



**CHARTING THE PATH:
GUIDING LAW STUDENTS
AND LAWYERS THROUGH
SELF-ASSESSMENT**

NALP Annual Education Conference
April 26, 2023, 3:00-4:00pm

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Speakers



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Agenda

- Using assessments to guide students and lawyers to insights
 - All stages: Career planning, career development and job transition
 - Favorite tools and approaches
- Illustration using case study
- Discussion

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What are we assessing?

- Strengths
- Values
- Interests
- Needs
- Preferences

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Assessment Tool Snapshot

Tool	Cost	Strengths	Interests	Values	Needs	Wishes	Decision-Making
24 Lawyer Effectiveness Factors	Free	✓	✓				
Actionable Values Exercise	Free			✓			
Associate Frameworks	Free	✓			✓		
CliftonStrengths Assessment	\$19.99-\$9.99	✓					
The Creative Lawyer	\$30.00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Decision-making Tools: (1) A Scorecard to Help You Compare 2 Jobs (2) Career Choice Worksheet	Free						✓
Designing Your Life	\$20.00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Designing Your Work Life	\$15.99	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Legal Career Exploration Questionnaire	Free	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self-Assessment Toolkit	Free	✓	✓	✓			
Retirement By Design	\$19.95	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Via Survey of Character Strengths	Free	✓		✓			

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Self-Assessment for Law Students

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Foundation of Self-Assessment

Strengths

Interests

Values

Your Career Sweet Spot

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Interests

- Initial thoughts? (Hypothesis)
 - Why did you come to law school?
 - What are you involved in?
- Where can you learn more? (Refining the Hypothesis)
 - Research
 - Informational interviews; lunchtime presentations; bar and legal community events

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Strengths

- Tools (VIA Core Strengths Survey, Strengthsfinder, DiSC, etc.)
- Me at My Best/Peak Experience Stories
- Ask others!

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Values

accomplishment	adventure	advocacy	ambition	appreciation
autonomy	balance	beauty	challenge	children
communication	community	compassion	competition	contribution
control	diligence	diversity	education	ethics
excellence	excitement	expertise	fare	family
financial stability	freedom	friendship	fun	health
honesty	humor	idealism	influence	leadership
legacy	legal achievement	mastery	mentoring	money
nature	order	originality	people	philanthropy
physical fitness	practicality	productivity	professionalism	rationality
recognition	relationships	religion	respect	risk
service	social change	solitude	spirituality	stability
teamwork	travel	variety	wealth	work

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Putting It All Together

- Run Experiments (Testing the Hypothesis)
 - Internships
 - Externships and classes
 - Pro bono and volunteer work
 - Student organization and bar association involvement
 - Other

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Debrief and Reassess

- Self-assessment is an iterative process!
- A coach can help clients make sense of the information they have collected and plan next steps to keep the action moving forward
- Circle back to the practical: what are preferences and needs?
- Don't forget the psychological: addressing negative self-talk and limiting beliefs

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Debrief and Reassess

- Self-assessment is an iterative process!
- A coach can help the client make sense of the information they have collected to plan next steps and keep the action moving forward
- Circle back to the practical: what are preferences and needs?
- Don't forget the psychological - addressing negative self-talk and limiting beliefs

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Self-Assessment for Attorneys in Legal Practice

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Self-Assessment Can Be Helpful In

- Identifying strengths
- Identifying goals
- Preparing for feedback conversations
- Making the most of the feedback you have received

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Associate Development Framework – Written Communication*

<p>Junior Associate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces clear, concise, well-organized, typo-free written work • Drafts Effectively 	<p>Mid-Level Associate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written work is thorough, well-structured and persuasive • Drafts, revises, and conforms increasingly complex documents • Edits and effectively incorporates work of other attorneys and/or clients 	<p>Senior Associates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written work is thorough, well-structured, persuasive and client or court-ready • Takes lead in written and work product and communications • Writes with appropriate and sophisticated tone and nuance
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*Excerpt from Goodwin Associate Development Frameworks NALP 2023 Annual Education Conference

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Associate Development Framework - Oral Communication*

<p>Junior Associate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses ideas clearly and concisely • Modifies presentation style for audience • Listens well 	<p>Mid-Level Associate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conveys legal and business concepts in audience-appropriate manner in meetings, negotiations, and group settings 	<p>Senior Associate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads discussions, meetings, and negotiations • Demonstrates effective public speaking and presentation skills • Speaks directly and independently with clients and attorneys outside the firm • Negotiates complex issues with appropriate supervision
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*Excerpt from Goodwin Associate Development Frameworks NALP 2023 Annual Education Conference

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Career Questionnaire (written communication) *

1. Have you had the opportunity to draft principal deal documents, pleadings, or briefs?
 Yes Sometimes No

1. Does your substantive written work require minimal or no revision by partners?
 Yes Sometimes No

1. Have you been given the lead in communicating in writing with clients and attorneys outside of the firm on substantive issues?
 Yes Sometimes No

