		Total		Total	
Total		Total		Total		Total		Total		Total	



Do a final review of each list, then add up clusters 1-8. Which cluster has the highest score? Which cluster the lowest? **Based on these results, order the clusters from highest to lowest in a chart like the one that follows.** In addition, add any interest that you scored as a 5 into the “Individual Interests” column.

Interest Clusters in Order	Individual Interests

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU LOVE TO DO

Now that you’ve scored each cluster, let’s learn more about each.

The Leader (Cluster 1): This cluster of interests identifies a natural affinity for leadership roles. A person who scores high here likes to make a difference on a personal level.

The Organizer (Cluster 2): This cluster of interests is oriented around people who like to organize and be organized.

The Helper (Cluster 3): This cluster of interests signals a desire to help others.

The Artist (Cluster 4): This cluster identifies someone who has a natural desire for creativity and/or the arts.

The Analyzer (Cluster 5): This cluster reflects someone who likes to analyze and solve problems, and for whom logic is important.

The Producer (Cluster 6): This cluster reflects someone who likes to make or fix things with their hands. These interests often result in a physical product.

The Adventure Seeker (Cluster 7): This cluster of interests reflects someone who is not satisfied with sitting at a desk or staring out a window. They want to experience the adventure firsthand.

The Scholar (Cluster 8): This cluster reflects someone who is a reader and thinker. Intellectual pursuits interest them. They like to ask questions and are naturally curious.



Exploring what you love to do is a tough process at any point in your life, but particularly when you’re younger, because your comfort zone and your limited experience govern your options. Part of discovering the Whole YOU is to scratch those interest itches and explore the things you’ve always wanted to try. Have

you ever wanted to skydive? Take a class in World War II history? Volunteer at an animal shelter? Attend a music festival? Lead a team?

To start this process of exploration, grab your journal and complete the sentence “I have always wanted to...” as many times you wish. There are no boundaries to how you end the sentence; the key is to start to write them down.

I have always wanted to....

You now have a lot of information about what you love to do:

1. High-level areas of interest (e.g., leader, organizer, helper...)
2. Specific interests that you scored high on (e.g., solving complex puzzles, writing stories)
3. A list of things you want to try (e.g., skydiving, volunteering at an animal shelter)



Now it's time to write a paragraph (a minimum of 250 words) summarizing your interests and addressing the deeper question of the “Why?” behind them. You'll be spending a lot of time digging into these areas that you love, so take your time on this exercise. Again, this exercise isn't intended to confine you to a box. Rather, it's to reflect on the results and dig deeper into the “Why?”

- **Why do I love to do _____?**
- **Why don't I love _____?**

Here's a sample:

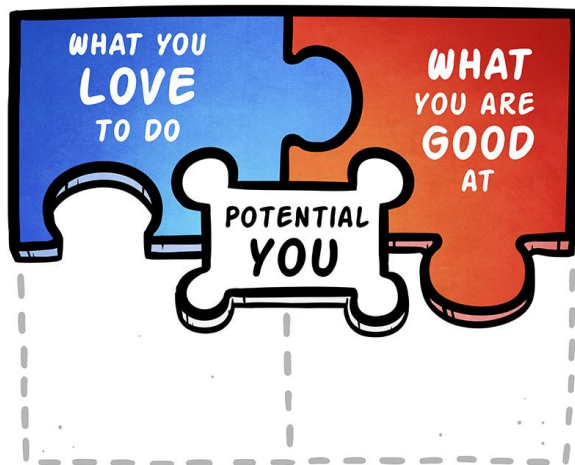
What Do I LOVE To Do?

As a communicator and language lover, I enjoy studying those who have made a significant impact on the English language—I think this may be why I have such a fixation on Shakespeare. This passion most likely taps into Clusters 1, 7 and 8. Although I am not a natural artist, I find it important to spend time being creative in some respect, even if that just means appreciating art. I express this love by spending a lot of my spare time in museums, playing guitar, cooking and working at a floral studio. My highest scoring cluster (Analyzer) speaks to marketing—which may signify that I am heading down the right career path. I've always wanted to be able to draw and express myself through art—sometimes words aren't enough. I've always wanted to lead a very big team and accomplish something bigger than myself.

POTENTIAL YOU: THE INTERSECTION OF 'GOOD AT' AND 'LOVE'

On our way to finding your Professional YOU, we must first identify the overlap between what you're good at (or have the potential to be good at) and what you love to do. The overlap in these two areas is where we find the **Potential YOU**.

It's important to remember that "what you love to do" isn't in isolation from the Current YOU that you explored in Step 2. In fact, there can be a strong relationship between what you love, your personality and what you're good at. Here are a couple examples from your authors.



David:

"I remember distinctly when I found my love for history and politics. It was Grade 7 and Social Science was my highest grade. When I reflect on it now, Social Science aligns to two of my core personality traits (organized and curious), so studying social sciences for me wasn't really work. Consequently, I was good at it and it was my highest grade. On reflection, I realized because I loved social sciences, I was good at it. In hindsight, I guess I also knew I was never going to be a respected mathematician, so I put all my energy (and three university degrees) into studying the social sciences. Social sciences is at the intersection of what I love to do and what I am good at."

Ray:

"I had a love of solving problems. I played chess (poorly) and ran little experiments before I understood anything about experiments. With one experiment involving gasoline and a candle, I almost burned down my parents' house. I'd take apart anything in the house that was broken and try to fix it—usually unsuccessfully. I loved trying to fix things so much that I took apart my father's fully operational antique gramophone. It never worked again.

"On the surface it looked like I wasn't good at what I loved to do. However, I always scored the highest in my class in math. It was easy for me. I also had the critical personality trait of perseverance—I rarely got frustrated with my failures and kept looking for the next challenge.

"Although the outcomes of my experiments and household repairs didn't show promise, my logical and determined brain was evidence that, with some education, I could master what I

loved. This led me into computer science and engineering. I still can't fix anything around the house, but I did OK in a 25-year career in the technology sector."



The goal now is to review what you love to do, and find some evidence that you are (or may be) be really good at it too. Referring back to previous exercises as necessary, replicate the following sample table in your journal and fill out what you "love to do."

Next, flip back to Step 1 when you explored your interests and passions, and dug into why you liked them. Reflect also on Step 2 when you identified the things you can do (and are good at, or have the potential to be good at). **For each of the things that you identified as interests and passions, is there any evidence that you are skilled at or could become skilled at it?**

If you're having trouble finding evidence that you're good at what you love, try asking yourself why is it that you love it. For example, while you think you love basketball, it might actually be the social interaction that you love and you likely have a lot of evidence you are good at that social interaction. Likewise, if you know you are good at something but don't particularly love it, then ask yourself why you're so good at it. Being good at math

might be because you love solving problems or love knowing you got the right answer. **Update the "Love to do" column based on this reflection if needed.** When you have identified what you love to do and what you're good at, you've found the Potential YOU.

Plan Long-Term so You Can Focus on the Present

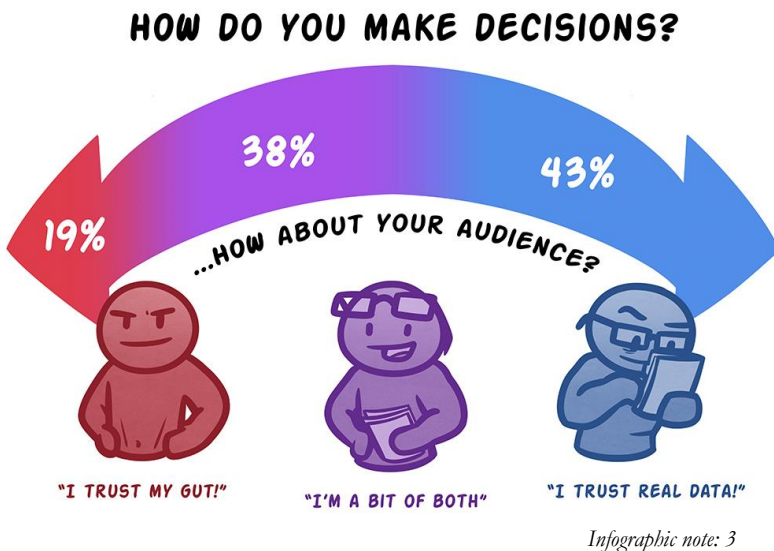
In her twenties, Michelle worked incredibly long hours. "Work you love is like university on steroids. If you work hard, you never stop learning and you will be recognized and rewarded." But, she knew this level of professional focus wasn't sustainable if she wanted any kind of personal life. Now in her forties, with a master's degree and working in executive roles which allowed her to intentionally focus on achieving greater balance into her life. To keep her life in balance today, Michelle separates her personal and professional goals. Taking time for her family life and her hobbies as well as her career allows her to maintain her own brand of success.

Michelle's Tip: In your twenties, keep exploring and developing to discover what you love and what you are good at.

Potential YOU	
Love to do...	Good at... (evidence)
Fix stuff	Math, physics, taking things apart
Read fantasy novels	Reading, writing, imagination
All things art	Drawing, comics
Sports	Skiing

THE PROFESSIONAL YOU: WHAT CAN YOU MAKE A LIVING DOING?

Now that you have a handle on the Potential YOU, it's time to figure out whether there's an opportunity to make a living in any of the areas where you show potential. This is where we find the Professional YOU. We've intentionally chosen the phrase "make a living" because of its ambiguity. What you need to make a living is different from what someone else needs to make a living. We'll get further into that in the next step when we tackle your personal definition of success. Regardless, whether you can make a living or not is based on whether there are (or will be) opportunities.

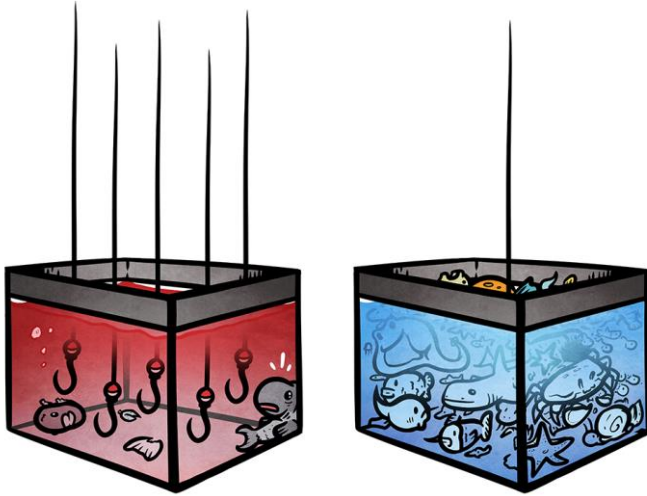


IDENTIFYING THE PROFESSIONAL YOU

Product managers are always on the lookout for what we call "market opportunities." A **market opportunity** arises when a consumer wants or needs something but the current suppliers aren't meeting their want or need. That gap between wants or needs and supplies is the market opportunity. For example, there is currently a market opportunity for electric cars. However, one of the realities facing all product managers is that competition is fierce. Everyone from Tesla to Toyota to GM has identified the opportunity and all of them are trying to fill the gap.

Understanding your opportunity is an interesting challenge because it's not simply about what you're doing, but also about what everyone else is doing. In product management there are

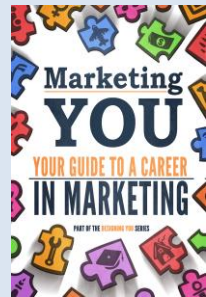
two broad approaches you can choose to pursue an opportunity: a **blue ocean** or a **red ocean**. A blue ocean occurs when there are very few competitors and the opportunity is growing. Think of it as finding a wide-open sea with lots of fish and no other fishermen. In contrast, a *red ocean* is about pursuing an opportunity in an existing market where there is lots of competition. This sea is full of other boats (from big trawlers to small row boats) that are fighting to catch the same fish as you. Succeeding in a red ocean is really tough because there aren't enough fish to go around. The result is the ocean is red with the blood of those who failed. Dramatic, yes, but instructive. One of the most important things a product manager searches for is a blue ocean.⁴



Designing YOU Career Guides

Are you struggling finding your Professional YOU? Do you still have questions about specific careers and where they are going? If this sounds like you, check out *Designing YOU Career Guides*. Each guide in the series **does a deep dive into different fields**. If journalism and communications interest you – check out the *Journalism YOU*. If technology interest you, dig into *Computing YOU*. And many more from there. These free guides are designed to answer the big questions at the heart of the Professional YOU:

1. What are the **different jobs** in in this area?
2. What are the **trends that will impact future** careers in this area?
3. How have others **built their careers in this area?**
4. And the inevitable... **how much money** can I make in different jobs?



Say you're a product manager for the car company Daimler AG (makers of Mercedes and Smart). Your job is to sell their ultra-compact two-seater car. You believe young people who just need a no-frills way to get from A to B would be interested, but you know buying and running a car is expensive. This is a big barrier to you selling your car. As a great product manager you know that taxis, buses, rental cars, bikes and walking are all indirect competitors, as they can also get your potential customers from A to B. But, taxis are expensive, buses aren't always convenient, most car rental companies won't rent to those under 25, and walking and biking aren't always an option. A red ocean product management strategy may be to reduce the price of your car and keep selling in an already crowded and cutthroat market of cheap transportation. A blue ocean strategy may be to reframe your business away from what is done today and ask some good blue ocean questions:

1. What if people could share cars instead of buying a car that sits unused 23+ hours a day?
2. What if my ultra-fuel-efficient car could be used to support urban planners who want to reduce the number of cars in urban centres?
3. What if my car could be used to meet the environmental values of my customers?
4. What if we could use technology to allow people to access and pay for a car only when they need it?

(Note the **“What if?”** approach to intentional curiosity we learned in Step 1.)

Welcome to the blue ocean opportunity that led product managers at Daimler AG to create their own car-sharing company called Car2Go. These product managers realized that in addition to selling their cars outright, they could also sell their cars in one-minute increments. So, today you can book one of thousands of Car2Go cars on your smartphone in more than 25 major cities and pay in one-minute increments. This is because they connected their core product (a fuel-efficient two-seater car) with a blue ocean market (people who couldn't or didn't want to own a car but often needed the convenience of a car).

This same principle of avoiding competitive red oceans and looking for new blue oceans holds true in the context of designing you. For you, that means identifying an existing or potential market where there is a gap between what is needed (demand) and what is already out there (supply). For example, in the U.S. today, there is a significant gap between the demand and the supply of qualified computer programmers. The result is an opportunity for those who want to develop their skills as a computer programmer. Looking a little further down the road, as baby boomers age, there might be a huge potential market for individuals

Stay True to Your Values

Combining her love of teaching and working with children, Katie committed to a career in libraries. While she had turned to library work as a more stable career option than teaching, she soon learned the library industry could be just as unstable as teaching in the school system.

Katie needed to differentiate herself from her peers with similar, if not identical, educational backgrounds. After interviewing experts in the field, she mapped out a plan to set herself apart through a combination of a master's degree and work experience.

Katie studied history and then earned her master's degree in library science and it led into her first five years as a professional librarian. She is driven by her determination to do work that brings her joy. For her, that's the definition of professional success and personal happiness.

Katie's Tip: Look for balance and happiness in both your personal and professional life.

who can care for seniors. But watch out for red oceans. Is everyone going to school for the same jobs that might start to disappear in the next decade?

As we've already identified, the Professional YOU is located at that intersection where (1) others will pay you (2) to do something you love to do and (3) are good at. This is when work has the potential to be more than just work. In the following pages you'll start to reflect even more deeply on the Professional YOU. It is one step closer to the Whole YOU.

EXPECT THINGS TO CHANGE

Over your lifetime, you and the world around you will continuously change. You can rely on that. Change is why the most valuable skill today is more fundamental than being able to code or weld. Today, you need the skills to adapt and evolve; this agility separates your long-term success from everyone else's. The question isn't whether you'll change, it's whether the change is proactive (like Daimler and Car2Go) or reactive.

“FOR YOU, THAT MEANS IDENTIFYING AN EXISTING OR POTENTIAL MARKET WHERE THERE IS A GAP BETWEEN WHAT IS NEEDED (DEMAND) AND WHAT IS ALREADY OUT THERE (SUPPLY).”

In the world of product management, there are endless examples where companies misread opportunities and failed to adapt until it was too late.

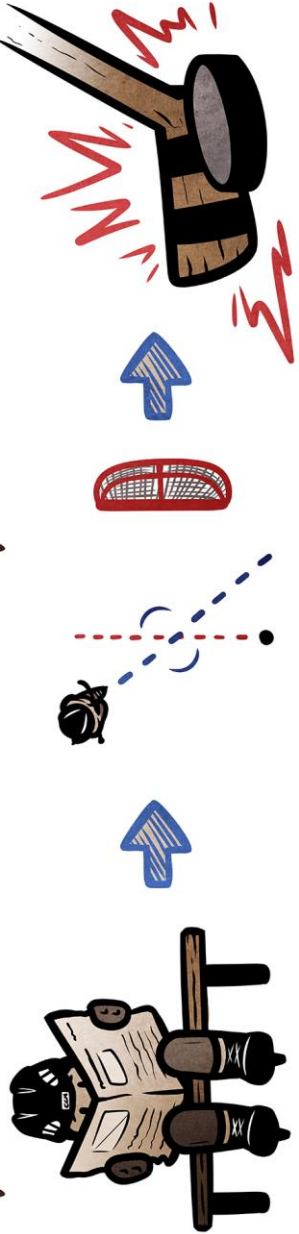
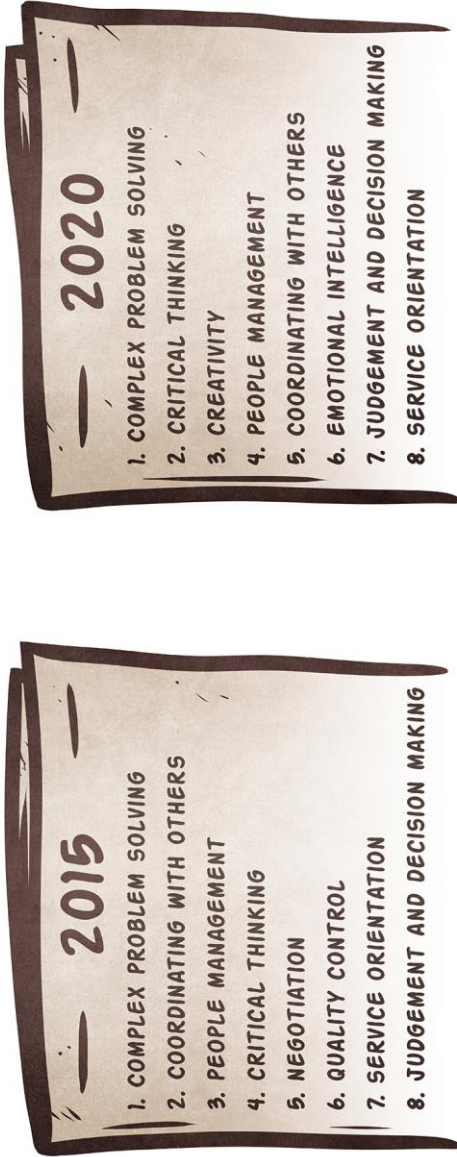
Some of you may remember Blockbuster. Most of you know Netflix. Blockbuster started as a video rental store in 1985 to capitalize on an emerging opportunity with the advent of VCRs. It successfully filled this gap...for a while. Blockbuster peaked in 2004 with 9,000 locations and 60,000 employees. In 2016 it had only 51 locations.

The problem is the Blockbuster product management team didn't see the change in opportunity until it was too late. When the demand for DVD rentals collapsed in the mid-2000s with the advent of video streaming services, Blockbuster product managers found themselves the kings of a dying market.

In contrast, a lot of people don't know that Netflix started back in 1997. Netflix was in the entertainment delivery business. For its first decade, the product management team of Netflix captured an opportunity by delivering more than one billion DVDs to customers through the mail. But before it mailed its first DVD, the product management team had read an emerging opportunity. Specifically, they anticipated that with advancements in Internet technology, eventually it would be far more efficient to deliver their entertainment through digital streaming. Even the name their product management

SKATE TO THE WHERE THE WHERE THE PUCK IS GOING TO BE

THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM FORECASTS THE MOST DEMANDED SKILLS TO CHANGE BETWEEN 2015 AND 2020



Infographic note: 5

team chose—Netflix—was designed to meet this emerging opportunity. Today, Netflix streams entertainment to 81 million customers in 190 countries and is worth more than \$40 billion. Netflix was designed to evolve with the opportunity.

There is a classic piece of advice, attributed to Walter Gretzky, the father of the greatest hockey player who ever lived, Wayne Gretzky. When Wayne was asked how he had a seemingly uncanny ability to be in the right place at the right time, he shared his father’s advice: “Skate to where the puck is going to be.”

You need to be like Wayne Gretzky and the Netflix product managers and go to where the market is going to be, not to where it has been.

One of the highest-paid careers in the past decade is petroleum engineering. It makes sense when you consider the gold rush nature of the oil industry. But nobody can confidently tell you if a petroleum engineer will be in demand in 10 or 20 years. With a government policy focus on renewable energy, the advent of the electric car and the declining price of oil, the puck may be going in a different direction. This is why looking backwards in time for clues can be troublesome. Few people can tell you with any certainty what the opportunities will be for your product (you) in a few years. Don’t be like Blockbuster; be like Netflix. Specifically, you need to deeply understand the market you’ll enter, anticipate changes and be ready to refine the Whole YOU as it evolves.

**“YOU NEED TO DEEPLY UNDERSTAND THE MARKET
YOU’LL ENTER, ANTICIPATE CHANGES AND BE READY TO
REFINE THE WHOLE YOU AS IT EVOLVES.”**

Product managers always define a **value proposition**—the proposed value that the product would bring to a customer. The product management guru Geoffrey Moore has a template that great product managers follow to ensure they have found their value proposition before they start building their product. Here’s a simplified version:

Moore’s Value Proposition (Simplified)	
For...	Who is the target customer?
Who...	What is their specific problem or need?
Our product is...	What is the product description?
That provides...	What is the key benefit or problem solved?
Unlike...	Who are the main competitors?
We have...	How are we different from the competition?

For example, when Netflix launched their streaming service, the product manager may have written their value proposition as follows:

Value Proposition: Netflix	
For...	...households with high speed Internet
Who...	...are frustrated with their entertainment options over traditional TV
Our product is...	...a digital streaming service
That provides...	... thousands of movies and TV shows (including exclusive Netflix content)
Unlike...	...renting an expensive DVD at Blockbuster
We have...	... available on demand for only \$8 a month

This simple statement identifies who Netflix is targeting (households with Internet), the problem they're solving (frustration with traditional TV), the key benefit that Netflix delivers (thousands of movies and TV shows), their direct competitor (Blockbuster), as well as the primary reason they're better than their competitor (on demand for \$8/month). They clearly found their sweet spot with this value proposition.

As your product manager, you can use a similar model to determine when you've found the Professional YOU:

Value Proposition (Professional YOU)	
For...	Who is your target company or industry?
Who...	What is their specific need that isn't being met today?
I am...	Your job title or profession.
That...	What is your specific skill or knowledge that'll satisfy their need?
Unlike...	Who are the other entry-level employees who are also trying to satisfy this need?
I...	What unique skills and experienced do you have that'll differentiate you from all the other entry-level employees?

For example, if you love and are good at both drawing and computer programming, after some effort, you may arrive at the following value proposition:

Value Proposition: Computer Programming/Art	
For...	...the video gaming industry
Who...	...can't find gifted artists to create engaging game worlds.
I am...	...an artistic game designer
That...	...that has leveraged my fine art and computer science education to build my own stunning game.
Unlike...	... artists without a computer background,
I...	... not only can design, but also implement my creative ideas.

Since everyone's Professional YOU (and ultimately their Whole YOU) is different, the only person who can identify it is you. Your goal now is to explore your Professional YOU to enable you to articulate your own value proposition.

EXPLORING THE PROFESSIONAL YOU

A good starting point for exploring the Professional YOU is to search through the huge amount of employment information available. This includes government reports (e.g. employment studies, census data) or annual reports of companies. It also includes periodicals (e.g. newspapers), other media (e.g. podcasts), scholarly journals, commercial information (e.g. trendsetting.com) or credible websites (e.g. Scientific American, Fast Company).

For designing you, this type of information is incredibly useful. When you have data, you don't have to rely solely on your biased intuition or assumptions. You can make decisions based on evidence. This type of information lets you start in one place and then meander your way to a different but related space, building evidence and connections, and learning as you go. You're once again an explorer. To paraphrase Thomas Edison, locating opportunities is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration.

Your employment research will allow you to identify entire industries, educational programs, companies and jobs you've never heard of. All of this research will lead you to form the detailed questions you need answered as you develop the Whole YOU and help you identify assumptions you want to test by talking to experts.

For example, research around the topic of mathematics may soon lead you to see that there's a burgeoning field called data mining that requires a deep understanding of math. A little more digging may tell you the types of industries and companies, from global giants to Silicon Valley start-ups, that can't hire data mining experts fast enough. You'll then be able to use this type of information to explore what exactly a data miner does: What type of education do you need? Is it a short-term or long-term opportunity? Beyond mathematics, what other skills does this role need? If you're someone who is both good at math and loves math, this small amount of information might have helped identify the Professional YOU.

Here are five basic rules for using this type of information to identify potential opportunities related to what you love to do:

1. Always start by using existing information rather than relying on your intuition or biases.
2. Ask your network and design team for advice on places where you can start looking.
3. Don't take existing information as an absolute. It's always contextual to a time and place.
4. Only use the information if the original source is credible.
5. Become a regular consumer of market intelligence, especially in your areas of interest. For example, this may be following news about companies in your areas of interest or general trends. Read it every day. This will offer you a deeper and richer context to the potential opportunity.

Beware of the Dark Side of Data

It's important to use caution when relying on the information out there. The challenge is that this research was not conducted for you. It was commissioned and done for another purpose. There are risks with this kind of information: the source and the context. If you use the research poorly, it may send you in the wrong direction.

