

The background features a soft-focus image of a desk. On the left, a portion of a person's arm and shoulder is visible. In the center, a silver paperclip is attached to a sheet of lined paper. To the right, a pen lies diagonally across the page. Further right, a textured orange calendar is visible, with the year '2017' embossed on its cover.

ANATOMY OF A DREAM JOB

Bring Direction and Focus to Your Career Search



Julia Bushue Career Coaching

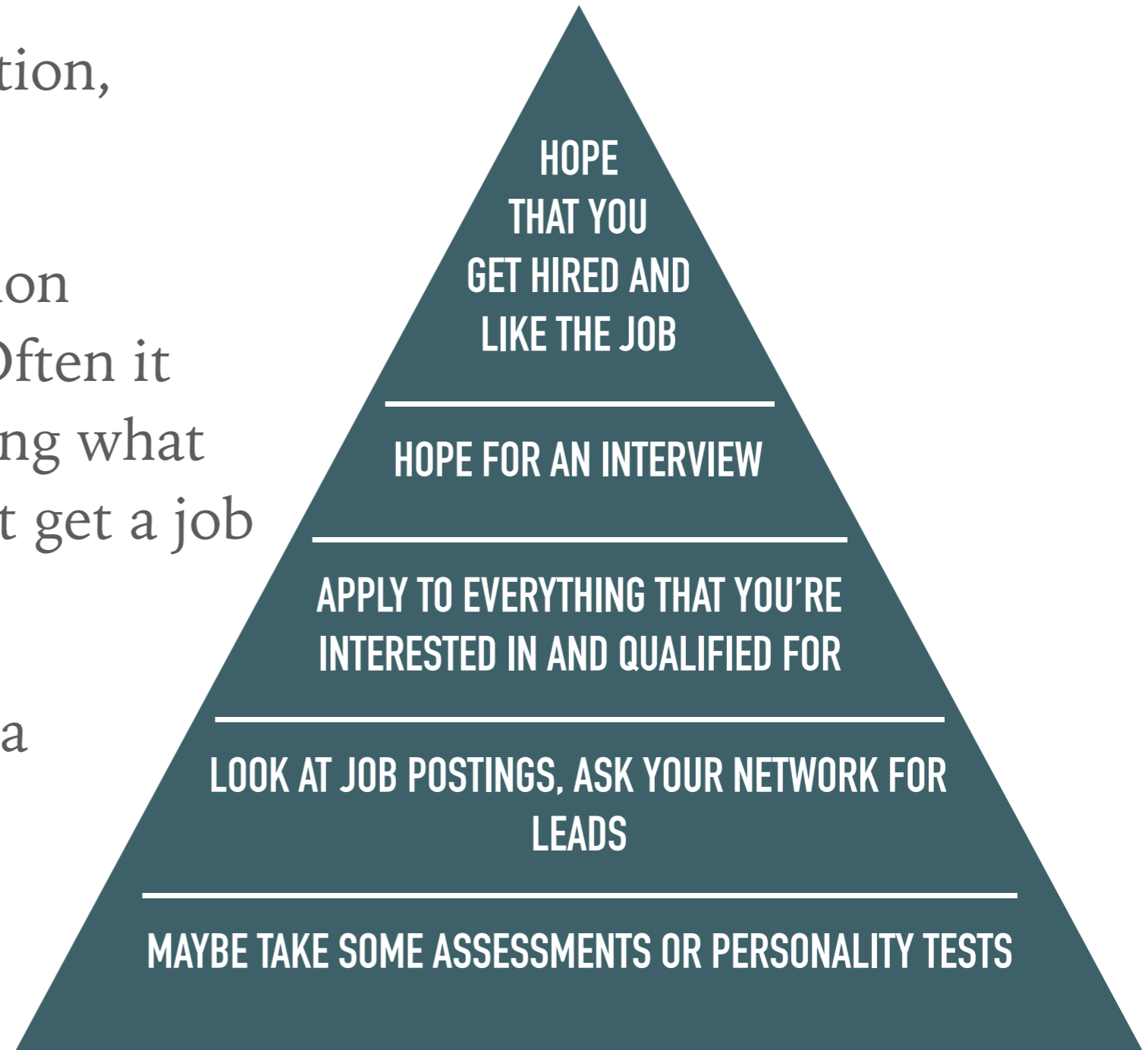
THE PROBLEM WITH TRADITIONAL CAREER EXPLORATION

How do you approach the question, “What do I do with my life?”

This graphic illustrates a common strategy. Sometimes it works. Often it doesn't and you're left wondering what you did wrong. Either you don't get a job at all, or it's not a good fit.

You've got to wonder if there's a better way. **And there is!**

The first secret to an effective career exploration strategy starts at the base of the triangle.



STARTING YOUR CAREER SEARCH OUT RIGHT

You want a good foundation when thinking about what direction to take your career. What kinds of activities, people, and environments support you in being your best self?

This is the kind of thing you want to know *before* you spend a lot of time and energy on applications for jobs that just aren't a good fit.



In addition to understanding your ideal career elements, you'll also want to know your “blind spots” — personality traits that can keep you stuck. More on those in a bit.

JUMPERS AND OVER-THINKERS

When it comes to career exploration, people tend to fall into one of two camps.

The Jumpers: So-called because they jump into situations without a lot of forethought. They tend to go with the first solution that sounds good (or at least better than where they are now), which can result in either job-hopping or long-term dissatisfaction.

