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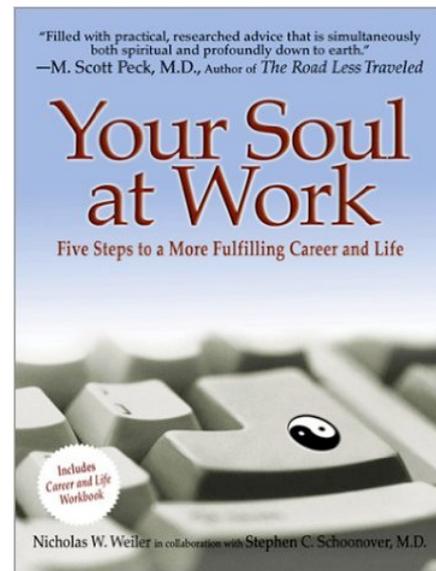
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Personal Criteria for Success

Before making career and life planning decisions it's important to do some homework and define your own very personal criteria for success. These criteria should be clearly established in your mind and regularly updated based on changing circumstances and lessons learned over time. Otherwise having to make a quick decision on an unexpected promotion, downsizing, career or location change opportunity might send you off in



directions you really don't want to go. There are two types of criteria you need to determine for yourself.

The first are personal life value priorities - Determining your most important current values (e.g., money, location, service to others, time with family), rank-ordering them and deciding which you will trade off if faced with a contradiction (e.g., the job you want not being available in the location you want). As we said earlier, many people keep themselves in a state of continual agitation by refusing to make focused value decisions.

The second are personal job-content objectives - Identifying what specific combination of skills or competencies (e.g., intellectual, technical, interpersonal, physical, artistic, mathematical, etc.) you want to develop and exercise in your future on-the-job activities. These objectives become your criteria for judging the content of potential future jobs. If a potential opening involves doing a lot of financial or technical analysis by yourself with no opportunity for interacting with others - and interacting with others is important to you - you will avoid that job even if it is a promotion. You can't assess potential future career paths effectively until you have some standard or criteria for judging whether or not what you find is for you.

The following chapters and the workbook at the end of this book outline an organized process with proven instruments and tools to help you establish both these sets of criteria. In this chapter we'll discuss life values.

Life Values

It's important to know what personal values we want to achieve in life, on and off the job. Then we can make career choices that help us meet the most possible of these values. Making an initial list of our values is usually the easy part. Most of us can come up with a long list. The real challenge - the tough part of determining values - comes in the choices we have to make in setting our priorities, in deciding which values we will give up or trade off when we face inevitable contradictions.

I don't know about you, but I want everything. I don't want any contradictions or forced choices. I want the freedom and flexibility of a single life and all the rewards of a loving spouse and children. I want to live in a small, intimate, low pressure, academic town and have all the challenges, money, and status of a job that may only be available in places like New York or Chicago. I want Santa Claus to come along and let me have it all. And I don't think I'm unusual in this. I think most people, reasonable or not, want just about everything.

If I let myself think about it, however - if I face the unpleasant reality that there are contradictions and I can't have everything - I'll probably discover I do have some preferences. Each of us wants some things more than others. Precisely what we want and in what rank order is distinctively different for each individual. Accepting someone else's -- organization's, peer's, or teacher's -- rank order is not a very adult decision. Accepting someone else's rank order for me is laziness, unwillingness to do my own tough thinking, or excessively conforming behavior.

If I wait for Santa Claus to give me everything, Santa will not come. Someone or something else (e.g. an unexpected opportunity for a location move) will make the trade-offs for me. Both are really non-decision options, and both are dangerous. Letting chance or someone

else make the trade-offs for me will rob me of many things I want most and substitute things I don't want nearly as much.

Deciding Our Own Values

We help people start identifying their most important personal values by asking them to prioritize 20 typical career-related life values. We do this by giving them a set of 20 cards each of which defines one of the values. Then we have them practice identifying contradictions and making trade-offs by giving up the cards two at a time until they get down to the top five they would be least willing to trade off. Most find this a tough but enlightening process. Of course, most will achieve more than five of the values, but forcing themselves to focus down on only five introduces a valuable discipline.

The process of looking carefully at your life values and establishing clear priorities may force you to make some conscious tradeoffs you've been avoiding, particularly when you compare what your top value priorities are with the values you are actually spending most of your time pursuing today.

Figure 3 shows 20 typical life values people want to pursue. Some will realize more than others. It's unlikely anyone will realize them all, however, because several are likely to contradict each other. This is not because the establishment or system is plotting mean things. This is simply because that's the way the world is. You can complain that this is not fair, get angry, and refuse to accept the fact that you have to trade off anything. It's easier and much more productive to become your own Santa Claus by making choices, ending the impasse and moving on.

Figure 3. TYPICAL CAREER-RELATED LIFE VALUES

Friendship	To work with people I respect and to be respected by them
Location	To be able to live where I want to live.
Enjoyment	To enjoy my work. To have fun doing it.
Loyalty	To be committed to the goals of a group of people who share my beliefs, values and ethical principles.
Family	To have time with my family.
Leadership	To motivate and energize other people. To feel responsible for identifying and accomplishing needed group tasks.
Personal Development	To learn and to do challenging work that will help me grow, that will allow me to utilize my best talents and mature as a human being.
Security	To have a steady income that fully meets my family's basic needs.
Wisdom	To grow in understanding of myself, my personal calling and life's real purpose. To grow in knowledge and practice my religious beliefs. To discern and do the will of God and find lasting meaning in what I do.
Community	To be deeply involved with a group that has a larger purpose beyond one's self. To perform in effective and caring

	teamwork.
Wealth	To earn a great deal of money (i.e., well beyond my family's basic needs). To be financially independent.
Expertness	To become a known and respected authority in what I do.
Service	To contribute to the well being and satisfaction of others. To help people who need help and improve society.
Personal Accomplishment	To achieve significant goals. To be involved in undertakings I believe personally are significant - whether or not they bring me recognition from others.
Prestige	To be seen by others as successful. To become well known. To obtain recognition and status in my chosen field.
Power	To have the authority to approve or disapprove proposed courses of action. To make assignments and control allocation of people and resources.
Independence	To have freedom of thought and action. To be able to act in terms of my own time schedules and priorities.
Integrity	To live and work in compliance with my personal moral standards. To be honest and acknowledge/stand up for my personal beliefs.
Health	To be physically and mentally fit.
Creativity	To be innovative. To create new and better ways of doing things.
??	Add value definitions of your choice

Parents, Mentors, Organizations, and Others

When people prioritize their life values we suggest they sort out any voices they might carry in their heads from other people telling them what they should value. There are four categories of voices each of us should particularly monitor. These are the voices of our parents, mentors, organizations, and others.

Many values come from our parents. Most are probably very worthwhile. We share and want to retain them. It's important to look at values transmitted from our parents. However, we must make certain we are not unduly influenced by those we may not share. We might be putting an inflated emphasis on wealth as the answer to all our problems, for instance, if our parents faced economic deprivations we don't face, and more money had an urgency for them it needn't have for us (or if our parents were very wealthy and prized that). Wanting something different from our parents doesn't mean they were wrong. It just means we're different and probably living in different circumstances.

