



careergasm

www.careergasm.com

THE REARVIEW MIRROR

You can't see what's in front of you by looking in the rearview mirror.

True. But you DO have to check the rearview mirror while driving. Looking behind you gives you helpful information as you navigate the road ahead.

Of course, I'm not just talking about driving. Looking behind you can be darn good for your career too.

OBJECTS IN MIRROR ARE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR

Let's take a look at your career up until now, shall we? If you've hated most of your career or if you're just starting your career, don't panic. We're going to mine your work history – all of it – for precious clues about what your ideal career could look like.

If you hate your job or industry, you may feel like your career up until now has been wasted time. Trust me, while it may feel that way, there's good stuff there. When you use your work history as a teaching tool, the dots start to connect. You notice that your previous experiences were there to teach you something about yourself, and making a career change – even a radical one – no longer feels like you've been wasting years of your life. It's all valuable stuff. It's empowering to use your past in this way.

Write down every single job you've had. Even the volunteer jobs, part-time gigs, extra curriculars, student jobs, babysitting, burger flipping, whatever. Go as far back as you can remember. If you can go back to the jobs you had as a teenager and young adult, you'll get even more out of this exercise.

Every job I've ever had:

Now, think of one or two things you genuinely liked about each of your former jobs. Even for jobs you hated, there was probably *something* about it that you enjoyed. For example, when I was a teenager I worked at a meat counter. I hated that job, but I did enjoy cleaning the shop and keeping things organized. It was a very small part of the job, but for me it was the best part.

The best job I ever had, aside from the one I have now, was waaay back when I worked as a residence assistant in a university dorm during my undergraduate degree. People came to me with their problems. I created a community of support. The pay was crappy and the hours were many, but I could write a list a mile long about the things I loved about that job.

YOUR TURN

Job:

Things I Liked About This Job:

Job:

Things I Liked About This Job:

THE SIDE MIRROR

While you're at it, check your side mirror too. Notice the information available in your immediate environment. What do you like about your current work? Maybe it's something that is a major part of your job or maybe it's a couple of teeny-tiny tangential details, but come up with a few things. It would be a shame for some really good information to sneak up and pass you by because you weren't paying attention.

Things I like about my current (or most recent) job:

DIG DEEPER

Look at the lists of things you like about your current and previous jobs. What themes do you see emerging? These themes are signposts for what you might consider important ingredients in fulfilling work.

My own work history includes jobs working as a waitress, a cleaning lady, a shopkeeper, a salesperson, a recruiter, a manager, a trainer, a marketer, an advisor, a receptionist, an editor, a speaker, a researcher, a professor, a writer, and a coach. Based only on what I liked about those jobs (not the job titles or job descriptions), some of my themes are creating, organizing, nurturing, helping, teaching, and communicating. These are my own personal career history signposts.

What signposts/themes do you see when you look at your lists of career history “likes”?

Signposts from my career history “likes”:

Congratulations. You have just compiled a list of the types of activities that get your motor running. We’re going to add to it in the next section.