

2

What Influences Your Career Choice?

OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, you will be able to

- describe how influences can affect career decisions.
- analyze how people influence you and your decisions.
- determine your preferences for a work environment.
- identify the values that influence you.



“A closed mind is a good thing to lose.”

—Anonymous

Key Terms:

- influence
- work environment
- social environment
- values
- motivation
- intrinsic
- extrinsic

Consider...

Doug’s passion was discussing politics. Whether he was talking about a presidential election or about the political correctness of a school mascot—he thrived on the conversation. So when writing about his passions in his Career Journey Folder, Doug knew that he needed to mention his love for politics. However, Doug didn’t think he wanted to run for political office in the future. How would he be able to satisfy his overwhelming passion for politics without becoming a politician?

Then Doug talked to Mrs. Garden, his journalism advisor. She pointed out that in the writing he did for the school paper, Doug investigated problems, interviewed people, and wrote his opinions. Wasn’t he essentially discussing politics? She also reminded Doug of his excellent grades in his English and government classes that gave him a solid foundation for a career as a political reporter or columnist.

Mrs. Garden suggested that Doug work in the summer at a weekly newspaper to find out if a career in journalism fit his passion for politics. Doug followed her suggestion. At the *Forestville Reporter*, he is now stimulating political discussion for a wide audience while reporting on local politics.

When you think about your future career, whose opinions are important to you? Parents or other relatives? Teachers? Peers? Employer? Guidance counselor?

Influence

“We shape clay into a pot, but it is the emptiness inside that holds whatever we want.”

—Tao Te Ching,
Wisdoms of Ancient China

The word **influence** means the power of people or things to cause an effect on others indirectly. Everything and everyone around you influences you every day. You may not consciously think about how the person, place, idea, experience, or thing influences you. However, your life and the choices you make will be affected.

Influences may be positive or negative. For example, if you are allergic to cats and work as a veterinary technician in a small animal clinic, then your surroundings have a negative influence on you.

Also, some influences are stronger than others and have a greater effect on your behavior and decisions. For example, if you respect and admire someone or believe a person is knowledgeable, then the advice and opinions of that person are likely to have a strong impact on you.

Although influence is not manipulation or direct persuasion, influence still affects you and your decisions. In this chapter, you will determine what has some bearing on your career decisions—in other words, who or what influences you. Then, as you travel along your career path, you can decide which advice or experiences you will allow to influence your career decisions.



Activity 2-1, “Things You Love To Do,” will help you begin to see what may influence your career decisions.

People Who Influence Career Decisions

Information about work comes from many sources. Of all these sources of information, the people you know will have the greatest influence on your career decision-making. Family members, teachers, peers, community members, and many others give advice, provide part-time jobs, and share experiences. In addition, listening to others talk about their work influences your perception of work and various careers.

Observing and investigating how work affects people both positively and negatively can give you much information. Sometimes in talking with people about their careers and where they work, you can tell just by their tone of voice that they are happy with their careers. You can tell they enjoy waking up each morning and heading off to work.

Learning why people work, finding out what makes them happy or unhappy with their careers, listening to them talk about their workday, and watching their interactions on the job are some of the ways you can research careers. Your observations can provide information that ultimately may help you make decisions about your own career.

Parents and Other Family Members

Consider...

Do your parents or other family members look forward to going to work most of the time, or do they reluctantly get ready each day?

How do they generally act and talk about their jobs or careers?

According to the Ohio Career Development Services, the greatest influence on your career decision-making is your family. Your parents and other family members provide the basis for your initial ideas and beliefs about work. In particular, the way they react to their work situations can influence your perception of work and various careers.

Constanza loves her career as a cosmetologist. She is delighted by how people's faces light up with pleasure after she has completed her transformations with scissors and chemicals. She has a knack for bringing out the beauty in her customers, flattering their appearances with her skill. Her knowledge of color and her skill at creating new shades of nail polish, hair color, and makeup make her one of the most sought-after cosmetologists in her part of town.



