ZENIE FOUNDATION
Helping Students Become Effective Adults

ZF - Career Strategy Guide

Congrats – What's Next – Your Career

Zenie Foundation
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Introduction

A while back, some of our soon-to-graduate students shared that they felt unprepared to begin their new careers. We, the ZF Team, recalled having similar concerns and struggling early in our careers. The following Strategic Framework begins our effort to further help our students become effective adults AND effective professionals. Our ideas reflect the experiences of ZF leadership, recent ZF alumni and friends of ZF. None of us are career guidance experts, but collectively we bring deep and broad experience. As we work with our students and alumni, we will learn more and improve this framework.

It may take you an hour or two to read and digest it the first time through. If it is successful, you will return often in the years ahead. We include personal career experiences from the ZF Team called “Career Moments”. These are actual stories that dramatically shaped our careers. This isn’t intended to be a detailed handbook, but a values-based framework to build on. We hope this becomes a highly valuable tool for your professional career. Appendix A lists a number of books highly recommended by our ZF Alums, invest your time it’s your career.

Congrats! You’re probably an undergraduate college student looking forward to graduating soon or a year or two in the future. You will need to transition from student to career building adult. Note: Parenting is an important career, but we will focus on non-parenting careers.

When possible, we will cite references for in-depth review. Think about printing a copy of this to keep on your desk, in your favorite notebook or an electronic document file for easy access. Every once in a while, take a look and pick one topic to refresh your thinking. When you’re ready, you should find these concepts helpful.

Cheers,

Frank

PS Please send me any comments Frank@zeniegroup.com

ZENIE FOUNDATION
Helping Students Become Effective Adults

When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.
Source Unknown

Getting to Know You – Explore and Discover

At Zenie Foundation (ZF) everything begins with values, so not surprisingly, we will suggest that you build your career around your personal values. You will have to bring skills and a strong work ethic, but you will earn your families', managers', colleagues' and customers' trust based on how you live your values.

ZF (zeniefoundation.org) offers examples of personal values that we believe provide a foundation for becoming effective adults – and building successful careers.

Core Values

- Develop and are driven by a set of personal values
- Do not waiver from them even when challenged
- Earn trust by demonstrating integrity through principle-based actions
- Seek win-win relationships
- Want to make the future better than the past

Self-Awareness

- Know and accept their strengths and weaknesses
- Commit to achieve their full potential
- Recognize educational opportunities are special gifts that create obligations to give back.

A Commitment to Learning

- Lead continuous lives of learning and self-development
- Have a vision for their future – not predefined jobs but visions to pursue
- Are passionately self-motivated to work hard in pursuit of their vision; reflect, learn and adjust as needed

Financial Responsibility

- Are financially self-sufficient
- Adopt responsible lifestyles consistent with financial means

Begin by thinking about a few people you know well – some you trust and respect and some not so much. Now measure them against your value system. Do you see any patterns? Lessons?

Almost 200 years ago, the Danish author, Hans Christian Anderson, wrote a short story titled "The Emperor's New Clothes" about two weavers who promised the emperor a new suit of clothes that are invisible to people who are unfit for their positions. In reality they made no clothes at all. When the emperor paraded before his subjects in his new "clothes", no one dared to say that they do not see any clothes on him until a young child cries out "But he isn't wearing anything at all!"

Unlike the emperor, virtually all effective and successful people are keenly self-aware. Honest, pragmatic and, sometimes painful, self-awareness becomes the foundation for a successful career. Take a moment and begin developing your Self-Assessment Profile. Be honest; hypocrites claim worthy values without living them.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Challenges	Goals

Note if you seek help from family and friends set the tone so that their advice isn't criticism – people avoid criticizing people they like. Going forward, you can certainly add some needed skills and modify some weak behavior but build on your strengths and try to avoid your weaknesses. Beware, that strengths carried to excess may well become weaknesses. For example, the strength of tenacity taken to extreme becomes stubbornness.

Strengths and Weaknesses tend to be personal while Challenges tend to be situational. For example, large student debt, health limitations or geographic constraints are challenges, not weaknesses

Update your Self-Assessment Profile frequently. It will drive your self-improvement programs and help prepare for future opportunities. Never forget, denial is the enemy of self-awareness; so become brutally honest with yourself. Embrace and live your values.

What is a Career?

Career is not simply your current occupation. Careers are a lifelong progression through a series of jobs enhanced by ongoing learning and experiences helping to make you a more effective and valuable person. Think of your early career as an investment in your future.

Christopher Columbus actually failed, or did he?

> Chris was an Italian explorer, navigator and sea captain. In 1492, he was sponsored by the Catholic Church to sail west and find a direct water route to Asia. He landed at and explored a Caribbean Island and returned home. He made three additional voyages always landing somewhere in what are now known as the Bahamas. He explored and colonized the islands and never succeeded at finding a water route to Asia. Chris is credited with discovering America yet, most believe, he never set foot on North America.

