

Do You Feel Lost In Your Career?

**Seven Steps To Making
Positive Career Changes
Today**



Eddins Counseling Group

PERSONAL AND CAREER COUNSELING SERVICES

www.eddinscounseling.com



Do You Feel Lost in Your Career? Seven Steps to Making Positive Changes Today

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INTRODUCTION

Do you feel stuck and unsatisfied in your career or job search? Maybe you worry that you will never find a career that utilizes your skills, involves your passions, and makes you happy. You might be unsure of your strengths and wonder what other careers you might be qualified for. Perhaps you know you want to make a change for the sake of your mental, emotional, and physical well-being, but feel discouraged and in need of guidance and support. And, if you are just entering or reentering the working world, you might feel lost, afraid, and unsure about what direction to take. No matter what your story, you're in the right place. Whether you've been in a career for a number of years or you're just getting started, it's a good idea to re-evaluate your present situation.

Your career is an enormous part of your life. Even if you try to leave your work behind you when you clock out and head home, what you spend the majority of each day doing influences your sense of self-worth and helps to shape your understanding of who you are. In order to feel good in other aspects of your life, it's important to find a career that makes you feel whole, hopeful, and proud about how you spend your time. A good fit career gives you a sense of purpose and meaning.

You can take control of your career. Regardless of how you feel right now, you have the strengths, skills, and resources inside of you that can help you find and excel in a satisfying career. With a little help, you can uncover who you truly are and the best career fit for you.

Even if you are in a hurry to get a job, knowing clearly what you want is important for two reasons:

1. Search focus: it helps you more tightly focus on your target employers, industries, and positions, which is essential for many job search strategies.
2. Self-marketing: employers are more likely to select candidates who can clearly articulate what they want and why they want to work for a particular organization.

GETTING STARTED

In this report, we'll address some initial steps on your path to a fulfilling career. A career counselor or career program can help you to dig deeper and get greater clarification through asking powerful coaching questions, conducting deeper self-exploration exercises, performing [career and personality assessments](#), and exploring possibilities with you. An experienced counselor is skilled at active listening and can help you to overcome hurdles and make connections that you might not be able to make on your own. Because a counselor is an objective audience, he or she can also help you do away with internalized self-doubt and identify strengths and skills that you might not be aware of.

The key to this process is the willingness to ask yourself questions, answer honestly, and keep asking as your career unfolds. As you do this, pay particular attention to anything that hints toward your purpose and passion, for they are the essence of your internal career compass, which will guide you as you move forward and make decisions. Don't let the word purpose intimidate you – you're not looking for a cloud parting revelation. Rather, you're looking for the simple, yet unique ways you express yourself day to day that can be channeled into a career.

STEP 1: ASSESS WHAT IS PROMPTING YOUR CAREER CHANGE

Before you pursue a new career, it is important that you first take the time to figure out what is not working in your current or old career. By identifying what doesn't work, you can better recognize the issues you want to avoid in your future and ask yourself what you would prefer instead. Asking yourself what you would prefer instead is a key component in gaining clarity on what it is you *do* want. Although you may feel like a drastic career change is necessary, you might find that you would be happy with new responsibilities or a new environment.

Think about the following aspects of your current job:

- **Your tasks:** Do you feel like your work tasks are tedious or do not challenge you enough? Or, are your tasks driving you crazy because you have so much to do? What would you prefer to do?
- **Your work environment:** Do you sit in a cubicle all day and long for the outdoors, or do you work in all sorts of weather and wish you had an office? Are you happy and productive in your work setting?
- **Your coworkers:** Do you relate well with your colleagues, or do you experience conflict with your coworkers and supervisors? Do you work from home and wish you had coworkers to commiserate with? Do you feel isolated doing the type of work you do? What types of relationships would you prefer?
- **Your lifestyle:** Does your job prevent you from enjoying activities or social events? Do you constantly feel stressed? Be sure to clarify what is internally based and what is externally based pressure (i.e., being on call vs. pushing yourself to get it all done).
- **Major life events:** Has a major life change, such as the birth of a child or the end of a relationship, changed your career needs? What specifically do you need now at this stage?



