



Mining your Past to Discover Your Design

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Introduction

In Ephesians 2:10, the Bible says, “we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” In this assessment you’ll complete a three-step process that will help you identify the elements of your God-given design, His workmanship.

You will spend quality time during your discovery. I recommend printing this document and putting it in a 3-ring binder to do your discovery.

I’ve provided time estimates for each step. Please plan accordingly.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| 1. Putting your past to work (45 minutes) | 3 |
| Elementary School (up through age 12) | 6 |
| Junior High School (up through 9 th grade) | 7 |
| High School | 8 |
| 2. Capturing the action (2-4 hours)..... | 9 |
| Activity 1 | 10 |
| Activity 2 | 11 |
| Activity 3 | 12 |
| Activity 4 | 13 |
| Activity 5 | 14 |
| 3. Identifying recurring themes (1 hour) | 15 |

These assessments are taken from a tool called *The Career Kit* produced by a group called Interchristo. According to my research, Interchristo merged with ChristianJobs.com in March of 2009. After scouring the Christian Jobs website, it does not appear the Career Kit is available any longer. I have contacted ChristianJobs.com and received permission to use this material

Similar assessments are available from a book titled, *The Great Niche Hunt*, and as an appendix to the Max Lucado book titled, *Cure for the Common Life*.

1. Putting your past to work (45 minutes)

The goal of this step is to make a lifetime list of your design-related activities. You will benefit from this list because it can act like a compass, point to your unique strengths.

Your design has been expressed in any activity that meets these three conditions:

1. You enjoyed doing it;
2. Something was accomplished;
3. You did it well.

Your task is to identify jobs, hobbies, school activities, home responsibilities, etc. that meet these criteria. Each activity should be summarized by writing out a one- or two-sentence description of what you did. Here are some general examples:

- Putting on plays for neighborhood children with costumes, props, etc. The most successful project was transforming a shed in back of our house into a fairyland with lighting effects, decorations, princesses.
- I built and mastered the tallest pair of stilts in my neighborhood. I started a stilt craze among my friends.
- I had a job as a printer's devil. I developed a method of cutting stereotypes which was faster and more accurate than that previously used.
- I established an evening routine of a quiet time of sharing and reading with our children which made bedtime an enjoyable end to the day.
- Was a prime mover in starting a company. Saw utility of product concept. Had much to do with early market development. Helped conceive basic manufacturing concepts.
- Organized and ran a company-sponsored national conference with about 100 participants. Conference was a resounding success.
- Won the support of my subordinates over a period of years by building strong relationships. Took an interest in developing careers, always sent cards on birthdays, Christmas, and special events.

Here are examples from my own life when I completed this assessment:

1. When I lived in Germany (age: 5-6)

- I memorized our apartment number (25A2)
- I made a red leather change pouch from a kit

2. When I lived in Massachusetts (age: 6-7)

- I learned to ride my purple bike

3. When I lived in Louisiana (age: 7-8)

- I built a snowman in our back yard
- I built a fort in our back yard

4. When I lived in Alaska (age: 8-12)

- I wrote and illustrated a 22 page report on the planets
- I qualified to use the kayaks, row boats, and canoes at camp
- I built large structures with Legos: 6ft long ships, underwater cities, space stations, airplanes, submarines, spaceships, computers

5. When I lived in Florida (age: 12-13)

- I built and painted a model of an F-105 all by myself
- I won a talent contest singing a special version of "row your boat"
- I completed sixth and seventh grade in one year

6. When I lived in Utah (age: 13-17)

- I organized all the boxes and furniture in our base house into a functional, livable design
- I won regionals in the 100m breast stroke
- I read all of Tolkien's Middle Earth books
- I was the fastest swimmer to complete the 200 lap swim-a-thon
- I bowled a 263 game

7. When I went to the Academy (age: 17-21)

- I earned an 'A' in English 495 (after getting an F in an earlier English class)
- I graduated with a 'real' degree (bachelor of science in Engineering Mechanics)
- After getting my 'F,' except for the last semester, I never fell below a 3.0 GPA

8. When I lived in California (age: 21-24)

- I rode 50 miles around Edwards by myself on my bicycle
- I was asked to, and successfully reorganized the ENAE office
- I organized my belongings in DV at Edwards
- I did everything I ever wanted to do in a fighter
- I completed the Bear Lake triathlon in the 1:30 I predicted
- I figured out, using the maintenance manual, how to disassemble, replace the brake pads, and reassemble the front brakes on my 1978 Toyota Celica.

