



GRADUATION & NEW LIFE STAGE

MANAGING THE 3-WORRISOME-F'S OF "ADULTING"

Photo by Ben Konfrist



By Sonny KH Wong (MEd, RP)



+ John Sendim (MPS candidate, RP(Q))

"Many adults now go back full time to change careers given our ever changing job market, so they are just like youth looking for their first job in their field of study. Sonny and John's article is a big help for adults and youth in this Graduation and New Life Stage."

Graduation is a reality that many students in colleges/universities will be experiencing soon enough. And with each generation of graduating students, they have all been asked, "Times are tough...what are you going to do about a job?" The excitement of completing an education, perhaps being the first in your family to do so, is characterized with nervousness especially while answering the question – what is next for me? Moreover, the responsibilities that come with "adulting" can be overwhelming. The combination of nervousness and the reality of adulting can overshadow these new grads' major life accomplishment. The article is written by two professionals, at two different major universities, and from two different

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THERE IS MORE TO A JOB SEARCH THAN GOOGLE (OR REASONS TO ATTEND JOB FAIRS) BY LISA TRUDEL

Have you heard the expressions: Job Fairs, Career Fairs, Career Expos, Hiring Events and Employer Events? These events often have slightly different titles, yet they usually have the same format. In brief, Job Fairs are occasions in which employers, schools, recruiters and career professionals give information to job seekers. However, they can be much more than this. Job Fairs can be opportunities to understand initiative, to practice patience and to switch up your job search from searching online, to getting out of your home to learn

something new. At Job Fairs you can research, appreciate and prove that there is more to life than hunting through Google for a job. The top 10 reasons and points to remember when attending Job Fairs are:

- To learn that first impressions can make you stand out from the crowd. Many employers prefer to meet candidates in person instead of reading resumes and applications from strangers.
- To learn that the workplace is not always organized by what you have originally studied. There are many alternative careers you might

not have even thought about. For example, you could be an Internationally Educated Lawyer with a recent Community College Human Resources Diploma who starts to talk with a Legal Recruiter, and the next thing you know, you might be considering an administrative position with this Recruiter. Or maybe you are a job seeker with two years of coursework toward a Bachelor of Nursing Degree, who changed directions and obtained a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree. While you were at University you were very involved in the Student Union and the

Canadian Federation of Students and have a passion for advocacy and Labour Relations. The next thing you know you might be talking with the Ontario Nurses Association and considering becoming a Labour Relations Assistant.

- To learn more about employers than what you read on their websites. When you ask questions in person, you can gain an inside view into the company culture.
- To learn that Job Fairs are not social events. Be careful not to fall into the mistake of interacting on a social level. Never forget

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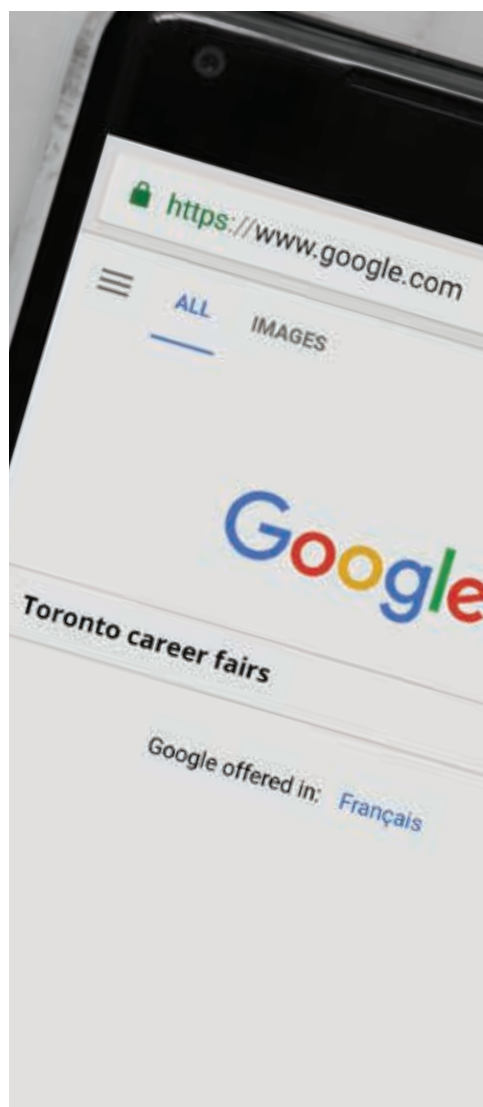
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THERE IS MORE TO A JOB SEARCH THAN GOOGLE (OR REASONS TO ATTEND JOB FAIRS)

BY LISA TRUDEL



that you are being judged on your potential to function in a work environment.

- To learn that planning can put you ahead of the competition. Dress to impress as if you are going to a job interview, have extra copies of your resume, and yet be ready for some employers not to accept your resume and instead ask you to apply online. This is simply to comply with company policies and does not mean employers are ignoring you or that attending Job Fairs are a waste of time.
- To learn about having an open mind. For example, if you research the registered employers before attending Job Fairs, you might discover there are only 6 employers on your target list to speak with. However, if you have extra time, or have to wait to speak with an employer, take advantage of the opportunities to talk with other employers who are not busy. You might be surprised to learn something new. At the very least, you will be practicing how to initiate a

conversation in an informal business setting.

- To learn about business etiquette. Stand up straight, don't chew gum, don't play with your hair, don't smell like smoke and don't act distracted. Use all the keys to successful interviewing including a firm handshake, a warm smile, eye contact and an assertive voice.
- To learn how to be evaluated on more than your resume and LinkedIn profile. At Job Fairs you can practice your "career pitch" or "elevator speech" or "30-second commercial". For example, instead of just handing your resume to a potential employer when you get to the front of a crowded line at a Job Fair, your career pitch could be:

"Hi. My name is Jane Smith and I'm an administrative assistant who is fluent in two languages. I recently graduated from George Brown College with a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Management and I have excellent digital fluency skills. If you are looking for someone who is

organized and reliable, here I am!"

- To learn that you can use your leadership skills to follow-up with employers. While at Job Fairs, collect employers business cards and email your "Thank You" within 24 hours. Thank you emails can work to your advantage because they show courtesy and respect, and can demonstrate your written skills.
- To learn that connecting with employers, recruiters, schools, or career professionals can help to build self confidence. Nothing can really replace in-person contact for making an impact. Not even Google.

