

**8 BIG
Questions
Every
Undergrad
Must Ask**

**Student
Playbook**

... to build a
solid bridge
to their just
right work.

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INTRO

Are you ready to start building a solid bridge from school to work you really care about, your **just right work**, a bridge that begins and ends with YOU?

We know you're not dragging your body, mind and spirit through the hallways and across campuses each week just to land a boring, mediocre job that barely pays the rent and leaves you paying off student loans for the next umpteen years.

We also know that now is a time of unprecedented opportunities and possibilities in the wacky world of work. Are you taking TOTAL advantage of it?

Before you cash in, some serious soul searching is called for to figure out who you want to be, where you want to be and what you want to contribute.

Did you notice the phrase "just right work"? Think back to Goldilocks and the Three Bears for just a minute. Remember the story? When she tried the porridge, the chairs, and the beds until she found the one that was just right for her?

That's what we encourage you to do. Be curious. Don't settle. Keep exploring until you uncover work that's just right for you. It may be compensated, it may not, this depends on several factors and your personal circumstances. Oh, and while you're exploring, please enjoy the journey and learn everything you can.

Because everyone is different, it may take you a little more time, or a little less time than someone else. Remember: this is not a competition. This is about YOUR life.

If you commit to the process, you will uncover what your just right work is when you're ready to handle it.

Sometimes we're not ready to handle what we say we want. The opportunity may come along and we're too afraid to take it. Or, we may take it, and deep down inside we feel we don't deserve it, or we can't do it, so we find a way to self-sabotage. We may have committed to a set of beliefs that block us from getting what we say we want.

It may take some time to jackhammer through some of those self-defeating thoughts and behaviors.

All of this is why we encourage you to consider the 8 BIG questions that follow. Maybe you've already asked some of these questions, maybe you haven't. If you've read this far, it means you haven't uncovered what you want yet. That's OK. The best time to start is always NOW.

QUESTION 1

What lights me up?

Did you pause? Did your eyes begin to wander or did you close them to think about it? Did you think, “Hmm, what DO I really love to do”? Consider for a moment being SO engaged in your work that hours fly by like minutes, and minutes like seconds.

Also ask: What’s MY **natural brilliance** - my unique collection of strengths, talents, abilities, skills, experience, etc. that make up ME?

For many, all of this can be challenging to figure out. Why? Because we’ve been so conditioned to listen to everyone except ourselves. Others can certainly provide insight, but they’re not experts on what YOU want.

If your desire is to identify work that reflects who you are and what you really want, you must slow your thoughts, get relaxed, tune in and turn down the volume on all that is outside of you – the expectations, opinions, shoulds, criticisms and judgments of others so you can hear those faint whispers that are your own unique voice, that voice that IS the YOU expert.

Some believe they’ll never figure it out. And if that is your belief, you’re right, you won’t. Remember Henry Ford’s words, “If you believe you can’t or believe you can, you’re right.”

So, if you believe that it is as possible for you as it is for anyone else, you can identify your natural brilliance (also referred to as your genius, calling, super powers, life’s work, etc.) and begin designing a worklife that allows you to engage in the kind of work that results in genuine joy, satisfaction, meaning and fulfillment. Work that allows you to make the kind of contribution and dent in the world you want to leave.



All of the questions in this playbook are designed to help you create a worklife blueprint. Take your time as you review each one.

You can take it a step further and grab your favorite notebook or journal, and your favorite pen or pencil and jot down your thoughts and feelings.

It's been said that writing is a direct connection to the heart. That's exactly what's being suggested here, that you explore not only your thoughts, but also your feelings – tap into that heart space.

Really listen to those gentle whispers that you've probably been ignoring, no doubt, for years. Now is the time to make a positive shift in this direction. This is your life we're talking about, right? Let's move to the next question.

**YOU
ARE
THE
ONLY
YOU
EXPERT!**

QUESTION 2

What's my work print™?

