

Career Design Workbook

GUIDE FOR SELECTING YOUR CAREER



Introduction

If you look at how you spend your life purely from a time perspective, you would likely conclude that more time is spent at work than any other activity. If you have any doubts, look at my typical weekday:

- Sleep: 7 hours
- Eating meals: 2 hours
- Relaxation: 2 hours
- Exercise: 1 hour
- Work, commuting, preparing for work: 12 hours

Figure 1: My typical weekday broken down by percentage:

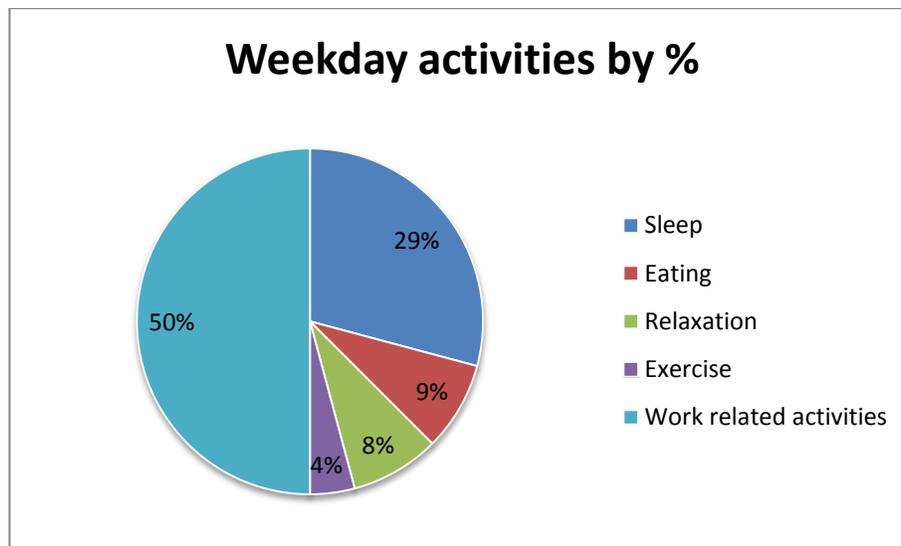


Fig. 1

Now, consider how much effort you put towards choosing your current career. When you reflect on your own experience, consider the following:

- How much research did you do when buying your current house?
- How much research did you do when buying your current automobile?
- How much research did you do when choosing your college?
- How much research did you do when choosing your career?

I am willing to bet that most people spent more time on Edmunds.com researching their next car than they devoted to researching their current career. Consequently, many people get depressed on Sunday evenings and dread going to work on Monday mornings. If you can relate to most of the concepts on this page, you may want to consider a career transition to something that is more aligned to who you are. Life is too precious and short to dislike what you spend 50% of your day doing.

Workbook Overview

This workbook is a guide that can be used by a qualified coach working with their clients to help discover their life's purpose. It can also be used by individuals working alone, although this will require a great deal of discipline. For the sake of consistency we will assume that the workbook is being used by an individual user.

The workbook contains a series of exercises that will help you identify your fundamental nature, requirements and contributions. Keeping it simple is a goal of this book; therefore, so are these exercises. Their purpose and direction are clear and they adapt easily to the Career Decision Making Matrix (explained in the below paragraph). Typically, these exercises involve a set of cards (included in this workbook). The instructions are simple: you will find the exercise cards easy to use and very effective.

The output of this workbook is a '**Career Decision Making Matrix**' (covered in detail in Section three). The matrix is a customized output of your individual profile evaluated against various career possibilities that you can use for exploratory purposes. This process is illustrated in **Figure 2** and will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

