

CAREER EXPLORATION
Revised 1-16-18

By

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CAREER EXPLORATION QUESTIONS

What aspects of what I am currently doing or most recently have done are satisfying to me?

What aspects am I dissatisfied with?

If a miracle happened one evening and I awoke the next morning with my fantasy career waiting, what do I see myself doing that day?

What can I honestly see myself doing and enjoying?

Who do I admire? Why?

One thing I have always done well is...

When thinking about next steps in a career choice (whether the same as before or different), am I willing/needing to:

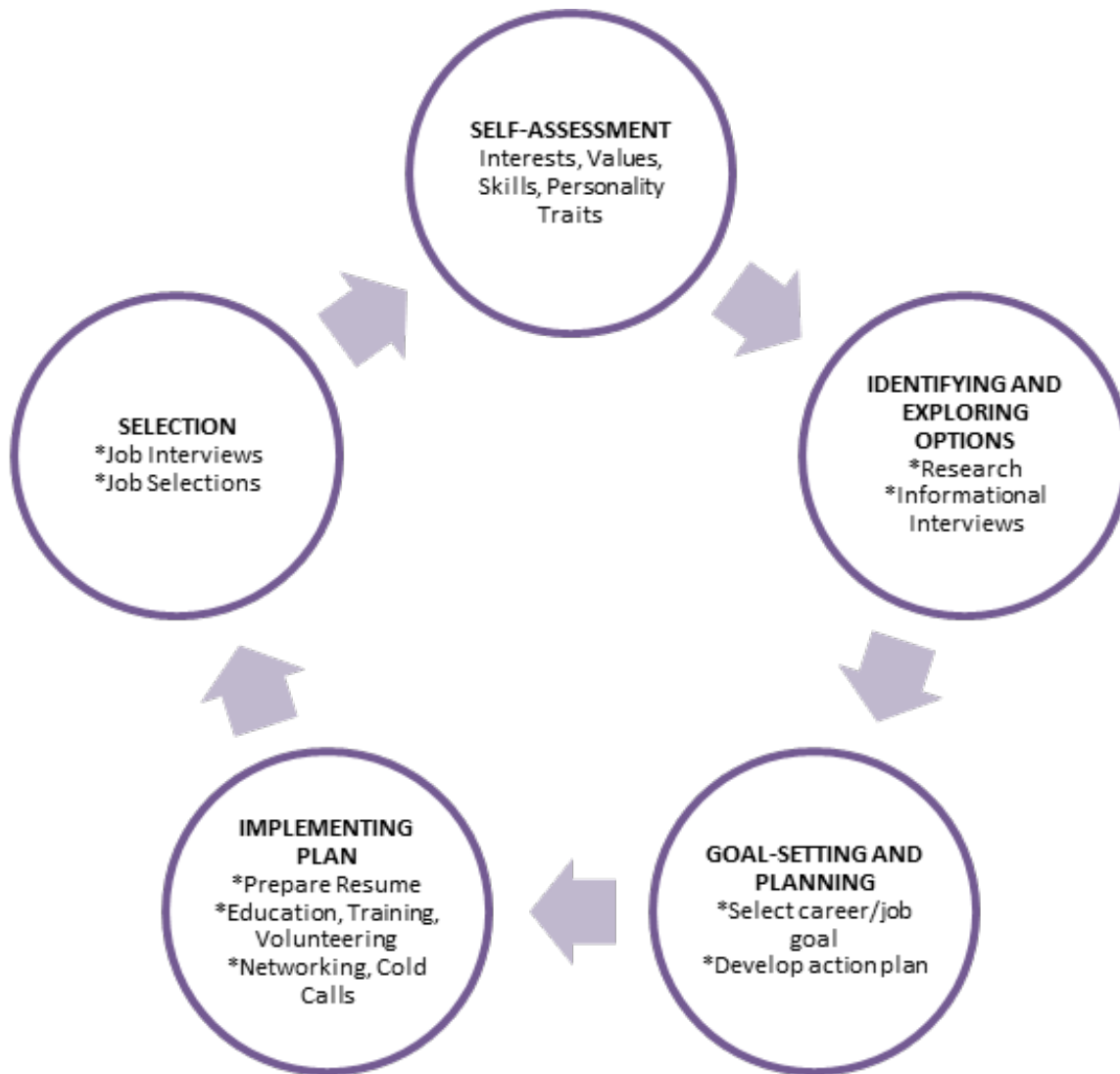
Further my education?

