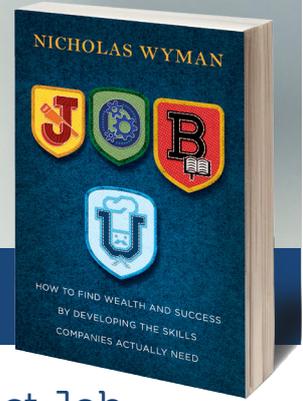




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## Four Popular Myths That May be Keeping You from Your Perfect Job ...And Why it's NEVER Too Late to Follow Your Dream

### Do any of the following ring true to you?

- You're in a job that isn't fulfilling and you can't stop dreaming about doing something completely different.
- You're just starting out in your professional life, having a hard time making the transition from school to work and are unsure of which direction to take.
- You're in the field you want to be in, but can't seem to get a promotion or find a way to move up the ladder.
- You're feeling the bombardment of messages from family, friends and the media telling you 'a desk job (like a manager or an accountant) is the only respectable way to make a living' - the exact kind of job that bores you to tears.
- You think you need a college degree to be competitive in today's job market, but you don't learn well in a classroom, or don't want to take on the burden of a big student loan.
- You've always dreamed of learning a trade and enjoying satisfaction that comes from making something with your own two hands - but don't know where to look for the right program or teacher.

If you identify with one or more of these statements, I have some good news for you. No matter what stage of life or career you are in, it's never too late to follow your dream. For many people, these four common myths are the only thing standing in the way of a fulfilling a financially rewarding career:

**Myth #1:** The are no jobs.

**Myth #2:** Vocational training only leads to boring, low-status jobs.

**Myth #3:** You can't afford the education or training.

**Myth #4:** It's too late to too risky to change career directions.

Too many people put off pursuing what they really want in a career because they've fallen prey to these popular ideas. In many cases, the problem isn't a lack of opportunity; it's a lack of information about all the amazing opportunities that exist. But as I can tell you first hand, your dream job is probably out there waiting for you; all you have to do is choose the right path towards it. Here's why:

**Truth # 1. There are over 3 million American jobs that need to be filled.** We are currently experiencing what economist call a job-skills gap, which is simply a mismatch between the skills people possess and the skills employers actually need. This is why even though there are 13 million unemployed or underemployed people in the United States, 39% of employers still say they are having trouble filling jobs. These employers are desperate for skilled people - and willing to pay them well.

According to the Summer 2014 Occupational Outlook Quarterly published by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are tens of thousands of job opportunities available in sales, mechanics, woodworking, customer service, manufacturing, and others - and many have median salaries up to \$60,000 a year.

**Truth # 2. These are not low-paying menial jobs.** Vocational and practical skills training is not just for blue collar jobs. In fact, it can be the ticket to well-compensated careers in business and entrepreneurship, hospitality, aviation, health care, graphic design, mechanical engineering, information technology, and even artistic trades such as culinary arts or book restoration. With increasing apprenticeship and skills-training opportunities available in a wide swatch of professional fields, it's easier than ever for anyone in any walk of life to make a change and pursue a dream.

Take Alisha Doring, for example, who just landed her dream job with one of the largest employee-owned global consultancy firms in the world. Alisha had been working in retail and hoping for a promotion to management that never came, when she decided to apply for a business traineeship. After a series of interviews, Alisha was awarded the year-long, opportunity to 'earn and learn' and she could not be happier.

For Alisha, this opportunity isn't just "good enough" - it's exactly what she was hoping for. She's now on the direct path to her dream career, and making money while she learns.

**Truth # 3. Most of these opportunities don't require a college degree.** It's no wonder that many people hesitate to pursue higher education

when the cost of a four-year degree from a private college has tripled over the last three decades, and bachelor's degree holders are graduating with an average of \$23,000 in student debt. In contrast, skills certifications (awarded for 9-12 weeks of concentrated training in specialized fields) cost only a few thousand dollars, and the average cost of 2-year associates degree in the US is just \$6,300 (compare that with the \$120,000 one could easily pay for a 4-year degree at a private institution!).

And contrary to the popular belief that 4-year college is the best or only way to land a job in today's economy, 61% of all jobs in the US right now do not require a college degree. Many of these are high-paying, respected, skilled jobs in mechanics, technology, electronics, manufacturing, and so on; all careers that can be built on skills certifications, associates degrees, or with on-the-job training and apprenticeships, with absolutely no need to invest in an expensive university education.

**Truth # 4. It's never too late.** Anyone, at any stage in their career can pursue a skills-based education. I have seen this in action so many times. From young people like Alisha who have chosen apprenticeships over university, to working parents who increased their earnings exponentially by learning a trade, to successful professionals who quit the rat-race to start their own business, to retired adults who found the rewards of hands-on work in their golden years.

And contrary to popular belief, the benefits of changing direction at any time in your life greatly outweigh the risks. Skills are stackable credentials, and you can always keep acquiring new ones to move up or over in your chosen profession. That's exactly why today's smartest companies are building opportunities for further education and training right into their business model.

And remember that vocational education isn't a strait jacket; It can be a springboard to greater educational advancement. Just because you choose not to pursue the traditional college education now, doesn't mean you can't go back to school later in life, as I myself did.

In short, with more and more on-the-job training programs cropping up on-line and in companies across the nation, and more and more apprenticeships and community colleges partnering with employers in local job markets to "skill up" their work force, there's never been a better time to seize these opportunities to follow your dream.

### About the Author

Nicholas Wyman is the CEO of the Institute for Workplace Skills and Innovation.

He is the Author of "Job U - How to Find Wealth and Success by Developing the Skills Companies Actually Need" published by Crown - a division of Penguin Random House. He speaks and writes on the business and leadership challenges companies face in finding skilled employees. Nicholas is a graduate of Harvard Business School and is a Churchill Fellow.



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