

Create Your Career

The art of working with your values to create a career that you love.

What do YOU love to do?

"Finding your passion isn't just about careers and money. It's about finding your authentic self. The one you buried beneath other people's needs." - Kristin Hannah

Creating a career that you love is a life-long journey. This is because our wants, needs, and desires change as we grow and evolve. The questions below are designed to help you take some time to reflect on what shuts you down and what lights you up at work so that you can tune into what you value the most.

What Shuts You Down?

1. What subjects did you dislike at school and why?
2. What types of activities at work drain you now?
3. What categories of information do you forget easily?
4. What puts you in a bad mood at work?
5. What types of situations bring out the worst in you?

What Lights You Up?

1. What types of activities make you lose track of time?
2. What types of challenges bring out the best in you?

3. What strengths do you get complimented for the most?

4. What types of environments bring out the best in you?

5. When you're at the end of your life and you reflect back on it, how do you want to see yourself having contributed to this world?

Reverse-Engineering Your Values

Sometimes it's easier to focus on our big career goals and work our way backwards to our values. Use the exercise below to test this out for yourself!

Goal #1

1. Why is this goal important to you?
2. And why is that important to you?
3. And why is that important to you?
4. And why is that important to you?
5. And why is that important to you?

Goal #2

1. Why is this goal important to you?
2. And why is that important to you?
3. And why is that important to you?
4. And why is that important to you?
5. And why is that important to you?

Goal #3

1. Why is this goal important to you?
2. And why is that important to you?

3. And why is that important to you?
4. And why is that important to you?
5. And why is that important to you?

What do you value at work?

Sample Core Values:

- Excellence
- Innovation
- Communication
- Learning
- Career Advancement
- Compensation
- Team-Work
- Job Security
- Flexibility
- Integrity
- Efficiency
- Respect
- Harmony
- Diversity
- Client-Service
- Creativity
- Autonomy
- Work-Life Balance
- Meaningful Work
- Recognition
- Trust

Taking into consideration your reflections above, what do you value most at work? List 5 values and feel free to add any values that are not covered here:

Self-Reflection

"People who can focus, get things done. People who can prioritize, get the right things done." – John Maeda

Why did you choose these 5 values as your top ones?

How would you prioritize them? List them from 1-5:

Now that you've spend some time reflecting on your core values and prioritizing them, take some time to consider what this tells you about what you need in the workplace.

What do you need more of?

What do you need less of?

What would you like to stay the same?

How to Prepare for a Discussion

"The art of conversation is the art of hearing as well as of being heard." - William Hazlitt

There are many different ways to have a discussion with your manager about what you need at work. What is said and how it is said will vary from person to person and from situation to situation. That said, there are five key questions that can help you prepare for this conversation so that you can feel more confident entering into it:

(1) What is your intention for the conversation?

The people who experience the most success in any conversation are the ones who are crystal clear about their intention. Spend some time reflecting on what you want out of the conversation.

Do you want your manager to help you find a new job?

Are you interested in learning about opportunities on the team? Would you like your manager to be a sounding board for you?

What's your ultimate goal for this discussion?

(2) What might be important to your manager?

Conversations are a two way street, so it's just as important to consider what your manager might want to get out of this conversation.

What might be your manager's values regarding your topic of discussion?

What might they want to get out of the conversation?

What questions might they have for you on this topic?

(3) How will you invite your manager to the discussion?

This may be an easy question to answer if you have a great relationship with your manager. You might be able to simply add this topic to the agenda of one of your regular one-on-one meetings.

If you're not sure how to invite your manager, consider what type of invitation they would like to receive. Would they prefer a heads up by email before receiving a calendar invitation? Would they prefer for you to raise it verbally and then schedule the meeting with them?

The invitation is intended to be high-level - i.e., "I'd like to have a discussion with you about X." (Where X is your career, opportunities in the office, etc. - whatever you decided on in question #1.)

The invitation is not the place to have the entire conversation. That's what you will do when you meet together, so keep it short and sweet.

(4) How will you start the conversation?

The first 30 seconds of any conversation are the most critical. The great news is that you have a lot of power here to set the stage for a good discussion. So spend some time reflecting on how you will set the tone for the meeting right at the beginning.

How will you thank your manager for taking the time to meet with you?

How will you share your intention for setting up the meeting?

How can you check in about whether manager has anything that they want to discuss at the meeting?

(5) What will you share with your manager during the discussion?

Reflect on how you might communicate 1-3 core needs in the workplace that are important to you. Once again, if you have a great relationship with your manager this might be easy for you to do.

If trust levels are low, keep in mind that in any collaborative conversation you are aiming to strike the delicate balance between candor and compassion; your own needs and your manager's needs; and your goals as an individual and the team's goals as a unit.

If you would like some help, don't hesitate to reach out to your Department's Informal Conflict Management Office for support. You can find a list of offices and their contact information [here](#).