To find out more about job searching and how to approach employers, contact your local Employment Ontario Career Centre.

This article was submitted by Lisa Trudel, Career Specialist with the Centre for Education & Training. She works at their Parliament Employment Services location in the historic Cabbagetown district of downtown Toronto and can be contacted at: ltrudel@tcet.com

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NIGHT RIDE HOME:

PART TWO OF TWO CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH AND TRUCKING WHICH BEGAN LAST ISSUE

BY CARTER HAMMETT



Photo by Matthew T Rader on Unsplash

According to MHCC, the average age of a Canadian trucker is 47 years old. By the age of 40, more than half the population have, or will experience a mental illness. When you realize the sobering fact that many drivers are absent from their homes and support systems for long periods of time, accessing psychological support seems rather unlikely.

In an industry where 97% of the workers are men, and that sector is largely seen as “hyper-masculine,” female truckers are at a distinct disadvantage says Ellen Voie of Women in Trucking, a United States-based agency that promotes the participation of women in transportation.

“I see a lot of anger from drivers,” she says via email. “They seem to feel victimized and lash out because of it. For example, on Facebook they swear at one another, call each other names and use it to humiliate others. I see it on Twitter as well, as people seem to feel the need to denigrate others. It’s sad that social media is used to harm others (doesn’t sound very social, does it?)”

“I also think there is a higher level of loneliness with the driver community. They are often alone for so many hours, they have a lot of time to think and if they are focusing on negative situations, it only makes matters worse.

“It’s hard for drivers to be away from their family and friends for extended periods of time. Also, a lot of interaction drivers have with their companies is not always positive. They are reprimanded if they are late or don’t complete their paperwork on time. They don’t have the good interactions as often as the bad ones, so it makes it seem as if no one is supporting them. They also have so many regulations that govern their life, from hours of service to cameras and satellite tracking devices, they are always being monitored.”

Burley concurs. “In the trucking industry you get it from both ends,” he says. “The

dispatcher typically has a stack of 200 envelopes of work that needs to be done. They don’t care what the weather is, nor does anyone else, including the end-user. They’re just expecting a delivery and don’t care about the weather. All they care about is, you’re late.”

Burley points out that longhaul truckers have it the worst. “You could be on a route from Mississauga to Halifax and your phone rings. It’s your wife and she’s crying that your kid’s in the hospital or the water tank broke. All that stuff from home comes with us,” he says.

There are some elements that occur on the road people don’t often talk about. One of these is suicide. A trucker will be driving along a stretch of highway when a suicidal driver in an oncoming vehicle decides to ram into the truck in a suicide attempt. They are often successful. People have been known to jump from overpasses into the oncoming path of a truck. Others will walk along the side of a highway and throw themselves in front of the truck. One can only imagine the stress caused to the driver.

Drivers involved in this type of incident whether as a participant or even witness can be triggered into a state of stress and anxiety which can lead to conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among others. And absence from any support systems for weeks at a time may deter them from seeking help to cope with these issues, which can compound over time or manifest as unhealthy behaviours.

The S-Word

So, with all the facts squarely on the table, why does the sector seem to stay mum on how to assist their “trucking family?”

The answer to that can be summed up in one word, says Linda Corkum: Stigma.

Corkum, executive director of the Nova Scotia Trucking Safety Association (NSTSA) says that her association’s main goal is trying to get people talking.

“We’re trying to break down barriers in a male-dominated industry and get people speaking about the subject,” she says.

But too often drivers who do want to talk about their struggles are met with phrases like, “suck it up” or “deal with it.” And unfortunately there’s lots of “small-to-medium sized companies that don’t have medical plans or employee assistance programs to support their employees; that’s part of it,” she says.

In response to some of these absences, NSTSA offers a training program called The Working Mind. Based on the Mental Health Continuum Model, The Working Mind is an evidence-based education program designed to address and promote mental health and reduce the stigma of mental illness in a workplace setting. The program is offered in two formats, a full-day option geared towards managers and supervisors and a half-day version aimed at workers.

The program—which includes some cognitive behavioural approaches—aims to reduce the stigma of mental illness, while increasing awareness of mental health and offers resources to maintain positive health and resiliency. Overall, the goals of the program includes improving the productivity of employees while encouraging employees to seek help for mental health issues.

The program also teaches self-management skills.

“Through the mental health program, there’s certain techniques truckers can use to manage their situations,” says Corkum. “For example if they were in a situation where they saw a collision they could try a breathing technique where they hold their breath for several seconds. It’s a calming activity they can use while driving. You can also do it in everyday life.”

Another element the program creates is a “framework where truckers can express themselves in a comprehensible manner,

that’s safe and people understand.” The framework is organized around colour with each colour representing a varying degree of wellness, from healthy to ill. For example, a trucker might say ‘I’m feeling yellow today,’ and people will understand, says Corkum.

The Other S-Word: Solutions

“Supervisors need to know how to talk to the driver,” says Corkum. “How do you have that difficult conversation? They need to recognize the signs and symptoms that show up.

“We’re making a real difference in the industry,” she says.

But that’s not the only tool available to assist workplaces. Companies are starting to wake up and seeing mental health as a very real issue and offering solutions to help supervisors and workers alike. Earlier this year, The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety redesigned an online toolkit to help workplaces take action on psychological health and safety.

The toolkit, Guarding Minds at Work (www.guardingmindsatwork.ca), is designed to “assess and address psychological health and safety in the workplace and is available to all employers in the public or private sector at no cost. The tool provides employers with an eight-step process to conduct a thorough audit of their organization’s mental health using worksheets, surveys and reports that evaluate psychosocial risk factors in the workplace.

“The tool offers human resource professionals, managers, supervisors, union representatives, and small or mid-sized business owners a practical resource to focus on psychological health and safety in their workplace, undertake appropriate interventions, and measure the effectiveness of their actions. Guarding Minds at Work can also be used to help organizations as they implement the

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National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

Developed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, The Standard is a set of voluntary guidelines, tools and resources intended to guide organizations in promoting mental health and preventing psychological harm at work. The first of its kind in the world, the Standard provides a framework to help all types of organizations guide their efforts with productivity, financial performance, risk management, organizational recruitment and employee retention. For more information on accessing the standard, visit www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/national-standard

On March 19 of last year, while this story was being written, Trucking HR Canada announced a new project:

Trucking HR Canada, with support from the Ontario provincial government, announced a new project focused on mental health in the trucking and logistics sector.