Once you begin to identify the aspects of your career that make you unhappy, you can determine what changes you need to make for yourself. You might find that you can make positive changes in your current career, but you also might discover that your current career path just doesn't fit your needs. Don't forget to evaluate alternative career paths with your current employer. It's easier and more realistic to make one change at a time.

STEP 2: MAKE YOUR MIND YOUR FRIEND AND ALLOW YOURSELF TO DREAM BIG

When beginning career exploration, it's important to expand your options wide. Expanding your options allows you to explore new opportunities and increases your chances of finding the right fit. Many people limit themselves in this stage either due to overwhelm or holding themselves back. You may not realize ways in which you hold yourself back. For example, "I don't have enough education." Though that may be true, there may be alternative paths to a similar career that doesn't require the same advanced education/training. For example, someone who enjoys teaching may decide to become a trainer or provide education through self-employment in a personal passion vs. becoming a teacher. At this stage in the process, write the career interest down on your list as it may be a clue to an alternative good fit career path.

You may also be limiting yourself due to a niche you were working in previously. Particularly if the niche is no longer ideal for you or is no longer a booming industry. It can be helpful to identify what you really want through self-assessment, seek input from others who know you personally and professionally as well as others who know your industry, and conduct your own market research. Don't limit yourself to your experience only.

Many people limit themselves in less obvious ways. How you see things – the stories you create in your mind – determine your experience of life. What are your stories or self-limiting beliefs? They may be hard to recognize because they sound so familiar or practical to you. Here are a few examples:

- I don't have enough experience.
- I'm too old.
- Other's won't pay me for that.
- It's just a hobby.
- I don't have enough education.
- I'm good, but not great.

- I could be successful if I could just learn to (focus/stop procrastinating).
- People don't like me until they get to know me.
- I am not that smart.
- I don't have enough xxx.

These self-limiting beliefs may be getting in the way of you finding a meaningful career path. They may seem realistic to you and others may have told you the same thing, but that doesn't mean they are true. The next time you find yourself ruling out a potential career option or feeling stuck, pay attention to your thoughts. See if you can identify (and write down) any limiting beliefs.

Spend some time over the next few weeks with your limiting beliefs. Ask yourself what if the opposite were true? What would be possible for you? What does that feel like?

It's normal to feel fear, despair, and trepidation as you open yourself up to change. Fear is part of the process. Stay with it and know that even if you feel afraid, you are ready and capable. You have what it takes. And if things seem overwhelming, you can seek support in the process.

"YOU HAVE BRAINS IN YOUR HEAD. YOU HAVE FEET IN YOUR SHOES. YOU CAN STEER YOURSELF ANY DIRECTION YOU CHOOSE."

DR. SEUSS

STEP 3: ASSESS YOURSELF

The next step is to assess yourself and learn more about who you are in relation to work.

TALENTS (SKILLS & STRENGTHS) + PASSIONS & INTERESTS + PERSONALITY + VALUES = PURPOSE

PURPOSE + LIFESTYLE + NEEDS = CAREER SATISFACTION & LIFE BALANCE

Getting in touch with your strengths, interests, personality, values, and goals often requires some time, attention, and thought – especially if you have changed and grown over the years. For example, you may have once prioritized a high salary, but now value time with your family as well. If you don't know the answers to the following questions, that's ok. They are simply meant to prompt your thinking. There are many other strategies you can use as well. To go through this process in depth, you can participate in our [career coaching group or self-directed career program](#).

Your personality type is the way in which you prefer to express yourself and interact with the world. We all change and grow, but what changes are our perceptions, our perspective and our ideas. What remains the same is our personality, the tendencies and preferences we were born with. To assess your personality type, we offer the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality assessment. If you're interested in taking the full Myers-Briggs Type Indicator personality assessment, you can do so through our office: <http://eddinscounseling.com/career-testing/>. For an in-depth view of your interests and how they relate to careers, you can complete the Strong Interest Inventory (SII). Through this assessment, your interests are compared to the occupations of others who have similar interests and enjoy their jobs. It's used to help you identify potential good-fit careers, but should be used as one tool of many (as you want to consider all elements in the formula above). To complete the full SII assessment, visit <http://eddinscounseling.com/career-testing/>.

