Holden: I'm going to get started. I know that there's likely to be some more people dialing in in the first 5 minutes and that's fine. I'm just going to go over protocol and then maybe I'll give my opening framework. In terms of protocol, first, thanks to everyone for coming. This is very experimental. This is just me trying to think through some of what I think about careers and also to just help think it through with other people and discuss it with other people.

For me, it's an experiment to help me reflect on my own thoughts and for you guys hopefully, it will help you reflect as well. The way that I've structured this call based on how previous conference calls have gone. Everyone is muted by default. Otherwise, there will be a lot of background noise. You can press star 6 to unmute yourself. In general, I'm going to try and keep this call very structured so that we move through a lot of things. I'm going to start with my opening remarks and my framework and some of the general thoughts I had from reading people's questions.

Then, I'm going to go through 1 person at a time in roughly the order that I sent out before by initials and for each person, I'm going to give a brief summary of what they're asking. I'm going to give my response and then I'm going to ask them to unmute themselves by pressing star 6 and ask any followup questions or comments.

If you want to come in in a way other way other than that, I would probably suggest emailing me at holden@givewell.org rather than unmuting yourself although it's up to you. I'm going to try to check my email for specific questions after every section. I won't check it constantly but that's what I think is the best way to run this. If anyone has any issues with that, send me an email or if you want, you can always unmute yourself by pressing star 6.

That's the basic plan. For the most part, just go ahead and listen and I'll keep reminding people of the protocols as we go. Now, to actually get started with just some thoughts I've had. Lots of people sent in questions, really interesting questions, and in reflecting on the questions, I thought about what a good framework for career choice looks like from 2 different perspectives.

Perspective 1 and this is something that ... just this 1 caveat. Again, I think I've said this but I'm not someone who's put a ton of time into these questions. Again, the purpose of this call is for me to start thinking about these questions in a sense. All of the things I'm saying are things that I ... my opinions have changed recently, they could change again quickly, et cetera. They're not well researched. They're not necessarily ... They're mostly not based on studies. One thing I do sort of have to offer is that as we go around looking at things for GiveWell, I have the opportunity to think a little bit about what the effective altruist movement

needs more of and what I've wished, you know, what kinds of things I wish we had more people who are good at or in a certain position.

That was 1 perspective from which I thought about good career choice. The thought I had when I thought, "Okay, what do I wish there were more of? Where do I wish there were more effective altruists?" Some of the things I came up with ... I mean I wish there were more effective altruists who really understood political advocacy, politics in general. I think it's really important, really leveraged, where we've been stuck with a small number of people who kind of really get what we're trying to do but also get politics and I really wish there were more of those, that would be hugely helpful to us.

Related to that, I wish there were more people in government who thought along GiveWell lines, who were effective altruists. I think there's a lot that we need to understand about what government does and why and how it could do things differently that it's hard to understand when we don't have context, we need people we can trust, who think along the same lines as we do, who think like effective altruists.

I wish more effective altruists were good at marketing. I think that the effective altruist movement, it would be really great if it would grow. I don't know that it's doing the best job of that right now that it could be. I think people who really understand how to make an idea take off, how to make it appeal to people - There are some of those but I think it would be nice if we had a lot more of them and they were a lot better at it.

More generally and more broadly, I think ... I would certainly love to run into more academics who think like effective altruists because academics have a particular platform and a particular network and a particular set of knowledge that if they applied it right could be really helpful to us.

Related to all this, I just wish there was more diversity of where people were and what they knew and what they could do. I think the effective altruist movement would really benefit from having more diversity of experience, more people who can generate ideas that we haven't thought of yet, more people who understand the important parts of the world that we don't understand very well, more people who are in positions to make changes that are very hard to make as an outside philanthropist.

This kind of ... and when I think whether there needs to be more money, more money is good and I think more money is definitely very helpful because money's powerful and money can do a lot of things but at this particular moment, it doesn't feel that's the greatest need. It feels ... and maybe that's a temporary thing but it feels GiveWell is a little bit money heavy and knowledge

poor in a sense and may remain that way because I'm optimistic about our ability to move money and a lot of the bottleneck has to do more with finding people who know what they're talking about, finding people who can figure out how to do things, finding people who know how to get certain things done because it can't all be bought linearly.

Those are some thoughts. I don't mean to be down on making money because I do think money is very important and very powerful but what I am trying to say is that when I think about what the effective altruist movement needs, I would love to see just more diversity and more people scattering into all kinds of areas and becoming really good at things that aren't already kind of core competencies of the effective altruist community.

If that was the thing I was focusing on and I was giving career advice, I would really focus on finding things that you can be really good at, finding things that are high status that you can become high status at, finding things that allow you to get a strong network and finding things that not everyone is already doing, going in unusual places, finding unusual places to push your brain. That's 1 perspective on effective altruist career choice.

The other perspective is thinking about how people choose jobs and how that's good and how I wish they did it differently and this is something that, you know, again I don't ... this isn't something I've studied. I haven't put systematic work into it. I have spent a lot of time talking with people about their career choice. It's something that I find very interesting. I followed a lot of people as they developed their careers and I've talked with them as they're going and I'll give a couple of examples in a bit.

I think 1 of the things that most people do in their career which I think is actually good and works well at a basic level is the basic approach of get as many offers as you can or get the best offer that you can and choose between them on a combination of intuition and the feeling that some of these offers are generally higher status or more rewarding than others.

I think there's a lot to be said for approaching careers in that way. I think generally becoming really good at something and becoming high status within a field just makes you a lot more useful in a lot of ways. It makes you more powerful. It makes you able to do things that other people can't do. It also makes you connected and makes you knowledgeable, puts you in a position to understand things other people can't understand.

I think when you take the general approach of looking at lots of offers and looking at 1 that's going to allow you to become successful in some kind of status-oriented way, I think there is a lot to that. Obviously, being successful at

some things is more valuable than being successful at other things. Some people consider this more than others. Some people are happy to do whatever they can do and other people say they want to do something socially valuable. I certainly think that's something I'd like to see more of.

I think that basic approach has a lot to be said for it. Another thing that I think about careers is there's a lot to be said for incremental choice and for revisiting as you go along, for being very iterative, so I often cringe when I see people trying to map out an entire career path for themselves. I think that most great careers don't come from that thinking because you go do something and you find out something about what you're good at and what you're going to succeed at and then you go do something else.

I think it's often unnecessary and often not that helpful to map out something highly in advance. That it is good to try different things and to see how things feel and to try something else. Certainly, there are times when you do have to lock yourself in or lock yourself out to a path.

Academia is a good example where it feels to me like you either get started in it pretty early or you're locked out. That's a decision that has to be made. There are other fields and other careers where you really have to make decisions early. If you're going to be a highly technical person, a scientist, it matters a great deal what specialization you choose early on. I think an interesting choice that I've seen 1 person make is physics versus biology. I think that biology has pretty robustly got more opportunity for high social impact than like theoretical physics and so that's a case where picking that early seems really important.

There's other fields like medicine or law that's just like there's a lot of investment upfront and before you put in that investment, you really have got to be thoughtful about where it's going. For those kinds of decisions, I wish people had a higher bar for confidence. I think it's a really bad thing to go to law school without being pretty confident that you want to be a lawyer or to go into the medicine track without being pretty confident that you want to be in medicine.

