

Career Self - Assessment

CAREER SELF-ASSESSMENT by Lupe I. Torre Do you have a job or a career? A job is a way to bring in needed income: A job does not motivate us to get up in the morning; does not energize us during our work day; does not have a pathway to more responsibility, more interesting duties, or a larger paycheck... The words "dead-end job" come to mind. A career has a future, a "career path," where we can see ourselves two-five-ten years from now, and set our goals accordingly. However, if you have a "job," do not despair, this could be a "career-in-the-making";

By performing our own career self-assessment (being totally honest with ourselves), we can redirect our career path, develop a new one, or reaffirm that we are on the right track. First, make a list of your strengths... chances are that what you love to do is what you do best! If we follow our passion, we are usually also striving to be the best we can be. What are those skills/functions that come easily to you, particularly those for which you have been complimented? It could be your problem-solving skills, your ability to handle customer complaints and problems, your visionary perspective, your ability to motivate others. We all have several strengths, and many times they are underutilized. Now let's look at which of these are "transferable skills." This means that you can take those skills and apply them to other professions or you can take them and carve yourself a path towards a promotion. There are some skills that can be applied to almost any career: Self-starter, team player, motivator, visionary, goal-oriented, problem-solver, good communicator, people person, etc. And then there are skills that are more job-specific like technologically savvy, numbers or detail oriented. Once you have prioritized your transferable skills, with those that you enjoy most at the top, look around your company to see which positions (all positions, not just those that are vacant), require some of these skills. Choose a couple of positions, and then begin your "detective work." Can you add a new project to your present duties where you'll be using these skills (and could possibly lead to a promotion in the future)? Is there a large project with high visibility, where you could volunteer to use your strengths? If the company is downsizing, can you add some of the responsibilities of downsized workers, where you will be using these skills? While you are doing this, please keep in mind that you are grooming yourself for those two positions that you chose as your target. By focusing on your strengths and putting them to use as skills required in those targeted positions, you are actually developing a "self-training program" that will show documented experience in those areas. And, if you get tired of waiting for those positions to open up in your company, the competition would be eager to find such a perfect candidate to fill one of their openings! Copyright (C) 2004, Lupe I. Torre. All Rights Reserved.