SELF KNOWLEDGE

“Know thyself.”
- PLATO

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”
- OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

“Make it thy business to know thyself, which is the most difficult lesson in the world.”
- MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

“I think somehow we learn who we really are and then live with that decision.”
- ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

“Your life is a process of maturing, developing and growing. You have unique characteristics, needs and goals. The lifestyle or career that is best for a friend, parent or relative may not be the best for you. It is important that YOU make decisions based on YOUR OWN evaluation of the direction that you want to take in life.”
- HECKLINGER & BLACK

“To know oneself, one should assert oneself.”
- ALBERT CAMUS

“Until you truly know yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, what you want to do and why you want to do it, I promise you, you can’t succeed in any but the most superficial sense of that word. You are your own raw material. When you know yourself, you are ready to invent yourself.”
- WARREN BENNIS

SELF-UNDERSTANDING

Effective career and life planning begins with a firm determination of who you are. A strong sense of self-awareness will give you the confidence you need to plan your future. The first step is a true understanding of yourself. Of all the people in the world worth knowing, you should know yourself best. When we gain better insight into ourselves, we can see more clearly the world around us. Self-understanding is also the first step toward better understanding of others. When we have a sense of who we are, we are better able to make decisions about things that affect our lives. We are able to make important choices concerning such things as academic major, marriage, lifestyle and career direction. Knowing yourself prepares you to be more effective in making decisions and setting goals.
FINDING YOUR NICHE

Knowing yourself means identifying your unique characteristics, traits, and qualities. Understanding yourself means defining yourself. Self knowledge and self understanding are the keys to finding your niche. Finding your niche means discovering how your personality relates to the outside world. Finding your niche means discovering your purpose or meaning in the world. When you are able to draw parallels between your personality and your environment you begin to understand how you fit into the grand scheme of things.

"Self-knowledge means being conscious of your personality characteristics in general and your interests, abilities, and values in particular. Personality is the sum total of all your unique qualities and traits or all the physical, mental, and behavioral characteristics you possess."
-ROBERT LOCKE

"Once you begin to identify what energizes you about life you can then begin to incorporate those insights into a career. Self-awareness is the first stage of the career planning process."
-SUKIENNIK, BENDAT & RAUFMAN

"The best approach to the process of career planning is first to examine who you are and what you know about yourself and what you need and want, and then mesh that information with the world of work."
-SUKIENNIK, BENDAT & RAUFMAN

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The process of getting to know who you are involves acknowledging your unique self. It is not uncommon for many individuals to possess the same educational background and similar work experiences. What makes an individual unique are personal characteristics. These personal characteristics are another dimension of a person's qualifications and potential for success in a given career field. Education, work experience, family and environment are the major factors influencing an individual's personal characteristics. All experiences help shape people's view of themselves which are projected in career and life choices. They are revealed through interests, skills and values. They are expressed as personality.

PERSONALITY

Personality is what makes you who you are. Your personality is determined by a variety of influences. A combination of many factors affect your personality. Your individuality and uniqueness are defined by your personality. Your personality helps establish who you are. Who you are depends a great deal on such things as family, culture, environment, education, genetics and experience. Your personality type is reflected in your disposition, temperament, preferences, orientation and attitude. It determines how you live, love and work.

Vocational preferences are expressions of personality. The choice of a particular occupation expresses an individual's motivation, knowledge of a particular subject and personal abilities. Work environments vary as much as individual personality traits. The goal, then, is to move people toward work environments that permit them to develop their abilities, project their
personal values and become involved in activities of interest. Job satisfaction comes from working in a compatible work environment. People invest a lot of their time and energy in their work. People tend to project views of themselves and the world onto their occupational titles. Through proper self-assessment, individuals can be classified into a particular personality type category, and thus be matched with a compatible occupational environment.

**MATCH GAME**

"Where your talents and the needs of the world cross, there lies your vocation."
-ARISTOTLE

Effective goal setting and decision making begin with a serious consideration of one's interests, skills and values. These personal characteristics, when integrated with real world options, become the starting point for career and life planning. Effective career and life planning seeks to match your unique personality with specific job requirements.

