

## ADDITIONAL EXERCISES FOR THE MORE EXPERIENCED:

### My decision-making history

You're probably doing this exercise in preparation for making yet another decision. This is a good time to look at how you've made earlier decisions, or had them made for you, or made a decision not to decide!

Putting together a "lifeline" will help you to take a look at your history of decision-making and risk-taking. Making decisions is easy for some, more challenging for others. Sometimes people find patterns in their decision-making style that haven't been helpful and can be changed.

On a separate sheet of paper, draw a lifeline for yourself in any format that suits you. Some people just draw a horizontal line and list ages and events along it. Others like to draw peaks and valleys to reflect how they feel about the particular event or decision. (After you've filled in your lifeline to the present, you may want to project how you would like it to look in the future.)

Put an identifying mark where: (1) you took the greatest risk of your life so far; (2) you encountered an obstacle preventing you from getting or doing what you wanted; (3) a critical decision was made for you by someone else; (4) you made your best decision thus far; (5) you made your worst decision thus far. Finally, mark where you see an important decision approaching.

Now consider your chart carefully, complete with markings:

1. Any surprises?

2. How have decisions affected your lifeline? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How have risks affected your lifeline? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What have you learned from decisions that didn't seem to work out?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Who has made each major decision that has affected your life? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Any decision-making techniques that seem to have worked well for you? \_\_\_\_\_

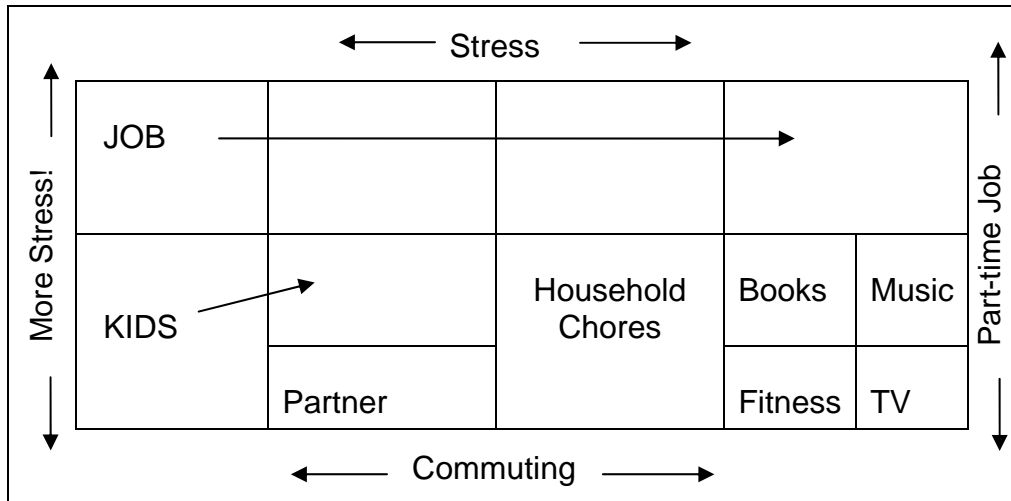
\_\_\_\_\_

Now transfer your findings to your **Additional Summary Sheet**.

## BATTERY RE-CHARGING EXERCISE

Feeling stuck? Sometimes we get stalled on the highway of life-work planning because we do not take time to re-charge our personal and professional batteries. This exercise is designed to help you evaluate where your life is now and make a plan to bring about some changes.

Imagine that your life can be represented as the pattern of a patchwork quilt. Your work, leisure, family and friend time, interests and hobbies, studies, activities, and other pastimes make up the shapes of the quilt. Here's an example:



Now, draw your own patchwork quilt. Try to draw it to accurately reflect your life as it is now. (Hint: It may help to think about how you spend a typical day or week.) If another image is more helpful to you than a quilt, use it instead.

(cont.)

Now complete the following statements:

1. I really wish I had more time to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. If I could learn something new, it would be \_\_\_\_\_.
3. If I could only \_\_\_\_\_ I would feel better about myself.
4. I feel so envious when I see other people \_\_\_\_\_.
5. If I had a free day, I would spend it \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I know I am taking good care of myself when I take time to \_\_\_\_\_.
7. I consider it a good day when I have \_\_\_\_\_.
8. I think I could get out of the slump I'm in if I could \_\_\_\_\_.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ always makes me happy.
10. My top priority right now is \_\_\_\_\_.

Use the space below to imagine your life as it could be. Design the quilt any way you like. Again, use any image that allows you to express your ideal life-work balance.

Look over your design with one or more people you really trust and strategize about how you could make changes to energize your life. Transfer your findings to your **Additional Summary Sheet**.

**If you can imagine it, you can do it!**

Adapted from: Free to Succeed by Barbara B. Reinhold.

## CHECKING THE FIT

How well-suited are you to the work you are currently doing? The following check-list is designed to help you evaluate how good a "fit" a particular type of work is for you. This exercise can also be used when you're evaluating a job offer or planning a new venture.

Job Characteristic	Poor Fit	OK Fit	Great Fit
My enthusiasm for the work	_____	_____	_____
Work load--hours per week	_____	_____	_____
Location	_____	_____	_____
Time alone--solo tasks	_____	_____	_____
Time with others--teamwork	_____	_____	_____
Work environment and culture	_____	_____	_____
How feedback is given	_____	_____	_____
Variety and change of pace	_____	_____	_____
Autonomy--time freedom	_____	_____	_____
Level of intellectual challenge	_____	_____	_____
Degree of competition	_____	_____	_____
Opportunities for advancement	_____	_____	_____
Style of supervisor	_____	_____	_____
Social value of work	_____	_____	_____
Relationships with co-workers	_____	_____	_____
Holidays and vacations	_____	_____	_____
Travel requirements	_____	_____	_____
Commuting time	_____	_____	_____
Salary and benefits	_____	_____	_____

How's the fit? If you have more than 2 or 3 checks in the "poor fit" column, it may be time for a change. What changes could you negotiate or arrange for yourself to make this position a better fit? Transfer your findings to your **Additional Summary Sheet**.

## **SUMMARY SHEET**

### **ADDITIONAL EXERCISES FOR THE MORE EXPERIENCED**

#### **EXERCISE #1--MY DECISION-MAKING HISTORY**

As you look over your lifeline and history of decision-making and risk-taking, what is most striking? Are there any patterns?

As a result of these findings, is there any need to modify your decision-making or risk-taking styles? If so, how?

#### **EXERCISE #2--BATTERY RE-CHARGING**

How does your life as you imagined it differ from your life as it is now?

What strategies can you think of to re-energize your life and work? Feel free to brainstorm with family, friends, and a CDO counselor about possibilities.

(cont.)

### **EXERCISE #3--CHECKING THE FIT**

How well-suited are you to the work you're currently doing?

What changes could you make or negotiate for a better fit?

### **NEXT STEPS**

**Combine your two sets of summary sheets.** As you look them over, ask yourself whether any more priorities, patterns, needs, ideas have risen to the top of your agenda.

**Discuss your findings,** and your reactions to those findings, with a willing and non-judgmental listener – friends, family, and/or a CDO counselor.

**If you've identified some fields** you'd like to explore, begin doing informational interviews with people in those fields, using the Informational Interviews handout: [www.smith.edu/cdo/handouts](http://www.smith.edu/cdo/handouts) (and the Alumnet if you're a Smith student or alumna).

**If your choices still feel a little murky,** set up a phone or in-person appointment at the CDO to brainstorm possible fields based on your exercise responses, and to identify sources of career information.