

Bridging the Professional Gap

Eat, Pray, Love *Your Work*



Part 1 of a 4-Part Series



During adulthood, we spend approximately one quarter of our time working. For many of us in the helping and healing industry, we have a good idea of the overarching values that assisted us in choosing this path, such as wanting to help others, having someone close to us with mental health concerns, having people value us as good listeners, and the list goes on.

As we continue through graduate school and into our professional life, it can be important to re-evaluate our values and how they align with the type of work we are wanting. In this re-evaluation, we can explore how to use our values to guide what we do in our personal and professional decisions.

Whether you are just starting to think about your job search or you have started your career, please consider engaging in this exploration of aligning your personal and professional values with the goal of finding work that you love. If you take this a day or a week at a time, this self-paced content can guide you through the following self-paced series:

Section I

Exploring
Personal
Values

Section II

Identifying
Professional
Values

Section III

Intersection of
Personal & Professional
Values

Section IV

Job
Satisfaction

Section V

Organizational
Culture

Section VI

Bringing it All
Together

Overview

When trying to figure out your first job out of internship, or getting started in your early career, you can use this series at any stage. We often receive messages, directly or indirectly, to settle for or “not be too picky” about an available position because we need to start paying off loans. But this can set us up for dissatisfaction. Some of us may already feel pre-programmed to take the next step rather than evaluating if this is a good fit for us from our graduate school practicum assembly-line process.

Section I

Exploring Personal Values

Exploring what your values are helps you evaluate how you want to spend your time and also allows you to set boundaries, make important life decisions, find purpose, and even find the type of job and workplace that best aligns with who you are in your personal life. This first step is focused on what leads you to these feelings. In other words, what do you care about, and what *actually* matters most to you?

Exploring Personal Values

Instructions:

- Review all of the values listed (see Slide 8, adding your own as needed) and identify which are most important in each aspect of your life, including the values that have helped shape you as an individual, in your immediate community and greater society.
- Pick your top five values in each section and rank each one on a scale of 1-5, with the first being the most important.
- Reflect upon your top five values to define what each value means to you.
- Consider how closely your top five values are reflected in your personal and professional life. List some examples of how you are currently living in accordance with your values.
- Identify changes you can make to better incorporate these values in the future.

Exploring Personal Values

Next, you will find a list of values, broadly defined, and spaces to add your own values that are not listed. As you review each value listed, check in with yourself and decide whether the value resonates with you. Then consider whether it lies within yourself, in your immediate community, and/or in the larger society.

Do not overthink this! The best approach is to put your pen to paper before your inner filter starts to change your authentic truth to what you think you should care about most.

Your values are unique to you and while they may have been shaped by those around you, they live at your core and thus drive your true inner joy.

Exploring Personal Values

Aspect of Life → (How this value relates to you...) Value ↓	Personal to You (individually)	Immediate Community (family, friends, co-workers)	Larger Society (neighborhood, world)
Relationship			
Improvement			
Making a Difference			
Service to Others			
Fairness and Justice			
Environmental Sustainability			
Independence			
Adventure			
Location			
Impact			

Exploring Personal Values

Aspect of Life → (How this value relates to you...) Value ↓	Personal to You (individually)	Immediate Community (family, friends, co-workers)	Larger Society (neighborhood, world)
Creativity			
Financial Security			
Love			
Knowledge			
Positivity			
Culture			
Recognition			

Exploring Personal Values

<i>Top 5 Personal to You</i>	<i>Top 5 Immediate Community</i>	<i>Top 5 Larger Society</i>
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.

Section II

Identifying Professional Values

Whether you are still in the planning stage, evaluating your current position and the next steps, or looking for a career change, knowing your professional values can help guide your decisions so that you feel job satisfaction and fulfillment. It will also identify what you should be looking for in an employer or workplace as each come with different values of their own.

Identifying Professional Values

Instructions:

While in the previous part you examined your personal values, in the next slide, we invite you to explore your professional values as it is important to evaluate whether your personal and professional values align or differ.

Indicate the level of importance of each value listed, feel free to add your own.

<i>Value</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Very Important / Non-negotiable</i>
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Identifying Professional Values

<i>Value</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Very Important / Non-Negotiable</i>
Sense of Achievement			
Receiving Recognition			
Financial Security / Success			
Respect			
Loyalty			
Leadership Opportunities			
Being Challenged			
Predictability / Job Security			
High-Intensity / Fast-Paced			
Supportive Community			

Identifying Professional Values

<i>Value</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Very Important / Non-Negotiable</i>
Feeling Supported / Having Support			
Reliability and Accountability			
Flexibility / Independence / Autonomy			
Making an Impact on Others			
Seeing Immediate Results			
Leaving a Legacy			
Belonging / Teamwork / Relationships			

Identifying Professional Values

Top 5 Very Important / Non-negotiable Values

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Section III

Intersection of Personal & Professional Values

Sometimes when we take a step back, we can clearly see our values reflected in how we choose to live our lives. The areas where we are often dissatisfied or stuck tend to highlight the ways in which we are *not* living in accordance with our values.

