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## *Talking With Your Parents About Your Career Concerns*

The following recommendations are merely guidelines for you to consider as you discuss your career concerns with your parents. The suggestions may apply if you are currently attempting to resolve your career indecision or if you have recently decided upon a major or career plan. {PRIVATE }

### **Keep The Lines Of Communication Open**

Arrange a time or times to discuss your career decision with your parents. By doing so you demonstrate that you value their support and opinions and that you are taking the situation seriously. Communication is two-way - talk to them and listen to them. If they don't already, request that they do the same.

### **Demonstrate To Your Parents That You Are Dealing With The Situation In A Mature Fashion**

IF UNDECIDED: Share with them the steps you are taking to resolve your indecision - participating in a Career Planning Workshop or individual career counseling, enrolling in a Career Planning course, examining career literature, using DISCOVER, arranging information interviews, etc. Explain what these activities consist of - your parents may be unfamiliar with them.

IF DECIDED: First discuss the steps you took to resolve your indecision. Then, outline your career planning and preparation strategies. For example, describe your present and future course curricula, volunteer and student organization activities, internships, and part-time jobs, mentoring and networking plans, etc.

### **Be Specific**

Parents may react unfavorably if you are keeping them in the dark. Instead, deal with specifics. For example, if you are receiving career counseling, describe what has been discussed (e.g., work values, interest themes, assessment of abilities, results of inventories, etc.). You need not reveal all that has been covered in counseling, only that which you feel comfortable discussing, and enough to demonstrate the comprehensiveness of the approach.

### **Present The Facts**

If your parents possess inaccurate or outdated information, educate them. Examples of information you can provide include starting salaries for various Liberal Arts and Sciences majors, companies' hiring practices by major, and U.S. Labor Market projections for specific career fields.

### **Supplement Your Discussions With Available Printed Materials**

If it has been of value to you, it may be of equal value to your parents. Examples include NIU major WebLinks print-outs and interest inventory results, career books from the library, career handouts, undergraduate and graduate catalogs and course descriptions, graduation statistics supplied by the Career Services office, etc. The printed word often carries considerable weight especially if its current and accurate).

### **Be Assertive**

That is, say what's on your mind and express your feelings and opinions honestly and openly. Of equal importance - afford your parents those same courtesies. You can respect their opinions, whether or not you agree with them. You are both entitled to those opinions. Ultimately, only you can decide what to do with your life, and most parents will respect that. This is especially true if your decision is the result of well thought out, organized, and unhurried career exploration and planning.