So Columbus failed to meet his goal. Yet he discovered an unknown opportunity and enlightened Europe about the great potential of the vast Americas. Let's not debate the moral issues of the then common practice of colonialism. The point is that he followed a vision into the unknown, discovered reality and redefined his goals and career.

Career Moment

Your Career - New Reality - As a student, you are the customer. It's all about your education symbolized by your grades and your graduating degree. Very early in my career, I suddenly realized that I was now part of a business committed to serving its customers. Even though I didn't yet know all the members or their roles, I joined a team with customer impact as the ultimate measure of value. As we faced challenges, I had to learn how to collaborate and develop effective solutions that earned the respect and support of the entire team. This can be frustrating and time consuming, but when everyone contributes to and owns the solution, you can march forward. To do this, teams need leadership and effective teams draw on leadership from all members when needed. Jon R. – ZF Alum

Careers are strategic. Think 50 years. You will need a career strategy that isn't simply a linear progression of jobs aimed at a predefined goal. Be open and flexible, probably the best jobs in the future don't even exist today.

Career strategies are different than constructing a building where architects and engineers design everything around proven principles and only start when every detail is fully defined. In careers, you are growing and maturing and the world is changing. Everything is dynamic and vision and values are your foundation. Uncertainty clouds the future. Begin with an **action-centric** career strategy.

Think ➔ DO ➔ Learn ➔ Prepare

Nike has a point when they say; "Just Do It". Knowledge gains value as it's put into practice. Commit to excellent performance in all your jobs, then commit to lifelong learning and self-development; and finally prepare yourself to be a candidate for the broadest range of future opportunities by developing leadership and communication skills and becoming an ever more effective adult and earning trust.

Return to your self-assessment goals. How ambitious are you and are you willing to invest sufficiently to gain the skills and do the work required to support these goals? Think of yourself as an entrepreneur starting a new business - YOU! You're determined to invest your time and money to build something of great value. Like all entrepreneurs you're fully committed; you see great potential in the mirror and you're determined to achieve your full potential. Your job description defines your job; your career strategy defines a path to enrich your job and to prepare you for exciting new opportunities. Be patient, don't expect immediate recognition and rewards, they will come.

Your employers, particularly early in your career, are key to your career development. Do they have a worthy mission and live a values-based culture? Will they invest in you in return for your professional commitment to them? While no job offers 100% enjoyable and satisfying work, can you look forward to showing up each day?

We often hear or read about the "Gig" economy. Certain careers such as entertainment and professional sports have always been gigs where you have to compete for each gig and when you no longer attract customers (audience) you become unemployed. Gigs pay well for top talent, but beyond the pinnacle quickly fall to commodity pricing. In gigs, you are self-employed, paid for your current skills and without an employer investing in your future. When working in a gig economy you don't have a boss, you have customers! Develop your sales skills; there are many excellent sales training books and workshops. If gigs appeal to you, try it and discover whether it's a potential career path for you.

You should have a career strategy without a detailed plan. Don't try to predict who you will become and what future career opportunities will unfold. Look around you for gaps that you fill, volunteer, learn and contribute. Just be opportunistic, flexible and prepare. As you learn more, you will modify and clarify your vision and strategy. You will learn from setbacks and change is not failure.

Graduate School?

Even though your career plan may be ambiguous, don't just default to graduate school. Unless you plan to enter a profession that emphasizes academic credentials, such as medicine, law, academia or scientific research, graduate school is simply one of many tools you can use to learn and build knowledge.

Your value, both economic and intellectual, comes from applied knowledge. Integrating lifelong learning into life and career will compound its value. Don't choose graduate school because you don't have a career vision, only choose that path when you need immediate academic knowledge or credentials. Be proactive; pick a career path, go to work, learn and discover and adjust with new knowledge and passion.

Career Moment

Integrating work and academics for career growth - When I graduated, I was over "school". Committed to my career development, however, my bosses pushed me to continue my formal education. My company further supports this by contributing to the financial expense. Particularly in technology fields, we need to have a formal education program to stay up to date. Combining graduate school with my work enabled me to achieve personal financial self-sufficiency and to merge my work experience and academic focus. In doing so, I discovered a specific field where I am developing unique and valuable skills and I'm excited to apply them to each day's new challenges. Jon R. – ZF Alum

Think about all the learning paths easily available:

- Graduate School immediately following graduation
- Graduate School delayed for a few years' work
- Graduate Courses nights or weekends while working
- Reading books and journals in your fields of interest
- Using your job as a laboratory and your boss as a mentor
- Exploring relevant topics with family, friends and colleagues

Please consider the economic benefits of integrating graduate school alternatives and career.

Economics R'Us

Think About: Financial Self-Sufficiency, Affordability, Debt and Interest Paid vs. Savings and Interest Earned, Think Lifetime Earnings

Centuries ago, civilization transitioned from barter-based to money-based economies. Like it or not, almost everything has a price.

In 1943, Abraham Maslow published "A Theory of Human Motivation" introducing Maslow's Pyramid of Needs. You can easily search for more information on the Internet.