The first consideration is the source of the information and whether you should trust them. Put in the effort to find out who paid for the research to be conducted and why. Research is very easy to manipulate to secure the answer you're looking for. It's not surprising that special interest groups have no shortage of research they've conducted or commissioned to support their position (as do their opponents). If you find that the vast majority of credible sources support one viewpoint and a tiny minority supports the other, you really have to dig into why the minority disagrees with the consensus expert opinion. While it may be that the one or two lone voices are correct, it's always good to have a healthy dose of skepticism when assessing research.

The second consideration is using this type of information out of context. Relying on a commercial research report from five years ago is out of context. Similarly, extending research that was done in Japan to the United States is out of context. The result could be really poor decisions rooted in bad evidence. For example, while the opportunity for Hello Kitty is huge in Japan, you may find yourself in trouble if you relied on Japanese data and opened a store in your small town.



You're going to do some research to give you a richer understanding of the things you love, as well as uncover insights into the professional opportunities in those same areas. Refer back to your Potential YOU list, where you identified the things you're both good at and love. Remember, these don't have to be career or job related, as they're simply a starting point for your exploration.

The ideal place to start is to identify the most credible sources for your topic area. It might be more traditional media such as National Geographic, Scientific American or Wired or websites such as TechCrunch.com or TrendWatching.com. **Dive into these sources and soak in the material.** Don't just read it for pleasure, read it with purpose. What trends are they are pointing out? Where do they think the industry is going? Which companies are described as “innovative” or “forward-looking?” (Innovative companies are a particular treasure trove of information for an upcoming exercise, where you will review job postings.) These credible sources aren't only refining your knowledge of an industry or a topic, they're giving you a glimpse at where the puck might be going.

Based on this information, replicate the following table in your journal and identify the Professional YOU—the intersection of the Potential YOU (what you love to do and what you're good at) with professional opportunities. Keep notes on the sources of your information and the nuggets you find. The invaluable part about existing information is that it can be a trigger to stimulate more questions. **Jot down these questions in the table in your journal; these are the questions you need to focus on when you proceed to the next phase and plan for your informational interviews.**

You've now identified potential opportunities and questions for a handful of the areas you love to do and are good at (the Potential YOU). You can continue to add to the table as you do additional research. Here's a sample table to see where the Potential YOU meets opportunities:

Identifying the Professional YOU		
Potential YOU	Potential opportunities	My questions
Math	Data analytics	How much can I get paid? What type of education and experience do I need? Do I need to move?
Outdoors	Wildlife conservationist	What type of education is required? Are there internships available? Is it dangerous? Where are these jobs?

TRANSFORMING JOB POSTINGS INTO EVIDENCE

Job postings are a rich source of existing information that can help you identify emerging opportunities and trends in the areas that you love. They can also expose you to the types of jobs that exist in your areas and companies of interest. They're handy for a few reasons:

1. They're easily accessible on job posting websites.
2. This accessibility means you can collect a large and diverse sample. We generally recommend reviewing a minimum of 25 job postings in a specific field to ensure effective comparison.
3. Most past job postings are archived and are also accessible via <http://archive.org/web/>, so you can assess trends over time.
4. The extra work you put in to consolidate the job postings can help you identify trends and themes that may not be obvious to others.

When you're consolidating job postings, it's helpful to collect information on several major areas. The most efficient way to do this is by making a spreadsheet using a program such as Microsoft Excel to track the answers to the following questions:

Company Details

1. Industry
2. Size of company (e.g. number of employees)
3. Location (the location may reflect culture, language and compensation)

Job Details

1. Title
2. Level of position (titles can be misleading)
3. Responsibilities (e.g. does it mention what they will be doing?)

Qualifications

1. Educational (do they specify a major)
2. Professional experience (years and type of experience)
3. Professional credentials (does it mention specific credentials are required?)
4. Industry engagement (does it mention if active involvement in a professional association is important?)
5. Personal attributes (does it mention the importance of any specific interpersonal or communication skills?)
6. Required versus preferred for the above

Following the directions for how to turn job postings into evidence, fill in your own spreadsheet with information gleaned from at least 25 job postings in a specific field.

Job Posting Spreadsheet			
	Posting 1	Posting 2	Posting 3
Company details			
Industry			
Size of company			
Location			
Job details			
Title			
Level of position			
Responsibilities			
Qualifications			
Educational			
Experience			
Professional credentials			
Industry engagement			
Personal attributes			

SO WHAT?



Now that you have consolidated your findings, it's time to analyze the major trends and what they mean for you. For example, do smaller companies have different educational expectations than large companies? Do expectations differ between industries? Are specific skills necessary? Are you able to map a career trajectory in a specific field? For example, when you map entry-level to mid-level to senior-level positions in a field, does it look like they are just looking for more experience or has a new educational requirement (e.g. Master's degree) been introduced?

Remember, this is only an exploratory process to identify and narrow some of the potential skills and qualifications expected today in different roles. The greatest limitation to the process is it can only analyze existing postings. Just think, if you did this analysis in 2007, you wouldn't see a position for an app developer. This exercise is a starting point to explore market needs today. A key role of your design team will be to guide you how these may change in the future.

Here's a sample of the major theme analysis:

Professional YOU	Major Themes	So What?
Nurse practitioner	<p>75 per cent require a four-year nursing degree.</p> <p>60 per cent of the jobs ask for previous experience in nursing, with the majority asking for a minimum of five years.</p> <p>Posted positions were split evenly between public health providers and private service providers.</p> <p>Most entry-level positions stated the candidate would have to work evenings and weekends.</p> <p>The majority asked for evidence of working in a team and in stressful situations.</p>	<p>I should complete my nursing program to increase my options of employment.</p> <p>I'll need to sacrifice personal time to work evenings and weekends early in my career.</p> <p>It will probably take about five years before I move up the ranks.</p> <p>I should pay attention to how my part-time job during school builds teamwork and stress-management skills.</p>

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

So far, you have used existing information to build foundational evidence to narrow down the Professional YOU. You might even feel like you have an idea of where the Professional YOU is (in data mining, for example, for our math lovers out there). The problem with relying on existing information is that you don't get to ask questions or dig deeper on topics that may only be interesting to your particular combination of skills and personality. To get this level of understanding, you'll have to talk to people with the answers. Steve Jobs believed that you had to understand your customers so well that when you showed them what you built, they would exclaim, "Of course we need that!" You have to get to that same level of knowledge about your customer: your future employer or field of work. There's only one way to do that—talk to them face to face. **You'll do at least 10 informational interviews to guide you towards the Professional YOU.**

These interviews are far more in-depth than the curiosity conversations you had earlier, so you'll need to approach these with rigour and discipline. These interviews have a variety of purposes, including to:

1. Expand and strengthen your professional network and add new members to your design team.
2. Explore industries and specific companies related to what you love to do.
3. Explore specific needs/jobs that are, or will be, in demand within these industries.
4. Evolve a clearer picture of a Professional YOU.
5. Develop and refine your professional communication skills.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS: THE WHO



From your existing search information, you should have a growing list of questions. **The key at this stage is to identify interview candidates with the expertise and experience to answer these questions.**

The most obvious place to start is with your design team. Your list of who to interview will evolve as you do more interviews, since a key question you’ll ask in each conversation is for an introduction to additional candidates for a future interview. In this regard, interviews and the intentional curiosity that drive them are a life-long project. Each conversation must trigger two key outcomes: more questions to ask and more candidates to ask them to. Therefore, the “who” is like an avalanche that picks up speed and keeps growing.

How your design team can help you with informational interviews	
Role	Potential expertise
Whole YOU Mentor	The greatest role your Whole YOU mentor (or people you’ve identified as possible mentors) will play is guiding your preparation for your interviews; specifically, who you should talk to and what you should talk to them about.
Professional YOU Mentor	As opposed to the Whole YOU mentor, this mentor primarily focuses on the Professional YOU, and they’ll be able to offer specific guidance in the areas of industries, companies and fields for you to consider in your informational interviews. This could give you a sense of the direction of the industry and what skills might be required today and in the future. Moreover, they can offer important guidance on linking “who” you interview to “what” their expertise is (and therefore what you should ask them).
Personal Advisors	Similar to your Whole YOU mentor, engaging your personal advisors during the preparation process is important. Because they have personal relationships with you, they’ll offer important guidance on evaluating your list of what you love and what you’re good at, and perhaps introduce you to people you wouldn’t have considered.

Real-World Experts	Real-world experts are likely the largest group of your initial interview candidates. Remember, the “real world” is diverse and may involve factors like industry, fields, size and type of company, so ensure your sample is broad and captures many of these factors. Go back to your journal and identify companies that you read about in your searching. Then use Google, LinkedIn and people you know to see if you can get an interview with anyone at the company.
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When you’ve refined your list of interview candidates, it’s imperative you explore their background prior to interviewing them.

A lot of people use **information interviews** to get answers to questions they could have found online. That is a waste of time and energy for both sides. Instead, you’ll spend your interview time digging into the more interesting areas of their life and career. This will make the interview more engaging and valuable for both sides. People like people who are interested in them, so do some basic research that shows evidence of your genuine interest. LinkedIn, blogs and Twitter are logical places to start to answer some of the basic questions that follow.

The modest goal of many early stage interviews is to learn more about an industry, position or person (e.g. what types of jobs are available to biology graduates and do they sound interesting). If we use the well-worn onion analogy to represent you—the Professional YOU that you’re looking for is buried at the core of the onion. You can’t immediately come up with a well-articulated value proposition like the ones for Netflix or the artistic game designer mentioned earlier. You’ll have to start several layers away, peeling back more about the areas that you love, the jobs and problems that exist, and the future of the industry. As you peel back a layer of the onion with each round of interviews, you’ll expand your knowledge and put yourself in a position to develop a series of deeper questions for the next round of interviews. If you prepare for these interviews, peeling the onion won’t even make you cry.

Here are some questions to answer using existing information about your interviewee before you go on the interview:

Education

1. What is their level of schooling?
2. What was their major, if any?
3. What school(s) did they go to?

Career trajectory

4. What was their first position after school?
5. What companies have they worked at?
6. What roles have they held?
7. What company do they work for (or run) now?
8. How has their company performed? What news releases have they published?

9. What are some of the major trends in their industry?

Personal

1. Where have they lived?
2. What interests do they have outside of work?
3. What volunteer or charitable activities are they engaged in?
4. What is their family status (e.g. married, children etc.)?

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS: THE WHAT



If you followed the “who” process with your design team, you’ll have a solid list of diverse candidates as a starting point for potential interview subjects. Each candidate brings expertise to a conversation, so it’s important that you focus each conversation individually.

Everyone you’ll have conversations with will have one thing in common; their time is at a premium. Since you’re the one who asked for the interview, you’re in control and need to ensure it’s focused.



One useful approach to determine what you’re trying to learn from these interviews is to identify the assumptions you’re making about the field, industry or job, and then use the interviews to test these assumptions. For example, your earlier work may have uncovered architecture as a possible career path based on your interest and skill in art. To dig deeper into architecture, you would list a set of assumptions and how you might validate them. For example:

Assumption	Validation
Architecture sounds like an interesting field to work in.	Interview a series of architecture professionals to learn more.
I need an architecture degree to work as an architect.	Search past job postings. Interview non-architects in the field to understand alternative paths (drafting, computer design, interior design).
Most architects are independent and manage their own business.	Interview architect professionals at different career stages to understand potential career paths.
Architects will still be in high demand in the coming decades.	Interview architects working for innovative firms.

Architecture is mostly about being a good artist.	Explore what courses are required. Interview architects about the skills they use every day.
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HOW TO BOOK AN INTERVIEW

The first rule of an informational interview is respect. Every single person you want to interview is busy and is doing you a favour. Most of these interviews won't exceed 30 minutes, so they need to be laser-focused. In most cases, you'll be the lowest priority in their email inbox or voicemail list. To cut through this clutter you should consider the following:

1. **Connect through a mutual contact.** For example, "Wendy Smith suggested I contact you because of your expertise in..."
2. **Make it personal.** Demonstrate you know something about them through your digging. For example, "I see you also studied accounting at the University of..."
3. **Be clear on your ask.** For example, "I am considering a career in X and would like to have 30 minutes of your time to ask you about how you progressed in your career." This does two things, it puts a clear constraint on the request (30 minutes) and it reinforces that the interview is about them (not you). We all like to think we're special, so reinforce how their knowledge is important and valuable to you.
4. **Be persistent and keep asking.** As you're the lowest priority thing in their inbox you'll likely have to send a couple of reminders. Be polite and persistent and if they say no, ask them for anyone else that they could suggest. This will ensure you'll have a return on your effort.
5. **Make it easy for them.** Offer to work to their schedule and meet them at their office or anywhere they'd like to meet. This interview is for you—not them. Don't be surprised if the interview is a month or more out. Professionals are busy people!

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS: THE HOW

As part of the preparation for each interview, develop a discussion guide that includes the background information you learned about the interviewee and some questions to start off the interview. Remember that this is a guide, not a script, checklist or questionnaire. You want to facilitate a discussion more than conduct an interrogation. In the appendix we have provided some thought starter questions to get you going. To ensure both you and the interviewee get maximum value from this process, we recommend you consider the following both in developing your discussion guide questions and conducting the interview:

Build rapport: People like to know you've taken an interest in them, so do your homework. Are they alumni of your school? What do you have in common with them? Do they like sports? The arts? Building rapport is about building a minimum-level of trust and empathy to

facilitate a much deeper conversation. Part of building rapport is about being authentically interested in what they have to say. Enthusiasm can go a long way toward showing someone that you care and are interested in what they have to say. Harvard professor Amy Cuddy claims that when people first meet you, they size you up based on warmth as the most important factor, followed by competence.¹ So, dazzle them with your trustworthiness rather than your intelligence.

Keep it simple (but focused): The KISS rule (keep it simple, stupid) may be easy to say, but it's really difficult to do. You'll want to talk about a lot of things, but interviews should be organic. To get the most from your interview, note these suggestions:

1. **Start with general questions** and then move into more specific questions later. For example, you may want to ask them what made them decide to become a _____.
2. **Start with topics that the interviewee would find familiar.** Most people like to show others how smart they are, so let your interviewee talk about his/her expertise.
3. **Start with open-ended questions and only use close-ended questions if required.** For example, asking a question such as, "Tell me why you became an accountant" is open-ended, allowing the respondent to talk. In contrast, a _____ close-ended question may be, "Did you decide you wanted to be an accountant before you started university?" The risk of a close-ended question is getting a simple yes or no response with minimal value. Your goal is to stimulate your interviewee's engagement and keep him/her talking.
4. **One of the hazards of open-ended interviews is that they can stray from the goal of the discussion.** Sometimes this leads to valuable knowledge and connections. However, given time constraints, it may lead to spending 25 minutes talking about baseball or their time at college and five minutes on the actual subject of the interview.

Listen. Listen. Listen. In interviews, it's very common to be so focused on the process and the next question that we don't actually listen very well. Great interviews build on what your interviewee says, which is impossible if you aren't actually listening. So, absorb what they say. If you do, your interviewee will sense you are engaged and the interview will be much more rewarding for both of you.

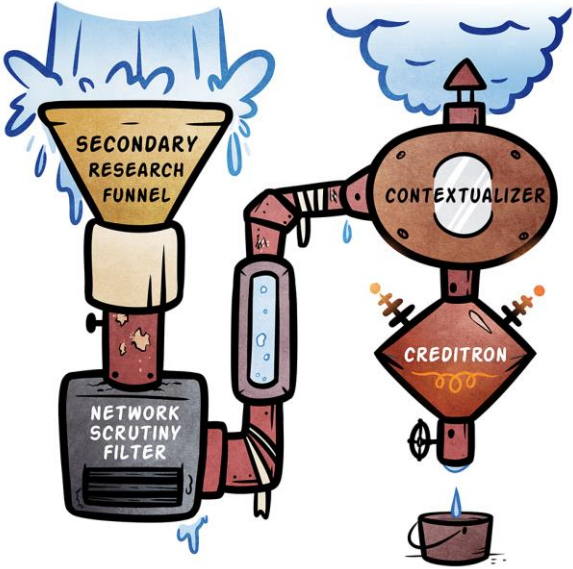
Keep probing: Probing is intentional curiosity in real-time. When you respond to a comment by asking them a more specific question, you're probing. For example, if an interviewee tells you that the best decision they ever made was to do a co-op degree, don't just leave it at that. Ask them, "Why was the co-op so important to you?" Then you may ask about their specific co-op experience and the skills they developed.

Record the interview (with approval): Every smartphone has a digital recording capability. Recording every interview has several benefits. Firstly, it provides you the ability to go back and listen to the interview to catch any nuggets of gold. Secondly, if you're not recording an interview, you'll have to take notes. Taking notes is a distraction and it stifles the natural conversation. The result is that interviewees are less natural and less open. But remember to always ask your interviewee for approval in advance and put the recording device on the table so it's transparent.

Be respectful: You aren't only interviewing someone, you're also building your personal brand and network. This professional has given you their valuable time. If you find that the

interview is naturally going longer, ask if they'd be able to extend the interview by a specific amount of time. If they have time and are enjoying the discussion, they'll almost certainly say yes.

Invest in the future: Ideally, this interview is not simply a one-off. A core objective of this process is for you to build your professional network and identify additional candidates for your design team. Following the interview, ensure you send a note thanking the interviewee for their time. Personalizing the note by identifying some key themes they highlighted demonstrates your engagement and reinforces the value of the time they spent with you. In your note, ask if they'd be open to keeping in touch so you can get in touch with any additional questions.



CONSOLIDATING YOUR INTERVIEWS



Within 24 hours of each interview, sit down with the recording and make notes in your journal. The goal of the notes is to identify major themes that emerged from the interview. A 30-minute conversation can cover a variety of topics, but some topics or themes float to the top. They'll offer new insight or perspective on a topic. Capture these key themes for each interview. Each theme is interesting unto itself, but it's the merger of these themes that transform them from merely interesting to the evidence you're looking for to define the Professional YOU.

As we have discussed, this interview process is dynamic and each interview should be treated as a building block. Each interview will raise new themes or questions that you'll want to explore and test in future interviews. It's important to consider the **rule of three**: If a theme or issue emerges from three credible sources, then you can have confidence there's a factual basis to it. This theme or issue should then move from the "interesting pile" to the "evidence pile." The evidence pile is what you'll use to start refining the Professional YOU.

WHO IS THE PROFESSIONAL YOU?



Once you've completed a minimum of 10 informational interviews, you should be closer to the Professional YOU and ready to draft your first value proposition. **In your journal, using the same table format we reviewed earlier, articulate your value proposition.** Here's a refresher on the value proposition:

For...	...who is your target company or industry?
Who...	...have a specific need that isn't being met today.
I am...	...a job title or profession.
That...	...you have a specific skill or knowledge that'll satisfy their need.
Unlike...	...other entry-level employees who are also trying to satisfy this need.
I have...	...what unique skills and experiences do you have that'll differentiate you from all the other entry-level employees.

Your completed value proposition should include the thing you love to do and what you're good at combined with real opportunities in the marketplace for you to make a living. If all those elements are there, you've just defined the Professional YOU.

If you have trouble identifying your value proposition, it likely means that you'll have to go interview more people or find some additional information. Be honest with yourself. Perhaps it's time to refer back to your Potential YOU list, where you identified things you love to do and are good at, and explore a different path altogether.

Remember, getting to the point when you can articulate your value proposition is both hard and important. Don't be in a rush to move on; instead, keep cycling ideas and testing until you feel comfortable that the Professional YOU in your head and supported with evidence, is the one you want to take to the next stage.

Once you've completed a value proposition you feel confident with, circulate it to your design team for input and refinement.

Only once you have done this is it time to move on to Step 5, where we will challenge you to transform the Professional YOU into the Whole YOU.

GENDER AND THE PROFESSIONAL YOU



In this step you were asked to research potential jobs and conduct informational interviews to explore what sort of opportunities might be out there for a person of your skillset and interests. This process provides a prime opportunity to push beyond your (often unconscious) gender biases about your future professional life.

Remember the interest clusters (The Leader, The Organizer, etc.)? Each cluster lends itself to a wide range of potential professions, but we are naturally hampered by our tendency to think of “men’s jobs” and “women’s jobs.” The great thing about conducting informational interviews is you’re exploring possibilities, which should include possible jobs that you might otherwise not consider because of your gender. Even though 75 per cent of entry-level investment bankers are men, there are women who find investment banking to be a highly satisfying career. Don’t rule out an interest cluster simply because it seems stereotypically more suited to another gender.

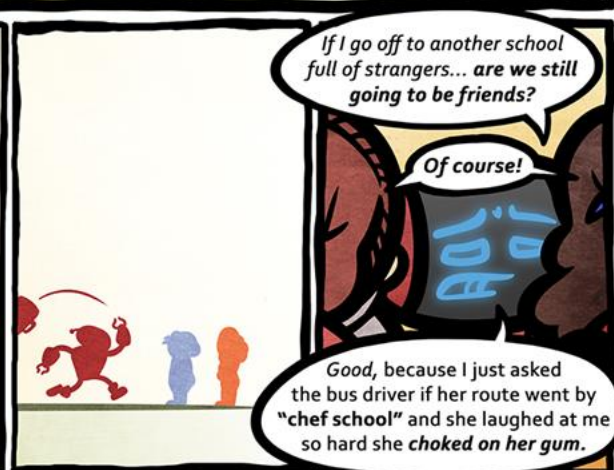
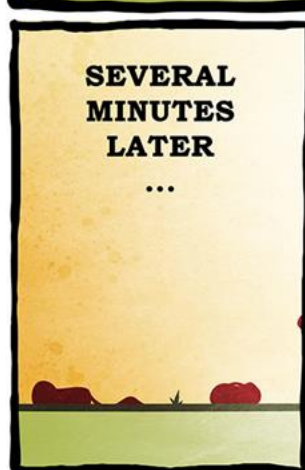
Find people in jobs that are suited to the same interest cluster as your own, but that you might not have considered because of your gender. For example, if you’re a man who falls into the “Helper” interest cluster, interview a nurse or a social worker. If you’re a woman who is by nature a “Producer,” interview a mechanic or a carpenter. Be sure to ask about people of your gender in the non-traditional role. Is it a good or improving field for the underrepresented gender? Or are there still deeply entrenched barriers that are difficult to overcome? As part of this process, consider your own willingness to be in the minority in your field. Does the thought of being a trailblazer appeal to you?

With some research, you should be able to determine whether the industry or field in question is working to improve diversity and foster equal opportunities. When investigating a particular industry or company, have a look at the current leadership teams. If there is some degree of diversity, that’s a promising sign for prospective women and minority candidates. If it’s entirely white men, ask questions about whether the company is doing anything to encourage diversity. You may also want to check into the company’s work/life policies. Does the company subsidize daycare? Top up maternity/parental leave benefits? Pay for fitness club memberships? In a competitive market for talent, you want to join an organization that recognizes people as its most important asset. Don’t be afraid to ask questions about the company’s philosophy and policies.

AT A GLANCE

1. Reflect on what you love to do and why you love to do it.
2. The Potential YOU is the intersection of what you are good at and what you love to do.
3. The Professional YOU is the intersection of the Potential YOU and what you can make a living doing. “Making a living” is unique and rooted in how you define success.
4. When exploring potential professional opportunities, go where the puck is going to be, not where it’s been.
5. The Professional YOU is discovered using credible existing information and looking for connections and professional opportunities. This research leads to more questions and gaps.
6. By digging deeper on gaps in your understanding through a minimum of 10 informational interviews, a vision of your Professional YOU will emerge.
7. Don’t fall into the trap of gender stereotyping interests or careers. Gender should be an irrelevant consideration.

Next, you will focus on transforming the Professional YOU into the Whole YOU.



STEP FIVE

DEFINING THE WHOLE YOU



STEPPING BACK BEFORE DIVING IN - DEFINING SUCCESS

In Step 4, you developed a vision of the Professional YOU (expressed through your value proposition). For one person, this vision may be a surgeon, others a counselor and others still an entrepreneur. If the Whole YOU were defined solely by your career, you could stop here; but, few of us are defined by a paycheck. We're more complex.

It's time to transform the Professional YOU into the Whole YOU. To do this, you will reflect on a very abstract (and contentious) concept: success. There's no generic definition of success. It's difficult to define because it's unique to you and considers many factors in your life.¹ To figure out your own definition of success, you'll need to think about your whole world. Your definition of success is rooted in your experiences, your personality, your values and your relationships, and it will continuously evolve with you.

Success is about understanding and juggling your values and priorities in life. When you think of success, what values do you think about?

Money? Family? Friends? Career? Wellness? Community? Social justice?



Reflecting on your values is a critical dimension of designing you, as your values guide the things in life that are important to you and filter out what aren't. Your values tell you what's right and wrong; they're your moral compass. And because they are yours, there is no right or wrong answer when you're asked what your values are.



Before we dig deep, we're going to do a little time travelling and allow you to reflect on your definition of success. To envision your future, we need to you enter our *Designing YOU* time machine and fast-forward 80 or so years...

It's somewhere around the year 2100 and your family is excited about your upcoming 100th birthday celebration. You're going to be giving a speech in which you reflect on your life's successes. What has made you most proud?

Is it your family?

Is it your career accomplishments?

Did you change your world through creativity?

Did you change your world by making your friends and family laugh?

Did you change your world through the work you did in your church community?

Did you leave a tremendous amount of money to your children and the community?

Only you can reflect on what success means to you.²

Like today, in 80 years from now people don't want to sit through a long speech, so get to the point and keep it under 500 words. Reflect on 100 years and your proudest successes in life. Here's a sample:

My First 100 Years

As I reflect over the past 100 years of my life, I find that I am overwhelmed with pride, gratitude and of course, amazement. I am fortunate to have lived an inspired life alongside an incredibly supportive and loving partner, travelled to every continent in our beautiful world, surrounded myself with fulfilling relationships with family and friends, and, through my work, had a profound impact on my community.

I'm honoured to be considered a community builder and have devoted my life's work to providing opportunities to as many people as I can. The ability to end my career as a respected teacher is a true blessing. The connections today with my past students, fellow colleagues and late mentors will be cherished to my dying days.

