

Taking a Holistic Approach to Career Development

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In the medical world, a “holistic approach” is characterized by treating patients in a manner that considers the interconnectedness of social and mental factors, as well as how that influences the individual. This is in opposition to simply singling out symptoms of a diagnosis (Oxford Dictionary).

With this in mind, a holistic approach to career development means to layer the totality of our being—friendships, family, culture, environment—against the expectations of one’s potential work life. In other words, the criteria we expect our careers to fulfill must be akin to that of our personal goals.

By doing so, one may inspire their life to be rich with both purpose and satisfaction.

Methods to Live and Work in a Holistic Manner

1. *Pursuing Meaningful Work*: Seek a profession that you’re passionate about; in which everyday tasks or long-term goals motivate you and ignite a self-satisfying purpose. A [Stanford study](#) was conducted to discern what constitutes a meaningful life. Essentially, a meaningful life is not the pursuit of instantaneous satisfaction, but rather nurturing long-term relationships and endeavors that help to define an individual’s identity.

Thus, meaningful work is that which leads to a specific goal. This involves considering devotion to a company that may share a similar value to your own or is perhaps aiding in the development of a societal solution. Fostering meaning in one’s career is the consideration of what your efforts can contribute, not necessarily what you can take for your efforts.

2. *Enhancing One’s Knowledge*: Today’s workplace is a highly competitive market. Attaining and retaining a job requires not only a successful completion of tasks, but a constant refinement in one’s repertoire of skills. There are a [range of benefits](#) one may reap for taking the time and effort to attain new knowledge and skills. Regardless of career, an individual can become highly marketable by pursuing licenses or certifications, undergoing extra training, or even continuing with higher education.

Not only do these extra skill sets prime you for career advancement, but they may also entertain your personal interests and perhaps even enrich your being on a personal level. Taking the time to learn new skills not only increases one’s marketability but also their confidence and positive personal regard.

3. *Evaluating External Factors*: Oftentimes, what may stand in the way of pursuing a holistic career may not have anything to do with an individual or their work. It is easy to lose faith in one’s work if there is an inherent lack of faith in them as an employee. In other words, without respect or consideration deriving from an employer or supervisor, an individual may quickly lose faith in

the work they are doing. In fact, [an article from The New York Times](#) observed a lack of meaning and satisfaction in jobs where emotional, physical, mental and spiritual opportunities were not provided or encouraged by their employer. Even if a company is pursuing a goal that correlates with your own individual interests, it is highly important to consider if your efforts will be acknowledged.

4. *Devotion to your Wellbeing*: Regardless of what your focus may be, keeping your body, mind and spirit active is an excellent way to renew strength and confidence in yourself. Just like how our personal relationships affect our focus or motivation at work, the condition of your health plays a huge role in your ability to perform in any circumstance. By taking the time to prepare and eat healthy meals, stay active at least thirty minutes a day, and aim for a consistent sleep cycle, your ability to function in both work and personal settings dramatically increase. In essence, one's health is the foundation for a holistic balance in both career and personal endeavors. This is another reason why it is important to seek work environments that support frequent breaks and even adjustments to work settings, like having an adjustable desk to avoid long periods of immobility. One's health is the center for success and stability in any pursuit.