Though working with people and beauty is her passion, Constanza never reveals her love of her career at home. In fact, Constanza comes home from work every day complaining—about her customers, her aching feet, and the shop owner. However, she also spends several hours of her free time each week

researching new products, volunteers monthly at the local cosmetology school, and gives an annual presentation about her profession for Career Day at the area high school.

Constanza's daughter, Donna, hears her mother's grumbling every day, but also sees her dedication to her profession. Because of her mother's behavior, Donna has mixed feelings about a cosmetology career. She wonders how she can get a clear understanding of the profession.

Even though you may get conflicting messages about a particular career from the behavior of your parents or other family members, you should not ignore their advice when you create your career plan. Family members know you well and can help you make sound career decisions.

Consider...

Expectations

- Do you share a common interest with a family member? What is it?
- Would you pursue that interest as a career? Why or why not?

Your family has expectations for you, hopes and dreams for your future. These expectations influence your personality, passions, interests, talents—and your choice of careers. You may find you are expected to fulfill career dreams based on someone else’s talents and passions. You may be expected to follow in the footsteps of family members or to join them in their business or profession. Or, you may be cautioned against pursuing the careers practiced by members of your family.

Lou has a small, successful dental practice with a loyal patient following. He has always dreamed of working side-by-side with his son Michael and eventually passing the business on to him. Michael has almost finished his undergraduate degree and is considering entering dental school and then joining his father’s practice. To help him make his decision, Michael observed Lou on the job during semester break. The experience helped Michael decide that he does not want to become a dentist. He feels that he is better suited for a career in psychology or marketing.

Although he was disappointed by Michael’s decision, Lou tried not to show his son how he felt. But, Michael realized Lou was unhappy. Michael wanted his father to support his career choice, so he described to Lou the successes he’s had in activities related to psychology and marketing. He explained how he wanted to follow Lou’s example by using his own talents to build a career from the ground up. Lou listened carefully. He saw more clearly how he and Michael are alike in their passion for their work but different in their interests.

If you feel your family expects you to follow a career path that doesn’t really fit you, take the initiative to show them the success you have had in your high school courses, extracurricular activities, and part-time job—anything related to a possible career. By doing this, you set the stage for your family to listen and to support your dreams.

Encouragement

By supporting and guiding you, the members of your family can help you develop and pursue your career focus. Your family can support your search for possible careers that will allow you to use your unique talents and passions. Encouraging you to take challenging courses so you can explore your career interests is one of the most important ways that your family can help you create plans and goals for the future. Your family’s encouragement to expand your talents and passions can help you find your *P*A*T*H to Success*.

CAREER SUCCESS TIP
Welcome constructive criticism. It can help you identify things about yourself that you may want to change. Accept and learn from criticism that seems to make sense to you.

You should discuss your talents and passions with your parents and other family members. Talk about what you like and about how you want to find out more about possible career opportunities. If you really like to do something and also do it very well, that passion—if you pursue it—is often the foundation for a happy and successful career. The encouragement of your family can give you confidence in the direction you choose for the rest of your education and training.

Teachers

Consider...

What have been your favorite courses in school?

What are some possible careers related to those courses?

Teachers influence your career decisions almost as much as your family does. For example, recall this chapter's opening scenario in which Doug's career decision was influenced by his journalism advisor. Students are in contact with classroom teachers every day during the school year and are often comfortable discussing their futures with approachable teachers or advisers. This is especially true if the student is interested in a career involving a teacher's subject matter. For example, suppose you are taking Spanish and feel you have a talent for foreign languages. In this situation, your Spanish teacher is a natural resource about career opportunities for Spanish majors.

CAREER FACT

Eighty-seven percent of employers surveyed by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* felt that communications skills are critical for their employees. Fifty percent felt computer skills were as important.

Your English teacher can have a major influence on your career no matter what your interests are. You may think English classes only relate to a few occupations, such as writing books, journalism, or editing. However, every career requires workers to have effective communication skills, skills that are developed in English classes. Effective communication skills include having the ability to give and follow instructions accurately, to persuade people to a particular point of view, and to write in an organized style with correct spelling and grammar. Workers in every career must read material related to job skills, and every employee has to explain problems to supervisors and other workers. For example, in addition to writing diagnostic summaries and repair recommendations, an auto technician may skim an average of 150 pages of manuals a day!