The Pyramid, shown as a table to the right, describes a hierarchy of human needs that generally must be filled from the bottom up much like a building requires a strong foundation. While only the basic needs directly require economic resources, economic resources enable the higher needs.

Self fulfillment	Self actualization	Achieving one's full potential
Psychological Needs	Esteem	Prestige & accomplishment
	Belonging & Love	Intimate relationships & friends
Basic Needs	Safety	Security and safety
	Physiological	Food, water, warmth, rest

Economic value ultimately funds all work. If you work for private industry, customers buying your product or service fund your paycheck. If you work for a non-profit, philanthropy funds your paycheck because they value what you do. If you work for the government, taxpayers fund your paycheck and voters ultimately set government priorities. Professional entertainers and athletes are funded by fans who pay to see them perform.

Once we understand economic realities, we can start making pragmatic lifestyle decisions - with less fear of unintended consequences. Beware of the widely used term "free" because few things are truly free, rather someone else is paying for it – probably with a self-serving motive.

Career Moment

Working to live, easier said than done - As a twenty-something coming out of college and embarking on my career path, I wasn't thinking about buying a house immediately, or getting married, or starting a family. I was focused mostly on learning as much as I could and growing as a career driven individual. I put in long hours and I was totally OK with that. I was fulfilled. However, there came a time where all of those other life things hit me and I was at a point where I was successful, built a good reputation, working in an industry that I loved, but I was sacrificing a lot of airport and travel time away from one of the main reasons we all go to work, our lives. One day while in the Logan airport terminal A in Boston, I realized that when I calculated my time at home vs. my time at work, I was traveling 80-90% of the time and the benefit no longer outweighed the cost. That day I made the scary, but exhilarating decision to embark on a career move that would still support myself and family financially, my brain intellectually, provide me with a new challenge, and allow me to live outside of my job more often. This career moment allowed me to really dig into what I needed as a working professional (reinvent myself in a totally different industry and prove to myself I can add value anywhere if I put the work in) as well as LIVE my life. My lesson here was even if you are comfortable in your career, take the time to evaluate if it is really fulfilling your need as an individual occasionally, it may lead you to something even better! Ashley D - ZF Coach

As we mature, we will adjust our economic and non-economic priorities. Our goal isn't to maximize our economic value; it's simply to align our lifestyle expectations with our likely career economics – think affordability and financial self-sufficiency. Beginning while a student, consider the financial ramifications of your academic focus, career choice and lifestyle goals. For most of you, it has already started. High school seniors and their families are making school choices that trigger student loan debt (and interest) that may burden them for years into the future. It may seem like easy money, but eventually requires painful repayment.

Recognizing this, ZF developed its College Affordability Toolkit (CAT) providing easy to use planning and financial budgeting tools for students. Students are guided through estimating college costs and resulting loan requirements. They're further guided through estimating their early career economics and loan repayment burden. CAT is available to all at zeniefoundation.org and it's free – because ZF's mission is to help everyone become effective adults.

Many of you will graduate with student loan debt and may likely incur a mortgage when purchasing a home. Please be cautious before incurring any additional debt. Effective adults earn interest while others pay interest. If you can earn just 4% on money you save and invest and pay just 6% to borrow, you actually give up 10% when you borrow to

purchase now rather than save and buy later – that costs you $100 per year on every $1,000 you borrow.

Our economic challenge is to plan and live responsibly. Accept that economic constraints may be difficult but ignoring them can be catastrophic.

Add a spouse or committed partner and then family changes your economic model; you incur financial obligations beyond yourself. Update your self-assessment. Will you have one or two professional careers? How does this impact your lifestyle goals? With children, will you have the financial resources to pay for their personal electronics & communication, transportation and travel, healthcare, education and weddings? You now have dependents and you are interdependent with others.

Finding a "Career-Building" Job

Think About: Finding Career-Building Jobs, Due Diligence, Self-Awareness, Career Strategies and Professional Selling.

The Best Place to Work – Find Admirable Leaders

1. Admirable leaders are relationship driven.
2. Admirable leaders create safe space for risks to be taken.
3. Admirable leaders display uncommon humility.
4. Admirable leaders, in the end, will make those around them better.

Source: Warren Buffett – Inc. Magazine

It's easy to blast resumes across a broad spectrum of potential employers hoping a few will earn a response. In doing this, you become a commodity and suffer the consequences. So clear the deck, ignore the distractions and get started.

If you work at it, you can find a job. If you work hard, you can find a good job. --- And if you work very hard, you can find a career-building job.

Most colleges provide excellent career counseling services; take advantage of yours. They can help you prepare your resume, develop interviewing skills, develop strong references, and how to use online recruiting services and their placement services. Keep in mind, however, that they want to help you find a job while you want to launch your career. Don't adopt any advice, including this, until you've thought it through and believe it reflects your values.