If you've been working for even a short while, your **work print™** can hold the key to understanding the path that's brought you to where you are today in your worklife. How?

Well, a lot about what drives you and your decisions about your work choices is embedded in your work print™, which you uncover when reviewing your work story (history).

Nope, I'm not talking about lying on a couch and doing a history dump while drowning in a pool of your tears. Marinating in your past story and playing the role of the victim is not part of this process, not at all. This quick peek into the past is about fully equipping you to move forward!

Let me introduce this concept of a **work print™**.

You see, buried (sometimes deeply) in your work story (history) is your unique work print™. In this context, your work print™ is a set of variables unique to you that have influenced every step of “your” work journey – your work philosophy (beliefs about work); your motivational drivers; your perceptions about work; your perceptions about yourself as a member of the workforce; people, places and things that have influenced your philosophy about work, success and money; your work style (real or perceived); your preferences (real or perceived), and a combination of biological, psychological, social, cultural, economic and political pressures that inform your current worklife position.

Why review your Work Print™?

- To identify patterns that serve as clues to uncover your strengths, natural talents, skills, abilities, etc.
- To identify specific information that can help you kick to the curb all that’s been holding you back.
- To make you acutely aware of beliefs and behaviors that have worked in your favor and create momentum to propel you forward.

THERE'S SOME REALLY GREAT INFORMATION TO DECODE IN YOUR WORK PRINT™.

When you understand your work print™ you know more about what makes your worklife tick, what makes you tick. The bottom line is: you can’t change what you don’t know.

Examining your work print™ is part of an introspective empowerment process that establishes a good starting point!

Spending a little time reviewing your work history can reveal some very interesting patterns and insights.



GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR WORK PRINT™ . . .

Get your favorite pen and journal or a pad of paper. Then, find a quiet and comfortable space where you can reflect and write, undistracted, for at least 45 minutes. After you get settled into your *favorite chair*, close your eyes and take three to five deep breaths (try deep, diaphragmatic breathing or belly breathing - inhale slowly, letting your stomach swell and expand, pause, then exhale, slowly release). Deep breathing helps you to *relax* and center before you begin.

- Now, *write out your work story (history)* - think back to your very first job and track your journey to your current work situation (consider how, when, where, why, who, what, etc.). You can capture some of your general experiences or you can really get into the details (I strongly recommend capturing as many details as you can recall). Yes, more details mean this will take a little longer, but the more you include, the more you will discover

in this process. This is a for-your-eyes-only writing innercise; so let that pen/pencil flow across those pages.

- *Don't simply write from your head; also write from your heart!* Do NOT hold back, no filters, just write whatever comes up when thinking about your work journey to date; you may think about using the "right" or proper words and format to describe your experiences and your feelings about them or you may be tempted to censor yourself, RESIST, simply write whatever comes up for you. Some of your words will be pretty and some, not so much; the goal is to get it all out of your head and heart and onto paper.
- Write for at least 30 minutes (remember, the more details, the better), if it takes longer than 30 minutes (great), keep writing until you are complete in describing your work story and all of your conscious emotions and feelings about it (you, no doubt, have some subconscious emotions and feelings about your work story too, but let's stick to the conscious ones, we can address the subconscious ones later).
- Tune into how your *body responds* as you write and carefully take notice.
- When you are finished and feel complete with the writing process, *sit still* for a few minutes and notice your body, how do you feel physically right now? What did you *notice about your body* as you were writing? Were you calm? Did you feel any discomfort? Frustration? Were you tense? If you felt tense, where was it located? In your neck, shoulders, chest, stomach? Were your teeth clinched, etc.? Jot down what you observed while you were writing and how you are feeling right now.
- Take three or more deep breaths and just sit there until you *feel complete*. Do NOT read what you wrote right away, you'll be tempted, but don't do it...nope, don't do it! Tuck your pages away in a private place for at least 24 hours.
- After a day or so, return to your pages with *fresh eyes* and review what you wrote. Take time to *carefully read* through all that you wrote.
- Jot down some of your *thoughts* about what you wrote. What did you learn? Notice any patterns? Any realizations?

