

# CHAPTER ONE

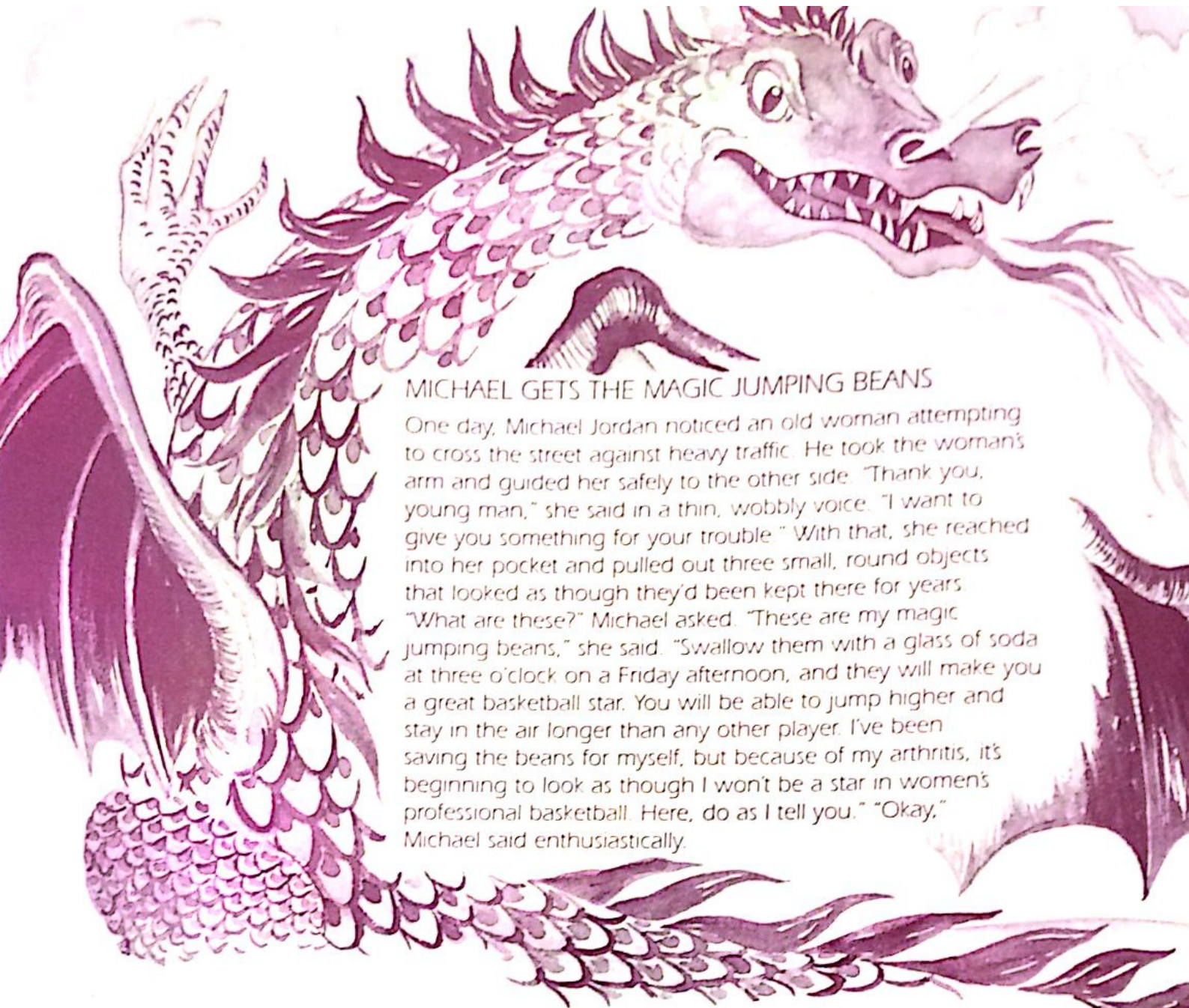
## *Envisioning Your Future*

How do you define success?

Personal success is simply the fulfillment  
of what makes you happiest.  
—Anonymous

Vision is the art of seeing the invisible.  
—Jonathan Swift

Section One:  
WHO AM I?