*Excerpt from Goodwin Career Questionnaire NALP 2023 Annual Education Conference

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Career Questionnaire

Based on your answers above, please select your overall assessment of your legal excellence:

- Area of Strength
- Work in Progress, but on the Right Track
- Area for Improvement

Goal(s) for next year:

*Excerpt from Goodwin Career Questionnaire NALP 2023 Annual Education Conference

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Career Questionnaire (oral communication)

6. Do you independently engage in discussions/negotiations with opposing counsel on substantive legal or business issues?
 Yes Sometimes No
7. Are you comfortable speaking in adversarial or contentious situations?
 Yes Sometimes No
8. Are you capable of effectively "thinking on your feet?"
 Yes Sometimes No
9. Do you feel that you have developed an effective style of communication based on your own personality traits and experience?
 Yes Sometimes No

Goal(s) for next year:

*Excerpt from Goodwin Career Questionnaire NALP 2023 Annual Education Conference

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Career Questionnaire

Based on your answers above, please select your overall assessment of your legal excellence:

- Area of Strength
- Work in Progress, but on the Right Track
- Area for Improvement

Goal(s) for next year:

*Excerpt from Goodwin Career Questionnaire NALP 2023 Annual Education Conference

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Associate Professional Development Report*

- Based on your current level of seniority, please provide two to three examples of how you have expanded your skills in legal excellence, management and collaboration as outlined in the Development Frameworks.
- Please describe one or two examples of professional success that you experienced in FY 2023.
- If applicable, please describe any support you provided to pitch new or expand existing client relationships over the past year.
- Please describe your efforts to create or sustain an inclusive work environment during this review period.

*Excerpt from Goodwin PDR NALP 2023 Annual Education Conference

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Self-Assessment for Lawyers in Transition

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Legal Career Exploration Questionnaire (Excerpt)

Activities:

- Which activities seem to boost your energy level? Which activities seem to drain your energy level?
- Which activities engage you or capture your attention? Are there activities where you are so "in the flow" that you don't notice anything else?
- Which activities seem impossible to initiate or sustain?
- What do you receive the most compliments about?

Excerpt from Legal Career Exploration Questionnaire © Susanne Aronowitz LLC NALP 2023 Annual Education Conference

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Legal Career Exploration Questionnaire (Continued)

Structure:

- Do you prefer an organization with structured policies and procedures, or a loose, informal environment?
- Do you prefer to be a member of a team, or to work on your own? Do you enjoy leading teams?

Recognition:

- How do you like to be recognized for your contributions?
- Do you prefer to have a role in the spotlight or in the background?
- Is your job title important?

Excerpt from Legal Career Exploration Questionnaire
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Legal Career Exploration Summary (Excerpt)

	Important to Include	Important to Avoid	Questions and Gaps to Explore
Activities			
Structure			
Recognition			

Excerpt from Legal Career Exploration Summary
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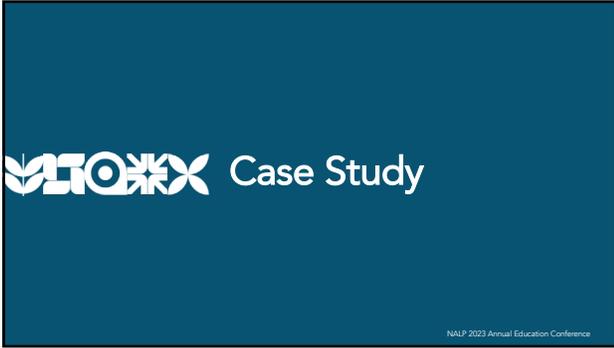
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Career Choice Worksheet

Area	Satisfaction Criteria	Importance to you (1=low, 5=high)	Feature of job Option (1=low, 5=high)	Overall Score (Multiply importance by preference)
Work/Job itself	Job responsibilities			
	Learning/growth opportunities			
	Potential for promotion			
	Future career potential			
	Authority to make decisions			
	Leadership/supervision			
	Variety			
	Autonomy			
	Challenge			
	Self-expression/creativity			
Work/Environment	Physical environment			
	Salary			
	Benefits			
	Flexibility			
	Stability/economic security			
Work relationships				

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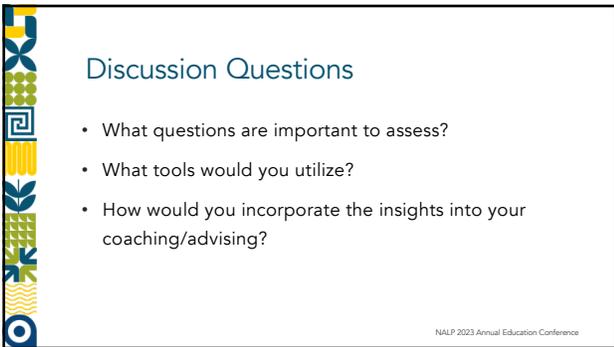
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Case Study

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Discussion Questions

- What questions are important to assess?
- What tools would you utilize?
- How would you incorporate the insights into your coaching/advising?