Throughout this journey, I could not have asked for a better co-pilot than my loving partner. Together we have raised a beautiful family, travelled the world and placed our efforts, to the best of our abilities, toward bringing haves to those who have not. In the 75 years we've been in one another's company, we have consistently challenged ourselves and our families, all while feeding our undying love for adventure, laughter, and of course, delicious food. We're so fortunate now to live part-time here in Canada amongst our loved ones where we're able to commit our undivided attention to their support and growth—and back in our second home, in France, when the blasted winter comes again, where we're able to write and soak in the azure sea.

Today, on the centennial of my birth, I am humbled to say that I have lived a life with an abundance of love, inspiration and growth—and for me that is success.

The point of writing your 100th birthday speech is to allow you to distance yourself from today and step back and look at life more holistically.

It's OK to Change Paths

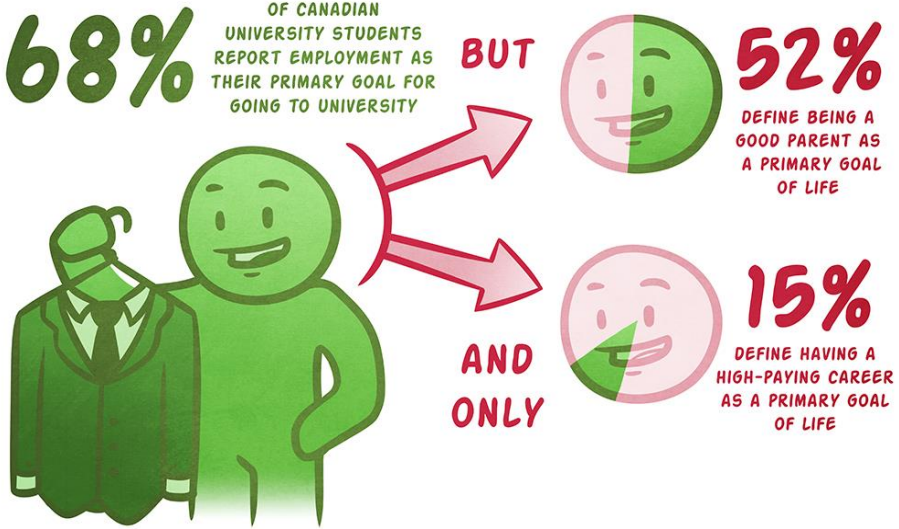
At the start of his university career, Jim aspired to be an outdoor education teacher, inspired by his own experience in a high school outdoor education program; but, the further he went along the path of outdoor education, the more Jim bumped up against the red tape of the education field. A career in education didn't seem to fully align with his vision for his professional life.

Right around the time he was reconsidering his path, Jim's aptitude for technology resulted in a number of professional opportunities. He decided to take advantage of them, thriving on the challenges, and before he knew it, found himself on an entirely new career path.

Jim's accidental corporate career provides the challenges, structure and control that are important to him. He's able to pursue his passions for the outdoors, while still being challenged in his work.

Jim's Tip: Your passions and your career don't necessarily need to be one in the same, but don't sacrifice one for the other. When you have both, you have the Whole YOU.

EVERYONE STRUGGLES WITH THE WHOLE YOU



Infographic note: 3



The goal of the next exercise is to build on your speech and explore your values further. To do this, review the list of statements below for you to score yourself on; remember, it's important to be honest with yourself and to score what you really think today (as opposed to how you think others would want you to respond).

For these statements, score yourself on whether you agree with this statement using a scale of 1 to 5, with a 1 being “Never” agree with it and 5 being “Always” agree. Go slow and feel free to make changes as you work through the list.⁴ At the end, find your total for each factor.

“IF THE WHOLE YOU WERE DEFINED SOLELY BY YOUR CAREER, YOU COULD STOP HERE; BUT, FEW OF US ARE DEFINED BY A PAYCHEQUE. WE’RE MORE COMPLEX.”

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	A lot	Always

Success Factors
<p>Factor A</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My friends and family are the most important thing in life.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Intimate relationships are the most important thing in life.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I value true friends before everything else.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Having respect and admiration from others is most important.</p> <p>Total</p>
<p>Factor B</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have nothing if I don't have my physical well-being.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I wouldn't sacrifice my weekends and holidays for a job or money.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I value my personal leisure before everything else in life.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have nothing if I don't have my mental well-being.</p> <p>Total</p>
<p>Factor C</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am professionally ambitious.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I believe my career defines my success.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It's important for me to be considered professionally successful.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I want to be influential and respected in my area of professional expertise.</p> <p>Total</p>
<p>Factor D</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> It's important for me to live close to my family.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I wouldn't move cities regardless of the professional opportunity.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I know where I want to live the rest of my life.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Where I live is more important than anything else.</p> <p>Total</p>
<p>Factor E</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I need inner peace.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual well-being defines who I am.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Having a sense of meaning is the most important thing in life.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My spiritual beliefs are central to me as a person.</p> <p>Total</p>
<p>Factor F</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Being financially prosperous is most important to me.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Money is the most important factor when I am assessing potential careers.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Financial success is critical to my future.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> My view of success won't come cheap.</p> <p>Total</p>



TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT SUCCESS



Now that you've totaled up each success factor, let's see what questions they raise.

Relationships (Factor A): What role do relationships play in your life? Are they central to you or are they secondary to other factors?

Health & Leisure (Factor B): How important is your leisure time and your physical and mental wellbeing to you? Would you trade this for other factors, such as professional or financial success?

Professional (Factor C): What role do professional or career goals play in defining your success? Are they paramount to your view of success or are they simply a means to achieving goals that are more important?

Place (Factor D): How important is the city or region in which you live? For some, they could never see themselves moving away from their home; but for others, where they live is secondary to pursuing other opportunities in life.

Grades Do Not Measure the Whole YOU

Growing up, Amanda's definition of success had a simple measure: her grades. But by the time she got to university she felt something was missing. Enrolled as a psychology major, she was fascinated by the topic, but stymied by what she could do with it.

In her second year, Amanda enrolled in a marketing course. The class lit Amanda's fire by linking her genuine interest in psychology to the real world: a better understanding of consumer behaviour. In marketing, she met a totally different type of student. Though committed to their formal education in a classroom, these students defined education way beyond the classroom. It included volunteering in their community, part-time jobs and internships. She realized her singular focus on her grades impacted her ability to be a holistic student.

Inspired by her classmates, Amanda became heavily involved in campus culture. She held executive positions in clubs, studied abroad, mentored new students and completed the cooperative education program. She chose her extracurricular activities to help her improve in areas where she felt she was lacking, such as network development, personal balance and work experience.

The cost of finding her Whole YOU was a slightly lower GPA, yet at graduation Amanda was chosen as her graduating class valedictorian.

Amanda's Tip: Purpose cannot be measured as a GPA. When you find your purpose, you will start to get a glimpse at your Whole YOU.

Spiritual (Factor E): What role do spiritual factors play in your life? How may this priority influence your future life decisions?

Financial (Factor F): Are you a person with very expensive goals in life and will you do whatever you need to do to see them through? If so, following a career that'll reward you financially is essential.



Now reflect on the results of your assessment. What factor was the highest? Which was the lowest? Why are some more important to you than others? What are some examples of how these factors influence your decisions today?

If these success factors always worked in harmony, you'd likely have no reason to read this book. But that's not how life works. In fact, the tension between these factors is at the heart of the Whole YOU. For example: achieving incredible financial success might be in conflict with relationship success - could the dedication to work get in the way of family? When you think about success, what is most important to you? What is least important? **Make a journal entry answering these questions about your values and how they affect your definition of success.**

Now that you've framed a more holistic definition of success, it's time to test whether the Professional YOU is consistent with this definition of success. For example, if the Professional YOU requires you to move to New York City and work on Wall Street, does that conflict with your success factors of Place and Relationships? If the Professional YOU imagines you working for a non-profit in a developing country, does that conflict with your Financial or Place factors? If the Professional YOU draws you away from your mountain home, does that conflict with skiing as the key to your Health & Leisure?



As an exercise, create a table in your journal like the one that follows. For each success factor, record whether it's "very important," "important" or "not important" based on the assessment you just did. Then identify how the Professional YOU helps you achieve success for each factor. Finally, identify

how the Professional YOU might be in conflict with each success factor.

Remember the Whole YOU

As a student in high school, Nicole started reading classic feminist texts that spurred an interest in gender studies, an interest that has lasted throughout her academic career. 2 years into her undergraduate degree as an English and Sociology major, she began volunteering for the campus helpline and became further impassioned to improve the safety and well-being of women on university campuses. These experience all encouraged her interest and commitment to improving gender equality.

Three degrees later, Nicole is a teaching assistant while she pursues her PhD in sociology. She's supporting a lifelong commitment to social change through research and education. Throughout her career, Nicole has learned the importance of being both committed and agile. She has an unwavering passion for gender studies and social change, while understanding that job markets can be fickle and new graduates sometimes need to be flexible. It is therefore important to discover the core element of what you're passionate about. In discovering what that is, you will open yourself up to new possibilities and employment opportunities, while not sacrificing your values and goals.

Nicole's Tip: It's about finding what you love to do and building your life around this.

The Whole YOU: Where the definition of success meets my Professional YOU			
	Importance	How does this support my Professional YOU	How does this conflict with my Professional YOU
Professional			
Relationships			
Health & Leisure			
Place			
Spiritual			
Financial			

Once you’ve filled in the table, it’s time to reflect. In your journal, consider the following scenarios:

1. Does the Professional YOU that resulted from exploring what you love to do, what you’re good at and what you could make a living at, allow you to achieve your broader definition of success?
2. Or, is it in such conflict with how you want to define success on your 100th birthday that you have to go back to the exploration stage and look for another Professional YOU?

If the second point is your conclusion, don’t be disappointed! While you may feel like you’ve wasted a few weeks or even months pursuing a Professional YOU that didn’t match your view of success, many of your peers would’ve gone decades before realizing they had sacrificed most of the success factors in their life. It’s better that you try again now than lead a life of regret.

Designing you is difficult because it involves so many different and often moving parts. In the remainder of this book, we focus a disproportionate amount of time on one part of your life—your professional life. In doing so, we aren’t suggesting that your success must be driven by the Professional YOU (though some may choose to do this). Rather, we find that at the life stage of a young adult, professional success emerges as either an important input or an important output to other success factors. For example, if you define living in a ski town (“Place”) as your highest priority, this will have significant implications on your profession as a surfing instructor or an accountant. Similarly, if you define making a million dollars a year as your highest priority, it’ll narrow down the professional paths that’ll support this priority (for example, following the profession of surfing instructor may put that million-dollar salary in serious jeopardy). **Remember, recognizing how these different parts of the Whole YOU are interconnected is what separates a systems thinker from everyone**

else. This is particularly critical when you move forward defining your product road map in Step 6.

YOUR 10-YEAR PURPOSE



The final exercise in Step 5 is articulating the Whole YOU in a purpose statement. A purpose statement (sometimes called a mission statement or vision statement) is core to product management because it offers a simple and concise description of your future product. This ensures that you are spending your precious limited resources (time and money) on a meaningful purpose. The purpose statement is the litmus test for all future decisions. That is the power of a purpose statement

Here's the trick to crafting an effective purpose statement: It shouldn't be constrained by history and the status quo (nor your comfort zone and your current identity). **A purpose statement is about defining a new identity that will anchor the future Whole YOU. It's a point on the horizon that provides you guidance and a destination.** At this stage, you don't have to understand how to achieve your purpose. The purpose statement simply provides guidance on how you should spend your limited time and money.

In *Designing YOU*, we'll focus on your 10-year purpose. We have found that 10 years offers a guiding light on the horizon without being as far off as a 100th birthday party. A 10-year purpose should incorporate all of your success factors. Your 10-year purpose should be an ambitious goal that is not constrained by the Current YOU. This is the time to dream big and think about the Whole YOU! To kick-start your thinking, here are some sample purpose statements:

Exploring for a Purpose

Madina followed her parents' advice and embarked on a business education. After all, it seemed like the surest chance at finding a job straight out of post-secondary school. Immediately, she had no interest in any of her classes and struggled to make a connection with any classmates. At 18, she didn't know exactly who she was yet, but she knew business school was the wrong place for her.

Madina also knew if she was ever going to be happy, she needed to explore other options. One of those options was an introduction to a government class she chose to satisfy an elective requirement and it sparked a fire in her. For the first time, a professor told her she was good at something.

Soon after, she ran successfully for an executive position with her university students' association for which she spent a year representing her university at student government events all over the country. Today, she uses her degree in government and policy studies background to help people and support human rights and LGBT causes. She's found her Whole YOU.

Madina's Tip: The Whole YOU will take time to find. Explore and be prepared to follow uncharted routes.

Sample 1

“In 10 years I will be a vice-president of marketing for an NHL team and a respected leader in professional sports marketing. I will be a leader in my community and actively engaged in my commitment to youth sport. I will complete an Iron Man triathlon every year as a commitment to my health and wellness.”

Sample 2

“My 10-year purpose is being a medical doctor, conducting cutting-edge research, and helping improve the lives of others around the country, and around the world. I will complete multiple residencies around the world and learn from the leading experts on health issues. I will form deep relationships with colleagues, have empathy for patients and always keep the greater good as my guiding light.”

Sample 3

“In 10 years, I will be the CEO of a software company. Against all odds, I will do this while spending most nights with my kids and continue to deepen my relationship with my spouse. I will pursue an MBA, which is critical to my professional goal, and stay active in order to manage stress and my health. I understand that my personal friendships might have to take a backseat for a while in order to achieve my 10-year purpose, but I’m willing to sacrifice some financial success in order to achieve success in my relationships.”

To develop your 10-year purpose, build it from the bottom up. Start by completing mini purpose statements for each of your success factors as illustrated in the table below, which you can replicate in your journal. Your 10-year purpose is like a house of cards. When the cards/success factors are aligned it’s remarkable, but if you disrupt one card, you risk the integrity of the entire house.

Since changing one card can completely alter the house, we encourage you to map out at least three different mini-purpose statements for each success factor based on three distinct “what if” scenarios. The complexity of your definition of success means there are several possible paths to achieving your 10-year purpose.

When you’re considering the possibilities for your “what ifs,” be aspirational. For example, “what if” in one of your scenarios you stay in your hometown but in another scenario you move to Australia? How could this ripple across your plan? “What if” in one of your scenarios you pursue your passion for social justice and join a non-profit agency, but in another scenario you follow this passion in your leisure and volunteer time?

The system-wide implications of one “what if” may be massive or small, but through “what if” planning you can start to understand life’s trade-offs as you frame these mini purposes. For this reason, when you’re completing this table you should reflect back on the last table you created in your journal, in which you identified the potential conflicts within your success factors.

As part of the “what if” reflection, engage your design team for input. Everyone on your team has made decisions in life based on what might happen if they took (or avoided) a certain path. This is an opportunity to benefit from their hindsight.

To develop your 10-year purpose, build it from the bottom up. Start by completing mini purpose statements for each of your success factors as illustrated in the table below, which you can replicate in your journal. Your 10-year purpose is like a house of cards. When the cards/success factors are aligned it’s remarkable, but if you disrupt one card, you risk the integrity of the entire house. When you’re completing this table you should reflect back on the last table you created in your journal, in which you identified the potential conflicts within your success factors.

Now that you’ve identified the mini purpose statements that could form your 10-year purpose, we are going to throw you a curve ball. We want you to step back and consider what an alternative set of mini purpose statements might be. What additional combination of success factors could also lead to a Whole YOU? It will be very rare that you can only envision a single clear path. The complexity of your definition of success will likely mean that there are several paths and several points on the horizon that could act as a guide.

Achieving Dreams is Hard Work

Steve dreamed of someday working in an office. Since nobody in Steve’s family had gone onto a post-secondary education and most of his adult role models were in the trades, he had to find his own path to his dream. There were barriers along the way. His family struggled financially and that meant he couldn’t afford some of the basics like textbooks. Even so, Steve persevered, studied hard and was accepted into university.

Steve studied sociology, which gave him an academic foundation to better understand his community as a member of a First Nation. Today, Steve works for an academic support centre, helping First Nations, Metis and Inuit students achieve their education goals. This enables him to give back to his community, practice his spirituality and financially support his family.

Steve’s Tip: Achieving your dreams is hard work, but following your passions will allow you to persevere through the hard times.

Success factor	“What If” Scenario A: _____	“What If” Scenario B: _____	“What If” Scenario C: _____
Professional			
People			
Place			
Financial			
Health & Leisure			
Spiritual			
Other			



Following consultation and reflection, it's time to choose: which scenario energizes you. At the end of the day, only you can choose which path to take. Following a roadmap is important, just be open to the fact that there will be off-ramps worth exploring as you discover the world personally and professionally.

The next step is to transform these individual success factors into a concise 10-year purpose statement around 200 words long. This purpose statement should be aspirational in tone and reflect what you want to become in 10 years. It's a critical guiding light for the Whole YOU that is the ultimate outcome of *Designing YOU*. This 10-year purpose statement gives shape and direction to your future and your future identity. With your purpose statement guiding you, it will be easier to define the actions and goals that will help you achieve your purpose. It'll also act as a yardstick to measure your progress and allow you to reflect on your identity.

Finally, your 10-year purpose evolves with you. Ten years is a long time during which you'll enter different stages in your life. Those new stages may influence the priority of your success factors and, as a result, influence your 10-year purpose.

The final stage in the 10-year purpose process is to go "live" with your preliminary 10-year purpose by discussing it with your design team. If you aren't comfortable with sharing your 10-year purpose, it's probably because you're not fully comfortable with it. Sharing and reflecting is a critical aspect of this process. You'll go through multiple revisions and refinements of your 10-year purpose. Once you're confident in it, it's time to go to Step 6, where we focus on getting you from where you now to where you want to go tomorrow.

GENDER AND THE WHOLE YOU



In our opinion, defining the Whole YOU may be the hardest step of all at this stage of your life, because your current perspective and priorities are very likely to shift over the next 10 years. If you're young and single, it's easy to underestimate the importance of future decisions around marrying (or not) and having children (or not). Still, we can't overstate the importance of forming a vision of your ideal family life long before you decide to "settle down" with someone. Your wedding day is a little late to figure out whether your vision is compatible with your partner's.

There are few decisions as important in your whole life as choosing a spouse. Unlike the other elements of the *Designing YOU* process, this choice is not entirely in your control. You might think that 28 is a good age to get married, but end up falling in love at age 18, or 35 or not at all. Your partner might have children from a previous relationship that ties him or her to a city where you didn't plan to live. Or you might be with a partner who has a highly demanding career and, as a result, expects you to be the primary caregiver for your children. And as complex as these considerations are for straight people, they can be even tougher for LGBTQ individuals, given the stigmas and discrimination that these individuals often face. Popular culture puts forward a fanciful notion that love conquers all. Perhaps. Just in case, we always recommend being clear-headed about your own personal deal-breakers.

This book is about designing you, not about designing your current or future relationship. This is a really important distinction. You can't be sure that your partner shares your values if you haven't independently decided what your own values are.

Think about these critical questions, regardless of your gender:

Do I want children? How badly? If so, how willing am I to slow my career progression for the sake of my kids?

Should mothers and fathers have equal involvement in raising their kids?

Is it best if a parent stays home while children are small? If yes, would I be willing to be that parent?

Could I be a single parent?

Would I be willing to move, for my own job or for my spouse's job?

Share your values openly with anyone you are considering settling down with. As difficult as these conversations can be, it's better to discover a values mismatch before than after a wedding.⁵



Our attitudes toward family life still retain some features from previous generations. When a professional woman has a baby, she's often asked whether she plans to return to work after maternity leave. The father of the same baby, however, is seldom asked whether he plans to quit work to care for the baby. Even in an era of increasingly involved fathers, the difficult decisions around childcare and work/life balance are still assumed to be bigger challenges for women than for men. Indeed, the majority of young straight men today still believe their female partners will assume primary responsibility for raising their children.⁶

The elusive work/life balance is a perennially hot topic, particularly for professional women with children. Both Laurie and Leah are professionally successful mothers who have faced, with our male partners, the tradeoffs required to find solutions that work for us. We believe that balance is possible, but it's different for every person. You need to set your own priorities and figure out your own answers—there's no magic bullet.⁷

Don't let yourself be bullied by social pressures. Professional moms feel social pressure to spend more time with their children. Stay-at-home moms feel pressure for falling behind professionally. Men are expected to be fully involved dads, yet they feel judged if they cut back their work hours or become stay-at-home fathers. Only you can define success for yourself, as that critical final piece of the Whole YOU. You are also likely to find that your priorities shift as time goes on, in ways that you may not be able to predict at this stage of your life.

AT A GLANCE


1. The Whole YOU is the intersection of four elements: what you're good at, what you love, what you can make a living doing and how you define success. How you define success is unique to you.
2. To transform the Professional YOU into the Whole YOU, you need to prioritize all the factors in your life: professional, people, financial, place, health & leisure, and spiritual.
3. Once you define the Whole YOU, you dig into your bigger purpose—your 10-year purpose.
4. Gender often plays a big consideration in exploring the Whole YOU and your 10-year purpose. It is important to reflect on what is most important to you as a person and not to be bullied by social pressure.

Next, once you have your 10-year purpose, it's time for you to build your product roadmap.

Alright. I know you're excited to start school and become the perfect cook, but we *really* need to make sure that you're fully equipped for the task.

First things first... I think we have to get rid of these pinchy *lobster fingers* you've got.

Hammer Hands



Great for tenderizing, terrible for tenderness.

I know it's hard to tell from my facial display, but I'm really quite excited.

Whisk Hands



I whisk they were better at holding ingredients!

Oyster Knife Hands



Far too niche, but great for the beach.

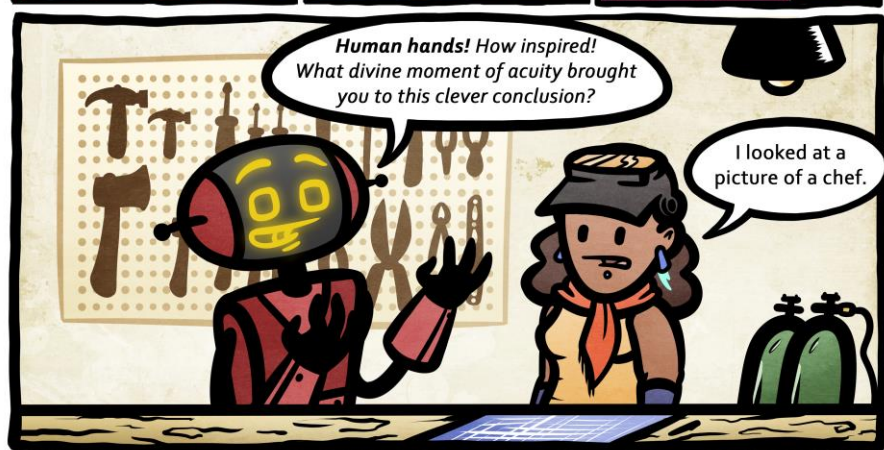
Steak Knife Hands



Hard to shake.

Human hands! How inspired! What divine moment of acuity brought you to this clever conclusion?

I looked at a picture of a chef.



STEP SIX

DEFINING YOUR PRODUCT ROADMAP



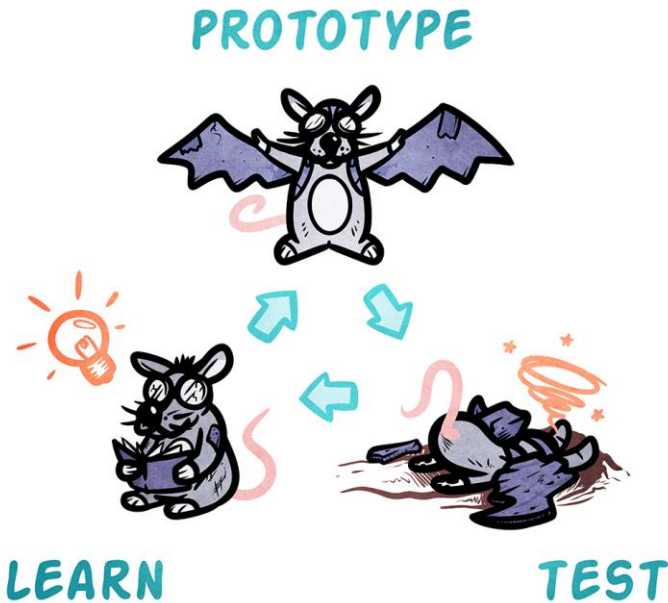
Some of you may be driven to choose the most direct approach to achieving your 10-year purpose, fast-forwarding from A to B. Adopting the shortest path to your 10-year purpose may appear to offer superficial and near-term benefits but the risks far outweigh any benefits. For example, if you decide the core goal of your 10-year purpose is to be a partner at a major law firm, you'll spend four years on your undergraduate degree, another three years on your law degree and a couple of years articling at minimum wage. In all, this will be a nine-year product development process that sets you back upwards of \$100,000. Before you put all your faith in developing this version of the Whole YOU you've imagined, you'd better be sure that at the end of the nine years it still aligns with your ever-evolving definition of success.

ESSENTIALS TO CREATING A PRODUCT ROADMAP

PROTOTYPE AND PIVOT

It's a considerable risk to spend all your time and money developing a product neither you nor the market wants or needs. So instead of viewing your roadmap as a set-in-stone path, view it as a series of prototypes, testing as you continually refine the Whole YOU. Prototyping and testing isn't a one-time activity, it's iterative. That is, you do it again and again.

Because prototyping and testing is a cycle, you can't always anticipate what your next prototype needs to be until you've learned from the previous prototype. In the law example above, your first prototype for being a lawyer might be to take a summer job in a law firm during your first couple of years as an undergraduate student (well before you take the expensive leap to law school). Maybe during this experience, you learn that a law career (especially early on) is a 24/7 365-days-a-year commitment. You might have serious concerns that this path may significantly impact other factors in your definition of success.



One option would be to run another test at another law firm the following summer to see if the work expectation is company-specific or if it's industry-wide. Or, you may decide, through ongoing consultation with your design team that you need to **pivot** and adapt your 10-year purpose to another market opportunity that will use your analytical skills, while allowing you to balance your other success factors.

The concept of pivoting is a powerful one. It's borrowed from basketball, where a player with the ball can have one foot firmly planted on the ground and pivot around to go in virtually any direction.

