



# DISCERN YOUR CALLING, LIVE YOUR PURPOSE

Using PathwayU™ to Tell Your Career Story

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## BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

The writing prompts in this workbook offer you an opportunity to understand your scores and career matches generated by your PathwayU™ profile on a deeper level. They do so by inviting you to reflect on how the information fits with your personal experience, and how it weaves into your personal life story. It is important to know what to expect before diving into this workbook.

1. You will **reflect on your purpose and your calling:**
  - Your **PURPOSE** can be described as your intention to accomplish something that matters deeply to you and that benefits the world.
  - Your **CALLING** can be described as a pathway for expressing your purpose in ways that make the world better.
2. You should **spend some quality time** responding to the questions. Like most everything in life, the more you put in to this kind of personal reflection, the more you will get out of it. Moving quickly through the questions will offer you something of value, but taking your time and being really thoughtful about your responses will benefit you the most, by far. Research on reflective writing shows that devoting 20 minutes a day for several days in a row offers a cadence that leads to positive outcomes. [1] One way to accomplish this pace is to complete this workbook one module per day over the course of a week. But, feel free to adjust your pace to meet your own needs.
3. You should plan to **revisit your responses.** Making decisions about your education, career, and life is truly a process—it requires ongoing time and effort. This workbook is not intended to give you THE answer for what your calling is for your career. Rather, our goal is to get you thinking about the right kinds of questions. The more deeply you reflect on the kinds of questions in this workbook, the more likely the answers you are looking for will emerge. Nevertheless, it may help to come back to the questions from time to time, re-reading your responses and adding to or changing them where necessary.

4. Although you are responsible for your own decisions about your life, you should **enlist the support of people who care about you**, and avoid engaging in this process entirely on your own. Some of the questions in this workbook are really challenging, and talking it through with others prior to writing a response—especially with a counselor, advisor, significant other, or trusted mentor—can help you sort through your thoughts and put them into words. It is hard to make wise career decisions in a vacuum, and lots of research suggests that leaning on important others—people who want the best for you and who have your best interests in mind—can make a tremendous difference. [2] We will come back to this point later in the workbook.

5. Many of the items in this workbook invite you to **apply your assessment results to your personal experience**. Doing so helps make your results more tangible, and also provides you with a chance to evaluate their accuracy. Some questions ask you to reflect on your past work experience. If you haven't yet experienced employment, think about volunteer experiences you have had instead, or simply write "not yet applicable" and continue to the next item.



## GOALS FOR THE PROCESS

Before going further, take a minute and write down a few goals you have for this process. Make sure they are challenging but achievable, and commit to them. The following are some goals that many people write down. If any apply to you, feel free to add them to your list of goals. But, your goals should really be **your** goals!

*“Clarify my interests and values.”*

*“Articulate my sense of purpose.”*

*“Gain a clearer understanding of myself.”*

*“Learn a process that will help me make wise choices.”*

*“Find insight on how people experience me.”*

*“Begin to gain a sense of direction.”*

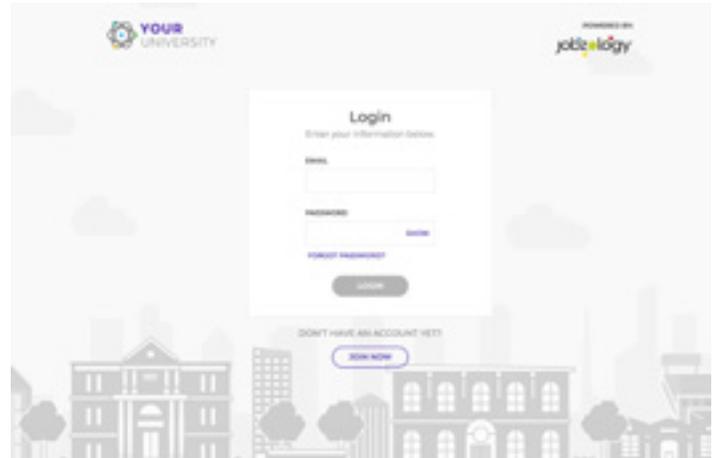
*“Learn about career paths that fit me well.”*

*“Figure out what my next steps should be.”*

► My goals for this process are to:

## PART 1 | GIFTS

An important initial step in discerning a calling is clarifying your gifts, those personal attributes that make you unique. Start by completing all four of your PathwayU™ assessments. After you complete them, spend some time exploring the feedback provided along with your results. Once you have a grasp of your assessment results, respond to prompts 1-5 below.



### 1. INTERESTS

Your Interests describe what you enjoy. Think carefully about your results—what you scored high on, what you scored low on. Part of living a life of joy and purpose means always finding ways to satisfy your interests.

- ▶ How do these scores reflect your experience in your life right now? Write a few sentences in response to this question. Don't worry about punctuation and grammar, and remind yourself that there are no right or wrong answers. Just get your thoughts down.