1. WHAT DO YOU WANT? A QUICK BRAINSTORM:

a. What do you want from your career in the long-term?

b. What do you want and not want in your next job?

c. What would you most like to change about your current career? What would you like to eliminate?

d. If you could do anything you wanted and knew you couldn't fail, what would it be?



e. List aspects of all your prior experience that you MOST liked:

f. List aspects of all your prior experience that you LEAST liked.

g. What do you feel passionate about? What do you love? What is important to you? What do you get angry about? (Ex: working outdoors, politics, creative strategy, food, your family)

h. I am happiest when I



i. If I had a million dollars, I would...

j. One thing I would change in my life would be ...

k. I daydream most about ...

l. In school, I did best in/when...

2. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER?

a. What are the top three skills that you offer an employer?

b. What can you do easily that other people find difficult?

c. What is difficult for you that others seem to find easier?

d. People tell me I'm good at...



e. What do you LOVE doing/being?

3. GET FEEDBACK ON YOUR STRENGTHS AND SKILLS:

Choose two or three people you respect and who know you fairly well. Tell them you are gathering feedback to help you evaluate your career direction and set up a meeting or at least a phone or email connection with each to ask them three questions:

a. What do you see as my natural strengths/talents?

b. What do you think are my best skills?

c. What kind of things could you see me doing well in the future?

Pay attention but consider carefully before letting them steal your dreams. They should be helping you uncover new dreams if they aren't supporting existing ones. Identify any patterns and themes in the way others see you.

4. YOUR WORK VALUES:

One way to begin to identify what we want is to evaluate and rank a list of things work can offer us. This exercise will help you determine which values are important to you in your daily life and career.

Place an “X” in the box that best describes the relative importance to you of each work value.

High = essential. Medium = desirable, but not essential. Low = little importance.

YOUR WORK VALUES							
	Relative Importance				Relative Importance		
	High	Medium	Low		High	Medium	Low
Leadership & authority				Excitement & challenge			
Autonomy & independence				Physical activity			
Opportunity for Advancement				Knowledge/Learning			
Responsibility				Personal development			
Integrity				Harmonious relationships			
Location				Fun			
Lifestyle				Adventure			
Predictable				Community contribution			
High potential capital gain				Work-life balance			
Variety				Creativity			
Recognition/Feedback & Status				Helping others			
Entrepreneurship				Friendships			
Fast pace				High income			
Professionalism				Time freedom			
Peace of mind				Meaningful work			
Security				Winning/competition			
Achievement				Helping Society			
Environment				Influence People			
Self-Direction				Stability			
Public contact				Make decisions			
Part of group/team				Affiliated with organization			

Write your top eight values in order here (most important at the top).

Ranked Top 8	What does that value word mean to you? Why is it important?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.	
Ranked Bottom 3	What does that value word mean to you? Why is it not important?
1. 2. 3.	

Values are the fundamental piece that connects who you are with what you do. They are the foundation for a satisfying career. In fact, research shows that people who are satisfied and happy in their careers identified values as key factors in career decision-making.

THE FEAR FACTOR:

Once you've identified your underlying values, take a look at the list again. Of the values you've identified, which ones are a result of something you are afraid of or have negative emotions associated with? Which are not truly YOUR values? For example, "I fear being controlled, therefore, authority is important to me." Fear-based values have more control over you than you over them. Essentially, this value is saying, "I have to avoid being controlled and, as a result, I'm not taking the time to find out what I really want."



Which of your values represents your authentic self and focuses on positive emotions? For example, “I love being creative and would like to find more ways to express my creative self.” Authority would fit in this example as, “I want to have authority so that I can express my creative ideas.”

To live a life you love, you must move toward the positive and away from the negative.

STEP 4: EXPLORE YOUR IDEAL WORK DAY

Ask yourself, “If I were to have the perfect career, what would it look like?” Imagine an ideal day moment to moment, from the time you wake up until the time you go to sleep at night. Write each part of that day down. Imagine what you would do if you knew you could not fail. Consider the following points:

- What do you do first thing (i.e., do you jump up to an alarm and get in the shower, or slowly rise and begin your day with your yoga practice?)
- Where is your office and what does it look like?
- Who are you interacting with?
- What tasks are you performing?
- What are you doing in your “off-time” throughout the day and evening?
- How do you feel while working throughout your day?

The more details you have, the better.