No matter how strong your academic credentials, you are an entry-level applicant. While most applicants will claim to be hard working and thorough, you will want to demonstrate why you're special throughout your application process. How?

Career Moment

Networking in Job Search - When looking for a job, talk with every single person you know about what you're looking for. Don't be shy. When you meet someone and they ask, "How are you?" Respond with something like, "Great! I'm job hunting in x field." You chitchat about it for a minute, and hey - that person just might have a connection.

It's how I landed my first job as a reporter with a television station in Erie, PA. It was the day of graduation and I still didn't have a job lined up. I bumped into someone in my friend group and we were chatting about our futures. When I told him I was looking for an on-camera position as a reporter, he told me his dad actually knew someone who actually owns TV stations!

After graduation, I applied for dozens of jobs online for a month without hearing a peep back from a real person. Then one day, the president of Lilly Broadcasting called me. It was a cold-call phone interview at 8am and I was still half asleep. When he identified himself, I went from dozing to heart-pounding nervous.

But I had prepared myself for that moment. I'd done my due diligence and so truly believed I was qualified and the right person for the job. I had three internships in major TV markets (Boston, Los Angeles, plus the CBS London office) and had won a fellowship with a TV station in Phoenix. I had prepared for any potential opportunities by writing out answers to interview questions and practicing my answers. I knew that even if my skills weren't 100% there, I was ready to work hard to learn the skills to become a great employee. I think ultimately, all of that came across. They flew me to Erie, I went through the in-person interviews, and got the job. Deedee S. – ZF Advisor

Due Diligence > Tailored Message

Due diligence is a process of research and analysis used to evaluate future alternatives. Its purpose is to identify the benefits and risks associated with each alternative. In your job search, you will use your due diligence to determine both the benefits and risks to you as the applicant and to your potential employer. You can access online a huge amount of information about most potential employers except very small local organizations. Publicly traded businesses must disclose their financials and material events and most choose to disclose and share their strategies. CEOs of public companies publish shareholder letters in their annual report and often present their story at investment conferences. All you have to do is dig, read, assimilate and prepare. Most applicants won't do this because it's too much work.

Step one of your due diligence should ask whether an organization has a worthy mission. How can you build an exciting, energized work environment without a worthy mission? Why would you want to work in an organization that's primary mission is to raise money (non-profit) or maximize profit? By worthy, we don't mean just philanthropic; serving customers, creating jobs, developing employees and investing in its future all contribute to a strong economy that, in turn, benefits all. During your interviews, you can determine whether the mission is deeply imbedded into its culture.

Career Moment

If you don't have a worthy mission, find one. – In 1957, a year after college graduation, I reported to Fort McClellan in Anniston, AL to fulfill my two-year Army ROTC obligation. 1957 was after the Korean War and before Vietnam. We were at peace and most believed that airplanes and submarines would fight future wars – there would be no more traditional ground wars fought by armies. In 1957, the US Army lacked direction and energy. During my first three months of training, the classes were fine, but when we went for weapons training, we only shot a few rounds because they couldn't afford sufficient ammunition. Following training, I was assigned to a company-size unit whose primary role was to impregnate battle uniforms to resist chemical attacks. I soon learned that they had warehouses full of impregnated uniforms and didn't need more. Our backup role was to be a laundry, but they already had a laundry unit. So we had nothing to and only had a headquarters staff of about a dozen people rather than the 150 or so needed to perform our role. Then one day, an order was issued by the post commander. The maintenance costs for our vehicles is too high – as measured by maintenance cost per mile. The post had many vehicles and many maintenance specialists, but little work for them so they sat idle much of the time – hence high cost per mile. Rather than reduce the vehicles and support staff, the post commander ordered us to drive more. So I was instructed to check out a jeep and simply drive around. The lack of a worthy mission resulted in counter-productive activity. Frank Z – ZF Coach

The purpose of your resume and its cover letter or preamble is to get an interview. Even with electronic submissions, you need to convey how you plan to help this organization achieve their mission and goals. Use your due diligence information to tailor your message in a cover letter or by customizing your resume for each potential employer. You can even use LinkedIn.com for due diligence and even find contact information to submit your resume rather than just submit online. Yes, it's hard work and time consuming, but it shows you're special.

Interviews are your opportunity to sell yourself and learn more about the prospective employer. Prepare by brushing up on your due diligence and resume. Develop questions about the employer's mission and strategy, their culture and their challenges. You are trying to determine if this would be a career-building job for you. Arrive a little early and look professional. Don't try to show how smart you are, try to demonstrate how well you listen and how much you want to learn. Demonstrate confidence, not arrogance.

Earlier we described the importance of personal economics, but we also stressed that career is strategic - a marathon not a sprint. As a personal entrepreneur, you expect to invest in our your future just as your family invested in your care and education. If asked about expected compensation, we recommend that you defer to them by saying you expect appropriate compensation and an opportunity to learn and develop and earn greater compensation in the future. If the employer embraces win-win values, all will work out just fine. Pick the job that you think offers the greatest opportunity to learn and grow.