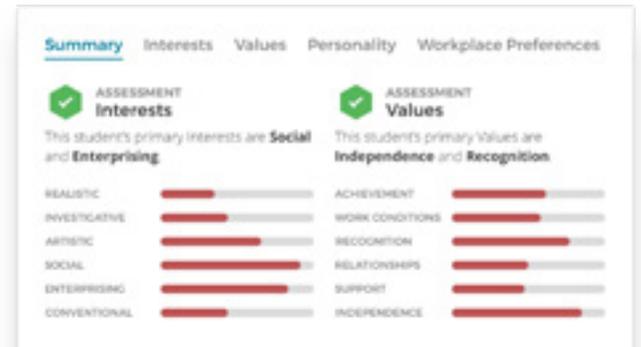
**EXAMPLE** | *Liz wrote: "My scores are highest on Social and Artistic interests, and lowest on Conventional. I really love helping people, and right now I volunteer as a tutor for a really sweet 3rd-grader (Social). I also have a creative spirit, and I like to decorate spaces and sing in choir (Artistic). But wow, I hate keeping track of details (Conventional)."*

- ▶ Now reflect a little on the work activities, hobbies, or school subjects you've really enjoyed over the last few years. Write about an experience or two you have had that helps illustrate your high scores.

**EXAMPLE | Liz:** *"I've always loved helping people. For example, I worked as a camp counselor for my first job (Social). I also have a stack of sketchbooks I've filled with drawings, just for fun (Artistic)."*

## 2. VALUES

Your values refer to what you find deeply important in a work environment. Take a look at your results, especially your high scores. For you to experience joy, meaning and purpose in your career, it is really important that these values are satisfied.



- ▶ After you reflect on your scores, maybe in light of your current work experience (if relevant), write a couple of sentences to describe how these scores fit with what you observe in your life right now.

**EXAMPLE |** *Santiago wrote: "My highest scores are for Support and Achievement. I definitely don't get along with my manager right now, and all the time, I wish I had a more competent boss, someone who is actually fair (Support). But I do feel good about my job when I am making the most of my abilities and when I feel like my work accomplishes something that actually matters (Achievement)."*

- ▶ Now think about jobs that you've held in the past. In the most satisfying job you have had, how well were your values met? How well were your values met in the job you disliked the most? If a volunteer experience is more relevant for you, write about that.

**EXAMPLE |** *Santiago: "One summer I worked for a remodeling contractor who was a super-nice guy, and very encouraging (Support). I felt really proud when I helped transform a space so that it really looked awesome (Achievement)."*

### 3. PERSONALITY

Your personality traits reflect how you typically think, feel and act over time and across situations. Your personality can help you understand what kind of work environments allow you to “be who you are,” like a fish swimming with the current instead of against it. Consider your results carefully—the dimensions on which you scored high, the ones on which you scored low, and the ones with mid-range scores.

- ▶ In what ways does your life experience illustrate your pattern of scores? Give it a shot—Think about your personality, and write a few sentences in response to this question.

**EXAMPLE |** Sean wrote: “I scored mid-range on Openness; high on Conscientiousness, Extraversion and Agreeableness; and low on Emotional Stability. I would say I’m a very imaginative and curious person, but I’m also really down-to-earth (Openness). I’m also extremely disciplined, and people can always count on me to follow through with things (Conscientiousness). I have a lot of energy and I can strike up a decent conversation with just about anyone (Extraversion). I’m also, I think, pretty unselfish and compassionate. I am definitely a harmonizer; It really bothers me when I have conflict with someone, so I try to avoid it whenever possible (Agreeableness). I also get stressed out easily, and honestly yeah, I struggle at times with anxiety (Emotional Stability).”

- ▶ Think about people in your life who know you really well. If they were asked to describe your personality, what would they say, and how would their answers reflect your scores?

**EXAMPLE |** Sean: *"My friends know that I like learning about and trying new things, but I never push things too far (Openness). I'm by far the most organized and responsible of my friends (Conscientiousness), but I also love to go out and have fun; sometimes I can be loud (Extraversion). Everyone knows I'd do anything if I felt like a friend needed me, and most people can tell that I really do kind of want people to like me (Agreeableness). The people who are closest to me know how rattled I can get when I'm under a lot of pressure, and how hard it can be for me to just chill sometimes (Emotional Stability).*

## 4. WORKPLACE PREFERENCES

You workplace preferences refer to the values you'd like your ideal employer to emphasize. You are most likely to feel like a good fit for an organization with values that match your workplace preferences. If there is a mismatch, you'll likely feel unhappy. Take a look at your pattern of scores—what you find especially important, and what doesn't matter as much.

- ▶ Think about your current employer, or your most recent one. In what ways (if any) has that organization embodied the values that matter most to you? If a volunteer experience is more relevant, write about that. Otherwise, skip to #5.

