

CAMPUS TO CAREER TRANSITION

A New Journey Begins



The bible abounds with stories about people in transition, facing the unknown. Some, like Abraham and Jesus' disciples, were called by God to launch into the unknown. (Genesis 12:12; Matthew 4:18-22) Others, like Joseph, Esther, and Daniel and his three friends) were forced into the unknown by circumstances beyond their control. (Genesis 37-50; Esther; Daniel 3) All had to walk by faith, trusting God with the process and the outcomes. (Hebrews 11)

Setting out from the college campus on one's career journey is for some both anxiety-producing and exciting. Finding a job, learning how to manage finances, building friendships and community, finding a mentor, cultivating a vibrant relationship with God, figuring out how to live out your faith at work and in culture, and trying to find a work-life balance can all seem overwhelming.

The reality is that for most, there really will be times of difficulty, uncertainty, loneliness, questioning and frustration.

The good news is that it is *absolutely possible* to thrive in that journey, even in the difficulty- or perhaps because of it. Here are some tips and mindsets to help you thrive in the campus-to-career transition and throughout your 20s.

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MINDSET MATTERS

Cultivate your identity, relationship, worldview, and contentment in God. Your perspective about God and yourself really does influence how you adjust. Take time each day to listen to Jesus. 1 Peter 2:9; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 2:10,19; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, 9:8; 1 John 3:1; Zephaniah 3:17

Hopefulness. God is good, faithful, and sovereign. It's going to be ok. Hebrews 6:19, 10:23; Jeremiah 29:11; 1 Peter 1:13, 5:10

Manage expectations. Transitions can prompt a cycle of normal emotions. Expect that things will likely not work out the exact way that you envisioned and that emotions of disappointment, loneliness, and frustration may be part of the journey. But also maintain hope that God will indeed get you through. Romans 8:25; Psalm 62:5; Proverbs 11:23

Nix the Shame Game. Don't compare yourself to how the transition is going for everyone else. 2 Corinthians 10:12; Galatians 6:4

Purposefulness. Be intentional and take ownership for putting in place what you need during the journey, including finding friends, finding a church community, managing a budget, and choosing mentors. "Start small, decide what you will do, and be faithful to your commitment." When you mess up, receive grace and keep going. Erica Young-Reitz. Philippians 4:6-7; Proverbs 13:4, 21:5; Proverbs 24:27-34. Purpose to bloom and thrive where you are planted, even if you are certain it's only a stepping stone to something else. (Jeremiah 29:1-11)

Patience with others, your plans, yourself, and God. Expect things to take time. It's okay to fail, to pay dues and to allow God to grow you "slowly" and purposefully. Think crockpot meal, not microwave dinner. James 5:11; Proverbs 14:29; Romans 12:12; Galatians 6:9; Lamentations 3:25-28

Presence. "Choose to be present- listening to others, slowing down, taking breaks from technology, and in your transitional time. Fully embrace the in-between campus to career time. Put down your roots, even if it isn't where you ultimately want to be. Allow God to work in your life during a time that may feel awkward, directionless, or distressing." Erica Young-Reitz. Psalm 27:14, 37:7; Ephesians 4:2-3; Hebrews 2:1; Proverbs 4:1, 15:31, 18:13, 19:20; Philippians 2:4; 1 John 3:17-18; Galatians 6:2

COMMUNITY IS KEY

Finding a mentor... Cultivate meaningful, intergenerational relationships. Marketplace ministries, church, Christian associations, campus ministry alumni organizations, Christian college alumni associations, mentoring organizations and referrals from friends are all potential places to look for mentors. Psalm 145:4; Proverbs 13:20

Church Community. If you know where you will be geographically upon graduation, plug into a church community, and serve. (Hebrews 10:24-25; Ecclesiastes 4:12; 1 Corinthians 12:18-27) Engage in counter-cultural Mission to curb entitlement and self-centered tendencies. Prepare to serve within a church as quickly as possible- you'll develop relationships faster and be less self-absorbed with the difficult transition. Know that no church is perfect. Ephesians 3:2; Jeremiah 29:1-11.

Core Travel Companions. How you see the world will influence how you feel, so your worldview matters. Cultivate a core group of friends who "spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another..." Choose your core community from those who are going in the direction that you want to go. Heb. 10:24-25; Proverbs 17:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Hospitality Practice hospitality. It's a good way to get to know people better and develop a community. 1 Peter 4:9; Titus 1:8

THE RIGHT WORK

Competence and Character. Work on the right things at work. Character and competency, in that order. Employers say that character development is the number one need of young professionals. Commit to reading the book of Proverbs and applying what you discover. Psalm 78:72; Romans 5:3-5; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:23-24

Healthy Habits. Practice healthy spiritual and physical habits. Personally experience intimacy with Jesus, forming a resilient identity. Develop cultural discernment. Colossians 3:12-14; Psalm 1:1-4; 2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 100:2-4; Romans 12:11; Psalm 91:1-5; 1 Corinthians 9:27, 10:31

Restore and Solidify Foundations. Your 20s are a good time to get healing and deal with any baggage in your life that hasn't been resolved. It will minimize the pain to yourself and others as you develop relationships. When you are a leader, there's also an amplification affect. Romans 12:2; Psalm 147:3; John 8:32; Psalm 30:2; 1 John 1:9; James 5:16

Networks. Always be networking. It's how you will discover mentors, travel companions for the journey, and job opportunities.