Travel/relocate?

How willing am I to take risks?

What small preparations can I begin today to help with my occupational switch?

CAREER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS



VALUES CLARIFICATION

Read the definitions of the work values listed in three categories below. Rate each work value according to its degree of importance to you. Use the following scale in assigning your ratings:

-
- 1 = unimportant in my choice of career
2 = somewhat important in my choice of career
3 = very important in my choice of career
-

Place the number corresponding to your rating in the appropriate space to the left of each work value.

A. Work Conditions. The conditions of work involve:

- _____ 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-performing regular, predictable tasks in a job you are assured of that pays you reasonably well.
- _____ Physical Challenge-performing dangerous tasks that challenge your physical capabilities and involve risk.
- _____ Physical Demands-performing physically strenuous, but relatively safe activities.
- _____ Mental Challenge-performing demanding task that challenge your intelligence and creativity.
- _____ Pressure/Time Deadlines-performing in a highly critical environment with constant time deadlines.
- _____ Precise Work-performing prescribed tasks that leave little room for error.
- _____ Decision Making-making choices about what to do and how to do it.

B. Work Purposes. The purpose of work is to:

- _____ Truth/Knowledge-pursue knowledge and understanding.
- _____ Expertise/Authority-see recognition as an acknowledged expert or leader in a particular area.
- _____ Creativity/Innovativeness-develop new and different ideas, programs, and/or structures.
- _____ Aesthetic Appreciation-see out the appreciation of beauty in all of its various forms.
- _____ Social Contributions-see to improve the human condition.
- _____ Material Gain-acquire and accumulate money or other material objects.
- _____ Achievement/Recognition-see public recognition for your work contributions.
- _____ Ethical/Moral-act in accordance with a set of moral and ethical standards.
- _____ Spiritual/Transpersonal-see beyond ordinary consciousness to a more spiritual plane.

VALUES CLARIFICATIONS (CONT)

C. Work Relationships. The relationships at work entail:

- _____ Work Alone-doing assignments by yourself with minimal contact with other people.
- _____ Public Contact-interacting in predictable ways with a continuous flow of people.
- _____ Close Friendships-developing strong interpersonal relationships with the people at work.
- _____ Group Membership-belonging to a group with a common purpose and/or interest.
- _____ Helping Others-assisting other people directly to obtain information and/or resolve problems.
- _____ Influencing Others-affecting others in ways designed to change attitudes or opinions.
- _____ Supervising Others-being in a position to oversee the work of other employees.
- _____ Controlling Others-maintaining some control or power over the destinies of other people.

List below all the values you rated a “3” for each category. Add any others that are important but which were not covered above.

<i>Work Conditions</i>	<i>Work Purposes</i>	<i>Work Relationships</i>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

CREATING AN ACCOUNT IN COLLEGE IN COLORADO

Type in the address line
www.collegeincolorado.org

Find the turquoise colored box on the right
Click on **Create an Account**

Step 1: Who are you? **Adult**

Step 2: Click on **FIND**. In the box under **Workforce Centers**, scroll to the bottom of the list. Choose **Workforce Boulder County**, Boulder or Longmont. Hit **Continue**, then hit **Next**.

Step 3: Complete account information.

Create user name; write it below for future reference. Use the first letter of your first name and your entire last name, all lower case, followed by the month and day of your birthday.
Your user name must be unique to College in Colorado.

