

Appendix B:
Make Your Job Your Calling Reflective Exercises
from <https://makeyourjobacalling.com/about/>

Exercise 1: Values Checklist

<https://makeyourjobacalling.com/about/book-extras/self-help-strategies/values-checklist/>

Values Checklist

Often when people think about choosing a career, they think about the things in which they are interested (e.g., woodworking) or the things at which they excel (e.g., math). What sometimes goes overlooked in this thought process is values. Work values generally pertain to specific goals that an individual believes are important to attain through work. Common examples of these are, “earn an income that can support my family,” “help others,” “have a flexible schedule,” and “have good health benefits.” These are not interests or skills, but personal preferences about features of a job that are important in the decision-making process. This exercise starts with 29 work values, along with their definitions, that are used at the highly reputable career services center at Arizona State University. These are not overall life values, but rather, features of work environments that people find important to have in order to experience satisfaction on the job. Read over this list carefully. When you are finished, write down your top 5 most important values—those values you might call your “non-negotiables.”

- **Help Society:** Do something to improve the world in which we live
- **Help Others:** Be directly involved in helping other people, either individually or in small groups
- **Public Contact:** Have a lot of day-to-day contact with the public
- **Work with Others:** Work as a team member toward common goals
- **Work Alone:** Do projects by myself, with limited contact with others
- **Competition:** Engage in activities that pit my skills and abilities against others
- **Make Decisions:** Have the power to decide courses of action and policies
- **Work Under Pressure:** Work in situations in which time pressure is prevalent
- **Influence People:** Be in a position to influence the attitudes or opinions of other people
- **Knowledge:** Engage in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding
- **Work Mastery:** Become an expert in whatever work I do
- **Artistic Creativity:** Engage in creative artistic expression
- **General Creativity:** Have the opportunity to create new programs, materials, or organizational structures
- **Aesthetics:** Participate in studying or appreciating the beauty of things, ideas, etc.
- **Supervision:** Have a job in which I am directly responsible for the work of others
- **Change and Variety:** Have work activities that frequently change
- **Precision Work:** Work in situations in which attention to detail and accuracy are very important
- **Stability:** Have a work routine and job duties that are largely predictable
- **Security:** Be assured of keeping my job and receiving satisfactory compensation
- **Recognition:** Be publicly recognized for the high quality of my work

- **Fast Pace:** Work in circumstances in which work must be done rapidly
- **Excitement:** Experience a high degree of (or frequent) excitement in the course of my work
- **Adventure:** Have work duties that require frequent risk-taking
- **Financial Gain:** Have a high likelihood of achieving very great monetary rewards for my work
- **Physical Challenge:** Do activities that use my physical capabilities
- **Independence:** Be able to determine the nature of my work without significant direction from others
- **Moral Fulfillment:** Feel that my work contributes to a set of moral standards which I feel are very important
- **Community:** Live where I can participate in community affairs
- **Time Freedom:** Be able to work according to my own schedule

My top 5 most important values:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Journal Engagement: Once you've identified your five "non-negotiables," think about how well your current job, or the job to which you aspire, satisfies these values. In general, a goal for career counselors is to help clients identify career paths that align closely with their values. If your values are consistent with approaching work as a calling, a work environment that satisfies those values provides an ideal scenario for living out your calling. If the fit you experience right now is poor, in what ways do you need to craft your current work environment, or change your current career path?

Exercise 2: Do your Career Goals Fit with Your Life Goals?

<https://makeyourjobcalling.com/2012/09/27/do-your-career-goals-fit-with-your-life-goals/>

Most people agree that experiencing a positive sense of meaning—defined as “the sense made of, and significance felt regarding, the nature of one’s being and existence”—is fundamental to living “the good life.” Yet how many take serious steps toward living meaningfully at work? One way to think through this question is to evaluate how well your career goals fit within the context of your life goals. Try this: for starters, think about your life as a whole. What, ultimately, is most important to you? How would you describe your life’s *purpose*? With answers to these questions in mind, list at least five *life goals* you are currently pursuing. Write these down in your journal.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Next, think carefully about your career for a moment—your current job situation, the kind of work you most want to do, and the steps you need to take to bridge the gap between these, if there is one. How close or far away are you from where you want to be? What role do you want your career to play within the broader context of your life? With your answers to these questions in mind, in your journal list at least five *career goals* you are currently pursuing:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Journal Engagement: Now look closely at the goals you listed above for your life and your career. To what extent are your career goals in line with your life goals? Are you happy with your answer to this question? If not, what needs to change?