Most professionals have one or more significant mentors during their 20's and 30's. Mentors are usually people 8 to 15 years older than we are - teachers, bosses, or experienced co-workers who take us under their wings and teach us the tricks of the trade in our

occupational specialties. They help us establish ourselves as members of our trades or professions. A mentor serves in a role similar to that of master in the old master-apprentice system.

To become masters themselves, however, apprentices must finally break from masters, become their own persons, and steer their own courses. This often happens when people are between the ages of 35-40 and realize they have been too subject to influence by those who have authority over them. They then stand on their mentor's shoulders, build in new directions from that firm foundation, and extend their capabilities beyond their mentor's.

Identify and think about your mentors. Sort out what they have said you should and should not value. Decide where you do and do not agree today. You may still be associated with a mentor or you may be carrying some strong value messages from mentors you haven't worked with for years. If so, assess them and pursue only those you still agree with.

Many companies are attempting to better align individual employee behavior with the organization's vision and mission. They often do this by communicating various organization values employees are expected to acknowledge and commit themselves to. This is basically a good trend. If you know what your organization's values are you can better understand what's expected of you. And you can better decide if your personal values are compatible. This doesn't have to be an all or nothing decision. It's better to look at each specific organizational value, articulated or implied, and decide whether or not it conflicts with what is important to you. You will probably find it's easy to agree with the majority (e.g., quality or customer service). There may be some, however, like "working whatever after hours or weekend time it takes to get the job done" in a significantly downsized and overloaded operation - or "always exceeding the previous quarter's sales figures" - that you need to put into better perspective or even resist.

Another potential contaminating influence on our choice of values can often be found in relationships with our 'others' - in our own competitive instincts and need to be one-up on our friends, siblings, or peers. Their values are probably and legitimately very different from mine. They may be paying a high price in some dimension (e.g., time with family) that is more important than power or money to me. Both of us may be sacrificing important values in a race neither even wants to be in. What a way to waste time and lose spirit.

Where does it end? It ends when I call a halt for me. The others must determine how it will end for them. Think about who your others are. What price might you be paying for the competition? Do you really want to race? If not, plan what you will do differently in the future to avoid these useless competitions.

Staying anchored in life values that bring personal meaning to you

If you don't know who you are you will probably become for other people (e.g., superiors, peers or society) what they need or want you to be. There will be no self. Doing what others expect (including suggested career or location moves) may bring high recognition and material rewards, but if there is no self in your decisions there will probably be little true meaning. Your life will drift away from you unanchored and in directions you don't really want to go.

Even when we believe our life values reflect our own inner preferences it's important to test this assumption regularly. Life values are frequently influenced - often unconsciously - by our evolving life environments (e.g., faddish cultural, peer or organizational norms). It's

important to identify these influences periodically, make certain they are conscious and test how they are supporting or impairing pursuit of our important life and spiritual goals.

We need to know and stay anchored in who we are, in what we personally value and stand for. Our actions probably won't always reflect our deepest beliefs. There will be gaps between our values and our behaviors. Filling those gaps is a constant struggle for everyone. If we don't notice the gaps - if we don't strive continually to fill the gaps by better matching our values and behaviors - chances are we will find sparse meaning in what we do no matter how great the external rewards.

Brief reflection

The following brief reflection will help you make a quick assessment of what your value priorities are today. Later, you can take a more in depth look when you do the exercises in the workbook. Before you do the meditation sit quietly a moment and get in touch with your own thought process. Monitor any voices you carry around in your head from other people (e.g., society, the media, peers, former teachers, your organization) telling you what it is popular to value. Put them aside and get in touch with what you want. Listen to your inner voice. Hear what it tells you about what values you really want and need to pursue if you are to put more meaning in your life and career for both yourself and your family.

Brief Reflection

Look at the twenty Life Values in the table above. Then take an erasable pencil and make a few notes following the instructions below. Don't take a lot of time to do this. Just record what comes to your mind quickly. See what initial response comes to mind first. (You can do a much more thorough Life Values exercise later, when you complete the workbook.)

Bottom 3

List your bottom 3 values (i.e., those you would be most willing to give up)

Top 3

List your top 3 (i.e., those you would be least willing to give up)

Least Important Value

Review your bottom 3 values and circle the "B" after the single value you would be most willing to give up (i.e., the value that has the lowest priority for you personally)

Most Important Value

Review your top 3 values and circle the "T" after the single value you would be least willing to give up (i.e., the value that has top priority for you personally)

Compare your top values with those you spend most time pursuing today.

When you compare your value priorities with what values are actually taking your time these days, are there any discrepancies or gaps? You are very unusual, or untruthful, if you see no discrepancies. Are there a few imbalances that have, for all practical purposes,

become unacknowledged false gods that are leading you off course? If so, what will you do about that?

It's up to each of us to make our own tough values choices. Recognizing this can be scary for even the bravest of us. But there is good news to go with that. We can empower ourselves and get back on course. The hardest part is tracking the many times we drift off course, admitting what's happening, and taking corrective action.

Because this is a book about career planning, we have presented a list of career or vocation-related values. It is not a list of moral principles. We can't make a complete list of those in a book like this. You've probably already learned much of what you need to know about those from a long list of spiritual writers and leaders who are much wiser than we. What we show in Figure 3 is merely a list of fairly typical day-to-day value concerns (only some of which involve moral principles in themselves) that most of us need to track and assess continually throughout our life journeys.

Principle-based decisions vs. evasive value clarifications

When we prioritize our life values it is important, however, that we make what Stephen Covey and many of our modern behavioral experts call principle-based value decisions. That requires a lot more than the typically evasive value clarification exercises that are so popular in today's value avoiding society.

Unfortunately, many contemporary values clarification exercises tend to foster not tough decision making, but a currently popular form of easy-out escapism. They provide a way to pretend we are making meaningful choices while avoiding any hard decisions. They give us a tool to play what Peter Kreeft describes as "moral ping pong." He tells us that questions addressed by facilitators in many modern values clarification exercises are:

...never about the roots or grounds of values, about principles. Instead, they are about feelings and reasoning, calculations.

They never ask questions about virtues and vices, about character, but ask only about what you would do or rather what you would 'feel comfortable' doing.

The one moral absolute in (typical) values clarification is that there are no moral absolutes, and the only thing forbidden is for the facilitator to suggest that...there is objective truth in the realm of values, for that would mean some of the students are wrong, and that would be 'judgmental', the only sin. In fact the very procedure itself teaches a nearly irresistible lesson: values are all up for grabs, are matters of individual or social taste; no one has the right to teach another here; values are "my" values or "your" values", never simply true values; values, in short, are not facts but feelings.¹

This approach to deciding and living our values is obviously ridiculous - at least when someone like Kreeft takes an objective look and tells it like it is in non-evasive language. If you are like me somewhere deep down you have always known it was ridiculous. But if you're like me you've also not always been as courageous as Kreeft in owing up to it - or expressing it.

