

## The Hiatus year...



## Alternative Careers...

### Why are you interested?

Most people mention issues such as “undecided about career, interested in something unique, haven’t found a job yet,” etc. Or maybe you are considering the road less traveled.

### Hiatus Year Defined:

- **Hiatus:** suspension, respite, reprieve, abatement -- *an interruption in the intensity or amount of something.* .....Like for instance, no problem sets due?

....a similar word:

- **Furlough** (*a.*) Leave of absence. Etymology: Dutch *verlof*, literally, permission (to lay off from work).

### This is an important component of today’s discussion.

The Hiatus year is about doing something with the “in-between” time from graduation to a larger/longer commitment to work or grad school. Most seniors that haven’t made commitments think about waiting for one year before applying to grad school or full time career employment.

### Why do people take a Hiatus year?

- Not sure about career direction
- Not enough experience in a career field to make a strong commitment to it.
- Job opportunities recently dried up, the economy tanked.
- Change in situation such as finances, geography, health, etc.
- Just plain tired
- Earn lots of money before next step or pay off loans
- Too busy (procrastinated) until it was too late to go get the ideal situation
- Others.....

## There are 4 ways to think about the Hiatus year:



### 1. A time off to literally rest, relax, goof off.

The movie “The Graduate” Dustin Hoffman hung out until he almost got into plastics! He got into other things instead. If you can find room and board and want to do nothing. Why not? To do this you must successfully resist your lifelong acculturated imperative to “accomplish something.”

Is this a legitimate way to spend time? What are the benefits of rest? What are the costs? How long can you really do nothing?

### 2. A time to pursue a special interest, skill, knowledge, information

Is there something you always wanted to learn, such as carpentry, scuba, a foreign language, public speaking, art, cooking, etc.? You may want to spend some time developing a skill or knowledge base in something you thoroughly enjoy unrelated to traditional academic or serious career pursuits.



### 3. A time to pursue a specific experience, personal growth, or self-development

**Is there an experience you always dreamed of doing?** Or have you wanted to work in a situation that is not career related? Ideas include things such as working on a ski slope in Montana, coaching a sport, living overseas, biking across country, joining Peace Corps/Vista/Teach for America, write a novel, etc.

### 4. A time to do TWO or more of the above.

One of the Hiatus advantages is that you can do **more** than just one of these things. You could work at a job just for pay for 6 months, then bike across Europe for 4 months on your earnings. You might study a language at a Community College while you work in Ski shop in Aspen.



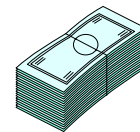
### The things you must put in place:

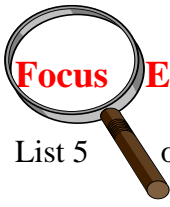
**Resources** – how will you survive during the hiatus

**Time** – how long would you like to take?

**Interest** – how passionate are you about interests/experiences?

**Support** – who needs to be in your life to support or join you?





## Focus Exercise:

List 5 of your favorite **activities**: physical, mental, social, spiritual, interpersonal

1

2

3

4

5

List 3 of your strongest **passions**: Groups, interests/hobbies, world issues, subject matter people



1

2

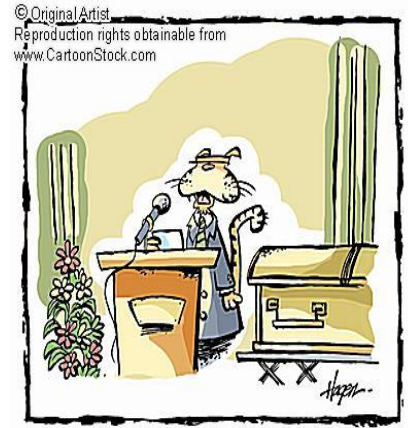
3

Share some of their responses or some of the more creative things they are aware of that others have done.

## Your Eulogy

Imagine your funeral. You have lived a long and fulfilling life. Now at your funeral there are people who are going to do a eulogy speech about you and your life. Answer the following questions.