Being able to pivot means that while you may not like the direction you are headed, you can benefit from all of the work that got you to your current spot as you move in a new direction.

The beauty of pivoting is it's not "starting over." It's definitely not failure. It's leveraging where you are and factoring in new evidence to make a conscious decision to change direction.

One of the best pivots in recent years was a company called Odeo. The founders were going to build a podcasting platform, but the market opportunity evaporated when Apple released its own podcasting app for the iPhone. As the former boxing champion Mike Tyson said, "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the face." The Odeo team wisely decided they needed a new plan. They had built an impressive team and decided to leverage it by pointing it at a new plan—Twitter. You've probably heard of them and their 300 million active monthly users.¹

Don't be Afraid to Pivot While Looking for the Professional YOU

Stefan's family had immigrated from Serbia, and it was important to both himself and his family that he earn a university degree. However, he lacked confidence after spending 12 years in an education system that told him he didn't conform well enough to be successful. Influenced by a lifelong love of video games, Stefan pursued a degree in computer science with his eyes set on designing games.

Stefan earned an internship at a video game design company, but it didn't go exactly as planned. He quickly learned that playing video games was vastly different from building video games. Stefan accepted that he no longer wanted to develop video games, but he did have a passion for solving problems and developing software.

Upon returning home from his internship, Stefan was inspired by watching his father meticulously check his lottery numbers each week. Stefan thought he could provide a better solution. So he did. He developed a mobile application that facilitated checking lottery numbers. The app received 20,000 downloads in its first year.

Stefan's Tip: You never know what the world will throw at you, so be ready to pivot when the opportunity arises.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PROTOTYPE YOU?

Prototyping a physical product is relatively easy to wrap your head around. The original BlackBerry (the world's first smartphone) was first carved out of wood in order to test if it was easy to hold and if big fingers could type on tiny keys. The \$2 piece of wood was eventually built into a \$20 billion per year company before it lost out to Apple and Android. As Reid Hoffman, the founder of LinkedIn says, "If you're not embarrassed by the first version of your product, you've launched too late."²

But what does it mean to prototype yourself? What does it mean to prototype and test your 10-year plan?

Let's look at an example: Marco is in the second year of a business degree and his 10-year purpose involves being a partner at an accounting firm. He believes he understands the educational and experience requirements he needs to get there. What would be a reasonable, low-cost (in both time and money) prototype, to test the viability of his product roadmap? Marco might consider spending the summer working at an accounting firm. That would certainly give him more information about the world of accounting and let him test his interest in the profession. But getting a job at an accounting firm as a 19-year-old isn't easy. Rather than simply waiting until he's a senior and hoping he gets a summer job, is there an easier prototype that might move him forward? Marco decides to write an up-to-date resume and cover letter and test this early prototype of himself on a few accountants. In order to get valuable feedback, he uses his network to reach out to accountants for a brief meeting. His goal isn't to get a job, but to test whether the current version of Marco that is documented in his resume/cover letter is sufficient to get that first job. Instead of selling himself to the accountant, he focuses on determining what he needs to do to create

a version of himself that would be attractive for a summer job. During the interview, he probes for information in areas such as education, task-specific skills, soft skills, volunteerism, etc. that might be necessary to make his future application successful. This subtle difference between trying to get a job and trying to learn what it'll take to get a job is critical.

Once Marco has the valuable information about the gap between where he is today and where he wants to get by the summer hiring season, he gets to work on his second prototype. He revises his professional portfolio (which we will cover in Step 7) and prepares a cover letter to reflect the version of himself that'll result after he's taken the initiative to fill the gaps. In order to validate that he is on the right track, he reaches out to the accountants that gave him the original feedback and asks them if the new version of himself would be a strong candidate for a summer job. When they say "absolutely!" Marco can get to work filling those gaps.

Plan Your Path in Bite-Sized Pieces

Melissa was driven most of her childhood and adolescent years to be a doctor. However, once Melissa was in her first year of her Bachelor of Science degree, she realized that the highly competitive atmosphere of the program didn't suit her. She made a list of other disciplines where she was able to embrace her love of science. She landed on the more applied science of kinesiology and transferred programs. This pivot allowed Melissa to work toward a career in healthcare that she hadn't previously known existed.

Later, during her master's degree, Melissa enrolled in a work experience program where she learned how to practically apply her formal education. She learned she had an aptitude for project management and organization.

Melissa's project management work in healthcare today aligns with both her professional and personal goals. She has the flexibility to travel often, which likely wouldn't have been possible if she'd become a doctor.

Melissa's Tip: Thinking big can be overwhelming. Breaking your life and career into smaller achievable short-term goals are far more rewarding.

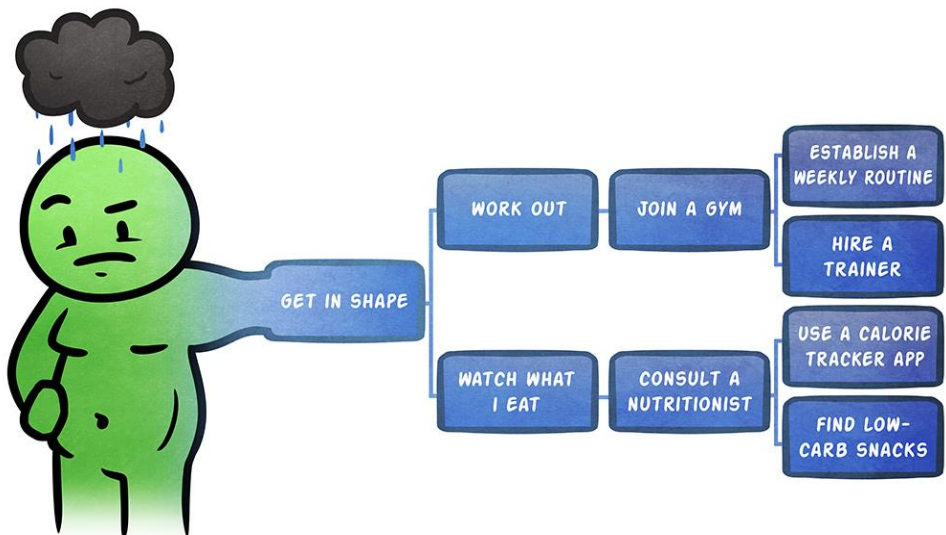
BREAK BIG PROJECTS INTO MINI-PROJECTS

As hard as it is to figure out what your whole product needs to be, having a credible roadmap that turns it into reality is even harder. Your *Designing YOU* roadmap outlines a series of complex and interdependent activities that share a common purpose—your 10-year purpose. Therefore, to actually move forward, you'll need to break down these complicated, lengthy tasks (such as earning a degree) into small, manageable pieces (such as improving your study habits). Accomplishing these smaller pieces gives you measurable proof that you're making progress towards your 10-year purpose.

It's not unusual for the burden of a large project to make your goals feel virtually unachievable. The result? Paralysis and often failure. Therefore— great product managers realize that progress is made through a series of mini-projects. Your *Designing YOU* roadmap is a series of inter-related **mini-projects**.

For example, if your big project were to get into physical shape, you'd break it down into a series of distinct mini-projects that make your long-term goal achievable.

Similarly, each of the mini-projects in your roadmap contributes to your knowledge on the path toward your 10-year purpose.



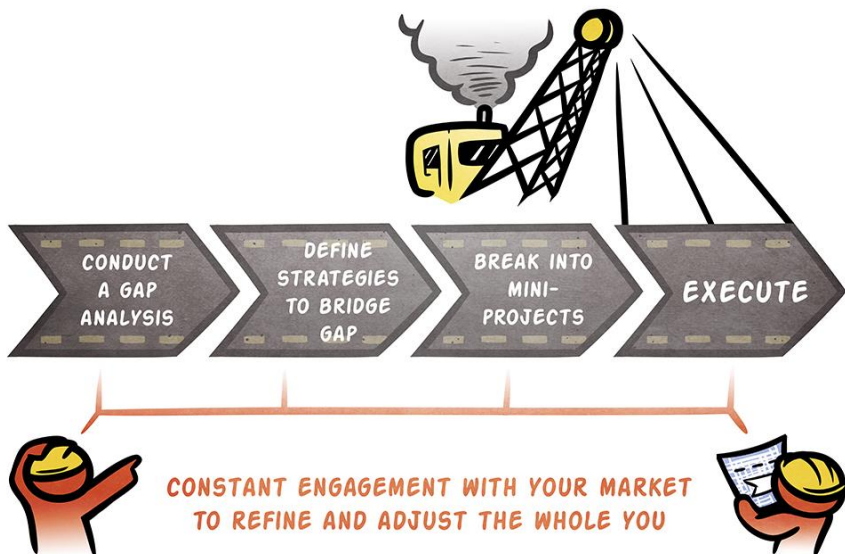
BE A SMART PRODUCT MANAGER

As you create your roadmap of mini-projects, you'll use the principles of **SMART** to ensure the goals for each mini-project are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Using SMART demands that you challenge any mini-project that doesn't deliver on these principles. For example, stating you want to graduate from university is not a SMART goal. Yes, it's both attainable and relevant to your 10-year purpose, but it's not specific, measurable or timed. A SMART goal would be "I'll graduate with a degree in sociology from the University of ABC in 2019 with a minimum 3.8 GPA." (And this high-level goal will be broken down into a series of mini-projects.)

The key with SMART goals is that they are measurable. By being this specific, the answer is a simple yes or no. In July 2019, you can either check off this goal as completed or not. Did you "graduate with a degree in sociology from the University of ABC in June 2019 with a minimum 3.8 GPA?"

SMART goals, when done well, offer both focus and motivation. Specifically, how attainable your goal is either motivates or demotivates you. For example, coming up with a SMART goal that defines an unrealistic schedule (e.g. completing a four-year degree in two years) or unprecedented level of performance (e.g. driving your GPA from 2.9 to 3.9 in one year) has a demotivating effect as you miss every goal.

For designing you, having both focus and motivation is critical because achieving your 10-year purpose is a really big project. Therefore, to get from here to there you need to be SMART. This requires you to keep an eye on both the horizon (your 10-year purpose) and to define a concise and well-ordered series of mini-projects (your roadmap) that let you test things on route to your 10-year purpose.



HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR PRODUCT ROADMAP

As we've noted, your roadmap is a series of concise mini-projects and each mini-project is in pursuit of a SMART goal. It may take several mini-projects to achieve one goal. For example, let's say you put graduate school on your roadmap. The goal of going to graduate school would be dependent largely on (1) achieving academic performance and (2) having the financial resources.

“THE KEY WITH SMART GOALS IS THAT THEY ARE MEASURABLE. BY BEING THIS SPECIFIC, THE ANSWER IS A SIMPLE YES OR NO.”

Let's tackle academic performance first. Achieving a SMART goal of “graduating in three years with a GPA of 3.8 in an honours program” has many mini-projects associated with it. Each university class you take could be its own mini-project, and each of those mini-projects has their own SMART goals: “A 3.7 GPA in Math.” “A 3.9 GPA in Human Behavior.” To ensure your assignments and test results allow you to achieve those course goals, you may need mini-projects within the mini-projects. Outside of classwork, you may also have mini-projects such as “being an undergraduate research assistant,” designed to test whether you would even like graduate school.

Similarly, your SMART goals for acquiring financial resources would also need to be broken down into mini-projects.

Resiliency Should Not Be a Gender Issue

When Aislinn began university, she quickly became frustrated because she was no longer the straight-A student she'd been in high school. Discouraged by her grades, she dropped out to pursue a professional music career. However, Aislinn quickly discovered that periods of failure and rejection are integral along the road to success in the music industry. But each time Aislinn struck a wrong chord onstage, her confidence took a hit, which was amplified when she noticed her male counterparts seemed to effortlessly shake off similar missteps.

Over time, stumbling in her sets became easier to stomach and Aislinn began to realize that the only way get over rejection was to face it regularly. When she reflected, she realized the guy musicians she knew had faced rejection countless times in ways that she had not as a woman. From traditional dating courtship, to stints of rebellion, Aislinn's male cohorts had been encouraged to face more failure as boys and therefore, became better equipped with tenacity as men.

Today, Aislinn uses the resiliency she gained as a musician to face the everyday challenges of entrepreneurship.

Aislinn's Tip: Don't theorize, don't analyze, don't overthink—take the plunge. Failure is inevitable and the only way you're going to get better at coping with it is by experiencing it.

— PHASE 1 —

ANALYZE THE GAP BETWEEN THE CURRENT YOU AND THE WHOLE YOU

Your 10-year purpose statement is both aspirational and ambitious. It's supposed to be. The ambitiousness in your 10-year purpose statement highlights gaps between the Current YOU and the Whole YOU. If the Whole YOU is the goal, then the gap will highlight the mini-projects required to reach that goal.



To build a roadmap composed of mini-projects and goals, we first need to conduct a **gap analysis** to identify the gaps between the Current YOU and the Whole YOU. Answering the following six questions will help to break down the professional side of your 10-year purpose into gaps, goals and mini-projects.

Review the information you gathered in Step 4 (including looking at previous research and your interviews) to answer these questions about the Whole YOU. When you answer, remember your responses need to be SMART.

Whole YOU questions

1. What formal education do you require to achieve your 10-year purpose?
2. What specific skills and experiences do you require to achieve your 10-year purpose?
3. What connections do you require to achieve your 10-year purpose?



Next, review your work from Step 2 and 3 (including what and who you know and what you can do) and answer the following questions in detail. It's important that your analysis is specific, as this will allow you to identify measurable gaps between today and your 10-year purpose.

Current YOU questions

1. What formal education do you have as of today?
2. What specific skills and experiences do you have as of today?
3. What connections do you have today?

When you compare your first three answers with your last three, you should notice significant gaps between where you are and where you need to be. If there aren't significant gaps, then you should challenge how aspirational and ambitious your 10-year purpose is. Remember, it's better to go back and make adjustments now than to wait until you're nine years into your roadmap.



Next, create a table in your journal like the sample that follows, using your answers to the questions above to fill in the table. In the last row, consider your definition of success and how it interconnects with the Whole YOU. You will use the contents of the third column later to build your roadmap of mini-projects.

Sample — Gap analysis and mini-projects

	Current YOU	Whole YOU	SMART mini-projects required to close gaps and achieve goals
Education	Completed one year of my business degree with a 3.6 GPA.	Requires a degree in business. 70 per cent of postings prefer graduate school. Design team recommends a graduate school only after work experience.	I must complete my degree with a minimum GPA of 3.6 to get into graduate school.
Skills & Experiences	Elected to an executive position on student council. Work part-time as a bartender. Coach competitive soccer team.	Key skills in postings: interpersonal communications, experience launching new products, experience managing project teams and projects. Design team emphasized diverse proven experience in both large and start-up companies. They also emphasized different industry experience is key to understand context.	I'll move to the co-op program to get two work terms prior to graduation—one term with a big company and one with a start-up. To gain management experience I'll take the project lead for my church's annual fundraising dinner.
Connections	My network is limited to my long-term friends and my student council network.	My 10-year purpose emphasizes the role of my network in creating opportunities. I'll need people from my industry in my network, and I'll need to identify a professional mentor that can make introductions.	I'll join the accounting club and the campus entrepreneur club. I'll also start attending more network activities at these clubs. I need to look at opportunities to use my church as a networking opportunity. I'll focus on using my design team to maintain a minimum of two informational interviews per month.
Interdependent with success factors?	I live in a small city with my family and girlfriend and commute to university. There are few high-tech opportunities in my home city. Bogged down by homework, I only work out three days a week for 60 minute	My 10-year purpose requires relocation to a major high-tech centre in Canada or the U.S. within five years. My 10-year purpose includes me completing two triathlons per year.	I'll review the roadmap with my family and girlfriend. I'll evaluate doing one co-op term in another city to see if I like it. I'll book 90 minutes five days a week in my calendar for the gym. I'll review in three months.

— PHASE 2 — STRATEGIES TO BRIDGE THE GAP



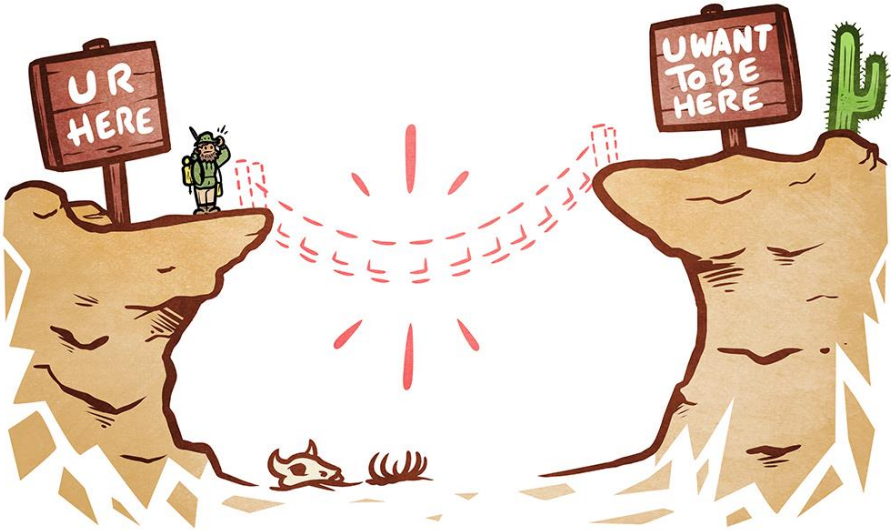
The analysis in Phase 1 identified your gaps and started the process of breaking your 10-year purpose into smaller and more manageable SMART mini-projects. Now you will need to break each mini-project into actionable activities.

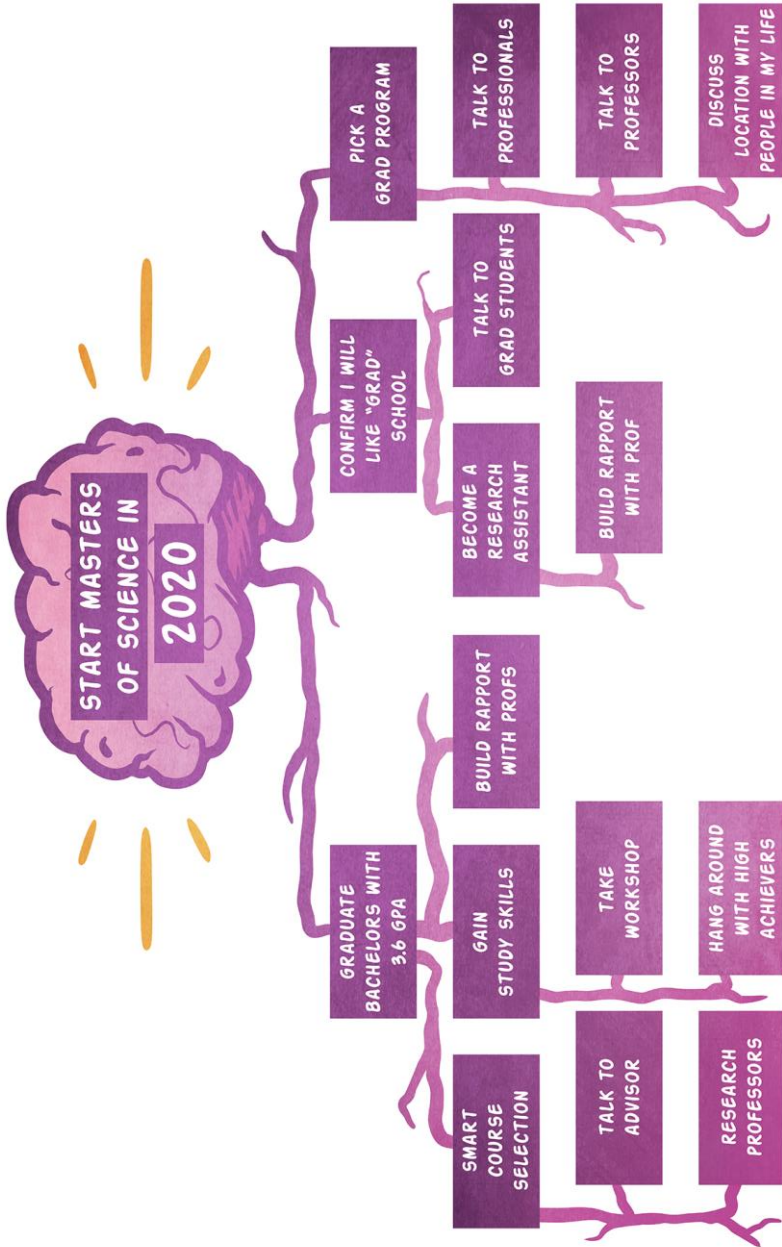
For example, it may seem audacious or like a flat-out fairy tale if your professional 10-year purpose is to be a vice-president of research by year 10. But once you break your 10-year purpose into SMART mini-projects for your *Designing YOU* roadmap, they'll be much less daunting. This will allow you to focus on the near-term mini-projects, which act as building blocks for your 10-year purpose.

Each SMART mini-project will be composed of a series of activities and goals. These shorter-term goals act as both motivation and reinforcement that you are on plan and the sacrifices you've made are worth it.

In this context, remember that the activities and goals for each mini-project you define must be SMART; if they aren't SMART, motivation and reinforcement can quickly turn into defeatism. Therefore, on one hand you want every goal to be a challenge, but you also need to ensure you can do it within the defined timeframe. Your design team plays a critical role in advising on this process as they'll have a sense through their experience of what is both achievable and realistic.

Let's now map out an example product road map to show you what we mean.

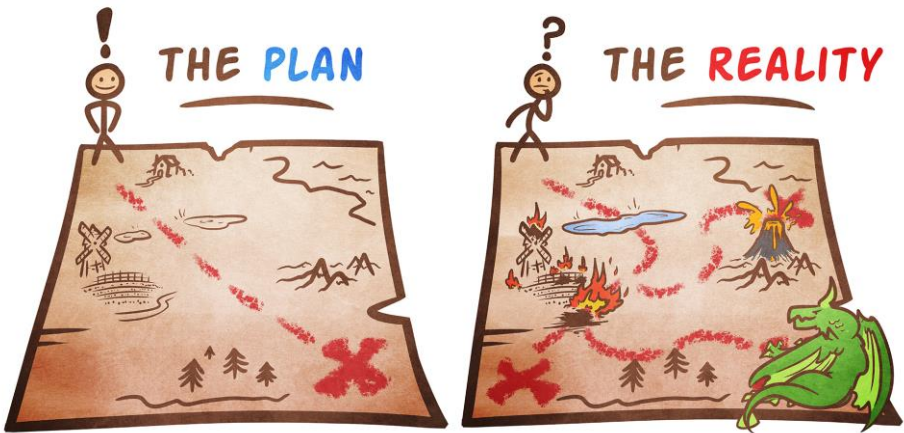




If you feel you aren't committed or motivated to achieve a specific mini-project, then don't include it in your roadmap. Reflect on why you aren't committed and evaluate alternative paths.

When you've completed your roadmap, review it with members of your design team and refine as required.

HAVING THE COURAGE TO SAY "STOP"



Congratulations. If you made it this far, you've designed you; but don't forget what Mike Tyson said, because **planning is very different from reality**. For this reason, ensure each activity, goal and mini-project incorporates prototyping and testing to make sure it is still delivering the value you anticipated, and if it doesn't, be prepared to pivot your plan. For example, in our sample above, we used a master's degree as the goal. A master's degree is a worthy goal, but it's not free. It'll cost real money, including two years of your life, not to mention the effort required to achieve the minimum entrance requirements comes at a real cost. In this example, one mini-project defined a goal of acquiring a 3.6 GPA. A 3.6 GPA is no easy task, and when you're sitting in the library on a Friday night developing your 3.6 GPA thinking skills, you aren't developing your other skills by volunteering at your church or working part-time in a bar. **For this reason, as a great product manager, you'll continuously test the payback associated with a master's degree and all the associated SMART mini-projects required to achieve it.** This should also be a key mandate of your design team. If you find at any stage the value of a graduate degree is questionable, it may be time to reassess you plan, stop and pivot. Only poor product managers blindly execute their plan, spending real time and money on something when all the evidence shows the cost exceeds the value. **Remember, it takes real courage to say "stop," but the cost of stopping is marginal compared to the cost of doing the wrong thing.**

GENDER AND YOUR PRODUCT ROAD MAP



Step 6 took you through a process of breaking your 10-year purpose statement into achievable goals. That process is largely the same for men and women, with one notable exception.

