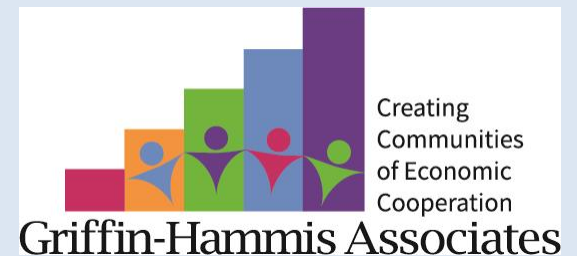


# Customized Employment

*Going Where the Career Makes Sense*

Bob Niemiec  
Griffin-Hammis Associates



# The Challenge



- Creating lasting satisfying, person-directed, employment beyond the confines of conventional job development

**TWO RULES TO FOLLOW**

# Rule Number One

***IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT THE JOB SEEKER***

## Rule Number Two

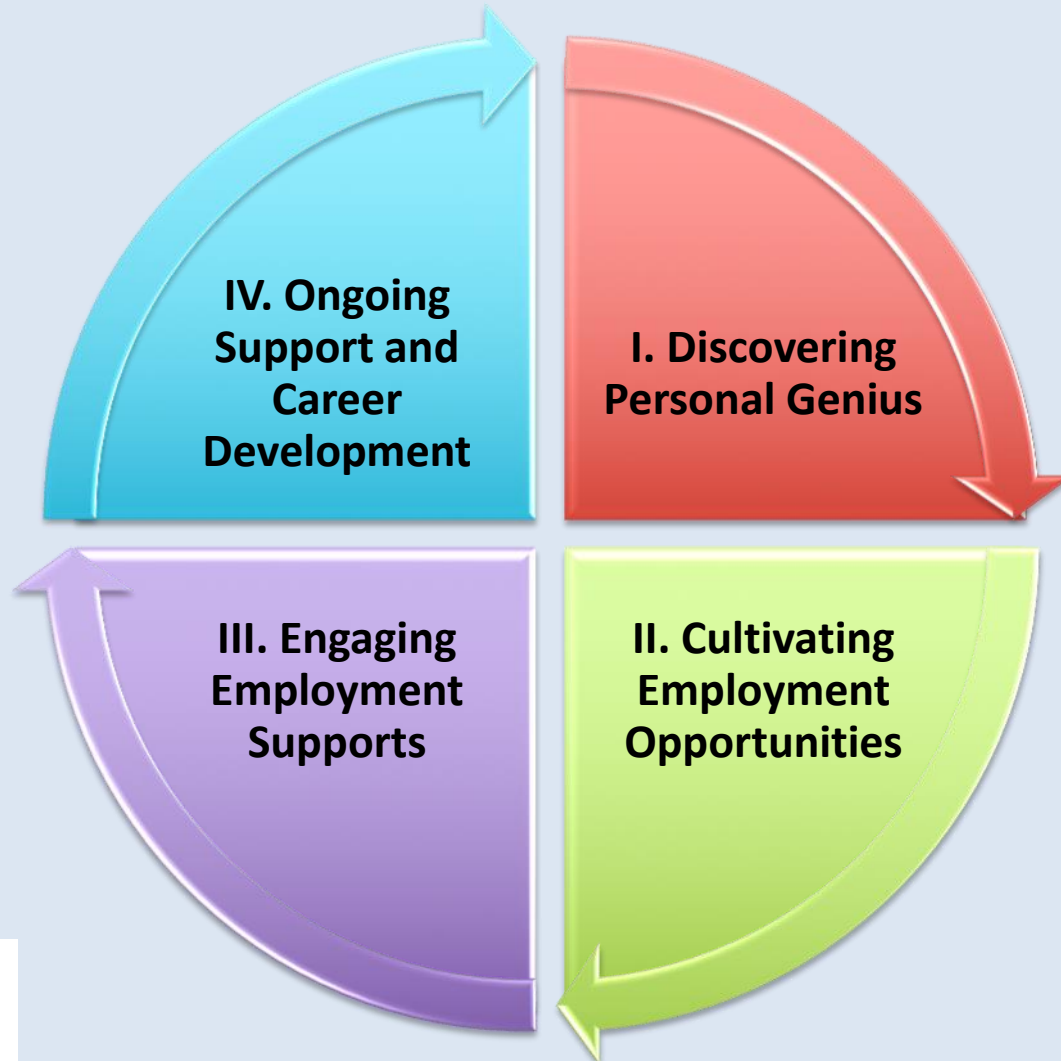
***NEVER BREAK RULE NUMBER ONE!***

# 4 Phases of Conventional Employment

- Assessment/Evaluation
- Job Development
- Job Coaching and Other Employment Supports
- Ongoing Support

