**SELF AWARENESS ASSESSMENT (SAA)**

We begin your self-assessment with some basic questions about who you are. Asking yourself, "Who am I?” means that we get a self-reported description of the patterns that are evident to you in your life. This is a "deductive” approach because it begins with what you "know” about yourself. What you know is the result of your conclusions about yourself thus far in life. Those conclusions may or may not be accurate based on how self-aware you are. And we must begin somewhere--especially for those who have a "theme” of "hurry up!”

Remember we will be looking for patterns (call them "habits” if you wish, we will call them "Life Themes.”) across multiple pools of data. This, the SAA, is the first pool of data we’ll ask you to generate. Note that if we did not behave in somewhat predictable patterns, we would have no identifiable characteristics or personality. Many people think little about who they are yet those around them are quite able to describe the patterns evident in their behavior. The things we say, the things we do, the way we think, our preferences, all of these are part of our individual set of habits, patterns, or themes. And, "It’s all data.” That is, even the lack of interest in self reflection might be a behavioral pattern. For the purposes of career decision making however, it’s important to know your patterned habits well so that you might better match or fit your personal interests, skills, preferences, and most importantly central tendencies or "life themes” to the varying demands offered by various jobs and careers.

To begin this process of accelerated, more rigorous self awareness, complete the exercise below. This exercise solicits your self description on some dimensions that are important in making career decisions. We want to know, rather *you* need to know, who you are so you can make better career decisions. So, our task for the moment is to find out what you know about yourself.

*This exercise should take you about 60 minutes to complete.* ***NOTE****: You can take this instrument directly into your Career Option Workbook (COW) by going to the SAA page in that Excel workbook and answering the (same) questions there. If you prefer to work on paper or in Word, proceed below.*

On the following pages, for each of various "categories" of life, we ask you to complete the sentence fragment: **"I am a person who …"**. Give as many answers as you can for each category/dimension. Each answer should be relatively concise, probably less than ten words or so and contain a single concept.

Here are a few **EXAMPLES** to stimulate your thinking:

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| **Category** | **I am a person who …** |
| **How I think:** | Likes to solve math problems. |
|  | Likes to work alone. |
|  | Enjoys puzzles. |
|  | Prefers to read the instructions first. |
|  | Hates details, likes the big picture. |
|  | Scattered, I jump around a lot. |
| **How I deal with other people:** | Enjoys persuading others |
|  | Enjoys sharing knowledge with others |
|  | Enjoys presenting in front of groups |
|  | Distrusts others until trust is proven |
|  | Dislikes talking about emotions and feelings |
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| **How I organize my life:** | Dislikes dealing with routine details (e.g., paying bills) |
|  | Likes spontaneity, rather than planning events |
|  | Shows financial paranoia (i.e., highly conservative with money) |
|  | Needs to be always busy to be happy |
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| **Things I like to do:** | Likes to play poker with friends |
|  | Needs an organized sport during all seasons |
|  | Likes keeping up to speed on current events (reading newspapers, economist, etc.) |
|  | Likes playing golf on Sundays |
|  | Needs to run (at least twice per week) |
|  | Enjoys competitive sports (playing or watching) of any kind |
|  | Enjoys researching and buying stocks |

Now that you’ve had a chance to see some examples of what we mean, please complete the Self Awareness Assessment below.

**Self Awareness Assessment Data Generation**

Take as much time as you need to fill this out comprehensively; however, typically people are able to complete this in 60 minutes or less. Remember to complete each section as if you were beginning with, "**I am a person who.....”**

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| **How I Think** |
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| **How I Deal With Other People** |
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| **How I Organize My Life** |
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| **Things I Like To Do** |
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| **Where I Prefer to Live** |
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| **Level of Activity (pace) I Prefer** |
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| **How Other People Describe Me** |
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| **Key Attributes of My Personality** |
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| **My Most Important Beliefs and Values** |
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| **Things I Won’t Give Up for Work** |
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| **My Favorite Activities** |
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| **Other Insights** |
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## That ends Part I of the SAA.