Never lie in your resume or in an interview. Lies trigger three bad outcomes – they encourage expectations that you can't meet, you will be exposed and probably fired and your career resume will forever include a negative event. Be honest and over perform.

One final point. Consider starting or encompassing "Professional Sales" in your career. Not sales, but "Professional Sales" where misleading or manipulative practices are forbidden.

We define professional sales as:

Professional Selling is:
Motivating people to do what you want them to do -
Because it's in THEIR best interest to do so.

This is the same as our definition for leadership because both embrace win-win values. In professional sales you have elements of being self-employed and yet are backed by your managers and organizational infrastructure. To succeed, you will have to develop your time management, presentation and communication skills - listening, writing and verbal. These are leadership and core skills that will help you wherever your career takes you. By working harder and smarter in sales, you can directly increase your compensation because most professional sales jobs offer attractive base salaries plus incentives to reward hard work and effectiveness. Think about it.

Getting Started

Think About: Your Immediate Supervisor, Coaches and Mentors, Demonstrating Leadership, Support Your Colleagues and Learn and Prepare

Just like your interviews, show up early and look professional as you begin your career. You're no longer an esteemed college senior, you're a rookie. You have a lot to learn so encourage your new colleagues teach and coach you.

Career Moment

Self-Awareness - My First Review – Early in my career, I was an accountant working for the President of the company. At my first year anniversary, he scheduled my annual review. I went into his office and found he had written down the pluses and minuses that he saw in my work over the past year. How silly I felt that he had to take the time to do this. I committed to never letting my boss, coach or mentor, have to prepare from a blank sheet of paper to review my work. From that day forward I took an active part in assessing my career by providing a written assessment to my boss well ahead of an annual review. This critical self-assessment process helped me see my strengths and weaknesses, write them down, and provide them ahead of time to my boss for his/her thinking. As a result, our reviews became a valuable experience driving us both to productive programs, goals, and career building steps. I encourage all my employees to be active self-assessors and continually use their boss as a mentor and touchstone. I encourage this type of assessment OFTEN, not annually. Sit-downs every quarter or every six months are even better. Tim P – ZF Coach

Extend your due diligence, learn as much as you can about your organization's mission, strategy and culture. Ask yourself, how can my job contribute to these? Probe to understand who your customers are and your value proposition to them. No matter your job, find ways to meet and interact with your customers.

Your first line supervisor, Boss, should be your most important colleague. Try to develop a relationship along these lines – I will devote all my energy to doing a good job for you and this organization, in return I'd like you to coach me, recognize and reward my accomplishments, and advocate for my career development. Encourage timely and frequent feedback from your Boss. Whenever possible, support your boss and other managers. They need your help as much as you need theirs.

Career Moment

What's a Professional? – I was just a few days into my first post-graduation job. I'd never worked in an office before. I was working at MIT on military aircraft control systems prior to joining the Army to fulfill my ROTC obligation. A group of us engineers arrived each morning, poured some coffee and chatted before starting work. One morning, our boss arrived and, as best I recall, said we have serious work to do and are paying you guys to do it – not to sit around and visit. He was absolutely right and I was humiliated. I changed my habits and remember the lesson to this day. Frank Z – ZF Coach

Find others that you respect and ask for their advice and coaching. While it's your career, seeking advice makes you stronger not weaker. Listen carefully and take notes as you gain these valuable insights. Of course, you will help others as you develop your leadership skills.

Be positive and avoid organizational politics. Every organization has problems and it's easy to criticize; try to be part of the solution. If you need to address problems with management, be constructive. How your organization deals with problems and stress will provide insights into its true values and culture.

Don't think of your colleagues as competitors. You share a common mission of helping your employer succeed and that success will create abundant opportunity. Try to meet other career-building professionals performing other functions and teach each other how you fit into the integrated mission.

You may not want to become a manager but reach to achieve leadership stature by living and advocating a values-based culture. As you gain experience, try to coach and teach your work colleagues and the next generation of rookies.

Opportunities needn't be promotions. You're still learning and investing. Look for gaps and try to fill them. Grab opportunities that create new challenges and broaden your experience. Don't worry; the financial rewards will come.

Career Moment

Be ambitious and earn a good reputation early in the job - After college graduation, I worked for PricewaterhouseCoopers in NYC as an auditor. As it was a large firm with many new hires, I wanted to make a name for myself. So when I had some downtime, I asked my supervisor if I could become more involved with one of my clients and ended up planning the audit, which was unusual for a staff person. My supervisor was impressed with my "drive" and recommended me to some of her peers who ended up requesting me for their jobs. In turn, it led to being staffed on a high-profile new client that was frequently in the news for their business success. My reputation also led to being asked to be part of a proposal team that was trying to win over a new client. This was the first time the firm had included a staff level person in the proposal process. To this day, many years after leaving the firm, I can rely on them to provide me a good reference when needed. Sharon B. – ZF Advisor

Win-Win, Bigger Pie Careers - BPCs

Never forget that your colleagues and co-workers are your team, you are all interdependent and they are not your competitors. How can you all win? Make the pie bigger!

