

LifeMapSM



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

April 2011

This Month's Message:

Helping Your Grad Crack the Job Market.

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Helping Your Grad Crack the Job Market.

Last June we published an edition of LifeMap that generated a ton of responses and that was forwarded to dozens of other folks. To review it you can go to www.drpaulpowers.com, click on [LifeMap Archive](#), open 6/2010 *Living With Your New Graduate*. Among the comments were multiple requests that we tackle the issue of how best to help the new (and maybe not so new) graduate land his or her first big job. With graduation dates approaching it occurred that this might be a good time to do so.

You may remember the scene early in the movie *The Graduate* where everybody and his brother is giving Dustin Hoffman career advice ending with the one word that will guarantee success. "*Plastics!*" Such advice is well-meant but unfortunately is useless to a person who must make the transition from school to career and do it on his or her own terms. For those of us who have lived and survived for years or decades in the workaday world it's easy to think we have

a set of quick and easily applicable ideas for someone who is up and coming. But what worked for you or me with our unique backgrounds, temperaments and goals is unlikely to provide an easy template for what someone else should do. Now add on top of that the history and baggage that accompanies a familial or parental relationship and the likelihood of getting your message through starts to diminish even more.

So what can a caring friend or supportive family member do to help a new (or not so new) grad get a foothold in today's demanding job market? To validate some ideas I generated on this topic I surveyed a few dozen recent graduates as to what they found helpful and what they found unhelpful. (Thanks go out to the recent grads of UMass Amherst and State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota who completed those surveys.) In the process I also learned a few things I hadn't thought of. No idea here will work for everybody but if you want to help your favorite grad crack the job market here are some ideas that you can try.

Paths Forward

- You Don't Have The Answer. You might *think* you have the answer. And your answer might be very good; darn near perfect perhaps. And you might think it's "just common sense" or "obvious" (answers which tend to make the other person feel stupid that they didn't think of it on their own). An effective helper does not provide the path but helps the other person find the right path. Instead of starting with a pre-prepared "to-do" list, start by asking what is it you can do to help. If you've already goofed this one up be prepared for the "get off my back already" or "quit harping on the job thing" answer. But you can recover from this with open-ended questions which avoid the dreaded *yup / nope* responses to find out what the current obstacles really are. Now you're learning how to help.

- Start With The Campus Career Office. And start yesterday. Back in your day the campus career office might not have existed or if it did it might have focused solely on lining up interviews for business school grads. I cannot stress more strongly how much this field has developed and improved in the last ten to fifteen years. Go to their web site and find out the extent of the resources they have to share with your soon-to-be grad. Now - fortified with detailed knowledge - suggest that he or she become not only acquainted with but start setting up appointments with the college career staff for workshops and individual sessions on resume development, polishing research skills and developing interview skills. Raise the point that every top athlete has a coach, that a career coach is something they will need throughout their career and that the time to start with one is now.

- Provide Perspective. When I first got out of college the economy was in recession. Jobs were hard to find, salaries were down and folks were easily discouraged. But guess what happened? The recession ended, the economy got better and more jobs became available. And there has been one more recession since then. The economy goes up, the economy goes down. Share this insight with your grad to help her get some historical perspective. Neither good times nor down times last forever. The key is to do one's best in

either. If this doesn't help maybe remind her that she is young, healthy, educated and that millions world-wide would trade their best day for her worst.

- Gear Graduation Presents to the Job Search. Your new grad's comfy jeans, t-shirts and beat up backpack need to be retired for weekend use. Discuss with him what would be most helpful in his job search. Consider such things as a gift certificate for a nice interviewing outfit, a memory stick / jump drive, a cell phone upgrade, a briefcase or valise. A good job-hunting guide is low-cost and always appropriate (and you can borrow it when you need it). I take pride in suggesting (click here) [Winning Job Interviews](#), 2nd edition (Career Press) a fast-paced, easy to use, career category best seller that addresses all aspects of the job hunt and provides a job search tool-kit.

- Model Effective Networking. You and I know that networking is likely to help get your grad's foot in the door. But despite whatever career coaching he may have had do not assume he knows how to network effectively. Making a cold call to someone to whom you have been referred is hard for most folks. It can be immobilizing to someone who has never had to do it before. Let your grad watch and listen as you make a few calls to expand your network. This will show him that there is no magic to it, that not every call will be a winner, and that persistence and courage are as valuable in the job hunt as any other trait.

- Remember and Listen. Let's face it; job hunting sucks (the title, by the way, of Chapter 1 of [Winning Job Interviews](#)). Think back to your first professional job search. Was it frustrating? Did you feel like you really knew what you were doing? Were you afraid you would screw something up or make a major mistake that would hurt your career? Did the frequent rejection get you down? These are the very same things your new grad is going through. Not long ago she was at the top of her academic game and now she is, again, a novice. Let her share her reactions, let her vent her frustrations. Try not to jump in immediately with your proposed solutions. Remind her that this is just a first step on a long journey; that it is unlikely that she will start out with a dream job. Suggest she take some time to jot down her concerns and later, when she feels like it, you can sit with her and brainstorm some ideas. Remember that she has already worked very hard just to get to this point; so don't neglect to share your pride at her recent accomplishments and express your confidence in her eventual success.

LifeMap is about helping those you care about achieve their career and life goals.

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The best investment you can make is in your career, your future and yourself.

email drpaul@drpaulpowers.com

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Have Dr. Paul speak at your next off-site meeting or conference. Fast-moving, practical, motivating presentations from an acknowledged leader in the field of career and

personal success.

<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/speakingschedule.html>

Resources

· Are you or someone you know job hunting or thinking about it?

The best, concise, all-round job changing guide available. Revised Edition [Winning Job Interviews](#) by Dr. Paul Powers.

In this easy-to-follow, step-by-step book, Dr. Paul Powers demystifies job interviewing, explains why the process actually favors the job hunter, and shows how you can dramatically improve your interview skills.

Packed with solid, practical information and laced with both humor and "kick in the pants" motivation, *Winning Job Interviews* is the book you wished you had before your last interview... and is mandatory preparation for your next one!

· Stalled at work? Still struggling to find your true vocation?

Or know someone who is? Order your copy of [Love Your Job!](#) *Loving the Job You Have, Finding A Job You Love* by Dr. Paul.

<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/booksandarticles.html>

Have an issue or question you'd like Dr. Paul to address in a future edition? Send an email to the email address list below.

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Sincerely,

Dr. Paul

Email: drpaul@drpaulpowers.com

Phone: 781-237-0550

Web: <http://www.drpaulpowers.com>

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Dr. Paul Powers | 218 Brandywine Circle | Englewood | FL | 34223