



A Guided Career Discovery Exercise

Another way to get in touch with your interests is to complete my Career Interests Guided Discovery Exercise below. This is a compilation of what I believe are the most powerful questions you can ask yourself to get in touch with your career passions and interests. There are no scoring keys or right or wrong answers.

This should be considered more of a process exercise. In others words, simply taking the time to think deeply about these questions will give you ideas, insights, and new perspectives on yourself and what you should be doing with your career.

Find a time and place where you can do this without interruption for at least 15 to 30 minutes. Turn off your phone, computer, TV, and put a Do Not Disturb sign on your door if you have to.

Take 10 slow and long breaths as described in the Strengths Guided Discovery Exercise in the book. To do this, breathe in through your nose for 5 seconds and then blow out through your mouth for another 5 seconds. Don't take the deepest breaths possible. Rather, take slow and long breaths. Do it slow enough so that you can stretch it over the entire 10 second breath cycle (in and out). You should focus on the act of breathing. This should result in a mental state of calm focus and help clear your mind before you begin.

Academic Interests

1. Throughout your schooling, which classes/subjects did you enjoy the most or find most interesting?

2. What was it about the classes/subjects you found interesting?

3. Throughout your schooling, which classes/subjects were you interested in least or enjoyed the least?

4. What was it about the classes/subjects you found uninteresting?

Work Interests

1. Of all of the jobs you've had, which were your favorites?

2. What was it about each job that you enjoyed?

3. Of all of the jobs you've had, which were your least favorite?

4. What was it about each job that you didn't enjoy?

5. What type of work seems boring or tedious to you?

6. What type of work seems interesting and exciting to you?

Hobbies

1. What sorts of activities or hobbies did you especially enjoy as a child or teenager?

2. What sorts of activities or hobbies did you especially enjoy as an adult?

3. List your top three favorite television shows of all time: For each show, what was it about the show that you found appealing? Can you see any commonalities among the shows?

4. List your top three favorite movies: For each movie, what was it about the movie that you found appealing? Can you see any commonalities among the movies?

5. List your top three favorite fiction books: For each book, what was it about the book that you found appealing? Can you see any commonalities among the books?

6. List your top three favorite nonfiction books: For each book, what was it about the book that you found appealing? Can you see any commonalities among the books?

7. Are there any characters from any of the above who inspired you or who you admired?

Passions

1. Who in your life inspires you or who do you look up to?

2. What was/is it about this person that you admire?

3. What makes you feel passion or excitement?

Dreams

1. If you didn't have to worry about making a living or what others thought of you, what would you do with your time?

2. What are you most drawn to doing? Forget prestige, your friends' ideas, your parents' goals for you, and money.

3. What would be your top three dream jobs if money were no object?

4. Can you see any commonalities between your top three dream jobs?

5. What do you see as the main barriers to obtaining your top three dream jobs?

Once you've done this exercise, ask yourself:

- What did I learn about myself and my interests?
- Is there any way to tie in the interests I discovered in this process with what I am currently doing as a career?
- Is there any way to tie in the interests I discovered in this process with what I can do as a future career?
- Is there some action I can take to look into the possibility of incorporating my interests into my current career or another career?

Now put your responses away for at least a full day. After a day or two, come back to what you wrote and follow the breathing instructions noted above. Review what you've written and see what kind of reactions you get when you read it for the second time. Note any new insights or ideas.

Now that you have a better understanding of your basic personality, values, strengths, talents, skills, and interests, it's time to put it all together to figure out your purpose or mission.