

## Forward

Two years ago my beloved Black Labrador, Blackberry, died at age sixteen. To say we got along well was an understatement. Every day, despite rain, Santa Ana winds, or heat, we both walked through our local park. Even when Blackberry became arthritic and had to rest every couple of feet, she eagerly awaited our ritual walk. One night she didn't want to go, and I knew her end was near. After she died, I still got up to walk her out of habit for about three weeks. I realized that Blackberry and I were suited perfectly to one another. She was not a particularly active dog nor was I a particularly active human. She was low-key and friendly, as I like to think of myself. She kept herself fairly clean; I do too.

At the local animal shelter, I had an opportunity to get another dog. His name was Stout. He ran around the exercise area at about twenty-miles-an-hour, was a muscular, big Boxer-Great Dane combination. Though I only drive in my car at twenty-miles-an-hour and only the most imaginative person would describe me as muscular, I took Stout home. Stout fit horribly into my lifestyle. Coming home after work the first full day I had him, I sat down to relax and read. Stout ran around in circles, chased cats, and broke a very strong leash with which I tried to restrain him. He was SO active and seemed to need exercise at all times. He was also quite aggressive, especially with my cats. I was forced to return him to the shelter after two days because he didn't fit my lifestyle or my modest-sized yard.

A year later, I found an English Mastiff who turned out to be a perfect fit for my home and family. Her name is Meisje. She is a couch potato and lies around a lot. She chews on stuffed animals, but not enough to tear them apart. I lie around a lot, though I don't chew stuffed animals regularly. I found a match for my personality in Meisje and I realized how finding a career is a lot like finding the breed of dog or type of pet that matches your particular lifestyle. Not all pets or careers are good fits.

Your personality, your values, your interests, your skills, your daily habits must mesh with the pet with whom you choose to share your life. Some pets fit smoothly, some create conflicts. The same holds true with careers. You must choose a career that works with the whole of who you are. You need to know what holds your attention, what energizes you, and what career you can take on walks. Of course, you don't need to select a pet. You're free to avoid the responsibilities that owning a pet entails; however, you have no choices about careers. You must choose to do

something in life, whether to be a writer, a plumber, a statistician, or a health care worker. We can choose the career that suits us and that fits us the best. You need to know about yourself and about the career, in the same way you need to know about your preferences and about the characteristics of a breed when selecting a dog. Not all careers will fit easily in your back yard. And while dogs that do not work out can be returned, careers aren't quite as convenient. You need to invest time in training for various careers, and once that's done, it's hard to return for more training in an entirely new field of work.

Learn, then, to know how to know yourself. That's the most important part of this workbook. Learn next about careers to understand whether they are good fits with how you see yourself. Some people are comfortable with Mastiffs and some are comfortable with Miniatures. Choose a career that fits in your own backyard and that you can walk easily.



**When planning a career, you should ask yourself these basic questions:**

1. What type of life do I want?
2. Will work be the primary focus of my life?
3. What do I value in life and will my career help me achieve these values?
4. Will my career offer me other options if I choose to modify or change my direction in life?