Spanning two years, the new initiative will work to increase understanding among trucking and logistics employers on the importance of psychological health in the workplace; and, develop practical and relevant resources and tools to support employers in addressing employee mental health.

“Mental health in the workplace is an important, emerging priority among trucking and logistics employers,” said Angela Splinter, CEO of Trucking HR Canada. “This project enables us to focus on the development of tools tailored to the needs of trucking and logistics’ employers in supporting workers dealing with mental health issues.”

Gerald Burley was lucky. Entering the field a decade ago, he landed a trucking job that kept most of his deliveries local, thereby avoiding issues often experienced by long-haul counterparts. However, he still struggles with depression on a daily basis, yet no longer takes medication to manage it.

“It’s not always about a pill,” he says.

“You have to find the right combination of factors. I’m not a believer in western medicine. For me, food is medicine and I manage my condition through a combination of diet, exercise, mind set, thoughts and smiling. I have my music and my pets.

“Everyday I do something to help myself. I listen to my music or sometimes I sit here in absolute silence, or I’ll use essential oils and aromatherapy. This is the way I meditate. We all have to find what works for us.”

“Companies have to get staff trained to recognize changes in people,” he says. “We need to start those conversations with people, ask questions like, how are you doing today?”

A simple question like that might actually save someone’s life.

Carter Hammett is the Employment Services Manager with Epilepsy Toronto. He holds a Bachelor of Community Studies degree along with diplomas in journalism, social work and adult education. His work has appeared in National Post, Toronto Star and Toronto Sun, among others. He is the author of three books including Benchmarking: A Guide to Hiring and Managing Persons with Learning Disabilities (ALDER, 2005) and most recently, Book of Disquiet: Dispatches From the Disability Frontlines (2015). He can be reached at carter@epilepsytoronto.org.

HOW BRAIN BIASES PREVENT CLIMATE ACTION

BY MATTHEW WILBURN KING

Reprinted from bbc.com published 8, March 2019 <https://bbc.in/2F4JgDo>

Cognitive biases that ensured our initial survival now make it difficult to address long-term challenges that threaten our existence, like climate change. But they can help us too.

We know that climate change is happening. We also know that it’s the result of increased carbon emissions from human activities like land degradation and the burning of fossil fuels. And we know that it’s urgent.

A recent report from international climate experts tells us that we are likely to reach 1.5C of average global warming in as little as 11 years. At that point we can expect “increased risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth”. These experts also found that temperature rise has already altered human and natural systems in profound ways, resulting in more extreme weather, the melting polar ice caps, sea level rise, droughts, floods and biodiversity loss.

But that information hasn’t been enough to change our behaviours on a scale great enough to stop climate change. And a big part of the reason is our own evolution. The same behaviours that once helped us survive are, today, working against us.

It’s important to remember one thing, however. It’s true that no other species has evolved to create such a large-scale problem – but no other species has evolved with such an extraordinary capacity to solve it, either.

BRAIN BIASES

We lack the collective will to address climate change because of the way our brains have evolved over the last two million years.

“Humans are very bad at understanding statistical trends and long-term changes,” says political psychologist Conor Seyle, director of research at One Earth Future Foundation, a programme incubator that focuses on fostering peace long-term.

“We have evolved to pay attention to immediate threats. We overestimate threats that are less likely but easier to remember, like terrorism, and underestimate more complex threats, like climate change.”

In early phases of human existence we faced an onslaught of daily challenges to our survival and ability to reproduce – from predators to natural disasters. Too much information can confuse our brains, leading us to inaction or poor choices that can place us in harm’s way.

As a result, our brains evolved to filter information rapidly and focus on what is most immediately essential to our survival and reproduction. We also evolved to remember both threats, so that they could be avoided in the future, and opportunities, so we could easily recall where to find sources of food and shelter.

These biological evolutions ensured our capacity to reproduce and survive by saving our brains time and energy when dealing with vast amounts of information. However, these same functions are less useful in our modern reality and cause errors in rational decision-making, known as cognitive biases. “Cognitive biases that ensured our initial survival make it difficult to address complex, long-term challenges that now threaten our existence, like climate change,” says Seyle.

Psychologists have identified more than

150 cognitive biases we all share. Of these, a few are particularly important in explaining why we lack the will to act on climate change.

Hyperbolic discounting. This is our perception that the present is more important than the future. Throughout most of our evolution it was more advantageous to focus on what might kill us or eat us now, not later. This bias now impedes our ability to take action to address more distant-feeling, slower and complex challenges.

Our lack of concern for future generations. Evolutionary theory suggests that we care most about just a few generations of family members: our great-grandparents to great-grandchildren. While we may understand what needs to be done to address climate change, it’s hard for us to see how the sacrifices required for generations existing beyond this short time span are worth it.

The bystander effect. We tend to believe that someone else will deal with a crisis. This developed for good reason: if a threatening wild animal is lurking at the edge of our hunter-gatherer group, it’s a waste of effort for every single member to spring into action — not to mention could needlessly put more people into danger. In smaller groups, it was usually pretty clearly delineated who would step up for which threats, so this worked. Today, however, this leads us to assume (often wrongly) that our leaders must be doing something about the crisis of climate change. And the larger the group, the stronger this bias becomes.

The sunk-cost fallacy. We are biased towards staying the course even in the face of negative outcomes. The more we’ve invested time, energy or resources into that course, the more likely we are to stick with it – even if it no longer seems optimal. This helps explain, for example, our continued reliance on fossil fuels as a primary source of energy in the face of decades of evidence that we both can and should transition to clean energy and a carbon neutral future.

These cognitive biases evolved for good reason. But they’re now hamstringing our ability to respond to what could be the largest crisis humanity has ever created or had to face.

EVOLUTIONARY UPSIDE

The good news is that our biological evolution hasn’t just hindered us from addressing the challenge of climate change. It’s also equipped us with capacities to overcome them.

Take our capacity for mental “time travel”. Compared to other animals, we are arguably unique in the degree to which we can recall past events and anticipate future scenarios.

We can imagine and predict multiple, complex outcomes and identify actions needed in the present to achieve desired outcomes in the future. And individually we often prove able to act on these plans. We invest in retirement accounts and buy insurance, for example, as ways to counter our short-term interests over the long-term.