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Sam: Law Student

Sam has been working as a biochemist for a pharmaceutical company for the past 3 years. Although they liked aspects of their work, Sam also found it frustrating and stressful at times. After speaking with their company's patent lawyer, Sam decided to go to law school and has just finished their first semester. Sam knows they need to start their summer job search, but they're feeling uncertain about which direction to take. BigLaw is tempting because of the pay, but they think the environment might be more intense than they want. Also, to Sam's surprise, they found their criminal law class fascinating and are wondering if they should pivot to DA work. They're not sure what to do.

- What questions are important to assess?
- What tools would you utilize?
- How would you incorporate the insights into your coaching/advising?

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Sam: Associate Attorney

Sam decided on the Biglaw route, and is now a mid-level patent associate. As Sam has moved up in seniority, they are being asked to run meetings and communicate directly with clients. Sam has received feedback about needing to be more confident in these settings. The truth is that Sam doesn't really enjoy this aspect of the job - they prefer focusing on the substantive work. Sam comes to you for guidance on what to do with this feedback, and how to respond if it's brought up again in their upcoming review next week.

- What questions are important to assess?
- What tools would you utilize?
- How would you incorporate the insights into your coaching/advising?

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Sam: Mid-Career Transition

Let's fast forward a few years. Sam is now a senior associate at the firm and will be up for partnership soon. While the idea of being promoted is exciting, they are introverted and concerned about having business development and supervisory responsibilities. A recruiter recently contacted Sam about an in-house opportunity at a tech company. It would involve a pay cut, but the idea of not worrying about billable hours and business development sounds appealing. Sam asks you whether they should pursue partnership or shift to the in-house role.

- What questions are important to assess?
- What tools would you utilize?
- How would you incorporate the insights into your coaching/advising?

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Questions

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Thank you!

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Charting the Path: Guiding Law Students and Lawyers Through Self-Assessment

NALP Annual Education Conference | April 26, 2023 | 3:00-4:00 pm

Susanne Aronowitz, Tammy Dawson & Elaine Ventola

Resource List

A. Attached Resources (available via PDF attachment)

Actionable Values Exercise

- Exercise to help client identify their top values at work and to design "actionable" statements to guide career choices.

Career Choice Worksheet

- Matrix to identify priorities and compare options.
- Helpful to use in conjunction with "A Scorecard to Help You Compare 2 Jobs."

Legal Career Exploration Questionnaire

- Two-part questionnaire to help attorneys and students reflect on different elements of work to identify priorities.

Self-Assessment Toolkit

- Descriptions of how identifying strengths/interests/values can aid in career planning along with suggested exercises to aid in the self-assessment process. Designed for students, but relevant for users at other career stages "as is" or with minor adaptations.

B. **Linked Resources (available via hyperlinks in item titles)**

26 Lawyer Effectiveness Factors

- List of factors identified by scholars Marjorie M. Schultz and Sheldon Zedeck that reflect the qualities that make attorneys effective in practice.

CliftonStrengths Assessment

- Formerly known as Strengthsfinder.
- Creates customized report identifying strengths profile based on the 34 CliftonStrengths Themes.
- Accessible via the StrengthsFinder 2.0 book or the Gallup website.

The Creative Lawyer: A Practical Guide to Authentic Professional Satisfaction

- By Michael F. Melcher
- Book containing practical exercises guiding lawyers through the process of self-assessment for purposes of designing satisfying professional and personal lives.

Designing Your Life

- By Bill Burnett & Dave Evans
- Book offering a design-thinking approach to building a meaningful, joyful life.

Designing Your Work Life

- By Bill Burnett & Dave Evans
- Book offering a design-thinking approach to thriving at work.

Retirement By Design

- By Ida O. Abbott
- Book offering design-thinking exercises to explore retirement/post-law practice career options.

A Scorecard to Help You Compare 2 Jobs

- Harvard Business Review article describing the benefits of using a decision-making matrix.
- Helpful to use in conjunction with the “Career Choice Worksheet.”