## Part II consists of rating yourself on the dimensions below. These dimensions have been indentified by career experts as common variable demands that jobs place on people. Rate yourself on each dimension by circling how much you like each one. The scale is

## 1 = Strongly Dislike 2 = Dislike 3 = Neutral 4 = Like 5 = Strongly Like

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| --- | --- |
| **JOB DIMENSIONS** | **LIKING** |
| **Responsibility:** Being held directly accountable for results. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Pace:** Fast paced highly intense work setting. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Location:** I can work anywhere in the world. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| [**Hours**](https://www.careernextstep.com/privateContent/CareerAnalysis.aspx#thumb). Working long hours including evenings and weekends. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Social Interaction:** Having constant social interactions. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Autonomy:** Being free to do what I want without constraint. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Travel:** Constant travel. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Functional expertise:** Being required to have specific functional expertise. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| [**Ambiguity**](https://www.careernextstep.com/privateContent/CareerAnalysis.aspx#thumb): Working with no structure or guidance. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Numbers Orientation:** Being highly skilled with math | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Creativity**: Being highly creative and imaginative | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Compensation:** Being paid more than 99% of people. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Customer Interaction:** Having constant customer interactions | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Status/Reputation:** Having a job that society respects highly. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Impact:** Having the ability to change things now. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Intrinsic work value:** Being able to better society. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Passion/Flow/Resonance:** Loving what I do. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Product or Service**: Being able to serve customers directly. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Growth:** Working in a high growth business. | **1 2 3 4 5** |
| **Team oriented:** Working alone. | **1 2 3 4 5** |

This completes the data-generation portion of the Self Awareness Assessment. Continue below to learn more about it.

## Feelings Record

## Before you read about the theory of the SAA below, make a few notes here about your emotional reaction to completing the data-generation above. Did you like this process or dislike it? Were you anxious? Annoyed? Engaged? Disengaged? Why?

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## Theory of the Self Awareness Assessment

This assessment tool is a "deductive” instrument in that it attempts to capture what you "know” about yourself without requiring you to generate any objective data on which to base your conclusions. Further, *we* have designated what the key categories are, they did not emerge from any data. While this deductive approach might be a good way to begin, the problem is that to the extent that we all have "blind spots" we may not see ourselves clearly and therefore be overlooking key aspects of our behavior in the workplace. We caution you here about the issue of "**benign self-deception.**” How clearly do you see yourself?

Our degree of self-awareness and it’s counterpart, self-deception or lack of self-awareness, is in part a function of deep psychological patterns developed early in life. These patterns were developed in our family lives, in a surrounding culture, and within the boundaries set by our mother language. More than one researcher (e.g. Henry Mintzberg) has declared recently that self-awareness is a key leadership skill. Knowing who you are will help you capitalize on your strengths, compensate for your soft spots, and manage your own growth and development.

**Developing Your Life Themes List, Your Personality Profile**

The answers you made to the SAA could be viewed as a "rough draft” of your personality profile, that is, a description of the characteristic patterns that define who you are. In the end, as you saw in the Self-Assessment Paper examples, your list of Life Themes will be an accurate one page description of who you are. The SAA gives us a starting point for building that profile.

If you’re in a hurry and have no taste for more data generation, you could transfer the answers you gave above into your Career Option Workbook (COW) making each answer above a separate Life Theme. Then you could use the Decision Worksheet to assess various job options that you find by assessing how well each option "fits” your list of themes.

We assert that this is a deductive, minimalist approach and very prone to blindsiding caused by superficial self-analysis. As you add data from other instruments, some of these tentative "life themes” or patterns may no longer seem so strong. Others might emerge. Still others might be reconfirmed. Based on additional data, some themes may seem minor while others become salient. Some may even be contradictory and create a tension in your life—and affect your ability to make good career decisions.

We encourage you to build from this SAA "pre-test” by choosing to take a more rigorous approach involving objective data from multiple sources. That would be an "inductive” approach that would allow you to look for patterns that recur across data sets. Our experience is that the more corroborating evidence you can find in different assessment tools, the more you can trust your conclusions.

You may find that the data from these other instruments either confirm or disconfirm your initial reflections in this exercise. We believe it is important to never give too much credence to any single instrument, because none, including this one, are comprehensive enough or accurate enough to tell the whole story.

Nevertheless, it is useful to have this baseline document to provide at least a draft form of your personal profile as you begin the self assessment process. As you add more data from different sources, you will likely find that your self awareness changes, develops and becomes more refined.

**Summary**

So, having generated the data above, do the following:

1. Make an entry in your Feelings Record on that page in your COW.
2. Transfer your data to your COW or your binder depending on your chosen data organization style.
3. Decide whether any of your answers on your SAA are likely to become real themes in your life and make Life Theme Worksheets for each one in your COW or binder. Five worksheets have already been made for you. You can copy the pages to make more.
4. Transfer your ratings of the Job Demand Dimensions (PART II above) to the bottom portion of the first page of your COW in the column marked Rating.
5. Continue on to the next self-assessment tool.