

MCS

My CAREER STORY



*An Autobiographical
Workbook for
Life-Career Success*

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for Life-Career Success



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PURPOSE

Like many people, you may be facing a change in your life story; like going from high school to college, from school to work, or from one job to the next. And change means making choices. As you make your own choices, it helps to pause and reflect about your life story and what you want to do next in your career.

Sometimes taking tests can be helpful to learn about what kinds of jobs and occupations you may like and to make choices. You might have taken a test like this. These tests help with *matching* you to jobs that seem right for you. Usually, career tests tell you about your work-related interests, abilities, and personality. They tell you about what kinds of people you are most like and what kinds of jobs people like you most often do. While often helpful for finding out about what college majors or occupations might fit you best, such tests usually tell just one part of your whole life story.

To understand yourself more completely and how you can use work to be the person you want to be, it helps to think about your whole life story. Knowing and telling your own life story, or autobiography, adds *meaning* to your career choices and plans. That way, you can deepen your life-career decision making and planning by having a clearer sense of purpose and direction. **The “My Career Story” workbook (MCS) aims to help you tell, understand, and author your own career story.** Think of the MCS as a mirror that you hold up to look at yourself. By looking closely in this “mirror,” you can reflect on how you can use school and work in a way that is meaningful to you and that matters to other people.

The MCS prompts you to think about the decisions you must make and the actions you must take. Use it to tell, understand, and put into action your life-career story. The MCS contains a series of questions designed for you to tell about yourself. You then relate your story to a career problem you now face, such as deciding about educational and occupational options and making career plans. By reflecting on your answers to the questions, you will likely be much better able to tell and enact your own career story in terms of *who* you are, *where* in the world of work you would like to be, and *how* you will take the next step in your life-career.



GENERAL DIRECTIONS

The MCS contains three parts.

In **Part I, “Telling My Story,”** you will answer several questions about yourself. Your answer to each question tells one part of your whole life-career story.

In **Part II, “Understanding My Story,”** you will use your answers from Part I to tell and understand your career story with greater clarity and meaning. In so doing, you will better understand yourself, your interests, and your passion in life. Together, the story you tell in Part I and the portrait you construct in Part II will help you realize *who* you are as the lead character in your own life-career story, *where* in the world of work you would most like to be, and *how* you believe you can move to the next chapter in your career story.

In **Part III, “Enacting My Story,”** you will make a realistic plan to begin the next chapter by choosing a work setting that is meaningful to you and that matters to others.



PART I. TELLING MY STORY

A. You are probably using this workbook because you are facing some change or transition in your life; maybe from high school to college, from school to work, or from job to job. To bridge transitions, or end one chapter and begin the next, people reflect on their own life story to clarify and guide their choices. In the lines below, **write a few sentences about your current career situation and any decision you are trying to make.**

My goal in using this workbook is: _____

B. List the occupations or jobs you are now thinking about doing. You might have several, just one or two, or none at all. If you can, list at least three to five occupations or jobs.



C. Write your answers to the following four questions in the spaces provided.

- 1. Who did you admire when you were growing up?** List three people, other than your mother and father, who you admired when you were a child of about six, seven, or eight years old. These can be real people you know or don't know personally, make-believe people like superheroes and cartoon characters, or anybody else you can think of. Maybe you admired a neighbor or a teacher, an athlete, a politician, a scientist, an artist or musician, a T.V. star, or a character in a book.

List the three people you admired on the lines on the next page. Then, for each character, describe in 4-5 words in the space provided what you admired about them. For example, if you admired Anne of Green Gables you might write that she is independent and spunky. Or, if you admired Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. you might write that he was a leader who fought for social justice. If you admired Wonder Woman or Superman you might write that they fought for truth and justice.



My three people I admired and what I admire about them are:

People I admired:

These are the words I would use to describe them:

a. _____

a. _____

b. _____

b. _____

c. _____

c. _____

2. List your favorite T.V. shows, web sites, or magazines and tell what you like about them.

Three TV shows, websites, or magazines that I like are:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

These are all of the things I like about each one of these T.V. shows, websites, or magazines:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

3. **What is your favorite story right now?** Think of a story from a book or a movie that you have read or viewed, and maybe more than once. Tell what the story is about including what happens and the outcome.