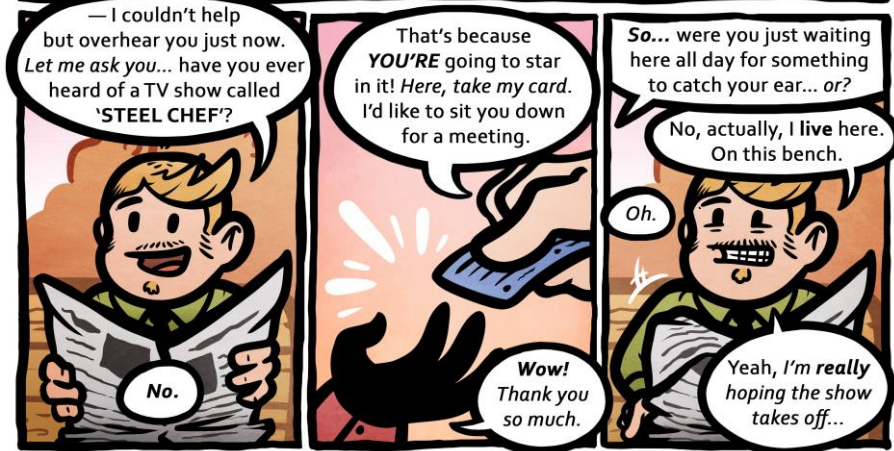
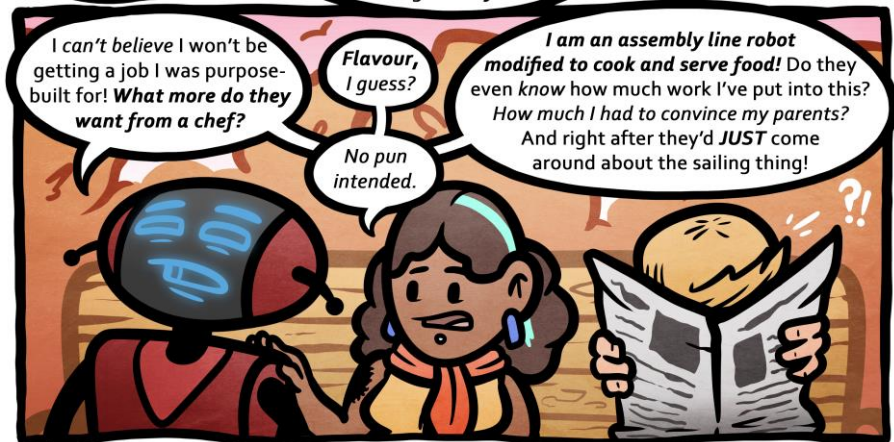
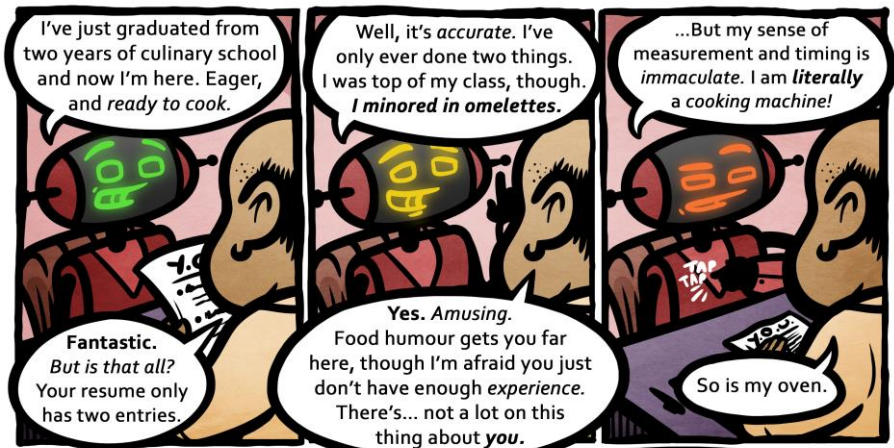
Your 10-year purpose statement might include starting a family. Since the biological reality remains that women are the ones with the potential to give birth, “starting a family” means quite a different thing depending on your gender (unless you are adopting a child).

If you’re certain you want children, you might be tempted to add childbirth as one of the steps in your product roadmap. However, having children is a particularly difficult thing to plan years in advance. In fact, even after a woman is pregnant, it is impossible to predict exactly when her maternity leave will start. We believe that the more realistic approach is to expect to update your purpose statement timeline down the road when you are ready to start a family. Or as Sheryl Sandberg puts it, don’t “lean out” of your professional career until you are actually pregnant. You might miss wonderful opportunities if you put too much focus on a possible future pregnancy that may or may not happen as planned.

AT A GLANCE

1. The product roadmap for designing you must be built on a philosophy of constant prototyping and testing.
2. Product managers must be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timed.
3. Complete a gap analysis by analyzing the Current YOU and the Whole YOU.
4. Break down major gap goals into SMART mini-projects that can provide an opportunity for prototyping and testing. This is your product roadmap.
5. Review your product roadmap with your design team and adjust it based on input.
6. A plan is different than reality, so always be prepared to say “stop” and pivot when the evidence tells you it’s time.
7. Factors like if or when to start a family may appear on your product roadmap; but be realistic as this is often difficult to build into a master plan.

Next, we focus on the importance of storytelling in product management.



STEP SEVEN

TELLING YOUR STORY

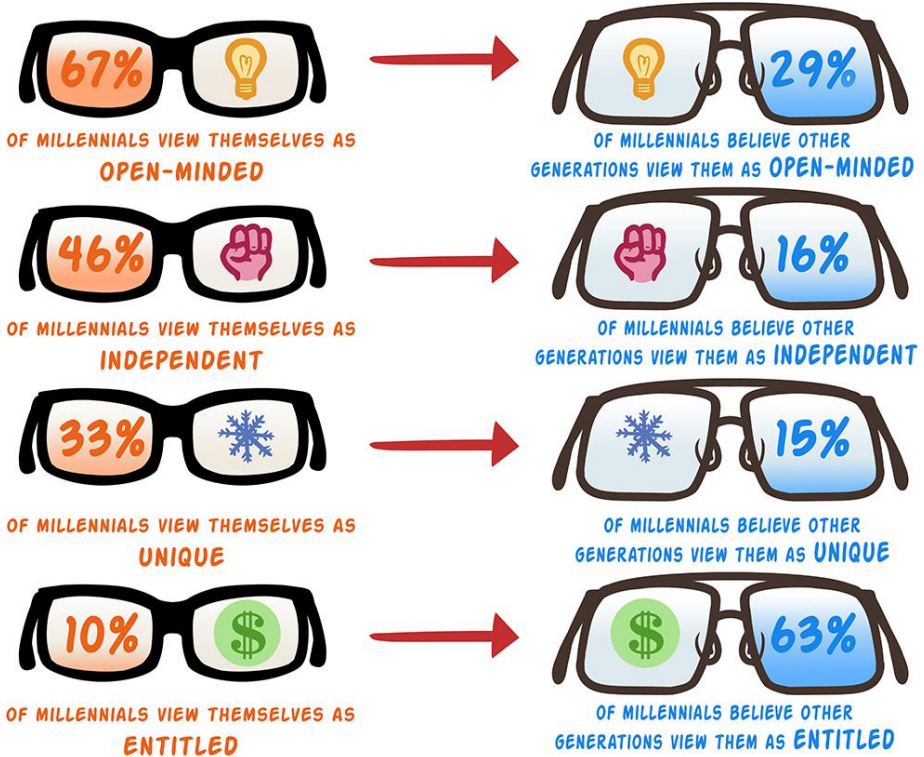


Every product manager must face the fact that the seemingly “best” product doesn’t always win. In fact, it could be argued that the “best” products rarely win. Usually the “best” product that also has the best story wins. Sometimes, the “good enough” product with the best story trumps the “best” product with no story.

The final critical dimension of designing you is effectively communicating to your audience (potential employers) that your product (you) creates the most value for them. You’ll do this using the art and science of persuasion.

“SOMETIMES, THE “GOOD ENOUGH” PRODUCT WITH THE BEST STORY TRUMPS THE “BEST” PRODUCT WITH NO STORY.”

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE



Infographic note: 1

Persuasion is one of the most basic human activities. Try to think of anything you've done today that isn't rooted in persuasion (e.g. Why did you wake up at a particular time? Why did you have a particular breakfast? Why did your friend retweet you? Why did you attend a particular class?).

Virtually everything you do involves either persuading others or is the outcome of you being persuaded. Sometimes persuasion is overt. For example, the goal of advertising is to change (or reinforce) your attitudes to trigger a specific behaviour. Advertisers want to persuade you to buy whatever they're selling. Other times persuasion is much more subtle, like an Instagram photo, Facebook post or tweet in which the subtle goal is to reinforce your reputation of being hip, cool, worldly, studious, entrepreneurial, adventurous, etc. Regardless of whether the medium and message are overt or subtle, the goal is the same: to influence the attitudes, and ultimately the behaviours, of others.



For great product managers, launching a successful product is not only about having the best features; it's about your audience believing your product offers them the greatest benefit and value and then having them act on it. Each launch of a new iPhone is a perfect example of this. Apple does such a great job of telling their story that people literally camp outside their stores to be the first in line to purchase the new model. This is an essential goal in *Designing YOU*. As you launch *YOU*, you want to have your audience line up in anticipation of the value you'll bring to them or their organization.

WHY YOU?

At the heart of your story is the reason your audience should be interested in you. For most products or services you buy, you're persuaded not by the **features**, but by the **benefits**. Think about any car advertisement. Yes, it may mention features like fuel efficiency or horsepower, but what the ad is really selling are the benefits of freedom, status, safety and convenience. It's these benefits that'll ultimately persuade you to buy one car over another. When you're designing you, you must translate the features of the Whole *YOU* into concise benefits. This is your answer to "Why you?" The following table demonstrates the difference between features and benefits.

Features vs. Benefits	
Focused on features	Focused on benefits
I worked in a retail sales position at a Nike store for three years. In this job, I developed my sales and customer service skills.	As a Nike sales representative, I had to embody the Nike brand to our customers. At Nike we don't "sell," rather we focus on the unique needs of each customer. Over my time at Nike, I developed my skill at exploring customer needs and aligning these needs to our product offerings. Evidence of my skill is the fact that I was the leading sales person at my store for two of my three years.



In the next exercise, we want you to answer the “Why you?” question by outlining your benefits. Replicate the following table in your journal. In the first column, identify the features of the Whole YOU. In the second column, note whether these are current features or ones you’re still working toward. In the third column, translate these features into the benefits for your audience. In this case, your audience is the target organization or industry you articulated in your value proposition from Step 4. An easy approach to this is to simply state the feature followed by “and this means...” For example, “I am on the student council executive team (the feature) and this means I have proven leadership in managing both people and budgets (the benefit).”

“FOR GREAT PRODUCT MANAGERS, LAUNCHING A SUCCESSFUL PRODUCT IS NOT ONLY ABOUT HAVING THE BEST FEATURES; IT’S ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE BELIEVING YOUR PRODUCT OFFERS THEM THE GREATEST BENEFIT AND VALUE AND THEN HAVING THEM ACT ON IT.”

To fill the fourth column, you need to find your empathy. Remember, the role of the Professional YOU is to create value for others, so you need to **enter the mind of your audience and prioritize your features and benefits**. What feature and benefit is an absolute need—a showstopper? Refer to the outcomes of your informational interviews so you can properly prioritize your features and benefits. Reflect on the language your interviewees used. How did they articulate the benefits they required? Did they describe a need for creativity, or problem solving, or people who can work in diverse teams, or employees who can get the job done with high-level instruction rather than detailed directions? It’s critical in your story to describe the benefits in your audience’s language. This is the value of empathy.

Here's an example to get you started:

“Why you?”			
The Feature	Current?	The benefit to your audience	Priority
Bilingualism	Yes	Canadian companies need to be able to communicate in both English and French. My bilingualism achieved through French immersion and studying abroad eliminates the need for a translator.	2
Finance background	Yes	By gaining three years' experience in finance before graduating with my marketing degree, I am able to understand the perspective of finance professionals, plan effective budgets and ensure the greatest possible ROI. This makes me an effective strategic marketer and allows me to reduce inevitable future tension with financial professionals, board members and CEOs.	4
University club executive	Working toward	Through various executive roles for the Student Marketing Society, I've developed the abilities to lead, coordinate and provide both long-term and short-term visions; identify and draw out the unique talents of those I work with; and, work effectively on a team with diverse viewpoints.	1
Theatre background	Yes	By spending six years in junior high and high school performing two plays a year, I've learned how to speak in front of a crowd and tell great stories. This public speaking acumen and ability to articulate myself despite pressures of a crowd helps me confidently represent the company at conferences and events.	5
Self-taught guitar player	Working toward	By taking the time to teach myself how to play guitar, I've developed a new creative muscle. Multiple modes of creativity inspire my professional work where I am regularly expected to be creative and inspired.	6
Nationally competitive athlete	Yes	As a competitive athlete for 18 years, I learned the importance of being disciplined, of setting achievable goals and of being committed despite physical and mental exhaustion. These world-class skills are now applied to my professional work.	3

This table of features and benefits is critical for creating your story. **It's worth sharing this with your design team and getting feedback.** Others will often see benefits that you miss and be able to help you prioritize the benefits that you have.

Implicit in “Why you?” is “versus someone else.” Your “Why you?” must be unique, otherwise you won't stand out from the crowd. Think about being “unique” as having something that is rare relative to your competitors (e.g. others applying for the same job). Being rare is critical since otherwise you're a commodity. Being a commodity means competitive products are virtually identical. Gasoline is the ultimate commodity. When people choose Gas Station A over Gas Station B, they'll typically choose the place with the cheapest gas because gas is a commodity. Trust us, you don't want to be the cheapest commodity, attractive only because you'll work for less money. You need to ensure you can deliver a unique collection of benefits that others cannot deliver.

At this stage you may be thinking, “I'm too young to be unique. I'm just like everyone else my age. I went to school and I had a part-time job, but there's nothing I've done that's ‘unique’ or ‘rare.’” Well, maybe, but we highly doubt it. A person with a sociology degree who has taught English in Asia, volunteered on a crisis help line, and started their own non-profit is totally different from their peer who has the same sociology degree, is a gifted musician, has published a research paper and has worked with autistic children.

**“IMPLICIT IN “WHY YOU?” IS “VERSUS SOMEONE ELSE.”
YOUR “WHY YOU?” MUST BE UNIQUE, OTHERWISE YOU
WON'T STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD.”**

Still, as great product managers know— being rare is really difficult because competitors can, and will, replicate most features and benefits. You may have a competitive advantage for a short period of time, but it'll soon disappear.

For example, as the first smartphone, BlackBerry delivered the very rare benefit of allowing you to be connected wherever you were. The main feature that enabled this benefit was the physical keyboard for typing messages. But the rareness of BlackBerry's key benefit of connectivity disappeared when Apple introduced the iPhone. Apple didn't replicate the physical keyboard common to a BlackBerry, but instead they decided to substitute this keyboard with a bigger touchscreen. For a short while, all smartphones had the same benefit (being connected wherever you were) but competed on features such as keyboard and screen size. BlackBerry was still in the game with their differentiating feature of a physical keyboard, but then Apple added another major benefit to their iPhone: access to hundreds of thousands, and then millions of apps. Android eventually matched that benefit with Google Play, but BlackBerry never recovered. Benefits always trump features.

Your answer to “Why you?” isn't tied to a single feature or benefit. The complex combination of your many features and benefits will make you unique, rare and difficult to replace. As you consider your features and benefits, ensure you look at the Whole YOU. Can your relationships and reputation (a features) open valuable doors for

your audience (a benefit)? Are your skills something that took you a long time to acquire, thereby ensuring others can't easily learn them? As we've pointed out, your degree or diploma

is likely just a feature, and not a very rare one. The reality is, the more multifaceted your features and benefits are, the more rare you are.

When you reflect on the Whole YOU, you'll find elements that can connect with your audience in a way your competition will struggle to match. If you aren't satisfied with your current features and benefits, then it's time to start acquiring more. If you know your audience wants a specific benefit you don't have, figure out how you can add it.



Infographic note: 2

YOUR STORY

Think of your answer to “**Why you?**” as the basis of a really good story. To write your story, you don’t need to be an award-winning novelist or salesperson. Your story simply needs to incorporate five key elements that make great stories great.³

A great story doesn’t speak to everyone; it speaks to your audience —

Few stories are universal. When you try to appeal to everyone, you typically end up watering down your message. That’s why the best stories are targeted to a specific audience. Understanding and empathizing with your audience is at the heart of your story.

A great story keeps them engaged —

Andrew Stanton, one of the master storytellers at Pixar Animation Studios, says the secret to a great story is caring. The easiest way to make your audience care about your story is to talk to them about something they already care about: a problem they have. What is their problem and how will you solve it? Once they care, you’ve got them hooked.

A great story makes a promise —

A story’s promise may be to thrill you, to entertain you or to make you laugh. Your story’s promise is to solve a problem. The bigger the problem that you can solve, the more your audience cares. The core of your story becomes the promise that you have the features and benefits to tackle an important problem and help them succeed.

A great story paints a picture with details —

Great writers have the ability to transport you to a different place or time by providing details so complete that you can see, hear and feel where they have transported you. The evidence of your features and benefits provides the details in your story. Without detailed evidence that you can solve their problem and deliver on your promise, the story falls flat.



A great story becomes their story —

Your story has to go viral. You need others talking about you and referencing the benefits you can deliver. This is far easier said than done because these storytellers have to deeply believe in your story before they stake their reputation on you. If you can get people to believe in you, they will amplify how many people hear it.

A great storyteller is trustworthy —

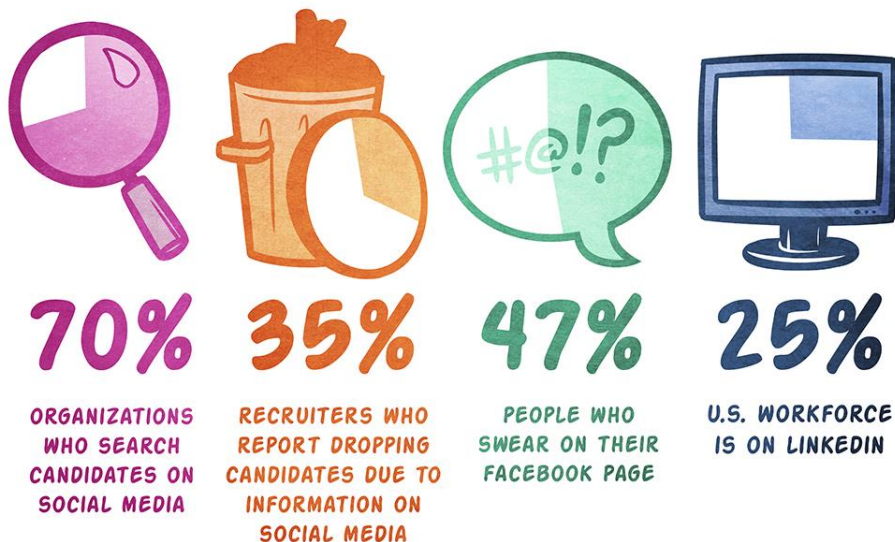
A story is only as good as its storyteller. At an early stage in your professional life, you may lack significant credibility among your audience. This is why your design team is imperative to telling your story. The more-established members of your design team possess one thing you can't help but lack—time. Time enabled them to build a trusted network. You can't be your only storyteller.

BUILDING YOUR REPUTATION

A positive personal reputation among influential people is gold; it opens doors and creates opportunities. Likewise, a poor reputation among influential people is a killer, closing doors and destroying opportunities. Big companies protect their reputations because they know the influence it has on everyone from their own employees to their customers.

Here is the challenge with your reputation—it's like glass. Warren Buffett, one of the richest people in the world, once said: "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently." You don't have to look too far to find a celebrity, athlete or politician who was at the top of their game one day and in the gutter the next. In today's digital world, all it takes is a viral video and a reputation can be destroyed. However, while global brands and celebrities can have their reputations cultivated by a team of social media marketing consultants, you cannot. Instead, your personal reputation is cultivated between people. This is because your reputation lives in the minds of your friends, teachers and coworkers; moreover, your reputation travels between your friends, teachers and coworkers.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUR REPUTATION



Infographic note: 4

Your reputation is the story about your past, your present and your future. Like all backstories, your reputation plays a critical role in establishing the lead character—you. Where did you come from? What have you done? What will do you in the future?

Your past is particularly important because it becomes the foundation for how others predict you'll behave in the future. As Henry Ford said, "You can't build a reputation on what you're going to do." Notably, your reputation never stands alone, meaning when others are evaluating you, they'll benchmark you based on people who are similar. They'll make judgments like, "I expected him to have more experience" and "I expected her to be more engaging." These expectations are out of your control. They are set by whoever is judging you. This is why you don't own your reputation; others do.

A hard thing for most people to comprehend is that you have more than one reputation. Your reputation is in the eye of the beholder. In other words, what an audience values will influence how they evaluate the positive or negative attributes of a person. Research shows that more than 90 per cent of employers use social media when evaluating a candidate.⁵ Employers report the use of profanity, poor spelling or grammar, and drug-, alcohol- and sexual-themed posts negatively influences their hiring decisions. Have you ever posted on social media after a great party? Maybe something like, "I had a #@\$& awesome time last night!?" Even if your social media channels are private, your posts from last night or even years ago may end up in front of an audience you didn't expect. (Ever heard of a screenshot?) How this influences your reputation among your friends may be very different than how it influences your reputation with people you may want to work for. This is why reputation is so tenuous; a single action can boost your reputation with one audience and destroy it with another. Here's a story to show how a reputation is in the eye of the beholder: Meet Yves. Yves is an undergraduate student majoring in accounting and minoring in mathematics. Yves did his first

internship in the accounting department of a massive company. In his informational interviews, Yves learned that accountants value three attributes: a grasp of numbers, attention to detail and a commitment to process. Yves had a very successful internship, happily crunching through spreadsheets and proving he possesses all the attributes they were looking for. Yves earned a reputation as a rockstar in the accounting department.

He was invited back for a second work term, but as is common in larger companies, he was required to work in a different department. After his first few weeks in the marketing department, Yves earned a very different reputation among the marketers. In fact, Yves had a reputation as being unable to keep up or solve the most basic problems. By the end of his three-month term, his nickname in marketing was “Slow Yves.”

Here’s the problem: His colleagues in marketing were dealing with anxious customers and their unique, challenging problems. For them, a rockstar was someone who could think fast and outside of the proverbial box to solve problems now. That was not Yves. For them, Yves wasn’t a rockstar.

The immense influence of your reputation means it’s essential for you to understand what your audience values and why they value it. A thorough understanding of their values will enable you to do two things: (1) ensure you actually develop features that are valued by your audience and (2) position and communicate these features as benefits that are of direct value to your audience.

Reputation and Networks

In the midst of his second year of a marketing program, Greg left college to pursue a position in industrial sales. He immediately found himself loving sales and was inspired to smash his sales targets.

Over his career in industrial sales, Greg has found success in industries from environmental services to technology, and in each case, his next opportunity came from his network. He found that he had to fully earn the confidence of people in his network if he expected a referral. Anyone who makes a referral is putting their own reputation on the line, too. Greg proved he was worth that risk again and again.

Greg’s Tip: Your professional reputation can play one of two roles: it can either become the biggest boost or the biggest barrier to achieving your goals. Either way, your reputation is built or tarnished with every decision you make every day.

THE REPUTATION RIPPLE

A reputation is intangible because it exists in the minds of those who know you. Unlike some hot new app, your reputation can’t be bolstered with million-dollar Super Bowl ads; your reputation is built one person at a time. Understand how your reputation is built and how it travels in your network, so you can do your best to build it in a way that benefits you.

The first impression: Psychologists find that the first impression is an anchor that sticks in someone’s head. The first impression can be through a direct interaction, but is often indirect, for example, if a friend or coworker mentions you to someone. Either way, your first impression leaves an anchor.

Say Tatiana is looking for a summer intern. Your soccer coach Marco recommends you to Tatiana for the internship. Marco says you’re super smart and a hard worker. This is Tatiana’s first impression of you. It’s only an impression, but at this stage it’s all she has, so it sticks.

Tatiana's first impression anchor is that you're smart and a hard worker. This anchor is like a hypothesis that needs to be tested.

Testing a first impression: Are you as good as Marco suggests? Tatiana needs to test this first impression. She starts by reviewing your public LinkedIn profile. She is impressed by your engagement in student clubs, your part-time work experience and your volunteer activity. Tatiana then checks you out on Facebook and Instagram and she can see you appear creative, sociable and well-liked.

Tatiana noticed that you worked for a company where her good friend Tom works. Tom and Tatiana go way back and she trusts his judgment. As it turns out, Tom was your previous manager and glows about your skills and work ethic. This supports the first impression anchor.

The judgment: Since sufficient evidence has validated Tatiana's first impression, she asks you for an interview. Although she trusts sources such as Tom, she trusts herself most.

In the interview, Tatiana is impressed with your demeanour, as it's consistent with her first impression and all the evidence she's collected. Based on this, Tatiana hires you for the summer internship. The internship allows her to test her impression over time. Time is a critical part of reputation-building because it allows her to assess the consistency of your performance. Time builds trust.

At the end of the summer, through her first-hand experience, Tatiana is prepared to make a judgment about you; you're a skilled and hard-working person. This shifts from being only an impression to being a fact that Tatiana is prepared to stand behind.

The reputation ripple: Now that Tatiana has first-hand experience, she is prepared to risk her own reputation by becoming your storyteller. So when she gets a phone call from Jill, a former colleague who is looking at hiring a new graduate, Tatiana offers you a glowing reference. This reference is Jill's first impression and the reputation cycle begins again.

But remember ripples can be good and bad......can you imagine what would have happened if your soccer coach thought you were a slacker, or if Tom remembered you being regularly late for work, or if your social media was full of misspelled messages posted in the middle of the night. There's still a ripple, and it's not a good one!

THE PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO: TELLING YOUR EVIDENCE-BASED STORY

As product manager, a key decision you'll make is where and how to sell your product. This decision has big implications on a product's success. It's not an accident that when you're in a particular store or mall you often come across the exact product you're looking for. It's because the product managers were one step ahead of you. To find just the right spot for their product, the product managers did a bunch of research to learn where people like you shop and what things you tend to buy. This helped them decide how and where they want to sell their product to you. Sometimes they'll choose to sell their products at stores where you might already be shopping (e.g. Walmart); or build their own specialty store so they control the full experience (e.g. Apple); or choose to use the internet exclusively (e.g. eBay); or they may choose a combination of the above to hit the broadest number of customers possible (e.g. Nike).

In the context of selling you, think about how and where you want to sell yourself. Do you want to use an online social platform that already has your target audience engaged (e.g. LinkedIn), or do you want to build your own website or do you want to use a combination of platforms? Wherever you choose to host it, we recommend you develop a **professional portfolio**.

Your portfolio is a dynamic and public collection of experiences, materials, relationships and evidence that proves that you're rare, valuable and able to deliver benefits to your target audience. It follows the old adage, "Show, don't tell." Building your professional portfolio demands a blend of all the work you've done in *Designing YOU*.

"THINK ABOUT HOW AND WHERE YOU WANT TO SELL YOURSELF."

We highly recommend you build your professional portfolio on a dynamic online platform, such as LinkedIn.⁶ With LinkedIn, you have a portfolio that is intuitive, relevant, has no cost and is used by more than 90 per cent of employers when hiring.⁷ If you're just graduating from high school, LinkedIn may be new for you (data shows that in 2015 only 1.5 per cent of high school students used it).⁸ LinkedIn as a platform has a variety of advantages, and because one in three people in North America are already on it, it's the most likely place your target audience is already hanging out.

Developing your professional portfolio on LinkedIn takes some time. Your portfolio is typically the first impression anchor and it sticks with influential people. You need to ensure it tells your story directly to them and offers evidence of your features and benefits.

