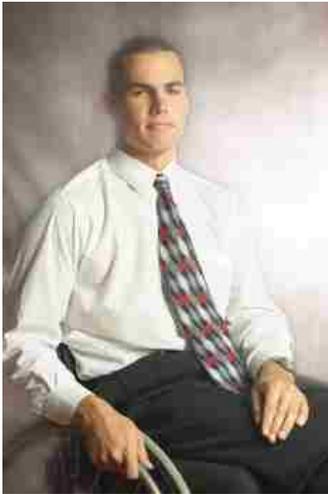


# Turning Points

THE HIGHLANDS COMPANY STUDENT NEWSLETTER

#3



## A Natural Born Salesman

With his college sophomore year coming to an end, Ethan needed a summer job. As a management major, Ethan wanted to use this break to get a few weeks of practical experience. He was experiencing frustration with his management classes, but didn't know why.

Ethan took The Highlands Ability Battery and got a big surprise. He found he had a clear sales profile. This profile displays strengths which are different from those used in management.

Ethan decided to test the new information about his ability profile. He took a job selling pest control contracts. Every few days he would go over his ability profile to review his strengths and weaknesses. He was anxious to develop better ways to make sales. By the end of the summer, Ethan was #6 in an organization of over 300 salespeople. He sold over \$100,000 worth of the product and made \$30,000 — enough to pay for a good part of his college education. Ethan wrote to say, *“Thank you for helping me find a remarkable summer sales job. The information about my natural abilities helped me pinpoint my strengths and weaknesses so that I could work to improve my skills....Thanks to The Highlands Program, I was elected most inspirational sales representative in the top office of the country and sold more contracts per sales rep than 97% of the company. All in one summer!”*

Ethan also found that learning about his strengths helped him make better decisions about college courses. He realized that his management courses were frustrating. Most of the time, it was “spend six hours studying and get nowhere.” Although his grades were above average, Ethan recognized that his college money would be better spent in a curriculum that was more in tune with his interests and with his strong natural abilities.

What about this summer? This year, Ethan has capitalized on both his natural abilities and his prior experience. He is in sales for a network marketing company. Ethan is actively enjoying what suits him best – selling. Learning about his unique strengths helped Ethan gain the confidence he needed to succeed. Most of all, he could make practical plans for the future based on his knowledge of himself.

## WORK?! WHO, ME?

You need money; you need experience; you're bored! It's time to get a part-time job or internship. How do you choose? How can you make the most of your experience? Let's face it, some jobs and internships are great. They can give you real experience. Others, like flipping burgers or sweeping floors in a factory, may seem less appealing and offer less. Nevertheless, any work experience can be put to good use. Let's look at how to make the most of it.

### HOW DO I KNOW WHAT KIND OF JOB TO LOOK FOR?

The best way to get a job you will love is to know yourself. What are your natural strengths? Learning about your real abilities in an objective fashion can open your eyes to avenues you may not have explored. Ethan – the student in our first story – didn't know that he would be good in sales, but once he saw how all of his abilities fit together, it gave him the confidence to try a new field. More important, he began to enjoy what he was doing and was able to start thinking about future options. Other important factors are your interests and your values. One new way to land a fascinating job or internship is

to look beyond school. What kind of field do you want to end up in? What would you really enjoy doing? Find someone who is doing just that and offer to work for him. Tell him why you're interested. Do you like working out of doors? With children? With pets? Do you ultimately want to go into fashion design? Mechanical engineering? Do you need to make enough money to pay for part of your education, or is it more important to get a job that will look good on a resume? Each person has a unique set of interests, values, and goals. The job that your best friend thinks is great may be the most frustrating job for you.

### HOW DO I GET A MEANINGFUL JOB?

First, do the basics. Start your search early. If you have a good idea about your areas of strength and interest, it is easier to talk to potential employers in the corresponding fields. A prospective employer wants employees who have a desire to work for the company and who can articulate the ways in which they can contribute. Jeffrey knew he wanted to go into engineering. After his junior year in high school, he talked to an engineering company, and got a job on a survey team for the summer. Not only did this fit his proposed plans, but it let him

assess whether this was really the career he wanted. Part-time jobs are a great way to try out a variety of options. They offer the best way to make plans for long term careers because they provide realistic information rather than an idealized version of what a job may be.

