

## **A WEEKEND GUIDE TO SELF-ASSESSMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

Although the Darden School and other business schools offer a semester-long Career Management course that includes an extensive self-assessment process, many people for a variety of reasons are unable to allocate the three months needed to complete these courses. This note is intended to be an alternative, a week-end “short course” if you will, that will guide you through a mini-version of the self-assessment process used in many of these longer careers courses. The goal here is to help you develop some modestly rigorous insights into yourself that may help you make career-related decisions. Please note that this short version is not nearly so involved as the regular course work. Nevertheless, if you’re willing to devote a weekend to the process, you can assemble some insights and ideas that may save you a lot of time and uncertainty in the future. This process will yield a set of life themes that describe you, a set of implications that describe the kind of work you should be seeking, and a set of questions that you can use to guide your efforts in resume writing, interviewing and in making company visits for recruiting.

We encourage you to prepare to work through this self-assessment process by eliminating the possibilities of distraction. A good way to do this is to go away from your usual surroundings. Rent a hotel or resort room out of town for the weekend; do not take phone calls or worry about things like mowing the grass or doing homework. Concentrating your efforts in part by removing the routine clutter from your life will clear your thoughts and feelings and will improve the quality of your data.

You will need some writing equipment and a good supply of paper. Purchase some “8½ x 11” lined, punched paper and a three-ring binder in which you can keep your self-assessment and career development materials, notes, and ideas--not only for now, but also for the future. It is difficult to learn from yourself *about yourself* over time if your notes are disorganized. You will need ten or more index tabs to organize your material. Also, bring your daily appointment book, if you keep one regularly, and, if you have a resume, bring it along, too.

Once you have selected a two-day period and have readied yourself (don’t forget a good night’s sleep), work slowly through the steps that follow.

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### **Step 1: Previous Jobs**

Take a sheet of paper and write the name of the last job that you held at the top of both the front and back of the sheet of paper. Working backward in time, make a separate sheet of paper for each and every job you have held. Include part-time or summer work. Once you have completed titling on both sides, stack the pages in reverse-chronological order with the most recent job on top. Then go through the stack one at a time, writing on *the front* of the page one-line descriptions of the things you *liked* about each job.

Feel free to repeat yourself. In other words, if you liked the freedom or autonomy that you had in several jobs, write that down on each page where it applies. Just because you have written a characteristic once, do not skip writing it on other pages if those jobs also had that attractive feature.

Press yourself to think of all the things you liked about each job. Be thorough and try not to take anything for granted. Think about the rewards--monetary and non-monetary, the people you worked with, the flexibility or control over your time, the activities that were involved with that job, the people you met pursuing that job, its proximity to your home, your daily schedule, the commute, and so on.

Once you have listed all the things you liked about each job, turn the stack over and begin writing the things that you disliked about each job. Again, be as specific as you can. Feel free to name names and to note specific incidents that you did not like. Again, repeat yourself when it is appropriate: if the same thing irritated you about three different jobs, write it down on those three different pieces of paper. When you have listed the things that you did not like about each job, put this set of papers in your binder under an index entitled "Previous Jobs."

### **Step 2: People**

Take a sheet of paper and at the top of the page write "People." On the front of the page, write the things that you like about other people. Think of all the characteristics of your friends, your associates, and the people you have met who impress you or appeal to you. One way to do this is to write down a person's name, think about that person, and note all of his or her characteristics that you like. When you have completed noting the things that you like about people (did it take more than one page?), turn the page(s) over and do the same for the things that you do *not* like about people. Put these pages in your notebook under a tab marked "People."

### **Step 3: Time**

Your objective in this step is to create a time allocation chart, a record of the way you spent your time during the last ten days. If you keep an appointment book, consult it for this step. Title a sheet of paper "Time Analysis." On the left-hand side, write all the different things you did during the last ten days--sleeping, eating, personal hygiene (showering, combing your hair, dressing),

traveling and commuting, work activities, recreational activities, talking to other people, attending sports events, and so on.

If you write “work” or “school” or any other general activity, break it down into more detailed components. Under “work,” for instance, you might write “working alone at a desk,” “working on the telephone with other people,” “working in meetings,” and so forth. Under “school” you might write down “in class,” (noting what the classes were), “studying,” or “meeting in study groups.” Make this list of activities as detailed and as specific as you can. Try to look at 15-minute intervals in order to press yourself into careful descriptions of what you did. This exercise will take some time, so relax, reflect, and do not hurry through it.

