The Path to Happiness: Assessing Yourself in Order to Choose the Right Career

Ever wondered why some people are just so unhappy while working? The grouchiness in their voice and the long faces as in they would rather be doing something else. Many people don’t always choose a career that best suits them; sometimes, they just choose a specific job because of the high pay. Instead of thinking what job will give you the most pay, think about what job will give you the most happiness. Because in the end, success doesn’t bring happiness, happiness brings success. But in order to choose the right career, you must first assess yourself.

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Self-assessment is the first and most important step that must be taken in order to make a wise informed career decision. A self-assessment will help you gather information about yourself such as your values, interests, personality, and aptitudes. Values are the things that are most important to you, interests are things that you enjoy doing, personality is a person’s individual characteristics and attitudes, and aptitudes are the activities that you are good at. Career Planning Expert, Dawn Rosenberg McKay, states “[The right career] needs to fit well with your interests, aptitudes, work-related values, and personality type. Why? If it does there is a better chance you will be satisfied with it and enjoy your work.” All four are equally important and taking that into account, it will be my pleasure to emphasize on all four individually. But how are you going to be able to discover such information about yourself, you might be asking. Well, luckily there are a couple of tests for each of the four essential components stated. These tests can be found online for free. That’s right, I said free. However, you might have to pay for some; Usually those are the full versions that come with extremely detailed results. Sometimes, your nearest career center will provide them.

Now, let’s discuss the important information you must find about yourself individually starting off with personality. An efficient, fundamental tool that can be used for personality is the popular Myer-Briggs Type Indicator. This assessment consists of 93 forced-choice questions. According to the Myer-Briggs, there are sixteen different personality types. [Look at chart to see all sixteen] Under each category it explains what kind of person you are and which careers will best suit you based on the characteristics that you have. Personality is extremely important because you want to work in an environment where the people there have similar characteristics as you. It’s important to get along with your co-workers and your boss and the only way you’ll be able to understand one another is by having a similar personality.

Mightywaters – Myers – Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

Discovering your interest is crucial especially because you want to have a job that you find interesting. A helpful career self-assessment is the strong interest inventory. This assessment is pretty self-explanatory; it’s a test that helps
discover your interests. The strong interest inventory is a trusted tool that is regularly updated. According to CPP, “[It] helps heighten individuals’ self-awareness and provide deeper understanding of individual strengths and blind spots, including work style and risk-taking orientation.” By getting an insight on what your interest are, you will have an easier time on deciding which career choice is appropriate for you. For example, if you enjoy socializing and having face-to-face interactions then being in an office enclosed in a cubicle for eight hours a day would not be a job that you would want. A career must be appealing to you in order for you to enjoy it.

When it comes to careers, knowing what you’re good at will come in handy. Aptitudes test range from all sorts, but finding your skills is what matters much like the aptitude test provided by RichardStep. According to the RichardStep website, “The RichardStep Strengths and Weaknesses Aptitude test is a tool to help you get a better look at who you really are and how much you could grow.” It is used to help you learn about what skills you already assess and what you can improve on. Knowing your strengths and weaknesses will help you be self-aware of what you are best at and you can use that information for your career decision. You want to have a career where your skills are needed and required.

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Of course you aren’t just limited to these tests that were mentioned. There are many more out there, but these are just a start. If you happen to struggle while doing these tests on your own, don’t worry. There are professionals such as career counselors that can help you with the process. Although it may come with a price at times, it is better to know what career best suits you instead of going blindfolded into the career field.

Being happy with your career choice lies in your hands. You have the control of choosing what you want to do as your profession. Self-assessing will help you have a clearer view of what career path you would strive in the best, but it will not give you a specific career choice. Once you fully assess yourself, you are able to move on to the next step and research careers based on the information you received from self-assessing. Make sure to think about which career truly complies to you, because in the end what makes you happy matters most.

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Melissa Alcaraz is a student at the CSULA. She is majoring in Business with the option of Human Resources and is expected to graduate in spring, June 2015.


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