C. Assessment Tool Snapshot

Tool	Cost	Strengths	Interests	Values	Needs	Wishes	Decision-Making
26 Lawyer Effectiveness Factors	Free	✓	✓				
Actionable Values Exercise	Free			✓			
Associate Frameworks	Free	✓			✓		
CliftonStrengths Assessment (Formerly Strengthsfinder)	\$19.99 - 59.99	✓					
The Creative Lawyer: A Practical Guide to Authentic Professional Satisfaction	\$30.00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Decision Making Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Scorecard to Help You Compare 2 Jobs • Career Choice Worksheet 	Free						✓
Designing Your Life	\$20.00	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Designing Your Work Life	\$15.99	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Legal Career Exploration Questionnaire (Parts 1 and 2)	Free	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self-Assessment Toolkit	Free	✓	✓	✓			
Retirement By Design	\$19.95	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
VIA Survey of Character Strengths	Free	✓		✓			

My Top Values at Work

Step 1: Select your top 5 values/value clusters. I've provided a list below for inspiration, but you are not limited to this list.

Step 2: For each value, create an actionable statement that describes that value; include a verb and as much specificity as possible. For each statement, ask yourself, "Will this guide me when I make decisions about important professional choices or set priorities at work?" If not, be more specific!

	Value	Actionable Value Statement "To [verb] so that [reason/impact]" "To [verb] to [reason/impact]"
Example	Empowerment	To empower my clients to recognize their strengths and values so that they will direct their careers in ways that bring them greater success and joy.
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Exercise inspired by Jonathan Fields, Good Life Project.

Sample Values List

Humor	Participation	Directness	Performance
Partnership	Collaboration	Productivity	Community
Service	Personal Power	Contribution	Freedom to Choose
Excellence	Connectedness	Free Spirit	Acknowledgment
Focus	Comradeship	Romance	Lightness
Recognition	Spirituality	Harmony	Empowerment
Accomplishment	Full Self-Expression	Orderliness	Integrity
Forward the Action	Creativity	Honesty	Independence
Success	Nurturing	Accuracy	Joy
Adventure	Beauty	Lack of Pretense	Authenticity
Zest	Risk Taking	Tradition	Peace
To Be Known	Elegance	Growth	Vitality
Aesthetics	Trust		

Sample values list courtesy of *Co-Active Coaching* (3rd ed.) © 2011 by Henry Kimsey-House, Karen Kimsey-House and Phillip Sandahl.



Career Choice Worksheet for...

- For information about Making the Right Career Choice, visit www.mindtools.com/rs/CareerChoice.

Area	Satisfaction Criteria	Importance to you (1 = low, 5 = high)	Feature of job Option (1 = low, 5 = high)	Overall Score (multiply previous two columns)
The Work Itself	Job responsibilities			
	Learning/growth opportunities			
	Potential for promotion			
	Future career potential			
	Authority to make decisions			
	Leadership/supervision			
	Variety			
	Autonomy			
	Challenge			
	Self-expression/creativity			
	Physical environment			
Financial Issues	Salary			
	Benefits			
	Incentives			
	Stability/economic security			
Culture	Work relationships			
	People/culture/style			
	Recognition			
	Prestige/title			



Area	Satisfaction Criteria	Importance to you (1 = low, 5 = high)	Feature of job Option (1 = low, 5 = high)	Overall Score (multiply previous two columns)
Work/Life Balance	Work schedule			
	Flexibility for family time and other commitments			
	Time to commute			
	Travel requirements			
The Company	Size of company			
	Values			
	Leadership			
	Product and quality			
	Environmental concern			
	Industry			
	Geographic location			
	Corporate image/integrity			
	Contribution/service to society			

Part I: Legal Career Exploration Questions

Name:

Date:

Review and answer the following questions as fully as possible to develop clarity on the factors that impact your job satisfaction. There are no “right” answers, and you may not know the answer to each question. Add as much detail as you can, rather than simple “yes” or “no” answers.

Ideal Job: Imagine you are at a job that you love. What elements would it include?

To help you with your exploration, consider the following factors:

1. **Activities:**

Between now and our next call, pay attention to your current job (and any other commitments such as volunteer work and hobbies):

- a. Which activities seem to boost your energy level?

- b. Which activities seem to drain your energy level?

- c. Which activities engage you or capture your attention? Are there activities where you are so “in the flow” that you don’t notice anything else?

- d. Which activities seem impossible to initiate or sustain?

- e. What are you proudest of at work?

- f. What do you receive the most compliments about?

2. Subjects:

- a. What subject areas do you find engaging or have expertise in?

- b. Do you prefer to deal with issues that change frequently, or do you prefer to master one set of rules?

- c. Do you prefer to deal with a variety of subjects, or be a deep expert in one area?

- d. Do you prefer to work on several, short-term projects, or fewer, long-term projects?

3. Clients:

- a. Is there a particular client population you'd like to serve?

- b. Do you prefer to represent people, businesses, or other entities?

- c. Do you prefer to work with clients who have particular areas of expertise?

- d. Do you want to help clients who are experiencing a crisis?

- e. How important is it to interact directly with your clients?

- f. Do you prefer to have long-term relationships with your clients, or focus on serving them for a limited issue or goal?

- g. What are your thoughts about attracting new clients to your practice?

4. How do you want to serve your clients?

- a. Do you prefer to find solutions to their problems?

