

Boston College Center for Work & Family

[Fox 25 Work-Life Wednesday](#)

Reinvigorate Your Career for 2012

In spite of the recent minor improvements in the nation's unemployment numbers, the last few years have been extremely trying for many individuals' careers. Whether you are stuck in a dead-end job, laid off and searching for work, or simply unsure where you want your career to go, the New Year is always an important time to take stock and assess your current career situation and develop some new, more effective strategies. Prof. Brad Harrington, Executive Director of the Center and author of [Career Management and Work-Life Integration](#) shared his thoughts on the changing nature of careers and the changing responses required from all of us.

Effectively addressing any of these issues begins with a high degree of self-awareness and a commitment to proactively managing your career. There's no time like the present to commit to clarifying your priorities in both your personal and professional life, and acting on those in order to create a better outcome for your career in 2012. The exercises listed on the website offer an opportunity to self-reflect in a structured manner and to help determine how to proceed in developing a meaningful career.

The [Peak Experience Exercise](#)

In this activity you are asked to reflect on 5-10 "peak experiences" in your life (both personal and professional) that you would list as highlights. For each, describe the activity in detail in the left-hand column. In the column on the right, explain why it felt like a peak experience. These experiences need not be times when you won an award in a sport or received an "A" for a school project (although these certainly may be peak moments). You should also describe times when you felt particularly happy, successful, at peace, or simply when you felt the most like your true self. Take some time to reflect on these and identify any themes or pattern that may surface in reviewing these experiences. Such patterns will say a great deal about you recurring interests and passions.

The [Ten-Years-out Exercise](#)

The 10-Years-Out exercise is intended to give you greater insight into what you hope you're your work and your career is leading you to. It is perfectly appropriate to be happy and content with your current state (that is our ultimate aim). At some point in your career and life, however, you will probably find yourself dreaming of something more, or at least something different, from your current situation. Knowing your aspirations and writing down your description of an ideal future state will help you gain a better sense of what is important to you and why and will also increase your energy toward achieving the your personal vision.

The [Career and Life Orientation Index](#)

This activity will help you determine your desire to have flexibility and control in your career or work life; i.e. how "[Protean](#)" you are. Do you tend to be driven mainly by your own personal interests and values (a more protean orientation) or are you more likely to follow your employers prescribed path to the success (a more traditional, organizational view of careers)? The Career Orientation Index will also provide you with a rating on six different facets of your career and life: self-direction, organizational orientation, value expression, whole life balance focus, family focus, and community involvement, so that you can determine the key drivers in your career.

By taking the time to complete these exercises and reflect upon their messages and meaning, you should be able to create a clearer picture of the career you hope to develop. You will be in a better position to not only articulate what you want to achieve, but also what you can offer to any potential employers. Good luck!