



A Good Fit? Play The Match Game



Trying to match our skills and abilities to the right career path has never been easy to accomplish. There have been many books and articles written on the relationship to job satisfaction and success. However, for most people, the where and how to start still seems a mystery. Maybe if you explore what your talents and likes are first, that will lead you. Here are some top ten stepping-stones:

1. Identify hobbies and occupations of interests
2. If need be, take career assessments to help identify the stronger areas
3. Determine what you value in life (again, career inventories can help)
4. Research occupations and new positions being creating, i.e. green jobs. (Department of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook)
5. Identify the need for additional training.
6. How would you fund it? Scholarships, grants and loans. Audit courses?
7. Online or in classroom training?
8. Have you completed a project and felt excited during the process? Was it at work or a hobby?
9. Have you ever had anyone point out that you were good at something?
10. Are you willing to work hard to find the **right fit**?

You may not have come up with all the answers to the above questions, but in order to have a plan preparation has to be at the forefront. You would never construct a building without a blueprint. Well, treat your career planning as also needing a blueprint towards a goal.

- Research and have timelines. Otherwise the opportunity for procrastination will throw you off course.
- Begin with a positive attitude. Surround yourself with positive reinforcement whether reading materials or friends.
- Obtain a mentor to help guide and coach you.

- Once you identify a field of interest, explore by seeking out locations and contacts.
- Conduct information interviews to learn more (the inside scoop)
- Be patience, persistent and allow for setbacks. They will always be your learning tools.
- Document your progress in writing. A visual plan is better to follow
- Discuss your progress regularly with your mentor and supporters. Loosing focus can derail your success.
- Remember volunteer experiences and temporary details are good when exploring new horizons. You can see if you have a good match of skills and abilities to a position.
- You can apply for a position on USAJOBS if you are a current federal employee. Just make sure you meet all requirements and area of consideration.

Research Internet sites and learn about the various organizations and federal sector. Each has a mission statement and hopefully, contacts. Find out where you fit in. Become a good match.

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Resources:

- Department of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>
- Career Path <http://www.careerpath.com/>