### MICHAEL GETS THE MAGIC JUMPING BEANS

One day, Michael Jordan noticed an old woman attempting to cross the street against heavy traffic. He took the woman's arm and guided her safely to the other side. "Thank you, young man," she said in a thin, wobbly voice. "I want to give you something for your trouble." With that, she reached into her pocket and pulled out three small, round objects that looked as though they'd been kept there for years. "What are these?" Michael asked. "These are my magic jumping beans," she said. "Swallow them with a glass of soda at three o'clock on a Friday afternoon, and they will make you a great basketball star. You will be able to jump higher and stay in the air longer than any other player. I've been saving the beans for myself, but because of my arthritis, it's beginning to look as though I won't be a star in women's professional basketball. Here, do as I tell you." "Okay," Michael said enthusiastically.

### SALLY WINS THE ASTRO-LOTTERY

Sally Ride was working a crossword puzzle and watching "Jeopardy" one evening when her phone rang. "Congratulations," said the voice on the line, "your name has just been picked from 20 million entries to be the first woman astronaut in America! What do you think of that?" "Gee, it sounds great," said Sally. "Yes, Sally," the voice continued, "you are our lucky winner. You'll be flown as our guest to the luxury astronaut training center in beautiful Houston, Texas, where you will learn space secrets and survival techniques from the experts. Then it'll be off to sunny Cape Canaveral, where you'll blast off into space as millions of people around the world watch and cheer. Your prize also includes the regulation space suit, the freeze-dried gourmet dinners, and assurance that your name will go down in history! What do you say to that, Sally Ride?" "Wow," said Sally.

## OPRAH GETS DISCOVERED

Oprah Winfrey got on a downtown bus to go shopping one Saturday. The bus was crowded, and she accidentally stepped on the foot of a man sitting near the front. "Excuse me," she said. The man looked at her. "Would you say that again," he asked. "Excuse me?" said Oprah. "That's it! People, this is the one!" the man exclaimed. "This is our star!" As he made his announcement, a dozen people jumped up from seats further back in the bus. A camera crew descended on Oprah with microphones and glaring lights. Someone from make-up began highlighting her cheekbones. A costumer told Oprah she'd be stunning in chartreuse. "Wait a minute," Oprah demanded. "What's this all about?" "You're going to be the star of our new talk show," the first man told her. "You'll have your own production company. And you'll make some movies, too. The job pays about 25 million dollars a year. How does that sound?" "Sounds good to me," said Oprah.

## GEORGE W. FINDS A JOB

One day, while vacationing in Washington, D.C., George W. Bush saw a sign in the White House window. "Help Wanted," it read. Since he was between jobs at the time, George decided to check it out. "We're looking for the next President of the United States," the woman in the office told him. "You have to be an American citizen, and you must be over 35 years of age." "That's me," said George. "Do I get the job?" "I don't see why not," the woman said. "Of course, you'll have to relocate. Would you mind living in the White House?" "Well, I don't know. Could I think about it for a day or two and get back to you?" "Sure. Take your time. No pressure."



## VISION + ENERGY = SUCCESS

You can safely assume that there is not one kernel of truth in any of the preceding stories. Successful people do not depend on luck or magic to get what they want. Nor do they let others make their career choices for them. Most people who are successful in their work don't just *find* a job. They *make* one. They have a *vision* of what they would like to do, how they would like to use their minds, talents, and interests. And they have the *energy* to make their dreams come true. They believe in their vision.

Vision and energy (or action) are the two most important elements in getting what you want from life. Your vision of what you'd like to do or be, or how you'd like to live, will help you know when you've succeeded. A goal is like a compass that will help keep you on track. And your energy or actions will take you, step by step, to the realization of your vision.

It is essential to have *both* elements. Vision without action is just daydreaming. Alone, it won't get you anywhere. Undirected action is equally useless. It leads only to exhaustion and frustration. Together, though, they are a dynamic duo. And they can work for you, no matter what your goal. (Not everyone can — or wants to — be a superstar. You need to have your own definition of success. More on that later in this chapter.)

What do you think are the *real* stories behind the successful people we talked about on the preceding pages? For the following exercises, write a statement that you feel might reflect his or her vision. Then list some actions they may have taken to realize their goal. Michael Jordan's chart, for example, might look something like this:

### **Michael Jordan**

**Vision:** To be a top professional basketball player, someone who adds something new to the game.

**Actions in school:** Throughout grade school, high school, and college, practice, practice, practice; seek out good coaching; watch and analyze top players; keep up grades in order to be eligible for team play; stay healthy.

**Actions at work:** As a pro, practice, practice, practice; maintain health.



Complete charts for the following individuals.