1. What activities would you like them to be talking about? What did you do? How did you spend your time? What talents, interests, programs, did you spend your time on (both career and volunteer)?



I THINK WE CAN DESCRIBE HARVEY IN ONE WORD.  
CURIOUS.

2. Describe the relationships you had with others throughout your life. What would have been your ideal in terms of family, friends, associates, colleagues, etc.?

3. How would they describe your personal characteristics? What qualities as a person did you exhibit?

Now...take the key elements of your eulogy and apply it to your Hiatus year. The eulogy taps in to central values. Did you travel, create art or music, build houses for the homeless, teach children, build a business empire, etc.?

Write down 2 things that may come to mind to spend your hiatus year doing. What are two steps you can immediately take to start you on your way?

Some things Caltech Alumni have done during the Hiatus Year:

- Elizabeth traveled to Tibet to study Buddhism
  - Tom sang and toured in a US rock group before becoming a McKinsey consultant
  - Cindy took a one year master's degree at Stanford then applied to Princeton for her PhD
  - Sandra joined the Peace Corps
  - Brian taught English in China
  - Spencer traveled to Japan to improve his Japanese and obtained long-term employment
  - Sue worked with an environmental policy group to pass legislation
  - Rebecca volunteered/worked at City of Hope to get into medical school
  - Jeff earned an income playing poker and traveled to Europe
  - Lynn worked in a lab on campus while applying to graduate schools
  - Dean took a Studenski scholarship to study in Europe and now sings opera
  - Robert started an on-line baseball tournament that became a small business
  - Alex took 3 part-time jobs: teaching, research, consulting. Had a baby, started a business
  - Erik and Andrea accepted grad school, postponed admission, got married, volunteered 6 months.
  - Imram did a Watson Fellowship and studied dance in India, Ireland and Kenya
  - Debi taught English in Japan for two years before enrolling in a Masters in Social Science
  - Ari used his SURF research to work with major league baseball
  - Samantha studied geology in South America for her professor
  - Micah taught English in China for a year.
  - Walt taught English in Korea.
  - Eric was a webmaster in London.
  - Cara was an au pair in Egypt.
  - Frank Capra dug ditches, did laundry, was an extra until he could direct movies full time
  - Sam took lessons from a chef while applying to law school
- Next? Your name here: \_\_\_\_\_ your activity \_\_\_\_\_



**Resources:**

“Taking a Gap Year” by Susan Griffith (available in the CDC library)

“The Back Door Guide to Short-Term Job Adventures.” By Michael Landes (CDC library)

<http://www.fellowships.studyabroad.caltech.edu/> Caltech Fellowships and Study Abroad office in the Center for Student Services 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. They have several books on short-term interesting jobs. 395- 2150

<http://www.caltechy.org/> Caltech Y has listings for volunteer opportunities 395-6163

<http://www.gapyear.com/> Placements, ideas, jobs, travelmates, etc.

<http://www.gapyear.com/> A UK site for young students. Good ideas

<http://www.travellersworldwide.com/> Volunteer placements overseas

<http://www.payaway.co.uk/> jobs abroad

<http://www.bunac.com> Working Adventures Worldwide

<http://www.ciee.org> Council on International Education Exchange

<http://www.allianceabroad.com> Alliance Abroad for unique opportunities to work, travel, volunteer, etc.

<http://www.globalvolunteers.org/> International service opportunities

<http://www.gvi.co.uk/> Environment/conservation service programs home and abroad

Many religious groups sponsor schools, clinics, orphanages, food banks, etc. such as the Sisters of Charity that Mother Theresa began. Check with any religious organization you are affiliated or familiar with.

**NOTE:**

To discuss your future plans, especially if you are interested in doing something “different,” contact the Caltech Career Development Center and ask for an appointment with a Career Counselor to brainstorm, discuss ideas, and make a strategy. [career@caltech.edu](mailto:career@caltech.edu) 395-6361