**EXAMPLE |** *Kana wrote: "My highest scores are on Guiding Principles and Recognition. My current employer is a good fit in some ways, because it is a mission-driven organization that cares a lot about social responsibility (Guiding Principles). But it's not a great fit in other ways. I'm badly underpaid given my level of experience, and the work I do is basically never rewarded, or even noticed (Recognition).*

► Now think about another employer for whom you have worked—one that stands out, either for being an excellent fit or a poor one. How do your scores illustrate what was so good or so bad about that organization?

**EXAMPLE |** *Kana: “My worst job was for a company that sold ads for used cars. They only seemed to care about the money I brought in, and sometimes they kind of encouraged us to put a lot of pressure on people, almost coercing them to buy an ad (contrary to having Guiding Principles). I felt like I was punished when I had a bad week, and almost never rewarded when I had a good week (Recognition).”*

## 5. INTEGRATE YOUR GIFTS

- ▶ Having spent some time reflecting on how your PathwayU™ scores fit with your personal life experience, how would you describe yourself, in terms of your gifts? Do so by completing the following sentences:

**Interests** | In terms of my interests, I am someone who:

**Values** | For me to be satisfied at work, it is important that:

**Personality** | Based on my traits, people experience me as:

**Workplace Preferences** | I really need an organization with a culture that emphasizes:

► Read again what you wrote above. Now, imagine yourself in a job with an organization that optimizes your gifts and allows you to “be who you are.” Write a paragraph that describes that job below—the tasks you are working on, your interactions with people, how it feels to work in this job. (Just do your best, and don’t worry—no one will hold you to this, and you can always change what you write.)

## PART 2 | CAREERS

Once you have a clearer sense of your gifts, you are ready to explore career paths that may fit you well. For this section, click on the “Explore Careers” button on the PathwayU™ interface. When you do so, you will see a very long list of job titles that align well with your unique pattern of interests and values. Take some time and look through some of your highest matches. Feel free to adjust the filters to organize your results in different ways. Typically, it helps to search matches that fit your current level of training, and also the level of training you hope to pursue in the future. If you see a job title you’re curious about, click on it to learn more.

The screenshot displays a grid of four career match cards under the heading "Career Matches". Each card features a "VERY STRONG MATCH" label, a job title, a brief description, and a "SUBJECT AREA".

- Adapted Physical Education Specialists**: Provide individualized physical education instruction or services to children, youth, or adults with exceptional physical needs due to gross motor developmental delays or other impairments. SUBJECT AREA: Education.
- Counseling Psychologists**: Assess and evaluate individuals' problems through the use of case history, interview, and observation and provide individual or group counseling services to assist individuals in achieving more effective... SUBJECT AREA: Human Services.
- Marriage and Family Therapists**: Diagnose and treat mental and emotional disorders, whether cognitive, affective, or behavioral, within the context of marriage and family systems. Apply psychotherapeutic and family systems theories... SUBJECT AREA: (partially obscured).
- Anesthesiologist Assistants**: Assist anesthesiologists in the administration of anesthesia for surgical and non-surgical procedures. Monitor patient status and provide patient care during surgical treatment. SUBJECT AREA: (partially obscured).

As you interact with your match results, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- **THINK OF THESE OCCUPATIONS AS A USEFUL STARTING POINT.**  
The extent to which people fit an occupation is a key predictor of outcomes, like job satisfaction, but it is far from a perfect predictor. There are many other factors that can influence whether a career path ultimately fits you well.

- **YOUR CAREER MATCHES DO NOT TELL YOU WHAT YOU “SHOULD” DO WITH YOUR CAREER.** They are simply one source of information (but a good one!) to inform your decision-making process.
- **DON’T WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT THE RANK ORDER OF YOUR CAREER MATCHES.** Your eighth-strongest match, for example, might be something you should consider more so than those ranked higher. Perhaps you already have some relevant training, or there are immediate openings in your area. Your best strategy is to focus on the Very Strong or Strong matches, regardless of their ranking.
- **YOU WILL FIND SURPRISES ON YOUR LIST.** People usually see matches on their list they find surprising or even off-putting. Even with these matches, you can learn about yourself. When a surprise job title pops up, look at the details of the occupation. What interests does it satisfy? What values does it reinforce? We’ve worked with job-seekers who are shocked they match well with Librarian, but who work at a bookstore; others who laugh when they match well with Flight Attendant, but who love travel and value helping people; and still others who scoff at their match to Housekeeping Supervisor, but who excel at managing people and providing customer service.
- **A SURPRISING MATCH ON YOUR LIST MAY PROVIDE SOME USEFUL INSIGHT EVEN WHEN THE SPECIFIC JOB TITLE DOESN’T SEEM APPEALING.** A useful question to ask is “What about this occupation makes it a match for my interests and values, and what can I learn from this that will help me make good decisions about my career?”

