

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/blog/videos/engage-in-informational-interviews>

Do as much informational interviewing as you can, advises Arbor Advisors partner Stan Christensen, who, through the practice, learned that law school was not a good fit for his interests. Learning the specifics of a prospective career from a distance is an enriching road map to a career path that might not suit you. And, potentially, it can save time, money, and emotional distress.



Transcript

So, I grew up very typically.. White male in the suburbs have the usual influences.. As I mentioned, my father was a doctor.. His friends were lawyers, then real estate.. I just did not really know what I want to do.. I did not like medicine.. I sort of did not really have in particular a penny to the sciences and I thought when I was an undergraduate at Burgundy, I thought well, lawyer, that sounds good.. I mean, I can stay in school.. It is very intellectual.. That will be a great thing to do..

So, I got a legal internship after my junior year undergraduate and I have the luck, the good fortune.. One of my parents' good friends, with the O'Connor that live the one the street and Sandra O'Connor became the Supreme Court justice when I was a kid and so I have this good connection in Washington.. She helped me get an internship and she set me up with lots of people in the law, so people in corporate law, people in litigation, people that were prosecutors.. They have all this information interviews, and I would recommend sort of point one of tonight is, do as much informational interviewing as you can.. The more you can talk to people about what they like, what they do not like about their jobs, will save yourself lots of pain.. And I was luckily able to save myself from those informational interviews, a lot of pain because I would have not been a very effective attorney.. It turns out that every single attorney I spoke with, I came away with the impression after I have lunch or coffee whatever we did.. Wow, here she does not really like their job.. And so I met with Justice O'Connor at the end of the summer and I said, "Oh, thank you so much for the internship." Thank you for setting me up with all these informational interviews.. It was really interesting but people did not seem to like their job that much, so I am not going to become a lawyer but I definitely want to go to law school because I think it is good general education independent of what I want to be later..

So, you please right me a letter of recommendation.. I want to go to Yale Law School.. I think that would be a great place for me and she gave me advice which I never forgotten and I have passed on to others which is, law school is a very specific education targeting the law and not very generalizably applicable, particularly if you want to do business.. And I asked a couple of people if they felt the same way.. People said yeah, law school is really about becoming a lawyer, in fact, that was surprising to me but I decided not to go to law school after that...