- b. Develop a strategy to accomplish their goals?

- c. Advocate to protect their rights?

- d. Provide stability during a crisis?

- e. Collaborate with others to achieve an outcome?

- f. Offer advice to avoid liability?

- g. Design a policy to improve the greater good?

- h. Analyze a situation to arrive at the truth or understand what transpired?

- i. Something else?

5. Values

- a. What makes your work important to you?

- b. What keeps you motivated?

- c. What kind of impact do you want your work to have?

6. Structure:

- a. Do you prefer an organization with highly structured policies and procedures, or a loose, informal environment?
- b. Do you prefer to be a member of a team, or to work on your own?
- c. Do you enjoy leading teams?
- d. Do you prefer a formal hierarchy with clear paths to promotion, or a less systematic structure?
- e. How important is it to have access to (or be part of) organizational leadership?

7. Recognition:

- a. How do you like to be recognized for your contributions?
- b. Do you prefer to have a role in the spotlight or in the background?
- c. Is your job title important?
- d. Is the social status of your organization important? (high-profile, grass roots, etc.) What makes it important to you?

8. Logistical Needs:

- a. Commute

- b. Geography
 - i. Are you tied to a particular location? If so, why?

 - ii. Do you need to be surrounded by certain environmental factors (e.g., urban center, trees, ocean, mountains, desert, small town, etc.)?

- c. What is your optimal schedule? Do you need flexibility? Predictability?

- d. Are you able to travel? Would you like to travel for work?

- e. What type of work environment do you need to be productive?

9. Financial:

- a. Do you know what you need to earn?

- b. How comfortable are you with fluctuation in your income?

- c. What other aspects of compensation are important to you?

10. Is there anything else that is important to include?

Part II: Legal Career Exploration Summary

Name: Date:

- After completing the Legal Career Exploration Questionnaire, identify the most important qualities to include/avoid in your next role, as well as questions you'd like to explore to fill in knowledge gaps.
- Circle the 3 most important attributes you'd like to find in your next role.

	Important to Include	Important to Avoid	Questions and Gaps to Explore
1. Activities			
2. Subject Matter/ Content Areas			
3. Clients			
4. Role			
5. Values			
6. Structure			
7. Recognition			
8. Logistical Needs			
9. Financial Needs			
10. Other			

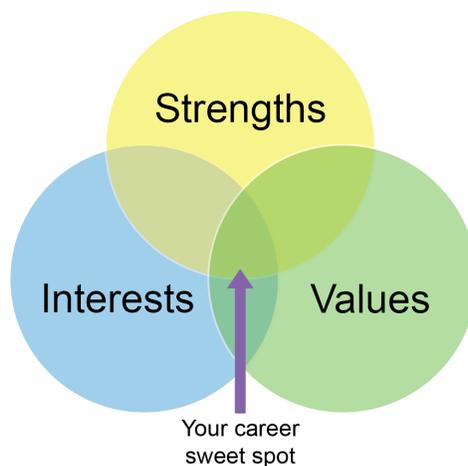
Berkeley Law: Advanced Degree Programs

Self-Assessment Toolkit

Earning an LL.M. degree is a career transition point. You might be looking to change your field of practice, or move from a firm to in-house, or just starting out and looking for your first “real” legal job. You might also be perfectly happy in your position, and just taking advantage of an opportunity to grow your skills and knowledge. Regardless of where you are in your career, this is an excellent time to carefully think through your next steps.

There are lots of things one can do with a law degree. Each involves using different skills, working in different environments, and accomplishing different goals. But how do you decide which option is right for you?

Individuals who are most satisfied with their careers find work at the intersection of their strengths, interests, and values as represented in the diagram below:



Understanding and owning your strengths, interests and values as they *actually are* (and not as you wish they were or think they should be) will help you narrow possible trajectories and keep you on a path to a successful and meaningful career after graduation.

While it may seem like we should be able to quickly and easily identify our own strengths, interests, and values, doing so can be surprisingly difficult. Many of us have a hard time being objective when evaluating ourselves. Our ideas about what we “should” be good at, what our loved ones think we should do, or what society rewards through status and money, among other things, can get in the way of developing a clear-eyed picture of what we bring to the table. To help, we’ve created this toolkit with exercises and resources to assist you in identifying your strengths, interests, and values and seeing how they might connect—or not connect—with your current career plans. Especially if you are just launching your career, or if you are planning a career transition after your LL.M., completing some or all of these exercises (and debriefing them with a professional development advisor) can help ensure you are on a great career path for *you!*

STRENGTHS

Research shows that people who have the opportunity to use their strengths every day in their work are significantly more likely to be successful and engaged in their jobs. They are also more likely to be healthier, have stronger professional and personal relationships, and report an excellent quality of life.¹ When we use our strengths, we are more likely to finish tasks with a sense of accomplishment and personal satisfaction for a job well-done. We leave invigorated, and energized for the next challenge.²

All jobs contain a multitude of tasks, and it is unrealistic to think we will be able to limit our work to only our strengths. We can work hard at tasks that may not be strengths and learn to perform them competently. However, these tasks take more effort and are likely to leave us feeling drained if too large a percentage of our time is spent on them. We end up spending energy rather than renewing it. Over time, we are less likely to be able to consistently perform at high levels, negatively impacting feelings of accomplishment, mastery, and satisfaction and leaving our metaphorical “tank” empty.