A lot of that is thinking through, what it's going to take to be highly successful at this. What's it going to take to do this well and to get where I think I'm going to be able to go and I think those are questions that can often be better informed by talking to a wide range of people and interviewing people and targeting people who are later in their career, whoever in that field and say how did you get there, how do other people get there, who are the kind of people who drop out and why do they drop out, who are the kind of people who don't make it, who are the kind of people who do make it, what's the day-to-day work life and really think about, "Okay, is this something that I'm going to be able to stick with? Is this something that I'm going to have the persistence to do well? Is this

something that I'm going to be glad I chose many years from now or can I say now that this path just looks too low probability or too unpleasant for me?" That's something I wish people did differently.

Another thing I wish people did differently which I think is kind of a big thing is just thinking more broadly about what their options are and being willing to change careers, change sectors, midstream. I think a lot of people do what their friends do or they do what their family did and at some point, it becomes too late and they haven't looked at lots of options. I think often by just exploring more things, you can find something that has better odds of leading to success. I really do think early in a career the main question is where can I visualize being very successful because that just has a very high variance and it varies a lot from person to person and from career to career and being successful at what you're doing is very important and magnifies your impact a great deal although some things are more worth being successful at than others.

You know, I do wish people thought more broadly about what careers are good. I see some people say, "Oh I want to be in a non-profit or I want to be in something that feels good and warm and fuzzy" without considering that they might be more successful and more impactful at a for-profit and I've seen people go the opposite way as well.

Another advantage I think of looking around and looking at different paths and different careers and different kinds of organizations is that it helps correct for another mistake I think people make which is focusing too much on internal status at the organization they're at. I feel like I've had a lot of conversations with people on both sides of the manager-employee relationship where very consistently, a lot of employees will say, "I don't feel like my title is good enough. I don't feel like I have enough formal responsibility. My work feels easy. It feels unglamorous. It feels mundane. I'm not happy. I don't think that I'm important." Where from the manager perspective it's often like "it is so hard to find someone who just does their job well like these people are just worth their weight in gold and they're adding so much value and our organization would be totally screwed without them."

That's just a divide that I see and feel a lot. A lot of times, when you're good at something, it can feel mundane. It can feel too easy and you can be asking yourself isn't there something sexier or just higher status feeling that I can be doing and you could ask yourself, "Do I have enough responsibility at this company or do I have a big enough title?" From what I've seen, people who do their job really well in the sense that, you know, your manager gives you something you get it done, your manager's happy. There's not a lot of drama. There's not a lot of mistakes. There's consistent reliable productivity.

Those people are just so valuable and so if you can be that at an organization that is doing something good for the world and/or is just kind of succeeding in a way that will raise your status over time. I think people generally tend to underestimate the goodness of that kind of role and they also underestimate the propensity for that kind of situation to result in unexpected improvement. Just a lot of times, it's like you don't see the path. You don't know when you're going to get promoted but your responsibility does change. It does gradually get better and sometimes, it's in unpredictable ways.

Generally, I think people who are just doing a really good job and their managers are really happy with them and they're at an organization that is basically pretty good. I think that is an easy thing to underestimate. Looking at other jobs and looking at other careers can help give you a feel for that and can help you focus on instead of worrying about whether I'm high in the status within the organization, worrying about how this compares to other things.

Another thing that can correct for this underestimation I think is negotiation. I think most people probably don't negotiate enough. I think it's a good idea to, not in a way that makes the work life dramatic and not in a way that jumps the gun, but in a way that's like when you feel like your pay is out of whack with your value added and you feel like it's been a while and you've really established your value added, to really go and explore what your pay should be because a lot of people are underpaid relative to their value and negotiation can be corrective for that and it can be a good way of finding out what you're really worth and how much you're really valued.

Sometimes, you might negotiate and find that someone would rather let you go, then pay you what seems right and that's a good sign that you're not adding that much value and that maybe you would add more value and raise your status more and do more good somewhere else. Sometimes, you'll find that someone is really desperate to keep you and that is a sign that you might be more valuable to the organization than you think.

Almost done with this kind of initial thoughts. I think that people who have established competencies, should be very thoughtful about where they're going to apply them. For example, if you're a great marketer, thinking very hard about which charity you want to market for is a good thing so I want to be clear about that. It's more early in a career that I think the focus should be more on finding something you can be really good at because I think that's a huge source of variance that matters a lot.

I do think there are some specific careers that may be overrated, maybe underrated. These are just based on informal observations. I'll get to that later. Like I said, I think it's ... I'm pretty skeptical of trying to choose a career path

based on explicit calculations of impact just because I think a lot of the best careers are really unpredictable in terms of the path they take and also the world changes a lot and we're looking at long-term predictions here and it's just really hard to say what's going to happen.

I think the more general ... the more robust thing to do is to make sure you're on a path where it seems very likely you are going to be very successful and have lots of different ways to make an impact. Things that make you wealthy, things that make you well connected, things that make you generally powerful and high status, I think, are good. These are good on a personal level as well as on an altruistic level.

Just to give some ... basically, the thing about what I want to see more of in the effective altruist community and the thing about what I think people do well and badly point to a lot of the same conclusions and so some of my generic advice would be as follows. Earlier in your career, I think it's really good to outside your comfort zone to try things you wouldn't ordinarily try, to grow as a person, to try to find something you can do really well that you can imagine sticking with. Networking is really, really important. Building a good network is a very good thing to do if you can do it.

I really encourage anything that's unfamiliar and that might lead to unexpected developments. Living in the developing world, I think, is probably a good idea in general or just going abroad in some way is a good thing to do at some point with the caveat that I didn't do that myself until fairly late in my career and whatever but I think it's generally a good idea.

I think it's good to avoid locking yourself into a path when you don't have high confidence, and try to get more confidence by talking to people who are further down the path. I think it's good to not be afraid to change careers, to explore a lot of things. It is good to focus on doing your work really, really well rather than getting distracted by some of the other concerns that I've mentioned and if you're really good at what you do and you know what you're good at, then it's the time, I think, to really be thoughtful about which organization is most worthy of your talents because that's the point at which you're taking a known quantity and donating it in a sense to an organization whereas earlier than that, you're basically trying to develop this thing that is going to be donated later and you're trying to figure out what it even is.

Those are my general thoughts. Just to talk about the 2 people whose career paths I know best, that's myself and my girlfriend, Daniela. I think this kind of illustrates some of the things I've talked to you about. So for myself, I was a very philosophy-oriented person in college. I was a Social Studies major. I looked at a lot of social theory. I was very into that kind of thinking and I got very excited

about going into a hedge fund partly because of how mysterious and foreign it was to me. I said, "This is something a lot more concrete. This is people making predictions about phenomena that I'm interested in that have a lot of overlap with phenomena I've always been interested in. They're making predictions and betting on them which is just such a different activity from kind of social theorizing, how does this look different and what will this be like." And I think the fact that I am not a natural fit for a hedge fund and everyone thought it was weird that I was going to a hedge fund - the fact that I did that is a lot of why I ran into what then became, I think, a really good opportunity which was starting GiveWell because I was just in an unusual position and a lot of innovation comes from seeing something unusual and being unusually positioned.

In this case, I was familiar with certain methodologies and I had certain financial freedom and certain confidence in my career that's generally associated with being a hedge fund but I had a certain theoretical orientation and a certain philosophical orientation that's generally not, and that led to me figuring out where to donate and approaching it differently from all the other people and starting GiveWell and this, I think, applies to Elie as well and this generally was the story but I focused on myself there.