4. **What is your favorite saying?** Think about a motto or a saying that you really like. Maybe you've seen it on a bumper sticker, a poster, a book, or a poem. If you can't think of a saying, you might even create your own. Write down your favorite saying here:



PART II. UNDERSTANDING MY STORY

You told small stories about your life and career by answering the questions in Part I. Now, put these small stories together into a big story, or **summary portrait**. This summary portrait helps you recognize who you are, where you like to be, and how to get there. Use the summary portrait to make sense of your current career situation, guide your decision making, and envision the next chapter of your life story.

Directions

It has been said that when we want someone to know who we really are, we tell them our life story. That is because we make ourselves and our world through the stories that we tell. To best achieve life-career success, you must know your story because it tells very clearly who you are as a person, where you would most like to work, and how to use that work in a way that allows you to fully be yourself. To construct such a story, think of your life-career as an ongoing tale with three main parts:

- ✓ First, you act as the lead character in your own story. Your **self** has qualities that make you the person who you are now and who you want to become. For example, maybe you are a person who is or is becoming independent, strong-willed, and helpful. Or, maybe you are smart, sensitive, and responsible. Whether it is these or other words, there is a way to best describe you.
- ✓ Second, you want to put yourself in an educational or work **setting** where you feel most comfortable. You, like most people, probably have been in a class at school or in a job that you did not like. That is because it did not allow you to be you. Knowing the settings that you like best tells about the kinds of work that most interest you and the places where you can best be you.
- ✓ Third, your story has a **script** and a central theme that likely suggests what you might do in the next chapter of your career story.

Use your answers to the questions in Part I so that you can understand the story of your **self** as the lead character in your own life-career, the work **setting** where you want to enact your life-career, and the **script** that explains your life-career direction, or how you can connect who you are to where you want to be in the world of work.



SETTING: Where Do I Like to Be?

Look at the words you used to describe your favorite T.V. shows, web sites, or magazines on page 8.

1. Write down the **first word** you used to describe each one of them:
2. Write down any **words or similar words that you used more than once** to describe them:
3. Write down **two or more things your shows, web sites, or magazines have in common**:
4. List any **other significant words or phrases** you used to describe them:

This is where you like to be you, your career interests. These are the kinds of *places* in which you want to work, the *people* with whom you want to be, the *problems* you want to address, and the *procedures* you like to use. You want to put yourself in a setting that interests you and where you enjoy the people with whom you work. **Using the words you wrote down in your summary above, tell in one phrase or one sentence where you like to be.**

I LIKE BEING PLACES WHERE PEOPLE DO ACTIVITIES SUCH AS:

MY CAREER STORY

SUMMARY PORTRAIT

Use this page to summarize your life-career story.

SELF

RE-WRITE HERE THE 2-4 SENTENCES THAT YOU WROTE AT THE BOTTOM OF PAGE 11.

I am/I am becoming a person who is:

SETTING

RE-WRITE HERE THE 2-4 SENTENCES THAT YOU WROTE AT THE BOTTOM OF PAGE 12.

I like being in places where people do activities such as:

SCRIPT

RE-WRITE HERE YOUR FAVORITE STORY THAT YOU TOLD ON PAGE 9.

The plot of my current favorite book or movie is:

Therefore, in these places I want to:

SUCCESS FORMULA

USE YOUR SELF, SETTING, AND SCRIPT ABOVE TO WRITE HERE A ONE-SENTENCE PERSONAL LIFE-CAREER MISSION STATEMENT.

I will be most happy and successful when I am able to be a person who is

in places where people do activities such as _____

_____ so that I can

_____.

SELF-ADVICE

RE-WRITE HERE YOUR FAVORITE SAYING THAT YOU LISTED ON PAGE 9.

My motto contains my best advice to myself for dealing with my career concerns. To apply my success formula now, the best advice I can give myself is:

EXPLORING OCCUPATIONS

If you wish to explore occupations that may best offer a setting for you to express your interests, return to page 5. Based on your summary portrait on page 13, **look over the occupations you listed on page 5 and identify those that you now see as potential choices.** If you want help to add more occupations to your list, then follow the instructions on page 16.