REFLECT ON YOUR IDEAL DAY AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. Look at how your day is structured. What does this tell you is important to you? What do you care about? Consider all aspects of your day (not just working hours). What we are looking for here is what matters to you in your life.



2. What makes your day meaningful?

3. What aspects of a work environment do you find important and essential? How did you visualize your environment?

4. What personal qualities did you bring to your work?

5. What sort of work interactions did you have?



6. What skills did you use?

Go through each item in your ideal day and ask yourself, what desires do these satisfy? Why do I want them? When you discover the reason, write it down here in the form “to be.” For example, if you write that you would ideally meet with people in an office, you might say, “to be connected with others” or “to be helpful to others.” This is your work value: to be connected and/or helpful. Use the values list to help identify what desire or value is connected to each item.

Circle things you want and write down anything else that you observed about your perfect day. Consider the things that you can start incorporating into your life today.

STEP 5: RESTORE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL BALANCE

If you are unhappy in your career, you may feel burned out and unmotivated in many parts of your life. You might feel disconnected and exhausted both at home and at work and be eager to “zone out” in your free time. Maybe you wonder if you even have passions anymore. Crashing in front of the computer or the TV may not be doing enough to nurture your mind, emotions, and body. In order to reconnect with excitement in your life and gain a better, deeper perspective on your needs and desires, it is important to take steps toward restoring physical and emotional balance in your life. Are there areas where you can set boundaries in what is draining you? Perhaps you can leave the laptop at work, say no, or leave a little earlier?

You can begin adopting small daily habits to regain balance. Improved self-care can have an enormous impact on your self-image and self-confidence. Exercise and movement are wonderful for releasing tensions and clearing your head. Even if you don't consider yourself athletic, a short walk around your neighborhood might give you the chance to reenergize as you think about your day. Getting outdoors can also open up your creativity.

Taking time for connection with yourself and others can also help you find peace and calm. You might start a journal, try an activity you used to enjoy (especially when you were young), or read an inspirational book to reconnect with your deeply held thoughts and emotions. Reaching out to your friends and family is another great way to nurture yourself. Even a brief phone call with a loved one can recharge your batteries and brighten your spirits. Share your feelings with someone you trust – family, friends, a counselor or career coach. Take some time to reflect on your life.

When you begin to incorporate greater self-care into your schedule, you might be surprised to find that your job no longer seems as terrible. Or, you may achieve the clarity and confidence you needed to free yourself from a negative work environment and explore breaking out of your comfort zone. The goal is to create space to allow yourself to be inspired, find your a-ha's, and manage anxiety, fear and doubt.



PRACTICE ONE-MINUTE DEEP BREATHING

When you feel overwhelmed, stressed, or anxious about your situation, take a one-minute time out. *Slow* your breathing. Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly. Open your mouth and sigh deeply allowing all your muscles to relax. Inhale slowly through your nose by pushing your stomach out until you've inhaled deeply. PAUSE (2-4 counts). Then empty your breath completely through your mouth and pulling your belly back in for a slow, long exhale (4-7 counts).

CREATE YOUR SELF-CARE TOOLBOX

Identify the following:

1. Whom can I turn to for support when I'm afraid? Who comforts me, makes me feel safe, and allows me to have my feelings?

2. Whom do I need to avoid? Who adds to my anxiety level, overwhelms me with questions, or has a tough time just listening without interrupting or offering advice?



3. What does my body need to feel nurtured, strong, and healthy?

4. What responsibilities or commitments do I need to let go of to clear some space so that I'm able to feel my feelings and do what's necessary to honor my needs?

5. What unhelpful coping strategies or activities do I need to avoid?

6. How will I best express my feelings?



7. What can I do when I need to take a break from the emotional stress? What's my best healthy distraction?

STEP 6: BE IN CHARGE AND FOCUS ON WHAT IS WORKING

Sometimes, you may feel as though you have lost control in your life. Perhaps you have spent so much time in your career that you feel dragged along by a lazy current, heading nowhere. But, it doesn't need to be this way. You are in charge of your present and your future. To help empower yourself to do what is meaningful to you, it can be important to focus on your strengths, as well as the positives in your current job.