**TAKING STOCK**

Self-assessment is the starting block. It is analysis of one's interests, skills and values. Conducting a self-assessment is like taking a personal inventory of one's self. It requires that you take stock of what you have on hand. The reason you prepare a self-assessment is to determine the most important criteria to use in analyzing your potential career options. The goal is arrive at an optimal match between your personal desires and your career alternatives. Inventories are checklists. They are useful in helping you identify the words that best describe your interests, skills and values.

"The career and life planning process involves gathering information so that you can make realistic decisions based on facts and self-knowledge rather than on your own feelings or the suggestions of others."
-HECKLINGER & BLACK

"Career life planning focuses on a significant number of factors that influence career choice. Setting priorities and goals for career life planning, developing ultimate life designs, and setting long-range and short-term goals are major choice objectives. In career life planning, values, interests, abilities, achievement, and work-life experiences are viable factors to discuss, evaluate, and clarify in order to make career life planning determinations."
-VERNON ZUNKER

"What the world needs is more people who know what they really want to do, and who do it at their place of work as their chosen work. The world needs more people who feel true enthusiasm for their work -- People who have taken the time to think out what they uniquely can do, and what they uniquely have to offer the world."
-RICHARD BOLLES / What Color Is Your Parachute?
ACTIVITIES

Every job is made up of activities. Activities consist of interests and skills. Activities that you like to do are called interests. Activities that you are good at doing are called skills.

Think about the activities that you perform on a daily basis. Which ones are your favorite? Which ones are you particularly good at? Which ones do you particularly enjoy? Think about individual activities you have performed in the past. Perhaps you performed these activities in a job, on a volunteer project, as part of a hobby or in everyday life. Ask yourself some important questions: How did it turn out? Was it fun? Did I do it better than most people? Have I been asked to do it again? Have I shown other people how to do it?

It is helpful to examine in detail three important concepts... Interests... Skills... Values...

INTERESTS

"Why can't a person do for a living what he would otherwise do for a summer vacation?"
- MARK TWAIN

"Do something you'd do for nothing. Do something you think will bring you satisfaction and the kind of pride in achievement that keeps you vitally absorbed in what you're doing. Do something that makes you glad to be alive. Do something you love to be doing. Do something you'd do for nothing and you will have found a gateway to real and lifelong happiness."
- JOYCE LAIN KENNEDY

"Thanks for helping me live my life like a song."
- JIMMY BUFFETT

Interests are represented by activities that you like to do.
Interests are things you have a particular passion for.
Interests are things you find desirable, enjoyable, fun or pleasant.
Interests may be oftentimes reflected in your hobbies, recreation and other leisure pursuits.
Developing interests adds variety, energy and enrichment to your lifestyle. What things interest you most? You can identify your interests by considering how you like to spend your time. Think of those things you enjoy doing, things that you would choose to do if you did not have other demands on your time. What activities have you made time for? In what ways do you pursue your interests? What activities fulfill your interests? How are your interests expressed?

"Because your personality reflects your interests, you feel energetic and enthusiastic when doing your favorite activities. Success is unlikely unless you are using skills you naturally enjoy in a compatible working environment. Have you ever noticed how hard it is just to get out of bed in the morning when you have nothing interesting to look forward to? People who enjoy their work tend to be healthier, both physically and emotionally, than those who view work as a rat race."
- BORCHARD, KELLY & WEAVER / Your Career: Choices & Changes
FOLLOW YOUR BLISS

"If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track, which has been there all the while waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living."
-JOSEPH CAMPBELL

"If you do what you like, you never really work. Your work is your play."
-HANS SAYLE

"Everyone has been made for some particular work, and the desire for that work has been put in every heart."
-RUMI

"As soon as possible, begin doing work that you love and enjoy."
-LAURENCE BOLDT

OCCUPATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

For the purpose of developing a universal set of definitions related to the variety of activities individuals enjoy doing, interests can be grouped into six different categories or occupational environments.

REALISTIC
Activities that are hands-on, manual, physical, tactile, athletic, or mechanical. Working outdoors or with machines, tools, or animals.

INVESTIGATIVE
Activities that are scientific, scholarly, analytical, technical, or intellectual. Thinking, researching, reading, experimenting, exploring, or solving problems.

ARTISTIC
Activities that are creative, innovative, aesthetic, expressive, and spontaneous. Working with ideas, concepts, feelings, and imagination.