Then, my girlfriend, Daniela, it's an interesting case because she always wanted to work in non-profit or do something that has a warm fuzzy social good feeling but basically found that non-profits were very frustrating for her. They felt very dysfunctional. She wasn't happy and she just made a radical change. She went and worked on a campaign, had an amazing time just did amazingly well at her job, and because of that, she got interested in working on a the Hill as the legislative assistant or someone in that kind of role because that's what people who are good at campaigns often end up doing.

However, that job was maybe not as good a fit for her and she talked to a lot of people about where that leads and where it can go and what it takes to succeed on that path and what success on that path looks like and ultimately decided that it wasn't actually all that exciting for her and end up looking a third direction that was really very different from the first 2 which was Silicon Valley startups. This is something that she was initially very skeptical would be a fit for her all because a lot of her skills are ... a lot of her interests are in helping people and she likes to work directly with people. She likes to have a lot of that warm and fuzzy feeling and this was a tech company.

She joined Stripe as a recruiting coordinator. Basically, it's been a surprisingly good fit and she's done really well there. I think she is really valuable to the company. I think the company is really valuable to the world and where I would hope this path goes is that she ends up with some combination of good financial

situation but also really good network in Silicon Valley which then becomes a very powerful tool for promoting affective altruism.

A lot of that was just being open to the unexpected, trying things that might make sense even though they're not seemingly exactly what makes sense, and having a broad definition of social good, being willing to accept that software companies do good for the world and non-profits do good for the world. That being wealthy can be good because of earning to give and also because of general influence in addition to doing direct good work. I've always liked the earning to give concept because it helps broaden people's horizons and it helps them consider more things but to me, the ultimate thing that really matters is probably just looking in more places than one normally would look and trying to find that moment where things take off and where it feels like you can do a really great job and end up with more status, more options, more power and more network than you would have had otherwise.

That was a while. That was over 20 minutes. I'm going to now start going through individuals and I haven't had any emailed questions as I've been going so I guess I'll just keep going and I'll just get through as many as I can in the next hour or so. Just another reminder to everyone on the call, we're recording this call. I mentioned that in the email, we're probably going to post the transcript, if you want anything about you taken out, just email me. We will make sure not to publish without explicit sign-off of anyone who's mentioned and again everyone's on mute automatically and I'll be asking people to unmute themselves as appropriate. You should email me if you have any questions during the call.

First, I'm going to take Holly Morgan's question that she emailed in. This has to do with whether the effective altruist movement is going to end up with a bigger bottleneck coming from money or talent. My sense is that my intuition right now and I could easily, easily be wrong about this is that the effective altruism movement is going to end up a little bit more bottlenecked by talent than by funding or maybe a lot more bottlenecked. That certainly how it feels right now and my basic reasoning here is that I think effective altruism is a mentality that demands kind of unusual styles of thinking and a lot of abstraction combined with empathy.

I guess I'm not that optimistic about appealing to a really, really broad set of people. I'm not that optimistic about this becoming something that takes off in a populist way. I generally don't have good intuitions about these things. I wouldn't take that that seriously but usually things that , Holden, really like are things that are unlikely to gain a huge amount of popular traction.

Where I think the effective altruist movement is strong though is that the people, the small number of people are unusually influential, high earning talented et cetera and so my guess, certainly, the situation right now is that there is a lot of funding available and a lot of it is coming from a pretty top heavy dynamic.

Good Ventures alone is going to give away such a large amount of money that it's like that ... that makes up for a lot of people and I think there's going to be more of those. My kind of vision for the effective altruism movement down the line, there will be enough people who have been just enormously financially successful that the money will be out of whack with the talent and the idea of having the things that I said at the beginning of the call - having a widely distributed knowledge base and set of competencies - is going to be really important.

I think there are going to be a lot of times when it feels like there's a lot of money to start an organization. There's not the people to start the organization. That's how I feel things are right now and that's how I feel things will ... I think things will become more that way and not less that way. That's my basic intuition. Holly, if you're there, why don't you hit star 6 to unmute yourself and I'd love to hear your reaction to that.

Holly: Hey. That was really good thinking. Although it did made me think the fact that we are an unusually talented group of people might be a reason against trying to focus on becoming really good at something because you would expect we're going to be successful anyway. Do you get what I mean?

Holden: Yeah. I get what you mean. I think basically that there's a huge difference between being pretty successful and really successful. I kind of believe in this model of the world where people who do incredibly well at something have like so much more impact than people who do very well at something so that's 1 thing and that's why I actually think for people who are unusually talented, I actually have said this at the beginning because I think a lot of my advice would be terrible advice for a lot of people and a lot of it is premised on the idea that you have a lot of options, that you have an unusual amount of talent, that you don't have a lot of insecurity.

I think a lot of people on the call fit this description but I think very different advice might apply to people who like need to do specific things to ensure they end up successful at all. My advice is actually very much thinking about people who are very talented and who could be good at a lot of things but being incredibly good at something is a big difference from being like pretty good at something.

Being incredibly good generally takes a lot of persistence which is why I often think that there's a good value in doing things that fit you well. That's like part of my answer and then the other part is that it's just there's lot of different problems in the world and it's hard to understand their true dynamics without having someone you trust who's looked really, really deeply at that problem. There may be problems in the world that are much more important than any of us think because no one who's in position to look at them is also the kind of person who thinks like we do and when I think about what we need large numbers of people for, it's to have people in position to understand all the different players and all the different agencies and all the different problems in the world which is a large number and that seems to be somehow more urgent than like making sure we get a large number of dollars which is something I see more as inevitable.

Does that address what you're saying at all, Holly?

Holly: Oh great. Thank you. I don't know how to mute my phone again, so I press star 6 ...

Holden: Yes. Star 6.

Holly: Okay.

Holden: Now, I'm going to go to Peter Hurford. His question was basically what are my thoughts on pursuing a mixed model combining earning to give with volunteering? The idea would be to do a normal career, programming, 40, 60 hours a week and then do volunteering for effective altruism in the spare time. There was a comment from Peter that this seems to violate a principle that either 1 or the other should be better and is desirable to be maximized. The thing that I really wanted to say on this is I think this is not the right place to apply that principle.

I think that principle makes sense when you're locking something in and there's no on the fly changes from new information but doing 2 things means you're learning about 2 different things at once and so from the perspective of option value and value of information, I think it's pretty clear that there is a strong additional benefit to doing 2 things as opposed to doing 1 thing. I think the ... the pick 1 thing and do it model applies when it's like ... it applies to some degree when it's like which charity should I donate to although even there, I think sometimes supporting more than 1 gets you opportunities to learn more than you could have otherwise.

I think for early career, I just think you're going to learn about 2 different things and that's got a lot of value. The caution that I would give on this is that I really

believe it's just incredibly important to be really, really good and not just okay at your day job. I think if you've got a lot of energy and you can handle it and you can do these 2 things, I think that's great and I think it's actually really, really great because it's very efficient. You'll be trying out 2 different things at once and the more things you can try the better.

If it starts to eat away at your job performance and you're not as good as you could be at your day job, that's when I would really start to reconsider it because I think being good at your day job is the best path to major impact. I think the spectacular performers are people who specialize and who'll put in the kind of hours associated with a day job and being good at your day job is really important.