While we do have to choose our own values, we shouldn't do that in a moral vacuum. Clearly there are some objective moral principles we have to consider. I don't believe values, especially moral and spiritual values, are all relative. But I haven't always been

willing to be clear about - and consistently practice - what I really do believe. That kind of behavior might challenge people. In much of modern society it's not considered politically correct and I don't want to be unpopular. I want to be sophisticated, urbane, and well liked even by people I know are behaving in direct contradiction to what I believe - even when they are subtly pressuring me to behave the same way. What a way to waste a life! I don't have to get on a soapbox and convert the world. However, I do have to be certain I at least really know where I stand and that my behavior and language are always consistent with that.

If we have a difference in values, I have to make certain my behaviors are not slipping into compliance with my audience's rather than my own moral beliefs. I don't have to berate or lecture everyone I disagree with. That would often be a waste of time anyway. However, I do have to make certain that my actions (i.e., everything I do) are consistent with what I really want (i.e., personal morality, integrity and self-respect) and not with what I can easily deceive myself into thinking I want (i.e., more recognition and personal popularity). And while I don't always have to say everything I believe, I do have to be very careful never to say anything I don't believe.

Some Very Available Road Signs

Steve and I are not theologians. It isn't our job in this book to teach the details of moral values. You don't need us to do that anyway. You already know them. They have been spelled out for you by much more learned and spiritually advanced people than we. They are as obvious as the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount with its eight magnificent beatitudes. I don't think many of our readers will deny the validity of those two documents as roadmaps for a more fulfilling journey - not only through this life but far beyond to a much higher realm. If you do disagree with them, you are an unusual person.

Kreeft points out the simplicity and universal acceptance of the Sermon on the Mount when he says:

The greatest sermon ever preached takes only fifteen minutes to read and can be printed on a single page; yet it has changed the world more than any other speech ever made. Even Gandhi found nothing in his rich, six thousand-year-old Hindu tradition to equal it. Even atheists, agnostics, and humanists testify to its greatness. The whole world stares in ecumenical orgy of agreement at it; yet the whole world fails to follow it, exactly as the man in Jesus' parable at the end of the sermon (Matt. 7:24-27) who built his house on the sand of hearing instead of on the rock of heeding.²

Are we mapping our lives and energy-consuming vocational pursuits on the drifting sands of transient and cyclical contemporary fads? Or are we using the solid life anchors provided by this great sermon, by the commandments, and by the great spiritual writers of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and other major religious traditions? Are we deafened by the noise of the media, or by organization and peer pressure? Or are we listening to centuries of eastern and western spiritual giants who have provided us with the time-tested, enduring, very public principles and values we've always had available to us as road signs for plotting and pursuing more fulfilling journeys?

Most of us are doing a little of each. The trick is to keep moving relentlessly towards firmer ground. It isn't easy, but it brings the only true satisfaction and the stakes are high. The real graduation prize, the only satisfying destination is not a short, if physically comfortable,

retirement in the sun, not fifteen minutes of fame, but an eternity of much more fulfilling light in an infinitely higher realm. What is a practical person to do? A practical person will pay attention and make the effort to keep his or her value choices on track. One individual I know, for instance, prioritized his values and concluded he was unhappily and excessively pursuing both wealth and personal recognition. He left a career that provided high visibility and material rewards for a less lucrative vocation that gave him more opportunity to pursue important social service, family and spiritual values he'd been neglecting. He never regretted the decision.

Steve and I have each spent our share of time lost in the self-generated fog of value confusion and indecision. We know it's only human. But we have also discovered that it isn't necessary.

There are people who discipline themselves to penetrate the fog. They make the tough decision to take off their blinders and see the markers. Then they work hard at clearing the air whenever new mists inevitably form. This gives them a noticeable serenity despite a chaotic and unpredictable environment. It provides them with a calming surety of direction when many around them are circling blindly in a foggy refusal to make value decisions, or in failing to act when they discover their values and day-to-day activities are in conflict.

We've said that many of the values we define in Figure 3 are not moral principles in themselves. However, there is a morality implicit in how and to what extent we pursue any given value on the list. There is a proper balance. We know that intuitively even when we don't allow this clear knowledge into our consciousness. Some values are definitely more important than others in light of our journey's ultimate destination. And an excessive pursuit of several can easily lead to an imbalance that we know, if we clear the fog, is not moral. Paraphrasing Kreeft we know, but we do not always heed. And we are geniuses at not noticing we are not heeding.

Kept in appropriate perspective, none of the values on the list is right or wrong in itself. However, pursued out of balance, many can become debilitating and road-fogging false gods.

We tend to think of false gods as antique and currently non-existent phenomena. No one has worshipped Zeus or a golden calf for millennia. In truth, however, we have not eliminated false gods; we have renamed them. If you don't know the names our values list can give you several clues.

Personal growth and satisfaction

If we track our progress and stay on course, our values will evolve and mature. We will grow and the growth will be satisfying. Being clear on our values can keep us anchored when the situation around us is falling apart. It can keep us in touch with our authentic selves, with who we are and, most important of all, with who we want to become in our ongoing development as both human and spiritual beings

1. Peter Kreeft, *Back To Virtue* (San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1992) p. 28-29

2. *ibid.* p. 79

Life Stages and Career Planning

Earlier we mentioned the work of people such as Erik Erikson and Daniel Levinson, who conducted extensive research and identified a series of very predictable life stages healthy people go through in their journeys through life. At each stage we tend to reassess and re-balance our life values priorities. It's helpful to know what some of these stages are so that when we pass through them we can be aware of what's happening and know that it's normal. Since our focus here is on careers, we will briefly summarize six stages of adult career development that we have synthesized from the work of many who have studied the adult growth process. For a more in-depth understanding we recommend the writings of Erikson, Levinson, Groeschel, Fowler, and others (see bibliography) who describe the process in more detail.

Stages of Growth

Addressed with the right mindset these are stages of personal growth. The movement through the stages is a progression. As we pass from one stage to the next, often with some difficult periods of transition, we learn and mature in the process. If we acknowledge and work through the issues of each successive stage we become better human and spiritual beings.

These following stages carry us from our late teens to post retirement. The ages shown for each stage are only rough estimates. People may pass through the stages several years earlier or later than the estimates shown. Individuals vary widely in their progression through the stages.

Stage 1. Autonomy and Tentative Choices (Approximately 18-26)

In this stage we are typically developing personal autonomy and leaving the family to establish an independent home, finances etc. We're developing our own sense of personhood as separate from parents and childhood peer groups. We try out new relationships (e.g., romantic interests, professional associates, peer groups and friends). This is typically a period of tentative or provisional commitments. We're comfortable there is plenty of time ahead to change our minds on provisional decisions concerning things like location, occupation, plans to marry or not marry, friends, key life values, etc. Our focus is on defining ourselves as individuals and establishing an initial life structure.

