

Last week, I had a conversation with some of my students about their plans after graduation and their job prospects. Since I teach students who are training to become doctors, I was surprised to hear that most of them believed they wouldn't be able to secure their desired jobs without "outside help."

"What kind of help?" I asked, expecting them to mention connections or family friends assisting them. Instead, one student replied, "Surgery."

I was alarmed by that response. It seems that today's graduates are increasingly willing to undergo surgery to gain a competitive edge in the job market. One girl even mentioned considering surgery to increase her height. "They break your legs, insert special extending screws, and gradually expand the gap between the two ends of the bone as it regrows. You can gain at least 5 cm in height!"

At that moment, I was shocked. I admit that I am short, but I would never put myself through months of pain just to be a little taller. I don't even wear thick-soled shoes because I am not trying to hide my height!

It appears that there is a growing obsession with achieving "perfection," an unrealistic ideal. No one is born perfect, yet magazines, TV shows, and movies consistently portray thin, tall, and beautiful people as the standard. Advertisements for slimming aids, beauty treatments, and cosmetic surgery clinics further reinforce the idea that "perfection" is necessary and must be bought at any cost.

In my opinion, a person's skills, rather than their appearance, should determine their success in their chosen career.

YUZHOU, HENAN — A tragic accident in a coal mine in central China claimed the lives of 21 miners on Saturday, with another 16 trapped underground, according to government reports. The death toll rose to 26 on Sunday morning as rescuers worked tirelessly to reach the remaining 11 miners still trapped underground. However, rescue efforts were facing slim chances of success, as Du Bo, deputy chief of the rescue headquarters, explained that the miners could be buried under coal dust, making survival unlikely.

More than 2,500 tons of coal dust buried the pit after a gas leak, which further complicated the rescue operation, Du added. The gas outburst occurred at 6:03 a.m. on Saturday while 276 miners were working underground in the mine in Yuzhou City. Although 239 workers managed to escape, 21 were confirmed dead, and 16 remained trapped.

An initial investigation revealed that 173,500 cubic meters of gas leaked during the accident. Liu Wenbin, the deputy chief engineer of the company that owns the mine, was in the pit at the time of the incident. He organized the escape after sensing something was wrong with the airflow. "Around 6 a.m., I felt that something was off with the airflow in the shaft, and one of the team captains told me he had also noticed it and had already reported the issue," Liu said.

The mine is owned by Pingyu Coal & Electric Co. Ltd., a company formed by four investors, including Zhong Ping Energy Chemical Group and China Power Investment Corp.

Understanding how to make career choices and manage your career is a fundamental life skill that everyone should have. Career decisions significantly impact various aspects of life, making it essential to have the right knowledge and resources to make informed choices. Whether you are seeking a

new job, advancing in your current role, or planning for retirement, every step involves career decision-making. Utilizing good resources and seeking guidance from a career counselor can help in making well-informed choices.

Many people mistakenly believe that choosing a career is a one-time event that happens in early adulthood. However, career management is a lifelong process, and individuals continue to make important career decisions over the years. Career growth and job searching involve much more than just writing a good resume. To build a successful career, one must continuously assess interests, abilities, values, personal needs, and real-life circumstances. Given the significant amount of time spent at work and its impact on daily life, it is crucial to be fully informed before making career decisions.

There are thousands of career options available. Resources like *The Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (U.S.) and *The National Occupational Classification* (Canada) list over 20,000 job titles, meaning there are many opportunities people may not even be aware of. Exploring different career paths allows individuals to discover roles that align with their skills and interests.

Matching self-awareness with an understanding of career options is key. Once individuals gain insight into their strengths, values, and preferences, they can combine that knowledge with labor market research to find careers that suit them best. After making a well-informed decision, the next step is to take action by acquiring the necessary education, skills, and experience. Additionally, implementing effective job search strategies can help secure the desired position.

Investing time in understanding career needs, researching options, and refining job search skills with the help of reliable career resources is a powerful step toward a successful and fulfilling professional future.

Astronauts on shorter shuttle missions often work long hours, with schedules so tight that even break times are used to complete tasks. However, such a demanding routine is not suitable for long-term missions on the International Space Station (ISS), where crew members typically spend at least three months in space. To maintain a sense of normalcy, ISS astronauts follow a five-day work schedule with weekends off. These rest days allow them to relax, catch up on household tasks, and stay connected with family and friends through email, internet phone calls, and private video conferences.

Although astronauts cannot attend a baseball game or watch a movie in a theater while in orbit, they still have access to many familiar activities. Before a mission, their family and friends prepare collections of personal photos, messages, videos, and reading materials for them to enjoy while floating 370 kilometers above Earth. During their time on the ISS, astronauts also receive care packages containing CDs, books, magazines, photos, and letters. Since early 2010, internet access has been available on the ISS, allowing astronauts to browse the web during their free time.

