

The Academic Journey: an Appreciative Inquiry

Do you know what you want to study? What's your major? What are your plans for after graduation? Where do you see yourself in 10 years? These are stressful questions. They're also not always the most helpful questions. Many employers hire regardless of major. Most first jobs are just that—the first step along the path to a vocation that may not even exist today.

Appreciative inquiry is a way of asking different kinds of questions—questions that focus on what you *already* love doing well. So, grab a notebook and take some time to reflect on these questions. You may not find all the answers, but you can learn a lot about where you're headed from where you are right now.

Conducting the Inquiry



1

Think of a time when you engaged in an activity that made you feel like your true self.

Pick a time when you felt fully alive, a time when you felt like you were in right place doing the right thing. Pick a specific moment. When and where were you? Who were you with and what were you doing? What sparked your passion? What did it feel like? Make a few notes in answer to these questions.

2

Think of a time when you absolutely geeked out on learning about something.

Pick a time, whether for class or some other reason, that you perused learning for its own sake—and enjoyed it. Pick a specific moment. When and where were you? Who were you with and what were you doing? What sparked your passion? What did it feel like? Make a few notes in answer to these questions.

3

Gifts

Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself as a friend, leader, student, and /or human being? List a few of your best qualities.

4

Dreams

If you could confer a blessing on yourself five years after graduation from college, what would it be? Write a word, a few phrases, or a sentence that names your desire for the future you.

5

Service to the World

Given your life experience, where would you most like to make a difference? What kind of service to the world might bring you the most joy?

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

– **Frederick Buechner**

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