Those are my comments. Peter, if you're there, do you want to unmute yourself and react?

Peter: Hi, Holden. Thanks very much for the comment that you're providing. Can you hear me okay?

Holden: Mm-hmm.

Peter: Yeah. I generally agree with everything you said. I was wondering a bit more about like focusing a lot on your day job. I think it is also … once you're really good at your day job but it's like how good is good enough, under a mixed model?

Holden: Yeah. I think it's like a very hard thing to really have strong thoughts on in the abstract. I think it really varies from situation to situation. Sometimes it makes sense to be just good enough at your day job if you've really got a strong feeling that you're going to head in another direction and you're just not ready to yet. I think that's a good time to just get by in your day job.

I think you should be pretty confident about that before thinking that way. I think in general like the minimum you should aim for at your day job is basically like A plus performance and basically where your manager is just like, "Wow, you are just killing it and you're invaluable and I have no complaints." That to me is like usually what you want to aim for at minimum and then even better than A plus is like A plus, plus, plus, plus, plus, plus but I could imagine like ... I think it's pretty reasonable in your situation to just aim for A plus at your day job and focus on other stuff.

That's exactly what I did when I was at the hedge fund. I was trying to be really good. I didn't want people to have complaints about me because I wasn't working or anything. I didn't want any complaints but, yeah, I was not trying to

be insanely great at it especially once I got interested in GiveWell and realized that it could take me to another direction.

That's where I was going just for A plus. Does that make it sense?

Peter: Yeah, exactly. I expect a lot is the specifics, I won't really know until I get into the job but it's a good thing to watch out for and try to keep in mind.

Holden: Cool.

Peter: All right. Well, thanks very much.

Holden: Yeah. Star 6 to mute. Next question, Thomas Hendrey ... sorry it just takes me a little while to look at this and figure out where the question is. This is asking about doing a PhD. Thomas says graduated with honors in math and philosophy. Basically, has performed very well in school, very interested in theoretical things like philosophy. The question is whether to do a PhD or basically taking a graduate internship to broaden his skill set, experience and networks, allowing him to visualize more career paths, et cetera.

What would I think about when thinking about a PhD, where to do a PhD, whether to do a PhD? Here's some initial comments on that and again, just take this as quick reactions. I think my prior is against doing a PhD in general. I think it should be something that you do if you feel really good about it but not ... if you're uncertain, I see a lot of value in exploring something else if you can afford to without falling off the academic track, I think PhD in philosophy is like not in my opinion 1 of the more promising paths for a few reasons.

One is that I don't know that it does a great job diversifying the effective altruist competencies. Two is that seems like a really tough job market and it seems like it's hard to get to the top and to be like a very successful PhD in philosophy or philosophy professor and then like when you get there, it seems like the impact is potentially good but not amazing. I can think of a lot of other paths where it just seems like easier and higher probability to be 1 of the super successful high status people plus getting to that point seems to have more impact.

That's my initial reaction. I think there a lots of exceptions in this. I think there are some philosophy people who have done a great ... really, really impressive amounts of good. I don't want to be taken as contradicting that but in a forward-looking sense, do I think that we need a lot more of them. Do I think it's the best path? My prior is against it unless it's just like an amazingly good fit and you're a super star.

I'm a person who has been very attracted to philosophy all my life and I'm glad I pushed myself specifically to go outside of that, because I think people who are good at philosophy are ... they have certain strengths. They become like really, really good when combined with other strengths and with putting themselves in other contexts.

Having good values, having effective altruist values, being good at introspection, knowing why you think what you think. These become very valuable in a lot of contexts but if you're just a philosophy professor, then you're up against a bunch of other people who do that and you're not working on the most practically important stuff.

I guess my prior is to say, if you're asking this question, I would be encouraging you to do something else at least for a little while and see how far outside your comfort zone you can push yourself and see what kind of thinking you're unfamiliar with that you'd like to be better at and go do that and then I think you might end up being good at that but also ... unusually good at it because of the other skills that are associated with being good at philosophy.

The only other thought I had in my point is like within academia, I think economics and philosophy have a lot of overlap in terms of the kind of thinking that people do and I think economics is like a little bit of a ... there's just more demand for it like there's more things you can do as an Economics PhD. I think that in a lot of ways, there's more paths to impact as that. That's my prior ... again, I've really tried to emphasize the importance of fit and if this is something that it would just be incredibly unpleasant to do anything else. Then, I'm not trying to come on too strong there but those are my reactions.

Thomas, if you're there, do you want to unmute yourself and react?

Thomas: Yeah. Thanks for those thoughts. I think I generally agree that PhD is a fairly big commitment but I've got a few different options for PhDs and much less concrete options for anything else. I'm in a situation where, when thinking about what to do outside that, I have much less to go on.

Holden: Yeah. I think that makes perfect sense and this is a common situation in careers is that people ... there's a lot of variance in where you even get an offer and where you can get an opportunity. I don't know that I have a lot to say to that except that I think I would personally advocate putting effort into finding other options and that could be tricky thing to do.

Generally, the best way to find options and to get jobs is via your network which is why networks are so important. I wouldn't be shy about talking to people and saying, "Hey, you know, what would you be looking for if you were me? Do you

know of any opportunities? Do you know of anything that's a fit for me?" I think that's worth doing and then ... other things that are worth doing are ... going overseas like just doing things that are just exploring the world I think are also interesting if those are your only options.

Thomas: Cool. Thank you.

Holden: Cool. Now I want to address a question that just came in by email because I think it relates to broader themes of this call. It says, "Could you outline some of your thoughts and concerns with 80,000 Hours?" I just want to be clear like I don't have a great sense of what ... I think because career advice is so dependent on the individual. It can be very hard to encapsulate someone's philosophy of career advice concisely and so I don't have a great understanding of what 80,000 Hours is telling people or what it is counselling people.

I've read most of their blog posts. There's a lot of stuff in there. In terms of like what framework should you use, what should you do and what's the advice, I don't have a great sense of it. Part of this call has been to kind of just get myself thinking about these issues and also ... anyone who's interested in my thoughts on 80,000 Hours. I feel like the easiest way is to let those thoughts emerge from this call. People who are noticing differences between ... people who think that what I'm saying basically sounds like what 80,000 Hours says, well then that means that we agree.

People who are noticing a lot of tension between things I'm saying and things that 80,000 Hours says, those are things to explore and to note down as things that are disagreement. It's almost like a question to you guys. Where do I differ from 80,000 Hours and any thoughts on that, I'd love to see among the blogs or emails to me or whatever.

I'm going to go to the next question now. This is Andrew Halpern. So sorry, it did take me a second again to read the email. Basically, he is very interested in doing good. A lot of people have a narrow view of that. It's been hard to find people who give good advice on that. He's doing MS in finance but doesn't think finance is a fit. His family does finance and he really doesn't feel that that is something that's going to be for him.

What should he do and where he should be looking, I think, basically is the question and if I missed something then, when you unmute yourself, that'll be great to correct me. I do ... I definitely like my main reaction is just I definitely don't think you should stick with finance just because it's like lucrative or because you can earn to give or because your family does it or because it's easy.