Intersection of Personal and Professional Values

Instructions:

1. Pick your top five values in each section and rank each one on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the most important.
2. Expand upon your top five values to define what each value means to you.
3. Consider how closely your top five values are reflected in your personal and professional life. List some examples of how you are currently living in accordance with your values.

Intersection of Personal and Professional Values

<i>Top 5 Personal Values</i>	<i>Top 5 Professional Values</i>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Intersection of Personal and Professional Values

Examples of ways you live in accordance with personal and professional values:

Section IV

Job Satisfaction

*“Choose a job you love,
and you will never have to
work a day in your life.”*
-Confucius

Whether we are in the early stages of our career, close to retirement, or even prior to making the decision to invest the time and money for graduate school, a question we may consider is whether a job is “right for us.” However, what does *right for us* actually mean?

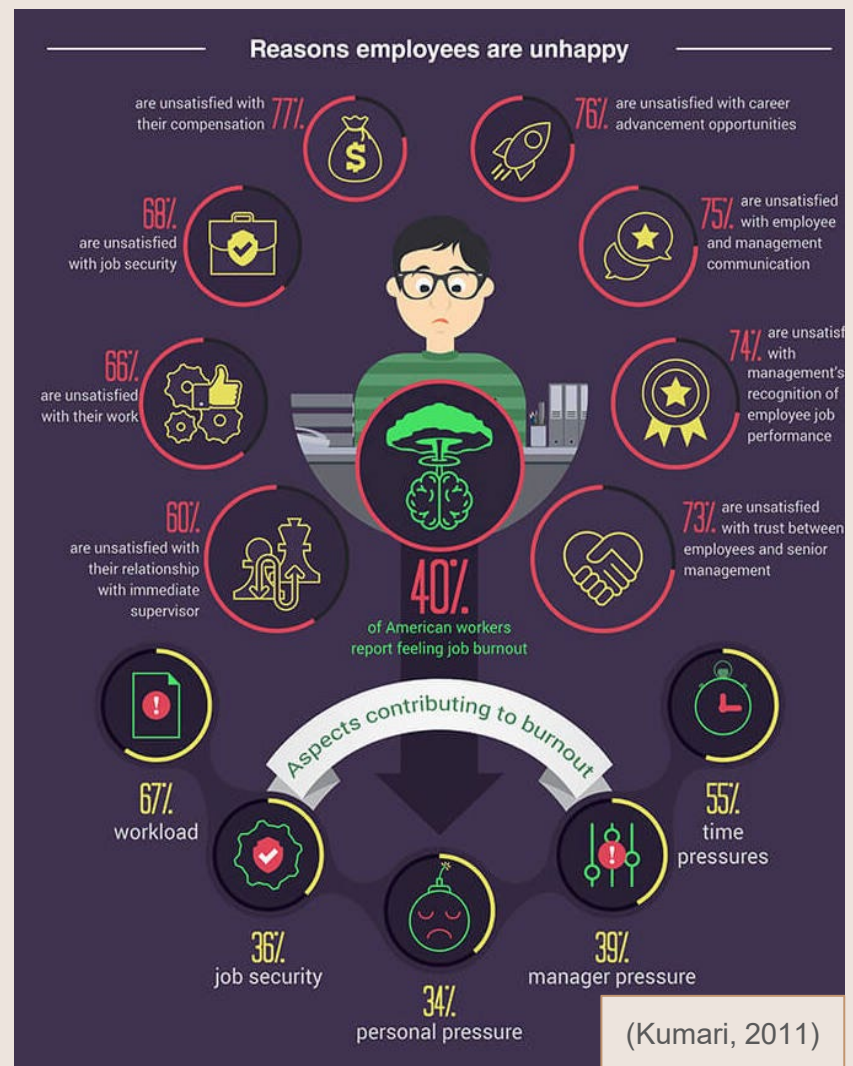
Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction can be defined as any combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances that cause a person to truthfully say they are satisfied with a job (Hoppock, 1935). More specifically and more recently, job satisfaction has also integrated the favorable or unfavorable feelings and emotions associated with an employee's work (Karatepe, Uludag, Menevis, Hadzimehmedagic, & Baddar, 2006).

Keep in mind, the concept of what makes work satisfying is a subjective opinion.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction research has indicated a number of proven variables associated with enhanced job satisfaction (Kumari, 2011).