*Each represents a discrete step with little or no relationship to the other steps.*

# The Phases of Individualized Employment



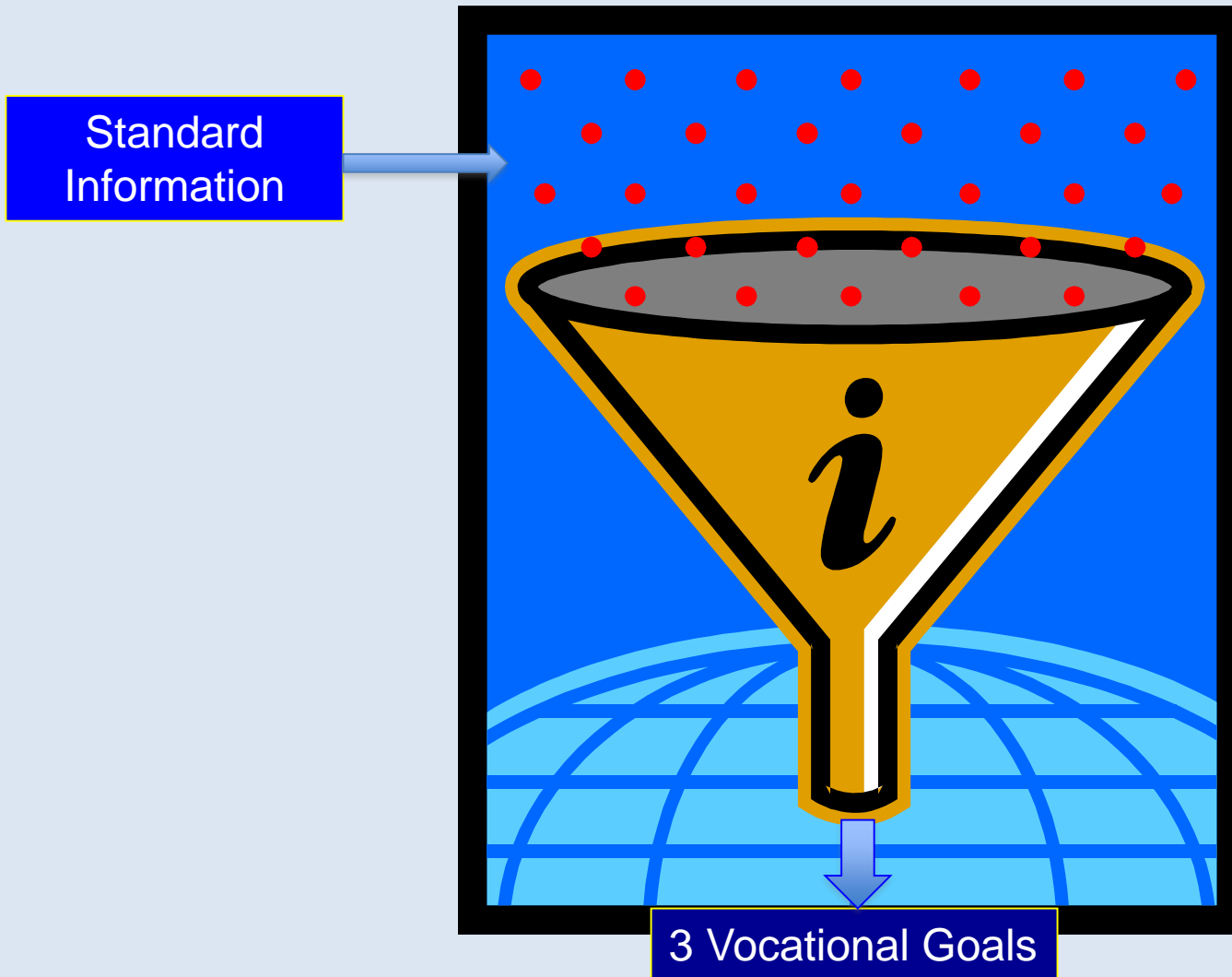
# DISCOVERY IS THE FOUNDATION FOR INDIVIDUALIZED EMPLOYMENT

A set of tools and strategies, resulting in positive employment opportunities by matching a job seeker's interests, skills, and ideal conditions of employment with the identified needs of an employer or community.