**Sally Ride**

Vision: \_\_\_\_\_

Actions in school: \_\_\_\_\_

Actions at work: \_\_\_\_\_

**Oprah Winfrey**

Vision: \_\_\_\_\_

Actions in school: \_\_\_\_\_

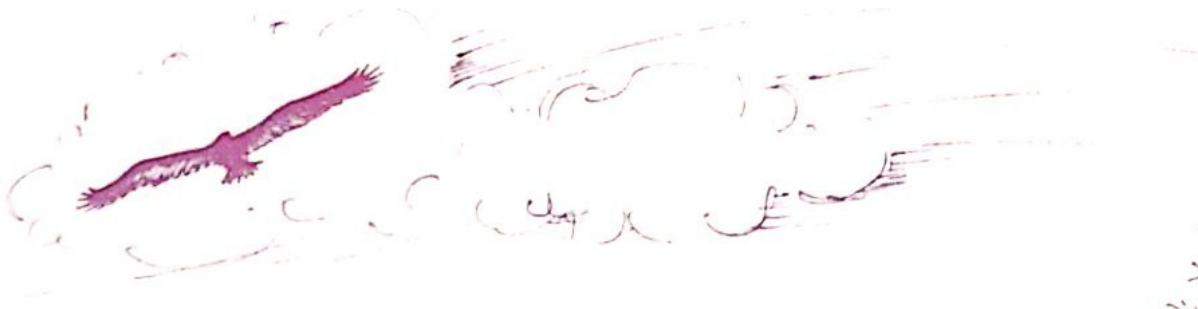
Actions at work: \_\_\_\_\_

**George W. Bush**

Vision: \_\_\_\_\_

Actions in school: \_\_\_\_\_

Actions at work: \_\_\_\_\_



# Envisioning Your Future

What about you? Do you have a vision for your own future? You need to begin imagining one if you don't. It's an important first step. Once you have a vision, you start expecting to realize it. What you *expect* for yourself tends to become what you *get*. So imagine a *positive* future for yourself.

Sit quietly, close your eyes, and imagine your ideal career. What kind of setting are you in? What tasks are you performing? Are you working alone or with others? How do you feel about yourself? Describe your vision in as much detail as possible.

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Was that a difficult exercise for you? Don't worry about it if it was. The rest of this book is designed to help you begin to clarify who you are, what you want, and what you need to do to get it. So keep reading!

# Why People Work

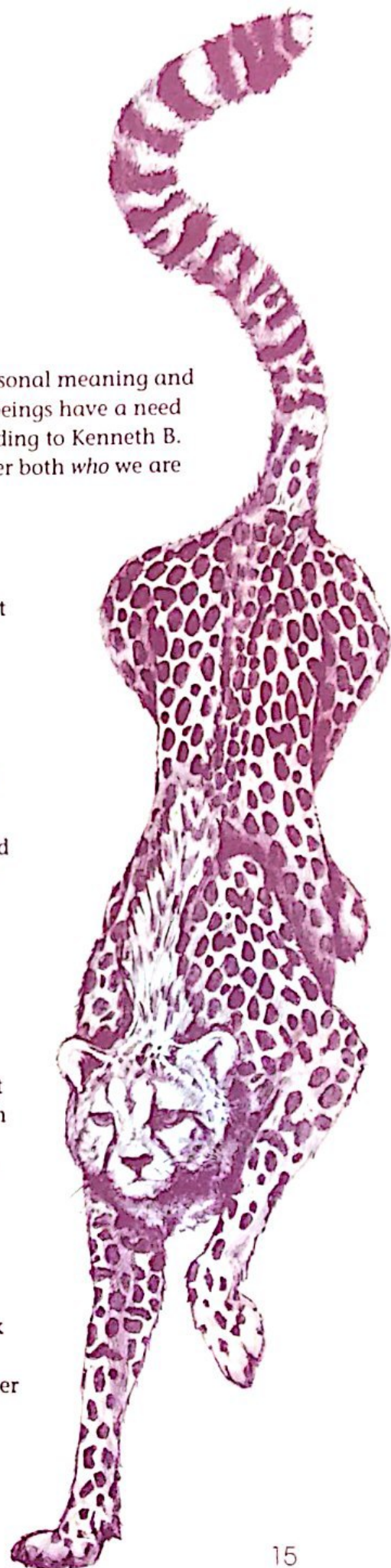
People work for many reasons, but, basically, they work to bring personal meaning and satisfaction to themselves as well as benefits to society. All human beings have a need to work, to do, and to become someone through that process. According to Kenneth B. Hoyt, known as the “father of career education,” we work to “discover both *who* we are and *why* we are.”