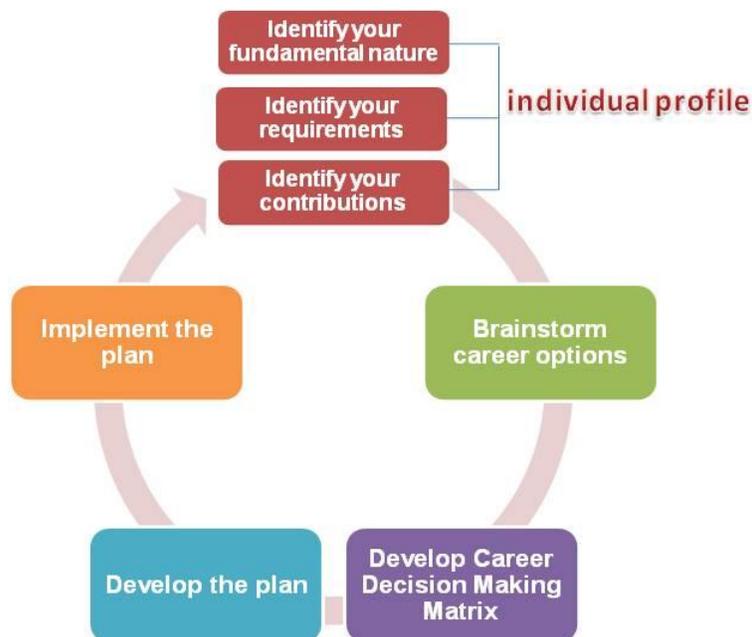


Figure 2

The workbook has five sections:

SECTION ONE: This section is made up of three subsections: They consist of identifying:

1. Your fundamental nature
2. Your individual requirements
3. Your individual contributions

These three elements will be referred to as your individual profile.

What is your fundamental nature?

This subsection is comprised of a set of exercises to identify all of the factors that you should consider when designing your future career. Specifically, it is identifying who you are and what careers might align to your fundamental nature. They include elements such as personality traits, core values and individual passions. You can determine which subset of these exercises to include when developing the Career Decision Making Matrix.

These exercises are either self appraisals or one where the data or feedback is solicited from your family, friends, colleagues or acquaintances. Do not underestimate the difference between self perception and the way others may view an individual. You don't always see yourself accurately, but by using your own knowledge in concert with others will help you to develop an accurate assessment of who you are. A key element or strategy to follow when using this workbook is to solicit feedback from the people who know you best and will be objective in their perspective about you.

What are your individual requirements?

These are straight forward. They are the requirements that are important to you when considering a career. They can be personal, such as financial expectations or schedule flexibility. They are also career requirements. For instance, some people like to travel as part of their job, others do not. Some like to work in an office environment, other find it too confining. These are all preferences or requirements that will help you select a fulfilling career.

What are your individual contributions?

This is what you "bring to the table". Here, you identify your strengths, job experience and life experience. Via a series of exercises, you identify your personal strengths and experiences either through feedback from others or through self identification. Section one will be utilized when generating the Career Decision Making Matrix (section three) to help determine the feasibility of certain careers when analyzed, integrating your needs and contributions.

SECTION TWO: *Brainstorm career possibilities*

In this step, you can collaborate with others to develop potential career opportunities using your needs and strengths as a guide.

The next sub step during the brainstorming phase is research. This means researching all viable career possibilities. The more career possibilities that are identified during the brainstorming phase, the more options you will have to choose from. As you work your way through the research process, document your information. This will be required for the next step, generating the **Career Decision Making Matrix**.

SECTION THREE: *Generate the Career Decision Making Matrix*

This Career Decision Making Matrix is the output of this workbook that allows you to evaluate each potential career considering your needs and contributions. An example matrix is provided between pages 48 and 49. You may want to reference the matrix at this point to have a basic understanding of what it is. This will help you as you proceed through the workbook.

Things to note here:

- This is a tool, and like any tool, it requires human analysis and validation. It is not meant to give the answer; it is meant to be used for analytical purposes.
- This is an ongoing process. I call it: Interpret Validate, Modify, Percolate and Iterate. This will be explained in more detail in Section three.

SECTION FOUR: *Develop the plan*

Once a career has been chosen, you develop the plan to make it a reality. This has several sub steps which I will explain later in the workbook. They include:

- Develop a gap analysis
- Generate a high level time frame
- Determine if you keep your current job or go “cold turkey?”
- Develop a detailed plan

SECTION FIVE: *Implement the plan, take action, Go for it!*

“Thinking is easy, acting is difficult, and to put one's thoughts into action is the most difficult thing in the world.” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German Playwright, Poet, Novelist and Dramatist. 1749-1832

As suggested in the quote above, taking action is difficult. Not taking action means more of the same. Taking action creates change. It's as simple as that. If you truly desire a more complete, fulfilled life, go for it!