Beyond these common sources of entertainment, astronauts also take pleasure in the unique experience of living in space. Many say that one of the most relaxing activities is simply looking out the window to admire the vastness of the universe and the breathtaking view of Earth's land and oceans.

Dogs have long been used to detect explosives and drugs, but a new study suggests they can also help identify lung and breast cancer. According to researchers in *Integrative Cancer Therapies*, trained household dogs can detect early-stage lung and breast cancers by smelling patients' breath samples.

Scientists have discovered that cancer cells release molecules different from those of healthy cells, and a dog's highly sensitive nose may be able to detect these unique scents. In the study, five dogs were trained by a professional instructor to distinguish between breath samples from healthy individuals and those with cancer. The dogs were taught to sit or lie down in front of cancerous samples while ignoring non-cancerous ones, using a food-reward method.

After training, the researchers tested the dogs' ability to identify cancer patients from a new set of breath samples, which included 55 lung cancer patients, 31 breast cancer patients, and 83 healthy individuals. The results were remarkable—the dogs correctly identified cancer patients in about 90% of cases, even in early stages of the disease.

Lead researcher McCulloch expressed hope for early cancer detection based on these findings. The team plans to study the breath composition of cancer patients further and potentially develop an electronic device to replicate the dogs' abilities. "A dog's nose is incredibly powerful, detecting odors 10,000 to 100,000 times better than a human nose," McCulloch explained. "This research proves there is something significant here, and I hope it encourages further studies."

Friends and Buddies

This program is planned for teenagers who have special needs with the goal of meeting within a community with other peers. The purpose of the program is that it will lead to a better understanding of friendships. Gym, Swim, Surprise Guest, and Pizza are included. Ages 12-18, numbers of members are limited. Contact: Gloria Bass. This program is held 2 Fridays per month. Fees: \$65/\$85

Club Saturday Swim

This program is available to anyone aged 5-14 who is challenged by mental, physical, or emotional trouble. The program will be held each Saturday afternoon, 12:00-12:30 pm or 12:30-1:00 pm. Fees: \$136/\$260

Sibshops (Ages 10-13)

Sibshops is a program for siblings of children with challenges. It includes group activities and talk treatment ways with the focus on improving sibling relationships and whole family happiness. Location: Hope Church, Wilton CT. Wednesday: 4:00-5:00 pm. Fees: \$50/\$65

Banana Splits

Banana Splits is an educational support group for children in family trouble. Children aged 9-13 will have the opportunity to meet other children whose parents have separated or divorced, learn to recognize feelings, think of healthy coping skills, and have a place to share their struggles through verbal, physical, and artistic experiences. Location: Hope Church, Wilton CT. Tuesday: 4:30-5:30 pm. Fees: \$50/\$65

Every time I lost a tooth, I would put it under my pillow at night. The next morning, I would wake up to find two coins replacing my tooth. Then I'd wonder about the tooth fairy all day.

"Mom, where do you think the tooth fairy lives? What does she do with the teeth she collects?"

My mom said she didn't know. She only knew that the tooth fairy took the tooth away while we were sleeping and left us some money under our pillow. But I wanted to find out. So I thought it was a good thing that I would lose another tooth. The plan was to stay up all night and ask the tooth fairy when she showed up.

That night, I lay quietly in my bed, growing sleepy as the night went on. Moments later, I felt that someone was close to me. Through my half-opened eyes, I didn't see any feet, but I knew it was the tooth fairy. I watched her run around and fly right out of my room. She was wearing a shiny green dress. After she left, I immediately felt under my pillow. There were two coins. I had never even felt my pillow move. I wondered if she used magic.

As I got older, I learned from my teachers that the tooth fairy didn't exist. It was just a mythical figure of early childhood. I kind of thought it was, but how could I see the tooth fairy fly that night?

Then one night, my mom came into my room to check on me. The moonlight was bright that night, and it shone through my window right on her shiny green nightdress. Right then, I knew deep down that my mom was the tooth fairy.

One day, an old woman was traveling alone in the mountains. Suddenly she saw something shining in the stream. When she came close, she found it was a precious stone. She put the stone into her bag and went on with her trip.

The next day, the old woman met a young man, who was also a traveler in the mountains. The young man looked very hungry, so the old woman opened her bag to share her food. The hungry traveler saw the precious stone and asked carefully, "The stone is beautiful. Would you like to give it to me?"

"Sure. Why not?" the woman said, and handed the stone to him.

The young man left happily with the stone. He knew it was worth enough to give him wealth for a lifetime. But a few days later, he came back to return the stone to the woman.

"I've been thinking," he said. "I know how valuable the stone is, but I give it back and hope that you can give me something even more precious. Give me what you have within your bag."

The woman opened her bag. It was almost empty. She looked at the young man and smiled, "I have nothing special in my bag, but I do have something precious—the joy of giving!"

The young man felt ashamed and left silently.

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