After reading the book “Getting from College to Career” by Lindsey Pollak, I can say that I have a good idea of the various ways to prepare for a future career. At the very least, I know where to start and the many steps that are already available to me, even though a “career” may not be staring me in the face right after graduation. The book outlined steps that Pollak viewed as helpful to build a personality of professionalism and preparation.

The various sections of the book outline major categories of professional development that could be undertaken by students and graduates alike. Such categories include analyzing and editing your online persona, designing and preparing business cards, networking, pursuing volunteer opportunities, and similar ideas; some sections were repeats of topics already covered in class and others seemed like common sense, but there were still other sections and parts of those particular categories that lent interesting and novel ideas to look into. For example, in the “Stop being a student and start being a professional” section, Pollak details several ways to communicate via more mature channels using appropriate speech; this includes not only messaging potential employers or other business contacts through email, but also adjusting how you are viewed on websites.

One unique and heretofore unknown measure to me that Pollak suggested was to register a Google Alert for your name, so you are informed as to what you were being searched for, what came up, and where to view the direct source. This was so interesting that right after reading the section, I put the book down and added several alerts in for my name, and they all saved directly to my Google account, with reports sent straight to my email. This book is filled with so many more tips like this.

Another interesting point of interest was the idea that blogging can lead to professional development. Along with the section on tweeting, it seemed strange that you can develop professional contacts, opportunities, and skills by participating in these social media activities, usually reserved to casual, young (non-professional), or flippant exchanges. Instead, these avenues create new connections and showcase design and writing abilities, as well as the opportunity to showcase what you know about your field. Professionally minded blogging is certainly something that I will be pursuing in the near future to develop my own field presence.

This book was quite well-written, sectioning and grouping points into larger categories, making the larger points easy to navigate, while keeping sub-points accessible and scan able. Pollak also inserted “Make this Work for You” sections at the end of certain points with instructions/examples to follow in order to try the principle outlined for yourself. The only drawback that I can really place is the lack of quantifiable sources or psychological/sociological research to back up some of the claims. While not necessary, and at the risk of nitpicking, there was an absence of information and/or research to substantiate many of the claims offered, at best leaning on the author’s background and training, and at worst simply not mentioning a source or specific examples of some principles.

As stated before, the book helped me realize some professional steps that I need to take, some steps that I have taken that I should reassess, as well as some future opportunities I need to be mindful of in order to develop myself as optimally as possible. It allowed me to see some systems and networks that I already utilize in a new light, and has prompted me to look back and see what I can change or make better in said systems.

Overall, “Getting from College to Career” is an excellent read for a soon-to-be graduating student, especially one going into a professional field. Aside from a great preparatory resource, it is also a potentially priceless reference for later on in subsequent job searches or professional encounters; there are many principles that are not useful to me now, that may be useful in the future. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone that was unsure about their career path, as well as to anyone that felt like developing their professional or communication skills.