

# How to Find Your Path

*A Roadmap for Choosing a College,  
a Career, or Something Different*



# Rick Fiery – Co-founder InventiveLabs



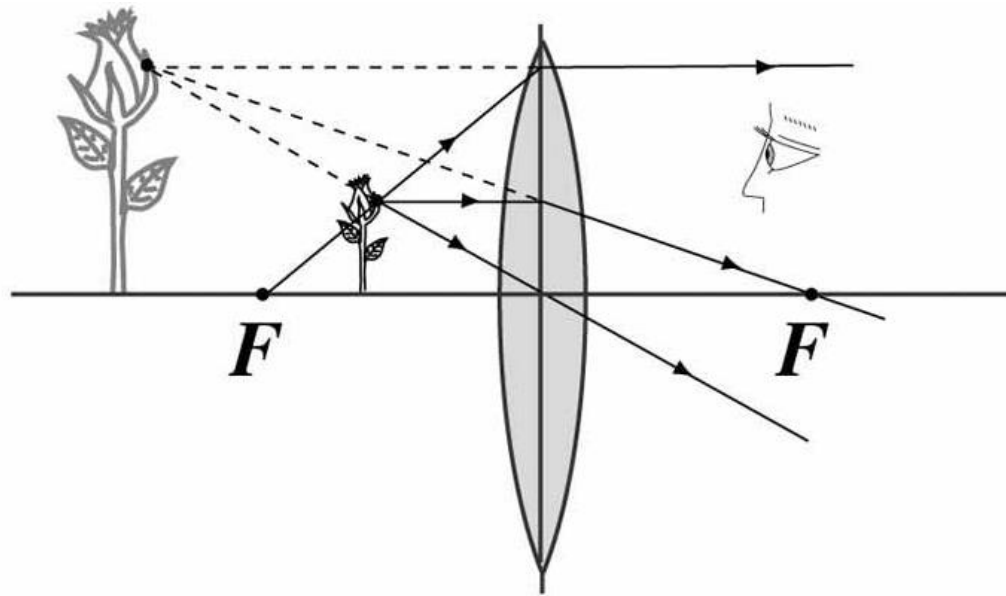
Rick Fiery is the co-founder of [InventiveLabs](#), in Amesbury, Massachusetts. He and Tom Bergeron created InventiveLabs because of their passion for helping young adults with learning differences find alternative paths to success. They believe that, with the right environment and supports, those teens and young adults can achieve substantial success.

Prior to InventiveLabs, Rick was the CEO of several startup companies that he created and grew before selling them to strategic buyers. One of his startups grew to where it had subsidiaries in 6 countries and products sold in over 60 countries. He also ran the finance department for a large multinational software company generating over \$330 million before departing to do yet another startup. Rick has a Bachelors and Masters degree in civil engineering from the [University of Virginia](#) and an MBA from the [Wharton School of Business](#).



# My Background

- Civil engineer turned business guy
- Love creating businesses



# Necessary Brilliance

*A true story*

He was brilliant....

..... and he was necessary!



Before we talk about careers and college...

We gotta talk about:

# The Importance of WHY?



*Learning  
Differences and  
the importance  
of Why?*



# How to find the why?

*Think like a business person and ask:*

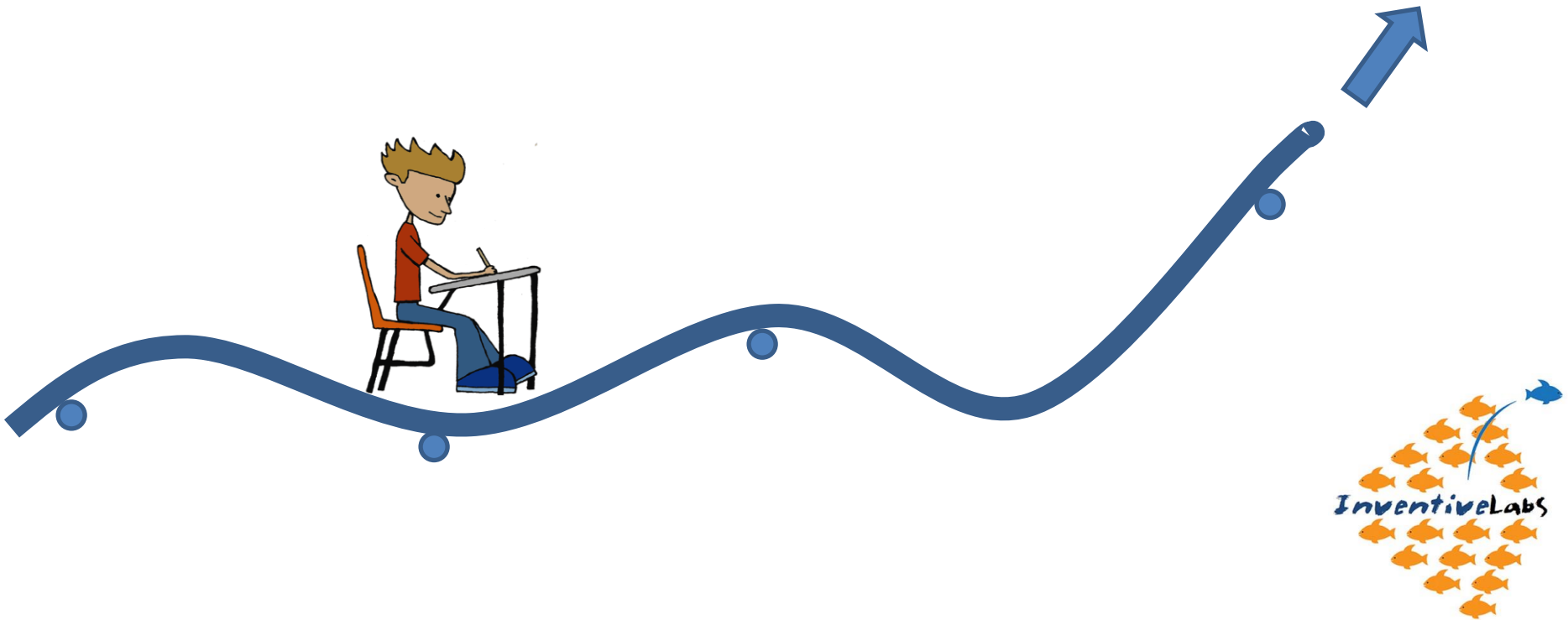
What is the goal?

What are we trying to achieve?



*If they know  
why, then....*

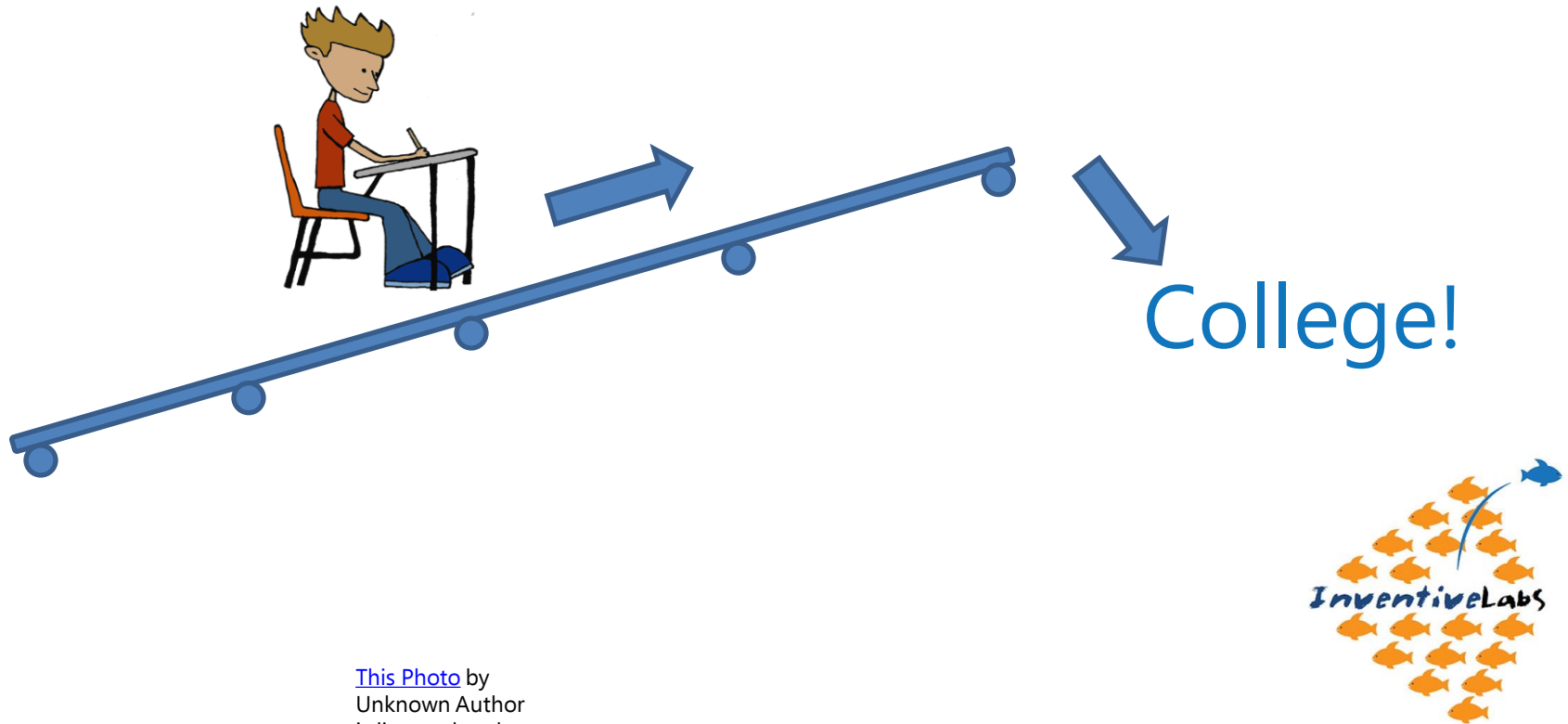
Success!