A bigger slice is one thing,
a Bigger Pie is everything.
Source: Bigger Pie Strategies

Great careers are bigger pie careers! BPCs define the power of win-win cultures. They build trust and combat politics. Even though you will have defined jobs as you progress through your new career, you can amplify your impact by linking it to the broader mission and strategy of your employer. And don't worry, many people will notice and remember. They might even describe you as a leader.

If you will only read one book on personal and career development, we recommend Stephen Covey's "The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People". Its sold more than 25 million copies in 40 languages throughout the world and you can buy a paperback edition for about $12.50. All of the 7 Habits are values-based principles for life and career. Covey then adds an overlay that we'll call Dependence Maturity and it's critically important for students beginning entering their careers.

Dependence > Independence > Interdependence

From childhood, we naturally strive to achieve independence. As teenagers, we resent parental controls. Finally, we escape and go to college. Free at last. Oops, Covey tells us "Not so fast". If we are to succeed and have impact in life and career, we need to integrate our skills and contributions with those of others. Strong families and organizations are more successful than weak ones. In our careers, we need the self-confidence to balance our independence with interdependence on our colleagues. This is the path to the bigger pie.

Career will become your foundation for retirement and future legacy reaching Maslow's apex, self-actualization.

Leadership – In Life and Career

> While STEM education and careers are promising, they may be overemphasized. The perception that technical studies offer more employment options and financial security than liberal arts, and that interpersonal skills can be acquired naturally, slight the need for a hybrid skill set. Critical thinking, persuasive writing, communications and teamwork are not fluffy, nice-to-have additions. They are hard-won and rigorously maintained abilities that might better be referred to as "power skills".
>
> Source - Forbes

Don't confuse management with leadership. Managers allocate and deploy resources and assets. Managers in bureaucratic organization frequently just translate orders from above to their local work group. Leaders, on the other hand, inspire people to achieve worthy goals. Many managers are effective leaders, but many are not. You will know the difference as your career progresses.

You may not want to be a manager, but you should work to become a leader. It's simple; live your values and seek win-win outcomes. Before long, your colleagues will seek your advice and coaching.

Career Stamina

Think About – Be Prepared, Win-Win Outcomes, Lifelong Learning and Worthy Goals

Stamina is the ability to sustain prolonged physical or mental effort. Career goes beyond any job; it's defined by each person's lifelong work. It's a marathon - with marathoners known for stamina.

Just as building physical stamina requires hard work, career stamina requires hard work and personal discipline throughout your career. Focus on your career strategy: keep Doing, Learning and Preparing. It's win-win; you are competing with your own potential.

As you learn and discover more about yourself, you might change your career direction. That's natural and you will find that much of your prior experiences will serve you well going forward.

"Be Prepared" Stamina

The Boy Scouts have it right – "Be Prepared". The days of lifetime employment are over. Many factors outside your control can force you to find a new employer. You also are a "Free Agent" meaning you can change employers whenever you conclude your current situation is no longer a win-win and a career-building opportunity.

Always perform your current job as though you will be there indefinitely into the future – until you are no longer there. You decide; guided by the great country song:

> You got to know when to hold 'em
> Know when to fold 'em
> Know when to walk away
> Know when to run
>
> You don't ever count your money
> While you're sittin' at the table
> There'll be time enough for countin'
> When the dealin' is done

Career Moment

I get it – I worked summers and school vacations at Shaw's Supermarkets from junior year of high school through junior year of college. I was promoted from Bagger to Cashier to Customer Service Representative in my first month. They seemed to like my work ethic. I majored in Biology and, during my junior year, found an internship at a diagnostic laboratory company and I joined them as a Medical Technologist following graduation. At the same time, some trusted family friends advised me to continue my formal education along with my work and I chose an MBA program to complement my Biology with Business and Leadership skills. My employer subsidized 75% of the cost. After two years, I realized that I didn't want a lab career. I wanted to work with people and use my technical knowledge to help them solve problems. Shortly thereafter, I briefly joined a Biology-based start-up and discovered the chaos and unique challenges of early-stage businesses. Each of my jobs helped me discover my next career step - technical sales where I could work with and help customers solve their problems. I recently joined a life science tools company in an entry-level sales position. What fun, I'm developing professional sales and personal management skills along with exposure to product management and marketing. I love what I'm doing; learning a lot and preparing for future career opportunities.

Erik R – Friend of ZF

Performance Stamina – Master the Fundamentals

Your career is a lifelong mission requiring unrelenting job performance. You will build the stamina for this journey by mastering work-related and personal fundamentals. You can and should get help from family, friends and colleagues, but begin with self-awareness so you can be your own key mentor.

