LEARNING POINTS

• Attitude towards work will influence success in the workplace.
• Good career choices depend on thoughtful planning.
• Good interviewing and resume-writing skills can help land the job.
• We determine our own success.
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PART V MATERIALS NOT INCLUDED

- Envelopes (For Section A.4, Activity 4, pg. 8)
- Paper (for letter-writing) (For Section A.4, Activity 4, pg. 8)
- Missouri Career Guide
  (Available through: Missouri Occupational Information
  Coordinating Committee, 573-751-3800)
  or other state career guides
- Telephone books (For Section B.1, Activity 9, pg. 14)
- Sunday newspapers (For Section B.1, Activity 9, pg. 14)
Preface:

PREPARING FOR THE WORKPLACE

For most of us, to work or not to work is not an option. We rely on our jobs for both the necessities and the luxuries that a paycheck provides. Since we may spend as much as 40 to 50 years in the workplace, we should do our best to find work that fulfills us. No job will give us satisfaction all the time, no matter how much we like it most of the time. Job satisfaction, on a day-to-day basis, is partially up to us.
A. **THE CAREER PATH**

1. **Work is an attitude**

“Successful people are not in a job for something to do . . . . they are in their work to do something” (Van Ekeren, 1994, p. 393). **DISCUSS.**

Work, like everything else we do, is an attitude. We can think of it as drudgery, a paycheck, or as a way to get through the day to get to the **good parts** of life. **OR** . . . we can look at work as something we want to do, something that adds value to our life, and something that gives meaning to the 24 hours we utilize each day.

Thomas Edison said, “I never did a day’s work in my life. It was all fun.” Was Edison some kind of nut, or was he on to something that many of us miss in our daily existence? **DISCUSS.**

Unfortunately, a vast majority of us do not enjoy our jobs. In a national survey of 180,000 workers, 80 percent indicated that they disliked what they did for a living (Van Ekeren, 1994). How can this negative perspective of the majority be so very different than the one professed by Edison?

Maybe it all goes back to attitude – the approach we take when we look at events and happenings in our world.

2. **Opportunity’s knocking!**

**Activity 1**

**OPPORTUNITY: Workplace Prep (Addendum)-3**

1. Show *Workplace Prep (Addendum)-3* as a handout, PowerPoint or overhead. Ask participants to read what they see.
2. Then ask if they can read it another way.
3. Discuss:
   - Which words were easiest to read?
   - Why?
Opportunities are not always easy to find, but they are always present. Sometimes it’s just the way we look at things that determines the end result.

**Activity 2**

**THERE’S AN OPPORTUNITY HERE SOMEWHERE:**

*Workplace Prep (Addendum)-4*

1. Divide participants into groups. Assign a few scenarios from *Workplace Prep (Addendum)-4* to each group.
2. Ask them to look for a positive opportunity in each case.
3. Discuss.

Mark Twain states, “I was seldom able to see an opportunity until it ceased to be one.” Mark Twain assuredly speaks for most of us. And Thomas Edison humorously adds that “opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.” That is likely the problem most of us have with opportunity. Unlike luck, opportunity requires us to do something. “You may have the loftiest goals, the highest ideals, the noblest dreams,” says Nido Qubein, “but remember this, nothing works unless you do.” And Thomas Jefferson stated, “I’m a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it.” **DISCUSS.**

“To be successful,” says Sister Mary Lauretta, “you must first fall in love with your work.” But how can one fall in love with work that is menial, low-paying, perhaps boring and physically demanding?

J.C. Penney once said, “Give me a stock clerk who wants to work and I will give you a person who will make history. Give me a person who does not want to work, and I will give you a stock clerk.” **DISCUSS.**

Very few successful people are born with “silver spoons in their mouths.” Most of them reach the top because they have a vision of what they want to be and work very hard to actualize that vision.

No one said it was easy! But is it worth it?