# Success

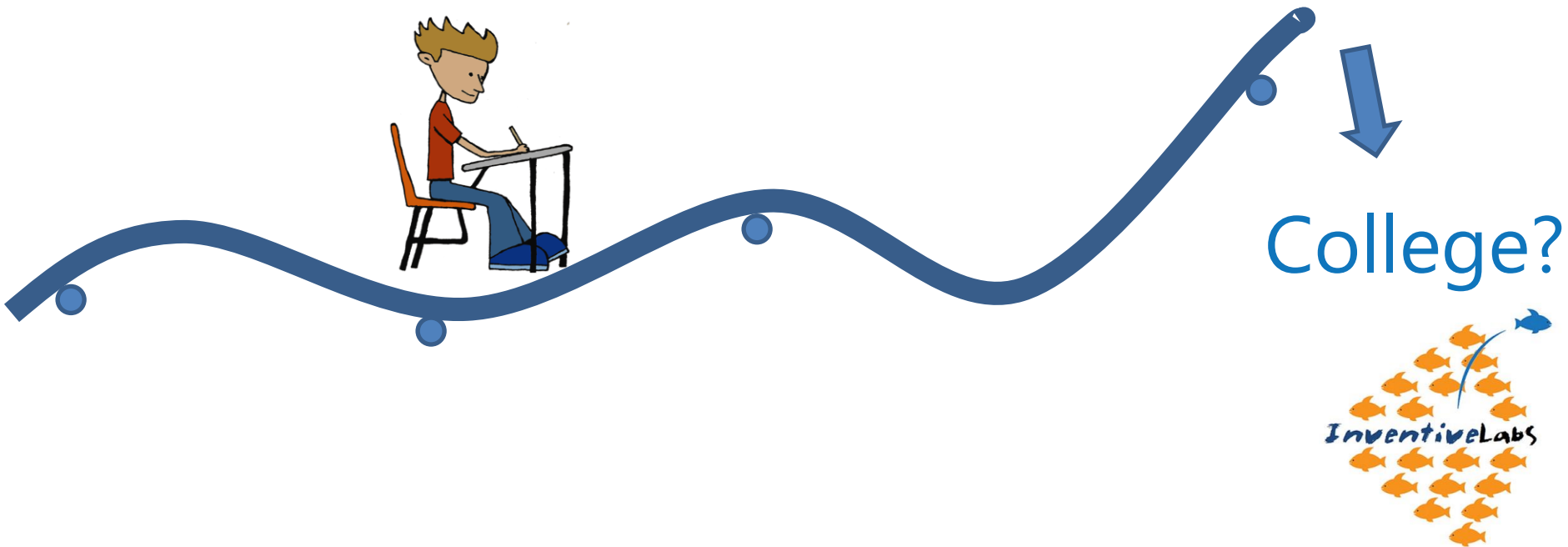
We probably can all agree that if college is attainable, it offers the most opportunity for our kids



# ADHD and the challenge of college

Is a college degree achievable if you have Learning Differences?

