

How do I get to know the real me? What do I need to know about myself when choosing a career?

# Chapter 7

## Learning About Yourself

### Key Terms

*resource*  
*personality*  
*self-concept*  
*interests*  
*attitude*  
*aptitudes*  
*abilities*  
*values*

### Chapter Objectives

After studying this chapter, you will be able to

- **determine** how personality, self-concept, interests, attitudes, aptitudes, abilities, and values affect career decisions.
- **analyze** how self-concept can affect job performance.
- **relate** personal values to work values.

### Key Concepts

- By knowing yourself, you can choose a career that suits you.
- Your personality, self-concept, interests, attitudes, aptitudes, abilities, and values are important to choosing a career you will like.
- You can evaluate yourself by taking an honest look at yourself.

## The Importance of Knowing Yourself

What career path will you follow? In Chapter 4 of this text, you learned how to explore the various career options available to you. The choices you face may seem overwhelming. Choosing a satisfying career requires knowing about careers, but that's only half the search. The other half is knowing yourself.

In this chapter, you will learn how to better understand yourself. Only then will you be able to choose a career that suits you.

### Examining the Real You

Most of us know ourselves better than anyone else does. However, we are not always honest with ourselves. “You are only kidding yourself” is a common saying. Being honest with yourself is important for knowing the real you and choosing a satisfying career path.

Understanding yourself begins by understanding your resources. A **resource** is anything a person can use to help reach his or her goals. Money is a resource you can get. Time is a resource everyone has. The desire to do well is a resource within you. (You will learn more about resources in Chapter 10, “Making a Career Plan.”)

The resources within you are important to choosing a career you will like. Your resources include your personality, self-concept, interests, attitude, aptitudes, abilities, and values. Each of these can affect the career choice you make. Understanding these characteristics about yourself may be as important to career success as your academic preparation.

### Your Personality

Everyone has a one-of-a-kind personality. **Personality** is the group of traits that makes each person unique. Some of these traits may be intelligence, enthusiasm, and honesty. Others are listed in Chart 7-1.

Have you ever described someone as having a good personality? You probably meant the person was friendly,

#### resource

Anything a person can use to help reach his or her goals.



### Your Reading

How does knowing what your resources are help you to choose a career path?

#### personality

The group of traits that makes each person unique.

## 7-1

Identifying the personality traits that describe you can help you choose a career that will suit your personality.

Personality Traits		
cooperative	dependent	unreliable
agreeable	talkative	tolerant
stubborn	loyal	critical
self-disciplined	honest	jealous
friendly	dishonest	capable
shy	pleasant	lazy
intelligent	enthusiastic	moody
thoughtful	outgoing	nervous
impulsive	quiet	patient
energetic	confident	kind
ambitious	happy	religious
generous	sad	polite
greedy	funny	respectful
aggressive	witty	sarcastic
assertive	boring	helpful
independent	dependable	selfish

happy, pleasant, and kind. Such a person is usually popular. People react in a positive way to someone with a good personality. Your personality is important to your career in the following two ways:

- First, understanding your personality helps you choose a career you will like. For example, a talkative person might do well in sales. A supportive person might do well in customer service or health occupations. Your chances for happiness and success are best when your career is suited to your personality. See 7-2.
- Secondly, having a pleasant personality helps you get jobs and do them well. Employers and coworkers react positively to pleasant personalities. They enjoy working with such people. Employers avoid hiring people with poor personalities. People with poor personalities are usually a sign of future problems.



## Your Reading

Name two ways in which your personality is important to your career choice.

**7-2**

People with friendly, supportive personalities often become teachers.

## Your Self-Concept

What you know and feel about yourself is your *self-concept*. Your self-concept affects your personality. When you have a healthy self-concept, you recognize both your strengths and weaknesses. You accept and feel good about your positive qualities. Factors that influence a healthy self-concept include a realistic and complete self-concept and high self-esteem.

You have high self-esteem when you feel good about yourself. You respect yourself and feel that you are a worthwhile person. You recognize what you like and dislike about yourself. You know what to change about yourself to raise your self-esteem.

You develop a realistic self-concept by seeing yourself as you really are, not as you would like to be. As you think seriously about your self-concept, consider your relationships with others.

**self-concept**

Recognition of both your strengths and weaknesses. Accepting and feeling good about yourself.

Your self-concept becomes more complete as you learn more about yourself. New experiences and interactions with a variety of people can help you develop a more complete and healthy self-concept.

Your self-concept can affect your chances of getting and keeping a job. Self-confident employees have a positive attitude. They are able to accept new challenges and responsibilities. People with a healthy self-concept tend to do well in the workplace so employers try to hire them.