Unfortunately, this capacity to plan to ensure a future outcome breaks down when large-scale collective action is needed – as is the case with climate change. As individuals, we know what

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Deep Roots and Growing Branches: Mothercraft's History of Training and Service Excellence

by **Glory Ressle, Director of Education Training & Data, Canadian Mothercraft Society**

Most people are surprised to learn that the Canadian Mothercraft Society's reputation of providing high quality early education and care training programs and direct services for children and families has its roots in the turn of the last century and the other side of the globe. From its inception, there was a strong focus on combining both education and direct service practices based on scientific and research findings.

It all began in 1907 when Dr. Truby King was motivated by high infant mortality rates in New Zealand to form a voluntary society that would 'help mothers and save babies'. He developed 'Mothercraft' as an educational process aimed at lowering these unacceptable baby death rates.

Dr. King aimed to spread 'a lofty view of the responsibilities of maternity', promote breast feeding, train nurses in maternal and infant welfare, and educate parents in parenting, domestic hygiene and nutrition. To promote these ideas he established the Royal New Zealand Society for the Promotion of the Health of Women and Children, and it came to be known as the Plunket Society because Lady Victoria Plunket, the wife of the Governor was an ardent supporter of Dr. King's work.

With her assistance, the movement spread rapidly and prominent women were inspired to devote their energies to promoting the cause of child welfare. Committees were formed throughout the country, local clinics were opened and nurses trained in infant welfare visited mothers in their homes. Nurses in hospitals were taught to encourage recent mothers to breastfeed their infants, as King believed that breastfeeding

'foster[ed] the highest development of maternal love and devotion'. This direct family and education work of the Plunket Society continues across New Zealand to this day - in some form or another.

The underlying message of his program was preventative in nature as he advocated that we "Build healthy babies rather than patch sick ones" and he had a vision of babies saved through the application of science to motherhood. However, some of Dr. King's original ideas such as limiting bonding time and establishing strict infant schedules have been subsequently disproven and are no longer included in education programs or direct service practices.

In fact, King later modified his stance on limited cuddling and strict infant routines to emphasize the consistency of care rather than duration or scheduling and we now focus on the quality and consistency of our bonding interactions with young children. Also, the original, more directive advice giving provided by the Plunket nurse was eventually replaced by a flexible partnership model of care and support for parents and their children.

The Plunket Society quickly became the basis for Mothercraft centres established in England, India, Jamaica, Scotland, Australia, and South Africa and eventually Canada. Barbara Mackenzie, a student of Dr. King and a Registered General Nurse and Midwife from New Zealand, came to Toronto. She married Irving Robertson, the Chairman of the Board of the Hospital for Sick Children. Together, in 1931, they set up a Mothercraft Centre under the auspices of The

Hospital for Sick Children and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth became the Honorary Patroness of the newly formed Canadian Mothercraft Society.

Mrs. Robertson founded the Mothercraft Well-Baby Nursing Training program, operated a maternity hospital and provided a community registry which was maintained until 1990. Mothercraft also supported infants awaiting adoption with the Catholic Children's Aid Society, provided hospice for infants who were very ill, and pioneered pre-natal classes that focused on mental health and infant well-being.

Students in the Mothercraft Well-Baby Nursing program underwent a year of studies in the Mothercraft Hospital and 4 months of placement practicum. Lectures were given by members of the medical and dental professions, child psychologists, dieticians and Mothercraft nursing staff. While the Plunket Society continues to have a nurse training and service focus to this day, in 1944 the Canadian Mothercraft Society shifted its educational focus to infant child care.

Then, in 1965, Mothercraft opened one of the first infant child care centres in Toronto, positioning it as a leader in both infant care education and direct service. A few years later, in 1967, a joint Mothercraft and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education research project was undertaken to determine the effects of quality child care on disadvantaged children and the findings formed the basis upon which an Early Childhood Education Diploma curriculum was written.

This work and 10 years of subsequent experience providing quality education led to Mothercraft being awarded post-secondary program equivalency from the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services in 1978.

The Canadian Mothercraft Society has continued its commitment to excellence through its focus on combining research, education and best practice over the last 40 years. This has included:

- Developing expertise and specialized education programs in a wide range of areas,

- such as: home child care, infant/toddler care, child mental health, trauma informed intervention services, educator pedagogies, leadership, anti-bias, Indigenous specific, family support, and newcomer child early development and family functioning.
- Expanding infant child care services to include toddler and preschool child care.
- Providing training across Ontario and Canada.
- Conducting research and publishing findings.
- Presenting at conferences across Canada and in France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Mexico.
- Obtaining national and international Best Practice Site recognition and local, provincial and national leadership appointments.
- Opening the Mothercraft College of Early Childhood Education at 646 St. Clair Ave., West. And approval to act as a recognized Private Career College.

The Canadian Mothercraft Society understands that there is still much to be done to promote further understanding of the importance of the early years to later life outcomes both locally and in Canada and around the world. We have continued to build on Dr. King's original ideas around caring for mothers, the importance of infant attachment, and applying science and research findings to education programs and our professional practices.

This approach, along with over 85 years of experience in education around early care and development and an established history of pursuing of excellence, has resulted in Mothercraft being well known for offering a variety of highly regarded child and family services and professional education and training programs. For further information, please visit: www.mothercraft.ca, email: college@mothercraft.org or call 416-483-0511.



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HOW BRAIN BIASES PREVENT CLIMATE ACTION

we can do about climate change. But addressing the issue also requires collective action on a scale that exceeds our evolutionary capacities. The larger the group, the more challenging it gets. Remember the bystander effect?

But in small groups, it's a different story.

As primates, we evolved to work cooperatively to defend territory and sustainably harvest food and resources for the group, all while ensuring enough genetic diversity to procreate. Anthropological experiments show us that, on average, any one individual can maintain stable relationships with 150 other people – a phenomenon known as “Dunbar’s number”. Beyond that social relationships begin to break down, undermining an individual’s ability to trust and rely on the actions of others to achieve collective long-term goals.

Recognising the power of small groups, Exposure Labs, the film company behind *Chasing Ice* and *Chasing Coral*, is using its films to mobilise communities to take local action on climate change. For example, in South Carolina, a US state rife with leaders who deny climate change, Exposure Labs shows a film to get a conversation started, inviting people from various interest groups – like the agricultural, fisheries, and tourism industries – to talk about how climate change affects them personally. They then work these small groups to identify practical actions that can be taken immediately at the local level to make an impact – something that helps generate the political pressure necessary to compel lawmakers to pass relevant local or state-wide legislation. When local

communities shape the narrative around individual interests, people are less likely to succumb to the bystander effect and more likely to engage.