As you can see, finding a job where we can use our strengths regularly is a critical first step in building a successful, long-term career.

Ironically, it can be difficult to identify our strengths. Many of us, especially high achievers like Berkeley LL.M. students, tend to discount our strengths - thinking of them as things that are no big deal, that anyone can do. But that’s not true! ADP counselors can *guarantee* that there are skills you find easy that many of your classmates struggle with, just as we are certain that you struggle with things which some of your classmates find easy.

We have identified the following four exercises to help you in identifying your strengths:

1. Take the Values in Action (VIA) Survey of Character Strengths
2. Write a “Me at My Best” story
3. Ask 3-5 colleagues, former bosses, or persons with whom you have worked on projects or in leadership roles why they would work with you again, or what you have brought to the table that has been valuable
4. Identify examples of situations where you have used the 26 Lawyering Effectiveness Skills

Each is explained in more detail below.

¹Rath, Tom, Strengthsfinder 2.0, pp.iii, 12.

²Seligman, Martin, Authentic Happiness, pp 13-14

Take the Values in Action (VIA) Survey of Character Strengths

Character strengths are the positive parts of one's personality that people feel, think, and behave. Researchers³ identified 24 strengths recognized across cultures and genders as being most core to the human experience. Every individual possesses all 24 of character strengths but in different degrees, giving each person a unique character profile.

The [VIA survey](#) will take about 15 minutes and can help you discover your unique character strengths profile. Knowing and applying your highest character strengths is key to you being your best self.

Write a "Me at My Best" Story

When do you like being you? We have all had experiences in our lives where we have felt accomplished, like what we did made a difference. Think about one of your own experiences where you felt really good about something that you did. Write down your story with a clear beginning, middle, and end. The experience you describe can be about anything and at any time in your life, but should involve something that you actively did rather than something that happened to you.

After you have written your story, re-read it. Then review your top 5 strengths from the VIA Core Strengths survey, above. Note which of your strengths are reflected in your story.

Ask 3-5 colleagues, former bosses, or persons with whom you have worked on projects why they would hire you, or what you have brought to the table that has been valuable to others

Many of us have difficulty identifying our strengths. Because our strengths come naturally to us, we tend to think they are no big deal, things that anyone could do. However, that's not true! A skill that comes easily to you may be an arduous task for the person sitting next to you (and vice versa). For this reason, it can be helpful to ask others to reflect your strengths back to you.

Identify 3-5 people with whom you have worked in the past. You might identify a boss, a co-worker, a fellow student or student leader, a professor, a teammate, or similar. Reach out to them to ask for feedback regarding why they would hire you or work with you again if they had the opportunity. This can be part of a larger effort to reach out and reconnect with people.

If the thought of doing this feels awkward, we encourage you to try it anyway! It will not only help you identify your core strengths - the things you do that really make a difference to others - but it feels great to get positive feedback! Save their responses in a folder and refer to them during those times (and we all have them) when you could use a reminder of your strengths and the value you provide to others.

³ Developed by the late Christopher Peterson, former professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, and Martin Seligman, professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, in collaboration with 55 scientists over multiple years.

The 26 Lawyering Effectiveness Factors

Researchers have identified 26 skills that firms, companies, and clients look for when hiring lawyers. The following is a list of the 26 Effectiveness Factors separated into eight umbrella categories:⁴

1. **Intellectual & Cognitive:** Analysis and Reasoning | Creativity/Innovation | Problem Solving | Practical Judgment
2. **Research & Information Gathering:** Researching the Law | Fact Finding | Questioning and Interviewing
3. **Communications:** Influencing and Advocating | Writing | Speaking | Listening
4. **Planning and Organizing:** Strategic Planning | Organizing and Managing One's Own Work | Organizing and Managing Others (Staff/Colleagues)
5. **Conflict Resolution:** Negotiation Skills | Ability to See the World through the Eyes of Others
6. **Client & Business Relations - Entrepreneurship:** Networking and Business Development | Providing Advice & Counsel and Building Relationships with Clients
7. **Working with Others:** Developing Relationships within the Legal Profession | Evaluation, Development, and Mentoring
8. **Character:** Passion and Engagement | Diligence | Integrity/Honesty | Stress Management | Community Involvement and Service | Self-Development

As you probably realized, these skills are not just used in the practice of law. You may have used these skills in non-law jobs, volunteer work, activities, sports, or leadership roles. Highlighting instances of using these transferable skills on your resume, regardless of where you used them, will appeal to legal employers. This can help you show that you have done your research, understand what it is that the employer does, and have begun to develop the skills and attributes that they need.