## Forming and Changing Your Self-Concept

A good self-concept doesn't just happen. What you have learned to believe about yourself forms your self-concept. If you have a good self-concept, you can strengthen it. If you have a poor self-concept, you can change it.

To change your self-concept, you must first be honest with yourself. Often people who brag about what they can do have a poor self-concept. They brag because they want others to think they are able to do more than they really can.

How you feel about yourself also affects how others see you. If you feel good about yourself, others will see you in a positive way. If you know your strengths and your weaknesses, and are honest with yourself, others will respect you. Knowing your strengths does not mean always knowing the answer. It means that when you are unsure of something, you aren't afraid to ask. You aren't afraid to make a mistake. You know that you can succeed only by trying.



### Your Reading

How do you develop a realistic self-concept?

## Your Interests

Everyone has a unique set of interests. **Interests** are the ideas, subjects, or activities a person enjoys. Right now, you may be interested in music and singing. Some of your friends may be interested in the computer, while others enjoy sports and hobbies. No person's interests are better or worse than another's. They simply are different.

Interests play a key role in your career. People who find their work interesting are usually successful and happy. If you like your job, work can be fun and exciting.

#### interests

The ideas, subjects, or activities a person enjoys.

Which do you enjoy most? Interacting with people, working with information, or using tools? In other words, do you prefer to work with people, data (ideas), or objects (things)?

## People

Are you a person who prefers to be around others? Do you like to talk with people? Do you make friends easily? Are you outgoing? See 7-3.

Students who are people-oriented prefer socializing to reading a book or watching TV. These students are usually active in many school functions and clubs. They like to assist others. They volunteer to help with community functions. They like to solve conflicts between others.

## Data

Are you an information seeker? Do you enjoy gathering information from books, magazines, newspapers, TV, or the Internet? Do you know all the football scores and statistics? Do you like to read and research information?



### 7-3

Jobs in the service sector need workers who enjoy helping people.



People interested in data like to discover facts. Some enjoy working with figures. They are comfortable spending time alone and often prefer that to socializing with others.

## Objects

Do you like to repair broken objects or assemble things? Do you enjoy working on a car, sewing a new outfit, or cooking a special meal?

People who like to work with tools and instruments enjoy making items with their hands, 7-4. They like to take objects apart and put them back together.

Sometimes they enjoy working with others on a hands-on project, but often they enjoy working alone.

Few jobs focus exclusively on people, data (ideas), or objects (things). Most jobs involve more than one interest area. Many careers, like those of a *carpenter*, *teacher*, and *reporter*, have primary and secondary interests. Knowing your particular interests will help you focus on a good career match.



### Your Reading

How do your interests play a key role in your career choice?

#### 7-4

Carpenters and other craftspeople have jobs that focus on tools and the objects that result from using them.



## The Three A's

Attitude, aptitude, and ability are the three A's. You can improve your attitude and abilities, but you have no control over your aptitude.

### Your Attitude—Positive or Negative?

Your attitude is very important. **Attitude** is how you react to a situation. Your reaction shapes how other people view you. Is your attitude positive or negative, happy or angry?

You probably know people who are friendly, pleasant, and kind. These are signs of a positive attitude. People with this attitude are very popular. Employers tend to hire these people, and employees like to work with them.

People with a negative attitude are just the opposite. They often complain and are rarely satisfied. They think their ideas are the best and are unwilling to compromise. These people become very difficult coworkers. Employers try to avoid hiring individuals with a negative attitude.

### Your Aptitudes and Abilities

Many people have natural talents and can learn to do new things quickly and easily. Natural talents and the potential to learn easily and quickly are **aptitudes**. For instance, some people can play a song on a musical instrument after hearing it only a few times. They have an aptitude for music.

If you have an interest and an aptitude for something, you would probably be very successful in a related career. If you enjoy writing and do it well, you would probably be a good author or journalist.

Some people discover their aptitudes on their own. They may discover their aptitudes when learning something new. Sometimes others can see your aptitudes when you can't. Your friends, family, teachers, and employers can all help you discover your aptitudes. You can also discover new interests and aptitudes by doing volunteer work, having an after-school job, or by exploring a hobby.



### Making a Difference

List your aptitudes and abilities. Prepare a list of volunteer jobs that could utilize your talents. Choose a job from your list and perform a volunteer service. Reflect on how this experience made you feel about yourself.

#### attitude

How you react to a situation.

#### aptitudes

The natural talents a person has or the potential to learn certain skills easily and quickly.



### Community Connections

Interview at least two factory workers to find out what skills are needed for their jobs. Make a list of the abilities needed for the work. Share results of the interviews with the class.



**abilities**

The skills a person has developed.



## Your Reading

What are the three A's and how do they determine the direction of your career?

A school counselor can give you an aptitude test. Such a test does not have right or wrong answers. It just helps you learn about your aptitudes.