These approaches use a couple of other psychological strategies, too. First, when small groups are involved in coming up with solutions themselves, they experience the endowment effect: when we own something (even an idea), we tend to value it more. Second, social comparison: we tend to evaluate ourselves by looking at others. If we’re surrounded by other people in a group who are taking action on climate change, we’re more likely to do the same. This is also the impetus behind programmes like comparing energy consumption from household to household in a community. Research shows that when people compare their energy use with their neighbours’ via statements on their energy bills they are more likely to reduce energy consumption.

Of all our cognitive biases, however, the framing effect is one of the strongest affecting our decision-making processes. Humans are more likely to change behaviour when challenges are framed positively, instead of negatively. In other words, how we communicate about climate change influences how we respond. People are more likely to act in relation to a positive frame (“a clean energy future will save X number of lives”) versus a negative statement (“we’re going to go extinct due to climate change”).

“Most people believe that climate change is real, but feel powerless to do something about it in the face of consequences that feel far away

from home,” says Exposure Labs managing director Samantha Wright. “So to get people to act, we need to make the issue feel direct and personal by focusing the issue locally, pointing both to local impacts and local solutions: like moving one’s city to 100% renewable energy.”

Similarly, behaviour change must be incentivised at the local level. One nation leading the way has been Costa Rica, which put in place an innovative carbon tax on fuel back in 1997. To emphasise the connection for taxpayers between fuel use and benefits to their own communities, part of the revenue goes to pay farmers and indigenous communities to protect and regrow Costa Rica’s tropical forests. Costa Rica’s system “now generates \$33 million annually for these groups and has helped the country reverse their forest loss while growing and transforming their economy,” says Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Costa Rica’s Minister of Environment and Energy. In 2018, 98% of electricity used in the country came from renewable energy sources.

Rodriguez says the country is going even further; they’ve announced a goal to be carbon neutral by 2050, an effort which will include a bus fleet that is 70% electric by 2035 and cutting the number of cars used in cities in half by 2040. The key has been having a large-scale, organised effort – but one supported and understood by hundreds of smaller groups and communities.

At a larger scale, the Paris Agreement and the EU’s 2050 carbon neutrality plan play a similar role, creating a common climate change

action framework for countries, cities, towns and the private sector. “The EU’s 2050 carbon neutral plan is what’s needed at the global level to generate enough momentum, awareness and action, more importantly, it sets an example that can be matched and replicated by others,” says Patricia Zurita, CEO of BirdLife International, a global partnership of bird conservation organisations.

Above all, the most helpful trait we’ve evolved to have is our ability to innovate. In the past, we used this skill to discover fire, invent the wheel or plant the first fields. Today, it may look more like solar panels, wind farms, electric vehicles and carbon pricing. Along with innovation, we’ve evolved to have the communication and technology to pass these innovations on, allowing a single idea or invention to spread far beyond our own family or town.

From mental time travel to cooperative social behavior to our abilities to innovate, teach and learn, all of these evolutionary consequences always have helped us secure our own survival, and they will continue to do so – albeit in the face of a very different threat than we had in our hunter-gatherer days.

We have evolved to be able to stop human-induced climate change. Now we must act.

Dr Matthew Wilburn King is an international consultant and conservationist based in Boulder, Colorado and the president and chairman of the COMMON Foundation. Connect with him on Facebook or LinkedIn.



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THE MILLIE ROTMAN SHIME ACADEMIC BRIDGING PROGRAM: A PATHWAY TO HIGHER EDUCATION SINCE 1967

BY EMMA CULPEPER, M.A.



“After a 30 year break from school, the first essay was the most challenging,” says David Lee Chung, a recent graduate of the Millie Rotman Shime Academic Bridging Program at the University of Toronto. “It was like going swimming after a long, long time.”

David is sitting in my office on a frigid February afternoon, explaining how he came to be studying – and succeeding – at U of T after being away from school for so many years. He wears what appears to be a very warm U of T branded sweatshirt, an item he wouldn’t have needed back home in temperate Mauritius, where he was raised.

David tells me a bit about his earlier aspirations. Although a university education had always been one of his dreams, he

quickly became mired in work and financial obligations after finishing secondary school. Watching his sister complete an undergraduate and then a Masters degree, David recalls feeling that something was missing. “I didn’t get my chance,” he explains.

When David moved from Mauritius to Canada in 2012, he began looking at post-secondary options but didn’t yet feel prepared to go back to school. “After moving here, it took me a few years to get myself ready,” he said.

Fast-forward to 2016 when David found himself at an information session for the Academic Bridging Program at the University of Toronto. “I was very impressed,” says David. Listening to program manager Curtis Norman describe the academic supports available to Bridging students, David remembers saying to himself: “I think I will be okay.”

The Millie Rotman Shime Academic Bridging Program, located at U of T’s Woodsworth College on the St. George campus, marked its 50-year anniversary in 2017. Launched in 1967 as the Pre-University Program, it was renamed the Millie Rotman Shime Academic Bridging Program in 2000 with the generous support of the Rotman family.

The program offers an alternative entry point into university for those who’ve been away from school for some time and don’t necessarily meet U of T’s requirements for direct entry. The program itself – which students can elect to take over the course of four or eight months – helps to bridge the gap between students’ prior education and the academic expectations of university-level course work. Students who successfully complete the program are admitted to the Faculty of Arts & Science and are on track to pursue a Bachelor’s

degree in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The transition to university life can be a steep adjustment for students who have been away from school for some time, but Woodsworth offers a host of academic supports to help ease this transition. David attributes his academic success in part to these supports. He received one-on-one help from a learning strategist and attended academic skill building seminars which quickly got him up to speed. “I didn’t know there would be so much support,” he says. “I attended a lot of seminars on essay-writing and research skills that were very valuable.”

As an older student, David feared feeling out-of-place in the classroom. But now, he says that being in class with younger students is a highlight for him. “Listening to the discussions in class, I find the younger students to be very smart,” David says. “It is interesting to hear about their world views.”

David enrolled at Woodsworth intending to study art history, but his interests have broadened considerably since beginning his studies. This year, he’s taking classes in Diaspora and Transnational Studies, Indigenous Studies and Religion. A highlight for David this year was a class called Cities and Urban Life, offered through the Department of Geography and Planning. He also has a growing interest in Industrial Relations.