YES!



# Timeout!



# Success

# College = Success!



# Changing the mindset

*The goal should not be a college degree.*

The goal should be...

A career!

...that they can enjoy and  
provide excitement every day



# Success

Start with the career...

....then figure out the path  
to get there



# Let's break this down



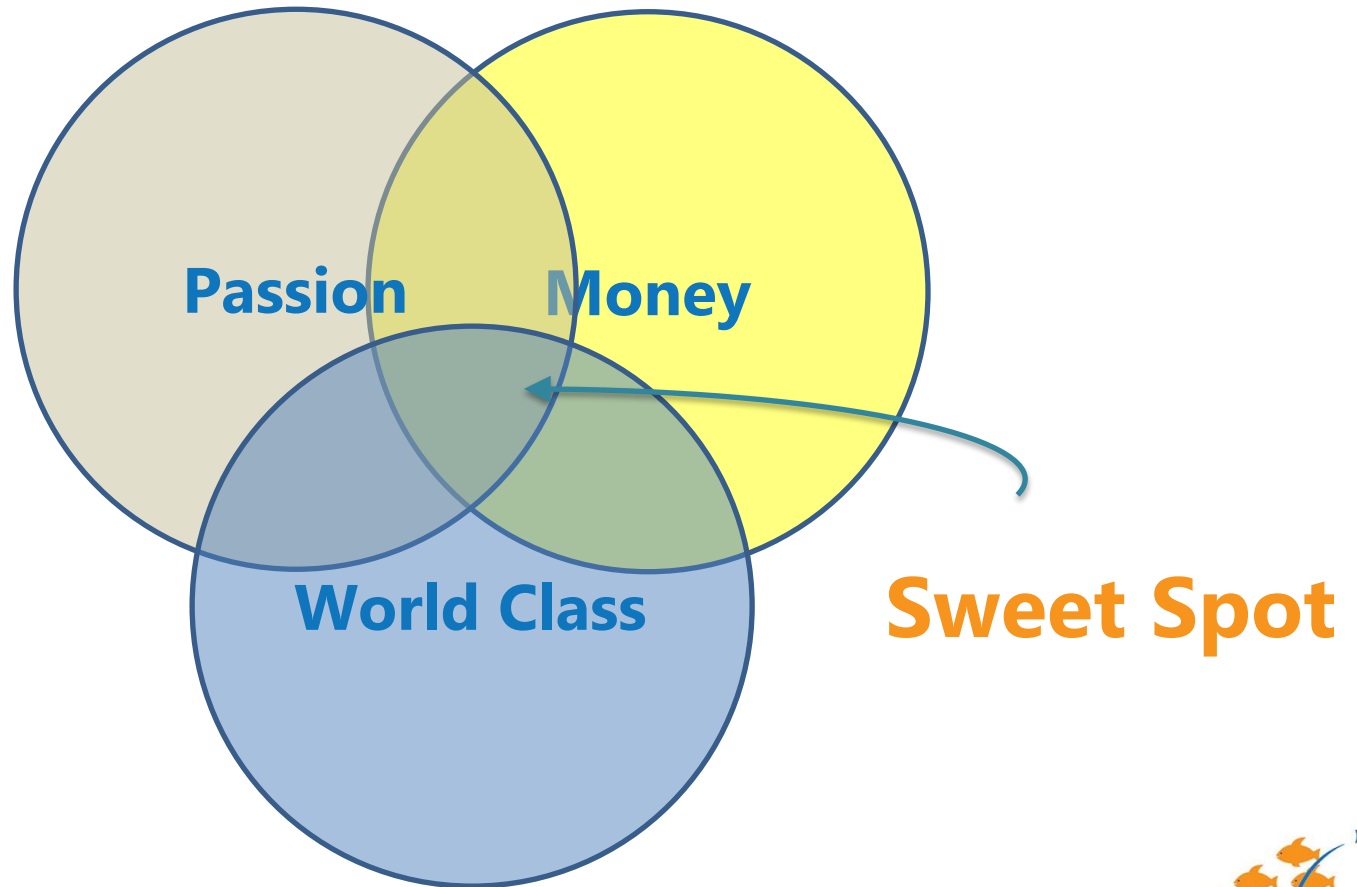
# How to find that perfect career?