I think again as with my last piece of advice, finding ways to find other options, I think, would be just really, really valuable. Andrew also mentioned that he's worked overseas ... or he considered working overseas but is skeptical of the good done by aid. The thing that I was going to recommend is like if you did go and work overseas for a little bit, you would probably get a much deeper idea of what is good and bad about development aid and that's a topic that you find yourself naturally drawn to ... that is something that you can learn a lot about and you would either come out of there saying "now I'm much more confident that aid is terrible and I have ideas for how to fix it and I'm going to do something about it" or you can come out of there saying, "Actually aid is much better than I thought and maybe I want to work there."

Just based on like what your interest and orientation are, that would be 1 thing that I would recommend doing not because I'm sitting here saying being an aid worker is the most impactful career but because you will probably learn something that augments your own world view by doing that since this is something you're interested in. Those are my main thoughts but I don't know like ... the main options laid out, I think, were kind of like that and finance and other and I think other has a lot going for it.

Andrew, do you want to unmute yourself and react to that?

Andrew: Hey, Holden. Yeah. I'm not necessarily doing finance just because of how … some kids have parents that are doctors and they go into that. I do love finance. I just ... so much of the business world and the financial world and especially in graduate school are so focused on just getting jobs in the banks whether investment banks or private equity and it's all the same thing. I'm just ... my focus is to start taking the study of what finance is and turn it to a more positive approach instead of just creating wealth but creating more well-being is more of the goal.

Holden: Yeah. That's interesting. I think a lot of times I would advise people to go into an area just to see what it's like and to learn more about it. I guess I had a negative view of finance that I wouldn't do it and I'm not saying my views changed in 1 direction or another but they certainly got deeper and more subtle when I was in finance. I think if you're really interested in turning finance into something better for the world, I think there's a good case to be made for taking 1 of these generic jobs - investment banker, hedge fund or whatever - and then you get to see it from the inside and then I think you'll just become a better and deeper thinker about what's wrong with finance and how it could be changed if you're sitting there on the inside and networking with finance people and understanding their day-to-day lives.

I would think that'd be a good thing to do not to lock yourself into that career forever but to go in there and look around in a sense and do as good a job as you can while you're there. You may also try to find other people who think like you about finance because I know ... I mean I know there is some buzz around Socially Responsible Investing. I know there are investment funds that try to have a double bottom line. I know there's things like the Calvert Social Investment Index so you could target those kinds of companies and try to understand more about what they're doing. I know there's a lot of skepticism about whether what they're doing is any good but that would be another interesting thing to learn to about.

Andrew: Yeah. That's pretty much been what a lot of my barriers have been. It's just how accurately can you assess a company. What your index might be. Of course, I know I'm going to be staying there for maybe 2 years max. But at the same time, you want as optimally as you can find a job that fits what you want to do.

Holden: Yeah. I think if you went somewhere ... let's say you went and worked for 1 of these double bottom line funds, then you would get to know people who work there and then you would get to talk to them and argue with them about whether what they're doing really makes sense and these are going to be people who've thought about this for years and years and have all kinds of experience that you don't have and I think those will be some interesting conversations that will make you a lot more intelligent about this question.

I'm not predicting which direction your views will move but that seems worth doing and if you can't … I wouldn't be saying, well, I won't take a job at let's say at this double bottom line company because I'm not sure they really are good for the double bottom line. I would more be ... if I got a good offer that was competitive with my other offers, I would go there because I'd be curious and I would ... you'll meet people and you'll get better connected to the network of people who've been thinking about these things longer than you have and then you'll be able to see in a more subtle way what's wrong with what they're doing or what's right about what they're doing.

If you can't get a job like that, I think going into a normal firm is still going to give you a lot of those opportunities to be like, "Hey, you work in finance. How do you think it could be more socially valuable? Do you know people who think about these things? Do you know people at double bottom line funds and everything?"

Andrew: All right. Thank you.

Holden: Cool. If you could mute yourself, star 6, then I'm going to move to the next question. This is Jonas Vollmer and I apologize for any mispronunciations.

Question, under what circumstances should people work for effective altruist organizations?

I think this is a really good question. I'm not sure what the answer is. A few questions to ask yourself when you're at an organization or considering an organization, are you good at what you're doing? Are you making a significant difference to the organization? If you're working in a young, smaller organization, you really need to be making a significant difference to it or you're probably not having that much impact and you can go somewhere else.

Is the organization doing well? Is the organization heading good places? Are things on the up? If all those things are true, I think that you found something very good especially if you're passionate about the mission of the organization and you believe in it and you think that the organization's going to make a big difference.

There this cliché quote that I forgot where it's from. It's like, "If you're offered a seat on a rocket ship don't ask which seat." Being on what feels like a rocket ship, being on an organization that's moving in a good direction and doing great things is great and if you're making a big difference to it, that's really great.

When either of those criteria fails, I think it's time to rethink especially if you've been there for a while. I think the big risk of working for an EA organization especially a really young 1 is if you stay too long, you may end up with a narrow set of contacts, not a very impressive resume and just not being as well positioned as you could have being somewhere else.

The question is, are you getting a good resume and good experience and good knowledge and good contacts and does it feel like these things are headed in a good direction or not and are you making a difference. Those are how I would think about that question on EA organizations.

Your second question says you have very good organizing skills, and should you do full time EA movement building. I actually just need a clarification on this. What exactly do you mean by organizing skills?

Jonas: Just general organizing like event management and keeping in touch with people and see that projects get done, etc.

Holden: I think that is a class of skill that is really important. I think it's good for a lot of things. I also think that a lot of people come out of college really lacking that skill but they develop it as they work other places. The skill gets more common as time goes on. I think that skill is good and it's a good starting point but I also think that it's not ... I don't know that you want it to be like the only skill or your

main skill that you're focused on because I think you are probably better at it relative to other people than like a few years down the line when a lot of people learn how to stay on top of stuff better as they pick it up in their career.

I don't know that that skill is really sufficient to be a movement builder though I'm not sure about that. I think that people who build movements and communities have that plus other things like just ability to network, ability to reach out, ability to get people excited, ability to frame things in exciting ways. One thing that I might suggest is just like trying to find other people who have built communities or managed communities and talk to them about how they've done it and what you need to be good at and what works and what doesn't. Does that make sense?

Jonas: Yes. Thank you.

Holden: Cool. Anything else on either that 1 or the 1 before?

Jonas: I would like to get some more of your thoughts on EA organizations. How would you validate them, and whether you would like to see them scaled up or if you think that people should instead earn to give or something similar.

Holden: Yeah. I mean I think a lot of that question is like maybe beyond the scope of this call where I wanted to focus in on careers so I've tried to give the framework of questions you should ask yourself about the organization you're at, like do I believe in this organization? Is it going good places? Am I making a difference to it?

In terms of like my views on the different organizations I mean A, I don't necessarily know a lot about all of them and B, it's like it ... I think I'd rather say that I've said what I'm going to say on that for this call, is that okay?

Jonas: Okay. Yeah.

Holden: Cool. All right. So if could mute yourself, star 6. … Next person, Helen Toner. There was a question about ... this is a cluster of questions about what the best thing is to major in like in college, in university. I think this is a good question and it's not something that I know a ton about but I'm happy to share my thoughts.

General conventional wisdom is that it's good to get a quantitative degree and learn most of the specific skills you'll need for each job once you have the job. I think there's a lot of truth to that. I'll certainly say that when I look back at what I majored in, what I could have majored in, what other people I know majored in, it's like the things that that I have the most regret about not studying are technical subjects and quantitative subjects because those are subjects where

you can just learn a ton from sitting in school and reading books and it's really hard to learn it in any other way.