If you feel that the last ten days were not typical of the way you spend your time, make a time log for the previous ten days or the ten days before that. Choose any ten days which seem representative and do the exercise to find out how you spend your time.

On the right-hand side of the page count up all the hours you spent in each activity. The total at the bottom of the page must equal 240 hours, or 24 hours times 10 days. At this point, you will have a list of activities on the left-hand side of the page and, on the right-hand side, a list of hours spent on each activity summed to 240 at the bottom.

Now calculate the percentage of your time spent in each activity. Write these percentages next to the hour figure for each activity. Finally, put these data in your notebook under “Time.”

This exercise gives you an idea of how you actually spend your time. Given that we all have the same resources (168 hours in a week, or 240 hours in ten days, and the freedom to choose what to do with it), this tabulation gives you a behavioral perspective on your values.

Frequently, we lose track of what we do and wonder where the time went, especially since we have so many things to do. A “time-spent” inventory like this will help you to see more clearly the relationship between your values, goals, and desires and what you actually do. In the final analysis, what we *do* is what we *are*. In fact, I’d argue that what you do is what you love and what you love is what you do. In our allocation of time and values, we vote with our feet.

You may not feel you had any control over your activities during the ten-day period. Not true. At some point, you *chose* to be every place you were, and those choices reflect a great deal about your values and goals.

#### **Step 4: Course work**

On the front of a sheet of paper entitled “Classes,” list the classes in school that you enjoyed most. Then note the reasons why you enjoyed them. On the back of the paper, list the classes that

you enjoyed the least and reasons why. Was it the school, the text, the subject matter, the teacher--and if so, what about them and/or him or her?--and so on. This page goes under the tab "Course work."

### **Step 5: Skills**

On another sheet of paper list the things that you believe you can do well--that is, your "Skills." What are the mental, physical, emotional, and interpersonal activities in which you feel well qualified and capable? Force yourself to write down *everything* that you can think of. Sometimes people have a difficult time identifying their own good points. To help do this step, ask yourself what others compliment you on. They may say that you are good with people, have an outgoing personality, are good at typing or at analyzing financial figures--whatever they may be, write down your list of skills on the front of the page. (Later, you will be asking people whom know you to add to the list.)

Then, on the back of the page, list the things that you are not very good at. Note the big mistakes you have made and why. Include any fears you may have that affect your behavior. One woman, for instance, was afraid of flying in airplanes and realized that this fear would rule out her taking a job in management consulting. Is it math? Is it negotiating? Is it talking with people for the first time?

### **Step 6: Dream**

Now, we'd like you to consider a fundamental question, What is your life's dream? We invite you to write this down now. On paper.

As you begin, though, we'd also like you to note that a life's dream is not a goal. A goal might be, "to win the Gold Medal." Or "to be a university president." These are often considered to be dreams, but we view them as false dreams. This kind of characterization is really just a snapshot of a dream, a milestone in the progress of a dream, a very brief slice out of a dream. Sometimes this view of a dream is uninformed; one doesn't really know what it takes to be a Gold Medalist or a university president.

The dream is contained in the daily living and activities that produce that short snapshot. If you like training, competing, pushing, and training ever harder, then *that* is the dream, to live a life in competition at the highest level. If you love going to social events, fundraising, persuading, and managing the educational process, then that is the dream, not the momentary, fleeting realization that one is in a position to do that.

One way to clarify your life's dream is to consider carefully the activities and jobs you've enjoyed the most thus far in your life. If you can identify these moments and times of "flow" or "resonance" when you felt most capable and most at harmony with your life and work, you may be

able to see what activities comprise your life's dream. In this sense, identifying your dream is more like *discovering* your dream, finding out what brings you the most satisfaction and opportunity to contribute in the world.

So, a life's dream is a set of activities, of doing things that bring one great internal satisfaction and also allow one to perform at one's highest level. Take some time now, to think about, and write down your life's dream.

If you cannot write your life's dream immediately, do not despair. For some, it may take months or even years to discover and clarify their life's dream. If you feel you don't have a dream and don't need one, consider the assertion that unless you're able to find one, you will spend your life operating at a modest level of energy and engagement and therefore, productivity. People who have a life's dream report feeling engaged in their lives and generally perform at a higher level than those who don't.