Stage 2. Young Adult Transition (Approximately 27-31)

This is usually a period of significant turmoil - of looking at who we are becoming and asking if we're really journeying in directions we want to go. We question most of our earlier tentative choices. Have we made the right decisions? Are we running out of time for changing our decisions? Are our decisions becoming permanent before we want them to? Do we really want to make this location, career path or romantic relationship permanent? Will we or will we not settle down and have a family? Is time running out? Often with considerable angst similar to the better known mid-life crisis we rethink our provisional decisions and maintain them or change them in the process of making more permanent choices.

Stage 3. Making Commitments (Approximately 32-42)

This is typically a period of relative order and stability where we implement and live the choices made in the young adult transition. We settle down into deeper commitments

involving work, family, church, our community ties etc. We focus on accomplishment, becoming our own persons and generating an inner sense of expertise and mastery of our professions. By now we have a better developed and fairly well defined, though not usually final, dream of what we want to achieve in life. We put significant energy into achieving the dream.

Stage 4. Mid-Life Transition (Approximately 42-48)

This is the stage of mid-life questioning that's been discussed so much in the popular press. Here we tend to question everything again. If we have not achieved our dreams we wonder why not. Were they really the right dreams? If we have achieved our dreams we look at what values we might have neglected in their pursuit. Was it worth it? Either way we're probably disillusioned. A period of reassessment and realignment usually takes place, including recognition and re-balancing of key polarities , such as:

Immortality vs. Mortality - While young people know better intellectually, emotionally they seem to feel they are immortal. In mid-life we start to realize it may be half over and we want to make the best of what remains. This typically requires some revision of priorities and values - perhaps less emphasis on values already achieved and more emphasis on those we have neglected.

Constructive vs. Destructive - Up to mid-life, most of us fool ourselves that our behavior has been constructive while we had to deal with others' destructive behavior. In mid-life we get the uncomfortable insight that we have also engaged in our share of destructive as well as constructive behavior. This insight is painful but essential if we want to continue growing intellectually and spiritually.

Nurturing vs. Aggressive - Whether we have focused on aggressive (e.g., fast track corporate careers) or nurturing (e.g., teaching, social work, or homemaking) behavior to date, in mid-life we often want to re-balance. Some aggressive corporate people want to spend more time nurturing with their families or in socially oriented work, and some who have been in more service-oriented nurturing careers want to pursue something more aggressive or financially rewarding.

The experts stress that acknowledging the turmoil, experiencing the pain, and facing and resolving the polarities is essential for continued growth and satisfaction. Refusing to acknowledge or experience mid-life anxieties and questions - or at some unconscious level trying to go back and be twenty again is usually a sure way to get stuck and disgruntled in a way station.

Stage 5. Leaving a Legacy (Approximately 49-65)

The period after completion of the mid-life transition can be one of the most productive of all stages. We are usually at the peak of our mature abilities here. If the issues of the mid-life transition have been acknowledged and addressed we can make our greatest possible contributions to others and society. Here we can be less driven, less ego-centered, less compelled to compete with and impress others. Instead we can focus on what really matters to us, on developing younger people, on community with others, on leaving some personal legacy that really makes things better for people (whether it's recognized as our personal legacy or not), and on accomplishing values that our maturity and greater spirituality tell us have the most true meaning in the overall scheme of life.

Stage 6. Spiritual Denouement (Approximately 66 and Beyond)

This is the stage of tying things up, of completing the design of what we want to become, of finalizing our growth and assessing/fine-tuning the persons we have made of ourselves. This stage can go on for many years. It can be hopeful or cynical depending on how realistically, humbly, and effectively we have resolved (or now finally resolve) the issues faced in earlier stages. We may move into this stage sooner or later depending on how rapidly we have developed in earlier stages - how much we have moved beyond our narrow selves. Here we come to grips with the ultimate limitations of life, ourselves and mortality. We can look hopefully and unflinchingly at the ultimate meaning of our life and the life of others in the larger context. We do the best we can to pass whatever wisdom we have gained on to others. We accept others for what they are, seeing them as growing like we are and part of humankind's diversity. Our sense of community continually expands as we prepare for survival of the spirit beyond our mortality.

A Reason to Be

What ultimately is career and life success? What are we striving for? Why? What is our reason to be? The answer to these questions, and the significance we find in each of the life stages, will be very different depending on which world view we take.

[In another chapter, we discussed two worldviews, Naturalism and Supernaturalism. Naturalism is based on the assumption that human reason is supreme and this world (*i.e.* nature) is all there is. Supernaturalism is based on the assumption that there is more - that beyond nature as we know it there is an intelligence far surpassing our puny human intellects and we are charting our courses to a higher place.]

If Naturalism is our world-view, much of this life, including the life stages, doesn't make much sense. There is no ultimate goal. We perfect ourselves more every step of the way in life and then, at the height of our growth, we cease to exist. Not a very motivating scenario. Also a risky scenario. If we were betting on the wrong world view the negative consequences are far more severe and lasting than anything that happens to us in this life.

Naturalism's idea that we humans represent the ultimate intelligence can seem - at least momentarily - very sophisticated and flattering to our egos. Many very intelligent people have been seduced by this idea and spent their entire lives stuck in this rut. However, inevitably, those who have tried to replace God with human reason (especially when it has been their own reason they decided to revere) have done more harm than good. They have usually also ended up disillusioned and unhappy. However well meaning their original intentions were, the seduction of power - the idea of 'being' rather than 'serving' God - got them, and us, in trouble.

The result has been much suffering, pain, unequal justice, and bad things happening to good people in this world. Hitler and Stalin occur to us as two extreme examples of people who took this path. Naturalism has not given us much to celebrate. The reality of Naturalism is that, when we get beyond its original seductions, it tends to keep our gaze focused down, on the mud. Most of us from the depths of our too often neglected souls ache for more. Something in our innermost being cries out for a higher purpose - real meaning and goals that can be more satisfying and enduring than the transient successes, the 'vanities' of this life. We long to make that all-important simple turn of the head. We don't want this troubled existence to be all there is. We want to lift up our eyes beyond the restricted ceiling of earth and hope for heaven.

Supernaturalism gives us that hope. Supernaturalism goes substantively beyond Naturalism and provides meaning, even to our sufferings. Supernaturalism makes life a positive journey towards a higher place, with rewards far surpassing anything Naturalism can promise. Also, not only our spiritual, but even our finest scientific leaders tell us the 'faith' of Supernaturalism is much more consistent with the universe's observed logic and order than Naturalism's faith in the chaos of nothingness built solely on chance. Supernaturalism gives us an over-arching reason to be, an ultimate destination. Fortunately, it turns out that the most advanced modern research on life stages helps outline a path to that destination with defined way stations that can help us map our progress during the journey.

They tell us the purpose of each stage is to further our growth - to increase our learning and give us new, more mature insights. Our primary purpose in life is not business, money, recognition, professional expertise or career progression. Our primary purpose is to become complete human beings and to help others become complete human beings as we work together in cooperative community on resolving the issues of each life stage. How open we stay to this never-ending learning, and how effectively we assimilate and grow from the often painful insight of each stage, seem to be critical determining factors in how far we progress - and in whether or not we experience satisfaction and the peace that can only come from movement towards an ultimately meaningful goal.

