Finding Your Place*

Imagine that you walk into a room where young men and women your age are talking about their future plans for education and work. You notice that there are six groups.

Group #1: Young people in this group are talking about working with their hands. They like using machines and tools, being around plants and animals, working outdoors, and making and fixing things. They enjoy physical work.

Group #2: Young people in this group are talking about using their minds to solve problems. They like math, science, investigating and discovering things, developing new ideas and products, and conducting research. They enjoy serious thinking.

Group #3: Young people in this group are talking about creating things that are pleasing to the eye or ear. They like art, music, dance, literature, form, color, sound, patterns, and using the imagination. They enjoy the arts.

Group #4: Young people in this group are talking about social issues. They want to eliminate poverty, hunger, illness, racism, and sexism; help reduce crime and the need for welfare; improve education; and help meet people's spiritual needs. They enjoy helping others.

Group #5 Young people in this group are talking about business and politics. They like buying, selling and investing; running a business or running for office; and persuading others. They enjoy being in charge.

Group #6 Young people in this group are talking about making things run smoothly. They like keeping records, files, and information systems; following policies and procedures; and taking care of details. They enjoy keeping things organized.

You are asked to join one of the groups and contribute to the conversation. Which group would you most likely join first?

Group #_____

After a few minutes, you decide to join a second group. Which group would it be?

Group #_____

After a few more minutes, you decide to join a third group. Which group would it be?

Group #_____

Adapted from "The Party," found in *The Quick Job-Hunting Map*, by Richard N. Bolles and Victoria B. Zenoff. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Work Environments and Personalities

According to John Holland, a well-known career development author and researcher, the **workplace** can be viewed as a combination of six work environments, i.e., the kinds of work people do, and where they do it. Also according to Holland, **people** can be classified according to six personalities, i.e., the characteristics that lead us to seek certain workplaces. To make things easy, Holland used the same names for environments and personalities. They are:

#1 REALISTIC: A realistic work environment involves making or fixing things, operating machinery, working with plants or animals, and using physical skills. People with realistic personalities enjoy working with their hands, being outdoors, and moving around. They like to see a product as a result of their work.

#2 INVESTIGATIVE: An investigative work environment involves thinking, analysis, research, experimentation and problem solving. People with investigative personalities enjoy observing, measuring, and figuring out why things work as they do. They like to ask "what if" questions and are often good at inventing things.

#3 ARTISTIC: An artistic work environment involves creativity, trying something new, and producing something that is pleasing to the eye or ear. People with artistic personalities enjoy composing, performing, writing, drawing or painting, and dancing. They like to be free to express themselves in a variety of ways.

#4 SOCIAL: A social work environment involves interacting with and helping others, for example by teaching, healing, supporting, or tending to spiritual needs. People with social personalities like working with others, either individually or in groups. They enjoy helping people improve their lives.

#5 ENTERPRISING: An enterprising work environment involves buying, selling, persuading and coming up with new ideas. People with enterprising personalities enjoy working in situations that create wealth or positions of power. They like working in the worlds of business and/or politics.

#6 CONVENTIONAL: A conventional work environment involves working with information and keeping things organized. People with conventional personalities enjoy creating systems for displaying and using information or objects. They like orderly situations where rules, regulations and policies are clear and easy to follow.

Students who find education and work environments that match their personalities will increase their chances for happiness and success. If this is not 100% possible, they can still use their personalities to shape the situations they find themselves in. Think of a workplace that is familiar to most of us, like a fast food restaurant. It can be viewed as any one of six work environments. How we view it can determine how we participate in it, and how successful we will be. The same is true of a college or technical school classroom.