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By now it is probably time to take a break. Stop for a while and take a walk or go for a workout. But, get away from your work. This break is an intentional part of the process. Let what you have been thinking about flow out of your mind, or if while you're jogging or walking, think about what you wrote. When you return, reread the work you have done so far and make additions: Fill in the gaps, refine descriptions, write in the things you just remembered while you were out. Be as complete as you can.

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### **Step 7: Finding Life Themes**

By this time you have compiled a fairly multidimensional look at some of your major characteristics. Your task now is to use those six sets of data to generate a list of related personal characteristics or "Life Themes."

A life theme is a simple, concise description of an aspect of who you are. One way to think about writing these themes is to complete the sentence, "I am a person who..." You might say for instance, "I am a person who feels uncomfortable meeting new people in new situations." Or "I am a person who likes to have things organized." Or "I am a person who likes to take risks." Taken together, these life themes should provide an accurate, fairly comprehensive description of who you are. By the end, you should have between 12 and 30 themes.

Where do these Life Themes come from? From the data you have been generating all day. We invite you to use an inductive logic process to develop them. To compose your Life Themes, flip through the sheets you have written and try to identify the patterns that run through several of

them. Let the data speak. Try not to impose your preconceived conclusions about yourself, even though they may be accurate; rather, pull together connected pieces of evidence that have a common thread.

Try not to take a deductive approach, that is, one where you say, “well, I know I’m this way, so let me see if I can see that in the data I’ve generated.” Rather, borrowing from the old saying from the Yellow Pages advertisements (“let your fingers do the walking”), “let the data do the talking.” Read and reread your data until you see common words, phrases or meanings begin to jump out at you. As you think about and look back over the things you have written, look for the patterns that describe who you are--not who you want to be, or who you once were, but who you are *now*.

Collect common words, phrases and meanings on separate sheets of paper. Don’t worry about naming them yet, just about gathering them together.

There are a number of aspects of life that you might begin collecting data about. Figure 1 outlines a number of areas to consider as you develop your list of Life Themes. See if your data reveal any themes in each of the areas outlined in Figure 1. If some areas are not represented, you may wish to go back and think about your data and how they relate to each of these areas of life and whether or not you can form substantiated themes from your data. (Note: Feel free to include other areas or aspects of your life as you write your list of personal characteristics. You may feel that other categories (such as “aesthetic”) should be included for your survey of personal characteristics to be comprehensive.)

As you collect data for your themes, you may also notice trends which have developed over time, indicating that some of the things you value may have gradually changed. You may have done some things in the past, but note that they are declining now. Or the opposite, that things you didn’t use to do, you are doing more of now. Note these evolutionary trends.

<b>DIMENSIONS OF LIFE</b>	
Physical	Professional
Intellectual	Educational
Emotional	Financial
Spiritual	Material
Social	Recreational
Marital	Societal
Familial	Ecclesiastical
Parental	

**Figure 1**

Collecting these themes may take the rest of the day; do not try to rush the process. (Students in our semester long careers courses may take several weeks on this part of the process.) “Collecting” may not be the right word; you are “discovering” these themes from your data. You browse through the data, looking for common threads.

To recap, here’s a simple process you can use to begin. Read through your data. When ever you see repeating ideas appear, collect those ideas on a separate sheet of paper. You may have a sheet of paper, for instance, that has a column of words on it like “bored,” “repetitive and boring,” “too repetitive,” “same old, same old,” “we did the same thing over and over again.” Don’t try to name this list of words yet, just continue throughout all your data collecting connected phrases, each

list on a separate sheet of paper. This may be a repetitive process. It will require that you review your data again and again. Each time through, you may see new connections or related “themes.”

**Step 8: Labeling Your Life Theme Data**

You should have ten to twenty sheets of paper now, each with a connected, related list of words and phrases that you sifted out of your data sections. Once you have assembled these sets of related words, phrases, and meanings, each on a separate piece of paper, you can begin to name them. Your goal is to find the right “label” for that stream or thread of data.

The name or “label” you write at the top of each sheet should capture the meaning of all of the data points on that page. You may have to write and re-write the label several times before you get it “just right.” Actually, there is no perfect label. Some are more useful than others though.

Life theme labels that will be of use to you have several common characteristics. First, each one reflects a volume of data. If you have developed Life Theme from only one or two bits of data, you are probably trying to impose an interpretation that is not supported. If you have a list of ten or twenty connected words, though, you can infer that this “theme” whatever it is, is pretty strong in you. More volume means stronger theme.