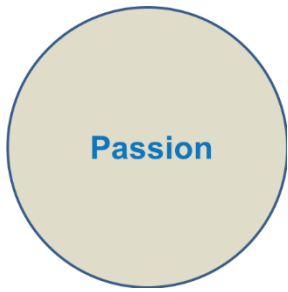
## Be methodical!





# Honing in on success





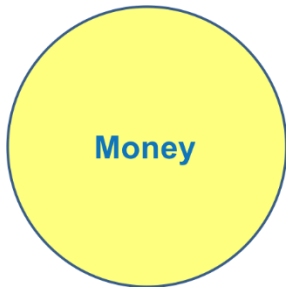
# Passion exploration

The only way to find a passion is actively try things

- Summer jobs are crucial
- Summer experiential camps
- Volunteer positions

You cannot Google your way to a passion!





# Money

How much is enough?

- Discuss lifestyles (Mansion vs. tent)
- Have them create a living budget and then do the math:
  - $\text{Total expenses} / \text{hourly rate} = \text{Hours to work}$
- Consider making the "The Millionaire Next Door" mandatory reading

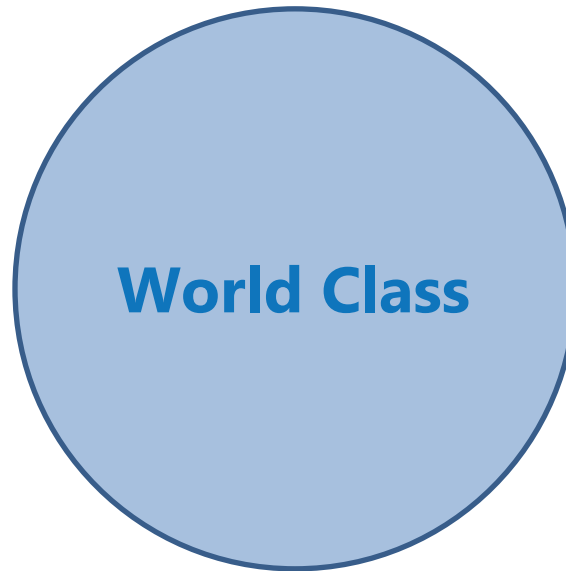


Becoming world class is the  
hard one

This requires brutal  
honesty!



# Honing in on success



Be honest about strengths  
Be honest about weaknesses



Build a career list and  
consider alternative  
careers



# Passion-based careers

- Personal Trainer
- Fashion Designer
- Alternative Energy Technician
- Conceptual Artist
- Entrepreneur
- Twitch Streamer
- Animator
- Video Game Designer
- Invasive Species Scientist



# Examples of non-traditional careers

- Drama Therapist
- Art Therapist
- Skateboard App Developer
- Boat Builder
- Dog Walker – Dog Care Business
- Roller Coaster Engineer
- ADHD Life Coach
- Eco-Tourism Guide
- Fishing Charter Captain
- Non-profit Fundraiser





# Determine a path

Pick several careers and look at:

- Passion match
- Educational requirements
- Skill requirements
- Job environment
- Location



# LinkedIn power tip

For career planning and college selection:

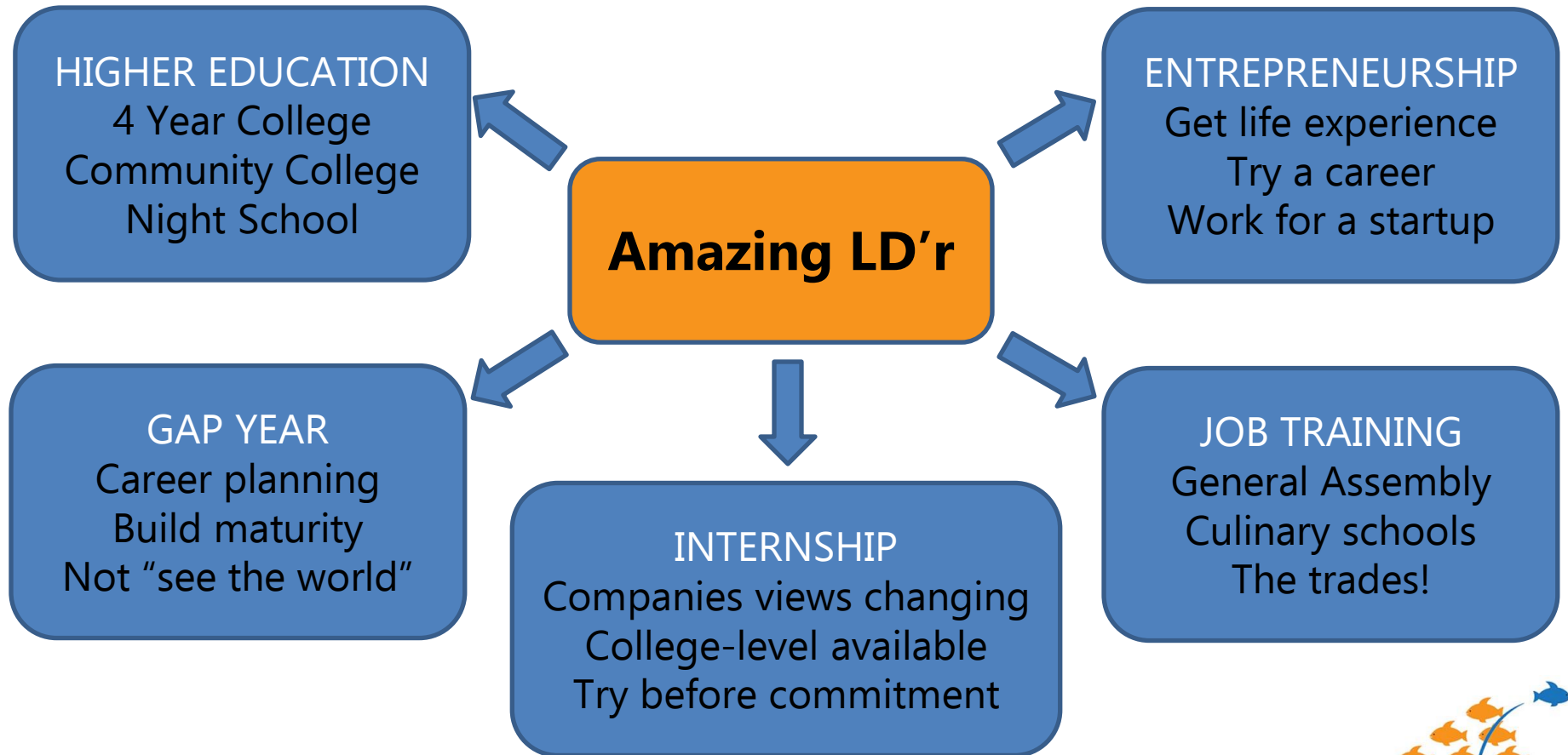
- Click on a company name in LinkedIn
- On the left panel click "People"

*Behold the colleges they hire from, where people live, and the skills they have!*

It's a roadmap for how to get hired to work in any company



# Now you can consider next steps!



# Higher Education

- Four Year Degree
  - Resident
  - Commuter
- On-line options
- Community College First?
  - Full-time
  - Part-time
- Night School



# Gap Year

Consider a gap year to:

- Explore potential career options
- Build maturity and independence by living away from home
- Build life skills first, without the concurrent crush of academics
- Avoid “see the world” gap years



# Internship

Many companies are now embracing diversity

- Chief Diversity Officers are a thing!
- Internships exist for people that are not in college
- Great way to try a career before investing heavily in training, time or education



# Entrepreneurship

Sometimes it is best to chart your own course

- People with Learning Differences can be great entrepreneurs - [www.necessarybrilliance.org](http://www.necessarybrilliance.org)
- Pursue an idea and create a business from it - a tremendous learning opportunity
- Work for a startup – hours and excitement match well with LD'rs
- You don't have to be the CEO!



# Job Training

More and more high-level job training programs are available:

- Software – General Assembly
- Art – Cyn Studios in Montreal
- Culinary – Many schools (community colleges too)
- Trades – shortages provide high income opportunity





# Summary

- Help your son or daughter figure out the WHY!
- Help pick a career that is in their sweet spot
- College is only one of many paths to success!
- It may take longer than their peers to get there, but that's OK! Who is keeping score?