During his Bridging year, David noticed a certain camaraderie in the class that helped to create lasting social bonds. He has since found other ways to meet people and feel at home on campus. “First Nations House is very welcoming and homey,” says David, “and the student lounge at Woodsworth is

welcoming as well.” He attends the free movie nights held at Innis College every Friday, and especially enjoys the discussions that follow.

David tells me that he has begun to think differently since studying at U of T – even his interpretation of film has deepened. “You will never read the same way again: you will always look for the thesis statement, even when watching a movie or documentary,” he explains. No longer a passive reader or viewer, David now regularly unpacks what he reads and sees. “I’m more analytical in my reading,” he adds.

This new breadth of thinking has allowed David to contemplate career options that wouldn’t have seemed possible before. He tells me that he’s interested in working with older adults from various cultural backgrounds. In particular, he would like to help document the personal narratives of Canadians who have immigrated here from all over the world.

In the long-term, David intends to continue studying as long as possible. He hopes to pursue a combined MA/ MBA degree at the University of Oxford, England. “I would like to study ethnicity in a place where there is lots of diversity,” he explains.

I ask David if he has any advice for those considering the Academic Bridging Program. “Attend the information session,” urges David. “I don’t think there is any age limit for learning. The Academic Bridging Program has opened up my horizons and it’s been the best decision I’ve made in my life.”

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SUSAN'S ENGLISH TEST

A SHORT STORY BY MINA WONG

When I first met Susan Shin in November 2017, she was a college student studying international business. A frequent library user myself, I would often see her among the stacks, and once, I even helped her find a book when the library assistants were busy.

At 27, Susan was a visiting student from Seoul with just enough funds for a two-year business program. She was also a candidate for permanent residency in the Skilled Worker designation. That meant she had to graduate from college with a competitive GPA, secure job offers, and earn high marks on IELTS, the official English test for all applicants.

Before coming to Canada, Susan had been an administrative assistant for a South Korean export firm. Once her studies had begun in Toronto, she also started working part-time in the offices of a local Asian supermarket chain.

Despite her employment success that many newcomers envied, Susan expressed a deep concern during her third semester: "I like my job and my GPA is okay. My problem is IELTS. I already failed it once. I need 5.5 but got 5." Susan also explained that language tests for immigration would be evaluated separately from a college transcript.

"That's a lot to deal with," I observed. I also asked Susan if she could get tutoring help, such as coaching just to target IELTS.

"Yeah, but that means spending money saved for my last semester, and not working for a month. IELTS courses are long and expensive," Susan replied.

"Who could help if you needed money?" I asked, hoping Susan could approach her family.

"My father retired so he can't support me anymore. My mother can help but she thinks I should go back to Korea. She doesn't want me to stay in Canada. She doesn't understand why I get a low mark in English. She thinks my English is already very good," Susan described some of her family's cultural beliefs that differed from her own.

Meanwhile, Susan understood that by marrying a Canadian, she could bypass many challenges that confronted her. Jimmy, a manager from her workplace was interested in marrying her, but he also wanted her to quit school and live with him in a small condo that he proudly owned. He tried to impress her with practical assets: "No mortgage, a nice

bedroom, just my son visiting every weekend, but he can sleep in the living room."

Although Jimmy was an honest man, Susan didn't want to date someone from work. At 27, she also wasn't ready to co-parent Jimmy's fifteen-year old son twice her height.

A week before last Christmas, Susan told me she had decided to try IELTS again. "I know my family doesn't like it, but it's the right thing for my future. I'll quit school for one semester and hire a coach just for IELTS. I'll write it again in April. Wish me luck!"

I could offer only moral support and encouragement: "I really respect you for trying again, and wish you tons of success."

Susan was hopeful and thoughtful: "No one said coming to Canada was easy. Learning English, lots of difficult assignments, no sleep, working twenty hours a week, and worrying about failing – but I won't give up. I will pass IELTS this time."

To my relief, Susan did get financial help from her college. After telling a counselor about her dilemma, she asked directly, "Is there any emergency money I can apply for if I want to succeed? I just need some help."

Impressed with Susan's focus and self-advocacy, the counselor found a few funds that she could apply for. In total, Susan raised an amount close to her IELTS expenses, part of which she would repay, but some was emergency assistance available to international students in need.

Elated, Susan pledged to score at least 10 extra points on her next IELTS before completing the final semester of her college education. With exciting jobs dancing in her head, she also visited career fairs to learn about professional development, salaries, benefits, and global prospects in her field.

As Susan attempts her second IELTS this spring, I feel optimistic about her success. Passing IELTS would mean one step closer to becoming a permanent resident, graduating from college, working in international business, and making Canada proud of another resilient young person building her life here.

We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this column. Send comments to learningcurves@hotmail.com.

SPRING TERM HAS DOUBLE THE START DATES

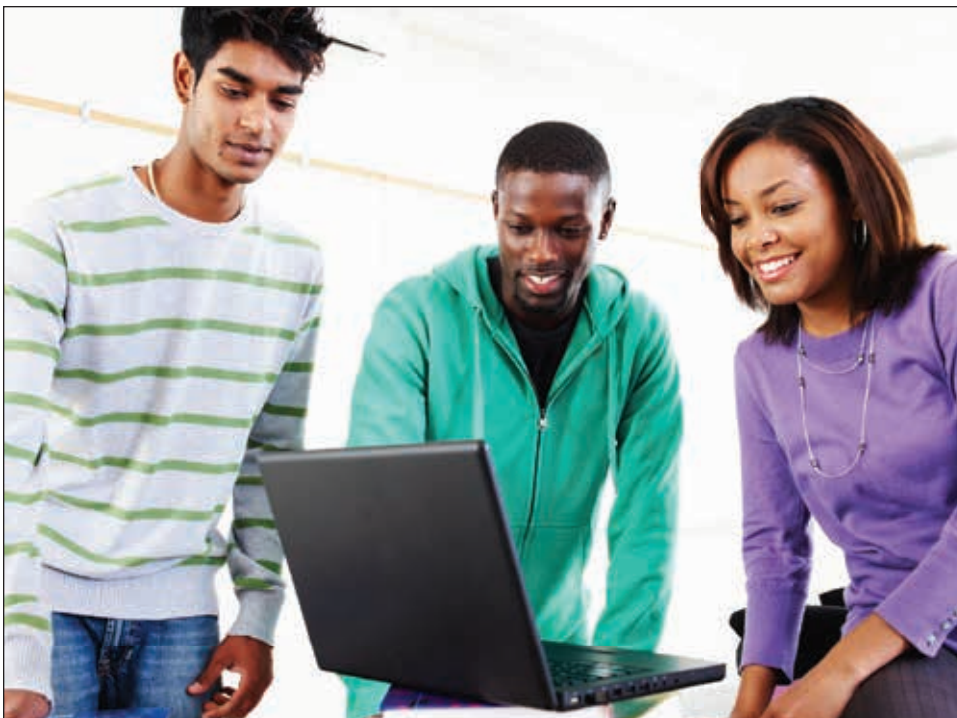
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GRADUATION & NEW LIFE STAGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

