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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
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Thrive

Innovation review

Highlights of innovative breakthroughs leading up to a fifth year ranked No. 1 in the U.S.

Engineer a solution


Research and big thinking on how AI will impact the future of work in Arizona and beyond

A bright idea

Jesse Senko's pioneering work with solar lights protects sea turtles and transforms the future of fishing

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Environmental issues may be your passion and a world powered by clean energy may be one of the ways you imagine a solution. Focusing your strengths, passions and interests on solving your chosen problem can lead you on a path to make a real difference and find a satisfying career along the way.

What problem do you want to solve?

That is the question to consider when pondering your future

Story by JAIME CASAP, '93 MPA

"So kid, what do you want to be when you grow up?"

The question has been passed down from the beginning of time.

When I think about that, I imagine a 10 year old in the 1700s brimming with pride and answering, "I'm going to be the best wheelwright in the world!" (Look it up.)

While this question helped us think about our future, it is no longer useful or relevant. We are at the beginning of the digitalization economy, and we can't even imagine the type of work that will require. Change happens gradually and then suddenly, and you, my friend, are living in "suddenly" times. The jobs of the future do not exist today. Digitalization is also causing jobs to shift and change like never before. All roles will be impacted by automation, robotics and digitalization.

So I have three better questions for you to answer.

"Don't worry about what you want to be when you grow up. Spend time thinking about the problem you want to solve and then utilize everything you've got to take on that problem and change the world!"

— JAIME CASAP,
CHIEF EDUCATION
EVANGELIST AT GOOGLE



Jaime Casap, '93 MPA in public administration, is the chief education evangelist at Google. He evangelizes the potential of digitalization as an enabling capability in pursuit of promoting inquiry based learning models. He collaborates with school systems, educational organizations and leaders focused on building innovation into our education policies and practices. Subscribe to his YouTube channel at youtube.com/jaimecasap.



1. What problem do you want to solve?

What is the problem you want to take on? It doesn't have to be a social problem like climate change, for example, it can be any problem. If you don't know, that's OK. Start the process of thinking about it. Search deep enough and you will discover patterns about what motivates you or what gets you excited.

2. How do you want to solve that problem?

There are a million ways to undertake a problem, so how do you want to use your gifts and your talents? If you tell someone you want to solve climate change, for example, they might suggest becoming a scientist or policymaker. However, that may not be where your talents are. Maybe you are a remarkable photographer and the way you solve climate change is by documenting its impact on human life.

3. What do you need to know to solve that problem?

What are the knowledge, skills and abilities you need to take on a problem like climate change? What do you need to learn? You could study biology, photography and

sustainability. When you do this, you can see the type of classes you should be taking. And even if you already have a degree, you can see the classes you need to keep taking because we live in a time where lifelong learning is essential!

These three questions line up nicely with what my Twitter friend Daniel Pink wrote in his book "Drive" regarding what motivates all human beings. It's the same three things — Purpose, Autonomy and Mastery. What problem do you want to solve (purpose)? How do you want to solve it (autonomy)? What do you need to learn to solve that problem (mastery)?

One of the many reasons why I love Arizona State University is its focus on solving the world's problems. Its size, scale, programs, areas of research, areas of study and partnerships tackle almost any problem you define. If you bring an issue to ASU, you can connect with a person who can help.

So don't worry about what you want to be when you grow up. Spend time thinking about the problem you want to solve and then utilize everything you've got to take on that problem and change the world! ■



The psychology of workplace satisfaction

When something boosts your mood, your brain releases neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine and oxytocin. Studies have shown the simple act of smiling can release some of those chemicals — and the feeling is contagious.

Smile to a room full of coworkers, for example, and others will likely do the same. That's an easy way to help create a happier workplace.

ASU alum Melanie Katzman '82 and '85, shares research-based, actionable things you can do to improve your success and joy at work in her new book, "Connect First: 52 Simple Ways to Ignite Success, Meaning, and Joy at Work." She maintains a clinical psychology practice and consults on workplace diversity and leadership with some of the largest organizations in the world.