Example: Jane Smith, April 7, would be **jsmith0407**

Account (User) Name: _____

Password: _____

Complete all Additional Information

Choose **Yes** or **No** on Scholarship info—your choice

Check the **Privacy Policy** box

Click on **Create Your Account**

Congratulations! You have created your account.

To take career planning assessments-

Click on **CAREER PLANNING**, then **Learn About Yourself** to see the choice of assessments

Choose **Interest Profiler**

To get your **Assessment Results**

Click on **Career Planning**, then click on **Learn About Yourself**, then click on **Interest Profiler**, just as if you were going to take the assessment again. Below the blue bar that says "**You previously completed the Interest Profiler on:**" Find the date. Click on the date to see your results.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

An informational interview is a way to gain information about a particular job by talking to people who are working in that field. It is not a job interview. After research, it is the best way to learn about a position and gather information that often couldn't be learned any other way.

An informational interview helps you decide if you want to do that type of work. Because companies, practices, and policies differ, it is important to talk with several people. Many interviews will help you to get specific information and compare facts. Plan to set up several interviews during your career search process.

Once you establish your career direction, you must research the career and prepare questions in advance. It is essential to talk with several people who are working in the same career before moving forward. Begin with names from your personal network or identify and contact local employers.

Since you are not seeking a job, informational interviews are less stressful. Most people enjoy talking about their jobs, so this type of interview is more like a pleasant conversation than a job interview.

It is recommended you do interviews in person rather than over the phone. An interview in person gives you the opportunity to see the work environment, which is an important part of a career decision.

How to Start

- Ask friends and relatives to give you names of people they know who are working in a field that interest you. Assure them you are not asking for a job, but just want information. Be sure to ask if you can use their name.
- Have your calendar ready to plan and confirm dates.
- Email or call the person. Tell them your name and who suggested you contact them.
- Ask for a day and time to come in and talk to them for 15 to 20 minutes.
- Prepare your questions in advance and take them with you to the interview in a notebook or folder. It is okay to take notes while you are conducting the interview.

Conducting the Interview

- Arrive a bit early, and take note of the time the interview actually starts.
- Ask questions from your prepared list of questions.
- Feel free to take notes, just be sure to inform them.

Closing the Interview

- Since you set up the interview, you are responsible for closing it. Watch the time. When the 15-20 minutes are up, thank the interviewer for his/her time.
- Remember to ask the person for a business card, which will give you the correct spelling of her/his name and an email address for a thank you note.
- Also, ask for the names of other people in the business/industry you can talk to regarding the career. Be sure to ask if you can use their name when emailing or calling. You may also ask if it would be okay for you to email or call back if you have additional questions.

After the Interview

It is important to sort out information and write it down immediately after the interview. Ask yourself questions like:

- What did I learn?
- Why is this person successful?
- What did I like about the career?
- What did not appeal to me?
- Is this the kind of work environment I want?
- Who do I need to email or call next?

Be sure to send a thank you note within 24 hours of the interview. You may e-mail your note or write it on a plain "Thank You" card, but it should be sent immediately.

Do as many networking informational interviews as you need to make a good decision. This process can also help you to decide on any additional training you may need, give you insight into the industry as well as practice for when you start doing job interviews.

SAMPLE EMAIL AND VOICE MAIL SCRIPTS

Email

Dear Mr. Leigh:

I am a technical professional and received your contact information from my friend Bob Smith who spoke highly of your expertise in the field of technical writing.

Although I'm not currently looking for a job, I am very interested in learning all I can about career paths in communications and what skills and experiences I should focus on gaining. Bob mentioned that you work as a Technical Writer and I would like to hear more about what you do.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you in person for 15 to 20 minutes to ask you a few questions about your role at Company XYZ, as well as other types of work in your field. Please let me know if an in person meeting will work for you and what day(s) and time(s) would work best for you.