Then, you get out in the world and you wish you had a better grasp of it and you try to frantically catch up. At least, that's been my experience. A lot of other things you can learn in college, it feels more like it's not really the most logical time to learn them.

A lot of the stuff you can learn in social sciences and humanities and stuff like that, it just feels like later in your career, you can say this is what I need to know and this is why I need to know it and you can learn it much more efficiently and this is just like much less true about scientific and quantitative subjects.

I think there is a lot to be said for doing scientific and quantitative subjects if you're good at it, if you're going to handle it. I think just as a random comment, I think the general cluster of fields around statistics, prediction, data science, machine learning, is like especially appealing if I were to go back in time and do college again. I think it has a lot of advantages. One, it's like super broadly applicable and demand for that kind of thinking only seems to be growing. You need that kind of thinking in a lot of different contexts. It's ... again, the kind of thing that you can learn in college and it's not really easier to learn it later. It's also you're studying how to think in a certain way that I think it is especially helpful, just like how to use data to make predictions in a way that actually works which I personally think just feels a little more practical and even if your interests are philosophical, I think, raises some interesting philosophical questions that some of the social scientists don't raise as much.

It also has applications like even if you change fields scientifically, having that stuff is going to be really useful too, almost no matter where you go. I'm a fan of that general cluster of fields. To push back on the other hand and why you might not want to do this in college, I think these majors are harder and they will leave you less time for doing other things and they will stress you out more and I think all that stuff matters. For me personally in college, I'm not wild about what I learn from my classes but a lot of what I learned was outside of classes and I would have learned less outside my classes if I have been working harder in the classes and that's just a weird fact but it's true.

I mean I think college is a great learning opportunity broadly because of the people who are there who are your peers, not just the professors. There's something to be said for doing things outside of class, extracurricular and just general getting to know people. I think there's something to be said for that too.

Another reason not to automatically do quantitative subjects is that I do feel like the people who I've met who seem to think most deeply and intelligently about

the world have kind of built up their own model of the world by always investigating what it is they're most curious about at that time and what feels like the missing piece of their world model.

Even though I don't feel the things that I learned in college are that great or helpful, I also feel that, that's what I was interested in and that's why it was logical for me to explore it and after I explored it, I was ready to move on to something else and I knew why I was ready to move on and I knew where I wanted to move and so I think the cliché advice to major in something you're interested in does have something going for it in that sense.

I think the considerations weigh against each other. I don't think you should just do what you're interested in. I think there are some majors that are much, much more useful than others but I also think if there's a huge discrepancy and, you know, you're really going to be unhappy and unsuccessful and stressed in a more quantitative subject and/or you're really fascinated by something like international affairs or philosophy or development studies which are the examples Helen gave then I think it make sense to do those things.

Helen, do you want to hit star 6 and give your thoughts?

Helen: Yeah. Thanks so much for that. I would also ask if you think something like economics would have value. I'm coming from a very mixed background. I studied engineering as well as politics, and I'm still thinking about where to go next. Also, how much studies do you think are useful? Usually a Bachelors degree and then try to work or do you think more study than that?

Holden: My own bias has always been toward doing lots of things and not studying a lot unless you have a specific reason to study a lot. I think academics can have a huge impact on the world and expertise is really valuable so if you know that your best fit or the area where you're going to be a star or the thing you're most interested in is a particular field and you're confident about that then it can make sense to follow that down all the way but … my experience in life has been that most of what you learn in school is not like … it is not as applicable as stuff you learn not in school.

That's been how it felt to me and experimenting with different things and trying different careers does seem more valuable to me than learning in some field. I do think the fields where this is least true are the scientific and technical fields where again like I said … a lot of times there is not another way to learn about them but I only have a bachelor's degree and I'm just … I've never really been all that sold that it's important to have more than that for general purposes. It's obviously essential to have more than that for many specific purposes and if that's where you know you're heading, then that's what you should do.

Helen: Okay. Thank you very much.

Holden   Cool. Let me just note down this other question. Next up … so actually I got an email and it's the same as the question I was about to get to. This was emailed in by … or similar. It was emailed in by Brian Geistwhite and also earlier by Sven Herrmann. And this is … as opposed to earning to give, what do I think about working at organizations that have a lot of influence on where funding goes.

That would be … that could involve advocacy. It could involve working in government, in bureaucracy. It could involve working for a big company with a big philanthropy program. It could involve working for a big foundation. What do I think about that?

I think that you can have a big impact that way. I think that idea is like a perfectly sensible idea. It is often a really good place to end up and I think that if you do end up high in a major aid organization, for example, that's exactly the kind of thing where I wish there were more effective altruists high in big aid organizations. I think they would help us understand how they work to the extent there's limitations and to the extent there's opportunities they would take those opportunities to do more good.

I think in impact terms, this is great. I think in terms of aiming and in terms of tactics, I don't know that this is the most useful way to think about your career because I don't know that there's a path that clearly leads there and leads nowhere else. Instead I think there's a lot of paths that might lead there and might lead somewhere else good. I think there's a huge difference between being high up in an aid bureaucracy and being low down in it and so this is where that issue of whether you're going to be good comes in.

So I generally just don't really think in these terms about early career stuff. I think to me the kind of thinking is more like, "Well if I study economics, I might end up high up in the World Bank and distributing a lot of money or I might end up advising, you know, some policy maker and making policies better which is not distributing money or I might end working for a company and earning to give and those are all good so I'll study economics because economics is a good fit for me or if I do political advocacy, I may be able to get funding allocated somewhere or I may just be able to get some other policy change that's good for some other reason or I may just be able to help effective altruists understand policy.

So the way that I like to think is in terms of career paths that are a good fit for what you're likely to be successful at and that have many possible paths to impact and that don't rely on getting some very narrow and unlikely victory.

That's kind of how I think about this stuff so either Brian or Sven if you want to unmute yourself star 6 and share some thoughts on what I just said.

Sven: Thank you very much. What you're basically saying is it's a good thing to be in that position and can be very effective, but not necessarily the thing to aim for.

Holden   Yeah.

Sven: This means you just shouldn't try to settle on the organization early or even in the middle of your career and hope you work your way through it to an important position, because if you can't get there, it wouldn't end up being a good idea.

Holden   I mean … again, it's like I think this is a good consideration as 1 of many considerations so I would certainly if it was like, "Well, I have this great offer at the World Bank and it's competitive with my other offers in terms of status and pay and networking and all the things I look for in early career offers and working at the World Bank, all right, how could that go well because I think it's good to think about how things could go well."

I think there are certain career paths where there's a very small number of ways for them to go well and some where there's a lot of ways and I think working at the World Bank, 1 of the ways it could go well is you end up in that position or you end up in that position at another bureaucracy. I think putting that in as a consideration is good but I think it's more in the framework I've said rather than … like you say, it's … to me it's not best to say, "Okay, this is my goal is to reach this particular position of authority allocating funding."

Sven: Okay. Yes. Thanks a lot.

Holden   Yup.

Brian: Hi. This is Brian. I asked a similar question. I've been talking to GiveWell and 80,000 Hours off and on for a number of years now and I guess part of my question develops maybe a suggestion for 80,000 Hours. I mean I truly agree with the paradigm that you're supporting: "Okay I have these competencies, a set of skills. I need to have a number of places I could end up in a career later on where I might able to make a high impact." Without ending up constrained to 1 agency or 1 sector. But where I see the real advantage of 80,000 Hours analysis is: if you're working as say a scientist, you need other scientists to give you career advice, but 80,000 Hours is kind of answering some of these very general questions along the lines of "What are some classes of careers where I can create high impact or not?"