OCCUPATIONS I AM NOW CONSIDERING:



EXPLORING MORE OCCUPATIONS

If you want to identify more occupations to explore, look at Table 1 and read about the six types of work settings and interests listed there. From the list, **write on the lines below the table the two letters that best describe each one of your TV shows, web sites, or magazines.**

Table 1. Six Types of Work Settings and Interests

WORK SETTINGS AND INTERESTS	
“R” Realistic	Outdoors, mechanics, athletics, construction, sports, plants and animals, wildlife, home repair, gardening, agriculture, skilled trades, farming, fishing, law enforcement, firefighting, working out, transport, computer hardware, electronics
“I” Investigative	Science, medicine, mathematics, research, problem solving, detective work, science fiction, discovery, analyzing, evaluating, studying, exploration, technical writing
“A” Artistic	Art, music, literature, writing, performing arts, theater, visual arts and design, creating, culinary arts, fashion, originality, mass communication
“S” Social	People, teamwork, helping, community service, teaching and education, social sciences, human resources and training, caring for others, support, nursing, social work, residential caretaking, counseling, child development, childcare
“E” Enterprising	Business, politics, leadership, entrepreneurship, management, sales, government, law, finance, marketing, travel and leisure, realtor, consulting, business agent
“C” Conventional	Office work, organization, data management, accounting, information systems, book-keeping, clerical work, record keeping, scheduling, customer service, administrative assistance, bank teller, traffic manager, dispatcher, office practices

The two letters from the above list that best describe my TV shows, web sites, or magazines are:

Now, go to the O*NET online:

<http://www.onetonline.org/find/descriptor/browse/Interests/>. There, you can click on your first letter that you wrote above (R, I, A, S, E, or C). Once you do that, on the web page that appears next you can expand the list by selecting from the drop-down menu your second most interesting letter that you wrote above. You will also find it worthwhile to reverse the order of your two letters, or even add a third letter that you like to the list.

The O*NET describes and provides detailed information about occupations that fit your interest two-letter code. If any of the occupations you listed on page 15 of this workbook appear on the O*NET list, circle them. On the lines below, **list any additional occupations from the O*NET list that you wish to explore:**



PART III. ENACTING MY STORY

By telling your story in Part I and understanding your story in Part II, you are now ready to make a detailed plan to put your story into action. Your plan has three parts that involve reflecting on, telling, and performing your story.

- A. **REFLECT** on your career story to set goals for the next chapter of your life-career. The goal you select should be something that will allow you to enact or bring to life your career story. Therefore, select a goal that is *achievable* (you have enough time, resources, and energy to do it), *believable* (you believe you can do it), *concrete* (it is measurable and specific), and *desirable* (you want to do it). **My goal, or goals now are to:**

- B. **TELL** and talk about your story and the conclusions you have drawn from this workbook with valued audiences. A next step in enacting your career story is to share it with people you trust. Audiences might be family members, friends, mentors, coaches, teachers, or career counselors. The more you tell your story, the more real and clear it becomes to you and the more confident you feel in living it. To make my story more clear and real, I will tell and discuss it with people I trust. **The people I trust to listen to my story and encourage me to go forward are:**

C. **PERFORM** your story by taking action. List two to four specific objectives, or small steps you will now take to move you from where you are today to the goals you listed above. For ideas on steps to take consider the following possibilities:

To commit to a tentative decision that I have made about my career plans, I will (check all that apply):

____ **Talk** to someone working in the occupation I am interested in

____ **Listen** to someone working in my occupation of interest

____ **Read** something about my occupation of interest

____ **Search** the world wide web for more information about this occupation

____ **Visit** places where people are working in this occupation

____ **Observe** people working in this occupation

____ **Other** _____

To try out my chosen occupation, I will (check all that apply):

____ **Apply**

____ **Volunteer**

____ **Search**

____ **Study**

____ **Apprentice**

____ **Other:**

To move toward reaching my goal or goals I will:

**End by re-reading your goal on page 4 to see if you have achieved it.
If not, discuss your workbook with someone you trust.**



And when in doubt, think about
your life portrait!