perspectives. By taking a mindfulness and a positive psychotherapeutic approach, we hope to help new grads embrace their next life-stage. It is very common that new grads want to learn how to manage their worrisome Fs, such as: failure, fear, and frustrations. For the youth population, they recognize that managing their worrisome Fs will result in a smoother transition to adulthood.

Failure: Many new grads have a strong desire to contribute to society. Many believe that they have much to offer and need the right opportunities to flourish. After some job search attempts without success, their frustrations result in self-doubt. Such doubts can be: I am not good enough, someone else is better, I am not qualified enough, I need to do more, and so forth. This internalization is something that needs to be addressed because there are a lot of students that succeed despite struggles/setbacks. How can you quiet down those thoughts filled with self-doubt? Viewing job search as a learning opportunity is better than evaluating yourself as a pass/fail. We encourage you to explore your identity beyond your academic training, interests and skill sets, so that you can find your total self while you are job searching. Rethink your “personal brand” without self-objectification. You are more than your degree/diploma and you are more than the accolades you have received. Try to connect with what made you choose your discipline. If no particular courses stand out, try to remember what lectures,

assignments and/or class discussions you enjoyed over your course of study. What kept you interested during your educational training can be clues to re-clarifying your job search goals. Sometimes, a little shift in how your look at your past thoughts/behaviors can lead you to a more positive job search experience.

Fear: Students believe that their educational training will dictate their career path. If they do not work directly in their field they are fearful of never living up to their academic aspirations. Some discovered that their ideal jobs are not quite within their reach just yet – which can provoke FEAR. This emotion makes new grads question, and at times, devalues their self-concept and emerging career identity. They have spent money and time on their education to secure a future for themselves and now in a new life stage – they are not living up to their own hopes and dreams. FEAR can have two meanings: the first being False Evidence Appearing Real, and second as, Face Everything And Rise. Students who are in college/professional programs may have internship opportunities making it advantageous for them to gain more skills/experiences to compete for their first “real job”. Let us ask you...how does focusing on what you don't have help you find out what you do have and move a bit forward? When you are job searching and you find a job posting where you may have the requirements and qualifications, expect the

“minimum X years of experience” – what do you do? You may query - How does one get the years experience if no one is giving you a chance? Better question is how did those other new grads get those years of experience so that they can obtain their ideal position in the workforce? We have worked with clients to formulate attitude and behavioral goals in order to obtain professional success. Sometimes success is measured with taking smaller steps rather than getting that “ideal job” right after graduation. To combat your fear and other underlying emotions, working with a registered professional can help with alleviating your fears.

Frustrations: Graduates are spending their time on different job boards in hopes of finding the “perfect” career only to apply to jobs and be left in the dark. They have excellent tailored cover letters/resumes to apply for those ideal positions. But in return, they do not receive any acknowledgement, they just see the “application confirmation” text, and that's it. Hence, many new job seekers have expressed to us that searching for jobs is not only frustrating but it is also dehumanizing, impersonal, and hopeless. Some have chosen to stay with their student-survival-jobs and convert those positions into full time jobs, to take a break from their frustrations only to find themselves stuck. Others get stuck with blaming their education, financial conditions, and/or lack of support - unable to move into other avenues

for finding employment. But for those who continue to job search online over and over again without the successes of a telephone interview or a live meeting – we asked them what keeps them doing it? We discovered with those clients, that the reality is that they don't like “networking” they feel uncomfortable with the process of going to career fairs and talking about themselves to employers – even though they have witnessed the benefits of networking with their peers. We have worked with new grads to explore the different types of networking arenas which they can strive in thereby conducting a more customized job search. It is those same new grads who reported back to us – “I should have learned how to network and overcome my nervousness much earlier”.

Every generation has been asked “how will you get a job with that degree/major?” Not only does this question build frustration and fear of failure, but this question is coupled with the comment that once they are out of school, finding work will be hard. No one ever tells you that unemployment is a temporary identity. In other words, tough times don't last, tough people do. The struggle of finding work is the path, and it is this path that allows us to find what is meaningful and purposeful to us. For new grads, we leave you with one final thought. Adulting isn't easy but it doesn't have to be difficult, if you have the right supports around you.

Sonny KH Wong (MEd, RP) is a Registered Psychotherapist who specializes in healthy career identity development.

John Sendim (MPS candidate, RP(Q)) is a Registered Psychotherapist (Qualifying) who specializes in careers and spirituality.



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OLD CULTURE VS NEW CULTURE: A NEWCOMER'S PERSPECTIVE

BY JUDEEN MEIKLE

The experience of a new culture is oftentimes eye opening and the shock that comes with it can sometimes leave us in awe. It can also be very effective in opening your eyes as to the alternatives that exist in comparison to the way we practice our own culture back in our old country. Effectively, we get absorbed in adapting the new culture, some of it is forced (like purchasing bag milk and a milk jug because that's the norm and it's also cheaper) and some of it we gladly accept (like the ability to use public transportation system for everyone with no separation as it relates to class, in some countries buses and trains are for lower class). I, for example, coming from a tropical country had to now get used to the fact that a bright and sunny day in Toronto, probably means it's super cold out and that means layered sweaters and frosty breath as opposed to deciding it's a beach day.

The decision to move from your home country is often based on a variety of reasons, some of which are more drastic than others. Some of us leave to pursue a higher education. Some will leave to join family who have already migrated. Some will leave for the possibility of greater financial security. Some will leave in the hopes of a better life for them and their young ones. For the many reasons it's probably safe to say that most have come here to create a better life for themselves and their children whether they were forced to leave their original country or not. We all decided to leave our own culture to experience that of a new country.