For example, if it talks about like doctors, maybe working as a normal doctor in normal hospitals doesn't have as much impact improving people's lives. I would be very curious to see people involved in 80,000 Hours do some let's say economic inquiries along the lines of "How much power do people in government agencies that are large bureaucracies have?"

Holden   I think there's a lot of value in making people aware of more options and especially showing that there are more good options than people think and a lot of good places to end. I don't see as much value in like estimates of how much value you can have because it just depends so heavily on the person's individual abilities plus by the time you're at that career stage, things are all going to be different anyway.

I think making people aware of the qualitative picture that there's a lot out there and specifically what those things are and where you may end up is a really good thing and also just having more information on what different paths are like down the line - I think generally people don't do enough work to talk to people and understand, "Okay, I shouldn't just follow this path out of inertia. I should understand that if I can't do X, I'm not going to succeed."

That's another thing. 80,000 Hours has done some interviews of people. What's your job like? How do you get there? And I think that stuff is valuable.

Brian: Okay. Yeah, maybe I haven't picked up on those individual interviews. That's very helpful to know they're available.

Holden   Yeah. Okay.

Brian: Thank you.

Holden   Yeah. Sure so if you can mute yourself, star 6. Next question, Jason Ketola. How do you know when it's too late to enter a certain career is the basic question here and there's an impression here that certain careers especially medicine, finance and law are hard to enter after a certain age, maybe age 30 or something like that.

This is something I obviously don't have expertise on. I think it is worth talking to people. I think generally people who are successful at career X will give you a good feel for how old is too old to start going in career X. Certainly my intuition of the 3 that were named, medicine seems like the hardest thing to get into later on. Law seems pretty hard to get into because you have to make that upfront commitment and all that.

Finance seems the least difficult to get into. I think there's a lot of diversity in the finance world and there's a lot of boutique firms and a lot of the hiring happens via networking and connections so you can … if you can meet the right people and if you have the right skills and appeal, you can … there's a lot of places to go in finance where you don't necessarily have to have been following some particular path for your whole life. I definitely believe that.

I think generally, for later … if you're later in life but you're … you don't have the resume and well defined skills that make you really a later career person, I think there are a lot of similar considerations to early career. In other words, you want to build that resume and build those skills.

I think the same basic principles I've been saying apply that looking for … I think it becomes especially important to just look for something you could do really well. Improve your resume. Improve your contacts because I think network becomes even more important at that point because when you don't look good on paper, then you're probably going to do better with the job where someone didn't need to evaluate you on paper because they know you.

I think it's a lot of the same considerations but maybe even more focus on networking, fit, being impressive, raising your status, improving your resume and just grabbing whatever you can that fulfills those criteria so with that said, Jason, do you want to unmute yourself and share some thoughts?

Jason: Thank you. I found that to be a very reasonable response. In part, I was asking the question because almost of all the career advice that I've read seems to assume that every option is still open and I do think that … I do have questions about particular fields so I think your advice about following up with individuals who work in specific areas to be helpful.

Holden   Great. Yeah. I don't have a formula for doing that. I think it's a matter of … I mean a lot of what I would be doing in this situation is just thinking about how to network like how to meet more people especially high status people, get to know them. Sometimes I've just like … I've been in some family event and I just … instead of making small talk … well I do make small talk by asking someone about their job and that's often like pretty educational and people like to talk about themselves and sometimes they like to talk about their jobs.

I don't have a lot to say except take whatever opportunities you can to talk to people, to get to know them, to hear about what certain jobs are like and when it's too late to enter them and I certainly, yeah, I certainly don't think that all options should be considered open even at a young age. I think a lot of what I'm saying about careers is that usually for an individual, there's big discrepancy in terms of where they're going to do well and where they're going to get a good

offer and where they're not and so the general approach of poking around, looking at a lot of things and seeing where you get attractive offers is like better than saying, "Well, I can do everything. Let me pick the thing that's theoretically highest impact."

Jason: Thank you.

Holden   Cool. All right so if you could mute yourself, star 6. Next question, Joey Savoie, there were a few questions here. One question is just like, how important is competitive advantage? If what you're best at is something like paleontology, does that mean you should do that? I think I covered this idea throughout this call is that I think this is a complex weighing of many things against each other and I do think there are certain careers where it's just like there aren't enough paths to impact and there aren't enough paths to success.

Good example of this, I mean a lot of entertainment careers, they're just like unbelievably competitive and it's much harder to succeed than it is in other careers and even when you succeed, it's like, you have some opportunities to have impact but not really so much better than other careers where it's much easier to succeed.

I think there are big differences there and what I've been trying to say is that you should … there is a lot of value to narrowing things down that are plausibly leading to a lot of success and a lot of different paths to good impact but after you narrow down by that, you'll still have a lot left and narrowing down by what you can do well and where you have a good offer is really important.

What do I think of working for a non-profit or starting a charity compared to other careers?

I think either 1 could be good and that is usually not the way that I slice it so I think most people GiveWell were not committed to working for a non-profit. Certainly I wasn't. It was more just looking for an organization that they were excited about and where they would make a difference whether that was for-profit or a non-profit and similarly like I was interested for a long time … in starting an organization of some kind and for a while, I thought it would be a for-profit but the best idea I had and the 1 that seem most likely to succeed in a very broad way just in terms of like making an impact and making a splash, changing the world was a non-profit idea.

I went with a non-profit idea. I would have gone for the for-profit idea if like I had not thought of GiveWell and I had thought of some for-profit idea that I was really excited about.

How much time is it worth spending on choosing a career? Should you reevaluate at certain points? I've always been like completely obsessive about career. I think I'm reaching a point now where I feel pretty good about where I am and … but for most of my life, I've just been like obsessively reflecting and re-reflecting on it.

I tend to think that's probably a good thing not a bad thing. I just think career is so important. It affects your happiness and what you get out of life and who you meet and what you become good at and what impact do you have in the world and it really is where most of your waking hours are going to go. I don't know. I don't really feel like there is such a thing as too much thinking about career or too much reflecting on it but there are good ways to think about it and bad ways to think about it and I generally think that a more iterative approach in which you try something and you gain experience and you gain some soft information and then revisit is really good. I would probably swap out some of the more explicit estimation stuff for that.

Final question. Listing some careers in general that occur to me as being very promising, so I purposefully got to this question late because I don't want people putting too much weight on this because this is complete guess work on my part. A few thoughts on this that I'll share anyway.

I think scientists are really important and there are not that many people who are capable of being really great scientist so if you're capable of it, I think strongly considering it is a good thing. I think I probably would have been wise to think a little bit more about that myself and I think I probably underestimated the amount of good scientists can do and that … so scientist and social scientist though I would say especially hard scientist.

Politicians, I think, are incredibly … like they just become … they get to a level of power that no 1 else has and I feel like the kind of skills it takes to become a politician are the kind of skills that the effective altruist community is deficient in so if you feel like you have a shot at that, that's a good thing to think about. However, the way to become a successful politician is often to become successful at something else first and do it in a way where you have a lot of friends, a lot of connections. You're well connected to your community. Thinking about what that path realistically looks like leads a lot back to some of the other advice I gave.

