

MCS

My CAREER STORY



*An Autobiographical
Workbook for
Life-Career Success*

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An Autobiographical Workbook
for Life-Career Success



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version of this workbook may be downloaded at www.vocopher.com.

PURPOSE

People often need help planning and deciding about their career paths. Such help includes figuring out what kind of work they might want to do and how to go about doing it. It also includes planning and feeling in control of their futures, exploring possible careers, and building confidence to do what they want to do and solve problems that might get in the way. Like most people, you may need this help because you are facing a change in your life; like going from high school to college, from school to work, or from one job to the next. And change means making choices.

Sometimes taking tests can be helpful to learn about what kinds of jobs and occupations you may like and to make choices. You might have taken a test like this. These tests help with **matching** you to jobs that seem right for you. Usually, career tests tell about your work-related interests, abilities, and personality. They tell you about what kinds of people you are most like and what kinds of jobs people like you most often do. While often helpful for finding out about what college majors or occupations might fit you best, such tests usually tell just one part of your whole life story.

To understand yourself more completely and how you can use work to be the person you want to be, it helps to think about your whole life story. Knowing and telling your own life story, or autobiography, adds **meaning** to your career plans and choices. That way, you can deepen your life-career planning and decision making by having a clearer sense of direction and purpose. **The “My Career Story” workbook (MCS) aims to help you tell, hear, and author your own life story.** Think of the MCS as a mirror that you hold up to look at yourself. By looking closely in this “mirror,” you can reflect on how you can use school and work in a way that is meaningful to you and that matters to other people.

The MCS applies career counseling principles to helping you make choices about current life-career transitions and future career directions. Use it to tell, hear, and put into action your life-career story. The MCS contains a series of questions designed for you to tell about yourself. You then relate your story to a career problem you now face, such as deciding about educational and occupational options and making career plans. By reflecting on your answers to the questions, you will likely be much better able to tell and enact your own career story in terms of **who** you are, **where** in the world of work you would like to be, and **how** you will connect yourself to occupations you may like.



USES

The MCS workbook may be used by individuals, groups, and educators for guided self-reflection to increase the meaning and purpose of work in one's life.

- ✓ **Individuals:** Use the MCS individually to tell, hear, and retell with greater clarity your own life-career story, and identify ways to enact that story in work. Doing so can help you better understand how you want to use work in a way that allows you to become the person you want to be.
- ✓ **Groups:** Use the MCS in group settings to tell, hear, and retell with greater clarity group members' own life-career stories. Individual group members engage the group as an audience to listen to and help them tell and enact their stories. In turn, they provide an audience for other group members as they listen to and reflect on other members' stories.
- ✓ **Educators:** Use the MCS as the syllabus or an activity for a high school or college career orientation/education course to increase students' ability to tell, hear, and retell with greater clarity and comprehension their emerging life-career stories and enact those stories in school and work.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS

The MCS contains three parts.

In **Part I, "Telling My Story,"** you will answer several questions about yourself. Your answer to each question tells one part of your whole life-career story.

In **Part II, "Hearing My Story,"** you will use your answers from Part I to tell your career story with greater clarity and comprehension. In so doing, you will better understand yourself, your interests, and your passion in life. Together, the story you tell in Part I and the portrait you construct in Part II will help you realize **who** you are as the lead character in your own life-career story, **where** in the world of work you would most like to be who you are, and **how** you believe you can connect yourself to possible work settings.

In **Part III, "Enacting My Story,"** you will make a realistic plan to put your story into action.



C. Write your answers to the following four questions in the spaces provided.

- 1. Who did you admire when you were growing up? Who were your heroes or heroines?** List three people, other than your mom and dad, who you admired when you were a child of about six, seven, or eight years old. These can be real people you know or don't know personally, make-believe people like superheroes and cartoon characters, or anybody else you can think of. Maybe you admired a neighbor or a teacher, an athlete, a politician, a scientist, an artist or musician, a T.V star, or a character in a book.