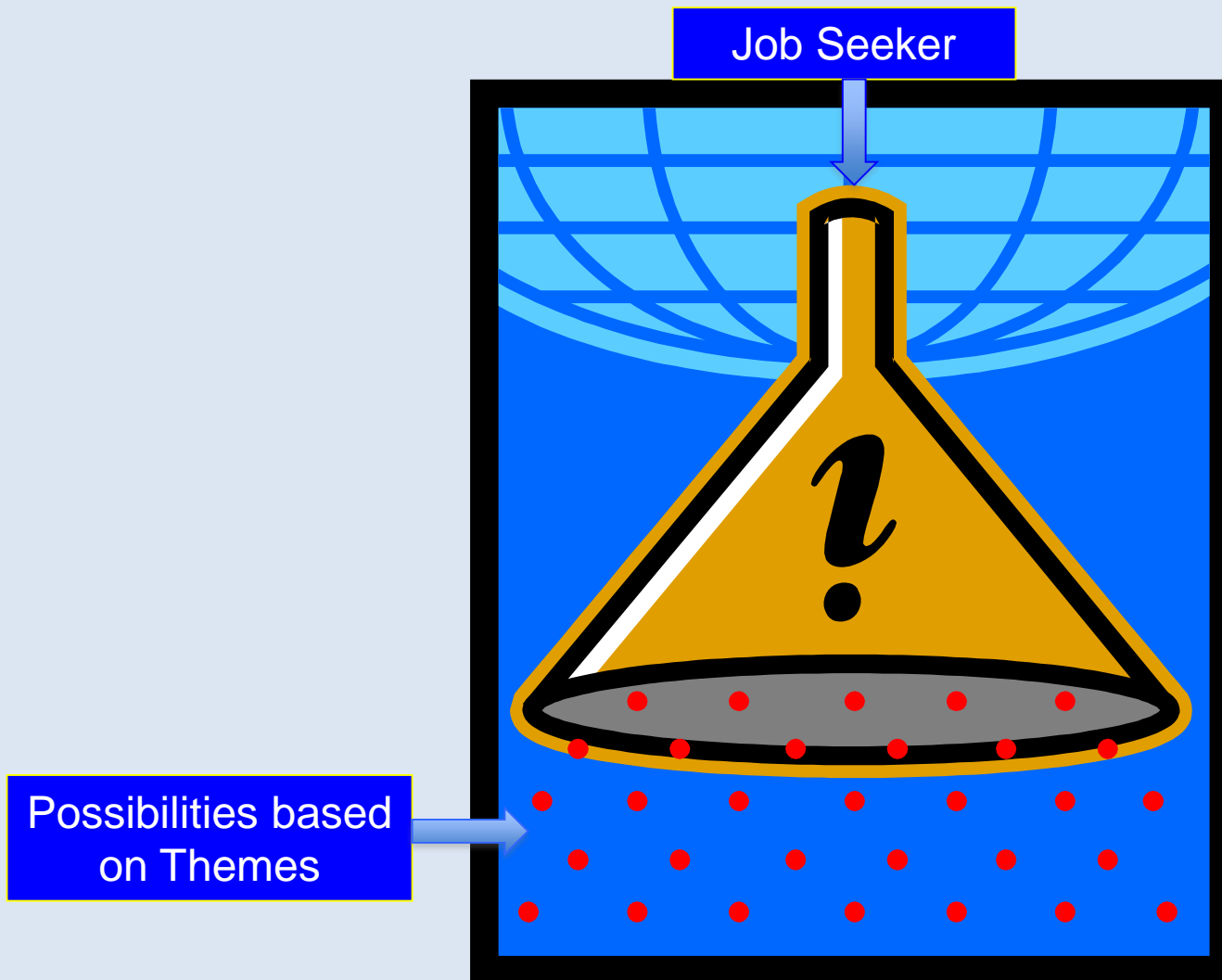




# Traditional Assessment



# A Different Approach



# Discovery Values

- Each stage of the process supports the premise that there are unlimited ways to make a living in the world and there is a place for everyone to make a contribution and earn a living.
- All people are viewed as “employable” and can make a contribution to the economic well being of a business.
- Discovery promotes self-determination, personal responsibility, and self-advocacy as critical elements.
- Guidance from a DPG facilitator does not mean control.
- The individual must be the key decision maker and agrees to take action on their plan.