SOCIAL
Activities that are oriented to relationships, interaction, teamwork, service, or education. Helping, supporting, teaching, or developing people. Improving society.

ENTERPRISING
Activities that involve selling, public speaking, or business. Working to lead, manage, control, persuade, influence, motivate, promote, guide, or direct.

CONVENTIONAL
Activities that are orderly, structured, efficient, organized, logical, precise, or detail-oriented. Working with mathematics, numbers, statistics, data, regulations, or rules.
SKILLS

"We were meant to work in ways that suit us, drawing on our natural talents and abilities as a way to express ourselves and contribute to others. This work is a key to our true happiness and self-expression."
-MARSHA SINETAR / Do What You Love, The Money Will Follow

Skills are represented by activities that you are good at doing.
Skills are expressed as abilities, strengths, talents and aptitudes.
Skills determine expertise, competency, proficiency and dexterity.
Skills may be defined in terms of mastery, power, knowledge and intelligence.
Skills are oftentimes reflected in your accomplishments and achievements.

Possessing skills builds your self-confidence and self-esteem. What activities are you particularly good at doing? You can identify your skills by considering your successes. Think of those things you perform well, things you have a special capacity for doing with excellence. Think of abilities you have developed through study and practice. What special talents do you possess? What activities represent your skills? In what ways do you seek to develop your skills? What things are you able to do better than others?

SUCCESS

Your personal successes are a direct reflection of your skills. In seeking to identify activities that may represent your skills, it may be helpful to begin by analyzing your accomplishments and achievements. In what ways have you been successful? Consider some recent successes from any area of your life. What motivated you? What skills and abilities were used? Who helped? What were the external circumstances? What were the rewards? How did you feel about it?

"Every man has his own vocation. Talent is the call."
-RALPH WALDO EMERSON

"The secret of joy in work is contained in one word -- excellence. To know how to do something well is to enjoy it."
-PEARL BUCK

"To the extent that your work takes into account the needs of the world, it will be meaningful; to the extent that through it you express your unique talents, it will be joyful."
-LAURENCE BOLDT / How To Find The Work You Love

"Although almost everyone is uniquely talented, most of us have only a vague awareness of what our skills really are. It's unlikely that we will realize our unique potentials unless we are clear about what skills we possess. Understanding our unique skills can help us choose a career or see how our skills might transfer from one field, occupation or job to another."
-BORCHARD, KELLY & WEAVER
SKILL AREAS

Consider the following general skills categories. In this grouping, one is asked to consider whether he/she prefers to work with data, people, ideas or things.

DATA Numerical, statistical, precision, mathematics
PEOPLE Social, service, interpersonal, initiating, managing
IDEAS Creative, conceptual, innovative, artistic, expressive
THINGS Scientific, physical, manual, technical, mechanical

SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Self-management skills are personal traits or characteristics. These skills are specific to your personality and do not depend on any particular job or occupation.

inventive  efficient  flexible  careful
tenacious  logical  spontaneous  conscientious
Teachable  versatile  responsible  cautious
Kind  alert  honest  confident
Thorough  daring  sociable  clear-thinking
Precise  loyal  forceful  competitive
tactful  trustworthy  intuitive  clever
Dominant  imaginative  helpful  analytical
Quick  ambitious  outgoing  adventurous
Accurate  cooperative  conservative  determined
Adaptable  active  tolerant  industrious
Rational  tough  strong  energetic
Mature  patient  reliable  firm
Resourceful  friendly  sensible  organized
Supportive  assertive  empathetic  creative

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Functional skills are work-related skills that are transferable from one occupation to another. These skills can be applied in a number of different work settings.

designing  helping others  creating displays
Information processing  fundraising  organizing data
Record keeping  filing  interviewing
Recruiting  developing budgets  dancing
Public speaking  generating ideas  selling
Motivating others  cooking  debating
Lecturing  financial planning  team building
Singing  providing care  landscaping
Providing leadership  manipulating numbers  proofreading
Making decisions  managing conflict  analyzing data
Running  investigating  writing
Values are represented by activities that are important to you. Values are reflected in your beliefs, priorities, attitudes, feelings and principles. Values relate to your dispositions, orientations and preferences. Values address what really matters most to you in your life and what is essential.