I think entrepreneurs can have huge impact. It amazes me how many companies are coming out of Silicon Valley now and just making ungodly amounts of money and changing the world in like really big scaled ways and becoming really prominent and there's a lot of them and it keeps happening. That just feels like a

field where it just feels like a higher percentage of those people make a big impact on the world and have a lot of success than in a lot of other fields.

Data science is something where it just seems like there is a lot of demand for it now and not so much supply of people who can do a good job, analyzing data, making predictions and probably as time goes on and we get better at collecting data, probably the demand for that will grow, not shrink, and because a lot of people have inertia and doing what their family did and what their friends did, the supply may not keep up with the demand.

Another really random 1 that I bumped into a lot is head hunting and recruiting so these are just something where it seems like a lot of people in this field … it seems like a really high percentage of them are really successful and it's so hard to find good employees and good talent to do the things you need to do and this is a universal thing at successful companies. I think these people create a ton of value. I also think they end up with killer networks like the job of a recruiter is basically being connected … a network gives you all kinds of power and options and they generally end up financially successful too and I've just been struck by how common that pattern is.

I don't know a lot of unsuccessful career recruiters. That could be total non-sense that's based on like observing people and meeting people but that's something to maybe think about and look into. And 1 other final idea is I think combining entrepreneur with a general sense of adventure and pushing yourself outside your comfort zone is an interesting thing to do, so if you're the kind of person who wants to start ventures, start a company, 1 approach is to move to Silicon Valley where there's a lot going on and even though there's a lot of people here, you still have a good chance of coming up with a new thing. If you're really good at it, I think you have a shot but another approach is to specifically do the opposite and take yourself out of what you would normally experience because a lot of what good entrepreneurship is, is finding a market need by experiencing it. GiveWell actually is that … GiveWell was … Elie and I were saying, "We want this thing to exist for our own personal use and it doesn't exist so let's create it."

It's a very common pattern for entrepreneurship and if you go into … if you go and take on a lifestyle that other entrepreneur types are unlikely to have, then you may see a need that they're not able to see. Examples of this would be like living in the developing world or just living in a lower rent part of your own country and just living a lifestyle that you wouldn't normally live, running into things that you didn't realize were missing pieces of the market, and then starting something up.

Those are some thoughts on interesting, promising career paths. Joey, do you want to weigh in? Star 6.

Joey: That addresses all my questions.

Holden   Okay. Cool. We're getting close to … being out of time. I'm going to take 1 or 2 more so just moving down the list … sorry, 1 second. We have [Anonymous]. What sort of professionals does the effective altruist movement greatly need? I think I've answered that 1 in previous discussion. How much money would I need to earn to give in order to offset the good work I could reasonably expect to have done as an innovative NGO worker, fundraiser or policy influencer? Is there a way to make a reasonable estimate?

I'm open to being wrong on this but my opinion is that it's probably not possible to make a reasonable estimate because it depends so much on what you would have done as an NGO worker and that depends so much on all these things you don't know about yourself and about the future.

I think the framework I've laid out for maximizing your general power and status and network and later on when you know more about what you have thinking about where to give it, I think is probably the more promising framework.

And then how can a humanities PhD break into an industry and make a positive difference. This is something where I'm not like … I'm unable to be all that helpful about this and I think I would just return to the points I was making before about just generally trying to look very broadly, network a lot, talk to a lot of people and consider a lot of things you wouldn't ordinarily consider and then for each of those things ask, okay, will this push me outside my comfort zone? Will this raise my status? Could this lead to good opportunities to do something down the line? Those are my responses on that.

Do you want to star 6 and comment? Okay.

Anon: Hello. Do you hear me?

Holden   Yeah. There you are.

Anon: Hi. Yeah. I think most of my questions were covered by your original comments, Holden, which were very helpful for me. I supposed I can second what you said earlier about philosophy PhDs being something where there is a serious oversupply, and many of us are having to look elsewhere but, of course, for an effective altruist, this is an opportunity to try to find something else.

I just have to figure out a way to market myself and I like the idea of both politics and marketing. Thanks.

Holden   Cool. Yeah. I think that points to another thing that I didn't think about before, which is another thing that I wish there were more info on is just very basic supply demand dynamics to the extent they're robust so when I think about what careers are promising and not, I mean Philosophy PhDs, it feels like there's a lot of supply relative to demand and that there's a lot of people doing it and the job market is tough and it's tight.

Entertainers, there is just a huge supply of people who want to do it versus how many spots there are at the top whereas to me, it kind of feels like with data scientists and with recruiters, it feels like the demand, it feels ahead of the supply. Certainly I wish GiveWell knew more good recruiters. Yeah. That's another thing to think about.

Those are some of the things that I think in theory explicit analysis could possibly help a lot with. I'm going to take … let's see. It's 1:29. I'm going to take 1 more that was emailed in from Ryan Gaines. This is, what is the largest hurdle preventing people from becoming effective altruists? Do we need more books, popular culture references, more opportunities to get involved, better products and companies, a different education system. I don't know and I think this is an interesting thing to think about because if you're passionate about effective altruism, thinking about how you could grow the movement is definitely a good thing.

I think effective altruism is pretty new. I think that's probably why it's small. I'm not sure why it's new. I kind of have some theories that I outlined in a blog post at 1 point which is the combination of people being able to see how wealthy they are relative to others and being able to see that they're able to do something about it. A lot of that has to do with better information and connectedness and that maybe what's driving some of this and more wealth and inequality in general.

So I feel like a lot of people just do not think abstractly enough to be an effective altruist. They're not able to combine empathy and emotion and wanting to help people with this kind of analytical approach and that may be a fundamental barrier but I also think that effective altruism is this very deep value set and people often form those deep value sets early in life and so finding ways to make people aware of this thinking earlier on when they're more open minded and certainly I like some of the work that's been done starting chapters at colleges and trying to get college students to engage with this stuff.

I feel like they're just … even though they're not immediately as influential, they're more open targets than a lot of other people so those are some quick thoughts on that. I also think the community has a lot of people who are really analytical and who are not particularly good at connecting to people, understanding people, marketing to people, framing things, telling stories, getting normal people excited, I am very weak in all these areas and I think that someone who's good at them, that would be really interesting and would be a great thing.

I'm not saying we have no people that are good at that but I think we could use more. Ryan do you want to star 6?

Ryan: Yeah. Thanks for that. That's helpful. I guess the only thing I would add is I think that there is potentially opportunity in finding ways where people can get involved even in a small or passive manner. What I'm thinking is that there's Warby Parker and TOMS Shoes - ways of contributing towards a social cause even if it's not what people are doing day-to-day. So I know the movement is really focused on having as much impact as possible but I think that there are ways to market to people and bring them in the fold even in smaller capacity.

Holden   Yeah. I agree with that and I think even the fact that you're saying that to me indicates a little bit more interest in how to connect to large number of people who don't think just like us … more interest than a lot of effective altruists have and that may be a hint that thinking about that stuff is a productive path for you.

Ryan: Thanks.

Holden   Yeah. I think we're just … we're more or less out of time. I tried to cover most of the questions. Apologies for anything I didn't cover. I'm happy to be pinged over email if you really want a response to some particular thing but thanks to everyone for coming. I'll probably send an email followup asking for your feedback. I'd love any thoughts and hopefully this was helpful to people. Thanks and have a good day.