Effective progression through the stages is congruent with what generations of spiritual writers have defined as the real purpose of life, spiritual growth - the process of purifying and preparing ourselves for a higher life. This is much more important than what specific career field or profession we choose, or how much material recognition and reward we receive for what we do. A successful career is one that enhances our spiritual growth. Our occupational choice should be one that can best enhance that growth. In later chapters we will present some proven techniques for helping us make that important choice.

If you continually track your progress, as we recommend, you may find you even want to change career fields occasionally as you progress over the years, reach plateaus, and need new challenges to start you towards the next stage.

There are many who have received very high levels of material recognition and reward, but appear to be frozen and unhappily stagnated at one of the lower level life stage way stations. Likewise there are people who are wise and at peace in very high level developmental stages who have never sought or received much material recognition and reward. Which group would you consider more successful?

There is nothing wrong with material success and recognition, if they don't distract us from more enduring realities and endeavors. If material success and recognition become ends in themselves, if they define the ultimate destination in our career and life journeys - there has been a great deal of social, psychological and spiritual wisdom accumulated over the centuries - that tells us we will find arrival at that ultimate destination terribly disappointing.

The rich man in the parables, who ignored the beggar Lazarus at his gate, discovered too late that Lazarus and not he found his final destination in heaven. In recent times we've all read about case after case of wealthy, renowned media, literary and financial personalities who ended their days in very public alcohol or drug ridden despair. Like the poet we cited earlier, most of these probably needed to lift their eyes and discover a higher reality.

Figure 1 outlines some key issues contemporary research tells us must be addressed and resolved at each life stage if we want a happier and more rewarding destination at the end of our journeys.

Figure 1. Adult Life Stages					
Stage	Key Issues	Self-Image	Goal Focus	Relationships	Community
Autonomy / Tentative Choices (18 - 26)	Autonomy vs. Dependence, Tentative vs. Lasting Choices	Developing sense of personhood as separate from parents and childhood peer groups	Defining self as an individual and establishing an initial life style	Testing out new relationships (e.g., love interests, peer groups, and friends)	Realigning focus from family of origin to new peers and groups
Young Adult Transition (27-31)	Turmoil vs. Certainty, Settling Down vs. Keeping Things Open	Questioning sense of self and who/what we want to become	Re-assessing initial life style and making more permanent choices/ commitments	Sorting out and deciding which relationships will become more permanent	Re-thinking and evaluating commitments and connections
Making Commitments (32-40)	Master vs. Apprentice, Permanent vs. Tentative Choices	Firming up/establishing a more permanent sense of self and who/what we want to become	Deciding a life direction and defining/ aggressively pursuing a dream of what we want to accomplish in life	Making more permanent commitments to love relationships, friends, and peers	Establishing more permanent connections and community ties/ responsibilities
Mid-Life Transition (41-48)	Resolving Key Polarities Immortality vs. Mortality, Constructive vs. Destructive, Nurturing vs. Aggressive	Re-examining realities of projected ego and image vs. true self and struggling to define/accept true self	Questioning the dream whether or not it was achieved and developing a more mature sense of what is really important	Recognizing/ acknowledging one's own negative, as well as positive, impact on relationships and correcting course for deeper, more authentic connections	Disengaging from group and cultural pressures/norms to re-evaluate and restructure priorities
Leaving a Legacy (49-65)	Contribution vs. Personal Benefit, Other vs. Self Centered, Social vs. Independent Accomplishments	Letting go of earlier inaccurate ego images and accepting oneself as a worthwhile being with weaknesses as well as strengths	Making the best of the time one has left to help others and leave a positive legacy	Settling into more realistic and rewarding relationships based on recognizing/ forgiving each other's imperfections as human and helping each other grow	Re-engagement on a deeper, more objective, less driven and more productive, level with family, friends, and society
Spiritual Denouement (66 and beyond)	Hope vs. Despair Survival of Spirit vs. Mortality Surrender vs. Control	Accepting self as dependent on a wisdom greater than one's own, recognizing that wisdom as benevolent, and submitting one's self and life to that wisdom's will	Tying things up and completing the development of the person/spiritual being we want to become	Accepting others and recognizing/ respecting humankind's diversity as part of a greater wisdom's plan	Recognizing that life is only part of a larger, more enduring spiritual community and helping others understand that

Where Are You Now?

We do not, of course, move in simple linear fashion from one stage to another with no going back. It isn't that simple. Instead we move through the stages in cyclical fashion, hopefully with a longer term forward momentum, but inevitably cycling back and re-working concerns of earlier stages as we face unpredicted events, traumas, and fluctuating career, family, or interpersonal situations.

As you review these life stages think about where you are now. What stages have you passed through and which do you face next? What might that mean in terms of what you're thinking and feeling about your work and life today - and about your choice of life values to focus on at this point in time? As you look through Figure 1 how are you progressing? Which of the key issues have you resolved and which are you working on now? Where do you stand today in terms of the key issues and other categories listed across the top of Figure 1? Where do you want or need to concentrate your efforts next? The following brief reflection can help you consider these questions.

Brief Reflection

Read down each column under the categories listed across the top of Figure 4 (Key Issues, Self Image, Relationships etc). Using an erasable pencil, put a checkmark (✓) in the one box in each column that best defines where you think you are today. It may not be a perfect fit, but pick the one that comes closest. Then look at the boxes above the one you checked and put a question mark (?) in any you feel may still need some attention.

Look at your checkmarks and question marks as clues to where you currently are in your progression through the stages. What does this tell you? What impact might it have on the life values you feel are most important to you right now - or on your sense of changing if you are in a transitional situation between stages?

If you are part of a couple, you're not assessing your values or passing through the life stages alone. Two of you are making value choices and tradeoffs. It's helpful to know and share where you both are now in your life stage progression and where each wants to go next in your individual and joint journeys. There will probably be differences that you need to accommodate while also respecting each other's individual growth needs. Then important future career decisions (e.g., a job offer for one of you at another location) can be made with full awareness of what values each is trading off, and plans can be made to maximize growth for both of you after the decision.

It's important that we continually revisit, re-evaluate, and link our life values to our deeper, more spiritual aspirations and growth as we pass through each life stage. It's important that we recognize and accept the fact that the values we are spending our time pursuing might have to change, sometimes dramatically, as we grow and mature. This doesn't necessarily mean we've taken a wrong turn. However, most of us do take wrong turns along the way, and recognizing that gives important insight that helps get back on course. Correcting course and continually re-balancing are not signs of failure. They are simply signs we haven't frozen our designs. We're still moving ahead and improving the final product of what we want to become. We're still focusing on the stars and lifting our gaze out of the mud.

Prioritizing your life values and tracking your life stage progression are the first two tasks in the Taking Charge Process. The next task is deciding what kind of work will best achieve your values and advance your progression in directions you choose.

Critical Success Behaviors

An Example of the problem: Being Right Can Be Irrelevant

While most universities are good at teaching the important rational, scientific processes for solving problems, most schools, especially the highly technical ones, spend far too little time on teaching their students to communicate and sell their ideas. The students are not taught to build understanding and consensus among people with different personalities, work specialties and agendas (e.g., sales, finance, and engineering) whose cooperation is required if their ideas are to be implemented.

