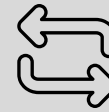# LIFE DESIGN 101

Life design, based on design thinking, is a creative problem-solving framework you can use to solve life's problems. We use it most often for career and vocational planning, but it can really be applied to any problem you're facing.

DESIGN MINDSETS

MINDFULNESS OF PROCESS
Know where you are in the process.

REFRAMING
Get unstuck by looking at something through a new lens.

RADICAL COLLABORATION
The best ideas come from other people.

CURIOSITY
Always assume there is more information waiting to be discovered.

BIAS TOWARD ACTION
Try things, don't be afraid to fail.

DESIGN THINKING PROCESS

EMPATHIZE
This is your life; you need to empathize with where you are and where you want to be.

DEFINE
Define your problem on your own terms; make sure it's actionable, appropriately scoped, unanchored, and contains enough context.

IDEATE
Brainstorm ideas that you can prototype and try in the real world -- nothing is off the table! All ideas are good. Try to get past your brain's natural tendency to be critical -- you'll narrow down later.

PROTOTYPE
Pick an idea from your list and **build** a prototype. For example, will I like school counseling or social work better? A prototype helps you try out alternatives without committing to anything just yet.

TEST
Once your prototype is built, it's time to test it! Talk to a school counselor or shadow a social worker -- these are cheap, low-stakes ways to test things.

ACCEPT
You can't solve problems you aren't willing to have. Accept where you are now and you'll be on your way to knowing where to go!

LIFE DESIGN LINGO

- **Anchor Problems** - problems where we are attached to one solution that leaves us stuck.
- **Gravity Problems** - not real problems. These are circumstances that are beyond our control and not able to be changed.
- **Prototype** - small experiments to gather data about a question. For example, will I like nursing or physical therapy better?
- **Ideate** - brainstorm! Go for volume -- all ideas are good and on the table.
- **Workview** - how you view work, what defines good work, why you do it, etc.
- **Lifeview** - how do you view the world? What gives life meaning, why are we here, etc.?
- **Dysfunctional Beliefs** - foundational and unproductive ways of thinking that are usually well-meaning, but oftentimes leave us feeling stuck.

DYSFUNCTIONAL BELIEFS

"I have to find my one true passion." → "I can have multiple passions and interests that ALL lead to a fulfilling life."

"There is one best life out there for me and I have to find it." → "There's no such thing as a best life! My life can look a lot of different ways and I can have a do-over at any point in time."

"You should know where you're going by now." → "There's no such thing as figuring it out or running behind; today, people's lives are far more fluid and changing."