Ask Your Mentor

1. When have been times of big transition in your life and how did you get through them?
2. How did you trust God in those times?
3. What did you learn about God and about yourself in those times?
4. What do you think are the most underutilized resources (e.g. people, community, place, things, behaviors, beliefs, etc..) people don't tap into in life transitions?
5. What character attributes help make the transition more beneficial for me?

Go Do

1. What would it look like to trust God during this time of transition?
2. Brainstorm what can you do to take initiative and be proactive during this time. Prioritize them. Now, write down one SMART goal action step.
3. Read, reflect on the noted scriptures, then ask God, "What do you have for me from this?" Listen and write down what comes to your heart and mind.
4. Do informational interviews of Christian young professionals that you respect that have been out of college 3-5 years. Use the questions in the Special Section below if you need interview question ideas.

Go Deeper: Further Conversation & Study

1. Look at the Special Sections that follow. Pick the one that represents you and dig in.
2. Read the story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50. What thoughts and emotions might he have experienced during his journey? When might he have failed? How did he thrive? What did he come to learn about himself and about God from his journey?

SPECIAL SECTION: MENTOR QUESTIONS TO ASK COLLEGE STUDENTS & YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Graduating

1. What do you anticipate as you transition from campus to career?

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2. What concerns or questions do you have about the transition?
3. How do you think the transition will affect your college life daily routines and time management?
4. What are some life skills you think you will need to develop as you start life after college?
5. Have you found a job? If so, how did you find it?
6. How will you find community? A church?
7. How do you think you will try to maintain your relationship with God?
8. What do you think will happen with college friends?

Recently Launched (One-Three Years Out)

1. What has been the best part of your transition out of college?
2. What has been the most difficult part of your transition?
3. What were some surprises?
4. What kind of limitations are you now facing because of the transition and how can they be viewed as a gift?
5. How are you ordering your priorities? What are your priorities?
6. How did you decide on your career path?
7. What do you want out of life?

SPECIAL SECTION: PROTÉGÉ QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUNG PROFESSIONALS OUT OF COLLEGE WITHIN THE PAST 3-5 YEARS

1. How does a college graduate find community once they leave campus and move to a new city or away from a campus ministry they may have been involved with?
2. How long should I expect it to take?
3. How do I get plugged into a church after graduation? Why is it important to?
4. What emotions can I expect to have once I leave campus and start the next chapter of my life?
5. How is post college life different than campus life?
6. How can I bloom where I'm planted?
7. How do I move past college and embrace the future, even if it is uncertain?

Life Skills

What do you think are important life skills to have and why?

New Skills

1. What have you learned about time management? How is time management the same or different than college? What have you discovered to be time wasters? Time savers?
2. What are you learning about managing finances?
3. What are you learning about navigating the workplace?
4. What are some important life skills you are learning?
5. What have you been learning about relating to your boss?

Advice to Others

1. What are life adjustments students need to be aware of upon graduating and getting started in work?
2. What, if anything, do you wish you would have done differently in college in preparation for post-college?

Sources & Resources

Books and Articles

- Book: After College: Navigating Transitions, Relationships and Faith, Erica Young Reitz
- Book: Welcome to Adulthood, JP Pohlman
- Book: Money, Possessions and Eternity, Randy Alcorn

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- Book: Common Mistakes Singles Make, Mary Whelchel
- Book: Love, Sex and Lasting Relationships, Chip Ingram
- Article: The Secret to Making Friends After College, <https://relevantmagazine.com/life5/secret-creating-friendships-last/>
- Article: When YOLO Becomes FOMO, Olivia Feller, <https://www.boundless.org/adulthood/when-yolo-becomes-fomo/>

Video Shorts:

- Video: Important Character Traits for College to Career Transition, Jon Shah, <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/147858226>
- Video: Important Character Traits for College to Career Transition, Nick Nye, <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/148316982>
- Video: How can I move past college and embrace the future, Kyle Young, <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/154183110>
- Video: What emotions might I experience as I make the college to career transition? Jon Shah, <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/147856998>
- Video: What has the college to career transition been like for you?, Onyeche, Oche, <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/151478984>
- Video: How is post-college life different than college life?, Jon Shah, <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/147857507>
- Video: How can I bloom where I'm planted?, Jon Shah, <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/147857506>
- Video: What advice would you give to a young professional?, Michelle Norris, <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/152196569>
- Video: How can I bloom where I'm planted?, Nick Nye, <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/148315103>