Your math teacher will also have an influence on your career success. Some careers use math directly every day, such as actuaries, engineers, accountants, and respiratory therapists. However, do you realize that mathematics plays an important part in the careers of funeral directors, electricians, broadcast technicians, and glass blowers? Yes, even glass blowers need to know math and science. Each type of glass needs a specific temperature to make it malleable, and each style of shaping and blowing requires precise temperature adjustments.

Teachers are excellent resources for learning about your skills and behaviors. Many activities and courses in high school require the same behaviors needed in the workforce. Teachers know if you are flexible and can adapt to change. Observing you in action shows them if you can work cooperatively in a team, have leadership skills, and are organized, punctual, and dependable. Teachers can be impartial and truthful with you when discussing your work qualities. Some of your behaviors may need to change for you to succeed in a career field, so the comments teachers make can be helpful for your improvement.

Which teachers may be the most helpful? The ones who know you well and who have been pleased with your work are the obvious choices. They are the ones you should approach first for career advice. Begin by talking to them about what you have enjoyed in their class. Ask for suggestions about how the skills learned in their class can help you develop your career focus. Teachers enjoy talking with students after class about their subjects and have much insight and experience to offer. These discussions will not only help give you confidence to take charge of your future but also provide you with a wealth of information.

REAL PEOPLE

REAL CAREERS

Space Scientists

Steve Chien became fascinated with artificial intelligence while he was still in high school. He thought the opponents in computer games “were so lame!” and so devised ways to make them more challenging. Now he is part of a team that works on software projects at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory. These projects will allow a spacecraft to go in places where it has never been before. His work with rovers and self-directed spacecraft intrigues him as much as tinkering with computer games did in the past.

Ken Neelson always cared more about his science classes than he did about any other subjects. Now he is following his passion for science in a career at NASA. In his work, Ken studies how life arises and thrives in some of earth’s extreme environments, such as Antarctica. The results of his studies will help those who explore other planets. Ken is also working on a project that is searching for life in outer space. Just the prospect of extraterrestrial life thrills him. Ken hopes to develop new methods of detecting life—NASA cares as much about life detection as it does about space missions. Who says life has to be like it is on earth?

For more information about

- NASA careers, investigate www.nasa.gov. Explore *Navigating NASA’s Strategic Enterprises* and then look at some of the topics that follow.
- engineering careers, explore the National Society of Professional Engineers site at www.nspe.org.

Peers

You influence your friends—and they influence you—every day in many ways, perhaps including what clothes to wear, where to eat after the football game, what classes to take, and what music CDs to buy. But how much influence should your friends have on your future life and your career? You may want to continue hanging out with your friends after high school, but do you want to build *your* future around your friends' lives?

Throughout high school, Amy was known for her creative way of dressing. Her outfits had the most unlikely combinations of accessories that seemed to fit together magically. Her talents included a unique eye for color, style, and designing displays and posters. With these qualities and passions, Amy seemed destined for a career in fashion design or interior decoration.

Shauna, Amy's best friend, wanted to move to Chicago and work as a receptionist after high school graduation. Shauna wanted Amy to go to Chicago with her and postpone going to a fashion design school. Amy was intrigued by Shauna's plan—going to Chicago, being independent, and sharing an apartment with Shauna would be exciting. Amy loved the whole idea and readily agreed to the plan.

Amy excitedly called her close friend Linda, who was in her first year of college, and told her about the Chicago plan. Linda asked Amy if fashion design was still her career goal. When Amy said yes, Linda suggested Amy think about sharing an apartment with Shauna during the summer but still start school in the fall.

After talking to Linda, Amy wasn't sure what to do. If she let Shauna influence her, she would have to put her career plans on hold. She had to use her scholarship within a year or she would lose it. If she postponed school, she would have to go to night school, which would take much longer. But, living in Chicago with Shauna sounded so exciting! Amy finally decided that delaying her career dream would not be in her best interest. Fashion design was her passion and she really couldn't afford to postpone her education. She hoped that Shauna would understand and agree to let her share a Chicago apartment for the summer.

