

Influences on Career Choices

2



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 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 adviser. 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, which gave him a solid foundation for a career as a political reporter or columnist.

Mrs. Garden suggested that Doug work during 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? counselor?

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

What do you think?

Influence

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

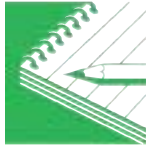
—Tao Te Ching,
Wisdom of Ancient
China

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 what 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

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?

What do you think?

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.

Expectations

What do you think?

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.

CAREER SUCCESS TIP



Welcome helpful criticism. You may be able to identify things about yourself that you want to change. Accept and learn from criticism that seems to make sense to you.

Michael's dad, Lou, has a small successful dental practice. Lou has always dreamed of working with his son Michael and eventually turning the business over to him. Michael has helped his dad in the office since he was twelve. He helped sterilize instruments, cleaned equipment, and ran errands. While he worked with his father, Michael closely observed the work of a dentist. In high school, Michael worked in a dental lab, making dentures and crowns. Michael's experience helped him decide that he doesn't want to become a dentist. He likes working with people, but he's more interested in a career in advertising.

Lou had a difficult time accepting his son's decision. He wondered whether all his hard work to build a dental practice was for nothing. Michael talked to his father about his decision. Michael explained how he wanted to follow his father's example to build a career from the ground up—how he wanted to work in advertising and eventually start his own agency. Lou listened carefully. He saw more clearly how he and Michael were alike in their passion for their work but different in their interests.

If you think 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 courses, extracurricular activities, and part-time jobs—anything related to a possible alternative career. By doing this, you set the stage for your family to listen to and 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 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*.

You should discuss your talents and passions with your parents and other family members. Talk about what you like and how you want to find out more about possible career opportunities. If you really like to do something and you 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

What have been your favorite courses in school?

What are some possible careers related to those courses?

What do you think?

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 adviser. 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 believe you have a talent for foreign languages. In this situation, your Spanish teacher is a natural resource about career opportunities for Spanish majors.

Your English teacher can have a major influence on your career no matter what your interests are. You may think English classes relate only 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 needs 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 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 must 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.

CAREER FACT

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

Teachers are excellent resources for learning about your skills and behaviors. Many activities and courses in school require the same behaviors used in the workforce. Teachers know whether you are flexible and can adapt to change. Observing you in action shows them whether 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 help you improve.

Which teachers are 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 classes. Ask for suggestions about how the skills learned in their classes 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 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 not challenging and so devised ways to make them more challenging. Now he is part of a team that works on projects at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. These projects will allow a spacecraft to go places where it has never been before. His work with rovers and self-directed spacecraft intrigues him now 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.

Sources: "Official Bio—Steve Chien." NASA. <http://www.nasa.gov>
"Kenneth H. Neelson." NASA. <http://www.nasa.gov>

Peers

You influence your friends—and they influence you—every day in many ways. That influence may include 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 you finish school, but do you want to build *your* future around your friends' lives?

Many of Kita's classmates admired her creative way of dressing. She used the most unlikely combination of accessories in her outfits and received many compliments for her style and flair. Her talents included a unique eye for color and design. She also liked creating displays and posters. With these qualities, Kita seemed destined for a career in fashion design or interior decorating.

Shauna, Kita's best friend, wanted to move to Chicago and work as a receptionist after graduation. Since Chicago was known for its famous designers and decorators, Shauna asked Kita to go with her. Shauna's plan was intriguing to Kita, but it would mean postponing her plans for fashion design school. Still, Kita was excited about moving to Chicago and sharing an apartment with Shauna.

Excitedly Kita called her close friend Linda and told her about her plans for Chicago. Linda asked Kita if fashion design was still her career goal. Kita quickly said yes. Then Linda suggested that Kita think about sharing an apartment with Shauna during the summer but starting school in the fall. Linda told Kita that if she let Shauna influence her, she would be putting her education and career plans on hold.

After talking with Linda, Kita wasn't sure what to do. Living in Chicago with Shauna sounded so exciting! Kita finally decided that delaying her career dream was not what she wanted to do. Fashion design was her passion, and she was eager to begin her education. She hoped Shauna would understand and agree to share an apartment in Chicago 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 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.

Employers

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

Joining the Explorers was a wise choice for Manuel. He was interested in firefighting and was eager to make a decision about whether to pursue it as a career. One of the Explorer groups linked Manuel with the Anderson Fire Department, where he now works and can see firsthand the daily labors of a firefighter. During school breaks, Manuel has a paying job with the fire department, cleaning the station. Though he isn't able to go out on fire calls, he does participate in Explorer fire training. During his interview for the job, Manuel spoke with Ms. Farrell, the supervisor of the fire department. He wanted her to know that he considered the part-time job to be a testing ground for his career focus.

