Inspiring Vocation and Career Interview

The idea

Find a person who is living their vocation, whose career life inspires you. Spend 30 minutes or so interviewing them to get a glimpse of how they’ve come to be living this life.

Ideas about selecting an interviewee

1. Select a person about whom you want to know more. You shouldn’t already know all of their answers to a majority of the interview questions!
2. Select a person whose life directly relates to some of your own aspirations and/or plans.
3. Select someone who lives a life that seems worthwhile and meaningful to you.
4. If, after considering your interests and existing network of people, you’re having a hard time thinking of a person, talk with friends, family and/or college faculty, administrators and staff. Campus resources include advising conversation partners and people who work in academic departments, Career Center, Student Leadership and Service, etc.

Setting up the interview

Preview the questions before you contact your potential interviewee so that you can answer their questions about the interview (i.e. “I’ll be asking you questions about your job, your community engagement and your college experience.”).Especially if you haven’t yet met or hardly know your interviewee, it can be helpful to remind your interviewee of how you know them (i.e. through a friend).

1. Be clear about what you’re asking in terms of time and effort.
2. Remember that your interviewee is being helpful to you. Be respectful of their time by being punctual in starting and ending the interview. Thank them…multiple times! Consider sending them a follow-up thank you.

Preparing for the interview

Before your interview you might want to come up with a question or two. You’ll find the other questions on the back of this sheet. Make sure that you can set aside any distractions before you have the interview so that you can listen well.

A thought on interviewing

Each person will take a different amount of time and words to answer these questions! If an answer leaves you wanting more, consider asking a follow-up question. Follow-up questions could include clarifying questions (i.e. What do you mean by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?) or other kinds of questions (i.e. Could you give me an example of that?). Of course, you can simply use this list of questions as a template and come up with all your own questions if you prefer.

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview. I’m doing this interview as a part of one of my classes. The class has us thinking about how to make the most of our college experiences. I have 10 questions to ask you and this should take about 30 minutes.

1. When you were in college what kind of work/career were you preparing or hoping to do? What was your major/minor?
2. Please give me a brief description of your current job?
3. Can you tell me your career story—how did you get from college graduation to your current job? What about your experience has been planned and what has been a surprise?
4. What are your favorite and least favorite parts of your job and why?
5. Whether inside or outside of your job, about what community concern are you really passionate? This could be specific like helping your local school raise money for a new media center or more general like social justice.
6. How did you come to be interested in this community concern? Why is it important to you?
7. What experiences from your college years seem most important to you now and why? These could be classes, organizations, activities…or they could be experiences like a relationship with a mentor or friend.
8. Think of an original question you would like to ask your interviewee.

Question:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. I’m in my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ year of college. What advice do you have for me?

Thank you again for taking the time to talk with me!