► Before you begin to narrow things down, take a step back and consider all of your Career Match recommendations that you find appealing, especially those in the Very Strong or Strong match categories. **LIST ALL THOSE OCCUPATIONS THAT YOU FIND APPEALING BELOW.** Don't worry about the training that is required, the annual salary, how easy or hard it would be to land a job in that field, or whether you have the needed skills right now. Just write it down if it sounds appealing to you.

► Now, take a look at the occupations you just wrote down, scanning each job title.

**WHAT ARE 2-3 COMMON THEMES THAT CUT ACROSS THOSE OCCUPATIONS?**

If you need help identifying themes from your occupational matches, go back to your scores on the assessments, and note which interests and values are reflected throughout your matches. If you are having a difficult time seeing clear themes, consult with a career counselor or advisor, a family member, or a good friend. What do they see?

**EXAMPLE |** *Jayla wrote: "I have strong matches to occupations like 'Dancers,' 'Makeup Artists, Theatrical and Performance,' and 'Broadcast News Analysts'." I've never taken dance classes or done makeup for theater, and I hardly ever watch the news. But, the themes in those careers include (1) creativity, (2) self-expression, and (3) public performance, all of which fit me really well. That makes sense, since I scored high on Artistic interests and Relationship and Achievement values."*

Those themes are very important because any occupation that captures those themes could potentially be a pathway that allows you to “be who you are,” expressing your gifts in ways that excite you, and that gives you an opportunity to contribute something of value to the world.

- ▶ Flip back a couple of pages and take another look at the list of occupations you wrote down. You've already looked at themes. Next, in the box below, **WRITE ANY SPECIFIC JOB TITLES THAT JUMP OUT AS ESPECIALLY INTRIGUING**—occupations about which you'd like to learn more.

**EXAMPLE** | *Jayla: Two of my "very strong" matches are Art Directors and Public Relations Specialists. Both of these seem really exciting to me, and they capture the themes of creativity, self-expression, and public performance well.*

What are your next steps? PathwayU™ provides very detailed information about each of these jobs such as their required tasks, the tools and technology used within the job, the skills and abilities they require, their primary activities, etc. To go deeper, conduct an informational interview with someone in one of these career paths. Read more about how to conduct an informational interview at the jobZology® blog:

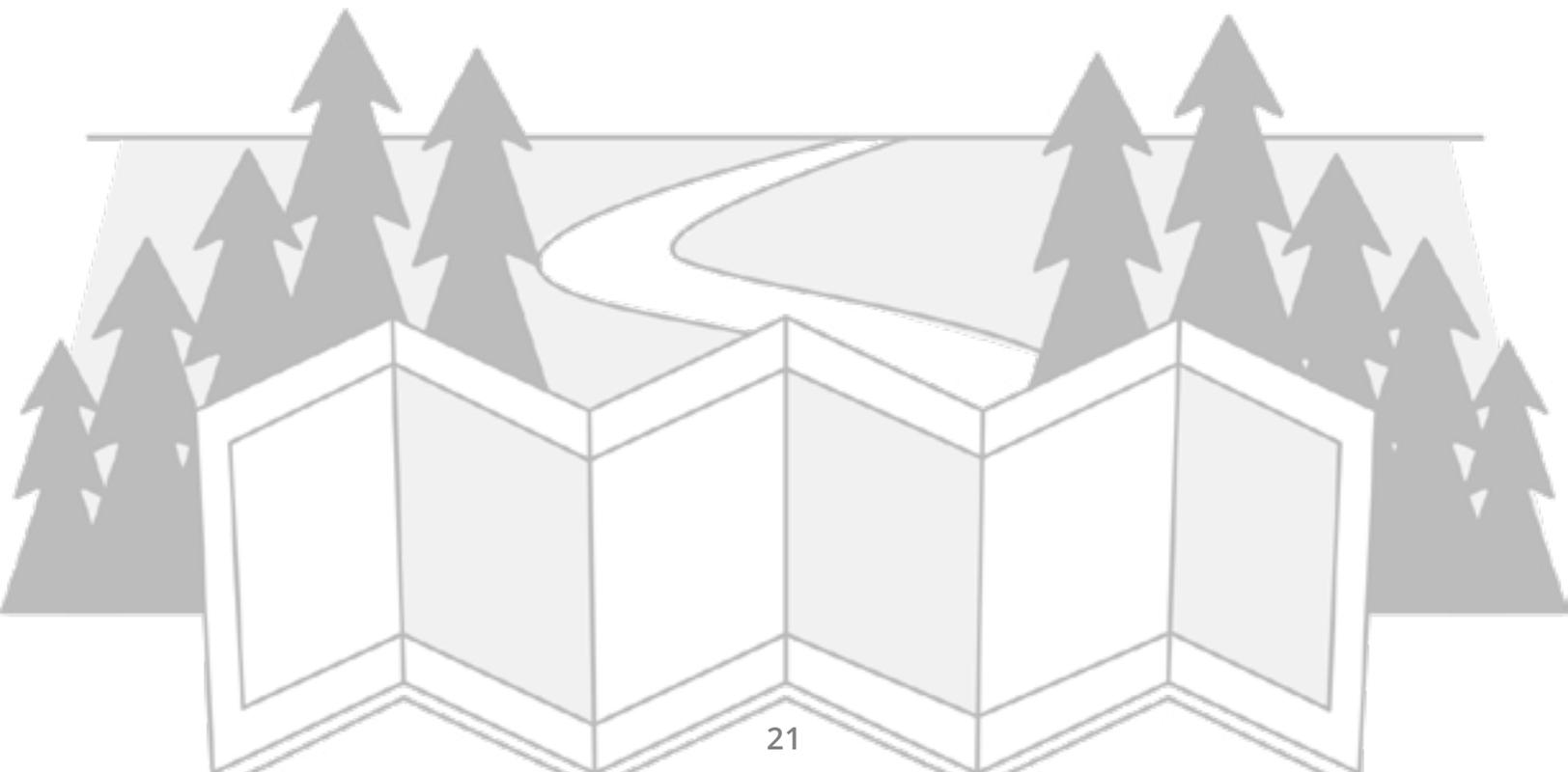
<http://jobzology.com/informational-interviewing-vocational-exploration/>