The Over-thinkers: These people love ruminating on their different options. They tend to like assessments, inventories and thought exercises. The problem is that they can get paralyzed by all the potential outcomes and never take action on any of them.

Which are you? Knowing that will remind you to do what comes less naturally, whether it's taking action or extra time to reflect.

WHY THIS EXERCISE WORKS

In the following exercise, you'll reflect on some past experiences and break them down into different components.

By identifying what makes up a positive experience for you, you'll have a good grasp of what elements to look for in your next job.

If you're a **jumper**, this will give you a framework for evaluating new opportunities before going all in.

If you're an **over-thinker**, this will give you enough information to start taking action in the real world.

INTRODUCING THE AEIOU FRAMEWORK

The AEIOU framework was developed in the early 90s to help social scientists understand how people function within society. We can use the same method to break an experience down and see how the components relate to each other.

- **Activities:** actions taken to achieve a goal or outcome.
- **Environment:** setting where the experience took place, including location, character, and function.
- **Interactions:** take place between a person and another person or object. What is the nature of these interactions? How do they relate to the activities?
- **Objects:** physical components involved in the experience. What are these objects and how do they relate to the activities?
- **Users:** the people involved. What are their roles and relationships? What personality characteristics are present?

STEP 1: LIST SOME KEY EXPERIENCES.

Let's start out by identifying 3-5 experiences from your past that you found enjoyable, engaging, or energizing (or a combination).

- Some ideas: An activity, class, job, group, project, trip or event.
- Go ahead and list these below. Don't overthink this: just go with what comes to mind first.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE COMPONENTS INVOLVED.

- For each experience, **circle** any words on the next three pages that describe a **positive** aspect of that experience.
- You can use the additional space to add any relevant details or additional options.
- If a word gets used more than once, put a tally mark next to it for each additional activity.
- For even more insight, **draw a line** through any of the words that describe a **negative** aspect of the experiences.

ACTIVITIES (WHAT YOU WERE DOING)

Advising

Connecting

Experimenting

Interpreting

Planning

Add your own:

Paperwork

Advocating

Convincing

Exploring

Leading

Presenting

Analyzing

Coordinating

Facilitating

Learning

Protecting

Arranging

Creating

Fixing

Maintaining

Researching

Auditing

Debating

Helping

Mediating

Restoring

Brainstorming

Delegating

Hypothesizing

Mentoring

Sharing

Building

Designing

Imagining

Motivating

Teaching

Collaborating

Discussing

Implementing

Observing

Testing

Collecting

Enforcing

Improvising

Optimizing

Thinking

Communicating

Evaluating

Influencing

Organizing

Troubleshooting

Competing

Engaging in
physical activity

Inspiring

Performing

Visualizing

ENVIRONMENT (SETTING / LOCATION / CHARACTERISTICS)

Busy	Collaborative	Dynamic	Imposing	Natural	Quiet
Calm	Competitive	Empty	Indoors	Noisy	Relaxed
Casual	Corporate	Fast-paced	Industrial	Orderly	Traditional
Chaotic	Crowded	Formal	Innovative	Outdoors	Welcoming

Other:

Home office

INTERACTIONS (SIZE / TYPE / MEDIUM)

One-on-one	Formal	Leading role	Solo	Support role
Casual	In-person	Phone	Spontaneous	Written
Interactive	Large group	Small group	Structured	Video

Other:

Deep conversation

OBJECTS

Specifics (tools, technology, software, devices, other man-made or natural objects):

Computer

USERS (THE PEOPLE INVOLVED)

Classmates

Coworkers

Partners

Subordinates

Teachers

Clients

Mentors

Students

Supervisors

Teammates

Others (types of people, specific people, or personality characteristics):

ST (client): open, genuine, doesn't take herself too seriously

STEP 3: CONSOLIDATE YOUR FINDINGS

Now, transfer your results below! Put any words that showed up more than once closer to the top with their numbers in parentheses (see example).

AEIOU Components to Seek Out:

Creating (3)

STEP 4: REFLECT ON YOUR RESULTS

Take 5-10 minutes to consider the following questions.

- Were you surprised by anything? What themes or patterns did you notice?
- As you consider your desired components, do any potential career directions spring to mind (even unrealistic or impractical ones)?
- How could you potentially increase the number of positive elements and decrease the negative ones in your *current* situation?

Give your brain a break! This is a great time to go for a walk and let things marinate. Come back to them in a day or so and see if anything new comes to mind. You may want to grab a friend to provide some outside perspective.

HOW TO USE YOUR LISTS

In the days and weeks ahead, you can refer back to these lists when considering possible career paths to explore. Knowing your preferences will **a)** bring instant focus to your job search and **b)** give you confidence when you're on the right track.

Great job! You've already done more thinking about your desired career components than most people, which will save you a ton of time and energy down the road.

Now you're ready for the next step: **using your insights to create a custom career exploration strategy.**

YOUR NEXT STEPS



Remember this graphic from the beginning? These are the next steps in a successful job exploration. You've already completed the first step — are you ready to continue the process?

Unfortunately, there's only so much I can cover in a short workbook like this one. Don't worry, though — I've got you covered! Keep reading to learn how to take this work further.

READY TO KEEP GOING?

OPTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:

Schedule your free strategy call

Find out where you're getting stuck and what you need to move forward.

Work with me

Check out my individual coaching programs and find the option that's right for you.

THANKS FOR READING!

I hope you found this exercise enlightening! I'd love to hear what you thought. You can reach me at julia@juliabushue.com or visit online at www.juliabushue.com.

Julia Bushue Career Coaching

www.juliabushue.com

