

# LOVE YOUR JOB! Finding Fulfillment at Work

BY HALLIE CRAWFORD

**Are you craving greater fulfillment in your career? Do you want more satisfaction at work but you're not sure how to get it?**

Many people feel this way, so you're not alone. In the past, it was acceptable just to punch a time clock at work and find

your fulfillment outside of the 9:00–5:00 workday. Or to wait until retirement to spend your time doing something you truly enjoyed. Fortunately, times have changed! You don't have to settle for less than a job that provides fulfillment and satisfaction, in addition to a steady paycheck.

I've noticed through my career coaching practice that people are now demanding that their jobs fill more than the need for a paycheck—they want fulfillment at work. I applaud this because I know from experi-

ence that this is possible. Now the question is...how do you find it?

One of the primary ways I help my career coaching clients determine what is fulfilling for them at work is by identifying what I call their *career values*. You've heard the word "values" before; here's how I define them—a value is an enduring belief that a specific way of behaving is preferable to any other. Your values are your priorities. They serve as a subconscious guide in helping you make decisions. Your values are at the core of who you are as a person, operating below the surface, much like the roots of a tree. The roots affect everything about the tree, just as your values influence your behavior and your decisions.

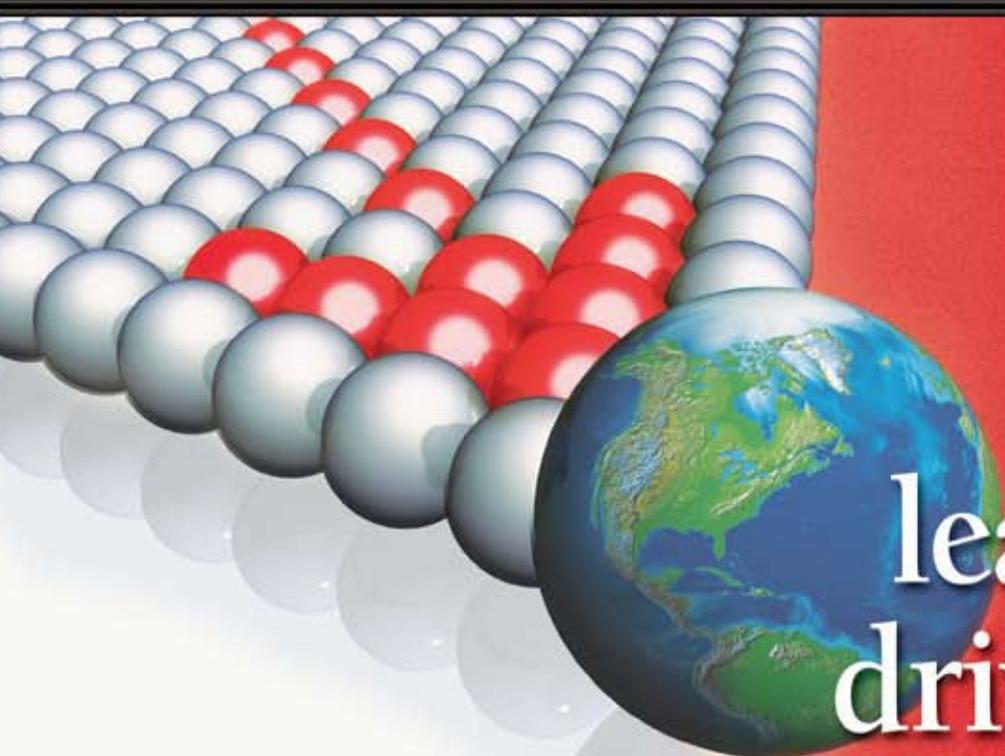
Most importantly, your values are your guideposts to fulfillment. Therefore, if you live your life according to your values, you will feel fulfilled. It then follows that if your career is aligned with your values, your career will be fulfilling for you. This is where the term *career values* comes in. Your career values are those values that you need to have honored at work to truly feel fulfilled.

Here are some examples of career values: accountability, achievement, adventure, autonomy, balance, beauty, communication, or community. Which, if any, of these things are important to you at your job? If you want to feel like you've achieved something every day at work, this could be one of your career values. Or if you're looking for a career with an air of adventure, then this is a value to place on your list. One reason that people tend to feel unfulfilled at work is that their career values either are not being honored or they are being stepped on. If you have a sense that some aspect of your job isn't a fit for you, it could be because one of your values is not being honored.



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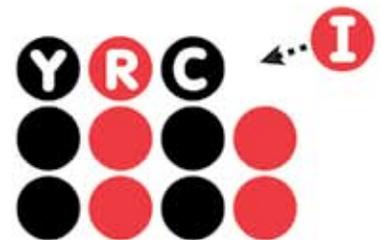
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## Here is a **five-step process** to get you started on identifying your career values and making changes to feel more fulfilled at work:

### STEP #1 Clarify Your Career Values

Answer these questions and make a list of what comes to mind first:

- What parts of your job do you love to do? When you perform these tasks, do you achieve a sense of satisfaction or pleasure?
- Think of a peak experience or positive pivotal moment at work. What made it a peak experience? Was it the kudos you received for a job well done or the sense of teamwork you experienced on a specific project? Write down why it was a high point in your career.
- If you were allowed to make one powerful, positive change in your workplace, large or small, what would it be?

The items on the list you created from these questions are some of your career values. Keep this list handy. As you think about what you like and don't like at your current job, you will begin to uncover more values to add to the list.

### STEP #2 Reflect On Your Current Job

Circle those values that are present in your current job and which are not. For example, if you have a value of achievement, but you don't get to see the results of your work every day, you may feel unfulfilled. Your value of achievement is not being honored. Circle it. Do the same for the other values on your list.

### STEP #3 Put Your Values to Work

Determine how you can begin to incorporate your career values into your current work situation. What changes can you make at work to begin honoring your values on a more regular basis? For example, if your value of achievement is not being honored, one action you can take is to begin to notice each day the things you accomplish at work. Before you leave at the end of the day, write down everything you accomplished since you first sat down at your desk that morning.

### STEP #4 Take Action

Make a list of action steps that you plan to implement in the next three weeks to begin honoring your career values at work. They can be small steps—one small step per week is a great start. You don't have to move mountains all at once. If you begin to take steps toward developing greater career fulfillment, the effect will snowball. You will feel better knowing that you are taking action.

### STEP #5 Decide if it's Time to Move On

If you realize that you can't make enough changes in your job to accommodate your career values, consider making a bigger move. Is it time to look for another position in your organization? Or time to find a different career path? If you come to this realization after trying to incorporate your values into your current position, at least you will know you gave it your best shot. And you will feel more solid in your decision that it's time to move on.

When you know what your career values are, you will experience greater satisfaction at work and feel more fulfilled in all aspects

of your life. And if it's time to make a career change, your values will help you decide what career path is best for you.

After finishing this exercise, you will probably get a sense right away of where your job is not rewarding and why. Know that it is possible to make changes to find greater fulfillment at work. And remember, they don't have to be huge steps. Making some small changes at your job can make a big difference. All it takes is being more conscious of what you enjoy and why, and what you can do about it right now. Take action today! **CM**

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**HALLIE CRAWFORD, MA, CPCC** (certified professional co-active coach), has her own coaching practice, Authentically Speaking, and is also an affiliate with the Center for Balanced Living. For tips, tools, and expert advice on finding a career you're passionate about, visit her Web site at [www.halliecrawford.com](http://www.halliecrawford.com).

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