## PART 3 | PURPOSE

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In Part 1, you reflected on how your gifts fit with your experience. In Part 2, you considered how those gifts may make you well-suited to enjoy, and thrive in, particular career paths. These are both important steps in discerning a calling. People who are truly living their purpose are also able to describe how their work fits into their personal life story, and their overall sense of purpose in life. In this section, think carefully about your sense of purpose, and how your educational and career paths can help you express it.

Your “purpose” refers to your intention to accomplish something that matters deeply to you and that benefits the world. A purpose combines what you find ultimately important, what you are passionate about, and what kind of impact you most want to have in the world. Let’s look at each of these factors in a little more depth.



► **WHAT DO YOU FIND ULTIMATELY IMPORTANT?** This is a big question, but don't shy away from it. Think carefully about why you feel you are walking the earth right now. What matters most to you, personally? One (somewhat morbid, but highly poignant) way to think about this is to imagine yourself attending your own funeral. What are you hoping that people will say about what mattered most to you? Write that here.

**EXAMPLE |** *Chris wrote: "I think a lot about people in my life who I care about, but I also feel like I have been given a lot, so I ought to be a good steward. To me, that means using opportunities, resources, and my strengths in ways that are positive. That's really what it boils down to—if I am being a good steward of what I've got, not taking stuff for granted, trying to have a positive influence in any way I can, then I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing."*

► **WHAT ARE YOU MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT?** Earlier you considered your interests broadly, at the theme level (e.g., Realistic, Investigate, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, Conventional). Now think about what specific activities you get most excited about. When you are engaged in an activity that you thoroughly enjoy—one in which you are so fully absorbed, you lose track of time—what activity are you doing?

**EXAMPLE |** *Chris: "For me it is probably being outdoors. I love being outside, whether that's hiking, biking, camping, fly-fishing, and so on. Fishing especially--when I'm on the water I get totally into it. I spend a lot of time thinking about my impact on nature, and it makes me want to be a positive force for the environment. I try to walk or bike instead of drive when I can, and I don't buy stuff that uses tons of packaging. I try to tell other people to be more aware of their carbon footprint, too. These are small things obviously, but I love the outdoors and I always feel good when I am doing things to help it stay beautiful."*

► **WHAT IMPACT DO YOU WANT TO HAVE?** What people or causes do you most want to impact in a positive way—and what kind of positive impact feels most meaningful to you?

**EXAMPLE |** *Chris: "It's kind of crazy, but for a long time, people have given me really encouraging feedback about my leadership skills. I think I have a knack for influencing people—somehow, they listen to me. I can be persuasive, I guess. Knowing that, I feel a lot of responsibility for influencing people in positive ways, especially about the environment. I still have a lot to learn, but eventually I feel like maybe I'd be a good leader, because if you can influence other people in positive ways, than your impact multiplies. That's kind of exciting to me."*

► **STATE YOUR PURPOSE.** Take a look at what you wrote above. Now, sum up what you wrote in each of those boxes by pulling it together into a single statement. This statement summarizes your purpose, combining what you find important, your passion, and what kind of impact you want to have. Give it a try!

**EXAMPLE |** *Chris: "Because being a good steward is most important to me, I want to use my passion for enjoying and taking care of the environment, with personal growth as motivation, so that I can have a positive impact on the environment through leading other people to do the same."*

Because \_\_\_\_\_ is most important to me,  
I want to use my passion for \_\_\_\_\_,  
so I can have a positive impact on \_\_\_\_\_.