Often talking to your friends allows you to consider other people's viewpoints. Their advice may help you consider other possibilities when making your decisions. But, never forget your goals and your passion. Keep in mind that your friends' influences can be either positive or negative. Use your judgment to decide whether or not to take your friends' advice when you make your career decisions. Your friends may have good intentions, but they may not truly understand what is best for you in the long run. While your friends' opinions are important to you, analyze their advice in terms of *your* interests.

“You are in charge of your own attitude—whatever others do or circumstances you face. The only person you can control is yourself.”

—Marian Wright Edelman,
Author and Children's Activist

Employers

Parents, other family members, teachers, and peers are not the only people who can influence your career choice. Your employer at your part-time or summer job may also influence your decisions about a career.

Getting a summer job in a manufacturing plant was a great choice for Manuel. He wants to make sure that a manufacturing career is right for him because he plans to continue his training in the fall at the nearby community college. During his interview for the job, Manuel spoke to Ms. Brown, the supervisor of the department where he's working for the summer. He wanted her to know that the summer job was a testing ground for his career focus.



To help him with his career choice, Ms. Brown has given Manuel job duties that demonstrate various aspects of a career in manufacturing. Manuel likes the challenge of computer-assisted drafting (CAD) and the precision work of the computer numerical control (CNC) machine. Techniques for using both types of equipment are part of the manufacturing course he has signed up to take in the fall at the community college.

However, he is not sure he will like to do the welding that is necessary to form and assemble some of the pieces he has designed and cut.

Ms. Brown is helping Manuel with his career because helping him can also help her company. She hopes that Manuel will be a good employee who will work each summer and holiday break during his remaining school years. Perhaps Manuel may even work for the manufacturing company permanently after he receives his associate's degree.

There are several ways in which an employer can influence your career choice and help you make career decisions. You don't have to have something as formal as a part-time job in order to benefit from an employer. You can observe an employee at his or her workplace or interview someone who works in a career field that interests you. Even working as a volunteer can help you understand the skills necessary for a successful career. Chapter 3 discusses these research options in depth.

Guidance Counselors

Counselors are tasked with several responsibilities. One of them is to provide information to guide you as you make decisions for your future. They can suggest courses for you that are based on your activities, talents, grades, and abilities. They can offer selections for researching educational options, such as college viewbooks and computer searches. They can set up interviews with military and college recruiters and employers. In addition, if you choose to use their expertise, they are trained to help you work through the process of career development.

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

—Eleanor Roosevelt

What a guidance counselor does best is to help you discover your options. For example, suppose you go to the counselor's office to find out about schools with engineering training. Your counselor may suggest several options: a college or university, a tech prep program, an engineering education through the military, or a co-op job with a local employer. These suggestions may provide you with a career path that you had not considered.

When you have narrowed your career focus and have chosen your education and training pathway, the guidance counselor can help you toward your goal by providing planning checklists, information on deadlines, suggestions for letters of recommendation, practice entrance tests, and tips for getting financial aid. A counselor is an invaluable resource and has many ways to help you on your *P*A*T*H to Success*.



Use Activity 2-2, “Learning from Others,” to find out about the career success of someone you know.

Environmental Influences on Career Decisions

The environment can influence your career decisions in many ways. The following questions are all related to your environment—either your work environment or your social environment. Your **work environment** is the surroundings and conditions of your workplace. Your **social environment** includes the community where you live and work and your lifestyle choices.

- Do you want to stay where you live now? Do you prefer a rural, urban, or suburban setting?
- How important is the outdoors in influencing your choice of career? For example, is mountain biking an important activity for you? Or are you an avid surfer?
- Do you need to have someplace nearby to continue your education?
- Is climate important to you? Do you prefer a change of seasons or a consistent climate?
- Will there be a future for people in your career field in the community where you want to live?
- Do you want to work around people or in isolation?

CAREER SUCCESS TIP

You will need to have effective interpersonal skills to achieve career success. Those skills include teamwork, self-confidence, dedication, and understanding others.