Since coming here one thing I've noticed is that as immigrants we sometimes get so caught up in our new existence that we start bashing the "inadequacies" of our old culture. Culture, my friends (another adaption to my new culture) is the way in which life is lived in a certain country. It is a culmination of ancestral, religious, social beliefs orchestrated to create the 'way' of life in a defined area. This all together will form the way in which societies operate. Now, we would all agree that not all societies are perfect and we would all agree that we will not always find the approach within our culture to be appropriate or necessary at times. But really more times than not it's not affecting anyone negatively and just contributes to be the unique way of life in that space.

With that being said, I find it disheartening when immigrants or returning residents look down on their old culture way of life. Being Jamaican I am particularly offended when people from my own country act this way. Growing up in Jamaica, is certainly a contrast to what we now experience here in Canada. It's the lifestyle that we grew up with and the exposure to other cultures/way of life does not by any means suggest that our culture is inadequate or inappropriate. Our new societal practices that we now openly enjoy and have adapted to and have found that it blends perfectly with our way of thinking, still does not make the old way of life wrong. We need to be open minded enough to agree that Jamaica has some practices, however messed up we may think they are, these are the

same practices that moulded us into the fabulous humans that we are, I believe this can be said for most countries around the world. We are the product of our society, why are we looking down on our own culture. I came by this thought after a very active conversation concerning the need for Jamaican students to wear uniforms hence suppressing the ability to express themselves through their dress. My counter argument suggested that the contextual attributes of the society leads to uniforms being the better decision. Jamaica as we know is a developing country, that is also an island and therefore must import a lot of products. It means that the accessibility to clothing across the social classes is not as equal as it is here in Canada. Now that is just one of the arguments that I used, many more exist. But the point is we have to be careful to not contextualise our practices before inferring that it has lost its relevance. Everywhere around the world people practice their daily lives differently and does not makes them less of a person.

One of the most fun ways to enjoy life is to travel, which exposes us to the diversity of culture. It educates us on the difference in practices in different regions, which is quite fascinating. However, each culture will have limiting factors, factors that will make the way of life less appealing to an outsider looking in. This brings about uniqueness. So many factors exist, it is just not possible to inculcate all of them into one place, creating the variety that we see today. One of the really good things about Canada, having so many immigrants

is that it becomes as well the melting pot of different cultures. Everyone shares a slice of their home with us. For instance, on any given day you are able to enjoy a meal from a restaurant that represents the diversity of people that live here and where they came from.

So, let us embrace our new culture but also accept the old. The old may no longer work for us but it continues to work for the persons that exist within it. Let's slow our roll on trying to kill the culture, kill the practices as it is what makes them unique. We could start by not complaining and just be grateful that we were exposed to a way of life that we longed for and were able to leave that which no longer worked for us. I am Jamaican and will always be proud to be Jamaican. I am however grateful for the new exposure and the ability to live and raise my child in this society that reflects a lot of the morals and values that I support. This doesn't negate the fact that I am saddened by some of the practices that she will miss growing up in Jamaica. It was those practices that helped to shape me into the person I am and I am proud of that. It will be my job to teach her these traditions from my past while showing her how we will live in our new country. Let's view our people with class and dignity as we represent our country around the world. Looking at how many of us have become successful citizens all over the world shows me our country of origin did something right.

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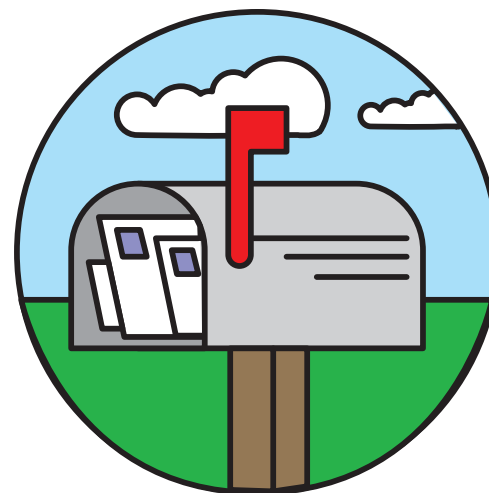
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Dear Elcee

**Dear Elcee is a feature in every issue of Learning Curves.
Send your questions about education, training, careers, jobs to:**

**Elcee – The WEA of Canada
157 Carlton Street, Suite 205
Toronto, On M5A 2K2**

Dear Elcee:

I am a second year college student and will be returning in September for my final year. I have to get my act in gear and look for summer employment. When is the best time to start looking for work. Any tips or hints for me?

Summer Suzie

Dear Summer:

Well, the time to start looking for summer employment is now!! In February and March you will find that many employers and the government will start advertising summer student specific positions. They will often run between May and August. You can find most of those on the Government of Canada job bank site or your local provincial and municipal websites. Another place to check out will be your own schools' student assistance office or website. I also highly recommend really thinking about what type of job you would like to do during the summer. Are you looking to develop skills and experience in your chosen career path or are you looking to make money? Occasionally the two goals can meet but not always. If it's skills you are hoping to obtain focus on obtaining a position through a summer employment program. Many of these positions are supplemented or entirely funded by government. Sometimes there are prerequisites to be met such as enrollment in a specific program of study. Wages can vary but often have a defined start and end date. Summer is also a time to look for employment in the hospitality, tourism, construction and agriculture industries. These jobs may or may not be advertised on student job boards. This is a good time to take your well written resume and hit the streets. Remember, if you are looking for work in the hospitality go in the down times (usually 2 -4 in the afternoon). Many jobs in

hospitality and tourism may not be 9 - 5 and may require working weekends. If you are flexible in your hours, add that to your resume. Don't discount any volunteer work you may have been involved with and if you don't have CPR/First Aid now is the time to get that certification. Another option would be to register with temporary placement agencies. Many offices will bring people on to cover for employees going on holiday. If that is your goal, ensure that your computer skills are up to date (MS Office including Word, PowerPoint and Excel are expected!). With all that in hand, check out the jobbank.gc.ca website and indeed.com. Both of them have filters which will specifically target summer student and temporary positions. As with all jobs, keep in mind, that you have to approach this with the same seriousness and professionalism that you would apply to any permanent position you would apply for. You never know where that summer job could lead to in the future! Good luck!

*Dear ELCEE is written by Deborah Noel,
deborahjnoel@gmail.com
Send her your questions.*

We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this column. Send comments to learningcurves@hotmail.com.

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