***Of course, people also work for survival.*** In early history, that meant — literally — bringing home the bacon (or the woolly mammoth), gathering fruits and grains, and finding shelter from the elements. Today the transaction is less direct. People work for *money*, which they use to fulfill the same basic needs. But then, you probably already knew that. You may be less aware, however, of some of the *other* reasons people go to work each day. The following come from Dr. Jay B. Rohrlich’s book, *Work and Love: the crucial balance*.

***People work to define themselves.*** Ask most people who they are, and they will respond with their occupation: “I’m a mail carrier,” “I’m a software designer,” “I’m a teacher,” and so on. It may be just as accurate to say “I’m an emotional person,” or “I’m very creative.” But, somehow, statements like these seem more ambiguous. They provide less concrete information. Being able to provide a job title or a list of accomplishments makes us feel more *real* to ourselves and others.

***People work to have a sense of security.*** Many people find it difficult to get all the love or approval they need from their relationships with friends and family. For them, work can be a constant source of security and pleasure. They may not know what kind of mood they will find their spouse in on any given night. But they can be fairly certain that their work will be the same.

***People work for self-respect, or to feel competent and powerful.*** It isn’t always easy to feel powerful in the world. Some people will always be more powerful than you are. Discrimination based on sex or race is real and robs its victims of the feeling that they can direct the course of their lives. But doing a particular job well gives a worker a sense of control and responsibility that adds greatly to his or her self-respect.





**People work to conquer time.** We are aware from an early age that our time on earth is limited. The days that pass simply vanish. One way we can “conquer” time is to fill each day with achievements or accomplishments. Over time, these experiences become a real and lasting part of what we see ourselves to be.

**People work to measure their self-worth.** Working is one way of “keeping score,” of seeing how we stack up in comparison to others. Who is the most accomplished? Who got the award or promotion? Who earned the respect of the group? Who makes the most money? These are all ways we use to measure our self-worth. We feel better about ourselves when we succeed at a *difficult* task than we do when we accomplish something easy. We also tend to place importance on public recognition: the more lives you touch, the longer you may be remembered.

In the long run, though, true job satisfaction comes only from inside. You are the final judge of your own achievement. Whether you make a fortune, or just a living, is less important than knowing that you made a contribution, and that you did your job well.



# Everybody Works

Whether you currently earn money from a job or not, you are a worker. You are probably a student. Chances are, you do chores at home. Perhaps you are an athlete or a musician, a computer whiz or a video fanatic, a cook or a gardener. For the purpose of this exercise, consider all your studies, tasks, and hobbies as work.

Think about a typical "working day," one in which you spent time on most of your "jobs." List the tasks and activities you performed below. Make your list as complete as you can.

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Based on that list, how would you define your jobs? Write your titles on the following lines.

I am a \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What would be your accomplishments at the end of the day (an English paper, a clean room, a solved problem, and so on)? List them below.

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Which accomplishments are most satisfying? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How do they make you feel about yourself? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do your feelings relate to any of the reasons people work listed on the previous page? Which ones?

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# Defining Success

According to the dictionary, success is "the achievement of something desired, planned, or attempted." Since your desires and plans are very personal and are not exactly like anyone else's, you will need to define success for yourself.

This is not an easy thing to do in our society. Success is often equated with wealth and fame, luxurious homes, and fancy cars. These outward displays may *look like* success to others, but they do not make those who possess them *feel* successful. The feeling of success comes only when you *achieve* what is *most important to you*. True success is a personal feeling, not a public display.

What does success mean to you? What would make you feel that you are a successful human being? In addition to thinking about what you do, contemplate the type of person you want to be.