Exercise 3: You at Your Best

<https://makeyourjobcalling.com/2012/09/27/you-at-your-best/>

One informal strategy for assessing your strengths is to think carefully about a recent situation when you were at your best. Give it a shot. Start by identifying the situation, a specific event within the last few weeks in which you felt you were clearly at your best. Got it? Now, replay it in your mind a few times, focusing carefully on the details of the moment. In your journal, write out answers to these questions:

- Using a step-by-step account, how did the events of this situation unfold?
- What did you do well?
- What was the outcome?
- Thinking back on it, what specific personal strengths did you show in this situation? List as many as you can.
- Circle or highlight the top five. In which other situations have you observed these strengths?

Journal Engagement: Once you have those top five strengths, try this experiment: Make a conscious, deliberate effort to use these strengths more often, and in new ways, in your job (or in other areas of your life, if you are not currently employed) every day for the next week. Over the course of that week, as you do this, what do you notice or experience? In what ways has using these strengths changed the way you feel about your work?

Martin Seligman and colleagues have shown that people instructed to write about a “you at your best” experience, reflect on their personal strengths illustrated in the story, and then review the story once a day for a week to further reflect on their strengths were significantly happier and less depressed compared to people in a control group at the end of that week. However, these effects didn’t last into the weeks and months that followed. Why not? One explanation is that merely reflecting on your strengths is not enough; you have to *use* them. Another finding from the same study supported that interpretation: Individuals who were given feedback on their top strengths, and who were then instructed to use one of their top strengths in a new and different way each day for a week, were significantly happier and less depressed not just at the end of that week but even six months later! Of course, these participants were instructed to use their strengths generally, not only at work, and happiness and depression are not the same thing as meaning. However, another recent study demonstrated that when people use their strengths at work, they are in fact more likely to experience their work as meaningful. To summarize the obvious conclusion: Don’t stop at merely identifying your strengths, *use* them!

Exercise 4: What does my ideal day look like in five years?

<https://makeyourjobacalling.com/about/book-extras/self-help-strategies/what-does-my-ideal-day-look-like-in-five-years/>

Find a comfortable place to sit and relax. Now, imagine yourself five years from now. In your ideal world, what does a perfect workday look like? To help you envision this in detail, walk through the following questions and detail some of them in your journal:

You wake up.

- What time is it?
- Where are you living?
- What does your living space look like?
- Are you alone or with a partner or family?

You start your normal morning routine.

- What is your normal routine?
- Do you eat breakfast?
- Drink coffee or tea?
- Shower?
- Exercise?
- What do you wear when you go to work?

You start switching into work mode.

- Do you travel to work or work from home?
- If you travel to work, how do you get there?
- How long does it take?
- You arrive at work.
- What does your work environment look like?
- Do you work indoors or outdoors?
- Do you have an office?
- Do you have a lot of coworkers or work mostly by yourself?
- You put in a day's work.
- How long is this day?
- What kinds of tasks are you doing exactly?
- Are you working primarily things, primarily with people, or a combination of both?
- Are you working primarily with ideas, primarily with data, or a combination of both?
- Do you have a lunch break, and do you spend it alone or with coworkers?
- Do you engage with customers of some sort?
- Do you work nonstop or have a lot of breaks?
- By the end of the day do you feel energized or drained?

You end your workday and head back to life at home.

- What does your typical post-work routine look like?
- Do you exercise?

- Eat dinner with friends and/or family?
- Watch TV?
- Read?
- Socialize?
- What time do you go to bed?

Journal Engagement: Now come back to the present. This day represents one possible image of an ideal fit for what you want out of work. Some career counselors use imagery exercises like this to help you develop a forward-thinking sense of clarity, which can be useful for helping you set more specific goals. If you imagined a day that included using your gifts in ways that aligned with your sense of purpose in life, and that left you with a sense of making the world a better place, this exercise probably gives you a good description of what it might feel like to live out your calling. How does this day match with where you are currently headed with your career? If it doesn't match well, what kinds of things do you need to change to redirect you toward this vision?