If you are struggling with career issues, you may feel as though you don't have any unique skills, or that you aren't qualified for a career that you want. While your job is a large part of who you are, there may be other aspects of your life that make you feel joyful, fulfilled, and accomplished. Although it may not seem so, there are things that are working. What is one thing you can do today to feel in charge of your destiny? It doesn't have to be big. It can be as simple as keeping a list of the things you liked about your day. Once you make the decision to do something good for yourself, you can begin to move forward.

Acknowledging your strengths can also help you feel empowered and confident. Take a look back on your experiences and see what you've enjoyed, what skills you were employing at those times, and what kinds of tasks you were dealing with. Look for patterns and priorities. These will help you see where you have focused your energy. The accomplishments that have given and currently give you the most pride and satisfaction tend to indicate where your greatest concentration of motivated skills exists. You will be happier, more productive, and more successful if you can incorporate your strengths into your life work.

FIND YOUR MOTIVATED SKILLS:

Identify 10 experiences in which you:

1. Feel you did well and
2. Enjoyed doing and
3. Are proud of



For each experience, identify the primary skills you used to make that happen. List as many as you can for each one. Consider HOW did you make that happen, what did you actually DO to make that happen?

Accomplishment	Skills Used
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	



STEP 7: HOLD HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Both research and our experience tells us that you can create a future that is right for you if you first allow yourself to dream and remain hopeful about what might be possible. Once you can believe what you hope for the future is possible, you can begin to imagine possibilities. Once you imagine them, they start to slowly take fruition in your life. You can make it happen!

Let's start by putting together what you've worked on so far.

Step 1: List the top three values you want to be remembered for:

Step 2: List the top three passions/interests in your life:



Step 3: List the top three talents, skills, or abilities that you possess:

Step 4: Use the following example sentence as a template to build your life purpose statement. This is just a starting point to help you express yourself.

“My purpose is to express my core values of _____
through my love of _____
and my unique talents of _____.”

“THE MOMENT ONE COMMITS ONESELF, THEN PROVIDENCE COMMITS TOO. WHATEVER YOU CAN DO OR DREAM YOU CAN, BEGIN IT. BOLDNESS HAS GENIUS, POWER AND MAGIC IN IT. BEGIN IT NOW.”

- JOHANN GOETHE

A CAREER COUNSELOR CAN HELP YOU PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER

At Eddins Counseling Group, we are committed to being trustworthy, respectful, friendly, down-to-earth, well-prepared, and focused on your needs. People often find it stressful to make important decisions. Many try to avoid the anxiety of decision-making caused by choosing their own career path. Some do this by letting parents, teachers, friends, or employers decide for them. Others try to pay a career coach to tell them what to do. Neither of these approaches work.

While you may want to alleviate the anxiety of not knowing, letting others tell you what to do can result in a career that may suit those other people, but is not ideal for you. A career coach can open up new possibilities and help you choose more wisely, but he or she cannot make your choices for you. It is important for you to listen and learn from others, but to make your own career decisions in the end. Formal written career assessment tests are useful for increasing self-awareness and creating a list of possible options to consider, but there is no test that can tell you *exactly* what you should do. There are too many factors that only you can identify and weigh.

If you feel stuck and unsure about what to do, we invite you to remember the importance of turning inward rather than outward. We have helped many different people in many different situations find their ideal careers. During sessions, one of our clients realized that she was unsure of what “meaningful” meant for her. She struggled to find a career that would make her feel purposeful because she was out of touch with her inner values and needs. She realized that her struggles were not just about the office or her difficult commute, but something much deeper. Through counseling, we helped her face her fears, build confidence, and uncover her personal definition of “meaningful” to create a career path that was exciting and interesting for her.

Working with a career counselor can help you envision an unlimited range of possibility for change, including new, exciting ideas that you might not have thought of before. You can nurture curiosity, optimism, and enthusiasm in your life.



Together, we can develop a clear plan that can guide you as you begin to pursue your career. You can begin to feel confident in who you are, hopeful about your future, and happy in your job.

Located in Houston, TX, with online career coaching available, our team of qualified career counselors is dedicated to helping clients develop self-confidence, self-awareness, and the power to move past barriers and obstacles into deeply fulfilling lives and careers. Contact a Career Counselor at 832-559-2622 or send us an email at hello@eddinscounseling.com for more information about group career coaching, individual career counseling, career testing, college planning, and self-paced career programs.