Maintain your professionalism. Set high standards; be loyal particularly to organizations and leaders that create career-building opportunities. Be professional when setting goals. Goals have three levels:

1. Sandbag Goals - to conceal or misrepresent one's true position, potential, or intent especially in order to gain an advantage. Never sandbag, it's not professional.
2. Achievable Goals – for work tasks and output that others depend on. Should be stretch and you will occasionally fall short. Do your absolute best, clean up any mess and move on.
3. Personal Goals – not impossible, but the leading edge of your vision. You may never hit your personal goals, but you are likely to achieve your full potential. For example, Ted Williams, the legendary Boston Red Sox hitter, achieved a

batting average of .344 during his 19-year career. That means he got a hit just over 1/3 of his batting opportunities. In 1941 he hit .406 or a little over 40% of his at bats. There's no doubt that Williams' personal goal was to get a hit every at bat and, although he fell way short, he became, arguably, the best hitter ever.
Don't sell yourself short when setting personal goals. Falling short isn't failure.

Some key work fundamentals.

1. Listening – perhaps your most powerful tool. Learn and lead by listening. You learn by thoughtfully listening to facts and opinions. And by thoughtfully listening, you earn trust and leadership credibility. An effective listening technique is to ask "open-ended" questions followed by "clarifying" questions. For example, "What keeps you up at night?" followed by "What caused the problem of missed deadlines?"
2. Reading – you can become an expert in almost anything through reading. It's an infinite source of knowledge and easily accessed through the Internet. Commit some time every day to reading.
3. Due diligence – related to listening and reading. You may make wrong decisions but should never make uninformed decisions.
4. Time management – time, your most precious resource. Plan and budget your time. Work on the most important topics not those you enjoy. Eliminate distractions. Respect your colleagues' time in meetings and communications.
5. Writing – become a skilled writer. Learn how to deliver a clear and easily read message. Take the time to write and then read and edit – multiple times if needed. Test your logic. Read one final time as a member of your target audience. Will they understand and be influenced by your message?
   See Appendix APEX Writing Method – it outlines a powerful writing technique.

Failure Stamina

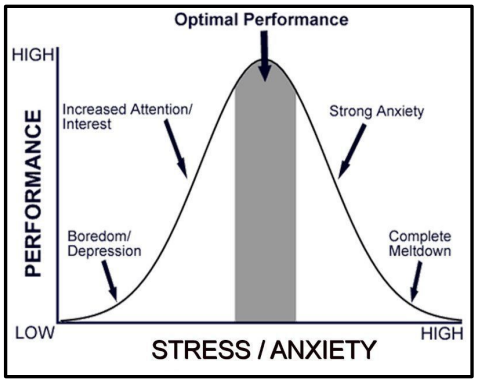
Failure is essential; it's a vital part of your learning process. If you never fail, you're being too cautious. In your due diligence and interviews, test whether this organization encourages risk and recognizes the value of failure. When you do fail, remember the three principles of failure response:

Principles of Failure Response

1. Admit, apologize and take full responsibility.
2. Do everything you can to mitigate any consequences.
3. Commit to learning from it and improving in the future.

Emotional Stamina – Stay Cool

Most of you are or were recently college students. Colleges understand the Stress/Performance model shown to the right and use stress to elevate performance. We resist and complain and then adapt.



We all have our personal demons that thrive on stress. Don't believe all the recommendations about avoiding stress. Effective people and leaders learn to manage stress and make their emotional stamina a personal strength.

In your personal lifestyle and your career, you will need to assess your emotional stamina, its limits and your capacity to be proactive, empowered and risk-taking.

Financial Stamina – You can't afford to worry about your finances.

Do you plan to be financially self-sufficient? Self-sufficient doesn't mean rich; it means that your lifestyle is consistent with your economics. This is a commitment that all ZF students make when accepting a ZF scholarship. Going forward, we will assume that you plan to be financially self-sufficient.

To become and remain financially self-sufficient you have to keep score. Your financial scoreboard is named "Budget". Your budget must project into the future as your life and career evolve. The term "Pro Forma" literally means performed routinely and according to form. In finance, it often means projected financial conditions after assumed events and changes.

Starting with your student loans, you will make decisions such as, spouse/partner, family, housing, loans for large purchases, health insurance etc., that impact your future economics. To visualize your economic future, you will need a budget package including a short term weekly or monthly budget, an annual budget plus several annual pro forma budgets – perhaps 5, 10 and 25 years into the future.

Learn about budgeting and build a simple spreadsheet for your budgets. Use terminology and detail that suit you and provide space to document the underlying assumptions particularly for your pro forma budgets. When assumptions change, budgets must be updated.

Everyone's financial plan must include savings – for both planned expenses such as children's education, your retirement(s) and unexpected emergencies. Don't forget that your savings, when carefully invested, earn compound interest. For example, compound interest on savings of $100 per month at 6% interest becomes $200,000 in 40 years. Pro forma budgeting is strategic and will highlight the lifestyle and decisions necessary for sustained financial self-sufficiency.