9. When I lived in Ohio (age: 24-29)

- I inventoried my entire household using Paradox database software
- I developed a milestone database for the B-2 SPO
- I solved several of the project X scenarios at SOS
- I hiked up and down Mt Whitney (14, 505) in one day with Paul Mueller
- I designed and built my computer desk
- I learned how to use Quicken and organized my finances
- I earned a letter of excellence in writing while at SOS
- I improved my driveway on Powell Road

10. When I lived in Colorado (age: 29-32)

- I was chosen to teach at the USAF Academy
- I wrote a bi-monthly newsletter the recipients enjoy receiving and reading
- I learned how to use WordPerfect, Quattro Pro, and other software
- I taught others how to use Quicken
- I researched and found the taxonomy for all living organisms
- I developed a schedule for reading all the Psalms twice per year
- My wife and I climbed the highest mountain in Colorado, Mt. Elbert (14, 433 ft), together
- I built a dining room table for my family

Hopefully, that will get you going! Please note, it is easy to misunderstand these examples. If you review them again, you will discover they are:

- Achievement activities, NOT experiences
- Specific activities, NOT milestone achievements
- Activities you can support with examples

To further clarify, here are contrasting good and poor examples;

| | Good | Poor |
|---|---|---|
| Achievement activities, NOT experiences | I fixed a grandfather's clock when I was 12 years old that hadn't worked for 2 years | I toured Europe with my friends and the Alps were beautiful |
| Specific activities, NOT milestone achievements | Made original discoveries in science labs; or Worked with sports team mates to improve their skills by 25% | Got an A on my History paper; or Got my Eagle Scout |
| Activities you can support with examples | Figured out how to replace the brakes and rotors on my car | I'm good at troubleshooting |

To make this easier, let's break your life up into smaller segments so you can come up with three to five activities for each segment.

Remember, for each activity write out a one- or two-sentence description of an activity:

1. You enjoyed doing;
2. Something was accomplished;
3. You did it well.

Then give it a one- or two-word name

Elementary School (up through age 12)

| Activity Name | Activity Descriptions (1 or 2 sentences) |
|---------------|--|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Continue on the next page.

Junior High School (up through 9th grade)

| Activity Name | Activity Descriptions (1 or 2 sentences) |
|---------------|--|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Continue on the next page.

High School

| Activity Name | Activity Descriptions (1 or 2 sentences) |
|---------------|--|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

It is interesting to note how early childhood experience foreshadow feats of excellence that unfold later in life. Consider the accomplishments of two people who completed this exercise.

One man wrote:

- At age 8: captured a monkey in the jungles of South America
- At age 35: Captured first government contract of its kind within the company

One woman completed this exercise by discovering:

- At age 10: Drew pictures of cars, trees, people in class.
- At age 42: Did all the graphic illustration for an architectural firm

You should have somewhere between 9 and 15 activities (or more written down) and looked at some of the possible recurring patterns. From this group, identify the top five (5) activities that are most important to you to continue using through the remaining two (2) steps. Try to pick activities from your whole life, not just recent examples.

List the names here:

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |
| 5 | |

2. Capturing the action (2-4 hours)

The goal of this step is to gather the specifics about what you actually did (that you enjoyed doing) in completing each of your top five design-related activities.

For each of your five most important activities, describe:

1. How you got involved in it;
2. The details of what you actually did (elaborate and expand); and
3. What was particularly enjoyable or satisfying to you.
4. What would have made this activity even more rewarding for you.

Here's one of my examples:

Name: Legos

Description: I built large structures with Legos: 6ft long ships, underwater cities, space stations, airplanes, submarines, spaceships, computers.

How I got involved: My parents bought Legos for me to play with.

Specific details: My imagination was fostered by watching science fiction shows. I used the Legos to create some of the things I saw and new things that I dreamed up.

What was particularly enjoyable/satisfying: Creating as I went along; seeing my ideas come to reality through the medium of Legos; using my imagination; completing the entire task.

What would have made it more rewarding: having more Legos to build even bigger creations.

For many people, recalling the facts about past activities is one of the most revealing and exciting steps in the entire assessment process. It gives you the chance to replay the events that have helped shape your life. Because these are activities you associate with personal achievement, chances are you're able to look back on them with good memories.

To help you along, I've created a template for you to fill in on the following pages. One page for each of the eight activities.

Activity 1

Name:

Description:

How I got involved:

Specific details:

What was particularly enjoyable/satisfying:

What would have made it more rewarding:

Activity 2

Name:

Description:

How I got involved:

Specific details:

What was particularly enjoyable/satisfying:

What would have made it more rewarding:

Activity 3

Name:

Description:

How I got involved:

Specific details:

What was particularly enjoyable/satisfying:

What would have made it more rewarding:

Activity 4

Name:

Description:

How I got involved:

Specific details:

What was particularly enjoyable/satisfying:

What would have made it more rewarding:

Activity 5

Name:

Description:

How I got involved:

Specific details:

What was particularly enjoyable/satisfying:

What would have made it more rewarding:

3. Identifying recurring themes (1 hour)

The goal of this step is to identify recurring themes, or, in other words, HOW YOU ARE WIRED!

Now that you have fleshed out the details of five (5) activities in your life where:

1. You enjoyed doing;
2. Something was accomplished;
3. You did it well.

Review your work and look for recurring themes in the following five (5) areas and write down what you discover:

| | |
|--|--|
| Strengths (talents and abilities you tap into to get things done) | |
| Topics (what you want to work with) | |
| Optimal Conditions (in what type of environment do you work best) | |
| Relationships (what role and relationship to others do you prefer) | |
| Yes! (what gets you excited and gives you a sense of fulfillment) | |