There's some really great information to decode to help you uncover possible barriers and highlight some positive pathways as you begin putting the puzzle pieces of worklife blueprint together. Let's move to the next question.

QUESTION 3

What are my non-negotiables?



What you value reflects what's most important to you. **Values** are those **non-negotiables** that guide your decision making process. When you're clear about what you value, you know where to direct your focus.

Living a life of integrity is all about living in alignment with what you value.

Because your list of what you value most will differ from that of others, deciding what's best for you is up to you – again, **YOU are the only expert on all things YOU.**

When it comes to your worklife, deciding how to design one that reflects the best of who you are begins with what you value.

For example, if one of your core values is “honesty,” you're going to have a difficult time working with or for an individual, or become part of a company culture that is dishonest in their dealings with other companies or their clients. You will experience tension that will create an uncomfortable environment.

Or, perhaps one of your core values is “recognition.” If you work with individuals or in an environment where appreciation and recognition aren't part of the work culture, you will experience tension that will create uncomfortable working relationships.

VALUES ARE NON-NEGOTIABLES

Much has been written about the importance of values. Steve Pavlina, author of *Personal Development for Smart People: The Conscious Pursuit of Personal Growth*, does a great job summarizing the importance of [living your values](#).

In addition to addressing this topic at length, he gets you started by providing a list of over 400 hundred values to consider.

Take some time to review this list and consider your **top five to ten core values** (it will be challenging to narrow them down to ten, but the goal is to identify your core values).

Then ask yourself, “Are these values reflected in my everyday choices”?

Let’s move to the next question.

QUESTION 4

What’s my motivation to change my situation now?

This one is heavy, right?

Your answer will determine if your worklife discovery and design efforts will lead to what you want and lasting change OR a temporary burst of excitement over the possibilities only to hit the wall of uncertainty and fear.

Which might very well happen after you realize the effort required to reach your desired destination.

Why? As a human being you’re just not a big fan of change.



Progress requires **effort** and change isn't easy. I'm sure you'd vouch for that!

It's not necessarily because you don't like change, it's because you're not sure what's on the other side of it.

Even when the change will clearly and eventually lead to a better situation, you may still resist – anywhere from mild hesitation to full on “no way”!

In most cases, it's the fear and uncertainty that blocks you from moving forward. You just aren't sure what's on the other side, and that can be really scary. Scary enough to keep you stuck right where you are.

Change also knocks you out of balance, which kick-starts that whole push and pull process of getting back to **equilibrium** in your life.

It's as if the ground that you're standing on becomes shaky, which is disconcerting, to say the least.

CHANGE IS NOT EASY

Consider some of the following questions:

- Are you tired of accepting “good enough”?
- Have you hit your limit of putting up with mediocrity?
- Are you sick of being bored and unchallenged?
- Why are you “really” interested in changing your worklife now?
- Are you simply going through the motions; has work become meaningless?
- What is different right now than yesterday, last week, last month or last year?
- Are you ready to expand your tolerance for experiencing “great” in your worklife?

- Are you really ready to experience lasting change and a new direction in your worklife?

When your motivation to change is about showing up authentically and **asking for what you really want**, you've got all the energy you need to propel yourself in a new direction!

Let's move to the next question.

QUESTION 5

What am I great at?

This question makes most people very uncomfortable. Why?

We have a problem recognizing and verbalizing our greatness.

Whether we've been told all of our lives how amazing we are or we rarely or have never heard this at all, when it comes to verbalizing this out loud, we get stuck.

If you've been on an interview, you know how uncomfortable it can be to talk about yourself and your accomplishments.

When was the last time you sat down to review your **accomplishments**, your **achievements** – both large and small?

Before you take on any major shifts or adjustments in your work or life, your level of **self-esteem** and **presence** is important. We're talking about how you view yourself (self respect) and the confidence you exude when you show up in any situation.