► **HOW YOUR GIFTS SUPPORT YOUR PURPOSE.** Take another look at the purpose statement you just wrote—and then refer back to p. 14, where you summarized your gifts. Looking at what you wrote for these sections, how do your gifts support your purpose? That is, in what specific ways would living out your purpose allow you to express your interests, values, personality, and workplace preferences?

**EXAMPLE |** *Chris: “Definitely, my Realistic and Enterprising interests are captured by enjoying being outdoors and also by wanting to lead and persuade people. I strongly value Independence and Achievement, which maybe shows up in my desire for personal growth. I’m kind of mid-range on Extraversion which is why I like spending time by myself outdoors but also like doing leadership-type things. High Openness fits with my desire to learn more and grow, and high Emotional Stability fits with the fact that I don’t get stressed easily. High Conscientiousness fits with how I like to get things done, and moderate-to-low Agreeableness with the fact that I get frustrated sometimes when people don’t want to do things the way I think is best. As for Workplace Preferences, I’m highest on guiding principles which makes sense—working for a nonprofit environmental agency would be amazing.”*

► **YOUR CALLING.** A calling can be described as a pathway for expressing your purpose in ways that make the world better. Flip back a couple of pages to your purpose statement on page 24, then flip back to the lists of job-titles you made on pages 18 and 20. Which of those job titles would allow you to live your purpose at work? Keep in mind, there are usually multiple jobs (not just one!) that could enable you to live out your calling. Read through the examples, and then list some job titles that you feel might best align with your sense of purpose.

**EXAMPLES:**

**CHRIS** | *"I guess I feel called to make a difference for the environment, maybe through leading other people. Firefighter and Fish and Game Warden could satisfy that, but I can't get Park Naturalist out of my head. It might be perfect."*

**LIZ** | *"I feel called to use my creativity in ways that really help people. That might mean art therapy or teaching creativity or art to children. Therapy or teaching; either one could be central to my calling."*

**JAYLA** | *"I think I'm called to express myself creatively, making more beauty in the world. Fine art and jewelry-making offer ways to do that, but I'm excited to see if Art Director opens up new possibilities for me to live out my calling."*

Articulating your calling is only a starting point. Research suggests that perceiving a calling is associated with both career-related and general well-being, but only for people who feel they are currently living a calling. [3] The key, obviously, is actually pursuing a pathway that aligns with your sense of calling, and then striving to find new ways to express your gifts at work, on an ongoing basis. Callings are not only discovered, they are **built**.

## PART 4 | YOUR FUTURE SELF

In the last section, you described elements of your purpose, crafted a purpose statement, and pondered what your calling might be. Now, project yourself five, ten, or fifteen years (choose one, and write it down here: \_\_\_ ) into the future. Imagine you are living out your purpose within your calling. As you imagine your future self, consult a few things you wrote earlier:

- A job that optimizes your gifts and allows you to “be who you are” (p. 15).
- The themes that emerge from your top career matches (p. 18).
- Your purpose statement (bottom of p. 24).
- Your thoughts about how your gifts support your purpose (p. 25).
- Your ideas about what your calling may be (p. 26).

► With those things fresh in your mind, write a narrative about a typical day in the life of your future self, from the time you wake up to the time your head hits the pillow. Take your time, add in lots of details, be thorough (you have two pages for this!), and enjoy the experience. Within your narrative, make sure you describe the following:

- What you are doing.
- The setting you are doing it in.
- The kind of people you are with.
- The impact you are having.
- How it feels.



## PART 5 | SUPPORT CIRCLES

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Career decisions are never truly permanent; in fact, in today's world of work, you can consider change inevitable. But, career decisions do often have consequences that extend beyond the short-term. Such choices are weighty, which means it really helps to have assistance from people in your life who care about you, and who want the best for you. People like that offer encouragement, support, wisdom, and often a helpful dose of perspective. Furthermore, research has shown that incorporating help from supportive people in your life often leads to good outcomes in the decision-making process. [4]

You might consider these people as making up your ***circles of support***. Often, it helps to establish a strategy for specifically seeking their support as you go through the career discernment process. Start by naming the people who make up your circles of support. In doing so, consider two separate (although possibly overlapping) circles, one that consists of people who serve as wise ***advisors***, and the other that consists of people who serve as ***support-giving encouragers***. Consider the following when identifying your circles:

- **ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE MORE PEOPLE IN YOUR CIRCLE THAN JUST ONE OR TWO.** Multiple perspectives from people who know you from different settings or who observe you in different roles will give you a more well-rounded perspective, and reduce the likelihood that you've got obvious holes in how you view yourself.
- **DO NOT INCLUDE SOMEONE WITH AN AGENDA.** We all know people who have a strong (sometimes self-serving) opinion about what we "should" do with our lives, and are more eager to express that opinion than to listen carefully to our concerns. Take the advice of such people lightly, and balance it with other perspectives you trust.