For any organization, big or small, hiring the right people is critical to their success. Put yourself in the position of a hiring manager at Company X. You have two candidates. Both have excellent credentials and both interviewed well, but one candidate incorporated a range of evidence to show the world what they have done. Who would you hire?

They aren't only risking their financial resources on salaries, but a bad hire means that the important problem they wanted solved isn't getting solved. Depending on the role and the problem, it could cost the company hundreds of thousands of dollars. Therefore, your portfolio is not only intended to position your features and benefits, it's designed to minimize your audience's risk.

**“YOUR PORTFOLIO FOLLOWS THE OLD ADAGE,
“SHOW, DON'T TELL.” BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL
PORTFOLIO DEMANDS A BLEND OF ALL THE WORK
YOU'VE DONE IN DESIGNING YOU.”**

Here is some of the evidence you should incorporate in your professional portfolio:

1. Letters of reference
2. Examples of school project outcomes
3. Examples of previous work-related outcomes (with permission)
4. Work and volunteer experience
5. Academic transcripts
6. Performance evaluations
7. Awards
8. Photographs/videos/graphics
9. Articles/blogs you've written



To get an understanding of the evidence you can add to your portfolio, refer to the features and benefits inventory you did earlier, and complete the table that follows in your journal. The goal is to identify the evidence available to support your claim of having a particular feature or benefit. For example, what evidence do you have that you can lead a team? What evidence do you have that you're a self-starter? What is your evidence that you are creative? Or a good programmer? Or good with the elderly?

Consider the best way to share each piece of evidence. A bullet point in your work experience? A document you can upload to LinkedIn? A link to an article about your accomplishments? Or, is it too sensitive to share publicly, but could be shared verbally? Is it so specific to a particular role that it's best shared as a story in an interview?

It's important to remember you can use multiple pieces of evidence to support a feature or benefit. Providing more evidence for the priority features and benefits minimizes your audience's risk and enhances your probability of success.

Priority Feature	Priority Benefit	The Evidence	How to Share

One of the best things about identifying evidence is that it lends itself to telling your story. Consider the following four questions (and example answers) to turn your evidence into a mini-story that you can tell at job interviews, networking events or when you meet with your design team.

Turn your evidence into a mini-story	
Question	Example
What was the situation?	I was the Vice President of Events for the Chemistry Society at my university. Employer and student attendance at our annual career fair had declined 20 per cent a year for the past two years. Student satisfaction for this event dropped to 74%.
What was the task?	I was challenged by the society's executive and faculty advisor to increase employer and student attendance by 20 per cent this year.
What was the action?	I formed a joint student and employer advisory team. The team broke the event into two separate events (fall and winter). The fall event was a networking breakfast event. The winter event was a summer job placement event.
What was the result (both organizationally and personally)?	The result was we doubled employer attendance and tripled overall student attendance. Student satisfaction increased to 96%. Through this activity I developed my planning skills including time and budget management. I also developed my interpersonal skill in management of the advisory team.

PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO TIPS

Your professional portfolio on LinkedIn is alive and will evolve. After you've done the initial profile creation, you can tailor your LinkedIn portfolio to your specific story with your own visualizations of evidence. It's important to build your portfolio continuously as your experience and evidence grow. This may include updating your connections by networking with friends, family, peers, fellow students, or anyone whom you feel comfortable publicly listing as a professional relationship. Remember that LinkedIn is for your professional relationships, so think twice before connecting to the underachieving partier in your History of Alcohol class.

Once you have completed your portfolio we recommend taking the following actions on LinkedIn:

1. Join a minimum of two groups.
2. Engage in discussion forums, always in a professional manner.
3. Collect and analyze data and trends you notice while viewing other people's profiles.
4. Ask for introductions through your design team to get connected to others and expand your network. But when you do, ensure you always network professionally and be sensitive to your first impression.
5. Grow your network by searching your email contacts and finding people you may know.
6. See where alumni of your school are working and reach out to learn more about their company or industry.
7. Share updates with your network—such as interesting articles, links to videos or presentations. Consider the quality over quantity rule and ensure it is relevant to your audience and your own positioning.

The Value of a Portfolio

During her third year of university, Dani developed a detailed LinkedIn portfolio outlining her skills and past experiences. Then she finished the semester and left to travel Asia. After a month of travelling, Dani was in Tokyo when she began to worry about having a stable job for the remainder of the summer. She knew she had been bitten by the travel bug, and she had no idea how was she going to financially maintain her passion for travel.

Motivated to keep travelling without sacrificing her financial stability, she updated her LinkedIn portfolio statement to express exactly what she was looking for—a stable, full-time, remote position.

She was at LAX about to catch her flight home when she received a message from the director of a marketing agency. He asked if she would meet for coffee to discuss a position. Dani reached out to her mentors and friends for advice on whether to pursue the opportunity.

With a positive response from her network, she agreed to meet the director for coffee. She earned a second interview and was offered a remote account management position, which she accepted. This account management position allowed Dani to work a stable job for the rest of the summer and into her last year of school.

Dani's Tip: Networking is necessary. LinkedIn helps you to maintain all of your professional connections, keep an eye on new opportunities and tell your unique story.

When engaged in these activities, remember your audience and the impact of a first impression on your reputation. Before making a “funny” comment, understand what message that sends. Before taking a political stand, consider that your future employers might not share the same politics. Before linking to a poorly written article that you found on BuzzFeed, consider what this says about you.

Recognize that everything you say and do is a building block of your reputation. What you say or do either becomes an asset to get you where you want to go, or it’s a liability and becomes a barrier to achieving the Whole YOU. Consider LinkedIn as one giant room where really influential and important people (e.g., your future boss) hang out to evaluate who they may want in the future on their team. If you really were in that room, you’d probably be super sensitive to how you look and what you say. Just because it’s digital, doesn’t mean it’s any less influential. In fact, every little thing you do in a digital world becomes even more influential to your reputation because it can follow you around for a long time.

Here are nine other tips when using LinkedIn:

Job search

1. Find jobs by keyword, title, company, function, industry, years of experience and date posted using the “advanced” search feature.
2. Sign up for email alerts on your saved searches to get automatic notifications about new jobs that meet your criteria.
3. If you’re interested in a company, visit the profiles of people in the department you’d like to join as well the HR/recruiter. LinkedIn shows these contacts who has visited their profile, so this is a way to potentially get your profile in front of important people.

Company information

4. Learn more about a company’s products and services, latest news, employees, job opportunities and more.
5. See how you’re connected to each company through your 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-degree connections.
6. See data on employees, including where they worked before and after that company.
7. Follow companies you’re interested in to get updates from them on your LinkedIn homepage.

LinkedIn resources

8. Join groups relevant to your professional interests: alumni groups, industry groups, geographic groups and more.
9. Use groups to make connections, find job listings, establish thought leadership and keep your information current on trending issues and topics.

Amanda Schaufele
Marketing Professional
Calgary, Alberta, Canada | Higher Education

Current: ClearMotive Marketing Group, Mount Royal University
Previous: ClearMotive Marketing Group, RCKTSHIP, NEWAD
Education: Mount Royal University

Send a message | 496 connections

Experience

Social Media Coordinator
ClearMotive Marketing Group
January 2016 – Present (8 months) | Calgary, Canada Area

Project/Research Assistant
Mount Royal University
February 2016 – Present (7 months)

Junior Copywriter
ClearMotive Marketing Group
June 2015 – January 2016 (8 months) | Calgary, Canada Area

Education

Mount Royal University
Bachelor of Business Administration - Marketing
2011 – 2016

Marketing (major)
Psychology (minor)
Cooperative Education Distinction

Activities and Societies: MRU Marketing Society, Office of New Student Orientation, Cooperative Education Program, International Education Program, Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Awards and Honors

- W. At MRU**: In collaboration with Paul Brandt, Rosanna Imbrugno and the Backuspring Foundation, our Professional Brand Studio captions... View
- Valectorian - Class of 2016**: View
- President's Academic List**: Annual GPA equal to or exceeding 3.75. View
- LinkedIn Portfolio Student**: In support of Mount Royal University's Bisset Marketing Portfolio. View
- First Place: Bisset Marketing Case Competition**: View
- Jason Lang Scholarship**: Awarded for an overall GPA exceeding 3.2. View

In Common with Amanda
4

Ads You May Be Interested In

- A Board Position for You**: These companies need board members. Click here to be matched with them.
- The pump that pays**: Find out what your business could save with our Fuel Savings Calculator.
- Need a Board Member?**: Search, post and connect with high caliber executives. All for free.

REMEMBER THE BASICS

This step focused on building your online professional portfolio. While your portfolio is flexible and adaptable, you'll still need to develop some other basic elements. Consider it as one tool in your toolbox. The other basics include a professional cover letter (that can be adapted into an email) and a resume. There are wonderful resources online and at your university, college or public library on how to prepare these materials. Don't let your story sound like everyone else's. Seek out the help that is available and package everything you did for your LinkedIn story into a more traditional cover letter and resume that tells your story well.

GENDER AND STORYTELLING



Learn how to tell your story and sell yourself unapologetically, particularly if you are female. Girls are taught from a young age to not call attention to themselves, and above all to not be “bossy” to other children. A bossy girl might become a great leader, unless she is made to feel ashamed of her take-charge personality and develops a habit of underselling herself to compensate.

When you are doing informational interviews, take note of the people you meet who you really admire. How do they describe themselves and their career trajectories? Do they turn their past into an interesting story, and if so, how? You have an interesting story too, including your plans for the future. Practice telling it, and take note of which versions seem to capture your listener’s attention.

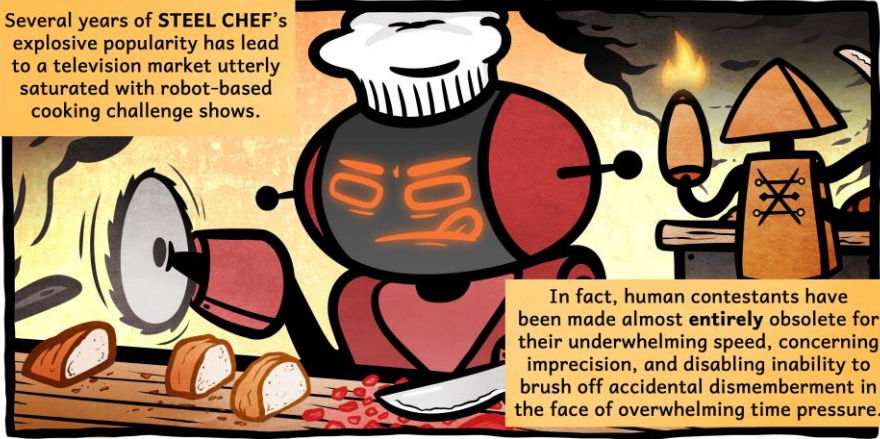
There are some interesting gender differences in how we listen to male and female speakers. Research shows that female speakers can enhance their credibility with an audience through the use of facts, statistics and evidence of analysis. Male speakers enhance credibility through the use of family references and shows of emotion and empathy. As ridiculous as these gender biases are in the 21st century, they still exist. You might as well be aware and take advantage of this knowledge, adapting your story accordingly.

AT A GLANCE

1. Without a good story, even the best product can’t always win.
2. Your story appeals to specific audiences. Empathy is critical; who is your audience and why would they care about your story?
3. The answer to “Why you?” is your unique combination of features and benefits. Your audience is persuaded by the benefits you can offer. Focus on benefits.
4. Your features and benefits must be both rare and difficult for your competitors to replicate. “Why you?” is rarely the result of a single feature or benefit, rather it’s the combination of different features and benefits that create unique value.
5. Great stories focus on an audience, engage, make a promise, paint a picture, are trustworthy and become the audience’s story.
6. Your reputation, like stories, is audience-specific.
7. Your reputation is an outcome of your personal and professional networks. It’s what separates you from achieving your 10-year purpose or helps get you there.
8. Your professional portfolio is your evidence-based story. It’s what shows your audience you can deliver the benefits you say you can.
9. Be aware of gender stereotypes (yours and your audiences) when telling your story.

Next, we look at the Whole YOU 2.0 and beyond.

Several years of **STEEL CHEF**'s explosive popularity has led to a television market utterly saturated with robot-based cooking challenge shows.



In fact, human contestants have been made almost **entirely** obsolete for their underwhelming speed, concerning imprecision, and disabling inability to brush off accidental dismemberment in the face of overwhelming time pressure.

We're about to be cancelled. Something new where the robots just fight each other to the death is getting popular again. *It's killing us.*

'DuelDroids'?
I love that show!

Me too, but it has **nothing** to do with cooking.

So, are you going to trade in your spatula for a *machete*?

Or a blowtorch!

Or a chainsaw!!

Heavens, no. Stop. I want to keep cooking. I just don't know where to go from here.

Well, people used to **love** seeing you cook in their living rooms. *Maybe...* they'd love to see you cook in their kitchens?

Are you talking about a door-to-door chef service? **Literal home-cooking?**

Bingo!

I love that idea! Wow, I really don't know what I would do without you two...

Well I just wish I could be as brave as you've been. I'm *still* getting my software development degree... I think I might actually *hate* it.

I've been working at the same auto shop since graduating. I don't really want to do it forever.

Now I'm afraid it might be *too late* for *my* dream...

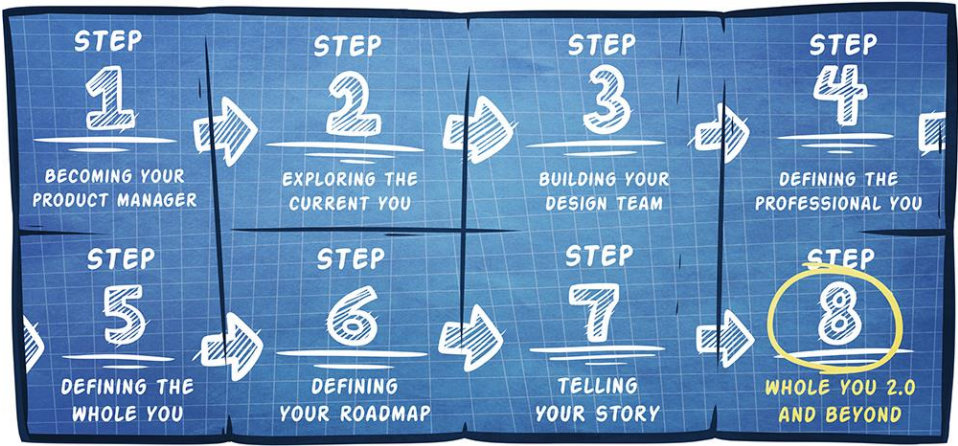
Which was?

Become a child popstar and retire at fifteen when my voice dropped.

...Well you could always shave...

STEP EIGHT

WHOLE YOU 2.0 AND BEYOND



**“WE KEEP MOVING FORWARD, OPENING NEW DOORS,
AND DOING NEW THINGS, BECAUSE WE’RE CURIOUS
AND CURIOSITY KEEPS LEADING US DOWN NEW
PATHS.”**

— WALT DISNEY

Congratulations! You have designed a Whole YOU that you can be proud of. You’ve set course for a 10-year purpose that’ll let you achieve your very personal definition of success. In this final step, we offer some of our closing thoughts on needing to view the process of *Designing YOU* as a state of mind.

EVOLVE OR DIE

If you go to your phone's App Store or Google Play store and look at the apps that are installed on your smartphone, you'll notice each of them are at version 7.15 or 10.32 or 6.56 or... These products never stopped improving. When Samsung and other manufacturers release new phones, the companies that build the apps add features to take advantage of the new hardware. When a competitor releases a new app, the app company has to respond with a better product to ensure you don't switch to that competitor. Even iconic "products" like the Ford Mustang, Nike's Air Jordans, Nintendo's Super Mario Brothers, Beyoncé, and the Rolling Stones had to evolve with the changing times. This concept of continuously adapting to a changing environment is what makes products successful over the long-term.

Don't be content with the first version of the Whole YOU that you launch. Your 10-year purpose must constantly evolve with you. You'll inevitably change as you add new skills, new interests, new relationships and new goals. Things around you will also change: new opportunities, new threats and new responsibilities. The work you have done to get to this point is important not only because it got you from there to here, but it also paved the path for how to get from here to wherever you might want to go in the future.

Four years from now you may decide to move that point on the horizon based on new evidence or a change in your circumstance. For both of your authors, our point on the horizon has evolved and changed over our lives. The 10-year point on the horizon in our 40s looks very different from the 10-year point when we were in our 20s.

And remember, the Whole YOU is not simply about your career or professional life.

Ray:

When I was in my second year of university, my 10-year purpose changed when my first son arrived. Specifically, the relationship success factor suddenly played a much bigger role in my 10-year purpose than it had before I became a father. I didn't throw away my 10-year purpose, but I did pivot slightly to ensure my professional success didn't come at the expense of my relationship success. This concept of continuously adapting to a changing environment is what makes products successful over the long-term.

David:

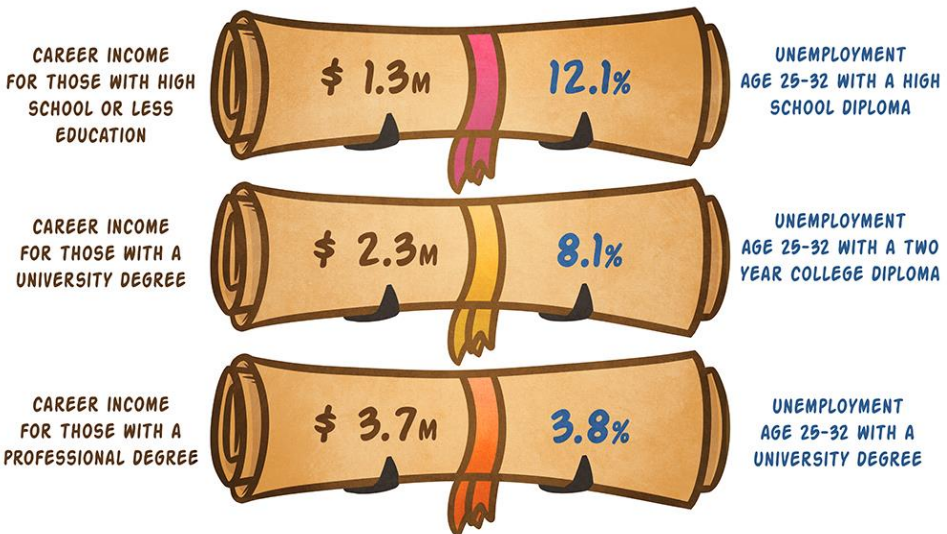
In my final year of my undergraduate degree, I defined my 10-year purpose. I informally updated it every year after and by 35, I had achieved my primary goal of becoming a founding partner at an agency. But after 20 years, I lost my drive to be a marketer. I remember the exact moment. I led a committee to build a new community playground. I remember the energy of raising \$300,000 and constructing the playground with dozens of neighbours and thinking, "I love doing stuff like this 10x more than my job." At that moment, I knew it was time to pivot, so I went back to school and completed my PhD on how companies can measure the value of giving (like donating money to build a playground!). This led to a whole new 10-year purpose (one that included this book).

EMBRACE CHANGE

As the saying goes, “The only thing that is constant is change.” Adapting, learning and growing is your only option. At certain times in your life your Professional YOU may be really important, and at other times it may be your relationships, your health & wellness or your spirituality. How and where they fit in depends on how you define success at any moment in time. However, don’t lose sight of what you wrote for your 100th birthday. Use this as your ultimate litmus test. Stepping back and reflecting on the whole you gives you a solid foundation to make those big (and small) decisions in life.

Recall in Step 5 that you considered several “what if” scenarios before arriving at your 10-year purpose. That same exercise is really practical throughout your life. When you’re faced with a change in life, use it as a reason to wonder “what if?” and revisit your 10-year purpose. If you have a job opportunity on the other side of the world, consider what your 10-year purpose might be if you went for it. If you lose your job in a recession, consider “what if” scenarios around going back to school, or starting your own business, or taking time off with the kids. “What if” is your best tool against sticking to a path simply because you’re already on it.

THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION



Infographic note: 1

THE MOST IMPORTANT BOOK YOU WILL EVER OWN

No, this is not a self-serving question and the answer isn't "the book you are holding." Instead, the most important book you will ever own is the one that you wrote, your *Designing YOU* journal. Regardless of whether you chose a blog, notebook or some other format, your journal shouldn't end here. In fact, your story is only at its beginning. So keep on reflecting, writing and reading. If not every day, then certainly every week. Stuff happens. Good stuff. Not-so-good stuff. But when this stuff happens, keep reflecting on your three questions:

1. What?
2. So what?
3. Now what?

This reflection continues to provide insight into yourself and the world around you. This is essential because the big designing you decisions you'll make over the next 10 years and beyond must be based on more than intuition and instinct; rather, these decisions must be rooted in evidence and reflection. This is why your journal is the most important book you'll ever own.

YOUR DESIGN TEAM IS FOR LIFE

After your journal, your design team is the most important part of the designing you process. Your design team isn't a short-term assignment or something you do in your twenties. Rather, the design team you built that helped you get to where you are today will continue to care about your growth as a professional and as a person. Just because you feel you have landed on the Whole YOU doesn't mean you won't need help and guidance as you continue your journey. Your design team should evolve and grow with you. They're there to support you. Listen to them.

Your design team should always be relevant to you, so keep it fresh. Continue to look for people in your network whose opinions you value and who are looking out for your best interests. This helps revitalize your team and provide fresh perspectives.

As you grow and change and are confronted with some big *Designing YOU* decisions (both professional and personal), your design team is a critical resource. In fact, one of your design team's key functions is to save you from yourself. Making big decisions alone is really hard and full of a lot of traps. For example, one common trap psychologists find is to fall so in love with a big idea that you subconsciously block out any evidence of information that may not support it.

**"ADAPTING, LEARNING AND GROWING
IS YOUR ONLY OPTION."**

Such traps can lead to making really bad decisions. History shows us that presidents, prime ministers and CEOs have fallen victim to many of these traps.² These traps aren't personality weaknesses. They're just part of being human. But that doesn't mean it's inevitable to fall victim to them, it just means you need to be prepared to see the signs of the traps. Spotting these signs is your job, but your design team, if you've selected them well, are your best defense. Below are common traps and how you can defend against them.

Don't fall into one of these traps	
The Trap	Your Defense
<p>I am correct because others agree with me. Psychologists have found a common risk of the comfort zone is an assumption that we're right. The result is you only listen to evidence that shows you're right.</p>	<p>Your Whole YOU mentor will need to play the devil's advocate and challenge you and your assumptions.</p>
<p>History will repeat itself. Trust me. It's human nature to use the past to predict the future. History is full of wonderful lessons, but it rarely repeats itself exactly. Just because something worked for your father or older sister, doesn't mean it'll work out for you.</p>	<p>If you notice you're making an inference without any evidence, test it. If you think you're making an unsubstantiated leap, bounce it off a team member.</p>
<p>An emotional fog. Do you really love an idea? Or at least love the idea of loving something? Emotions are funny things because they can make us act irrationally. But in the context of exploring your options, and trying to keep an open mind, emotions can be your enemy.</p>	<p>Ask for a trusted second opinion from your design team. Specifically, a trusted mentor won't be emotionally attached the way you are.</p>
<p>Building a "comfort zone" team. Odds are the people you trust more than anyone else in this world are just like you. They think like you and they want you to like them. This is double trouble. Psychologists call this <i>groupthink</i>. If you ask them for advice, you just get a love-in. They agree with you because they see what you see, or even if they don't, they want to be your friend so they tell you what you want to hear. If you start to fall into this trap, know you're not alone. Presidents have started wars and rocket engineers have blown up space shuttles because of this. Don't become a victim.</p>	<p>Find trusted advisors and mentors who are unlike you. You need a broader perspective. Tell them you explicitly want them to disagree with you. Tell them to challenge you.</p>

STAY INTENTIONALLY CURIOUS

You naturally get great depth of knowledge in the work that you do every day, but staying intentionally curious ensures that you continue to develop a breadth of knowledge. It's so easy to focus on your area of expertise, like taking more and more courses in your specialty, or subscribing to the magazines or journals that directly benefit your work. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but that's what all your peers are doing too. So how do you stand out? How do you have better ideas than the other specialists? How do you stay nimble while others

get pigeonholed? By staying curious, exploring new interests, having curiosity conversations and continuing to evolve a unique YOU.

THE POWER OF HUMILITY

One of the key messages in *Designing YOU* is the importance of humility— “knowing what you **don’t** know.” Acknowledging that you don’t know everything is not a weakness; in fact, it’s empowering. Once you acknowledge that you don’t know something, you start to do a lot of things differently. One of the most important things you can do is to become a better listener. You start to value the opinion of others because they know stuff you don’t. You start to listen and see things from the perspective of others. This is empathy. Finally, knowing you don’t know it all energizes your intentional curiosity because someone out there must know it.

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU GET GOOD AT

Malcom Gladwell popularized the concept that you need to put in 10,000 hours of practice before you can get great at something. You’ll accumulate 10,000 work hours in about five years, so there is a good chance you’ll naturally get good at what you’re doing.³ Before you get too deep into those 10,000 hours, be conscious of what you are getting good at:

- Is it in line with your 10-year purpose and the Whole YOU?
- Has something changed that may challenge the future value of these skills?

One of the most difficult decisions a product manager must make is acknowledging they’re heading in the wrong direction. They’ve probably invested a lot in a product’s development, so they keep reinvesting hoping things turn around.

You might be familiar with the name Kodak. The phrase “a Kodak moment” was synonymous with taking a special photograph. By providing both the film that went into cameras and the paper that most photos were printed on, Kodak became a huge success and a household name. But despite the fact that they invented the digital camera in 1975, Kodak clung to what they had become good at: making film and paper. If they had understood the

Keep Your Feet Moving

Shortly after achieving his 10-year purpose and being fortunate enough to sell his company, Ray realized that the lack of a Professional YOU really left a hole in his Whole YOU. He started having coffees with young entrepreneurs, asking good questions and sharing some advice. Although this began as way to “give back” and help the next generation, it turned into a full passion for Ray.

