

ROGER THE VET

A lesson on Career Awareness

From the time Roger was old enough to walk, talk, and understand the world around him, he knew that he loved animals. His family had a dog and a cat, and Roger was always with his pets. They slept on his bed at night and he thought of them as family. Roger loved to take care of his pets. He was always brushing them, feeding them, walking them, and tending to their needs.

Roger's dog and cat were not the only animals he cared for. He was constantly bringing home stray rabbits, birds with hurt wings, or turtles that he had found on the road. All of Roger's friends joked that he could open his own zoo.

When Roger was old enough to understand that when you grow up, you could actually get paid to take care of animals, he made up his mind. That's what he was going to do: He was going to be a veterinarian.

When Roger was in elementary school, lessons about jobs were taught every year. These lessons were called career-awareness programs. They began with community helpers who visited the kindergarten class. Each year, there were lessons about all the different kinds of jobs boys and girls might want to do when they got older. Roger usually listened with only one ear, because he already knew he was going to be a veterinarian. He didn't need to know about different careers or about what he was interested in or anything else to do with the career lessons. Maybe these lessons could be helpful to someone else, but not to him.

Actually, Roger didn't pay much attention to any of the subjects at school. He didn't even *like* school, because it kept him away from his animals. His mind was always on what his pets might be doing or wondering whether any of them needed him. He couldn't wait to get home every day to tend to their needs. There were many nights when his homework did not get completed because, in his opinion, he had more important things to do.

When Roger was in middle school, there were more lessons on careers. They even had a Career Day one year. But again, Roger tuned the whole thing out. Why? Because he already knew what he was going to be. He was going to be a _____. (Let the students say, "veterinarian.")

In high school, there was even more talk about making a career choice. When the school had a Job Fair, Roger didn't bother to attend because he knew what he was going to be. He was going to be a _____. (veterinarian). He didn't keep appointments with the school counselor, either. He saw no reason to visit the counselor when he didn't need help. He was going to be a _____.

One day when Roger was a senior in high school, his dog became very sick. Until this illness, Roger had always tended to his dog's simple needs and his mother had always taken his pets to the veterinarian for their shots and check-ups. He had never had to take his dog to the vet before. But this time, Roger's mother was busy and she asked him to do it.

As Dr. Martin, the veterinarian, examined his dog, Roger talked. He said, "You know, I am a senior and I have decided that I am going to be a veterinarian too."

Dr. Martin said, "Great! What college are you going to be attending?"

Roger was stunned. "College? I'm not planning to go to college. I already know a lot about animals, and I plan to open an animal clinic next year."

"Son, don't you know that you just can't call yourself a veterinarian? It takes years of schooling. You need to get an undergraduate degree, then you must get accepted at and attend veterinary school," explained Dr. Martin.

Roger replied, "But I don't even *like* going to school!"

"Well," said Dr. Martin, "to be a vet, you have to keep going to school for years. I hope you like science, because you will have to take lots of science courses while you are in school."

Roger said, "But I *hate* science!"

By this time in the conversation, the vet was giving Roger's dog a shot. The dog yelped.

Roger said, "Hey, you hurt my dog!"

Dr. Martin said, "Sometimes you have to hurt animals in order to cure them. And I'm afraid that sometimes, no matter what you do, you can't save an animal. I have had to put many animals to sleep."

Roger said, "I could never do that!"

"Son, I am afraid that being a vet may not be for you. I think you need to think this over," Dr. Martin advised.

Roger went home that day totally confused. He had never in his life considered anything else besides being a veterinarian. He really did not know what to do.

Well, I'm afraid that the story does not have a happy ending. Roger is now 26 years old. He has a job at a veterinarian's office, but he doesn't get to work much with the animals. He helps by cleaning the office and the cages.

QUESTIONS:

“What was Roger’s problem? (He closed his mind early in his life and chose a career that really wasn’t the best choice for him.)

“What didn’t Roger find out about being a veterinarian that could have been helpful to him? (Roger didn’t know how long he had to attend school, what kinds of courses he would have to take, what the unpleasant aspects of the job are.)

At this time in your life, you don’t have to know what you want to do when you are an adult. Nobody expects you to decide that yet. At this time in your life, you are expected to learn about different careers and the options that might be open to you. (Hand out the Career Pathways and Career Graph sheet).

NAME _____

DATE _____

CAREER PATHWAYS

Which path do you want to take in the future? Everyone is different. We all have different strengths and weaknesses and we are all interested in different things. In planning for your future career, you need to first think about yourself and then investigate various career clusters to find which pathway might be right for you.

Consider the following questions about six career clusters. Rate yourself from 1 to 10, using 1 to indicate low interest and strengths and 10 to indicate high interest and strengths.

1. **ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:** Are you a creative thinker? Do you like to use your imagination, enjoy thinking up new ideas, and like to share your thoughts and ideas with others? If so, this could be the career path for you!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. **BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY:** Do you like being a leader, organizing people, planning activities for others, and talking with important people? *or* Do you like working with numbers or ideas, like to carry through an idea and see the end product, like to know what is expected of you, and like things around you to be neat and orderly? If so, this could be the career path for you!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. **HEALTH SERVICES:** Do you like helping people who are sick or helping people stay well? Are you interested in new diseases and in how the body works? Do you like observing people and looking for changes in their physical well – being? If so, this could be the career path for you!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. **HUMAN SERVICES:** Are you friendly, open, outgoing, understanding, and cooperative? Do you like to work with people to help solve problems? Is it important to you to do something that makes things better for other people? If so, this could be the career path for you!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. **INDUSTRIAL AND ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY:** Are you mechanically inclined and practical? Do you like to use your hands and build things? Do you like to know how things work? If so, this could be the career path for you!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. **NATURAL RESOURCES:** Are you a nature lover, curious about the physical world, interested in plants and animals? Do you like to be physically active, observe, learn, investigate, or solve problems? If so, this could be the career path for you!

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

NAME _____ DATE _____

CAREER GRAPH

Now we will use your responses on the Career Pathways sheet to create a graph.

First, record the number you circled in each pathway.

- A. Arts and Communications _____
- B. Business, Management, and Technology _____
- C. Health Services _____
- D. Human Services _____
- E. Industrial and Engineering Technology _____
- F. Natural Resources _____

Now create a bar graph below using this data. Which pathway seems good for you?

A	B	C	D	E	F