### WHAT IF I CAN'T GET A JOB IN A FIELD THAT INTERESTS ME?

Face it – not every job turns out to be great. Maybe you have to get a job close to home because transportation to a more ideal job is too difficult. Maybe you'll decide to work in the family business, or take the job that makes the most money, even if these are not the most interesting. The most important thing is to make the most of what you have. If you have a sense of your innate strengths and a plan for the future, even so-so jobs can be turned to your advantage.

Part-time jobs and internships can be the start of a practical lifelong career path. The first step is to know yourself. Learn your natural abilities. Integrate that information with your interests, values and family background. Then use that knowledge to explore fields that fascinate you and that meet your unique plans for the future.



## Do You Have a Plan?

1. How much time have you devoted to thinking about the future?
  - a) I know that tomorrow I'm going to the movies (1)
  - b) I've thought about it vaguely (2)
  - c) I've thought about it occasionally (3)
  - d) I've been giving some thought to my choices (4)
  - e) I've spent real time considering my career and life in the future (5)
2. How detailed is it?
  - a) Just a vague goal (1)
  - b) Some rough educational goals (2)
  - c) Includes some goals and a time frame (3)
  - d) Have tried to create a detailed picture (4)
  - e) Have a detailed picture of myself in a definite future (5)
3. Have you written it down?
  - a) I can barely get my homework written (1)
  - b) I wrote something down once (2)
  - c) I have written a few specific goals (3)
  - d) I have written several detailed goals (4)
  - e) I set some detailed goals in a time frame and have reviewed them (5)
4. Have you told your plan to someone important to you?
  - a) I have never thought about (1)
  - b) I may have mentioned it once (2)
  - c) I have told someone important to me one of my goals (3)
  - d) I have told someone important to me some of my goals (4)
  - e) I have told more than one important person my goals and plans (5)
5. Are you moving toward your vision?
  - a) I don't know (1)
  - b) I haven't thought about it lately (2)
  - c) I am looking at educational and career options (3)
  - d) I am trying several work and educational options to see where they lead (4)
  - e) I am choosing educational and work situations based on my vision for the future (5)

### Scoring:

21-25 Fantastic! You have created a real vision for yourself. You can make it work for you by keeping your vision detailed, by communicating it to others and by organizing your decisions around it. Remember to keep refining your vision as life changes occur.

16-20 That's great! You have the start of a vision that can be useful as you make educational, career and life choices. You can make your vision work better for you by making sure you communicate it to others and write it down. When your vision is detailed and contains enough information about you, it can start to be a powerful way to make life and career decisions.

10-15 Keep working! You have done some work in creating a vision. You can help yourself by learning more about yourself and working on the details of your vision. Your vision should include not only what you want to do, but also something about what you feel is really worth doing.

<10 Time to get started! It's not too early to start thinking about your future. You can help your overall feeling of success in school, career, and life by creating a vision. You can use this vision to help make decisions about your options now and in the future. Start by thinking about your goals for the next 10 years. School? Work? Family? Hobbies? Start filling in the details. Where will you be? What will you be doing? This is how you create a vision.

## Where Are You Going?

In *Alice in Wonderland*, the Cheshire Cat said, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there." The opposite can be even more true: If you have a sense of where you are going, you can find the best road to get there and overcome almost any obstacle on the way.

Being able to picture your future – actually being able to “see” yourself there in your mind’s eye – is a very powerful aid to helping you get there. Research shows that the clearer, the more real, and the more specific a vision is, the more power it has to pull you along towards it.

Students often find it difficult to envision the future. They don't have enough experience about their options or, conversely, they have preconceived opinions about the “only” career they want, based on the things a parent or friend has done or said. Some careers, such as sports, music and the movies, are so glamorized by the media that it becomes difficult to picture the true nature and requirements of the work involved.

The best way to develop and fix a realistic Personal Vision for your own life is to construct and maintain a plan. It can't be just any plan – it has to be positively connected to you. It has to take into account certain critical factors about you: your abilities, interests, values, personality and goals. Your plan can't just be a pipe dream or a wish. You have to take the time to think about it, to make it a priority, to write it down, to discuss it and refine it, to make it realistic and evolving. A future that excites you has to evolve from inside you.

You can create a Personal Vision for your life and then use that vision to help you make decisions along the way. If you can “see” your future, you can get there.

### **To learn more about the Highlands Ability Battery**

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