One evening his wife asked, “Could this be the next professional you?” Ray got to work on the next version of his Whole YOU and he now works full-time teaching, mentoring and advising new entrepreneurs.

Ray’s Tip: There’s a hockey saying that you need to “keep your feet moving.” By having a dozen coffee meetings a week, Ray not only kept his feet moving but he skated right into his dream job.

changing environment around them, they would have invested many more hours in perfecting the digital camera and might be still relevant today.

Great product managers are driven by evidence and are prepared to pivot when the evidence tells them it's time. Keep challenging your assumptions and your 10-year plan to ensure whatever you are getting good at still fits.

INVEST DURING THE GOOD TIMES

A lot of people focus on networking only when they're in job-hunting mode. Here is the problem with that approach: If you view relationships as a bank account, the best time to build your social capital is during the good times. This means you'll have something to withdraw when you need it most. You need to constantly build your network, which is easiest when you have a job. You can attend professional events, your requests for a coffee won't be interpreted as a job hunt tactic and you can also offer help to those who are hunting for jobs.

While networking, you'll be asked, "What do you do?" Don't just rhyme off your job title and current employer. Remember, the Whole YOU is far more interesting than simply the Professional YOU. Instead of just responding "I'm a teacher at school X," don't be afraid to share a little more. "...but what really excites me is the triathlon that I'm training for." Those are the nuggets that people remember and may deepen the connection beyond a meaningless exchange of business cards.

JOIN A DESIGN TEAM

At this stage, you know the Whole YOU is a team effort. Your design team helped you get here, but so did your friends, family, teachers, coaches and many others. The best thank you that you can provide to those who supported you is to give back the way they gave to you. In the not-so-distant future, someone may ask for your advice over a coffee. While you may say "yes" out of a sense of obligation, you'll quickly realize that mentoring relationships always benefit both parties. Being asked to be part of someone's design team is an honour and an incredible learning opportunity. With that in mind, don't just say yes when the question comes up, but be proactive and look for opportunities where you can give back to others. Never forget how difficult it was for you to ask someone to a "curiosity conversation," so make it easy for others. Look into alumni programs at your college or university. They're always excited to have graduates come back and help new students.

LIVE YOUR REPUTATION EVERY DAY

As you embark on a career, there can be a tendency to start to define yourself by your current job. It's understandable given how many hours a week you spend on that aspect of your life, but similar to your education, you are much more interesting than simply your job. Remember that your reputation isn't tied to a given job or company. The Whole YOU goes beyond your education and your career. Likewise, your reputation transcends your current role. It's more

aligned with your 10-year purpose than your short-term career goals. How you express your reputation is completely up to you. It can be expressed in the way you dress, the causes you support, the blogs you write, the volunteering you do, the image you portray on social media, the introductions you make or the way you make others feel. Your reputation doesn't change when you change your employer or move locations. It's who you are.

TURN DOWNS INTO UPS

Life is inevitably full of ups and downs. Your ups include achieving your personal and professional goals, like completing your first triathlon, or meeting that special person or finding your dream job.

The unavoidable downtimes are why resiliency and perseverance are core attributes for product managers. If a new product flops, they take everything they learned from that failure and feed it into designing their next product.

There are few people who don't, at some time in their professional lives, find themselves bored at a job, underemployed or altogether unemployed. Sometimes, losing a job may have nothing to do with you but you became a casualty of something you had little control over. Unemployment is rarely fun, but it's worse if you didn't see it coming and worse still if you don't view it as an opportunity.

When great product managers have a product that flops, they park their ego at the door and reflect on why it failed. This same reflection needs to happen when you find yourself out of a job. The shock of being unemployed can do a number on your self-esteem (not to mention your bank account). After you get through the shock and perhaps anger, you need to ask yourself "Why?" What can you do to put yourself in a better position going forward? What part of the Whole YOU needs improvement?

For product managers, products rarely go from success stories to flops overnight.

In fact, the writing is often on the wall well in advance. If they see this writing on the wall, maybe in the form of increased competition or changes in consumer wants, product managers prepare for it. They may adjust pricing or start working on the next generation of the product.

Be Prepared

When David was a product manager in the tech sector, changes were coming fast and furious. His company had acquired a start-up and the merger had gone poorly. Shortly after, the CEO was fired.

At that point, David started to activate his network and his back-up plan. Through his network, he met a former colleague who was exploring starting a new marketing agency and was looking for a partner to share his vision. Being part of an agency was next on David's professional plan so the fit was perfect.

Though he was energized by the opportunity, he wanted to ensure he could maximize the timing. They worked at developing the agency plan in the evening and David kept his day job. Within 60 days, his company closed his division and laid off all staff. David took his severance on Friday and opened his new agency on Monday.

David's Tip: Always have a plan, and then always have a back-up plan. Being surprised is rarely fun.

For you, maybe losing your job had nothing to do with you and more to do with the struggling company or shrinking industry you're in (although you chose to work at the company or in that industry, so you're not completely blameless). On the other hand, maybe losing your job had everything to do with you. Did you fall behind on your skills? Did you get complacent? Did you tip the scales toward other success factors, ignoring the Professional YOU?

The best time to plan for the downs is during the ups. This includes revisiting your 10-year purpose annually and questioning whether the current version of the Whole YOU helps you achieve that purpose. It also means ensuring you have a buffer in your real bank account as well as all of your relationship bank accounts that we mentioned earlier. If you start to sense that an unscheduled and unwelcome career change is in the cards, it's critical that you revisit the Whole YOU and prepare to re-launch yourself into the world with all the energy, planning and reflection that you did when you launched the Whole YOU v1.0.

STAY FRESH

When we talk about the Whole YOU, we truly mean the Whole YOU—every single part of YOU. At this stage, you may have guessed your authors are both people who take our Professional YOUs very seriously, but also acknowledge the importance of taking a break to stay fresh.

“WHEN GREAT PRODUCT MANAGERS HAVE A PRODUCT THAT FLOPS, THEY PARK THEIR EGO AT THE DOOR AND REFLECT ON WHY IT FAILED.”

Taking a professional break is not incompatible with your Professional YOU, in fact, we believe it's essential. What exactly a “professional break” is will be up to you, those around you and your interests. We have both taken extended professional breaks to go travelling, spend more time with our families or go back to school. Just like most of what we talk about in *Designing YOU*, taking a break should be incorporated into your 10-year purpose. If you want to go backpacking for six months, go to Florence to study art history or volunteer in Africa, then go ahead and add it to your plan. This will force you to figure out the financial implications long before it's time to take the break. For example, taking a break requires you to be a disciplined saver and to manage your spending and your debt. Reflect on this, but know that we encourage you to plan for professional breaks. You'll find that well-timed breaks do wonders to help you evolve the Whole YOU.

GENDER AND THE WHOLE YOU 2.0 AND BEYOND



You're at an exciting stage in your life, and you live in an exciting time. We still have a long way to go to create a society that is truly accepting of all human diversity, but change is happening fast. Same-sex marriage is being legalized in more and more jurisdictions. Awareness of issues facing transgender people is rising. Women are breaking into executive ranks in greater numbers in most parts of the world. Paid maternity leave is now the law in almost every country (although the U.S. remains a striking exception).

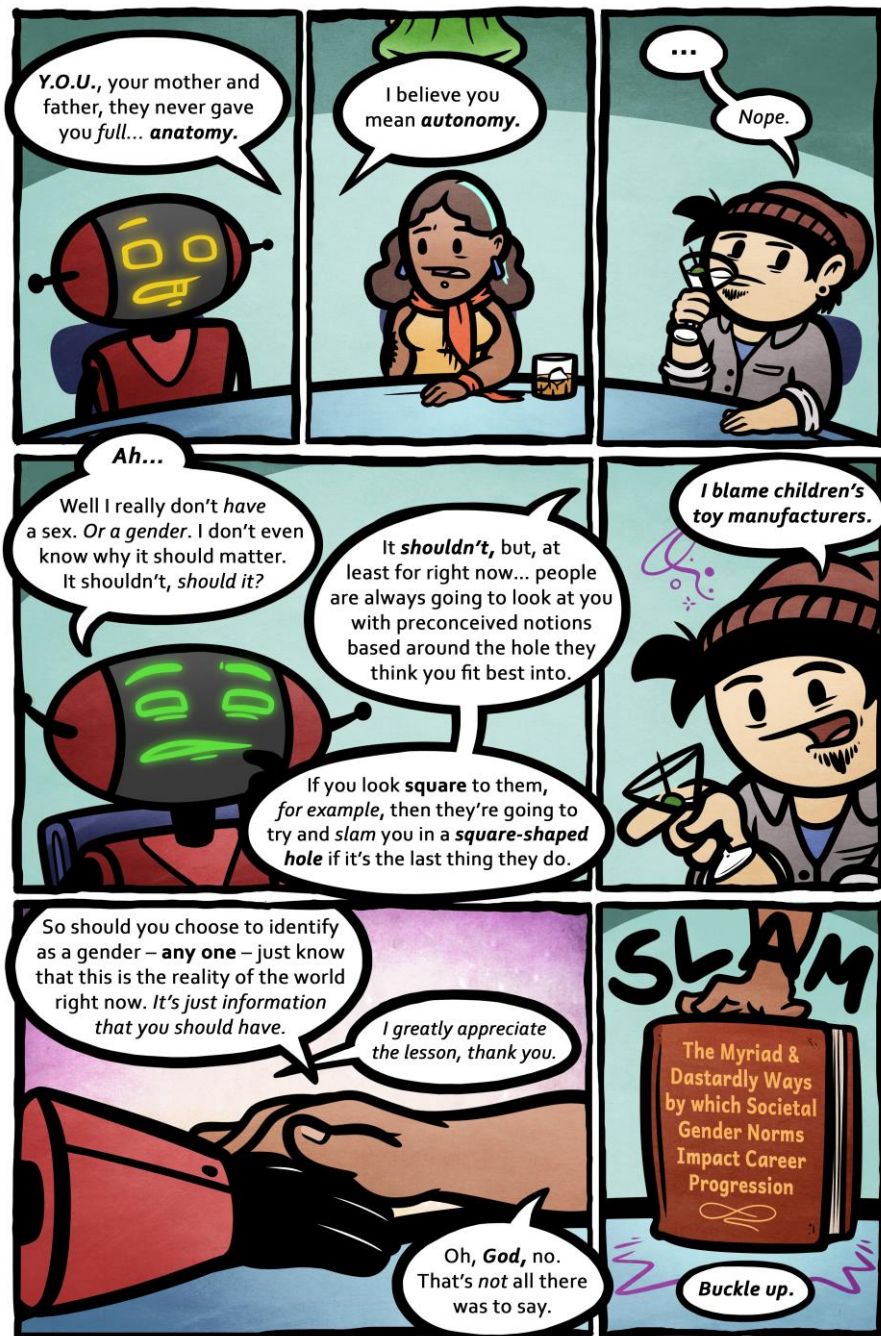
Gender is not the only factor of your identity that must play into designing you. Your sexual orientation, *gender expression*, ethnicity, religious identity and socio-economic status all play a large role in your personal identity, and all of these factors can create barriers, biases and challenges. It's important to decide for yourself the importance of each of these pieces of the whole you. Try to resist being put into a box because of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or socio-economic status. Your parents or members of your ethnic or religious community may tell you that a certain path isn't right for you because of your background. Balance that counsel with advice from others on your design team. Then make the decisions that are right for you—this is your future, after all.

Gender does matter, and there's no point denying that fact. The good news is that gender matters less for you than it did for your parents and grandparents. You have more options available when designing you today than any previous generation. So, be curious, be open, be flexible and set your mind toward your future. Only you can design you.

AT A GLANCE

1. Adapt to the changing environment.
2. Look around (and behind) you.
3. Your journal is the most important book you'll ever own. Don't stop reflecting.
4. Your design team is for life. Keep it relevant.
5. Stay intentionally curious by always asking questions.
6. Be humble, empathetic and know what you don't know.
7. Be careful what you get good at and remember you didn't fail, you just learned a great lesson.
8. Remember to invest in building your relationships during the good times. Build up this social capital because someday you'll need to make a withdrawal.
9. It won't be long before someone is asking you questions. Listen and give back. Don't ever forget designing you is a team effort. Proactively be someone who offers support.
10. Your reputation is about everything you do—big or small—every day. It doesn't take any breaks. So live it.
11. Everyone has ups and downs. One of the potential downs is unemployment or underemployment. Always think about how you can turn the down into an up. Be proactive and prepared.
12. Take a break and refresh yourself. This is important to keep your Whole YOU whole.
13. Gender is still a big societal issue but it is evolving at an unprecedented pace. You can be anything you want.

Next, is living up to your 100th birthday speech. Good luck with the many versions of the Whole YOU that you'll launch to achieve that purpose.



APPENDIX

— QUESTION THOUGHT STARTERS —

Think of this like a shopping list of questions; you'll never get the opportunity to ask anywhere near this many questions in an informational interview. Decide which questions are most important for you and are aligned to the expertise of a given interview candidate.

EXPLORING THEIR CAREER

1. How long have you been in your current job?
2. How long have you been with your current company?
3. What does your current role entail? What does a typical day look like?
4. Do you manage other people in your role?
5. What kind of decisions or issues are you often faced with in your job?
6. What type of training or education prepared you for your current role?
7. What is the toughest situation you've ever been faced with professionally?
8. What other groups or departments do you interact with in your current role?
9. Do you interact directly with customers?
10. Does your job involve regular hours or can they vary?
11. What is the best part of your current role?
12. What is your least favourite part of your current role?
13. What type of education do you recommend for your job? Would you recommend graduate school (e.g. MBA, MSc) for this role?
14. When you reflect on your career so far, what would you do more of? What would you do less of?

EXPLORING THEIR CAREER PREPARATION

1. When you were at my stage, how much planning did you do for your career/life?
2. How does your career relate to your formal education?
3. Is your formal education essential to your career?

4. What courses at school best prepared you for your career?
5. If you could go back to school and start all over again, would you do anything differently?
6. How important are grades for getting into your field?
7. What are the best university/college programs in your field?
8. Did you do a co-op or internship in college/university? Would you recommend this? Why?
9. Did you work part-time when you went to school? Would you recommend this? Why?
10. Are there specific extracurricular activities that might help me prepare for a career in this area?
11. What jobs and experiences have led you to your present position?
12. What kinds of things did you do before you entered this occupation?
13. Which aspects of your background are most helpful?
14. What other jobs can you get with the same background?
15. Based on our discussion, what other field or industries would you suggest I consider?
16. Would you recommend anyone in your network I should reach out to for a discussion?
17. Which professional journals and publications should I be reading to learn about this career?
18. Are there any professional or industry associations I should consider joining?
19. Are there volunteer activities I should consider that would support my entry into this field/industry?
20. What would you recommend I do to keep up to date on trends in this field/industry?
21. Do you have any written job descriptions of positions in this field/company?
22. Would you take a short look at my resume/LinkedIn profile and make any recommendations on how I could improve it to be better positioned for success in your field/industry?
23. Are you willing to answer more questions, by phone, email or in person, if I need additional advice in the future?

EXPLORING THEIR PROFESSIONAL FIELD (E.G., ACCOUNTING) OR INDUSTRY (E.G., RETAIL)

1. What are the different types of careers in this field/industry?
2. Is this field changing? If so, what is driving this change?
3. Is the field growing? Why? Why not?
4. In what industries is this field growing the fastest?
5. In what cities is this field growing the fastest?
6. What type of education do they require in this industry?
7. What are the most important skills demanded today in this field?
8. What is the starting salary in this field?
9. What is the best thing about working in this field?
10. Do people stay in this field for their career or do they tend to leave?
11. If they leave, what are the common reasons?
12. What do the common entry-level positions in this field generally entail?
13. When you look at people who have succeeded in this field, what characteristics do they tend to have?
14. What would you suggest is the most important thing someone entering this field should know?
15. If you were going to do it all over again, would you enter this field again?
16. To progress in this field, is moving cities required?
17. What international opportunities exist in this field?
18. What do you wish you'd known before you entered this field?

EXPLORING THEIR NON-PROFESSIONAL LIFE

1. How do you define success?
2. How do you balance your professional and life goals?
3. Have you ever had to make a decision to pursue financial gain in your career at the cost of other elements of your life? If so, what compromises did you have to make?
4. Have you ever had to move to advance your career? Was this a difficult decision?

5. Do you find you've been able to balance friends and family with your professional goals? At any time, did you have to sacrifice one or the other?
6. What are your hobbies or interests? Does your job relate at all to these interests?
7. Have you found stress in your career? If so, what do you do to manage this stress?

ABOUT US

DAVID J. FINCH



Before becoming a university professor and co-authoring *Designing YOU*, I spent almost two decades in product management and marketing roles primarily in the technology sector. After working away in cubicles and on airplanes for some giant companies like Bell Canada and Rogers Communications, I followed my own dream and co-founded a sports marketing agency.

Starting my own marketing agency taught me the importance and limitations of having a plan. Big companies, I realized, like having a plan, but big companies are terrible at actually following them because they're so big. Small

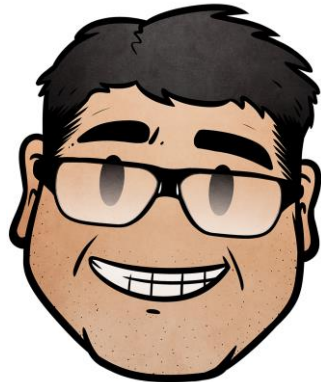
companies aren't great at making plans, but they're agile and adaptable.

After twenty years in these different roles asking questions, I decided it was time to find some answers, so I pursued my PhD in management and became a university professor. It turns out being a university professor is less about finding answers and more about asking better questions. As I started asking those better questions, it struck me that education and product management have a lot in common. Each year, universities and colleges churn out really expensive products called students; some of these products find an audience but many do not. This led to the question, "What if students started to manage their lives as if they were a product manager?" This was the inspiration for *Designing YOU*.

RAY DEPAUL

I spent the first 25 years of my career as the product manager for a series of successful and not-so-successful products. I tried to compete with Microsoft in the early 1990s and failed. In that failure, I learned a valuable and painful lesson that you need more than a good product to succeed.

I went on to be part of the team that created the first BlackBerry. I have many stories of the triumphs of birthing the entire smartphone industry, but understand the reality of having to compete with companies such as Apple and Google. I am thankful for the opportunity to deliver a product that so many loved, if only for a short time.



I became the CEO of another technology startup and later sold it to Intel, the mammoth Silicon Valley company. Reflecting on my career to that point, I realized coaching and mentoring young people brought me the most joy. I am fortunate to have found my next calling as the Director of the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Mount Royal University, where I spend every day working with young entrepreneurs trying to turn great ideas into successful ventures.

I am known for mentoring the person, rather than the company, and I've brought my person-centered approach to *Designing YOU*.



S.R. RINGUETTE

I am a British/French-Canadian crossbreed who successfully reached maturity in the harsh (but definitely friendly) climate of Western Canada. I began publishing my cartooning work online in 2007. My mission is to create entertaining content. I am the creator of multiple web comics: *Exploding Wumpus*, *The Aversion Bureau* and *Gamer Roommates*.

In recent years, my creative focus has turned towards novel writing and teaching. I teach kids how to make comics for fun. I have taught, organized, and run youth programming for the Writer's Guild of Alberta, including the Wordsworth creative writing residency and Drink The Wild Air. I also founded and currently lead an awesome youth cartooning club called Pen & Panel, and I work with the Reality Is Optional Creative Kids Programming organization. I have spent time as a cartoonist, artist and writer in residence at schools and I've even done birthdays. I believe free time is a luxury afforded only to the sane. Find my work at www.srrscribe.com.

ABOUT OUR DESIGN TEAM

Throughout this book, we preach the importance of your design team when designing the whole product that is you. The right design team is the difference between a product that flops and one that delivers results. While this book may appear to simply be the product of two authors and an illustrator, there was a whole team at work behind the scenes.

The design team responsible for *Designing YOU* includes countless colleagues, in academia and from industry, who offered opinions and insights over the years on the topics we tackle here. Dozens of people, including recent graduates and those further into careers, were interviewed and shared their real-life experiences for the *Designing YOU* story.

The design team includes our research assistant Amanda Schaufele who spent endless hours filling in the gaps and kept us laser-focused on our audience. The team also includes Mount Royal University's Career Services and the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, who generously supported this initiative.

Finally, the design team incorporates the thousands of students and other young people who, over the years, shared with and showed us firsthand what it takes to design you. This is their book.

GLOSSARY

Benefits: An integral part of the value a customer gets from a product or service, and what really sells it over the competition, beyond *features*. See *Features*.

Blue ocean strategy: A blue ocean strategy requires finding a market where there's lots of demand, but very few competitors. Finding a blue ocean normally requires you to think differently than others about what the customers in that market need.

In contrast, a red ocean describes a mature market where there is significant competition all offering a very similar product or service. They inevitably start cutting their prices to compete, resulting in the proverbial "red blood" of those who couldn't survive the tough competition.

Cognitive intelligence: A person's mental capacity for problem-solving and reasoning. This includes an ability to learn from an experience and reflect on its relevance.

Conformity: A term used by psychologists to describe how people are influenced to modify their attitudes and behaviours to align with a group norm.

Current YOU: In *Designing YOU*, this encompasses your existing experience, knowledge and skills at this moment.

Design team: A team of mentors who will advise you on important personal and professional decisions. This includes your *Whole YOU* mentor, your Professional YOU mentor, your personal advisor and real-world experts.

Emotional intelligence: A distinct form of intelligence separate from *cognitive intelligence* that includes six dimensions: emotional management, self-awareness, optimism, motivation, empathy and social skills.

Empathy: The ability to understand and share the feelings of other people. Sometimes called "walking in someone else's shoes."

Evidence-based: A principal first used in medicine that requires the rigorous evidence demanded by science to support decision-making.

Features: Features are the tangible, measurable attributes of a product or service. For example, "open 24 hours" is a feature; so is "12-hour battery life." However, what sells a product are the *benefits* that a feature provides. For example, "open 24 hours" offers the benefit of shopping on the customer's schedule, not the store's. "Twelve-hour battery life" in a smartphone offers the benefit of going out for the day and not having to worry about the phone battery dying.

First impression: A first impression happens the first time someone directly or indirectly experiences a person, place or thing. A first impression creates a mental reference point of the person or object being evaluated.

Gap analysis: In *Designing YOU*, a gap is the disparity between the current state (the Current YOU) and the desired future state (the Whole YOU). The gap analysis shows the opportunities to bridge that gap.

Gender expression: How a person expresses their *gender identity* (e.g., dress, body language, chosen name).

Gender identity: A person's individual experience and identity along the gender spectrum (as a female, male, or neither, or both). This may or may not correspond to their sex.

Goal: A target or objective pursued by a person. For example, Trish has a goal of moving to Italy and learning to speak Italian.

Groupthink: A term used in psychology to define when a group of people make poor decisions because they're intent on maintaining group harmony.

Identity: How we perceive ourselves or how others perceive us. Self-identity considers our self-image. Group identity is influenced by how a group of people project their image and how group members are in turn influenced by the larger group identity. For example, fans of a sports team may possess a group identity.

Imposter syndrome: When an individual feels like a fraud and undeserving of their accomplishments.

Information: Facts about a person, place or thing.

Informational interview: A term used to describe an interview conducted for the sole purpose of gaining *information* about the interviewee's area of expertise. The goal of informational interviews is the acquisition of *knowledge*, not to "sell" oneself to the interviewee. These interviews are well-structured with a clear *goal*. This contrasts with what we call "curiosity conversations," which tend to be more broadly based and less goal-oriented than informational interviews.

Intentionally curious: Someone who is inquisitive with a strong and intentional desire to learn through asking questions.

Interdependent: When two elements are dependent on each other. In other words, one thing cannot occur without the other. For example, "I want to help people by becoming a doctor. Therefore, this is dependent on me completing medical school. Going to medical school is dependent on me achieving a minimum 3.8 GPA in my undergraduate degree in biology." Thus, all these factors are interdependent.

Intuition: Someone who uses their intuition to make a decision is doing so without complex reasoning. Intuition operates based on past experiences in what are perceived as similar situations. Intuition may lead to poor decision-making because we overlook evidence, instead relying on our gut and biases.

Knowledge: The application of *information* to a specific context and used to solve a problem. Knowledge may be acquired through studying or experience.

Market: A collection of customers with similar wants and needs. In the context of *Designing YOU*, this might be an industry looking for new employees.

Market intelligence: This is *information* used by marketers and product managers to make

evidence-based decisions about the strategic direction of their product or service. Sources of market intelligence may include customer research, analysis of competitive offerings, government data and market research. It also may include internal company records such as past customer purchasing activities.

Market opportunity: When there is a gap between what a market wants or needs and the current product or service offering available. For example, Uber identified a significant gap not filled by taxi companies. There are also career-related market opportunities. For example, there is a gap in the number of companies needing software developers and the supply of qualified employees.

Mini-project: In *Designing YOU*, this is a sub-project used to achieve a larger *SMART goal*. For example, if you have a desire to become a marine biologist, a mini-project may be completing a degree in marine biology; another mini-project may be getting work experience in marine biology at your local zoo during the summer.

Personality: A combination of traits that influence an individual's attitudes and behaviours. A variety of approaches are used to explain common personality traits. One of the more common approaches is defined as the Big Five: Outgoing, Trusting, Organized, Nervous, and Curious.

Pivot: In entrepreneurship, pivot refers to when a *product manager* changes direction, often based on feedback from their customers. Pivoting doesn't suggest "starting over," rather it means that the product manager will build on the work to date and target a new opportunity.

Potential YOU: The Potential YOU is any option you identify as a potential future *Professional YOU*. It is the combination of what you love to do and what you are good at. A Potential YOU must be evaluated and tested. For example, Tasha is a recent high school graduate who loves astronomy and identifies being an astronaut as one of her Potential YOU options.

Product manager: Guides the process of creating a product from the inception of an idea, through development, testing, launching and getting it into the world. A product manager is responsible to identify a *market opportunity*, conceive and design a new product idea, and stay engaged with customers to ensure feedback is incorporated in the plan. Without a product manager's high-level oversight, a project such as designing you can fall off the rails, or simply wither and die.