Second, good labels are simple. Lengthy labels are more confusing than help ful. However, single-word labels are generally too broad to be useful. Try to compose sentence-long labels. These labels should contain one idea and be clearly descriptive of what that idea is.

<p><b>ALEXANDER HATHAWAY’S LIFE THEMES</b></p> <p>I am a person who....</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is strongly influenced by my father.</li> <li>2. Has a high need for prestige and recognition.</li> <li>3. Loves people socially, not benevolently</li> <li>4. Prefers an easygoing environment.</li> <li>5. Prefers an organized, stable environment.</li> <li>6. Dislikes academics.</li> <li>7. Is very goal oriented—shoots for the top.</li> <li>8. Loves to entertain—has a strong sense of humor.</li> <li>9. Is concerned about how others view me.</li> <li>10. Enjoys reading about and watching sports.</li> <li>11. Is future oriented-likes to think about what is coming.</li> <li>12. Needs to feel responsible for work.</li> <li>13. Feels that family is important-needs to see them often.</li> <li>14. Enjoys traveling.</li> <li>15. Likes to make overall pictures from smaller details.</li> <li>16. Needs positive feedback and support regularly.</li> <li>17. Takes the easy way out if them is high chance of failure.</li> <li>18. Enjoys dealing with superiors or elders.</li> <li>19. Has confidence in my personality.</li> <li>20. Takes a realistic approach to problems.</li> </ol>
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**Figure 2**

Effective labels will also be specific *and* varied. General labels that say the same thing in different words will constrain your ability to review a variety of job opportunities. For instance, “John is a person of integrity.” as a life theme label, may be accurate, but it is so general that it’s not very helpful. A more specific approach might be, “John is scrupulously honest and must tell the truth all the time.” or “John is willing to withhold information in order to finish a deal.” Or “John is a person who insists on keeping all his promises.”

When you’ve finished writing your labels, use the criteria we just discussed to judge the quality of your labels and then to refine them if necessary. Figures 2 and 3 show some well-written and useful Life Themes developed by former students in the careers courses I’ve taught at Harvard and at the Darden School, UVA. Note how they relate to the several areas listed in Figure 1.

**Step 9: Prioritizing Your Life Themes**

When you have labeled all your thematic data and it feels like a comprehensive list to you, that is, you are satisfied that it is a good, complete description of who you are, go through your theme sheets again and assign priorities to your themes. Write an "A" by those themes that are most important. Then write a “C” by those themes that are least important or do not cause you to feel strongly, namely, those themes upon which you could compromise. Finally, write a “B” beside the rest of your themes. Now rewrite your themes listing them in order of priority, grouping the “A’s,” “B’s,” and “C’s” together (see Figure 3).

Once you have identified and listed your Life Themes, call it a day. Get some rest. There is more to do tomorrow.

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>JEWEL SAVADELIS’S LIFE THEMES</b></p> <p>I am a person who ...</p> <p><b>Dominant Themes</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Likes to be in control.</li> <li>2. Has self-confidence.</li> <li>3. Likes dealing with people.</li> <li>4. Needs husband’s support.</li> </ol> <p><b>Major Themes</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Deals well with people.</li> <li>6. Wants to achieve significant ends and to improve self.</li> <li>7. Is creative and appreciates aesthetics.</li> <li>8. Is risk loving.</li> <li>9. Needs praise and recognition.</li> <li>10. Can get things accomplished.</li> <li>11. Needs self-respect:</li> <li>12. Likes variety.</li> <li>13. Is emotional.</li> </ol> <p><b>Intermediate Themes</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Is flexible.</li> <li>15. Has high material needs.</li> <li>16. Needs support of friends and family.</li> <li>17. Lacks stamina.</li> <li>18. Is self-reliant.</li> <li>19. Is concerned about the position of women in life.</li> <li>20. Is organized.</li> <li>21. Is intuitive.</li> </ol> <p><b>Subordinate Themes</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22. Is conventional.</li> <li>23. Is impatient.</li> <li>24. Is practical.</li> </ol> <p><small>Copyright © 1980 by the University of Virginia Darden Business School, Charlottesville, VA. From the case “Jewel Savadelis (A),” UVA-OB-190, by James G. Clawson. Reprinted by permission.</small></p>
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**Figure 3**



**Step 10: Goals**

Welcome back! Are you ready to move on? First, consider how you feel about your work from yesterday. Transfer all of your theme labels onto one sheet of paper titled “My Life Themes.” As you rewrite them, ask yourself if you are still comfortable with the way they are worded and how well they describe you. Do you wish to make any changes? If so, what data do you have to support the changes you want? Do you have evidence to support those changes? If not, be wary of making them.

