

Know Yourself

What is it?

Socrates once said that to know yourself is the beginning of wisdom. The same could easily be said of career success, which also encourages you to know your individual strengths, values, interests, etc. If you are unsure of where to start, the following list of prompts can help point you in the right direction toward finding a career path that is right for you. Remember—the end goal is not to be the most successful person on the planet with the most fancy toys. Career success is finding a life calling that brings you joy and/or a great sense of purpose, including work that neurotypicals may find unglamorous or strange.

Use the following prompts below to write down what would help you succeed in a career path.

Make a list of your interests

What are things that you enjoy doing in your spare time, or subjects that you like to research for fun? (ie video games, painting, biochemistry, cooking)

Make a list of your values

What is most important to you in life? What core, unshakable values do you hold? (ie family first, honesty)

Make a list of your interpersonal skills

What are some strengths you have in social settings? You may have more than you give yourself credit for. (ie good listener, great sense of humor, willingness to help)

Make a list of your technical skills

What everyday, hands-on skills play to your strengths? (ie small engine repair, IT)

List your behavioral and emotional characteristics

Good or bad, understanding your temperament can help you rule out jobs unsuitable for you as well as point you towards more-suitable jobs. (ie doesn't do well under pressure, very detail-oriented, sensitive and empathetic)

Make a list of other needs and wants

What other factors should you consider when finding a job? (ie time constraints, geography, financial status, cultural background, current or past work environments)

Some important considerations

- Compare your lists to job descriptions or recruitment announcements you come across. Not every job will be a perfect fit or align with your interests, values, interpersonal skills, technical skills, characteristics and other wants and needs.
- Avoid devaluing the strengths you have for the ones you don't.
- Remember that sometimes a job is just a job and that's okay. Not everyone is meant to be like Elon Musk or the President of the United States—and not everyone should be, as I doubt either would be willing to mop a dirty floor if asked. Sometimes the most honorable work is not the fanciest; the world is driven by custodians and cashiers as much as it is by CEOs and politicians.
- Set realistic expectations for your job-hunting journey—most people experience a lot of rejection when applying for jobs.
- Remember that job rejection isn't personal; different workforces have varying levels of competition to break into them. It is normal to apply to many jobs before getting any responses, including for low-skill work.