Review these skills and think about which ones you have demonstrated in the past. Don't just be abstract about it; tie these skills to specific accomplishments and events in your life or career. This will help you to isolate your real demonstrated strengths. As a starting point, we recommend that you work through the following analytical exercise.

⁴ Shultz, Marjorie M. and Sheldon Zedeck, "Identification, Development, and Validation of Predictors for Successful Lawyering," pp 26-27, September 2008.

For each of the 26 lawyering effectiveness skills listed, circle the number that corresponds to your level of experience with each factor:

1 = Little to no experience with this skill

2 = Moderate experience with this skill

3 = Lots of experience with this skill

Intellectual & Cognitive

Analysis and Reasoning	1	2	3
Creativity/Innovation	1	2	3
Problem Solving	1	2	3
Practical Judgment	1	2	3

Research & Information Gathering

Researching the Law	1	2	3
Fact Finding	1	2	3
Questioning and Interviewing	1	2	3

Communications

Influencing and Advocating	1	2	3
Writing	1	2	3
Speaking	1	2	3
Listening	1	2	3

Planning and Organizing

Strategic Planning	1	2	3
Organizing and Managing One's Own Work	1	2	3
Organizing and Managing Others (Staff/Colleagues)	1	2	3

Conflict Resolution

Negotiation Skills	1	2	3
Ability to See the World through the Eyes of Others	1	2	3

Client & Business Relations - Entrepreneurship

Networking and Business Development	1	2	3
Providing Advice & Counsel and Building Relationships with Clients	1	2	3

Working with Others

Developing Relationships within the Legal Profession	1	2	3
Evaluation, Development, and Mentoring	1	2	3

Character

Passion and Engagement	1	2	3
Diligence	1	2	3
Integrity/Honesty	1	2	3
Stress Management	1	2	3
Community Involvement and Service	1	2	3
Self-Development	1	2	3

For each skill for which you gave yourself a “3,” answer the following questions:

1. In which job or position did you use the skill?
2. What is a strong action verb that best describes the action you took when using the skill?
3. What detail can you provide that will help a reader form a mental picture of what you did and the value you provided to your former employer, co-workers, customers, or clients?

For example:

1. Transferable lawyer skill: Speaking
2. Action verb describing how you used the skill: Presented
3. Context: Presented monthly information sessions regarding job search skills to youth recently released from juvenile hall

Do your best to identify a variety of types of skills from as many of the different categories of skills as you can to show the diversity of skills you have to offer.

1. Transferable lawyer skill: _____

Action verb describing how you used that skill: _____

Context: _____

2. Transferable lawyer skill: _____

Action verb describing how you used that skill: _____

Context: _____

3. Transferable lawyer skill: _____

Action verb describing how you used that skill: _____

Context: _____

4. Transferable lawyer skill: _____

Action verb describing how you used that skill: _____

Context: _____

5. Transferable lawyer skill: _____

Action verb describing how you used that skill: _____

Context: _____

INTERESTS

If you are well-established in your career, you may already know your interests and be confident in your career path. Other experienced practitioners may be pursuing an LL.M. with the idea of expanding into a new practice. And if you are a new attorney, you may not be familiar with the practice options available to you. Or perhaps family or mentors have encouraged you to pursue a particular practice, but you are not sure what is involved in that practice or whether it might be a good match for you.

So how do you learn more about what options are available and what is involved in each? Once again, work forwards from who *you* are, and then see what is out there.

Identify What Interests you Generally

First, write a list of ten things that interest you intellectually or emotionally. These might be areas of legal practice, or they might not; just write down your top ten without self-judgment.

Once you have that list, it is time to look beyond and research what legal practice areas might mesh with your interests. You can do that by reviewing some of the many available online and print resources.

Researching Online Resources About Practice Areas

There are lots of resources where students can read about practice areas and what lawyers in each do on a daily basis. Below are some suggestions for where to start:

1. Berkeley's Career Development Office (CDO) website has many [online resources](#) with descriptions of practice areas, including recorded practitioner presentations. The password to access this page is "cdoaccess."
 - a. We strongly recommend that you review [this](#) and/or [this](#) guide to practice areas if you are interested in private practice.
 - b. See [this page](#) for information about public interest practices, including environmental, health care, human rights and international, and gender law.
2. Also look at the [Vault Guidebooks](#). This is a subscription service that Berkeley has and which you can also access through CDO's website. You will need your CalNet ID to access this resource.
3. A print resource with good basic information is [The Official Guide to Legal Specialties](#). This book has great basic information about over 30 different practice areas, where lawyers in these fields work and what they do, and what skills and experience are important for lawyers entering the field. However, as it was published in 1999, please note that the section on Intellectual Property is outdated.