# Discovery Values

- Discovery promotes mutuality among all individuals involved – job seekers, Discovery facilitators, prospective employers and all support personnel.
- There is unconditional acceptance of each person as they are.
- There are no “readiness” qualifications – competence is assumed.
- Individuals are assisted to explore choices and options, and are not expected to find simple, final answers.
- All participation is voluntary

# Discovery Values

- It is understood that each person is the expert on him/herself.
- The focus is on strengths and not on perceived weaknesses or deficits.
- Clinical, medical and diagnostic language is avoided.
- Testing and vocational evaluations are of little or no value.

# Discovery Values

- The process emphasizes strategies that are simple and safe for anyone.
- Difficult feelings and behaviors are seen as normal responses to difficult circumstances.
- Each person brings creativity and insight to their path of Discovery.
- No two paths of Discovery will be the same.

A photograph of a street sign. The sign is green with white, bold, sans-serif capital letters that read "UNEXPECTED RD". It is mounted on a black metal post. The background consists of a bright blue sky filled with large, white, fluffy clouds. At the bottom of the frame, the dark green foliage of trees is visible.

**UNEXPECTED RD**

# Discovering Personal Genius™

- Answers the basic question: “Who are you?”
- DPG identifies 3 Vocational Themes for Each Individual
- Each Theme generates a List of 20 places in the community where the Career Makes Sense
- Informational Interviews and Paid Work Experiences narrow the targets for Job Development



# Discovering Personal Genius

## *Hanging Out With Intent*

- Assistance *NOT* Assessment
- Inventory real environments
- Do not rely on data from segregated environments
- One place leads to another
- One person leads to another  
(*Family, Acquaintances, Friends, Professionals, Strangers, etc.*)