I look forward to hearing from you soon and if I do not hear back from you within a few days, I will follow up with a phone call. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,
Mona Mustang

Voicemail

Hello Roger Johnson. My name is Sarah Benson. Sally Smith from the Art Department of C.S.U. suggested I call you. In the past, I worked as a Graphic Designer but have been pursuing other areas of interest over the last few years. I now would like to get back into the field and would like to learn about how I might use the skills obtained over the past few years back in the field of Graphic Design. I am not expecting to discuss a particular employment position, but would appreciate meeting with you for 15-20 minutes to talk to you on an informational basis.

I believe that I would be able to get the most out of a visit to your office if you would be willing to have me. Again, it would simply be information collecting.

Please let me know if a meeting is doable and if so, I could suggest some days/times that would work on my end. If you believe a morning or afternoon and a particular day(s) would be better, let me know. Otherwise, we could set up a time to chat on the phone and if that is the case, let me know what might work best for you.

Again, my name is Sarah Benson and I can be reached at (800) 222-0568. That number again is area code (800) 222-0568. I will follow up with an email as well.

Thanks and I look forward to connecting with you soon.

Best,
Sarah Benson

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SAMPLE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Here are some questions you may want to ask. Pick only the ones appropriate for each interview.

- * How did you get into this field/industry/position?
- * What qualifications/key skills are needed to do this job well?
- * What training/education/volunteer experience is helpful?
- * What personality traits do you think are needed to be effective in this job?
- * What are your duties and responsibilities?
- * What kind of tasks do you spend most of your time doing?
- * What do you like best about this job?
- * What is the most difficult aspect of this job?
- * Is your schedule flexible or set?
- * What types of work setting or work conditions are there?
- * What is a typical workday like?
- * How can people advance in this field and how far?
- * What are some things you would need to do to continue to grow in your field?
- * What is the average starting salary in this field?
- * What surprised you about this position?
- * Do you ever utilize interns in this office?
- * What major changes do you see ahead in this field?
- * What advice would you give to someone wanting to break into this field?
- * Is there anyone else you can suggest I might talk to in this field?
- * What would you do differently if you had it to do over again?

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING TIPS

Email or call friends and family to get a name of someone in the industry.

When you get a name, ALWAYS ask permission to use their name as a referral.

Write and practice a script for each email or call/voice mail. Include your name, who referred you, why you are emailing or calling, and what you need.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

SMILE when you talk to someone on the phone or leaving a voice mail.

Always be polite and always keep your cool.

If the person answers the phone, ask if they have a few minutes now. If not, ask for a good time to call back.

Sometimes people will need to think about names or other ways they can help. That's OK. Ask for a call back time. Be sure and follow up with them at that time. It is your job to follow up.

Send a thank you email!

DO NOT TAKE REJECTION PERSONALLY!

STRENGTHS ASSESSMENTS



In a culture that has focused on developing or fixing our weaknesses, the *StrengthsFinder™* invites people to begin focusing on what is right, and strong about people. “Based on Gallup’s 40-year study of human strengths, we created a language of the 34 most common themes and developed the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment to help people discover and describe these talents.”

This is a shift in thinking, and a shift in how most people engage others.

Why focus on your strengths? When we focus on strengths, we are *6 times more likely to be engaged in our work*. When people are more engaged at work, they have greater productivity and satisfaction. When people are more satisfied with their work, it positively impacts their relationships at work, at home and within the community. We believe this is the most important application of StrengthsFinder™ – its impact on relationships.

Taken from: <http://www.leadershipvisionconsulting.com/why-strengthsfinder/>

Overall Strengths explanation: <http://strengths.gallup.com/110440/about-strengthsfinder-20.aspx>

Link to purchase the StrengthsFinder questionnaire (Cost is \$19.99):
<https://www.gallupstrengthscenter.com/Purchase/en-US/Product>

Interested in taking the StrengthsFinder 2.0 workshop? Email Jenn Underwood junderwood@bouldercounty.org or Claire Benton at cbenton@bouldercounty.org to register.