List your three heroes or heroines on the lines on the next page. Then, for each character, describe in 2-4 sentences in the space provided what you admired about them. For example, if you admired Anne of Green Gables you might write that she is independent and spunky. Or, if you admired Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. you might write that he was a leader who fought for social justice. If you admired Superman you might write that he fought for truth and justice.



My three heroes or heroines and what I admire about them are:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. **What are your three favorite magazines or television shows?** List magazines you like and tell what you like about them. If you don't read magazines, what television shows do you really enjoy? List your three favorite magazines or TV shows and tell what you like about them.

Three magazines or TV shows that I like are:

These are all of the things I like about each one of these magazines or shows:

a. _____

a. _____

b. _____

b. _____

c. _____

c. _____

3. **What is your currently favorite story?** Think of a book that you read a lot, or may have read over and over again. Tell the story of the book. What is the book about? Describe your favorite character in the story. If you don't have a favorite book, what is your favorite movie? Think of a movie that you watch a lot, or have seen over and over again. Then, tell the story of the movie.

4. **What is your favorite saying?** Think about a motto you live by or a saying that you have heard and really like. Maybe you've seen some words on a car bumper sticker or have a poster or plaque in your room or house that has words to live by. You might even have more than one saying or motto that you can list here. If you can't think of a saying, you might even create your own and write it down here.

PART II. HEARING MY STORY

You told small stories about your life-career by answering the questions in Part I. Now, let's put these smaller stories together into a big story, or portrait of your life. Your life portrait will help you hear your own life-career story, make sense of the change you are making, and clarify choices to be made.

Directions

It has been said that when we want someone to know who we really are, we tell them our life story. That is because we make ourselves and our world through the stories that we tell. To best achieve life-career success, you must create a story about yourself that expresses very clearly who you are as a person, where you most like to be in the work world, and how you want to use work in a way that best allows you to fully be yourself. To construct such a story, think of your life-career as an ongoing tale with three main parts:

- ✓ First, you act as the lead character in your own story. Your **self** has qualities that make you the person who you are now and who you want to become. For example, maybe you are the kind of person who is or is becoming independent, strong-willed, and somebody who stands up for others. Or, maybe you are smart, sensitive, and responsible. Whether it is these or other words, there is a way to best describe you.
- ✓ Second, you want to put yourself in an educational or work **setting** where you feel most comfortable. You, like most people, probably have been in a class at school or in a job that you did not like. That is because it did not allow you to be you. Knowing the settings you like best tells about the kinds of work that most interest you and the places where you can best be you.
- ✓ Third, your story has a **script** with a plot and a central theme that explains who you are and how you can use work in a way that allows you to best be yourself.

Let's use your answers to the questions in Part I so that you can hear the story of your **self** as the lead character in your own life-career, the work **setting** where you want to enact your life-career, and the **script** that explains your life-career direction, or how you can connect who you are to where you want to be in the world of work.



SETTING: Where Do I Like To Be?

Review your magazine or TV show choices. Look closely at the words you used to describe them. What kinds of activities are going on in these magazines or shows? What kinds of people are seen in them? **Tell what is happening and what the people are doing in your magazines or TV shows:**

Magazines and TV shows can also be grouped by the work settings they represent. Different magazines and shows make for different kinds of settings. **Go to Table 1 on the next page** and find the one or two work settings in column 4 (R,I,A,S,E,C) most like your favorite magazines or TV shows. After you read the table, **add to your summary above any words from column 3 or your own words that describe the work setting or settings you like the most.**

This is where you like to be you, your career interests. These are the kinds of *places* in which you want to work, the *people* with whom you want to be, the *problems* you want to address, and the *procedures* you like to use. You want to put yourself in a setting that interests you and where you enjoy the people with whom you work. **Using the words you wrote down in your summary above, tell in 2-4 sentences where you like to be.**

I LIKE BEING IN PLACES WHERE:

Table 1. Six Types of Work Settings with Examples

1. SAMPLE MAGAZINES	2. SAMPLE TELEVISION SHOWS	3. DESCRIPTION	4. WORK SETTING
Popular Mechanics, Field and Stream, Sports Illustrated, Hunting, Runner's World, Muscle and Fitness, Outside, Backpacker, Bass Master, Gear Solutions, Birder's World, Sporting News, Ring Magazine, ESPN The Magazine	Ice Road Truckers, This Old House, Deadliest Catch, World Extreme Cagefighting, Deer City USA, Top Truck Challenge, Animal Cops, Dog the Bounty Hunter, Cops, Blue Collar Comedy Tour, Swamp Loggers, Dirty Jobs	Mechanical and outdoor places where practical, physical, and athletic people use machines, tools, physical coordination, and common sense to solve concrete problems involving repair, building, transport, plants and animals, and athletics.	"R" Realistic
National Geographic, Science, Smithsonian, Discover, Natural History, Scientific American, Astronomy, National Wildlife Magazine, Sky and Telescope, True Detective, Crime	Star Trek: The Next Generation, Nature, Planet Earth, NOVA, How It's Made, Man vs. Wild, V, House, Biography, Journey to the Edge of the Universe, CSI, Criminal Minds, Frontline, Big Bang Theory, Vampire Diaries, Bones, Blue Bloods, Forensic Files, Dexter, Law and Order	Scientific and analytical places where logical and curious people use reason, math, and research methods to solve problems involving discovery, exploration, investigation, observation, and evaluation.	"I" Investigative
Rolling Stone, Fashion, GQ, Guitar World, Architectural Digest, Billboard, SPIN, Vegetarian Times, Entertainment Weekly, The Artist's Magazine, Bon Appetit, Gourmet, National Lampoon, American Photo, MAD	Man v. Food, Tosh.O., Independent Lens, Sons of Anarchy, South Park, Daily Show, Bizarre Foods, No Reservations, Fashion Police, What Not to Wear, Project Runway	Creative and aesthetic places where imaginative and expressive people use art, theater, music, and originality to solve artistic problems involving creativity, invention, performance, and writing.	"A" Artistic
People, Us Weekly, National Enquirer, Star, Woman's Day, Psychology Today, Family Circle, American Baby, Instructor, Education Week, Teacher Magazine	Parenthood, All My Children, America's Funniest Home Videos, Brothers and Sisters, Desperate Housewives, The Family Crews, Gossip Girl, True Life, Oprah, Supernanny, E! News, Friends, Scrubs, The Simpsons, Family Guy, 16 and Pregnant	Caring and educational places where helpful and sociable people use dialogue, instruction, understanding, teamwork, and nurturance to solve social problems involving education, caretaking, support, community service, and relationships.	"S" Social
Fortune, Money, Forbes, Travel and Leisure, The Atlantic, Time, The New Republic, The Nation, Cosmopolitan, Barron's, Black Enterprise, BusinessWeek, Self, National Review	The Sopranos, Hardball, Private Chefs of Beverly Hills, O'Reilly Factor, Golf Central, Sports Center, Mad Money, How I Made My Millions, Hell's Kitchen, Reba, 30 Rock, House Hunters, Income Property, Entourage, American Greed, High Stakes Poker, Undercover Boss	Managerial and political places where persuasive and powerful people use leadership, strategy, influence, and wit to solve business, legal, and government problems involving economic gain, opinion, risk, and competition.	"E" Enterprising
Reader's Digest, TV Guide, PC Magazine, SmartComputing, PC World, Packaging Digest, Consumer Reports, The Collector's Guide, Ladies' Home Journal, Beckett Sports Card Monthly, Railroad Modeler, Martha Stewart Living, Christian Parenting Today, Better Homes and Gardens	Antiques Roadshow, Golden Girls, Little House on the Prairie, 19 Kids and Counting, The 700 Club, World's Strictest Parents, WorldRadio Online	Office and uniform places where orderly and organized people use precision, conscientiousness, detail, accuracy, and caution to solve clerical and procedural problems involving organization, record-keeping, data management, and scheduling.	"C" Conventional

MY CAREER STORY

SUMMARY PORTRAIT

SELF

FROM PAGE 10

I am/I am becoming:

SETTING

FROM PAGE 11

I like being places where people do activities such as:

SCRIPT

FROM PAGE 8

The plot of my favorite book or movie is:

Therefore, in these places I want to:

SUCCESS FORMULA

USE YOUR SELF, SETTING,
AND SCRIPT TO WRITE A
ONE-SENTENCE
PERSONAL LIFE-CAREER
MISSION STATEMENT.