Product managers are often confused with project managers. A project manager is a role that occurs in a wide variety of industries from construction to technology and is responsible for the overall implementation of a defined project (e.g. implementation of a new information technology system in a company).

Professional portfolio: A dynamic collection of experiences, materials, relationships, and evidence that proves you are rare, have *value*, and are able to deliver *benefits* to your target audience. It follows the old adage, "show, don't tell." A portfolio may be in a digital format (e.g. LinkedIn) or it may be in a more tangible format (e.g. a book).

Professional YOU: The roles or positions you hold to earn income and make a living. The Professional YOU is not one single position, rather it's the combination of your experiences, *knowledge* and *skills* that create your unique *value* as a professional. The Professional YOU is the intersection of finding what you love to do, what you are good at and what you can make a living doing.

Prototype: An early stage product with the *goal* of testing the final product's viability and gathering feedback without major investment.

Purpose statement: In business this is sometimes referred to as a mission or vision statement. It is a concise statement—a few sentences or a short paragraph—that defines a goal or a future state. Its primary purpose is to align the direction of a product or company. In *Designing YOU*, you develop a 10-year purpose statement for your life.

Red ocean strategy: A market in which competition must cut their prices to survive. See *Blue ocean strategy*.

Reflection: A person's ability to consider their own attitudes and behaviours. It requires both the willingness and capacity to be introspective.

Rule of three: A term used to describe having three different credible sources of evidence on an issue prior to making a big decision. Researchers also use the term triangulation.

Skill: The aptitude to do something well. It is the application of *knowledge*. Skill may be developed and refined through practice. For example, having the knowledge of how to ride a bike is different than having the skill to ride a bike.

SMART: An acronym used to define goals that are “Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound.”

Social capital: The *benefits* (e.g., trust, information) associated with your *social network*. You build up or deplete social capital when you offer help or ask for favours from your social network.

Social network: A term used to explain the relationship and connection between three or more people.

Systems thinking: Considers the interactions between a wide variety of variables that may influence an outcome. It's a way of thinking that recognizes that no single factor contributes to an outcome; rather it is a range of inter-related factors that must be dissected to understand the causes of an outcome.

TED: Acronym used for Technology, Entertainment, and Design. TED hosts forums for speakers to speak for 18 minutes or less. TED is owned by a nonprofit foundation whose mandate is to stimulate debate and new ideas.

Tend and befriend: A term used in psychology to refer to when women respond to stressful situations by nurturing and caregiving.

Ties (strong and weak): The relationship between individual people in a *social network*. Strong ties refer to those in your network with whom you have a close relationship; normally defined by intensity or length. In contrast, weak ties are people on the periphery of your network. Strong ties are more likely to reflect similar values to our own and therefore can insulate us from different perspectives and networks. In contrast, weak ties open our network to different people and perspectives.

Transferable skills: Abilities that may be used in a variety of roles. For example, communication skills are transferable as they are important in a range of personal and professional activities.

T-shaped YOU: Human resource professionals refer to the T-shaped individual to describe the relationship between transferable and task-specific skills. In the model used in *Designing YOU*, the horizontal part of the “T” represents thinking, communication, organizational and interpersonal skills; the vertical is task-specific skills. The task-specific skills make you valuable to an employer; the transferable skills make you unique.

Value vs. values: Value is how a product or service meets the needs of its customers. Value is in the eye of the beholder and defined by each individual. Marketers use the equation: *benefits* – cost = value. Value is unique to each person.

Value is different than *values*. Values are related to an individual’s personal belief system.

Value proposition: The clearly articulated *value* that will be delivered by a product or service to a specific group of customers. Normally, value is received when a customer’s problem is solved or when a need is filled.

Whole product: A term used in product management to describe everything a customer expects from a product. This includes all of the physical attributes of the product that come “in the box,” but also the non-physical attributes that are required and expected by the customer.

Whole YOU: This is an extension of the *whole product* concept from product management to an individual. Each person’s Whole YOU is defined individually based on factors uniquely important to them and their life goals. This may include the factors of relationships, health & leisure, profession, place (geography), spiritual and financial. One of the challenges of life is navigating how these factors work together to allow an individual to achieve their personal definition of success.

NOTES

(In case you want to dig deeper!)

INTRODUCTION

¹ Infographic: You're one in a million: For further information, see: Trends in higher education. (2011). Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada. Available at: <http://www.caiss.ca/uploaded/trends-2011-vol1-enrolment-e.pdf> ; Canadian post-secondary education data also available from Statistics Canada at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/141125/dq141125d-eng.htm> ; Chinese university graduates statistics available at: <http://www.statista.com/statistics/227272/number-of-university-graduates-in-china/>

² For additional information on how men and women's brains are wired differently, see: <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2013/dec/02/men-women-brains-wired-differently>

For additional resources on gender related issues in the workplace, please see the following: <https://www.oecd.org/canada/Closing%20The%20Gender%20Gap%20-%20Canada%20FINAL.pdf> ;

<https://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rc=t=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiAs9mV-sXNAhVG1WMKHR6MA-IQFggkMAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.boardoftrade.com%2Fevents%2Findividual-events%2F284-5287&usg=AFQjCNFdh8XyuqoGX3AvcaiB8JkVTzH1w> ;

<https://www.visier.com/lp/visier-insights-gender-equity-report/> A bestselling book by Sheryl Sandberg <http://leanin.org/> In addition, it is important to note that issues related to transgender inequality are emerging in the workplace. For additional information, see:

<https://othersociologist.com/2014/12/01/transgender-women-inequality-work/> An excellent podcast on gender issues is: <http://www.stuffmomnevertoldyou.com/podcasts/>

³ Infographic: Yes Sex Matters! Please see: the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) study on Closing the Gender Gap available at: <https://www.oecd.org/canada/Closing%20The%20Gender%20Gap%20-%20Canada%20FINAL.pdf> Also, please see the *Visier Insights* Gender equity report: <https://www.visier.com/lp/visier-insights-gender-equity-report/>

Please see, *McKinsey Global Institute* (2015) report - the power of parity:

<http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/employment-and-growth/How-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth>

Finnie, Ross (2015). *Barista or Better? New Evidence on the Earnings of Post-Secondary Education Graduate*. A summary of this study is available at:

<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/07/26/higher-education-does-lead-to-higher-incomes-university-of-ottawa-study.html>

⁴ For more information, see Noland, M., & Moran, T. (2016, February). Study: Firms with more women in the c-suite are more profitable. *Harvard Business Review*.

<https://hbr.org/2016/02/study-firms-with-more-women-in-the-c-suite-are-more-profitable>

⁵ For more information, see: Berinato, S. (2010, April). Is a woman's MBA worth less?

Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2010/04/the-pay-gap-and-delusions-of-p>

⁶ The challenging "labyrinth" that women navigate in their professional lives is explored in: Eagly, A.H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). *Through the Labyrinth: the Truth About How Women Become Leaders*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

STEP 1

¹ An example of this is that fact that in the 1950s, an average company on the Standard & Poors Index was 61 years old. In 2011, the average company was only 18 years old. For further information, see: Foster, R., & Kaplan, S. (2011). *Creative Destruction: Why Companies That Are Built to Last Underperform the Market--And How to Success fully Transform Them*. Crown Business.

² For background on old-school product development and the case study of the television see: Adler, Lee (1966, Winter). Symbiotic marketing. *Harvard Business Review*. 44(6).

³ Infographic: Not your parents' future: Based on data from The Economy Goes to College Report. The full report is available at:

<https://cew.georgetown.edu/report/economygoestocollege/>

⁴ Infographic: *The forecasted job changes from 2015 to 2025* is based on a forecast by the World Economic Forum and is based on 15 developed and emerging countries representing 15 industries. *The Future of Jobs Report* is available at: <http://reports.weforum.org/future-of-jobs-2016/>

For more background on the psychology of curiosity, please see: Loewenstein, G. (1994). The psychology of curiosity: A review and reinterpretation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 116(1), 75.

For additional background (and a far easier read) on the value of intentional curiosity, see: Sinek, S. (2009). *Start with why: How great leaders inspire everyone to take action*. Penguin. His TED Talk is available at:

http://www.ted.com/playlists/171/the_most_popular_talks_of_all?gclid=CPjmw8aJh80CFQqsaQodHW4DgA

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- ⁶ Systems thinking has a long history in academia. For further information, see the fascinating TED Talk by Eric Berlow on *Simplifying complexity*: http://www.ted.com/talks/eric_berlow_how_complexity_leads_to_simplicity?language=en or the article Sargut, G., & McGrath, R. G. (2011). Learning to live with complexity. *Harvard Business Review*, 89(9), 68-76.
- ⁷ Infographic: *The value of understanding what your customer wants*: For further information, see: Bedurgtig, M., Hieronimus, S., & Kiler, J. (2015, February). How business and government can bring young people into work, *McKinsey Quarterly*. Available at: <http://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/how-business-and-government-can-bring-young-people-into-work> ; Finch, David J., Hamilton, L., Baldwin, R. and Zehner, M. An exploratory study of factors affecting undergraduate employability. *Education+ Training* 55, no. 7 (2013): 681-704. ; and the World Economic Forum's *The Future of Jobs Report* is available at: <http://reports.weforum.org/future-of-jobs-2016/>
- ⁸ A short thought-provoking TED Talk by Derek Sivers that supports the notion of our embedded bias: *Weird, or just different?* https://www.ted.com/talks/derek_sivers_weird_or_just_different?language=en#
- ⁹ For further information, see: Pfeffer, J., & Sutton, R. I. (2006). Evidence-based management. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(1), 62; or Dan Gilbert's TED Talk on *Why we make bad decision* available at: https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_researches_happiness?language=en
- ¹⁰ Infographic: *Who do you believe*: For further information, see: the *Edelman Trust Barometer 2016* based on a sample of 16,500 respondents from 27 countries. The full report is available at: <http://www.edelman.com/insights/intellectual-property/2016-edelman-trust-barometer/>
- ¹¹ Resiliency and the ability to bounce back is considered a central trait in entrepreneurship. For further information, see: Coutu, D. L. (2002). How resilience works. *Harvard Business Review*, 80(5), 46-56; Luthans, F., Vogelgesang, G. R., & Lester, P. B. (2006). Developing the psychological capital of resiliency. *Human Resource Development Review*, 5(1), 25-44. Thomas Edison quote from: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/240047>
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- ¹³ For additional reading on reflection, see Ash, S. L., & Clayton, P. H. (2004). The articulated learning: An approach to guided reflection and assessment. *Innovative Higher Education*, 29(2), 137-154. Driscoll, J. (1994). Reflective practice for practise. *Senior Nurse*, 14(1), 47. For reading on experiential learning, see: Kolb, D. A. (2014). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. FT Press
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- ¹⁶ For further information, see: Berger, W. (2014). *A More Beautiful Question: The Power of Inquiry To Spark Breakthrough Ideas*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- ¹⁷ Infographic: *Connecting the why*: For further information, see: *Attitudes Towards Higher Education Report* (December, 2015) from Mintel. For further information, see: http://store.mintel.com/attitudes-towards-higher-education-us-december-2015?cookie_test=true
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- ²² For further information, see: Asch, S. E. (1951). Effects of group pressure upon the modification and distortion of judgments. *Groups, Leadership, and Men. S*, 222-236.
- ²³ This issue of social conformity has been studied from a variety of perspectives. For further information, see the Spiral of Silence Theory (<https://masscommtheory.com/theory-overviews/spiral-of-silence/>) or Groupthink (<http://communicationtheory.org/groupthink/>). Additional academic readings include: Noelle-Neumann, E.(1993). *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion, our Social Skin* (2nd ed., p. 200). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Janis, I. L. (1982). *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Vol. 349). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
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- ²⁵ The issues associated with a standardized curriculum are central debates among educators and policymakers. The *Puppet Master* story is intended to show the challenge that many educators face. From our experience, the vast majority of educators seek to stimulate student curiosity and creativity but many are constrained by system-level pressures (at the Board, State or Provincial levels) that enforce policies associated with a common curriculum. The *Puppet Master* may be an intended or unintended consequence of this policy.
- ²⁶ Seelig, T. (2012). *inGenius: A Crash Course on Creativity*. Hay House, Inc.
- ²⁷ Another fun podcast that will open your world to new things is: *No Such Thing as Fish* available at <http://qi.com/podcast/>
- ²⁸ Transferring credit courses between accredited schools is not as hard as you would think. The easiest route is transferring electives, but transferring core courses is also possible. So, if you find a dream online course at a school 2,000 km away, book an appointment with a guidance counsellor.
- ²⁹ For a starting point, a great resource to find crazy university courses is at: <http://www.onlineuniversities.com/blog/2009/10/100-hilarious-college-courses-that-really-exist/>
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<http://hum.sagepub.com/content/64/12/1555.full.pdf+html>
- ³¹ McKinsey & Company has an online psychological test you can take to measure whether you have an unconscious gender bias: <https://esurveydesigns.com/wix/p46257077.aspx>

STEP 2

- ¹ Quote sourced from: <http://www.inc.com/larry-kim/50-innovation-amp;-success-quotes-from-spacex-founder-elon-musk.html>
- ² The question of the stability of your personality over your lifetime is highly debated among psychologists. We recommend the following: Jay, M. (2012). *The Defining Decade: Why Your Twenties Matter--And How to Make the Most of Them Now*. Twelve; or the following article offers insight into the role of age in the Big Five personality traits: Nofle, E. E., & Fleeson, W. (2010). Age differences in big five behavior averages and variabilities across the adult life span: moving beyond retrospective, global summary accounts of personality. *Psychology and Aging*, 25(1), 95.

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- ³ Personality assessments are far-ranging. In this scope of this book, we have provided a simplified version only as a starting point. Even taking this simplified approach has risks if you interpret the results as “fact.” They are only an exploratory tool to start to reflect on the factors that make you—you. Once you have done this, you are encouraged to go deeper and investigate more comprehensive academic and commercial assessment tools. One of the most recognized is the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) Test*. Additional information on the MBTI is available at: <http://www.myersbriggs.org/> A good book that builds on the MBTI as a mechanism to link your personality to career options is: Tieger, P. D., Barron, B., & Tieger, K. (2014). *Do what you are: Discover the perfect career for you through the secrets of personality type*. Little, Brown.
- ⁴ The Big Five instrumentation used herein adapts Gerald Saucier’s Mini-Marker public domain instrument. For further information refer to the following: Saucier, G. (1994). Mini-markers: A brief version of Goldberg's unipolar Big-Five markers. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 63(3), 506-516. <http://pages.uoregon.edu/prsnlty/SAUCIER/Saucier.Minimarkers.Full.pdf>; or <http://pages.uoregon.edu/sanjay/bigfive.html#where>
- ⁵ Infographic: *Return on Optimism*: For further information, see: Gielan, M. (2016, April 15). Optimists are better at finding new jobs. *Harvard Business Review*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2016/04/optimists-are-better-at-finding-new-jobs>
- ⁶ *Designing YOU* adapts some of the Big Five labels for our audience. For further information, see: John, O. P., & Srivastava, S. (1999). The Big Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and theoretical perspectives. *Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research*, 2(1999), 102-138.
- ⁷ For further information, see: Goleman, D. (2004). What makes a leader? *Harvard Business Review*, 82(1), 82-91.
- ⁸ Infographic: *What makes a leader*: Tizard, B., & Hughes, M. (1984). Young Children Talking. *London: Books, Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society the Australian*, 22, 377.
- ⁹ The emotional intelligence measures used herein are adapted from: Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Hall, L. E., Haggerty, D. J., Cooper, J. T., Golden, C. J., & Dornheim, L. (1998). Development and validation of a measure of emotional intelligence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 25(2), 167-177.
- ¹⁰ For *Designing YOU*, we adapt some of the emotional intelligence labels for our audience.
- ¹¹ For additional background on emotional management refer to: Wickelgren, I. (2012). The education of character. *Scientific American Mind*, 23(4), 48-58.

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- ¹² The concepts of *information*, *knowledge* and *skill* are rooted in historical philosophical debates from the days of Plato and Socrates. Safe to say we have no interest in joining this debate. However, if you're interested in digging a little deeper into this debate, you may want to consider a provocative TED Talk on Wisdom by Barry Schwartz available at: https://www.ted.com/talks/barry_schwartz_on_our_loss_of_wisdom or a much deeper read: Pojman, L. P., & Vassallo, N. (1996). *What Can We Know? An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*.
- ¹³ Refer to the two studies that offer some additional background on employability skills for new graduates: Finch, D. J., Peacock, M., Levallet, N., & Foster, W. (2016). A dynamic capabilities view of employability: Exploring the drivers of competitive advantage for university graduates. *Education+ Training*, 58(1); or Dacre Pool, L., & Sewell, P. (2007). The key to employability: Developing a practical model of graduate employability. *Education+ Training*, 49(4), 277-289.
- ¹⁴ Finch, David J., Hamilton, L., Baldwin, R. and Zehner, M. An exploratory study of factors affecting undergraduate employability. *Education+ Training* 55, no. 7 (2013): 681-704.
- ¹⁵ For further information on the impact of digital tools on writing skills, refer to the National Writing Project Report by the *Pew Research Center*. The full report is available at: http://www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_NWP%20Writing%20and%20Tech.pdf
- ¹⁶ For additional reading on how life expectancy will change how you design you, please see: <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/are-you-ready-to-live-to-100> and <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/careers/career-advice/life-at-work/pacing-your-career-when-you-plan-to-live-to-100/article30938836/>
- ¹⁷ For further information, see: <http://sites.laverne.edu/careers/what-can-i-do-with-my-major/>
- ¹⁸ Infographic: To intern or not to intern—there is no question: For further information, see: Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., Melton, M., & Price, E. W. (2015). *Learning While Earning: The New Normal*. The full report is available at: <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/workinglearners/>; Aligning skill development to labour market needs. *Conference Board of Canada* (2016, May) available at: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=7926>
- ¹⁹ This article explores the different types of empathy and how the male and female brains vary in this regard: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-brain-and-emotional-intelligence/201104/are-women-more-emotionally-intelligent-men>
- ²⁰ For more information, see: Zenger, J., & Folkman, J. (2012, March). Are women better leaders than men? *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2012/03/a-study-in-leadership-women-do>

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- ²¹ This magazine article gives a few simple tips to work on your emotional intelligence: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/margiewarrell/2013/12/03/do-women-have-higher-emotional-intelligence-how-to-raise-your-e-q/#233c21e84f6f>
- ²² If you struggle with professional self-confidence, you might benefit from reading Amy Cuddy's excellent book, *Presence: Bringing your Boldest Self to your Biggest Challenges*.
- ²³ This story from *The Atlantic* explores the self-confidence gap between men and women: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/05/the-confidence-gap/359815/>

STEP 3

- ¹ Social capital emerged as a phenomenon in the 1980s and has become a central theory in sociology. Some additional resources on this topic may include: Portes, A. (2000). Social capital: Its origins and applications in modern sociology. LESSER, Eric L. *Knowledge and Social Capital*. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, 43-67; and Putnam, R. D. (1995). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), 65-78.
- ² For more information see: Granovetter, Mark S. The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology* (1973): 1360-1380; Granovetter, M. (1995). *Getting a Job: A Study of Contacts and Careers*. University of Chicago Press.
- ³ Six-degrees of separation and social network theory emerged from sociology in the 1960s and 1970s. However, the influence and relevance of this academic work reemerged in the 2000s with the emergence of social media.
- For further information, see: Nicholas Christakis' TED Talk about the hidden influence of social network at https://www.ted.com/talks/nicholas_christakis_the_hidden_influence_of_social_networks ; Milgram, S. (1967). The small world problem. *Psychology Today*, 2(1), 60-67; Watts, D. J. (2004). *Six Degrees: The Science of a Connected Age*. WW Norton & Company.
- ⁴ There are loads of online mapping tools you could use. These include Google <https://coggle.it/> and Freemind http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page
- ⁵ For additional information, see the Deloitte 2016 Millennial Survey at: <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-millennial-survey-2016-exec-summary.pdf>

STEP 4

- ¹ For more information, see: <http://80000hours.org> and Benjamin Todd's TED Talk available at: <http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/To-find-work-you-love-don-t-fol>
- ² We adapted the *Oregon Vocational Interest Scale* (ORVIS) for Designing YOU. This scale is available at: <http://ipip.ori.org/newORVISKey.htm> If you'd like to dig into the academic study behind ORVIS see: Pozzebon, J. A., Visser, B. A., Ashton, M. C., Lee, K., & Goldberg, L. R. (2010). Psychometric characteristics of a public-domain self-report measure of vocational interests: The Oregon Vocational Interest Scales. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 92, 168-174.
- ³ Infographic: *How do I make my decisions*: For further information, see: Shah, S., Horne, A., & Capellá, J. (2012). Good data won't guarantee good decisions. *Harvard Business Review*, 90(4), 23-25.
- ⁴ For additional resources on Blue Ocean Strategy, read: Kim, W. C., & Mauborgne, R. (2005). Blue ocean strategy: From theory to practice. *California Management Review*, 47(3), 105-121.
- ⁵ Infographic: *Skate to where the puck is going*: For further information, see: *World Economic Forum's The Future of Jobs Report* available at: <http://reports.weforum.org/future-of-jobs-2016/>
- Cuddy, A. J., Kohut, M., & Neffinger, J. (2013). Connect, then lead. *Harvard Business Review*, 91(7), 54-61.

STEP 5

- ¹ The discussion associated with the concept of success and happiness is endless. On Amazon alone, there are over 48,000 self-help books and 6,000 psychology books associated with the search word "success." Optionally, see: Shawn Achor, *The happy secret to better work* http://www.ted.com/playlists/171/the_most_popular_talks_of_all?gclid=CPjmw8aJh80CFQqsaQodHW4DgA ; Scott Dinsmore: *How to find work you love* https://www.ted.com/talks/scott_dinsmore_how_to_find_work_you_love?language=en
- ² Also consider the granddaddy of the life coaching books: Covey, S. R. (1991). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York, NY.: Simon & Schuster. In it, Covey asks you to reflect on our own funeral as an approach to step back and consider the bigger goals of your life. We had no appetite to send you (or us) to your funeral so we sent you to your birthday party!
- ³ Infographic: *Everyone struggles with the Whole YOU*: For further information, see: Aligning skill development to labour market needs. *Conference Board of Canada* (2016, May) available at: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=7926>

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- ⁴ Our instrument was adapted from common Wheel of Life inventories commonly used by life coaches. A version is available here http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/cardev/gr11_found/blms/1-15.pdf You may also see Nigel Marsh's TED Talk on *How to make work-life balance work* available at: https://www.ted.com/talks/nigel_marshall_how_to_make_work_life_balance_work
- ⁵ For help navigating these difficult conversations, see Guy Grenier's book, *The 10 Conversations You Must Have Before You Get Married (And How To Have Them)*
- ⁶ A study of 25,000 Harvard Business School graduates of all ages revealed striking gaps between men and women on expectations of which spouse's career would take priority, and who would be responsible for raising the kids. See Ely, R. J., Stone, P., & Ammerman, C. (2014). Rethink what you "know" about high-achieving women. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2014/12/rethink-what-you-know-about-high-achieving-women>
- ⁷ One book that is helpful around dealing with these tradeoffs is Laura Vanderkam's (2015) *I Know How She Does It: How Successful Women Make The Most of Their Time*. Penguin. New York.

STEP 6

- ¹ For further information see, :Bill Gross' TED Talk on *The single biggest reason why start-ups succeed* available at: https://www.ted.com/talks/bill_gross_the_single_biggest_reason_why_startups_succeed
- ² Reid Hoffman quote sourced from: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/240047>

STEP 7

- ¹ Infographic: *Know your audience*: This data is sourced from the *Marketing to Millennials – Canada Report* (January, 2016) from Minitel. For further information, see: <http://store.mintel.com/marketing-to-millennials-canada-january-2016>
- ² Infographic: *An expensive product with no market*: For further information, see: Bedurgtig, M., Hieronimus, S., & Kiler, J. (2015, February). How business and government can bring young people into work, *McKinsey Quarterly*. Available at: <http://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/how-business-and-government-can-bring-young-people-into-work> ; Finch, David J., Hamilton, L., Baldwin, R. and Zehner, M. An exploratory study of factors affecting undergraduate employability. *Education+ Training* 55, no. 7 (2013): 681-704.

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- ³ For further information storytelling see Andrew Stanton's TED Talk, *Clues to a great story* available at: https://www.ted.com/talks/andrew_stanton_the_clues_to_a_great_story#t-5204
- ⁴ For further information see: Roth, P. L., Bobko, P., Van Iddekinge, C. H., & Thatcher, J. B. (2013, October). Social media in employee-selection-related decisions a research agenda for uncharted territory. *Journal of Management*, 42(1).
- ⁵ 2014 Social Recruiting Survey. Jobvite. The full report is available at: http://web.jobvite.com/Q414_Website_SocialRecruitingSurvey_LP.html
- ⁶ Though we recommend LinkedIn for your electronic portfolio, there are a variety of different options available. As a rule, you should evaluate what is most commonly used by others in your industry or field of interest. Other options include WordPress (www.wordpress.com), Weebly (www.weebly.com) or Wix (www.wix.com)
- ⁷ 2014 Social Recruiting Survey. *Jobvite*. The full report is available at: http://web.jobvite.com/Q414_Website_SocialRecruitingSurvey_LP.html
- ⁸ LinkedIn data sourced from: <http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/by-the-numbers-a-few-important-linkedin-stats/>

STEP 8

- ¹ Infographic: *The role of higher education*. For further information, see: Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., Melton, M., & Price, E. W. (2015). *Learning While Earning: The New Normal*. The full report is available at: <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/workinglearners/>
- ² For additional reading on how to avoid common traps, refer to: Kahneman, D., Lovallo, D., & Sibony, O. (2011). Before you make that big decision. *Harvard Business Review*, 89(6), 50-60.
- ³ The 10,000 hours rule is defined as deliberative practice. Gladwell discusses it in his 2008 book *Outliers*. A recent study examines the influence of this principle across different fields from sports to professions. For additional information, see: Macnamara, B. N., Hambrick, D. Z., & Oswald, F. L. (2014). Deliberate practice and performance in music, games, sports, education, and professions a meta-analysis. *Psychological Science*, 25(8), 1608-1618.