Several years ago I saw a classic example of how important communications and interpersonal skills are for anyone who wants to accomplish something - or negotiate a career - in organizations. I was reading a report about an unusually bright individual who had attended a large corporation's talent-assessment program. During the program participants worked in group problem solving exercises while a staff of psychologists and operational managers observed them. Afterwards participants received written feedback on their performance.

The feedback on this individual said he was so intelligent that he frequently had reasonable answers before the rest of the group had even defined the problem. Then the report made a statement I'll never forget. It said that his "being right was irrelevant".

How could his "being right" be "irrelevant"? It was irrelevant because he could never communicate his being right to the rest of the group, and all the problem solutions required their cooperation. At the end of each exercise he watched the others move off in the wrong direction because they never listened to him. He seemed oblivious to some of the important non-technical success behaviors and competencies we've observed in people who are effective at getting themselves heard and having impact.

Critical need for core non-technical performance and leadership competencies

After interviewing over 5000 people with multiple career specialties in over 60 Fortune 500 and other companies we identified a series of core non-technical performance and leadership competencies that distinguished successful performers at all levels. Our self-diagnostic tools listing specific success behaviors based on this research are currently being used in numerous national and international companies (GE, IBM, Lockheed Martin, Sun Microsystems, Apple, Citibank Hewlett-Packard etc). Various types of communications skills appear repeatedly in the behaviors people use to exercise these competencies. To illustrate the importance of these competencies, we'll start with a very common myth that hinders many in their efforts to become effective.

Myth: There is a right answer to every problem--and I should have it.

Much to the surprise of many, particularly younger recent college graduates, the right answer to most any work or career question (or problem) is also - like life - not a

destination but a journey. The highly technical president of a major corporation made this point very forcibly one day when I heard him address a gathering of deans from top engineering schools. His opening comment brought the group instantly to attention.

When they asked why they were not, he said their graduates usually had excellent technical skills but they were naive in that they defined success as finding the right answer to technical problems. He told the deans that getting the students to break that mindset was very difficult and they could never succeed if they continued to think that way.

Then he described some important success behaviors that were very consistent with what we found in our research. He said that, in the real world technical leaders have to decide which one of many problems to work on. Once they have decided, they usually have to build consensus among a group of colleagues who often don't agree with them and want to pursue other problems. Once the leaders have consensus they have to negotiate resources, often competing with other groups seeking the same resources to pursue other problems.

His message was that in addition to their technical skills people have to learn a variety of non-technical behaviors (e.g. consensus building, effective communications, admitting and learning from their mistakes) if they want to be heard and have impact in the real world.

A research-based head start

As we said earlier, we have already conducted over 5,000 competency-focused interviews across many career fields. ...In this section we will briefly outline some of the core competencies our interviews have identified as important in just about any career specialty. We will also show you a sample of a diagnostic tool you can use to assess yourself against these competencies.

From the research we have specified 12 core competencies that are critical for successful performance in nearly all career specialties. When we introduce these to our workshop participants it gives them a solid base to build on. They use this data base as a starting point, and then build from there by conducting Investigative Interviews to identify what additional specialized technical competencies are important in their individually chosen career fields.

This process of observing and interviewing managers and non-managers in both large and small organizations has taught us a great deal about what successful people do. It has also taught us about how they do it. Our interviews and focus groups have identified numerous things that successful and unsuccessful performers have in common - many behaviors both groups display regularly. But our analysis has focused on identifying a narrower, more practical set of distinguishing competencies and behaviors - things successful career strategists do that less successful people typically do not do.

If you know what these critical few are, you can focus your efforts on developing them - and eliminate much wasted time and energy spent on scattered and random personal development pursuits that have far less impact. Our research shows the 12 core competencies can be very powerful assets in the pursuit of any career strategy...

Three Competency Groups

There are three groups of competencies you need to explore in career planning. Our research can provide you with significant information on two of these three groups before you even begin your Investigative Interviews. The three groups are:

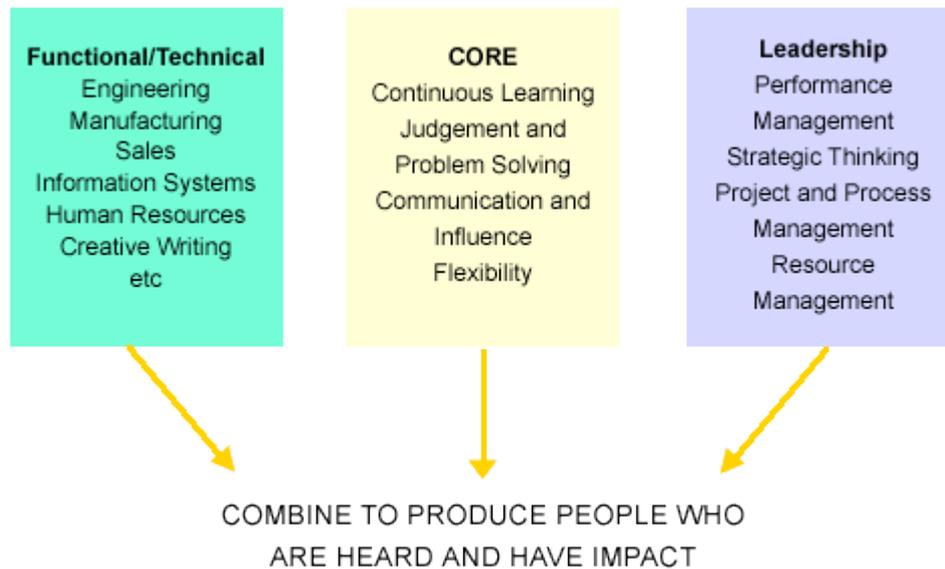
Functional/Technical Competencies. These are function-specific technical competencies required on a given career path (e.g., finance, engineering or computer systems). Training is usually readily available in these competencies. They are typically taught in local universities and technical schools. Our undergraduate major or trade school gives us a basic foundation of competence in the specialty we choose. Because knowledge is moving ahead very rapidly in many of these specialties (e.g., physics, psychology or automotive mechanics) we usually have to keep ourselves up-to-date through ongoing reading, graduate studies, or periodic participation in specialized courses offered by local schools or professional societies. Often our work organizations offer a variety of in-house training to keep employees up to date in the specialized technical competencies required for their work.

Core Non-Technical Competencies. In our experience this is a frequently overlooked, underestimated and ill-defined competency group, particularly among individuals who don't aspire to managerial positions. In current flatter and less hierarchical work environments anyone who wants to get his/her ideas heard and implemented will require a set of core competencies (e.g., communication, influence, planning, organizing and customer responsiveness) that in past, more hierarchical organizations have often been associated primarily with managerial positions. We call these core because they are not technical or function-specific. Those who want or need others to listen to, fund, act on, or support their ideas will require these core competencies no matter what technical/functional career specialty they pursue - and whether or not they ever aspire to formal managerial positions.