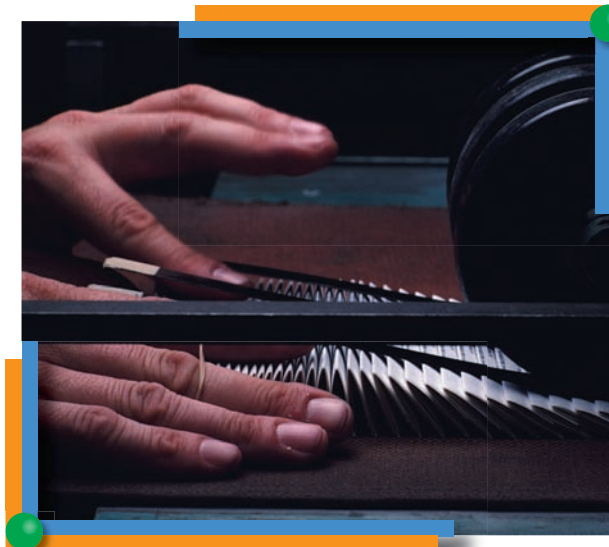
Skills you must develop are your **abilities**. Sometimes abilities are aptitudes that you have developed and improved. For instance, an aptitude for quick, coordinated movements could be developed into the ability to type quickly and accurately or play the piano well. Different jobs require different abilities, 7-5.

Sometimes people choose careers for which they have no aptitudes or abilities. This puts them at a disadvantage next to workers who have the natural ability to perform well. For example, an individual may want to be a professional singer. Without an aptitude for music or the ability to sing, that person does not have the personal resources for a successful singing career. It is very important to recognize your aptitudes and abilities when considering a career.

The average person has many aptitudes and abilities, but not all lead to a career. For example, one of your favorite pastimes may be repairing cars. This does not mean you should become a full-time automotive technician. You may simply enjoy fixing cars as a hobby. If so, your other interests would determine the direction of your career.

**7-5**

This assembly line task requires skillful finger manipulation. Such coordination is an aptitude, but with practice, a less coordinated person could develop the ability.



## Your Values

**Values** are all the beliefs, ideas, and objects that are important to you. People have different values. Your family, friends, and community influence your values. Your life experiences and religious beliefs also influence them. See 7-6.

Each individual has a unique set of values. Consider yours and be honest with yourself. Try to decide what is most important to you. Then try to act according to your values. If education is important to you, put your best efforts into your schoolwork. If you appreciate good health, take time to exercise and learn about nutrition.

Besides personal values, you also have *work values*. These are related to work that is important to you. Some common work values are listed in 7-7. Take time to think about what you want from your work. Some of your values may be the same personally and professionally. People who value honesty with family members and friends also believe it is important with coworkers.

Being able to identify what is important to you will help you make career choices. If you believe time with your family is important, you would not be happy traveling for long periods. If you seek creative outlets, you would not enjoy working on a factory assembly line. If you value high status in the community, you might want to become a doctor or police officer. Consider your personal values and work values when you choose a career.

### values

All the beliefs, ideas, and objects that are important to an individual.



## Community Connections

Interview someone you admire, based on your values. (Your values may include honesty, health, family, friends, religion, and education, among other topics.) Write a paragraph that explains why you admire the interviewed person.

### Values

<b>Honesty</b>	Are you always sincere and truthful? Do you expect the same in return?
<b>Health</b>	Do you enjoy practicing good health habits? Do you eat right, exercise, and get enough rest?
<b>Family, Friends</b>	Do you like to be surrounded by the people you love, or do you prefer to see them only at certain times?
<b>Religion</b>	Do you have certain beliefs or rituals that must be maintained?
<b>Education</b>	Do you enjoy gaining knowledge? Do you want to earn an advanced degree?

### 7-6

Beliefs, ideas, or objects that are important to you are your values.



## Your Reading

How do your values affect career choices?

**7-7**

Answering these questions honestly will help you identify some of your work values.



## Community Connections

Ask three adults who know you well the following questions: What are my greatest skills? What future career can you see me pursuing? What is one thing I need to work on to be successful in that career? Write a summary of the responses.



## Your Reading

What is the best way to evaluate yourself?

### Work Values

<b>Ethics</b>	Do you believe in being honest and fair in all business situations?
<b>Independence</b>	Do you like to work as part of a team or on your own?
<b>Variety</b>	Should your workdays be very similar or very different?
<b>Creativity</b>	Do you want a job that involves following directions, or would you prefer a job where no directions exist so you could figure them out for yourself?
<b>Competition</b>	Do you enjoy leading or following your coworkers?
<b>Recognition</b>	How important is it to you that others know what you do?