Some of these questions may seem strange to you. For example, why would a climate change, such as having snow, influence a career path? However, climate is sometimes a factor in making a career choice. For some people, having changing seasons is important to their mental health. They seem to be able to focus on work better when they have changing weather. Others are the opposite and want consistency in temperature.

By identifying the environments in which you want to work and live, you will be better able to narrow your career focus. Some careers must be near certain natural resources. For example, marine life is normally studied in a coastal community. So if you want a career as a marine biologist, you will probably not be able to live in Colorado. Other careers, such as convention event planner or computer network troubleshooter, require frequent travel. For those careers, you could probably live wherever you want although you may not be home much of the time.

Your work environment involves much more than the climate and the geographical area in which you live. The atmosphere of your workplace and your interactions with others are important factors in your work environment. Your career success will depend partly on knowing the type of workplace you prefer.



Use Activity 2-3, “Environment Preferences,” to determine some important environmental influences on your career choice.

Influence of Values on Career Decisions

Consider...

- What makes people successful in a career?
- What does success mean to you?

What will make you feel successful in a career? Earning a large income? Having an important title and position? Being famous? Having the respect of others? Being independent? Being able to develop innovative products? Providing service to others? Your answer is influenced by your values. Your values are the things that are important to you. Your values are also the motivation behind your goals and decisions—the reasons why you set specific goals and make certain decisions.

Your perception of success depends on your personal values, the values of your family and culture, and your economic values. If your career is based on your values, you will be happy with your life and career and you will consider yourself successful. Because you are the only one who knows your values, only you can define what success means to you and only you can determine what motivates you to achieve success.

Personal and Family Values

Your family began instilling its values in you when you were born. These values are the standards that your family members emphasize. While each family has its own set of values, the way individual family members interpret those values might vary.



Elizabeth's family believes in serving others. Ever since she was a little child, her parents have included her in church activities that benefit their community. In addition, Elizabeth's mother has always worked in the local polling place on election day. One of Elizabeth's earliest memories is of passing out the "I Voted Today" pins. Throughout her school years, Elizabeth has worked in a soup kitchen for the homeless and asked her teachers to save hotel soaps and shampoos for the women's shelter. Naturally, her family's influence has resulted in Elizabeth feeling

that helping others should be part of her entire life, including her career. She is exploring careers in teaching, social services, and health care.

The guidance provided by your family's values can be comforting. You know what to expect until you determine your own unique values. As you develop your own set of values, you may take part of your family's values and add new values that are especially important to you. You may begin with your father's streak of independence and your mother's trust in people, add your grandmother's thriftiness and your cousin's love for justice, and finish off with your own belief in community service—all to form your own personal value system.

Elaine likes to think "out of the box." She prides herself on being the one who is usually different, the one who has structure but who rises above the ordinary. In designing web sites for the education department, she follows the instructor's outline and then adds stimulating colors and catchy graphics. However, she also believes in being honest, as emphasized by her family. So, her designs never attempt to deceive those who view her web sites. Elaine has retained the values of her upbringing and has created the "outside the box" thinking for herself and for her career.



Activity 2-4, "Values that Motivate You," helps you pinpoint those of your values that motivate you to do your best.

Consider...

Cultural Expectations and Values

Does your cultural heritage impose expectations that influence your decisions?

You may have certain beliefs and behaviors because of your culture—your social, ethnic, or religious background or perhaps even the community where you live. The expectations and values of your culture may influence your work values. Your answers to the following questions will help you begin to identify your cultural values and expectations and their effect on your work values.

- Is helping others important in your culture?
- Should work permit you to make beautiful things and to add beauty to the world, as many Asian cultures advocate?
- Is caring for the environment something that is important to you and your culture?
- Should the world outside your community be avoided, as the Amish culture believes?
- Will the groups that your culture does business with affect your choice of careers?

“Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don’t quit.”