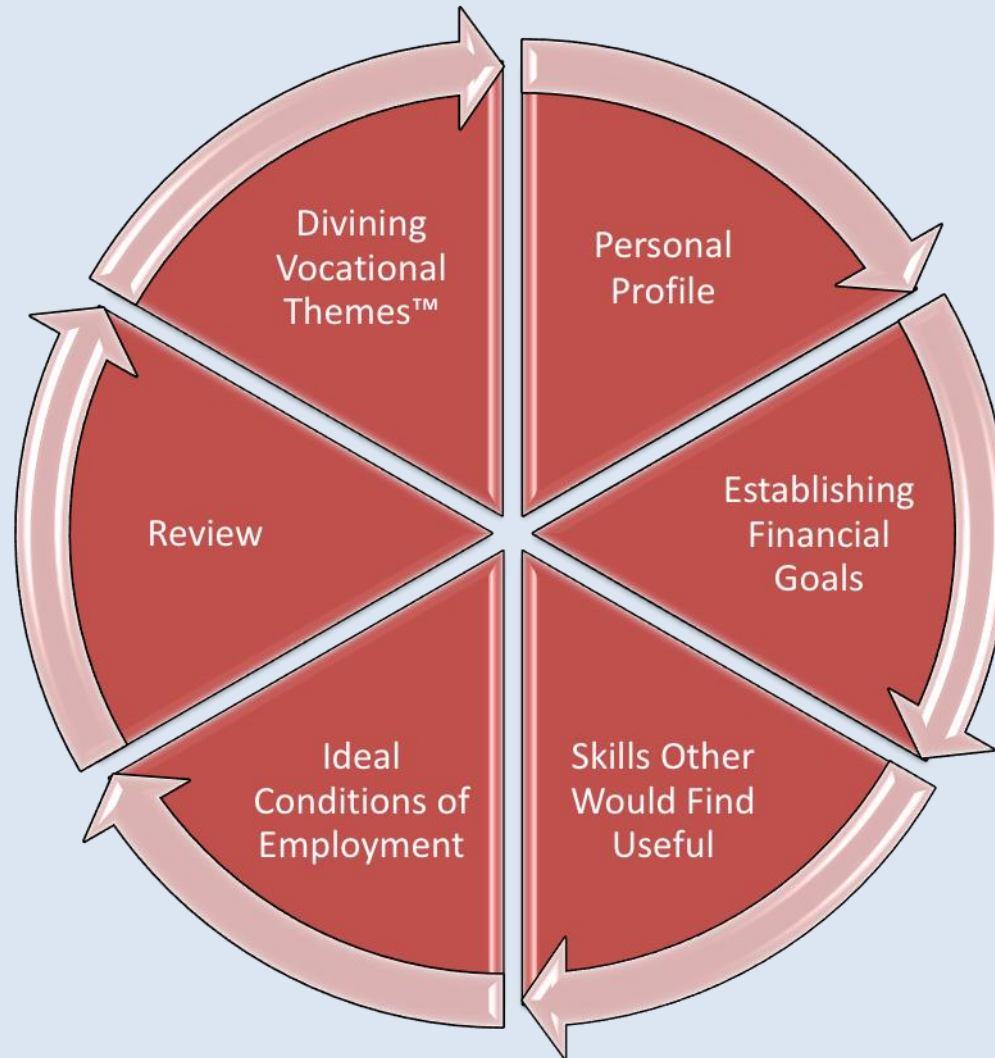
# Discovery

- Discovery is a structured Process
- We are not here to ask “What job or business would be best?”
- The more folks involved, the more diversity of activities & locations
- The more activities & locations, the more diversity of thought
- The best way to get a great idea is to get lots of ideas

# Common Myths About Discovery

- We do Discovery from our center
- Discovery requires large team cooperation
- Discovery takes too much time
- No one will pay us to do Discovery
- It's for folks who are *ready* for competitive employment
- It's for folks who aren't able to be competitively employed

# Discovering Personal Genius™



# The Task at Hand

- Building a Positive Vocational Profile
- Learning about interests and supporting skills
- Determining the Ideal Conditions of Employment
- Divining the Vocational Themes
- Creating the Lists of Twenty™
- Job Development

# Discovery Statements

- DPG is not used to find a “dream job”
- DPG is focused on getting people into the work arena as quickly as possible
- ✓ DPG is time limited, quick paced and goal oriented
- ✓ Solid outcome of work that fits the individual and provides opportunities for personal and professional growth
- ✓ Employment is ecologically relevant
- ✓ Benefits both employer and employee
- ✓ Generally developed without regard to the “labor market”

# Process

- ✓ Seven basic stages
- ✓ 20 – 65 hours
- ✓ 6 – 8 weeks
- ✓ Formulate descriptive paragraphs
- ✓ Basic question: “Who is this individual?”
- ✓ 3 solid Vocational Themes™

# Stages of DPG

1. Home and Neighborhood Observation
2. Interviewing Others (Supporters)
3. Skills and Ecological Fit
4. Review
5. Vocational Themes
6. Descriptive Narrative (Vocational Profile)
7. Career/Business Development Plan



***Great deeds are made up  
of small, steady steps.  
It is these that you must  
learn to value and sustain.***

Barbara Sher

# Building a Positive Personal Profile

**HEROES &  
HEROINES**

# Positive Personal Profile

- Who are you?
- Where do you live?
  - Who else is there?
- Who are you supporters?
- What do you know how to do?
- What do you know about?
- What are your financial goals?

# Social Capital

Robert Putnam defines Social Capital as *“the social networks and the norms of trustworthiness and reciprocity that arise from them.”*

# Social Capital

- “The goodwill and reciprocity inherent in ordinary relationships”
- Knowing others and sharing their interests, neighborhoods, cultures, ideals and values
- Social Capital is the underlayment of networking
- Purposeful connection to others for mutual gain

# Review

- Review the information you have collected
- Write it down!
- Type it into the Discovery Staging Record™
- Share it with the individual, family, co-workers or Discovery Team
- Does this capture the essence of the job seeker?

***UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF VOCATIONAL  
THEMES IN DISCOVERY  
& CREATIVE JOB DEVELOPMENT***