I will be most happy and successful when I am:

able to be _____

in places where people _____

so that I can _____.

SELF-ADVICE

FROM PAGE 8

My motto contains my best advice to myself for dealing with my career concerns. To apply my success formula now, the best advice I can give myself is (write your motto here):

EXPLORING OCCUPATIONS

If you wish to explore occupations that may best offer a setting for you to express your interests, return to page 4. Based on your summary portrait on page 13, **look over the occupations you listed on page 4 and identify those that you now see as potential choices.** If you want help to add more occupations to your list, then follow the instructions on page 16.

OCCUPATIONS I AM NOW CONSIDERING:



EXPLORING MORE OCCUPATIONS

You are a unique person. At the same time, we know from research that “birds of a feather flock together.” This means that you want to be around people who are like you. In fact, studies show that you likely most resemble two or three of six different groups of people and places.

Go back to Table 1 and read about the six types of work settings and the sample magazines and TV shows for each listed there. From the list, **write on the lines below the two letters that best describe each one of your magazines or TV shows:**

Now, if you want more occupations to explore, go to the O*NET online:

<http://www.onetonline.org/find/descriptor/browse/Interests/>. There, you can click on your first letter that you wrote above (R, I, A, S, E, or C). Once you do that, on the web page that appears next you can expand the list by selecting from the drop-down menu your second most interesting letter that you wrote above. You will also find it worthwhile to reverse the order of your two letters, or even add a third letter that you like to the list.

The O*NET describes and provides detailed information about occupations that fit your interest two-letter code. If any of the occupations you listed on page 15 of this workbook appear on the O*NET list, circle them. On the lines below, **list any additional occupations from the O*NET list that you wish to explore:**

PART III. ENACTING MY STORY

By telling your story in Part I and hearing your story in Part II, you are now ready to make a detailed plan to put your story into action. Your plan has three parts that involve reflecting on, telling, and performing your story.

A. **REFLECT** on your career story to set goals for the next chapter of your life-career. The goal you select should be something that will allow you to enact, or bring to life your career story. Therefore, select a goal that is *achievable* (you have enough time, resources, and energy to do it), *believable* (you believe you can do it), *concrete* (it is measureable and specific), and *desirable* (you want to do it). **My goal, or goals now are to:**

B. **TELL** and talk about your story and the conclusions you have drawn from this workbook with valued audiences. A next step in enacting your career story is to share it with people you trust. Audiences might be family members, friends, mentors, coaches, and teachers. The more you tell your story, the more real and clear it becomes to you and the more confident you feel in living it. **To make my story more clear and real, I will tell and discuss it with these valued audiences:**

C. **PERFORM** your story by taking action. List two to four specific objectives, or small steps you will now take to move you from where you are today to the goals you listed above. For ideas on steps to take consider the following possibilities:

To commit to a tentative decision that I have made about my career plans, I will (check all that apply):

- Talk to someone working in the occupation I am interested in
- Listen to someone working in my occupation of interest
- Read something about my occupation of interest
- Search the world wide web for more information about this occupation
- Visit places where people are working in this occupation
- Observe people working in this occupation
- Other _____

To try out my chosen occupation, I will (check all that apply):

- Apply
- Study
- Volunteer
- Apprentice
- Search
- Other _____

To move toward reaching my goal or goals I will now:

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES
TO USE IN YOUR
LIFE-CAREER PLANNING, VISIT
WWW.VOCOPHER.COM

