

Work Values

For your work to be satisfying, it must be compatible with your values. For some people, money, power, and status make a job rewarding. Others must experience meaning or purpose in the work for a job to be satisfying. The following exercises contain lists of work and personal values that could form the basis of your career planning decisions.

Directions

Rate each work value using the following scale:

1 = Very important to have in my work

2 = Somewhat important to have in my work

3 = Unimportant to have in my work

A. Work conditions may permit or require the following:

___ **Independence/autonomy**—doing what you want to do without much direction from others

___ **Time flexibility**—arranging your own hours, working according to your own time schedule

___ **Change/variety**—performing varying tasks in a number of different settings

___ **Change/risk**—performing new tasks or leading new programs that challenge the established order and may be initially resisted

___ **Stability/security**—working in a secure job that pays you reasonably well

___ **Physical challenge**—performing dangerous tasks that challenge your physical capabilities

___ **Physical demands**—performing physically strenuous but relatively safe activities

___ **Mental challenge**—performing demanding tasks that challenge your intelligence and creativity

___ **Pressure**—performing in a highly critical environment with constant deadlines

___ **Precise work**—performing prescribed tasks that leave little room for error

___ **Decision making**—choosing what to do and how to do it

B. Individuals work for the following purposes:

___ To pursue **truth and knowledge**

___ To acquire **expertise and authority**

___ To use **creativity and innovativeness**

___ To foster **aesthetic appreciation**

___ To make **social contributions**

___ To acquire **material gain**

___ To seek **recognition**

___ To promote **ethics and morality**

___ To seek **spiritual and transpersonal gain**

C. Relationships at work may involve the following:

___ **Working alone**—doing assignments by yourself, with minimal contact with other people

___ **Public contact**—interacting in predictable ways with a continuous flow of people

___ **Developing close friendships** with coworkers

___ **Group membership**—belonging to a group with a common purpose or interest

___ **Helping** others

___ **Influencing** others

- ___ **Supervising** others
- ___ **Influencing** outcomes

Personal Values

Every time you choose to do one thing over another, you make a value judgment. Choosing between two or more conflicting values that are of major importance to you can be extremely difficult (e.g., career values may conflict with family and friendship values). You can make these decisions more effectively if you know your most important values. When your actions are in harmony with your values, you will feel more in control of your life and more satisfied with your decisions. The following exercise will help you better understand your personal values and their priority.

Directions

Using the following scale, rank each personal value according to its importance to you and place the number that corresponds to your rating in the appropriate space to the left of each personal value. <Place a underlined space or check box in front of each Value>

1 = Very important

2 = Somewhat important

3 = Not important

___ Good health

___ Close friendships

___ A large family

___ A fulfilling career

___ A stable marriage

___ Financial comfort

___ Independence

___ Creativity

___ Organized religion

___ Having children

___ A variety of interests and activities

___ Freedom to create my own lifestyle

___ Owning a house

___ A happy love relationship

___ Fulfilling careers for my partner and me

___ Contributing to my community

___ Abundance of leisure time

___ Flexibility to choose geographic location

___ A stable life

___ A life without stress

___ Strong religious values

___ A chance to make social changes

___ Be remembered for my accomplishments

___ Helping those in distress

___ Freedom to live where I wish

___ Time to myself

___ Enjoyment of arts, entertainment, and cultural activities

- ___ A life with many challenges
- ___ A life with many changes
- ___ Opportunity to be a leader
- ___ Good physical appearance
- ___ Opportunity to establish roots in one place
- ___ Opportunity for physical activities
- ___ An exciting life
- ___ A chance to get into politics
- ___ Live according to strong moral values
- ___ Opportunity to teach others
- ___ Write something memorable
- ___ A chance to become famous
- ___ Help others solve problems
- ___ Make lots of money

Now ask yourself the following questions and note your answers.

- Does your life right now reflect your values? Is the way you spend your time consistent with your priorities?
- If the way you spend your time is inconsistent with your priorities, how can you make it more consistent?
- Are there parts of your life that you would like to change but cannot right now? If so, what is your timetable for bringing your lifestyle more into harmony with your values?
- How do you think your most important personal values will affect your career choice?

Adapted for use from *Training for Life: A Practical Guide to Career and Life Planning*, seventh edition (2000), with permission from the authors, Bernadette M. Black and Fred J. Hecklinger.