



## WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER MOTIVATORS?

A resource from the Co-op and Career journey kit  
Need help? Visit [www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer](http://www.uvic.ca/coopandcareer).

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Your career motivators are what energize and motivate you when you think about what you want to accomplish or work towards in your career. They are concrete descriptions of how you want to engage in your work. They are not job titles and they are not general words or phrases like “fulfillment, financial security, happiness, work/life balance” etc. Understanding what motivates you can help you find a career direction.

There are three types of career motivators:

1. **Core career motivators:** Core career motivators are what you want to spend your time doing. These include competencies (skills, knowledge and attributes) that you want to develop, specific things you want to create, or passions and causes that you want to pursue.
2. **Work environment motivators:** Work environment motivators are things that are important for you in your workplace. These include aspects of the physical environment, the work culture, the way work is structured (e.g. hours, schedule, etc.), and how you like to work with others (e.g. as a leader, support person, expert advisor, etc.).
3. **Lifestyle motivators:** Lifestyle motivators are what your career allows you to do in other areas of your life. This could include money, time, travel, relationships, and other parts that make up your work/life balance.

All three types are important, but your core motivators will be most helpful in pointing in a career direction. It can take time to uncover your own motivators, and it can be tricky to separate what you really want from what you feel you “should” want. It’s a good idea to revisit them from time to time.

### Sample motivators

- I want to manage information about people (not technical or financial) in a social service or educational setting (core motivator)
- I want to design and manage service-oriented systems, processes and procedures to make systems run more efficiently and help people (core motivator)
- I want to be recognized for making others’ lives easier (core motivator)
- I like being in a structured work environment where I have to respond to things that happen unexpectedly (work environment motivator)
- I want to balance the time and energy I use while earning my living with the time and energy I devote to my passion for competitive marathon running (lifestyle motivator)



## EXERCISE 1: IDENTIFY YOUR CAREER MOTIVATORS

Follow these steps to make a list of four to six personal career motivators:

1. Step 1: Complete the **Career Motivator Worksheet** on page 3.
2. Brainstorm a list of possible career options that includes different type of work and educational opportunities. Review your list and think about why you have chosen your options. Do they connect with the motivators you included on the Career Motivator Worksheet? Add any new insights to the worksheet.
3. Brainstorm a list of “de-motivators” that describe what you don’t want in your career. Reflect on your past work and educational experience. Review your list and think about the opposite of each de-motivator. Do these opposites connect with the motivators you included on the worksheet?
4. Review all the statements on your worksheet and identify patterns and themes. Write a set of four to six statements that summarize your key career motivators, and make sure that at least three or four of your statements describe your core motivators. Include enough detail to be meaningful.

Don’t worry if some of your motivators conflict with one another, or if they’re not realistic right now—it’s all part of the journey.



## CAREER MOTIVATOR WORKSHEET

### What are your interests?

Rank the following interests in order of their importance to you.

- Working with things, numbers and objects \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact with people \_\_\_\_\_
- Working with machines \_\_\_\_\_
- Working with animals or plants \_\_\_\_\_
- Working to improve social conditions \_\_\_\_\_
- Detailed, organized, routine work \_\_\_\_\_
- Studying people or communicating ideas \_\_\_\_\_
- Scientific or technical work \_\_\_\_\_
- Directing or organizing \_\_\_\_\_
- Abstract and creative work \_\_\_\_\_
- Working on or producing things \_\_\_\_\_

Now use your rankings to answer these questions:

1. What interests and activities energize you?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What are the skills that you really enjoy using?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What kinds of activities engage you so completely that you get wrapped up in them and lose track of time?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What kinds of subject or knowledge areas are you drawn to?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What are the first 2 or 3 sections that you head for when you go to the bookstore?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### What are your passions or causes?

1. What causes do you get excited about?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Where is the “juice” or “spark” when you think about your career?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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3. If you were independently wealthy, had done everything you wanted to do in terms of travel/leisure and had the total support, understanding and acceptance of your family and friends, what would you choose to do with your time?

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4. What would you do if you knew (and were 100% guaranteed) that you would not fail?

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**What type of work environment do you want?**

Rank the following work environments in order of their importance to you.

- Setting your own schedule \_\_\_\_\_
- Influencing people's opinions, attitudes or actions \_\_\_\_\_
- Variety with many changing duties \_\_\_\_\_
- Working under stressful situations \_\_\_\_\_
- Making decisions based on personal judgment \_\_\_\_\_
- Knowing exactly what is expected of me \_\_\_\_\_
- Taking responsibility- being in control \_\_\_\_\_
- Work requiring precision \_\_\_\_\_
- Freely expressing ideas and emotions \_\_\_\_\_
- Making decisions based on facts \_\_\_\_\_
- Working closely with people \_\_\_\_\_
- Working alone \_\_\_\_\_

Now use your rankings to answer these questions:

1. How do you see yourself working with others (e.g. leader, support person, expert advisor, etc.)?

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2. What type of people would you work well with, and how would you work with them?

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3. What places and environments make you feel engaged and energized?

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4. What type of organization would you like to be part of?

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**What type of lifestyle do you want?**

1. What does your career need to provide you with in terms of money and time commitment so that it will fit with and support the other important aspects of your life?

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2. What kind of income do you have to have in order to support the kind of life that you want to build?

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3. How much time are you willing to devote to your career so that it balances with the rest of your life?

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