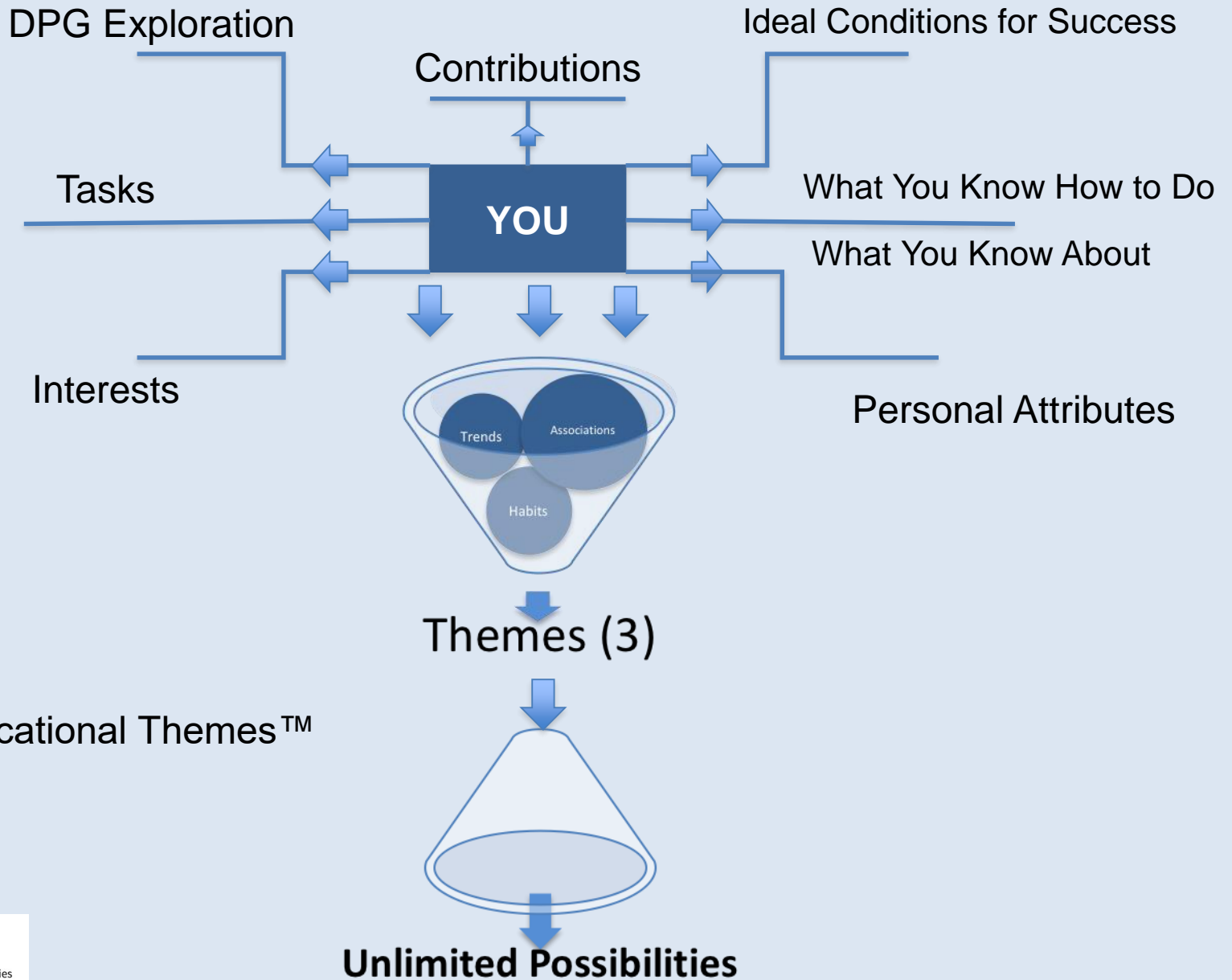
# The Crux of DPG

- When & Where you are *at your best*
- When & Where your support needs are highest
- The people who know you best (*Supporters*)
- Interests & Tasks that engage you
- Resident and Emerging Skills
- How you learn new Skills
- Where best to observe these Skills & Tasks being performed