Other people have made their opinions known as well. We've listed some of them below. Do any of them match your definition? Indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, are not sure, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Money, achievement, fame and success are important, but they are bought too dearly when acquired at the cost of health. — Anonymous					
It's great to be great, but it's better to be human. — Will Rogers					
Nothing succeeds like excess. — Oscar Wilde					
Success is a journey, not a destination. — Ben Sweetland					
The fastest way to succeed is to look as if you're playing by other people's rules, while quietly playing by your own. — Michael Korda					
She could not separate success from peace of mind. The two must go together . . . — Daphne Du Maurier, <i>Mary Anne</i>					
All of us are born for a reason, but all of us don't discover why. Success in life has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It's what you do for others. — Danny Thomas					
I've never sought success in order to get fame and money; it's the talent and the passion that count in success. — Ingrid Bergman					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The two leading recipes for success are building a better mousetrap and finding a bigger loophole. — Edgar A. Shoaff					
Success is something to enjoy — to flaunt! Otherwise, why work so hard to get it? — Isobel Lennart, <i>Funny Girl</i>					
Success is knowing what your values are and living in a way consistent with your values. — Danny Cox					
Success can only be measured in terms of distance traveled... — Mavis Gallant					
If at first you don't succeed, you are running about average. — M. H. Anderson					
I think success has no rules, but you can learn a great deal from failure. — Jean Kerr, <i>Mary, Mary</i>					
Success can make you go one of two ways. It can make you a <i>prima donna</i> , or it can smooth the edges, take away the insecurities, let the nice things come out. — Barbara Walters					
Six essential qualities that are the key to success: Sincerity, personal integrity, humility, courtesy, wisdom, charity. — Dr. William Menninger					
The people who try to do something and fail are infinitely better than those who try to do nothing and succeed. — Lloyd Jones					
The wealthy man is the man who is much, not the one who has much. — Karl Marx					
Winning isn't everything — it's the only thing. — Vince Lombardi					
Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly. — Robert F. Kennedy					
If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Then give up. There's no use being a fool about it. — W. C. Fields					
I'm opposed to millionaires, but it would be dangerous to offer me the position. — Mark Twain					



# Making Career Choices

Later in the book, you will learn a technique that will help you make good decisions in most situations. For now, though, as you begin making choices about your future career, try to be aware of the decision-making patterns you use most often. Some of them work better than others. Some of them don't work at all. Do you recognize yourself in any of the following stories?

ERIC has a tendency toward wishful thinking. He concentrates on the outcome that seems most attractive to him. But he pays little attention to the risks involved, or the probability of his wish coming true. Eric has decided to be a professional tennis player, even though he's not willing to practice. Last spring he was cut from the school's tennis team.

LOUISA is an escape artist. She takes pride in determining the worst thing that could happen in any situation. And, even when there is little chance of that outcome, she chooses a safe alternative. Although Louisa is a straight A student in math, she is afraid she wouldn't do as well in that subject in college. She'd like to be an engineer, but she's decided to major in elementary education.

MAGGIE likes to play it safe. She knows she could be successful as an insurance agent, so she plans to follow that course. Really, though, she'd rather be a politician.

WADE is impulsive. He makes decisions without giving them too much thought. He's thinking of being a flight attendant because he likes the way they dress.

ANDY usually leaves things to fate. He plans to hitch a ride to California after graduation, just to see what happens.

ELENA is compliant. She usually lets someone else make her decisions. Her parents think she should become a computer programmer, so she probably will.

HAROLD procrastinates. He puts off decisions until the last minute. He plans to think about his future after graduation.

YOKO agonizes over every decision. She examines each alternative so closely — and so repeatedly — that she never seems able to make up her mind. She says she wants to interview several dozen more people before selecting a career path.

ARTURO makes decisions intuitively. Some things just feel right, he says. He's always liked the idea of being a wildlife biologist, but he isn't exactly sure what they do.

KENISHA has a rational approach to making decisions. She considers the alternatives, the pros and cons of each, and the likelihood of succeeding before making her choice. She is interested in technology and sees a bright future in computer-related careers, so she plans to train for a job in that field.

Which of these patterns do you use most often? Explain.

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Write your own definition of success here:

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\_\_\_\_\_ your name

Throughout this book we will be talking about success. As you read about and ponder this concept, make sure to keep **your own definition** in mind.

## There Are Jobs . . . and There Are Careers

Although we often use the terms interchangeably, there is a difference between a *job* and a *career*. A job is a particular task or undertaking. It may be paid or unpaid. You will, undoubtedly, have many jobs during your lifetime.

But you will only have one career. Your career encompasses *all* of your life's work. You have already begun your career. The work you have done so far will help determine where you go from here. Future occupations grow out of past experiences. That is why people speak of *career development*. The path may not always be obvious, but the connections are there. So the choices you make now are important.

Making choices that are right for you is what this book is all about. Before you choose what you want, however, you need to know who you are. That is a subject we will tackle in the next chapter.