When your review and revisions are done, let’s continue. Take four pieces of paper and, at the top of one page, write “One-Year Goals”; at the top of the next page write “Three-Year Goals”; at the top of the third page, write “Ten-Year Goals”; and at the top of the last page, “Thirty-Year Goals.” These pages are to contain descriptions of what you would like to have or do or be 1,3, 10, and 30 years in the future.

<b>Goals for _____ Years from Now (Today’s Date= _____)</b>			
<b>I want to</b>			
<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Have</b>	<b>Have Done</b>	<b>Be</b>
Physical			
Intellectual			
Spiritual/philosophical			
Emotional			
Marital			
Familial			
Social			
Recreational			
Professional			
Financial			
Material			
Educational			
Ecclesiastical			

**Figure 4**

In the left-hand margin of each of these pages, write the words that are on the list in Figure 1. You may not have a lot of certainty or clarity about what you want to do, have, or be in 10 or 30 years, but try to think about the future in a systematic way. Across the top of each page, write “Have,” “Have Done,” and “Be.” The pages will now look like the one in Figure 4.

Write down the things you would like to have (own), have done, or be in each of those areas in 1, 3, 10, and 30 years. Be as specific as you can. Do not worry that these goals may change, as

they certainly will. You are only trying to establish a tentative, forward-looking plan for guiding your activities. When you are done, put these papers in your notebook under “Goals.”

### **Step 11: Implications**

By now, you have a rank-ordered list of personal characteristics (Life Themes), a life’s dream, and a list of goals at various points in the future. Your job now is to develop from these three things a set of “Implications” for the kind of work you should be seeking. This list must be directly and closely tied to your list of personal themes and personal goals, and unless, it takes into account your life’s dream, it won’t be a high energy course for you.

As you build your list of implications, include reference to particular themes or bits of data from the earlier data-generating exercises. This practice will force you to make sure that your Implications are closely tied to data or themes that you have written before. If you cannot identify a specific theme or a goal that relates directly to the Implication that you are writing, leave it out. An unrelated implication is an illogical jump and means that you are responding to the expectations of other people, or of society, or of your own ideal view of “success” rather than to your own current characteristics and goals. Figure 5 outlines some areas for building implications that may stimulate your thinking.

Implications can be worded most productively if you write them so that they will complete the sentence, “I should be seeking work that \_\_\_\_\_.” For example, if Number 7 in your Life Theme list was, “I like to work alone,” one implication of that theme would be, “I should be seeking work that will not require that I work constantly with a lot of other people”. After writing that Implication, you could write “(T7: works alone)” to remind you of its connection to your themes. There may be other themes that would give the same indication, and you could include them in your reference as well. This referencing, again, is important because it presses you to connect your Implications to your data. Figure 5 presents some well-written Implications. Your life themes and their implications taken together, now form your first draft of a relatively rigorous self assessment.

You are probably a little drained from all of this reflection and writing. If you have followed the outline, you have been using inductive logic to build from specific data a list of general Life Themes and Implications. This kind of inductive thinking is hard work. Many find it easier to start with a premise or hypothesis and then try to fit the data to that premise. This deductive approach begins with a model and tries to fit the world into that model. If I believe I am shy, I may begin finding ways to prove that this is so. In reality, I may find that I am quite at home in groups of new people, that I enjoy meeting people, and that this label in fact, is not supported by my data. The inductive process of looking at the data and building conclusions from them, is much more taxing. So, you may be a bit worn out by now. Even if you’re not, we recommend a break.

