



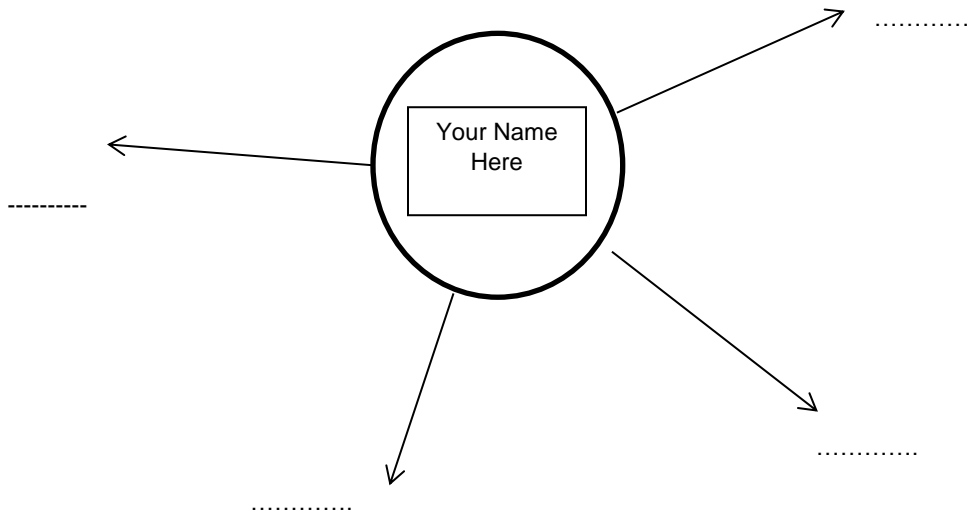
Possible Lives Instructions

Adapted from: Brooks, K. (2009). *You Majored In What? Mapping Your Path from Chaos to Career*. New York: Penguin Group

Let's take a moment to assess where you are in your future planning process:

- Is there one job, field of work, activity that seems to call to you?
- Do you have so many interesting options out there that you don't even know where to start?
- Does nothing seem to interest you because you don't even know what's out there?
- Do you want to do something that seems unattainable?
- Are you being "advised" by others to pursue a particular path?

Whatever your situation, Possible Lives can help you start finding the sense in this seeming chaos of your future; helping you identify and organize some future plans, while still keeping the door open to lots of new ideas. And the exciting part is there are so many possible lives within you; it's up to you to choose which one to move toward next.



Dysfunctional Belief: *I need to figure out my best possible life, make a plan, and then execute it.*

Reframe: *There are multiple great lives (and plans) within me, and I get to choose which one to build my way forward to next.*

(Burnett, B. & Evans, D. (2016). *Designing your life: How to build a well-lived, joyful life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.)



1. **Identify your Possible Lives** by writing down all the different careers or future plans you've considered in the last few years, no matter how wild, crazy, or seemingly impossible. We're going to focus on where you *might* go, not where you *have to* go. Now draw a line for each connecting to the center circle (you).
 - Always include one blank line for the yet undiscovered career
 - Don't censor your ideas
 - Don't consider whether you have the education or talent
 - Don't consider the salary (or lack thereof)
 - Jot down your ideas even if you "know" they're unrealistic

2. **Visualize:** Step back and take a look at your map. Consider the following:
 - What was it like to go through this process so far?
 - What would life look like 5 years down the road for each of these alternatives? Notice your role or the setting you'd be in. Who are you doing? Who are you working with? Where you are working and living?
 - What are some common themes or relationships among your different lives?
 - Can you see any of them blending together in any way?
 - Does one scenario stand out as a starting point with other scenarios following later?

3. **Reflect:** Confirm your general interest in some of the possible lives.
 - Which ones are the strongest? Which are the most fun to dream about and create?
 - How do they align with your career values, interest, and personality?
 - Which ones energize you the most?

4. **Next Steps:** After taking some time to visualize and reflect on some of the different possible career paths you are considering, create an action plan for yourself to move forward to learn about, explore, or gain experience in some of your possible lives.
 - What competencies, skills, and strengths can you bring to each role?
 - What do you still need to know about each option?
 - What do you still need to learn about or gain more experience in?