Life is all about transitions. More specifically, it's about navigating whatever life throws your way and managing the transition from one phase of your life into another. Changes are inherently difficult. Whether it's an emotional attachment to the current period of your life or the simple logistical challenges of it, change scares most of us. You can ask anyone for their advice on how to best handle these times and everyone will offer different points of view.

But right now, change is altogether different. Those that are facing the daunting challenge of entering the workforce and beginning, in earnest, their adult lives are venturing into a great unknown – one that has record unemployment numbers, civil unrest, and a highly polarized election all staring back at them. Traditional early career advice doesn't necessarily apply in this case.

So, what should folks trying to make a living do? Well, first, they have to accept that today's work environment is not an indictment of them or their abilities. The market ebbs and flows, however unnatural the current dip is, which brings me to my first bit of advice: it's okay to not know what to do.

It's okay to not know where to start in your job search – even in normal times, most people who are early in their careers don't have a firm grasp on where they want their careers to end up, which is normal and expected. But, even more so during these unprecedented times, uncertainty rules the day and it's important to know this. While you may see classmates and friends starting their careers with a firm grasp of what they want to do and where they want to end up, by and large most people are unsure of these things – and that's completely normal.

Another bit of advice that I still follow is to always be willing to listen, no matter who is speaking. In my decades of experience, I've found time and time again that innovative solutions to complex issues can often come from unexpected places. The best thing to be as you start any new job is to be a sponge – soak up everything you see and hear, listen more than you speak, and ask as many questions as pop into your head. If you take the time to get your bearings early on, and even proactively seek out a mentor, it'll greatly help accelerate your process during the onboarding and acclimation process.

Finally, and in my opinion most importantly, is you must seize opportunities – no matter where they come from. When I started 1-800-Flowers, I didn't know where it was going to take me. It was just a flower shop in the Upper East Side of Manhattan. But, I seized this small opportunity, began to cultivate and foster relationships with my customers, and eventually became an integral part of that community's fabric. In return, my customers remained loyal. I took this learning with me for the rest of my career and it has guided – and continues to guide – 1-800-Flowers' strategy in terms of how we view our relationships with our customers.

For those of you just starting out, seizing opportunities means taking chances: what may appear to be an odd job or position to begin a career could turn out to be the launching pad for a fulfilling career. It's okay to not know where a job will take you nor is it unusual to not have a sense of normalcy during our current chaotic times. Work-related anxieties are often typical with entering the job market and with a first job in general, but they have only been heightened because of recent events.

Marc Brackett, the founding director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, recently shared three tips for how to best deal with anxiety amidst the current crisis: read, breathe, and practice mindfulness. I've tried to incorporate his advice into my daily life, and I encourage others to follow it as well. These tips, in conjunction with being comfortable with the uncomfortable, a willingness to listen, and seizing opportunities no matter how they arise, can serve as helpful guideposts to workers embarking on the first step in their career journeys.

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