# Together

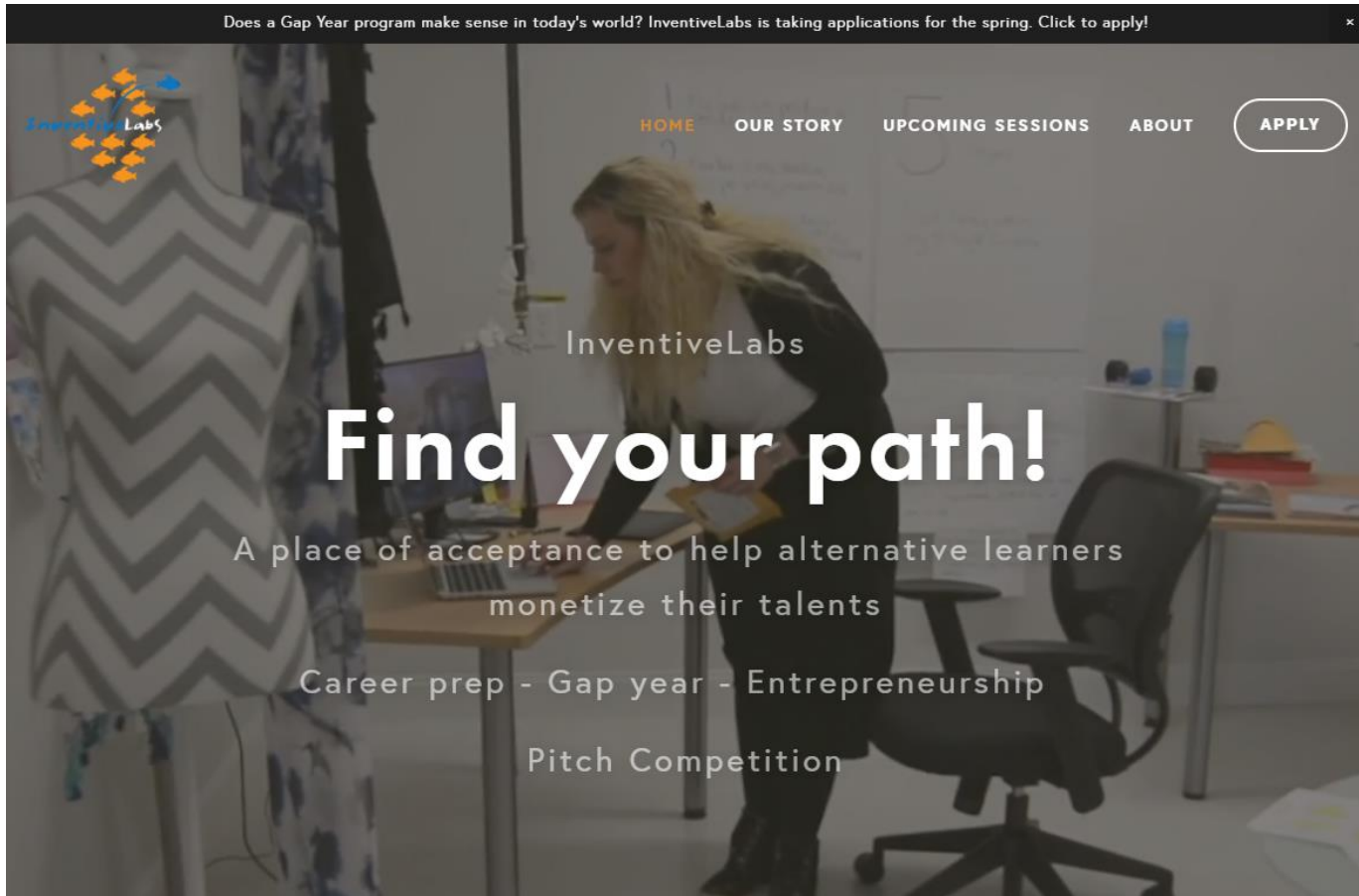
- We can provide pathways to success
- Reduce the anxiety of moving to adulthood

And by doing so:

Not waste this “Necessary Brilliance” the world so desperately needs



# InventiveLabs



[www.inventivelabs.org](http://www.inventivelabs.org)