Clarifying values provides the criteria by which you determine meaning in your life. What is important? What is essential? What do I believe? What makes me happy? What do I need? What really matters to me? What are my guiding principles? Are your activities consistent with your system of values? Are you able to derive meaning from the activities in which you are engaged?

Values Clarification

Values are feelings. Feelings relate to facts, things, thoughts, people and concepts. What is important in life? Some people might say: family, friends, love, security, comfort, community and leisure. Others might say: career, money, time, education and marriage. Values represent important aspects of your life. Values inevitably and quite properly call forth deep personal convictions.

Values help people make choices. Values help us prioritize the factors in our lives. Values help us determine the relative importance of things which impact upon our daily lives. Recognizing and defining your values helps you get a handle on your own self awareness. People will generally make decisions based on a value system. It is important, therefore, to determine for yourself what principles guide major decisions in your life. To make better decisions you need to start clarifying the basis upon which your decisions will be made. Most major decisions involve value conflicts.

"Few people really know what they want in life because they have never really taken the time and effort to determine what matters in their lives. To determine what you want, you must first know what is important in your life... the values that give your life meaning and relevance."
-Borchard, Kelly & Weaver

"We cannot separate our philosophy of life from the practical choices we make about career."
-Laurence Boldt
"A crucial component to your personal joy is establishing well-defined life goals that reflect what is important to you."
-WAITLEY & WITT

"If you can bring your actions and life choices into harmony with your values, you will feel more in control of your life and more satisfied with the decisions you make."
-HECKLINGER & BLACK

PERSONAL VALUES

Consider this list of personal values. They represent various aspects of life that are generally important to most people. As you read this list, are you able to identify some items that are more important than others?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>justice</th>
<th>independence</th>
<th>honesty</th>
<th>family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>health</td>
<td>financial security</td>
<td>leisure</td>
<td>personal appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power</td>
<td>accomplishment</td>
<td>love</td>
<td>spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friendship</td>
<td>recognition</td>
<td>intimacy</td>
<td>social consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creativity</td>
<td>adventure</td>
<td>morality</td>
<td>truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prestige</td>
<td>exciting life</td>
<td>inner harmony</td>
<td>comfortable life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>success</td>
<td>fame</td>
<td>religion</td>
<td>education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>career</td>
<td>integrity</td>
<td>community service</td>
<td>beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal authority</td>
<td>variety</td>
<td>marriage</td>
<td>stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freedom</td>
<td>pleasure</td>
<td>time</td>
<td>nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affiliation</td>
<td>loyalty</td>
<td>intellect</td>
<td>responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>autonomy</td>
<td>public contact</td>
<td>clean work setting</td>
<td>political involvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIFE VALUES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement</th>
<th>Accomplishing something important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>Seeking challenging new experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>Appreciating beauty in all its forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>Giving and receiving love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Genuinely being yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Having meaningful and challenging work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Freedom to express new ideas &amp; develop new things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Heritage</td>
<td>Appreciating your ethnic background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Reward</td>
<td>Earning a high rate of compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Strength</td>
<td>Managing your feelings in positive ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Living</td>
<td>Living morally and justly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise</td>
<td>Being good at something worthwhile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Having a strong bond thru shared heredity &amp; experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>Affiliating and associating with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Orientation</td>
<td>Seeking to learn what the future holds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Fitness</td>
<td>Actively maintaining vitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner Serenity</td>
<td>Seeking peace within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Maintaining congruence of your words with deeds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intellect  Possessing knowledge and a keen & lively mind  
Leadership  Having influence or authority over others  
Orderliness  Living an organized life  
Personal Freedom  Making choices independently  
Personal Growth  Continuing self exploration and development  
Personal Safety  Being safe from bodily or physical harm  
Pleasure  Enjoying leisure activities  
Recognition  Being known by others  
Risk Taking  Seeking excitement by living on the edge  
Security  Having a stable future  
Self Confidence  Feeling positive about oneself  
Service  Contributing to the welfare of others  
Spirituality  Seeking the ultimate meaning in life  
Variety  Seeking change in activities and surroundings  
Wisdom  Seeking mature understanding