Leadership Competencies. In addition to the core competencies, the research shows there are some further supplementary competencies required for success by those who aspire to positions involving leadership of other people. Like the core competencies these are generic across all career specialties. These leadership competencies are important in both formal managerial positions and in informal non-managerial leadership positions. For instance, in today's organizations people often serve as team or project leaders directing the technical work of others who do not administratively report to them. The people whose work they lead report administratively to other managers and move in and out of their groups depending on when various projects need their expertise. While the core competencies are required by everyone at all organizational levels, the supplemental leadership competencies evolve and change depending on the level of leadership involved. Figure13 shows some examples under each of these competency groups.

Figure 13

Examples of the Three Competency Groups



We focused our research on the identification of what specific competencies will be required for success in the current and predicted future career environments.

Functional/technical competencies varied, of course, depending on the specific business or technologies different organizations were pursuing. They were absolutely essential, but most organizations we interviewed thought they were at least competing on a level playing field in these. They could define what was required and usually had ready access to training resources equal to those their competitors were using.

The Critical Difference

However, the core and leadership competency requirements presented a different story. Most felt these were harder to identify and define than the functional/technical competencies and that the universities and trade schools were doing very little to identify, define, or teach them. Because most organizations were having difficulty identifying and defining these competencies in any coherent and focused fashion, it was also difficult to learn much by tracking or benchmarking what other organizations did. Interestingly, most also felt these were the competencies most likely to give their organizations a competitive edge - or keep them alive if organization survival was an issue.

Core and leadership competencies were seen as critical catalysts. These provided the rare spark that was typically required to ignite innovation and new technology. These provided the energizing motivation that could steer innovation through the many roadblocks and tedious details required for successful implementation. Because the core and leadership competencies are often fuzzy and ill defined, those organizations that can identify and focus on teaching them to their people will have a performance edge that can tilt otherwise level global playing fields in their favor.

But what makes the critical difference in the core and leadership areas? When we brainstorm in focus groups with top leaders in almost any specialty, we've found most can

paper the walls with chart sheets listing competencies they feel are important in their fields. It is like choosing doors. The problem is not that we can't identify enough, but that we can speculate on too many. How do we focus?

To help answer these questions we conducted in-depth interviews with identified top performers.... We focused on their specific observable behaviors on the job and looked for patterns the successful performers had in common. Based on that, we have identified a manageable number of core and leadership competencies we believe make the distinguishing difference in performance across different technical specialties and organizations.

The Most Important Few

Because the functional/technical competencies differed significantly depending on the type of organization and specific career specialties involved, the findings on those are too diverse to report here. Your own Investigative Interviews can identify those for the specific career field that interests you. Here we will focus instead on 12 core and a small number of supplemental leadership competencies that have emerged as most important for success across most career fields and organizations...

Twelve Core Competencies

Figure 14 shows the twelve core competencies identified in the research as important for everyone. The competencies are organized in three sections: personal, team, and operational.

Figure 14. CORE COMPETENCIES

Personal

1. Continuous Learning
2. Initiative and Risk Taking
3. Honesty and Integrity
4. Flexibility
5. Self-Confidence

Team

6. Judgment and Problem-Solving
7. Teamwork
8. Creativity/Innovation/Change
9. Communication and Influence

Operational

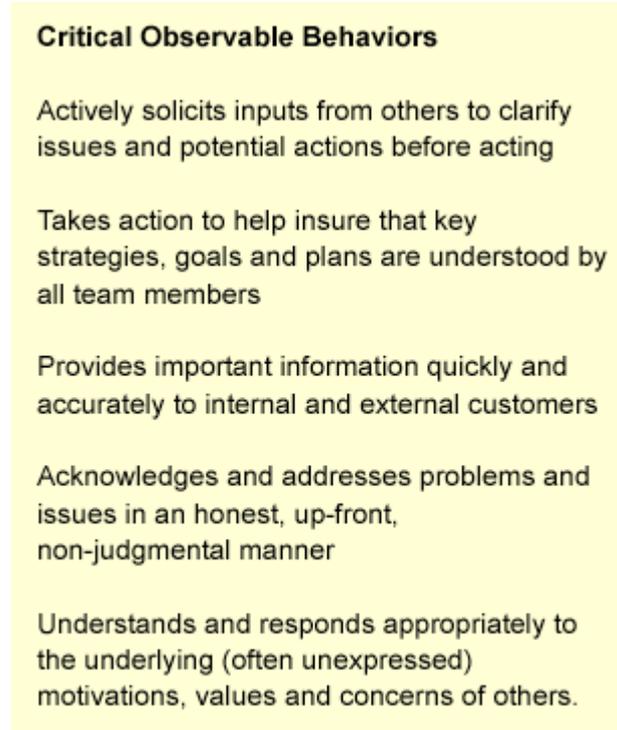
10. Responsiveness to Internal/External Customer
11. Planning and Organizing
12. Quality Results Orientation

Of all the competencies identified in the interviews, these 12 are the core 20% that contributed most to the successful interviewees' effectiveness. When you have limited time, these 12 give you a highly leveraged starting point for identifying your own personal competency strengths and development needs.

Beyond the Labels

As shown in Figure 14, of course, these competencies are only labels. What do they mean? Labels alone are useless. You need to know how successful people act out these competencies in their behaviors. Here again the key is focus. You could take full semester courses on each of these individual competencies. You could learn a hundred different behaviors for each. However, with limited time it helps to know the distinguishing few. What are the three to five most important things the interviews showed successful people do to demonstrate each competency? Our research concentrated specifically on what these few most important distinguishing behaviors are. For example, Figure 15 shows the 5 most highly leveraged behaviors we found successful people demonstrate in performing the Communication and Influence competency.

Figure 15. COMMUNICATION AND INFLUENCE COMPETENCY



We define these as observable behaviors because each describes a specific action or behavior you can perform - and you can readily observe whether you yourself and others are really performing them. These are not mysterious psychological traits. These are simple actions anyone can consciously choose to perform or not perform. If you rate yourself - or others rate you - as low on some of these behaviors that doesn't mean you're defective. It simply means you are not remembering or choosing to do them. The simple solution is to start doing them. You always have that option if you want to improve things. Practice can bring significantly increased skill in exercising each of the behaviors.

On the surface, many of these behaviors may seem obvious. When they are spelled out this clearly, most people would agree these are things we should be doing. When I first read one of Steve's competency models my immediate reaction was "so what's new?" After years of working with competency models myself - and seeing the positive results others have gained from working with them - I now realize that what's new is having the most important competencies spelled out clearly and succinctly, and having a readily available

checklist to remind me to do them. What's also new is knowing what few of the hundreds of good things I might do are most likely to have the highest impact.

When less successful people read through the key behaviors for the competencies they usually agree these behaviors are important, but typically they don't really do them and their excuse is they don't have time. Successful people acknowledge the importance of the behaviors and agree it's difficult to find time to do them. Typically, however, successful people tell us they force themselves to take the time because they've learned that doing these things saves much more time in the long run. It eliminates much wheel spinning and repetitive false starts which less successful people waste time on because they won't take time to rise above day-to-day fire fighting and find a way to prevent the fires from starting.