## How to Evaluate Yourself

There are many ways to evaluate all the characteristics that make *you*. Your school may evaluate you to help you make choices and identify classes. Employers will evaluate you, too. They often use written tests to evaluate your personality, aptitudes, and abilities. They may also use interviews and supervisor reports to assist their evaluation.

You, too, can evaluate yourself. You can recognize your attitude and change it. Simple activities, such as listing your positive and negative attitudes, can be the first step. Deciding which attitude to change and how to do so are the next steps.

Abilities can be changed in the same way. Your ability to play a musical instrument can change with more practice.

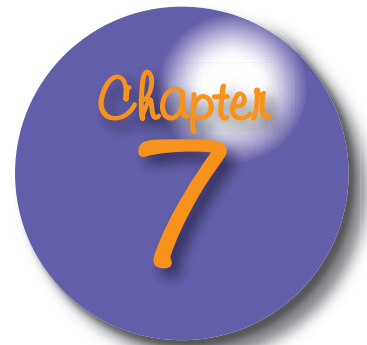
Taking an honest look at yourself periodically is the best way to evaluate yourself. Asking your family, teachers, and school counselor what they see in you will also help. When weak points are discovered in you, work to correct them. Then, map your progress.

## Summary

Being aware of the resources within you can help you choose a satisfying career. Begin with positive personality traits and a healthy self-concept. Employers and coworkers enjoy working with people who possess these resources.

Your interests, attitude, aptitudes, and abilities are other resources you can use to choose a satisfying career. You are likely to be happy and successful if you are interested in your work and able to do it well.

Think about what you want from your personal life and your work. Knowing what is important to you will guide you to satisfying career choices. Work toward knowing yourself better. Change any weaknesses in you that could negatively affect your career choice.



## Reviewing Key Concepts

1. What are resources?
2. What resources do you have that can help you choose a satisfying career?
3. Name a career and five personality traits that would help a person succeed in it.
4. Describe how you can develop a complete and healthy self-concept.
5. Why should you think about your interests when searching for a career?
6. What are the three basic areas of career interests?
7. How can your attitude affect your career?
8. List three ways people discover their aptitudes.
9. What is the difference between aptitudes and abilities?
10. Which of the following statements is *not* true?
  - A. Family, friends, community, life experiences, and religious beliefs influence values.
  - B. Each individual has a unique set of values.
  - C. An individual's work values tend to be very different from his or her personal values.
  - D. Both personal and work values may affect career choices.

## Building Academic Skills

1. **Technology Education.** Invite the technology teacher to class to discuss the skills needed to produce various products. Ask questions about specific items that interest you. You may bring actual items to class or pictures from magazines.
2. **Math.** Create a bar graph that indicates your attitudes about various topics. Vertically on the left, alphabetically list your courses, extracurricular activities, hobbies, and other favorite pursuits and interests. Across the bottom, label a scale from 1 to 10. (A rating of 10 indicates the highest enjoyment.)

## Building Technology Skills

1. Take an online personality test using one of the following Web sites: [2h.com/personality-tests.html](http://2h.com/personality-tests.html) and [queendom.com/tests/personality](http://queendom.com/tests/personality). Write a summary paragraph that describes what these tests revealed about your personality.
2. Use PowerPoint software and a digital camera to create a presentation that reflects your personality. You can show your skills and talents through pictures of yourself in sports, intramurals, community activities, hobbies, and family activities.
3. Use a word processing program to list everything you enjoy doing. Color-code the items as follows: red = *solitary pursuits*; blue = *pursuits involving one or more people*; green = *costs money*; and yellow = *involves sports*. (Note: Items may have two or three colors.)
4. Use a spreadsheet program to keep track of what you have learned about yourself. Document your abilities, skills, personality, personal priorities, attitudes, and interests.

## Building Career Knowledge and Skills

1. Working in a small group, identify and list personality traits you would want your coworkers to have. Compare lists. Which personality traits did everyone in the group list?
2. Research the background of a successful person. Write a one-page report on how the person's interests, aptitudes, and abilities helped him or her succeed.
3. Consider a famous book or popular television show. List the personal and work values displayed by the main character. How do they affect the character's life and career?
4. Design a bulletin board that shows how different interests can lead to careers.
5. List your positive and negative attitudes. Identify those that you would like to change or improve. Develop a plan that will enable you to change. (Keep this activity private or, if you desire, share it with your teacher.)

## Building Workplace Skills

Interview local employers to find out how they try to determine if job candidates have the personality traits, attitudes, and work values they desire in employees. Working with two or three classmates, decide how to divide the following tasks. Interview at least two local employers to obtain the information. Summarize your findings in a one-page report, and create an interesting cover page that focuses on one of the key points you learned. Use a computer to develop both the report and cover page. Present your cover page to the class, briefly describing what inspired your team to create it.