—Conrad Hilton,
Founder of Hilton Hotels

The Navajo tribe has expectations for Shasheem and the other members of her tribe. Her Native American upbringing has helped form her values through its expectations. Whether she continues to live on the reservation or leaves to work in the state capital, Shasheem will have the core values that her family and her tribe have instilled in her, such as respect for her elders. She knows that working in front of a television or still camera is frowned upon in her culture, so Shasheem will avoid careers that involve film and photographs of her. Her heritage is important to Shasheem, so the small modifications she must make are minor choices for her. She will always respect the Navajo customs and will never abandon her beliefs.

You may be unaware of many of the cultural expectations that can influence your career decisions. Their influence is often very subtle. By analyzing the things that are important in your culture, you can identify ways your culture influences your decisions.



The case studies in Activity 2-5, “Case Challenges,” give you the opportunity to analyze some of the influences on career decisions.

Economic Values

What kind of lifestyle do you want in the future? Do you want to acquire the latest electronic gadgets, a luxury car, and designer label clothes? Or do you want to buy a home, marry, and raise a family? No matter how you answer, all types of lifestyles involve money—and having money usually means earning an income.

the working conditions. One of the most important factors is for your career to be based on your personal and cultural values. Only you can determine which factors will have the most influence on your career choices.



Use Activity 2-6, “Coming to Terms,” to understand some of the important terms in this chapter more thoroughly.

Consider...

How important is money in your life right now?

If you had to choose *either* a career in which you were unhappy but made a great deal of money *or* a career in which you were happy but made very little money, which would you choose?

Your economic goals are related to your values. In making career decisions, you often need to determine how important money is to you. Which of the following is most important to you?

- A career that fulfills your passions and talents.
- A career that allows you to pay the bills and have some money for extras and savings.
- A career that provides you with a large income.
- A career that provides you with prestige and status.

Some careers have **intrinsic**, or internal, rewards. For these careers, the feelings that the career provides you are more important than the money you receive. Other careers offer **extrinsic**, or external, rewards. In these careers, the monetary rewards and benefits are of more significance to you than the work you perform.

CAREER FACT

According to a Shell Oil poll, the American workforce includes six types of workers: risk takers, fulfillment seekers, high achievers, clock punchers, ladder climbers, and paycheck cashers. Which one do you want to be?

Sometimes the type of organization where you work has more effect on your income level than your actual career does. For instance, if you are a psychologist in a small, independent practice, you will likely receive more intrinsic than extrinsic rewards. On the other hand, if you work at an advertising firm as a psychologist who determines how people feel about certain products, you will probably receive more extrinsic than intrinsic rewards. For each type of psychologist, the income and type of reward can vary tremendously.

Another factor influencing income levels is education. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that the more you learn, the more you earn—and the less likely you are to be unemployed. This fact does not mean that you need to have a bachelor's degree or higher to earn a high wage, but it does mean that you must continue to improve your education over your lifetime to earn a high wage. In truth, education often pays simply because employers believe educated workers learn tasks more easily and are better organized—which may or may not be true. The biggest reason for variety in income is the difference in occupations people may enter as a result of their education level. For example, anyone with a college degree may enter a career that requires less education if he or she meets the other job requirements.

The amount of your income is only one factor in determining whether or not your career is satisfying. Although everyone needs money, very few people choose a career based solely on income. Other factors include the nature of the work, the potential career advancement, and

IN A NUTSHELL

- **I can describe how influences can affect my career decisions.**

Everything and everyone around me influences me and my decisions. Influences may be positive or negative. Some influences are stronger than others, and these strong influences are likely to have an impact on my career decisions. By determining who and what influences me, I can find out which advice and experiences affect my career decisions.

- **I have analyzed how people influence me and my decisions.**

Many people can influence the decisions I make as I determine my *P*A*T*H to Success*. My family is the basis for my initial ideas and beliefs about work. Teachers may also have a strong influence on my career decisions. My peers' opinions are important to me, but I have to be sure that I analyze their advice in terms of my interests and passions. An employer can help me make career decisions by providing me with experience in a field that interests me or by allowing me to observe an employee. My guidance counselor can provide me with information and options that can help me make my career decisions.

- **I have determined my work and social environment preferences.**

My work environment is the surroundings and conditions of my workplace. It includes the atmosphere of my workplace and my interactions with others as well as the geographical area and climate where I work. My social environment includes the community where I live and work and my lifestyle choices. I need to identify the work and social environments that I prefer in order to be satisfied with my career and my lifestyle.