To help Manuel with his career decision, Ms. Farrell gave him scheduling duties and other routine work. His Explorer training offers different aspects of a career in firefighting. Manuel likes working with the equipment and teaching fire safety. He finds the work in firefighting challenging, though he isn't sure he is ready to face the dangers and hazards of the career.

Ms. Farrell is helping Manuel with his career because helping him can also help the fire department. She hopes Manuel is a good employee who will work each summer and holiday break while in school. Hopefully, Manuel can work for the Anderson Fire Department full-time after he receives his training and certification.

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 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.

“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

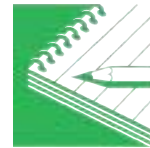
Counselors

Counselors have 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 computer searches. They can set up interviews with employers. In addition, if you choose to use their expertise, they are trained to help you work through the process of career development.

What a counselor does best is help you discover your options. For example, suppose you go to the counselor's office to find out about a career in medicine. Your counselor may ask what particular career you're thinking about—doctor, nurse, dental hygienist, pharmacist, medical transcriptionist. Then the two of you may talk about the courses you should take in high school to prepare for your career. You and your counselor may also talk about other careers in medicine you had not considered—physical therapy, sports medicine, nutrition.

When you have narrowed your career focus and have chosen your education and training pathway, the counselor can help you toward your goal by providing planning checklists, information on courses, suggestions for employment, and tips for taking control of your homework. 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.



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

—Eleanor Roosevelt

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 made up of 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 want 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?

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, the changing seasons are 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.

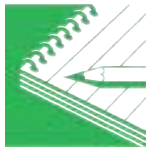
CAREER SUCCESS TIP



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

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 or in a zoo or an aquarium. 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 geographic 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

What do you think?

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.

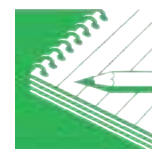
Elizabeth's family believes in serving others. Ever since she was a little child, her parents have included her in church activities that benefit their community. In addition, Elizabeth's mother has always worked in the local polling place on election day. One of Elizabeth's earliest memories is of passing 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 believing that helping others should be part of her life, including her career. She is exploring careers in teaching, social services, and healthcare.



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 believes in her work. She is honest, though she prides herself on being the one who is usually different. That creativity results in her web site designs being award winners. Her use of stimulating colors and graphics makes the sites eye-catching. Elaine will not give up her standards of what is right and true. She knows she has her family to thank for her values. Elaine's family taught her honesty, so her designs do not attempt to deceive those who view them. Her mother's artistic sense is part of Elaine's character, and her father's precision guides her in studying computer language. In her work, Elaine retains the values of her upbringing.

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



Cultural Expectations and Values

What do you think?

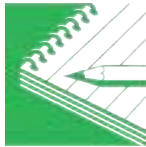
Does your cultural heritage impose expectations that influence your decisions?

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?

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 her family and her tribe 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.

“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

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?

What do you think?

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. In 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.

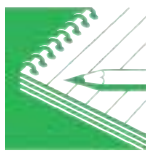
You may choose to work at a nursing home for the extrinsic rewards you receive. With the paycheck you receive, you can buy concert tickets, CDs, clothes, books—whatever items you choose to spend your money on. On the other hand, you may choose to volunteer at a nursing home for the intrinsic rewards, receiving no pay for your efforts. You enjoy helping elderly people and making their lives a little less lonely.

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 you need to have a bachelor's degree or higher to earn a high wage, but it does mean 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 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 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 the working conditions. One of the most important factors is for your career to be based on your values. Only you can determine which factors will have the most influence on your career choices.

CAREER FACT

Income has an effect on people's health. Studies have shown that the more money people make, the healthier they are.



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

IN A NUTSHELL

- **I can describe how influences 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 what advice and experiences affect my career decisions.

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

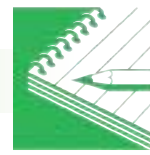
My family is the basis for my initial ideas and beliefs about work. Teachers may also have a strong influence on my career decisions. My peers’ opinions are important to me, but I must analyze their advice in terms of my interests and passions. An employer can help me make career decisions by providing me with experience in a field that interests me or by allowing me to observe an employee. My counselor can provide information and options that help me make my career decisions.

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

My work environment is made up of the surroundings and conditions of my workplace. It includes the atmosphere of my workplace and my interactions with others as well as the geographic area and climate where I work. My social environment includes the community where I live and work and my lifestyle choices.

- **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.