**JEWEL SAVADELIS'S IMPLICATIONS**

**Company Style**

1. Company should be renegade in its thinking. (T8, T21, T14, T7, T11, T22)
2. Company should permit employees time to devote to outside activities and not be workaholic. (T4, T16, T1, T17)
3. Company should encourage personal growth and advancement. (T13, T12, T6, T9)
4. Company should provide open access to all levels of executives. (T13, T12, T6, T5)
5. Corporate executives should be fair and ethical leaders. (T11, T19)
6. Company should value its employees. (T15, T1, T18)
7. Company should provide pleasant physical surroundings. (T15, T1, T6, T8)
8. Company should operate for profit and manufacture a tangible product or service. (T24)

**Lifestyle**

9. Lifestyle should permit time for self: for philosophizing, for intellectual growth, for professional growth, and for physical maintenance. (T11, T2, T6, T3, T12)
10. Lifestyle should include time for spouse and family. (T4, T16)
11. Lifestyle should include time for social and recreational activities. (T7, T16, T8, T20)
12. Lifestyle should include time for societal needs. (T19)
13. Life should take place in an attractive location. (T12, T14, T7, T19, T8, T4)

**Relationships with People at Work**

14. People with whom I work should be diverse with at least a few sharing my values and traits. (T12, T5)
15. My boss should be nonauthoritarian. (T1, T6, T11, T9)
16. Although I am able to deal with many diverse people (T5, T12), I may be lonely without a few peers with whom I can share experiences. They should be nonrigid (T14), bright (T13), and unconventional (T12, T22) and have integrity (T11)
17. People with whom I work should create an open, informal atmosphere with easygoing relationships. (T2, T5, T11)
18. I expect to be treated with respect, honesty, and encouragement. (T2, T5, T11)
19. I prefer to organize and lead groups in which authority is ambiguous. (T5, T20, T9)
20. I prefer to motivate people by challenging them and dealing with them fairly. (T6, T5, T14)
21. I demand that each team member pull his or her share. (T18, T23)
22. I will work to achieve organizational goals. (T20, T24, T8, T22)

**Job Characteristics**

23. Tasks should contain little structure and require low supervision. (T1, T7, T14, T12, T8)
24. Job should consist of a variety of tasks. (T12, T10, T13)
25. Task should contain minimal financial or technical component. (T20, T2)
26. Task should be of central importance to the organization. (T2, T19)
27. Task should consist of large amounts of new learning and use of MBA skills and provide people-intensive opportunities. (T6, T5)
28. Task should permit high degree of creativity. (T7, T21)
29. Task should have a measurable outcome. (T2, T10, T25)
30. Task should be ambiguous, but lend itself to being organized. (T20)

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Go home. Let the papers sit for a while, a week maybe, and then go on to Step 12.

### **Step 12: Life Themes According to Friends**

Take your list of Life Themes and show it to people who you feel know you well--your spouse, close friends, other family members, roommates, people who have seen you in a variety of settings. Ask them to read the list and make notes or comments about what they see. Ask them to make additions where they think you have left something out.

Be very careful not to try to convince people about the validity of the items on your list or to persuade them to change their suggestions about adding to it or subtracting from it. You may not agree with what they say, but for the sake of getting their honest opinion, try not to be defensive. Do not argue against whatever suggestions they may make. Once you have written down the suggestions and ideas from three or four people, sit down again with your list of themes and make the changes that you feel are appropriate or accurate. Then make any changes in your implications suggested by the Life Theme revisions. Once your list of Implications is complete, put it in your notebook.

Your list of implications provides criteria for considering job opportunities and for making job-related decisions. The list will help you to be more focused, more effective, and more efficient in your job search activities.

### **Step 13: Criteria Checklist**

At this point you can develop a "Criteria Checklist" from your lists of Life Themes and Implications. The checklist is a one-page sheet with phrases that remind you of the criteria you have developed in your self-assessment exercise. This checklist forms a basis for a list of questions *you* need to have answered in an interview or job search recruiting trip in order to get the information *you* need to see if that opportunity fits your Self Assessment and matches your Implications for the kind of work you should be seeking. Figure 6 gives an example of what a criteria checklist looks like.

### **Step 14: Using Your Self Assessment**

Keep this checklist beside your telephone or in your appointment book. The criteria are a screen for deciding whether or not you want to spend the considerable time and effort it takes to follow up on a job opportunity. You may get telephone calls saying, "Come to Houston [or Denver or Seattle]. We want you to consider working for us." Before you decide to go to the expense in money, time, and energy to research the company and to make the trip, you can ask some specific questions, drawn directly from your list of Implications, about the characteristics of the job. You

might ask about involvement with people, autonomy in the job, travel, or whatever it is that you have on your checklist. The key is that your self assessment now helps you avoid the common recruiting pitfall of searching under every rock and listening to all opportunities, and *focus* your job search efforts to finding the match between your self assessment template and the characteristics of the job and its surrounding environment.