- **I have identified the values that influence me.**

My values are the things that are important to me. They are the motivation behind my goals and decisions. The values instilled in me by my family will influence my choice of career and will affect my personal value system. My cultural heritage may also impose expectations and values that can influence my work values and career choices. My economic values will determine the balance of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards I choose for my career.

ACTIVITY 2-1

Things You Love to Do



Analyzing the things you like to do will help you begin to understand some of the things that influence your career decisions.

1. On a separate sheet of paper, list 20 things in life that you really love to do.
2. Code your responses according to the following (some items may have more than one symbol):
 - Place a **\$** before any item which costs *money* to do.
 - Put an **R** in front of any item that involves some *risk*. The risk might be physical, intellectual, or emotional.
 - Record an **F** before the items you think that a *family member* would have had on a list if he or she had been asked to make a list at your age.
 - Place a **P** before items you prefer doing with *people* and an **A** before items you prefer doing alone.
 - Place a **5** by the items you probably would not list in *five* years.
3. Which of the categories in Question 2 influences you most? Why?

ACTIVITY 2-2

Learning from Others



How much do you know about the careers of those people who influence your career decisions? Interview one of your parents or grandparents or a close relative about his or her current career. Use the questions below as guidelines for your interview.

1. Where do you work now?
2. How long have you been with your current employer?
3. What is your specific job title? What is your job description?
4. What products or services does your employer provide? Who are the customers?
5. What qualifications are needed for this career? (Include the specific training or education needed.)
6. What communication skills are needed for this career? What math skills are needed? What technology skills are needed?
7. How has this career changed over the years? How has technology affected it?
8. What is the best thing about this career? Why?
9. What is the worst thing about this career? Why?
10. What was the first paying job that you had? How did it help with your current career?
11. Why did you choose your current career?
12. What is your advice for preparing for career success?

After completing the interview, answer the following question: How did the results of the interview influence your thinking about career choices?



Community and Climate Preferences

Included in the environmental factors that create career satisfaction are the climate, location, and the type of community in which you live and work. On a separate sheet of paper, describe your preferred community, including its environmental factors. Then list the benefits of the community you prefer.

- Examples of climate: humid or dry, changing or consistent
- Examples of location: small town or big city, rural or suburban area, changing or consistent climate, nearby lake or ocean, hills or mountains or flat land
- Examples of benefits: close to mass transit, family-oriented, health care availability, cost of living, education availability, neighborhood safety



Ideal Lifestyle

Go to www.bgsu.edu/offices/sa/career/process/exercise.html, and take the *Ideal Life Style Inventory*. As described at the end of the inventory, use your *very important* choices to allow yourself to dream about your future, five to seven years from now. Imagine what you want to be doing. Write down where you want to be living. Use as much detail as possible, including such things as what your coworkers are like, the leisure activities you enjoy, your responsibilities, your family, and so on.



What pushes you to do your best? Looking at what inspires you will help you identify your values. You will be able to make better decisions not only for the future but also for all you do now. From the following list, select six items that motivate you to do your best work in school and write them on a separate sheet of paper. Remember, school is your current job—grades and knowledge are your pay, classmates are your coworkers, and so on.

1. Good pay
2. Career advancement
3. Respect of others
4. Being the top performer
5. A nice work space
6. Freedom to do projects my own way
7. Rewards or bonuses
8. Job security
9. Ability to do a good project
10. Approval of the boss
11. Great coworkers
12. More money
13. The chance to plan what I do
14. Feelings of importance
15. Nice working conditions
16. Giving support to others
17. Recognition from others
18. Opportunity to do new things
19. The chance to talk to other people
20. Being interested in what I am doing

If you selected items: Then you may be motivated by:

1, 2, 7, 8, 12

security

5, 11, 15, 16, 19

working with other people in nice surroundings

3, 4, 10, 14, 17

prestige and achievement

6, 9, 13, 18, 20

independence and personal satisfaction

Do you see a pattern in the things that motivate you? Which of your values influence your motivations?



