

Your Career Future: A Self-Assessment Exercise

Many of us, whether we're looking to start our careers or we're in some state of career transition, look to the future. Our past can inform us, and we try very hard to live in the present, but we often can't help to glance ahead and think about future possibilities.

So now is a time to "glance ahead" – to think about what could be. This is a time where you are asked to dream, knowing that with hard work and persistence dreams can become reality.

Take some time to reflect on the questions below. Please know that these questions are strictly voluntary. Don't feel compelled to answer those questions that make you feel uncomfortable; ones you don't wish to discuss. Answer all other questions honestly and openly; knowing that these answers will help you look ahead and plan for your career future.

Your Dream Job

What is your dream job? Pretend that you could design your own job – duties, responsibilities, work hours, who you would be working with and where you would be working. Don't label this job with an official title. Don't worry about you lacking the skills, abilities or qualifications for this job. Simply describe what your dream job would be – with no barriers or constraints.

Your Work Environment

Pretend for a moment that you've just joined a relatively new organization in a position of interest to you (perhaps your dream job!). The organization is small, but over the next few years has plans for rapid expansion. It's a "forward-thinking" organization and they value the input of the small group of employees that currently work there (including you).

The organization wants to develop a "mission statement," as well as a set of core values that will direct and guide the organization over the next five years. They've come to you and asked for your input on both the mission and values that the organization should adopt and follow. What would you tell them?

Your Passions

What are your passions? Reflect on the times and situations in which you felt most passionate, energetic and engaged. Describe, in as much detail as you can, those times and situations.

Your Legacy

Visualize that it's your 80th birthday party. All of your family and close friends have come together in celebration of this momentous event. Testimonials are given about you – and your life to date. Take some time to record what you would want your family and friends to say about you.

Your Definition of Success

What is your definition of success? How will you know if/when you are successful? Does it have to do with wealth (money), power and control (position and status), helping others (making a difference in someone else's life), contentment (happiness with who you are and what you're doing)? Write your definition of success.

Barriers to Overcome

Now go back to your dream job. Write about the barriers that currently prevent you from having your dream job. What is standing in your way? Is it a lack of skills or qualifications for the position? Is it a lack of venture capital (to start your own business)? Is it your personal or family situation? Be as specific as you can.

Next Steps

Contact Clarkson University Career Center to schedule an appointment to discuss your answers and how they may help lead you to a productive and meaningful career.

Note: Career assessments, both formal and informal, do not provide magical answers regarding career choice. Career decision-making is often a complex puzzle, where multiple pieces need to come together to form a complete and clear picture. This career exercise represents one puzzle piece and is not intended to provide a complete picture of your career future.