- **LEAN ESPECIALLY ON PEOPLE WHO:**

- you trust.
- know you well.
- care about you.
- you have a long history with.
- are described by others as wise.
- have substantial life experience.
- share many of your values.
- are kindhearted.
- are good listeners.
- are encouraging.

*\*If you are working with a **career counselor, coach, advisor, therapist, or teacher** specifically on your career decision-making, that person is your starting point.*

*Write down that person's name here:*

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► **PERSONAL BOARD OF ADVISORS.** Now, write down the names of 3-5 people who know you well, who are older and/or who have special wisdom, who are good listeners and candid truth-tellers, and who have your best interests in mind.

► **PERSONAL BOARD OF ENCOURAGERS.** Finally, write down the names of another 3-5 people who know you well, who are good listeners, who care about you, and who have a gift for offering life-giving, encouraging words that build you up. There may be some overlap between your Advisors and Encouragers, and that is perfectly fine.

► **CONTACT YOUR CIRCLE.** You've now identified your circles of support. Contact each of them and share that you are currently engaged in a discernment process and could use their help. This might feel unnatural or awkward, but take courage and speak from the heart! Here is an example of a short e-mail you might consider modifying so that it reflects your own voice:

*Dear Kurt,*

*Recently, I've been in the process of evaluating what my calling might be for my career. As part of that process, I've spent some time reflecting on important people in my life—people who have really been helpful to me, and who I've learned a lot from. You are one of those people, and I wanted to thank you for all of your support. I'm also interested in learning more from you, because I really value your perspective on what pathways might be most promising for someone like me. Is there a time in the coming weeks we might be able to meet for coffee, just for 30 minutes or so, when I can ask you a few questions to get your input on my process? I'm very grateful for your willingness to consider this.*

*Sincerely,*

*Bryan*

For members of your Board of Advisors, ask if they'd be willing to connect with you for a short one-on-one meeting. When you have that meeting, share what you've been learning during your discernment process. Consider taking this workbook with you and summarizing what you've written, or reading excerpts. Tell your story! Then ask for feedback and advice using questions such as *"How well does what I'm sharing fit with what you've noticed about me?"* *"How 'on track' does it seem like I am right now?"* *"What blind spots do you notice that I should be more aware of?"* *"What should I be asking myself that I don't seem to be right now?"* *"What do you see as my strengths, and what seem like promising pathways for me?"* Take a notebook and jot down your thoughts as you have this conversation.

For members of your Board of Encouragers, ask if they would be willing to provide you with a listening ear, and support when needed. Tell your story to them, too! Be open in expressing your concerns and your excitement, and lean on their encouragement for strength and persistence. The road you are traveling is not always easy, but it's much easier when others are traveling alongside you.



## PART 6 | GOALS

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- ▶ Review your responses in this workbook once more, especially your thoughts about...
  - A job that optimizes your gifts (p. 15);
  - The themes that emerge from your top career matches (p. 18);
  - Your purpose statement (bottom of p. 24),
  - Your thoughts about how your gifts support your purpose (p. 25);
  - Your ideas about what your calling may be (p. 26);
  - The narrative that describes day in the life of your future self (pp. 27-28).

▶ After you have reviewed those things, take a minute and flip back to page 5, where you stated some goals for your career decision-making process. As you read those goals, think about what you've learned. Next, write a response to these two questions:

1. To what extent have you met those initial goals?

2. If they have not yet been met, what would help you close the gap?

Reviewing your responses to these questions with members of your support circle will help you clarify what you need, and how you can best meet those needs, before taking the next steps.

**GOOD GOALS FOR WHAT COMES NEXT.** As you look ahead, take a moment and write down some goals for the next steps in your career journey. But make sure they are good goals. What is the difference between good goals and bad ones? A good way to evaluate your goals uses the acronym SMARTER<sup>1</sup>. To achieve optimally effective goal-setting, make sure each goal is:

1-2. **Specific** and **Measurable**. “To feel better about where my career is headed” may speak to a pain point, but it’s neither specific nor easily measurable. “Within the next month, interview three people who work in a career path that is exciting to me” is specific, measurable, and a far more effective goal.

3. **Attainable**. Challenging goals are great, but good goals have to be attainable. Climbing Mt. Everest next week is a challenging but unattainable goal.<sup>2</sup> “Complete a battery of career assessments before Friday” or “By tomorrow, schedule a visit with a mentor” —these are attainable.

4. **Relevant** to your larger objective. If your objective is choosing a college major or a new career path, work backward from there to identify goals that will bring you closer to your desired endpoint. For example, “Within the next week, gather detailed information about training requirements for three promising career paths” is a relevant goal.

5. **Time-bound**. Open-ended goals are never as helpful as goals with target dates. If you hope for clarity in your career by year’s end, treat it like a deadline and make a timeline for each goal leading up to it.