FREE version through Via Survey

Overall VIA explanation: <http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths/VIA-Classification>

VIA free survey: <http://www.viacharacter.org/Survey/Account/Register>

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POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY / DARING WAY

Positive Psychology

Positive psychology refers to a branch in psychology that focuses on helping people to lead happy, healthy and prosperous lives. Positive psychology uses scientific evidence to implement interventions that promote the flourishing of families and communities.

Positive psychology is a relatively new discipline that deals with topics such as mindfulness, optimism, hope, resilience, human virtues, character strength and positive thinking. Research in positive psychology reveals that spending money on others causes feelings of well-being and happiness. Strength of character and social relationships help people to overcome challenges and disappointments. Positive psychology is also based on evidence that engaging in meaningful and purposeful work makes people happier. People are happier when they show gratitude and humanity.

Authentic Happiness

Research, information, resources (books, etc.), assessments, videos, etc.:
<https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/home>

Happy Secret to Better Work

We believe we should work hard in order to be happy, but could we be thinking about things backwards? Psychologist Shawn Achor argues that, actually, happiness inspires us to be more productive.

TED Talk by Shawn Achor :

https://www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work?language=en

Brene Brown

Books:

Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead

Rising Strong

Website: <http://brenebrown.com/>

TED Talks: <http://www.ted.com/talks?q=brene+brown&sort=newest> and search for all Brene Brown videos to find more

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Keirsey Temperament Sorter

www.keirsey.com

Personality questionnaire; free for limited results, a fee for expanded results.

16 Personalities

<https://www.16personalities.com/>

Free personality assessment

***Do What You Are* - book by Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron**

Provides information on personality types, as described in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Keirsey Sorter. Available in your local library.

College In Colorado

www.collegeincolorado.org

A free website dedicated to providing adults and students with an interest assessment and other tools to help decide on a career focus. Also included is information on choosing and applying to colleges and obtaining financial aid.

O*NET

<https://www.onetonline.org/>

The O*NET program is the nation's primary source of occupational information. It contains information on hundreds of standardized and occupation-specific descriptors. The database is continually updated by surveying a broad range of workers from each occupation. It is an interactive application for exploring and searching occupations.

LMI Gateway

www.colmigateway.com

A powerful labor market information system. The system provides fast access to a complete set of labor market research tools on one web site.

Workforce Boulder County Website Career Resources

<http://www.wfbc.org/career-resources/>

More than 100 useful links to help you with every aspect of your job search.

Additional Career Exploration workshops

Strengths Finder and/or the **Myers Briggs** workshops are available by special request. Email Jenn Underwood junderwood@bouldercounty.org or Claire Benton at cbenton@bouldercounty.org to register.

CAREER EXPLORATION PROCESS – WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

Trust Yourself to Know the Best Path for You

Spend time in the research process.

Keep an open mind. Research all the job titles that came up as an interest for you.

Look at each job title on Onetonline.org to see the related job titles listed for that position. Those job titles may be of interest to you as well.

Decide if this is a career job or a survival job (if you are considering a survival job).

Be sure and check the Money & Outlook section on collegeincolorado.org to make an informed decision regarding the number of openings available in the field.

Remember to check your work situations and match those to the job you are researching. How good a fit is the job in that regard?

How well does the career path or job match your personality type?

WHEN You Have a Few Job Titles/Careers Picked Out

Schedule informational interviews with several different people in each field.

Think about and prepare questions to ask in the interview that will help you decide if this career is for you. Use this opportunity to fill up the holes in your knowledge (including education & salary).

Keep in mind that you are giving people the opportunity to help you in this process. Ask yourself, "What can I offer to others in return"? It doesn't have to be the same people who helped you.

Start Forming a Plan

If you find you need training, start that process. Check with an Employment Advisor to see if grant money is available for the training.

Once you have a clear job target it is good to get your resume up to date. Sign up for a class now.

Make sure your LinkedIn profile matches your new career focus.

Start networking! If you are unsure about how to do that, sign up for the Job Search Safari.

Remember, jobs are found through networking. Do not spend days online applying to positions. It is largely a waste of time.

Good Luck!