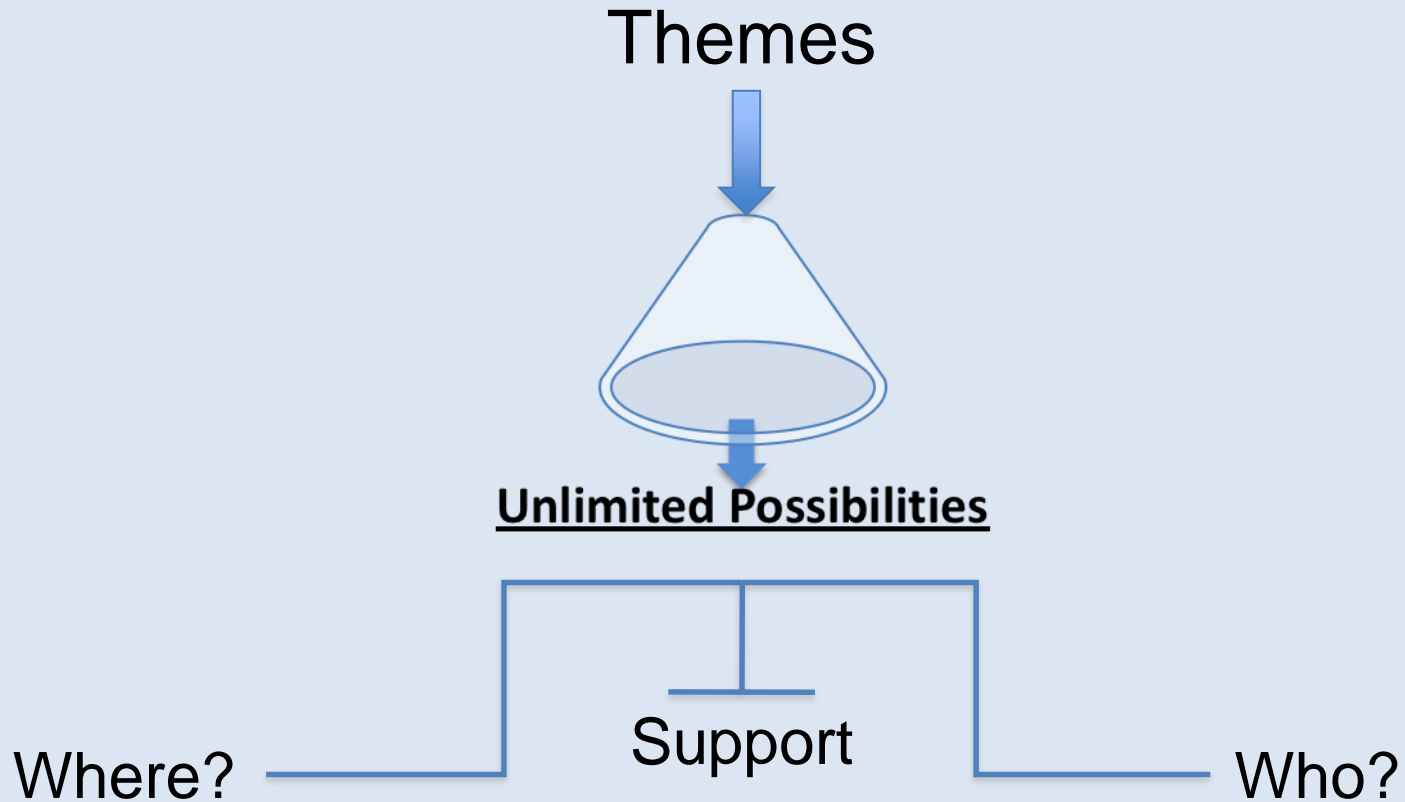
# Vocational Themes

- Themes are NOT Job Descriptions
- Themes are Big and Hold Many, Many Jobs
- Themes Open up the Possibilities Even in the Smallest Communities



Divining Vocational Themes™

# From Discovery to Employment



# Three Vocational Themes

- Why Three? One isn't enough. If we have two and throw one out, we're back to one....
- Themes are Imprecise but provide guidance for DPG activities & career development
- Themes are Not The Sum Total of Skills, Tasks, Attributes, or Interests...but they do make the Theme stronger

# Some Themes People Discovered

A word cloud of various themes discovered by people. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern, with some larger than others. The themes include:

- Performance
- Health
- History
- Community Involvement
- Transportation
- Math
- Politics
- Travel
- Tools
- Growing Things
- Teaching
- Music
- Design
- Helping People
- Culinary
- Clothing
- Automotives
- Building
- Science

# Discovery Exploration

- \* Opportunities to ACTIVELY explore skills/interests in new ways
  - Must be “active”
  - Occur in community
  - Reveal more about skills and interests
  - Facilitates community connections
  - Enhances business team development
  - Adds to emerging Themes

# Vocational Themes

- Establish Themes
- Verify Themes: List businesses (minimum 3)
- Test Themes
- Find the Nerds: These become theme testing informational interviews
- Get help, brainstorm ideas, the more ideas the better
- Avoid the obvious, avoid the *everybody* simplicity
- Again, have fun!

# Informational Interviews

- Brief interviews OR short (1/2 day) work experiences
- Opportunity to learn more about business, industry, environment, culture, etc.
- Provide hands-on experience with new tasks related to areas of interest
- Allow connections to emerge



# Why Informational Interviews?

- Helps refine Themes and Lists of 20
- Reveals Skills and Tasks found in workplaces
- Reveals Ideal Conditions of Employment
- Warms up to Job Development
- Helps avoid thinking in Job Descriptions
- Casual way to create relationships
- Increases Social Capital for the Job Seeker

# 10 Things I Wish I'd Known Before Starting Discovery

1. Work with one person at a time
2. Avoid the word “Interview” with IDT
3. Be patient and persistent
4. Helpful to “name-drop”
5. Cold calling can be difficult; it gets easier
6. Skills verification is very important
7. Create solid themes before going on informational interviews
8. You can't do it on your own
9. Tap into the Job Seeker's Social Capital from the beginning
10. Businesses are always hiring (even if they say they're not)