Reflection

As you return to the original question (“What is the *right* job for me?”), you may benefit from conducting an assessment of your own strengths and skills to help you determine your own job satisfaction.

Strengths are what you are best at, traits or capabilities that make you excel at your work. An individual’s talents may allow them to exceed expectations or may be special abilities a person may not be particularly aware of. Strengths are a part of who the person is and what they value most.



Exploring Relevant Strengths

Identify some of your strengths, keeping in mind that they are closely related to your personal and professional values.

<i>Strengths</i>

Section V

Organizational Culture

“Culture is the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously and define in a basic 'taken for granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment.”

~ Edgar Schein (2010)

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is largely determined by the leaders, their character, integrity, and the environment they foster. The culture is often difficult to describe, but most people will “feel” it: a sense of collaboration, appreciation, passion for a common goal, and is reinforced through individual and group interactions, such as meetings, trainings, and review process.

Leaders often have a greater vision for the organization, but if they are out of touch with those whom they wish to lead, chaos, confusion, and resentment can result. Edgar Schein acknowledges that organizational culture is a slowly evolving experience; although it can change, it rarely does so quickly (Schein, 2010).

When joining any organization, it is important to understand its unique culture as best you can to determine if it will uphold and utilize your personal and professional values. If not, you may find yourself experiencing stress due to internal conflicts, frustration, and possibly burn-out.

Organizational Culture

01

Leadership: A good leader is one who will care about individual differences to hone skills and foster new growth. They will model through their words and actions, and will inspire their subordinates rather than shaming or punishing. Healthy workplace environments will promote collaboration, encourage brainstorming, and care about the staff more than the deadline or goal.

02

Healthy Communication: Setting expectations using clear communication so that people are set up for success is crucial to a healthy environment. Handling mistakes as opportunities to learn tends to motivate and nurture growth, rather than criticism or humiliation, as often occurs in organizations with a competitive work environment. Another important aspect is whether there is transparency in the decision-making process. Sometimes employees are told what to do without the rationale, which can create misunderstandings (sometimes those making the decisions do not understand the work being done) and resentment.

Organizational Culture

03

Set up for Success: Employees benefit from knowing the “why” of what they are doing and how they fit into the organization’s overarching goals and plans. The concept of “culturally fit employees” (Dickman, 2021) is that organizations hire people that match the overarching values and goals of the organization, as well as the role for which they are hired, and not just a warm body in the office. Additionally, having enough staff to complete the demands and provide the tools and resources seems obvious but, unfortunately, many workplaces expect their staff to work in less-than-optimal environments. If there is a job opening due to staff leaving, ask about why people are leaving. If there has been high turnover in recent months and years, that may be a red flag or an opportunity. A healthy work environment will attract people.

04

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB): An important element missing in many organizations is focus and action regarding diversity, equity and inclusion, not just in hiring and promoting, but also in how every individual is treated. Oftentimes in workplaces, microaggressions are abound. Notice your interview committee—are they a diverse group, and how do they manage questions about DEIB? Ask if they are willing to let you speak with others in the organization (notice if they are supervisory level or not) to get a true sense of what your prospective colleagues and administrative staff are experiencing in terms of morale.

Interview Questions Exercise

Although it is difficult to pinpoint, there are several types of aspects that make up healthy (vs. toxic) work environments. Based on your exploration of values, you can incorporate that into interviews to gain some insight into how the organization may align with your values. Consider the following lists of questions to ask at the interview:

- What are the leadership styles used within the organization? (Learn more about leadership styles in our resources section.)
- How is appreciation and recognition for accomplishments, teamwork, and innovative thinking celebrated?
- What is the promotion structure? How are promotions handled within the organization?
- How would you describe your workplace culture?
- How often do you engage in team-building exercises?
- How does your organization demonstrate valuing diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- How often does your organization provide social activities or celebrations?

Interview Questions Exercise

Brainstorm and write out good interview questions.

Bank of Interview Questions

Section VI

Bringing It All Together

Look back several years ago: what was important to you then?

Is it the same or has it changed?

The values that are most important to us tend to change and morph with us as we grow and respond to life events.

We recommend using important dates or times of year to remind you to revisit this process (e.g., New Years, tax time, whenever you renew your professional license).

Setting Up Intentional Reflecting Time

For example, the table below can assist with pinpointing a good point in the future to reflect on this process, the time that passed since, and whether any adjustments need to made.

Dates	Yearly Evaluations	Professional Milestones	Personal Milestones

Final Reminder

Remember, this is an ongoing effort and we hope this process has made you more comfortable with addressing, adjusting, and evaluating your values.

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Thank you!

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