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

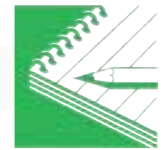
1. On a separate sheet of paper, list 20 things in life you really love to do.
2. Code your responses using the following. (You may use more than one symbol.)
 - Place a **\$** before any item that costs *money* to do.
 - Put an **R** in front of any item that involves some *risk*. The risk might be physical, intellectual, or emotional.
 - Record an **F** before the items you think 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?



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

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 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



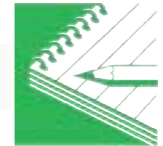
Included in the environmental factors that create career satisfaction are the climate, location, and type of community in which you live and work. On a separate sheet of paper, describe your preferred community, including its environmental factors. Then list the benefits of the community you prefer.

- Examples of climate: humid or dry, changing or consistent
- Examples of location: small town or big city, rural or suburban area, nearby lake or ocean, hills or mountains or flat land
- Examples of benefits: close to mass transit, family-oriented, healthcare 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 what your life will be like when you are in your early 20's. Use as much detail as possible, including such things as your coworkers, leisure activities, responsibilities, family, and so on.



From the following list, select six items that motivate you to do your best work in school. 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 | 11. Nice coworkers |
| 2. Career advancement | 12. More money |
| 3. Respect of others | 13. The chance to plan what I do |
| 4. Being the top performer | 14. Feelings of importance |
| 5. A nice work space | 15. Nice working conditions |
| 6. Freedom to do projects my own way | 16. Giving support to others |
| 7. Rewards or bonuses | 17. Recognition from others |
| 8. Job security | 18. Opportunity to do new things |
| 9. Ability to do a good job | 19. The chance to talk to other people |
| 10. Approval of the boss | 20. Being interested in what I am doing |

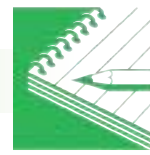
If you selected items:

- 1, 2, 7, 8, 12
5, 11, 15, 16, 19
3, 4, 10, 14, 17
6, 9, 13, 18, 20

Then you may be motivated by:

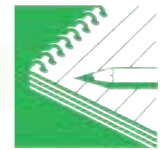
- security
working with other people in nice surroundings
prestige and achievement
independence and personal satisfaction

Do you see a pattern? 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 teaches high school economics and enjoys working with students. Stephanie, his wife, is a certified public accountant (CPA) with a large company. She works an average of 60 hours a week, including many Saturdays. Their first baby is due in two months. Both Stephanie and Charles believe one parent should stay home with the new baby while the other parent works. But who should stay home and who should work? Both Charles and Stephanie can take three months off from their jobs when the baby is born. However, Charles has made business contacts in the community through his work and has been offered a position as a bank officer. This new job will pay more than his present job. Should Charles take the banking job, or should he leave his teaching job to stay at home until their child enters school? Should Stephanie return to her well-paying job as a CPA?
 2. Alana likes her job as a carpenter. She works for a company that produces Broadway shows in major U.S. cities. She is in charge of the team that investigates the tour theaters and works with the set designer to customize the shows' sets. Alana travels to each city and stays with her team until the problems are solved. Looking to the future, Alana is thinking about starting her own company in New York City. She has a lot to consider. Should she begin taking college courses in business management? Should she retrain for another position? Should she look for a way to cut back on her travel now?
 3. Bobek is fascinated with running a kitchen in a restaurant. He is the pastry chef at Ginseng, a trendy vegetarian restaurant in Atlanta. However, he is not entirely happy because he hasn't been promoted to head chef, the person who makes the decisions in the kitchen. One of Bobek's customers has offered him the opportunity to be the head chef of a family restaurant in a town on the coast of Washington state. Bobek now has a problem. Should he leave the bustling atmosphere of his hometown, Atlanta, to become the head chef of a family restaurant in a small town thousands of miles away? Or should he wait until he finds a head chef position in Atlanta? He knows he can be successful as a head chef. He's just not sure what to do.
 4. Marguerite received her associate degree as a registered nurse (RN) from the local community college. Because she is a single parent, she prefers working as a nurse for patients in their homes, which provides her with flexible hours. Though she enjoys nursing, the hours for home-based nursing care aren't always steady. Sometimes the pay doesn't cover her family's expenses. When Marguerite's friend told her about job openings at the post office, Marguerite took the test and became a letter carrier. She now works regular hours. However, she wonders if she made the right decision. She misses medicine and her contact with patients. Should Marguerite go back to school to become a surgical nurse, a skilled position with regular hours? Or should she continue her job 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 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 by clicking on “Students,” then on “Career Services,” and finally on “Self-assessment” and “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 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 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 good-looking yard	extrinsic intrinsic intrinsic