



# ENLIGHTEN EXERCISE #38

## Understanding My Career Stage

Think about each question with respect to your own career interests, skills, values, expectations, aspirations, behaviors, and goals. Although the questions may be challenging to answer, you must rate each question according to how strongly you agree or disagree using a 1 to 5 scale below.

**1. My career expectations, feelings and aspirations are best described as:**

I am still exploring to what extent this job, organization or profession is a "good fit" for me; I am beginning the journey towards accomplishing my major career goals and realizing my own definition of success; The major theme in my life might be described as "self-validation" of my knowledge, skills, abilities, and potential.

<i>The way it is now</i>					<i>The way I would like it to be</i>				
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**2. My career expectations, feelings and aspirations are best described as:**

I am continuing to develop and enhance my professional knowledge, skills, and abilities to enhance my value to any business or organization; I am currently working to achieve success and accomplish my major job, career, professional and life goals; The major theme in my life right now might be described as "self-development" of my knowledge, skills, abilities, and potential.

<i>The way it is now</i>					<i>The way I would like it to be</i>				
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**3. My career expectations, feelings and aspirations are best described as:**

I am seeking to establish a greater balance between work and non-work activities (e.g., family, children, hobbies, etc.); I am trying not to take on additional work responsibilities and challenges that might add to my level of work and life stress; The major theme in my life might be described as seeking "self-fulfillment" and life balance.

<i>The way it is now</i>					<i>The way I would like it to be</i>				
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**4. My career expectations, feelings and aspirations are best described as:**

I feel trapped in my present job, career, or organization without real opportunities for career growth, professional development, or opportunities for advancement; The major theme in my life might be described as actively "exploring" and "redefining" my career options and opportunities where I can be challenged, stimulated and continue to grow and develop further.

<i>The way it is now</i>					<i>The way I would like it to be</i>				
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**5. My career behaviors are best described as:**

Figuring out how things are done in my organization and working hard to develop "key" relationships to establish my reputation within the organization as a knowledgeable and competent high performer.

<i>The way it is now</i>					<i>The way I would like it to be</i>				
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**6. My career behaviors are best described as:**

Actively pursuing the accomplishment of my major career and life milestones and goals by accepting greater responsibilities, assignments, and challenges as I work to demonstrate my competence and overall effectiveness.

<i>The way it is now</i>					<i>The way I would like it to be</i>				
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**7. My career behaviors are best described as:**

Developing a greater work/life balance and focusing more time, energy, and attention on my personal, family and non-work interests (example: hobbies, community involvement, volunteering, etc.).

<i>The way it is now</i>					<i>The way I would like it to be</i>				
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

**8. My career behaviors are best described as:**

Clarifying my career interests and transferable skills while exploring and actively investigating alternative jobs, career options or organizational opportunities.

<i>The way it is now</i>					<i>The way I would like it to be</i>				
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>		<b>Strongly Disagree</b>			<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

## SCORING

Calculate total scores based on your answers to the questions above for each of the four **Career Stages**.

### ENTRY STAGE

<i>The way it is now</i>	<i>The way I would like it to be</i>
Question 1 + Question 5	Question 1 + Question 5
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>

### DEVELOPMENT STAGE

<i>The way it is now</i>	<i>The way I would like it to be</i>
Question 2 + Question 6	Question 2 + Question 3
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>

## BALANCE STAGE

<i>The way it is now</i>	<i>The way I would like it to be</i>
Question 3 + Question 7	Question 3 + Question 7
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>

## EXPLORATION STAGE

<i>The way it is now</i>	<i>The way I would like it to be</i>
Question 4 + Question 8	Question 4 + Question 8
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>

## UNDERSTANDING THE CAREER STAGES

**ENTRY** -- This stage is characterized as the beginning of one's career (or new career), initial placement, the early process of "learning the ropes," figuring out what is expected from others in the organization and developing basic knowledge, skills and abilities. It is this period in which the individual forms a picture of their future with the organization, formulates a career development plan and works to become recognized and valued by others within the organization. The major developmental theme associated with the *entry* career stage might be conceptualized as "self-validation" of an individual's skills, abilities, and potential.

**DEVELOPMENT** -- This stage is characterized by being accepted into the organization, being promoted and receiving increasingly more challenging assignments and responsibilities. It is in this stage that the individual clearly establishes their career plans, develops professional expertise, establishes personal and professional contacts, becomes visible and recognized by others, demonstrates organizational worth and competence and achieves major work and life goals. The major developmental theme associated with the *development* career stage might be conceptualized as "self-improvement" of an individual's skills, abilities, and potential.

**BALANCE** -- This stage is characterized by self-satisfaction with previous organizational efforts and accomplishments and a re-assessment of career and life goals. Individuals in this stage may begin to limit their acceptance of additional organizational assignments and responsibilities that might be stressful in nature. Individuals also develop a greater balance between work, family, children, recreation, leisure and hobbies at this point in their lives. Explorations and plans for traditional retirement may also occur during this stage. The major developmental theme associated with the *balance* career stage might be conceptualized as "self-fulfillment" with an individual's work/family activities, experiences and accomplishments.

**EXPLORATION** -- This stage is characterized by feelings of lack of mobility, options, choices or "fit" regarding one's position, or career advancement (upward, laterally, or downward). The *exploration* stage may be temporary or long-term and occur at any time in one's career. During this stage, individuals often experience a wide range of emotions and behaviors including, but not limited to: job burnout, emotional exhaustion, frustration, anger, cynicism, negativity, defensiveness, helplessness, low self-esteem, detachment, depressed aspirations, insensitivity, lack of motivation, non-responsibility and low organizational commitment. The major developmental theme associated with the *exploration* career stage might be conceptualized as active "self-exploration" and redefining of career options and opportunities where an individual can be successfully challenged, stimulated and continue to develop personally and professionally.

## INTERPRETATION OF THE CAREER STAGE

Which career stage (or stages) has the highest score for *The Way it Is Now*?

Which career stage (or stages) has the highest score for *The Way I Would Like it To Be*?