**JEWELSAVADELIS'S CRITERIA CHECKLIST**

**From Life Themes**

- 1. Gives opportunity to control.
- 2. Gives opportunity to deal with people,
- 3. Involves significant ends.
- 4. Gives opportunity to improve self.
- 5. Allows creativity.
- 6. Includes some risk.
- 7. Company is good at giving praise and recognition.
- 8. Company allows new people to be effective.
- 9. Company respects new people.
- 10. Has flexible schedule.
- 11. Offers good compensation.
- 12. Is near friends and family
- 13. Has no marathon projects.
- 14. Treats genders equally.
- 15. Permits organization.
- 16. Requires intuitive thinking.
- 17. Is not conventional.
- 18. Company moves quickly.
- 19. Company has a practical orientation.

**From Implications**

- 20. Is a renegade company.
- 21. Allows time for outside activities.
- 22. Company encourages personal growth.
- 23. Offers open access to all levels.
- 24. Are fair and ethical leaders.
- 25. Company values employees.
- 26. Provides pleasant surroundings.
- 27. Manufactures for-profit tangible product.
- 28. Permits time for self.
- 29. Permits time for family.
- 30. Permits time for social activities.
- 31. Has attractive location.
- 32. Colleagues are diverse.
- 33. Boss is nonauthoritarian.
- 34. Peers are nonrigid, bright, unconventional.
- 35. Has open, infomal atmosphere.
- 36. Employees treated with respect, honesty, and encouragement.
- 37. Includes ambiguous authority structure.
- 38. Provides leadership opportunities.
- 39. Team members are willing to carry their share.
- 40. Has little structure and low supervision.
- 41. Offers a variety of tasks.
- 42. Has minimal financial and technical components.
- 43. Has central importance to company.
- 44. Requires new learning, use MBA skills.
- 45. Provides measurable outcome.
- 46. Offers ambiguous but organizable task.

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Whenever you go on a job search, keep the checklist handy. When you prepare for an interview, in addition to studying about the company and its industry, review your self assessment and refresh in your mind what your particular template is.

Remember, it is not just the companies who are doing the screening; you also are screening them. A productive job decision is one that matches individual characteristics with organizational needs. If either side in that contract makes an inappropriate decision, the outcome is likely to be unhappy for both sides. So, it is as much your responsibility as it is the company's to gather the kind of information necessary to make a good match.

Recruiters vary in their interviewing skills. Some are not able to ask the right questions or to volunteer appropriate data on the job or company. Since you share with the recruiters the responsibility for a good decision, you have to manage not only giving information but also collecting information. Your checklist of implications will help you to do that by reminding you of the kinds of data that you need to collect--data related directly to your life themes. Do not show the checklist to recruiters or tell them that you have gone through this exercise; rather, just use the self-knowledge to ask the right questions so that you can get the information you need.

## **Conclusion**

The process we have outlined here involves a relatively quick and multifaceted self assessment that will help you to develop a focus for your job search activities, for your recruiting activities, and for your career decision making. It does not necessarily give you a 100 percent accurate outline of the characteristics that you should be considering, but if you have been careful as you have gone along and have pressed yourself to be honest, it will be more accurate than not.

The approach we have taken is intended to prompt you to look at a variety of dimensions about yourself, in the belief that no single aspect can give you all the information you need to make a career decision. By looking at a variety of dimensions, you can begin to develop themes, patterns, or trends that are more likely to be an accurate description of who you are and who you are becoming than would a simple analysis of, say, your economic goals alone.

If this process has led you to feel the need to explore some areas more carefully or to use some professional help in developing some further information about yourself, seek other sources and spend some additional time on your self-assessment activities. You may, for instance, want to buy the book, *Self-Assessment and Career Development*, which offers a much more extended program of activities for self assessment than has been possible in this note.

Or you may wish to contact a career counselor--there are many counselors in private practice and many associated with universities or other institutions. Before you make a commitment to any of these counselors, however, do some homework to ascertain their reputations and the results of their work (by asking them what their services are, and what the credentials and training of their counselors are, and by talking to people who have used them before), so that you can assess the accuracy and the validity of the advice that they may give you.

Remember, there is no crystal ball; there are no magic answers. Developing a set of self-assessment data that will be a benefit to you is a matter of repeated reflection, hard work, inductive skill, honesty, and careful interpretation.