6. One for which you are fully **Engaged**. Choose goals you are highly motivated to carry out. You'll need that kind of full engagement when you face the inevitable obstacles.

7. One for which you receive **Reinforcement**. Reinforcement —feedback, encouragement, advice, etc, —from your support circle will be essential as you work toward achieving your goals.

With these criteria in mind, take some time and reflect on the goals that will help you move forward from where you are now to your hoped-for destination. Write 3-5 of them in the box below. The following are some goals that many people write down. If any apply to you, feel free to add them to your list of goals. But as was the case before, your goals should really be your goals!

*"During the next two weeks, identify 3-5 companies where I might like to work."*

*"Within the next month, gather information about three training programs in my field of interest."*

*"By this month's end, update my resume and draft a cover letter I can adapt for different positions."*

*"During the next two weeks, so I can learn more about a career path that interests me, I will conduct three informational interviews with professionals in that line of work."*

*"This week, seek feedback from my support circle on my strengths and areas for growth."*

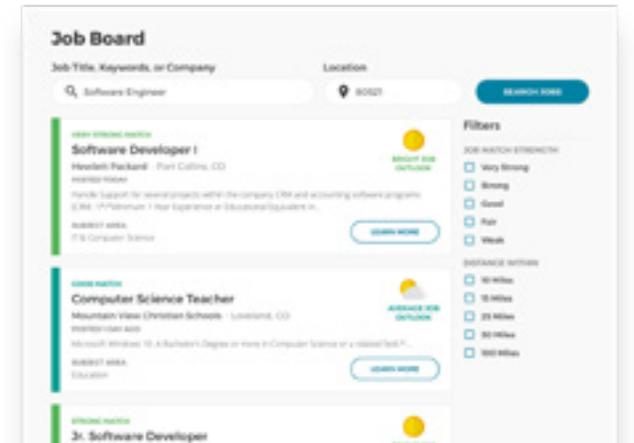
*"Create a thorough pros and cons list of staying in my current career path."*

*"This summer, increase my professional network by 25%."*

▶ My goals for what comes next are to:

After setting your goals for what is next, share your list with members of your support circle. With their help and support, go and make them happen!

For assistance with your job search, look for the PathwayU™ Job Search Workbook – COMING SOON!



## RESOURCES:

### PathwayU™ Job Search Engine

The PathwayU™ system now offers job search capability. Simply click on the “Jobs” tab to search by title, keyword, or company for open jobs all over the country, sortable by zip code and by how well they are predicted to fit you.

### PathwayU™ Job Search Toolkit

Click on the “Tools” tab to access the PathwayU™ Toolkit, which offers best-practices tips and tools, curated by career development experts, that assist with the following job-search steps:

- Cover Letter
- Resume
- Networking
- Job Fairs
- Interviews
- Evaluating a Job Offer
- Negotiating a Job Offer

- [1] SMARTER builds on the SMART acronym, which appears to have originated with George T. Doran, a consultant and former director of corporate planning for Washington Water Power Company. Doran, G. T. (1981). There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives. *Management Review*, 70, 35-36. The original five SMART principles evolved somewhat in light of advances in research on goal-setting, which was pioneered by psychologists Ed Locke and Gary Latham. Locke, E.A., & Latham, G.P. (1990). *A theory of goal setting and task performance*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Expanding to SMARTER is my own invention, it adds a little complexity but better captures Locke and Latham's seminal work.
- [2] I mean, unless you've been training and have the trip booked already, obviously. Then it is merely an extremely challenging (but not totally unattainable) goal.
- [3] In one example of these studies, Dr. Laura King invited a group of students to write about their "best future selves" for 20 minutes a day over four consecutive days. Five months later, she found that writing about a positive future, and the goals required to get there, led to significant gains in happiness and life satisfaction, and also fewer doctor's visits, compared to people in a control condition who spent a similar amount of time writing about a trivial topic. King, L. A. (2001). The health benefits of writing about life goals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 798-807.
- [4] As just one example, this study found involving parents to offer positive benefit: Palmer, S., & Cochran, L. (1988). Parents as agents of career development. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 35, 71-76.
- [5] For a brief summary of this research, see Duffy, R. D., & Dik, B. J. (2013). Research on calling: What have we learned and where are we going? *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 83, 428-436.
- [6] This is related to note 2 above, but for a more comprehensive summary of this research, see the discussion of evidence from meta-analyses, or "studies of studies," provided in Brown, S. D. (2017). Meta-analysis and evidence-based career practice: Current status and future directions. In J. P. Sampson, E. Bullock-Yowell, V. C. Dozier, D. S. Osborn, & J. G. Lenz (Eds.), *Integrating theory, research, and practice in vocational psychology: Current status and future directions* (pp. 82-89). Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University.
- [7] Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (1990). *A theory of goal setting and task performance*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

