

# Planned Happenstance and YOU

Many students seek career guidance hoping to discover exactly what to do to have a stable, predictable career. They want a concrete plan. While having a career plan helps, being open and curious about opportunities and possibilities may lead to an unexpected and fulfilling career. A new career theory, Planned Happenstance (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999), helps people generate, recognize, and incorporate *chance* events into their career development.

What does this theory mean for YOU? By engaging in effective behaviours, you can turn chance events into productive opportunities. Mitchell et al. (1999) recommend developing skills in five areas - curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism, and risk taking.

Try the following tips to use Planned Happenstance to your advantage:

**1) Explore things you are *curious* about – hobbies, occupations, school subjects. Try a new activity, look up that occupation you are curious about on the Career Cruising website ([www.careercruising.com](http://www.careercruising.com) username: career password: resource) volunteer, attend a presentation on a topic that interests you, or take a course in an area new to you. Increasing your exposure increases the likelihood of discovering exciting opportunities!**

Things I am curious about: \_\_\_\_\_

**2) Don't let indecision be a barrier in exploring new opportunities – by viewing indecision as open-mindedness, we can *persist* in our career exploration! If you aren't certain what to say when others ask "what are you going to do when you graduate" say, "I'm open to possibilities and exploring opportunities."**

Ways I can persist: \_\_\_\_\_

**3) Be *flexible* – sometimes the opportunities that come our way don't match our perceived "ideal" – yet sometimes they turn out to be great experiences for us! Be open to changing your attitude and your circumstance.**

I can be more flexible about: \_\_\_\_\_

**4) Be *optimistic* – assume good things may result from accepting unexpected invitations, attending networking events, trying new activities, and saying "hello" to others.**

I assume good things will happen from: \_\_\_\_\_

**5) Take *risks* – It's not always comfortable to contact people to ask them about the work they do, or to apply to a job, or attend a networking event where you may meet important people. The pay off (meeting someone who can help you with your career planning, being offered a job, learning more about your career options), however, is worth it!**

I can push myself out of my comfort zone by: \_\_\_\_\_

## Reference:

Mitchell, K., Levin, A. & Krumboltz, J. (1999). Planned happenstance: Constructing unexpected career opportunities. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 77, 115–124.