# Best Employment Practice Entails:

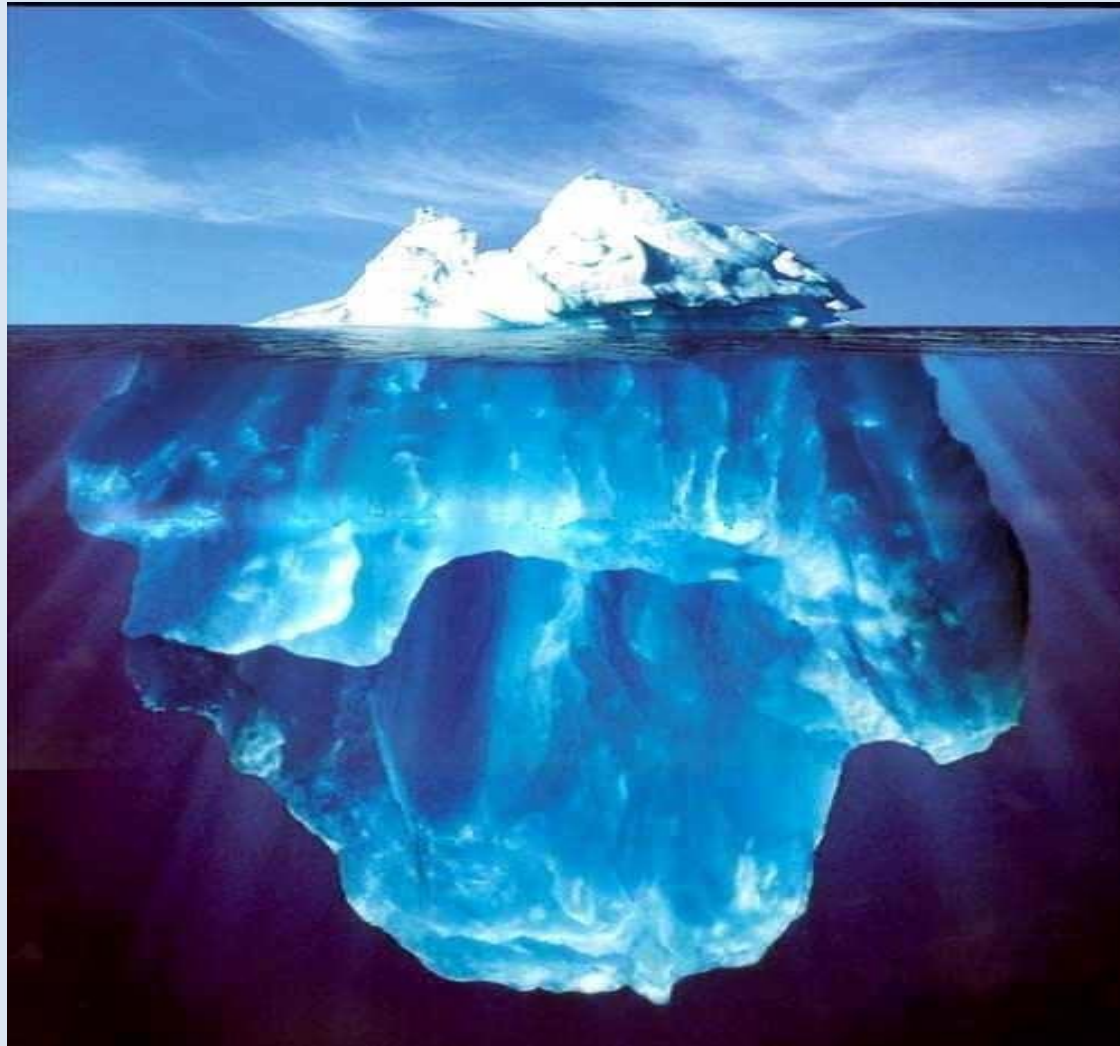
- Discovery
- Quality Job or Business Development with the Person
- Interest-Based Negotiation
- Job Analysis & Discrete Task Analysis
- A Training Plan for their new Employee
- Natural Support Analysis
- A Consultative Approach

# Employment Involves the Job Seeker

- People come together over shared interests and skills
- People teach each other their skills based on mutual interest
- There is a place for everyone, somewhere out there.



# Finding the Jobs Behind the Jobs



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