Learning by Observation

Successful people interviewed in the research said they learned the critical competency behaviors by:

- Observing other successful people and copying what they did (i.e., productive behaviors)
- Observing and learning from the mistakes (i.e., critical behavior omissions and counter productive behaviors) of unsuccessful people

Observation Checklist

Few of us are intuitive observers. We watch others' behavior but in the daily rush it isn't so easy to isolate what specific actions are making others successful - or unsuccessful - in their performance.

For instance, if I had the opportunity to observe a world class surgeon perform a complicated operation, when it was over I'd have a hard time saying what he or she specifically did or did not do that made the operation successful. On the other hand, if a medical student with a written checklist of key surgical behaviors for that operation watched, he or she could continually compare the surgeon's actions with the checklist and learn a great deal about what the surgeon was and was not doing to succeed.

Most of us could benefit from a similar checklist of core competencies - something we can carry around in our day planners and glance at to diagnose what's happening when we see others performing successfully or unsuccessfully. The checklist can help us learn in real time what works and doesn't work. It can also be a valuable self-assessment tool. When we succeed or fail at a leadership or communications attempt, we can later sit quietly at our desk and pinpoint what we specifically did or failed to do that influenced the outcome.

Core Competency Self-Assessment Form

Figure 16 illustrates the format we use for a competency assessment form designed to help you observe your own and others' behaviors. Here you see just one sample item from the three page Core Competency Self-Assessment Form we use in our workshops. The workbook has a complete copy of the full form for your personal use later when you do the workbook exercises.

Figure 16.

EXCERPT FROM CORE COMPETENCY SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

KEY COMPETENCIES	RATING SCALE	Average Score	Check Importance For Success
Enter the number indicating your current level of accomplishment on the line next to each behavior below	0 1 2 3 4 5 NA Very Peer Excellent	Sum of scores divided by # of behaviors actually displayed	Comment on pertinent facts and critical incidents that show: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key Strengths (i.e., behaviors often displayed) ▪ Important development needs (i.e., behaviors seldom displayed)
PERSONAL 1. Continuous Learning Competency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proactively defines and pursues personal development goals (e.g., identifies and addresses development needs, negotiates growth assignments). _____ ▪ Uses lessons learned from both positive and negative experiences to improve performance and effectiveness. _____ ▪ Continually looks for new and/or non-traditional ideas and approaches to improve personal and team effectiveness. _____ ▪ Identifies appropriate role models and adopts the effective behaviors and techniques they exhibit. _____ ▪ Seeks and applies new information and concepts quickly. _____ 			
		Average _____	Importance _____

Our workshop participants use the full form to assess themselves against the core competencies. Then they focus even further and identify the top three observable behaviors they consider to be their greatest current weaknesses. These are those they most want to strengthen and develop further, either because they're weak (i.e., got low scores) or because they believe they're especially critical for immediate growth on the career paths they've chosen. The following meditation can give you a quick idea what that's like.

Brief Reflection

Read through the 5 critical behaviors listed in Figure 16 under the Continuous Learning competency. Which one of these behaviors are you performing best today? Which one or two do you perform least well today? Can you benefit from improving your performance on these?

The Career Strategies Workbook contains the complete self-assessment form you can use to complete your own self-assessment against all 12 core competencies when you do the workbook exercises later.

Focus and Multiple Uses

Reading through the competencies in the profile can be informative in that it gives you a quick overview and probably some new insight. However, just reading through the competencies is unlikely to have much lasting impact on your personal growth. If you're like me, by the time you get to the last competency in just reading a list like this you may not remember much of what you've read.

The competencies only come alive when we assess ourselves against them. You can use the self-assessment profile to identify the few behaviors you want to focus on first. Then you can take action to improve your performance in those areas. We can't learn all the behaviors simultaneously.

Again, the key word - and the antidote to being completely overloaded with busyness - is focus. We suggest you carry a copy of the profile in your brief case. You can use it on a day-to-day basis to help identify and maintain focus on precisely where you want to concentrate your personal improvement efforts. The profile has multiple uses that can help you maximize the limited time you have available for self-development by directing your energy to more highly leveraged areas with the greatest potential payoff. For example:

Observing Successful Performers

Like the medical student, you can use the profile to sharpen your real-time observations of various successful performers in action. In meetings, for instance, you can occasionally glance at the profile in your briefcase to help pinpoint what these performers are doing - or avoiding doing - that is making them effective. As we said earlier, this type of observation is how people we interviewed told us they learned from many mentors who never knew they were their mentors. Having a tool can help those of us who are not always intuitive observers do the same thing.

- **Diagnosing Problems** - When you observe unsuccessful performers failing you can glance at the profile to diagnose what's causing the problems in real time - or you can go over it later to identify what happened.
- **Self-Diagnosis** - You can better analyze what went wrong in your own performance failures. After a specific incident where you have not been effective, you can sit quietly in your office or at home and use this tool to take a few minutes and identify what you can do better - or avoid doing- to be more effective next time.
- **Getting and Giving Focused Performance Feedback** - The profile provides a tool to solicit feedback from others about your own performance, or to give more objective feedback to others who solicit it.
- **Identifying Personal Development Needs** - With limited time and resources available for personal learning, you can use the profile to determine your most critical competency gaps and seek out and negotiate appropriate training and on-the-job development experiences to fill the gaps.

Organizations we have worked with often use a tool like this to focus their performance appraisal programs on more relevant and actionable feedback. They also use the profile to help people in their training programs pinpoint their most important improvement needs.

Many do what has come to be known as a 360-degree feedback. Individuals give copies of the profile to a sampling of their managers, peers, customers, and subordinates (if they have any). These people rate them anonymously on the behaviors and fax an answer sheet to our office. Then the individual being rated gets a confidential (i.e., no one else in his/her organization sees it) computerized profile showing the averages of how various groups (e.g., customers or peers) evaluated each behavior. The feedback report also highlights

participants' top ten behavioral strengths and weaknesses, and identifies those areas where their own self-assessment differs most from the averages of how others rated them.

Most people say this is the most objective, relevant and useful feedback they have ever received. They particularly like the profile's emphasis on specific behaviors they can choose to perform or not perform, as opposed to other more fuzzy or personality trait oriented feedback they've found to be less useful in the past.

Leadership Roles

The research showed that individuals who aspired to and succeeded in positions requiring leadership of other people moved through a series of progressive leadership roles as they took on increasingly higher levels of leadership responsibility. There are four generic roles that leaders passed through as they moved from team member (i.e., individual contributor) positions to increasingly more demanding levels of ad hoc leadership and/or administrative managerial responsibilities. These are:

- Team Member - (Individual Contributor)
- Team Leader - (Coach)
- Mid-Level Manager - (Multiple Team Integrator)
- Executive - (Strategist)

The Workbook contains a Role Determination Form. When you do the workbook exercises later you can use this form to determine which role best fits your current responsibilities and which (if any) additional roles you might aspire to. If you aspire to one or more of the leadership roles the workbook also contains a Leadership Competency Self-Assessment Form, you can use to assess yourself against those few additional competencies required for each role.