Opportunities Abound – Be Prepared

You can't predict what and when exciting career opportunities will present themselves. Your career strategy should be to prepare for the broadest possible range. You won't be "Qualified" for all these, but you can become the best candidate by being known for a high level of commitment and performance, by being a power learner and by living values that earn trust.

Career Moment

My First Promotion – Early in my career, I was an engineer in a small department of a large company. We provided engineering services to our sales departments when they were bidding on complex systems. One day our Manager announced that he had too many people (about 20) reporting to him and he would have to organize us into teams and appoint a team supervisor. I was the newest and least experienced member of my team. When he called me into his office, I was ready to discover my new boss. My Manager looked me in the eye and said, "You're the new team supervisor". I reacted by asking, "How can you do this, I'm the least experienced and skilled member of the team?" He explained it was easy; my team members were highly skilled engineers who wanted to work on technical challenges. You've become their interface with our customers and you do the work they don't want to do such as proposals and instruction manuals. Don't worry, they won't have a problem – and they didn't. My Manager concluded by explaining this was a great opportunity for me because I was also the lowest paid member of the team. Frank Z – ZF Coach

Career Moment

My Biggest Promotion - I was 35 years old and had recently joined a small scientific instrument company as VP Manufacturing. Things weren't going well and we had shrunk from about 150 people down to about 100 through layoffs and the sale of a small division. Soon I was the only VP remaining. Unbeknown to me, two of my colleagues asked our venture capital investors to meet with them the evening prior to an upcoming Board of Directors meeting. They explained that we faced weak new orders, low morale and unfocused direction – in short, we were failing. They concluded that we needed new leadership and they proposed me. The next morning, these directors met privately with the founder and I was elected Executive VP at our Board meeting. Three months later, I was elected President and CEO. I was truly unqualified to be CEO and had no idea how to lead us forward, but I had demonstrated a commitment to learning and my colleagues sure wanted me to succeed. Through the sheer will of many people over the next 8 years, we became a global leader increasing revenue 30-fold and employment almost 15-fold. Frank Z – ZF Coach

What's Next? - Legacy

Retirement? Probably. But, you're not done. You have the experience and energy to do more; don't waste it. You've successfully grown from child to student and now enter the great challenge to become an Effective Adult and a Values-based Leader and to apply these to building a successful career. In doing so, you're building your Personal Legacy. Will your grandchildren and future generations think about you? Will you have impacted their values and lives? Have you in some way made others better? Lots to do.

Enjoy Your Career

Your career will unfold as you live. It should be fun and exciting, and if not, fix it. Don't worry about failure because you will learn and overcome. Your successful career will open opportunities for every aspect of your life. Sure it's work, but it's an investment in you and your family. Get ready, get set and GO!

Appendix A – Recommended Reading

1. **The Miracle of Self-Discipline - Brian Tracy** – Audiobook -
   The "No-Excuses" Way to Getting Things Done.

2. **How to Read a Book - Mortimer Adler** -
   Learn about the various levels of reading and how to achieve them, from elementary reading through systematic skimming and inspectional reading to speed reading.

3. **The Power of Habit - Charles Duhigg -**
   Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business

4. **7 Habits of Highly Effective People - Stephen Covey** -
   Powerful Lessons in Personal Change.

5. **Personal Finance for Dummies - Eric Tyson** -
   Understand personal finance and put your money to work!

6. **Acing the Interview - Tony Beshara** –
   How to Ask and Answer the Questions That Will Get You the Job

7. **The First 90 Days - Michael Watkins** -
   Proven Strategies for Getting Up to Speed Faster and Smarter

8. **Who Moved my Cheese - Kenneth Blanchard** -
   An Amazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life

9. **What Color is Your Parachute – Richard Bolles** -
   A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers

Appendix B – Useful Websites

1. Zeniefoundation.org – Learn about ZF and their programs.

2. LinkedIn.com – Due diligence and networking

3. Mint.com – Personal financial planning and budgeting

Appendix C - The APEX Writing Model

About fifty years ago my employer invested in me (Frank Zenie) by inviting me to attend one-day communications seminar called the APEX Communications method. I have no idea whether some successor organization still teaches this method, but I frequently apply it in my communications. The method is simple:

A	**Attention** – Dramatic phrase and/or graphic that captures your audience's attention.
P	**Point** – What viewpoint or conclusion do you want your audience to accept? In sales and marketing communications, your point is often a strong claim where the ideal response is; "Prove It".
E	**Examples** – Supporting information or examples supporting your point.
X	**X = Strong Close** – Call to action. Ranges from intellectual acceptance of your point to purchasing your product. It may be a question such as; What do you think or does that make sense?

An ad or business letter may use APEX once, while a longer communication, might be structured into multiple APEX sections. Think of a sales presentation, where you summarize the customer's problem and gain agreement that your summary is accurate. Then you present an ideal solution and get agreement that, although it probably doesn't exist, it would fully meet your customer's needs. Then you present your proposed solution against the criteria of the ideal solution acknowledging any gaps that might exist. Now you're ready for a trial close leading to the next step in your customer's buying process.