VALUES

Values are deeply held personal beliefs about the way you live and work that define your priorities. When our actions align with our core values, we are likely to feel fulfilled and content; when they aren't, the internal dissonance can range from uncomfortable to intolerable.

Awareness of your core values can therefore be especially useful when thinking big picture or making difficult decisions. Career planning often involves both, so cultivating awareness of your core values is an important first step on your road to a meaningful, satisfying career.

The following is an exercise designed to help you identify your core values. Below is a sample list of values.⁵ Circle the **ten** that mean the most to you. Go with your gut response and try not to select what you think *should* be your most meaningful values, but actually aren't. **Spend no more than 10 minutes.** If there is a value that is not on this list, but is important to you, write it in. There are no right or wrong answers here, only the answers that are right for *you!*

accomplishment	adventure	advocacy	ambition	appreciation
art	autonomy	balance	beauty	building
business	challenge	children	communication	community
compassion	competition	contribution	control	diligence
diversity	education	ethics	excellence	excitement
experimentation	expertise	fame	family	financial stability
freedom	friendship	fun	health	home
honesty	humor	idealism	influence	inspiration
intellectual stimulation	international	language	leadership	legacy
legal achievement	mastery	mentoring	money	nature
order	originality	people	persuasion	philanthropy
physical fitness	politics	popularity	practicality	productivity
professionalism	public policy	rationality	recognition	relationships
religion	respect	risk	sensuality	service
social change	solitude	spirituality	sports	stability
team membership	travel	variety	wealth	work

⁵ Melcher, Michael, *The Creative Lawyer: A Practical Guide to Authentic Professional Satisfaction*, p27.

You have selected your top ten values, but ten values is really too many to keep in the forefront of your mind when you have a difficult decision to make and need to assess your core priorities. It's time to narrow your list down. Out of these ten, pick the **three** values that most define you as a human being. Again, go with your gut and take no more than three minutes to do this. You'll have time to reconsider your answers later.

Now that you have identified your three core values, define what these values mean to **you**. For instance, if one of your values is family, does it mean love, security, fun, or something else to you?

Value	What This Value Means to You
1.	
2.	
3.	

Now, confirm your choices. Take a look at your top three values. For each, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do the accomplishments you are most proud of have to do with living this value?
2. If there was a time you failed to adhere to this value, does it still bother you?
3. Are you willing to suffer some negative consequence rather than violate this value?

Did you answer “yes” to all of these questions? Do you feel confident that the values on this list are most core to you? Is there a value among your list of ten that seem like a better fit when considering these questions? If so, make the change!

Keeping your core values in mind when making career (and life) decisions can help bring clarity to your decision-making process in evaluating career choices and other challenges. It's an excellent step in your efforts to pursue a successful and meaningful career.

IDENTIFYING YOUR CAREER “SWEET SPOT”

Now that you have completed some or all of the exercises suggested above, hopefully you have developed greater clarity regarding your strengths, interests, and values, and what practice area or areas might allow you to work at their intersection, in your “sweet spot.” Whether you have reaffirmed what you might want to do with your law degree or are thinking of pursuing a career path you had never considered before, that’s great!

Go Deeper by Conducting Informational Interviews with Practitioners

Online and print resources will help you narrow the practice areas you think you might want to pursue. However, you are unlikely to have all of your questions answered through reading alone. To develop a deeper understanding of the nuances of different fields, as well as to get answers to important questions you don’t yet know to ask, conduct informational interviews with practitioners. Ask questions such as the following:

- What types of clients they represent and how they work with them
- What they do day-to-day
- What skills are particularly valuable in their field
- How they broke into their field and how new lawyers break into their field now
- What periodicals they read, conferences they attend, and bar associations they are members of
- What they did in law school and early in their careers that helped them succeed
- Who else in the field they recommend you speak with

For examples of informational interview questions, see [here](#) (questions are at the end of the document).

For guidance for LL.M. students on informational interviewing, see the [short instructional videos on networking](#) in the Professional Development section of your ADP bCourses page. Particularly look at Video #4, Conducting Informational Interviews, but all of the videos in this series will be helpful. Instructional information includes topics such as where to find people with whom to conduct informational interviews (examples include using LinkedIn, accessing the [Berkeley Law Network](#) of alumni, and reaching out to speakers at Berkeley Law events), expanding your network, and how to keep in touch and build long-term relationships.

NEED HELP?

Others of you, despite gaining insight, may still be uncertain how to put this information together and find a practice area or areas in your “sweet spot.” Don’t be discouraged if this is the case for you! Your ADP counselors are here to help. Make an appointment with an ADP advisor on [bCourses](#); we’d be happy to help you debrief your self-assessment exercises and talk you through your decision-making process.