If your level of self-esteem is low and your presence is weak, your chances of experiencing lasting change are little to none.

When we decide to move forward, it's important that we're prepared to handle it. Otherwise, we WILL self-sabotage, engage in **self-defeating behaviors** (i.e., fear, procrastination, self-pity, inaction, anger, rebellion, etc.) to keep ourselves in a place that's safe and familiar.

There are so many examples of individuals who rose to stardom, fame or acquired large sums of money only to find them eventually broke or broken.

You've got to know that you're competent, capable and deserve to get what you want. If you don't know this and simply just talk a good game, you will find yourself right back where you started.

TRY THIS: Get some sticky notes, a pen and a white board, or find a wall or something to stick them on. Now, write down as many of your accomplishments as you can. No matter how small. If you accomplished it, jot it down on a sticky note and proudly slap it on that white board or wall.

We suggest you start from when you were a kiddie pop, move through your teens and into adulthood, don't leave any period out; if it mattered to you and made you feel good, confident, it's fair game to post. You'll be surprised what a boost this exercise can be to your self-esteem. Have fun with this!

TIP: Take this a step further by taking a picture of your sticky note white board or wall with your phone for a visual reference. Refer to it when you're feeling challenged or unsure of yourself.

STOP FOCUSING ON YOUR DEFEATS SO MUCH AND START ACKNOWLEDGING YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

- Author Unknown

Let's move to the next question.

QUESTION 6

What am I willing to let go to get what I want?

Change implies something is going to be **different**.

In your pursuit of more meaningful work you want different to include more positive life impacts. Many find this an odd question, but this question, too, is important if you want to create lasting change and get what you want.

Identifying thought patterns, behaviors and social connections that block and no longer serve or empower you can be very difficult to let go.

Why? We find great **comfort** in what's familiar. We know what to expect in the familiar, there are no surprises, right?

Even when our best interests are not being served and we may be very uncomfortable or in some way suffering, we may still shudder at the thought of any change that will move us closer to greener pastures.

Before deciding what you're willing to let go, what no longer serves you or your situation, you first have to identify potential blocks that are specific to you. This requires more introspection.

Discovering what is meaningful work for you and designing your just right work is an inside job; there's no way around it.

Merely completing a battery of general personality or behavioral assessments to find that ever-elusive perfect job may provide some insight, but it's usually an ineffective long-term strategy for most people.

Seriously consider the following questions:

- *Are you willing to let go of mediocrity?*

**WE
FIND
GREAT
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IN WHAT'S
FAMILIAR.**

- *Are you willing to let go of being bored?*
- *Are you willing to let go of where you live?*
- *Are you willing to let go of all of the excuses?*
- *Are you willing to let go of getting in your own way?*
- *Are you willing to let go of that dead-end relationship that's been dragging you down?*
- *Are you willing to let go of being a slave to others' opinions?*

Let's move to the next question.

QUESTION 7

What am I NOT willing to let go that's blocking me from getting what I want?

Again, a desire to change suggests that some things need to be different to reach your goal, which may involve making some serious adjustments to your current situation to find your just right work.

Perhaps just a few changes are needed, or just maybe, many changes are necessary. Considering what you are NOT willing to let go [release] to change your current situation can be quite revealing; this knowledge may reveal what's non-negotiable for you or it may reveal what you're really afraid of.

Perhaps you're unwilling to move and leave your family. Or, maybe you're unwilling to let go of those friends who are holding you back. Perhaps you're not willing to let go of settling for less because you're afraid you'll fail. Or, maybe you're not willing to invest the time, effort and money to obtain the necessary credentials as a graduate student. Is a core value or fear holding you back?

Let's wrap it up with the final question.



QUESTION 8

Got a clear vision of my future?

Think about engaging in your just right work. Imagine hours passing like minutes. You're in the zone. You're experiencing flow. It almost, or maybe, it actually feels like play – the lines between the two are blurred. You have the opportunity to really express your ideas and/or your creativity and make the contribution that you've always dreamed of making. You complete each day with a deep sense of fulfillment, accomplishment and meaning. You are satisfied beyond what you could have ever imagined.

