ODYSSEY noun  
æ-de-sē 
A long journey full of adventures; a series of experiences that give knowledge and understanding to someone

Once you’ve identified some potential careers and majors that seem like a good fit for your skills, interests, values and ways you want to help others (refer to pages 18-19), it’s time to set some goals. On page 21 is an “Odyssey Planning” exercise, a creative tool to help you articulate some of the potential adventures that you could see yourself living. The goal here is to create plans that you would want to live, not just a series of ‘back-up plans’. You’ll get to create three Odyssey Plans, each with a unique theme.

How does it work? Guidelines to help you create robust Odyssey Plans.

STEP 1

Themes: Each row represents a unique adventure that you could live. Each plan has a ‘theme’ written to the left (e.g., the “WILD idea”). Start with whichever plan you want, at any point in the timeline.

Timeline: Each column represents a single year, from today up to 5 years from now. In these years, identify some of the major life goals (academic, personal, professional) that you’d like to accomplish in a given year. Think about these as big-picture bucket list items (e.g., study abroad in Paris, graduate from MSU), not simply normal/day-to-day activities (e.g., changing your oil, registering for classes, etc.). Try to list at least 2 goals per year.

STEP 2

Gauges: Once you finish all three of your plans, take a moment to reflect upon them. Next, fill out the “cold – hot” gauges under each of your plans:

- Resources: How much do you possess the resources to make this plan happen (time, money, knowledge, skills, etc.)?
- I Like It: How much do you like the plan?
- Confidence: How confident are you that you can make this plan happen?
- Coherence: How much does this plan align with your “true self” (are the goals represented above truly yours, or are they someone else’s goals for your life?)

STEP 3

Title: Once finished, give each of your plans a 6 word title (“My Life With Family Friends Dogs”)

Questions: Identify 1-3 questions that this plan creates for you (“Do I have what it takes?” “Will I be happy?” “How could I support myself financially at first?”)

STEP 4

Share plans: Show your plans to someone else (career advisor, academic advisor, friend, parent) for feedback and help determining your next steps.

Helpful Tips:

- Don’t overthink it. Don’t get too stuck on the details of how you will achieve a goal, just identify what you want to do.
- Be as specific as possible. For example, instead of a vague “get an internship”, identify: where? employer? industry/field? doing what? Specific goals are easier to plan for and test drive.
- Draw a picture of your ideas. Good life planning requires visualization of your goals - engage in “visual thinking” by drawing out your life goals (and stick figures are okay!)
- Feeling stuck? Revisit the pages on purpose and the Career Compass on pages 18-19.
Career Myth: “I need to figure out my one, best possible life and make it happen.”
Reality: “There are many great lives within me and I get to choose which one I will pursue next.”

What is the story you tell today?

What if the plan above were no longer an option?

What if money, status or image were not an issue?