Navigating Your Career Journey

Reflective Writing Exercises



LATITUDE 38
Leadership Strategies
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Why Reflective Writing

Sometimes when we feel stuck in our careers, unsure where to go next, or perhaps concerned that we might be becoming complacent, it helps to spend some time reflecting and writing on where and how we find joy and purpose in our work and the role that works plays in our life.

Reflective writing is great for:

- When we know we want something to change, but can't quite put a finger on what or maybe how?
- When we are feeling conflicted or perhaps some tension inside our heads – maybe dueling voices!
- When we need some clarity on direction.

Why write? Writing forces us to listen to and channel inputs from both our head and heart. It allows us to hear things from inside ourselves that have been trying to get out. Writing helps us capture and articulate our vision so we can create the path towards realizing it.

What we want or need from our work and careers isn't always completely obvious. In order to chart a path forward, it is important to have some idea of the destination.

Whether you have a fully developed vision of what you want to achieve, or little clue, these exercises will be helpful in charting the course forward.

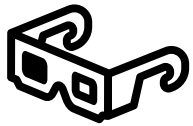
I write to find out what I am thinking, what I am looking for, what I see and what it means. What I want and what I fear. –Joan Didion

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Using these Prompts

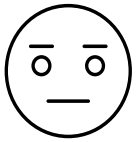
This guide includes three writing exercises each aligned with a different place you may find yourself om your career journey. Set aside some quiet time where you can think without distraction or interruption. Don't worry about being eloquent or extensive in your responses, just honest. Some questions may be easy to answer while others may take some time to explore. Share your responses with a trusted friend or coach, and revisit them regularly as they may change over time.

Imagining Possibilities



Having a vision for where you want to go professionally and personally can make decisions about opportunities and directions easier. Explore your career (or retirement!) vision.

Stuck In Neutral



Sometimes we find ourselves on cruise control, just showing up but not moving forward. These exercises will give you the nudge to get unstuck.

Telling Your Story



Get started on your personal elevator speech to capture the story of who you are and what value you offer to others.

1. Imagining Possibilities

Many of us cringe when a prospective employer asks, "Where do you see yourself in five years?" It's a tricky question to address in an interview situation, but it certainly valuable to privately consider your career dreams and aspirations. The prompts below are meant to help you identify what really matters to you when it comes to your work so that you can then evaluate possibilities and opportunities as they arise.

The place between your comfort zone and your dream is where life takes place. – Helen Keller

1. What am I doing when I am in my ideal workplace? What are my surroundings?
2. Who am I with?
3. How am I using my natural talents or gifts?
4. What does working in this way make possible for me? Why do I want that?
5. When am I in this ideal work setting, what am I telling myself?

2. Getting Unstuck

Ever find yourself thinking you've been in a certain job, role, or workplace for a while and it's getting dull or tedious? Or maybe you've doing great at work, but just sort of dialing it in and thinking maybe it's time for some change. Try these prompts to shake things up a bit.

1. What exactly about this place is off course? How?
2. I'm ready for change because…
3. What will moving upward, onward, or forward makes possible?
4. What drives or motivates my desire for change?
5. Where can I go for inspiration or encouragement?

Find yourself stuck just trying to answer these questions? Take just one prompt and go for a walk with it! Or trying drawing your response.

3. Telling Your Story

When trying to move forward or perhaps just in a different direction, it helps to be able to articulate what you have to offer. These prompts will help you begin to tell your story and develop your value proposition. These are building block questions to developing your personal brand, something I'd love to help you create.

Those who do not have power over the story that dominates their lives, the power to retell it, to rethink it, deconstruct it, joke about it, and change it as time changes truly are powerless because they cannot think new thoughts. – Salman Rushdie

1. What kind of a workday gets me out of bed in the morning?
2. What have my colleagues and bosses praised me for?
3. What accomplishments am I particularly proud of and why?
4. What do I want others to think or feel when they work with me?
5. I want to be known for….

Is Coaching for Me?

I work with individuals just getting started in their professional lives, with those moving into leadership roles, those at the height of their careers, and those winding down but still interested in staying "in the game" in some way. My clients look to me for help with topics such as:

- Career exploration and advancement
- Skills development
- Leadership challenges
- Personal branding
- Work-life balance
- Redefining retirement

In addition to coaching, I host regular reflective writing workshops to help you gain self-awareness and consider concrete actions toward your goals. Interested in learning more about coaching or writing workshops? Visit my website, schedule an appointment, or give me a call!

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