IDEAL SITUATION

"Everything has its own place and function. That applies to people... Although many don't seem to realize it, stuck as they are in the wrong job, the wrong marriage, or the wrong house. When you know and respect your own inner nature, you know where you belong. You also know where you don't belong.”
-BENJAMIN HOFF / Tao of Pooh

"Doing the work you love means living your philosophy. It means putting your values to work by determining to make what you do reflect who you really are.”
-LAURENCE BOLDT

"If there is such a thing as true happiness, it is in knowing you're in the right place.”
-FANNIE FLAGG

THE RIGHT PLACE

Getting in touch with your work values can be as simple as imagining the factors that make up the ideal job. Consider your typical workday and imagine the ideal conditions, activities, setting, people and supervisor.

What kind of place would I like to work in? What type of work would I like to do? What type of people would I like to work with? What skills would I like to use? What type of organization would I like to work for? What purposes would I like my organization to serve? What management style would I like my supervisor to have?

It is not only helpful to imagine the ideal situation regarding your workday, but it may also be helpful to consider factors you want to avoid. In other words, it might be useful to imagine the characteristics of the "not-so-ideal" job. What activities, people and situations would you absolutely not want? What type of work would you want to avoid? What type of organization would you want to avoid?
JOB VALUES

In choosing a career path, it is important to consider what you value most about your work. What must your work have to make it rewarding for you? Some types of careers are incompatible with some people’s values. Knowledge of your values helps you determine the relative satisfaction you derive from a career. Knowing what really matters to you is an important part of your career decision. Job and occupation values are related to the kind of work you might do and where you might work. The factors to consider are:

- Contribution To Society
- Leadership
- Security
- Challenge
- Training
- High Income
- Leisure
- Variety
- Easy Commute
- Pleasant Co-Workers
- Independence
- Prestige
- Advancement
- Flexible Hours
- Staying Put

CAREER & LIFE

"When what we are is what we want to be, that's happiness."
-MALCOLM FORBES

"Life is an integrated whole. We fool ourselves if we think it can be divided into discrete segments or compartments. Each area of our lives affects all the others. The unhappiness that results from a frustrating experience of work cannot be contained; it spills across the entire spectrum of our lives. On the other hand, doing work you love promotes happiness in other seemingly unrelated areas of your life. Once you have identified the work you love and have begun taking positive steps to realize it, you can set about balancing it with other important aspects of your life."
-LAURENCE BOLDT

In seeking satisfaction and happiness in your life’s work, it is important to consider such factors as personality, self-esteem and lifestyle. Your career and your life are not separate entities, but, instead should be inter-related and integrated. What we are and what we do must be consistent if we expect to find happiness.

BALANCE

"If you are going to let the fear of poverty govern your life . . . your reward will be that you will eat, but you will not live."
-GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

"I think the person who takes a job in order to live -- that is to say, just for the money -- has turned himself into a slave."
-JOSEPH CAMPBELL

"To live your life to its fullest, you must find a way to put your heart and soul into your work. Failing to find the work you love has costs, not only to your self-esteem, relationships, health,
and creativity, but to your world. As a human community, we all lose when people's creative abilities do not find expression in constructive, purposeful action."
-LAURENCE BOLDT

"Achieving a healthy sense of balance in our lives is central to overall success and happiness. It is important, therefore, that we seek equilibrium among such major factors in our lives as career, leisure, family, and community."
-HECKLINGER & BLACK

LIFESTYLE

"The degree of satisfaction which you get from your work directly affects the degree of health and vitality in the rest of your life."
-TOM JACKSON

What kind of life do you want to live? A well-developed, balanced lifestyle may hold the key to future success, happiness and fulfillment. Therefore, In considering any career or life decisions, it is very useful to evaluate what lifestyle considerations are important to you.

Is your career compatible with your lifestyle? Does your career give you adequate time, energy and space to pursue your lifestyle? How can you structure your life and career so that you can fulfill your lifestyle priorities?

Your total lifestyle is key to your life satisfaction and to your general mental and physical well-being. It is important to maintain a variety of interests and activities outside of your work that can form the basis of a well-rounded lifestyle. Integrating your career and your lifestyle is vital to your ultimate happiness.


Michael Lebeau / 2011
Career Services / Birmingham-Southern College