After reading each case study below, discuss the case with a small group of your fellow students. Use the following questions to get your group started. After you have analyzed each case using these questions, decide what advice, if any, your group would give to the person involved.

- What is the *motivation* of the person in the case?
 - What *personal values* might have motivated a particular career choice?
 - What is the *work environment* choice?
 - What other influences might have played a role in the case?
1. Charles is a counselor in a middle school and loves working with children. Stephanie, his wife, is a financial planner with a large accounting firm. Their first baby is due in two months. Stephanie will be given a three-month leave of absence from the accounting firm after the baby is born. Both Stephanie and Charles believe that one of them should stay home to raise their child while the other works. But, who should stay home and who should work? With the contacts Charles has in the community, he could work in business or industry as an in-house counselor, which would have higher pay than his present job. Should Charles find work in industry where the family would be more secure financially? Should Stephanie return to her well-paying work as a financial planner?
 2. Alana really likes the mystery of troubleshooting problems in electronic systems. The manufacturing company where she works values her expertise. Her supervisor put Alana in charge of the team that investigates problems in electronic brake harness systems in the trucks the company has manufactured and sold. In order to do her job, Alana has to travel to where the trucks are located and stay with her team until the problems are solved. Looking to the future, Alana and her husband are wondering what will happen when they decide to have a family. Should she now be retraining for another position or looking for a way to modify her travel?
 3. Bobek is fascinated with running a kitchen in a restaurant. He is the sous-chef at Ginseng, a trendy vegetarian restaurant in Manhattan. However, he is not entirely happy because he's the sous-chef and not the head chef. He really wants to be a head chef and knows he can succeed as one. One of Bobek's steady customers at Ginseng has offered him the opportunity to be the head chef in the kitchen of a small inn, a bed and breakfast in a small town on the coast of Washington state. Bobek now has a dilemma. Should he leave the bustling atmosphere of New York City, which he loves, to become a head chef at an inn in a small town? Or should he wait until he finds a head chef position in New York City?
 4. Shelly went to her local community college and received her associate's degree as a registered nurse. Because she has a young son and wants to work regular hours, Shelly preferred working as a nurse in an assisted living facility rather than in a hospital. Though she loved nursing, the pay at the assisted living facility was not enough to support her family. When Shelly's friend told her about openings at the post office, she took the test and became a letter carrier. Shelly still works regular hours, but her hourly pay is higher than it was at the assisted living facility. Now she wonders if she made the right decision. She misses medicine and the contact with her patients. Should she go back to school to become a surgical nurse, a more skilled position with higher pay? Or should she continue as a letter carrier?



Every aspect of a career is subject to many influences. The influences mentioned in this chapter are:

- People—including parents or other family members, teachers, peers, employers, and guidance counselors
- Environment
- Values—personal and family values, cultural expectations and values, and economic values



Personal Values

Take the values assessment at www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocecs/CRC/. Click on “Self-assessment,” then click on “Values.”

1. After taking the assessment, write down any other values that are important to you.
2. On a separate sheet of paper, list the five values that are most important to you. Choose your five values from those values you rated 1 on the assessment and from the others that you listed. Give reasons for your choices.

Cultural Expectations

Your culture is your social, ethnic, or religious background or the community where you live. Your culture may expect you to behave or believe in specific ways and can influence your decisions. Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper. (If you don't think you are influenced by your culture, answer the questions based on the expectations of a close friend's culture.)

1. What is your cultural heritage?
2. How do the expectations of your culture influence your life?
3. How might the expectations of your culture influence your career decision?
4. How can you make your own career decision and still respect your culture?

Economic Values

Your motivation for working is often related to the type of reward you receive. On a separate sheet of paper, list at least six types of work that you do and the reward that motivates you. Determine whether your motivation is *intrinsic* or *extrinsic*. You do not necessarily have to be given money for the work.

	Type of Work	Motivation	Intrinsic or Extrinsic
Examples:	completing an assignment	learning more getting better grades	intrinsic intrinsic and extrinsic
	mowing yard	money family's respect pride in yard looking good	extrinsic intrinsic intrinsic