- Who are you being?
- What are you thinking?
- How are you feeling?
- What are you doing?
- How are you interacting with others?
- How are you presenting yourself to the world?
- How do you want to show up in your work and personal life?

Only YOU have the power, dear student, to create the worklife and life you really want! It begins with imagining it before you can realize it. Can you see it?

TIP: Create a [vision board](#) that represents your dreams, goals, and desired lifestyle on your cell or tablet. There are free and paid apps on iTunes and Google Play to easily create a vision board or picture collage using words and images to capture ideas, places, things, etc. Use this visual on your lock and home screens. Create one for work, one for your relationships, one for life in general; make as many as you want to glance at throughout the day as a reminder of where you're headed.

**USE THE
POWER OF
YOUR
IMAGINATION
TO VISUALIZE
YOUR DESIRED
FUTURE.**

Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve. – Napoleon Hill

Uncovering YOUR Answers

Taking time to explore the answers to these questions is an investment that's SO worth it. *Better to spend time up front planning with the end in mind, than regretting at the end how much time you wasted not planning up front.*

Here are a few tips:

Tip #1:

Take your time, dear student; don't rush through these questions.

Tip #2:

Don't just think about your answers; write them down. There's great power in writing, getting your answers out of your head and onto paper where you can see them, review them, make some declarations and unveil some ahas.

Tip #3:

Do not compare yourself to ANYONE. This is not a competition. You're unique. Do not let anyone convince you otherwise. This is about YOUR life.

Tip #4:

Ask for help. It is so hard to ask for help, we know. You don't want to bother anyone. You want to do it yourself. Many times the reality is that you just don't trust others to help you. You need to GET OVER THIS! No one is an island. We all need help. Not one person has achieved success in isolation, they all had a network of mentors, supporters, coaches and cheerleaders on their team.

Tip #5:

Stay curious. Keep exploring. Keep learning. Consider curiosity, exploration and learning as breadcrumbs to the BIG answers you seek on your journey.

Wrap Up

After seriously considering these BIG questions, you can see the blueprint to building your bridge to your just right work begin to take shape. This is a great start to help you determine what, why and where.

Next, it's time for a strategy.

What's your plan to get what you want? How do you plan to stay motivated when fear shows up? How do you plan to keep going when you're tempted to stop because you think it's taking too long? What will you do when you get discouraged? What are you going to do when you think you're not making progress? When your expectations aren't met 100%, how will you handle it?

You've got to have a plan to get what you want, AND you've got to have a plan to deal with the obstacles along the way – obstacles created by others and obstacles you create.

We're here to help you figure this out and create a plan. During your private mentoring session, we'll first chat about your biggest challenges and where you think you're headed. We'll also cover a number of other relevant topics that typically shift your perspective and ease your overwhelm within the first 30 minutes. We've also got some cool tools available to get you started.

Our intention is to create and offer immediately applicable solutions to assist with the challenges you face everyday as an undergrad and help you prepare a successful transition into your just right work.

About BrijBrand

BrijBrand is an inward bound hub of services and products designed to help college undergrads, like YOU, navigate the wacky world of school while you build a solid bridge to your just right work and desired lifestyle.

It's clear that potholes exist along the traditional path to bridging school and career, which results in many temporary and permanent detours from our just right work.

We're schooled, counseled and at times frightened into believing that a successful transition into the world of work is primarily determined by external factors – social, cultural, political and economic, which minimizes or excludes factors that make up the individual – biological, psychological and spiritual.

We focus on both with an emphasis on the latter. We offer in person and virtual mentoring, workshops, and a variety of tools to support college undergrads on their journey of self-discovery, personal empowerment, exploration and transition.

For more info about BrijBrand and what we're building for YOU, dear student, visit www.brijbrand.co and subscribe to our student blog at www.brijbrandblog.co.