

STEP 2: APTITUDE

Discovering Your Unique Qualities

There is no one like you anywhere. There never has been. There never will be. You are a one-of-a-kind person uniquely designed and crafted by the hands of God. Nowhere on the planet does another person have your DNA and personal history. Over 2,000 years ago Israel's King David wrote this truth...

*For You (God) created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made . . .*
Psalm 139:13-14

If you start with this truth, then you're free to discover more about *how* you're uniquely made—which is essential for maximizing your career potential.

As you explore this crossroads in your career, plan to add to, subtract from, and modify what you know about yourself. Seek to discover what you do best and what you enjoy most. Discover your incredible gifts and deep passions for a life of purpose. You *can* make a difference, and you'll learn how to live and work maximizing your unique God-given design. The apostle Peter wrote:

*As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another
as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*
1 Peter 4:10

FIVE FACTORS IN YOUR UNIQUE DESIGN

The more and the better you understand your unique qualities, the more and better you can see how you to maximize your career potential. Most professionals in career planning and recruiting consider five factors:

BACKGROUND	Life history: Especially experience and education
ABILITIES	What you do best: Skills, talents, knowledge
PERSONALITY	How you do what you do best: Natural behavior
INTERESTS	What you like most: Things you enjoy doing
VALUES	What is important to you: Purpose and passions

Background + Abilities + Personality = Natural Capacity

Your natural capacity is the combination of your background, abilities (skills, talents, knowledge) plus your personality (normal behavioral traits). This capacity, unique to you, is motivated and used according to your personal passions (below).

Interests + Values = Personal Passions

Your passions include your interests (what you like doing) and your values (what is important to you).

INTRODUCING THE “X” FACTOR

Now that we have introduced the five factors that make up your natural capacity and your personal passions, it's time to add the sixth factor – the “X” Factor.

The “X” Factor encompasses much more than your job, career or work. It is the active presence of Jesus Christ—through the Holy Spirit—in your whole life, including your job, career or work. It begins the millisecond you are created anew in Christ Jesus by accepting Him as your Lord and Savior. Consider this thought...

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

—2 Corinthians 5:17 (NASB)

The “X” Factor brings to life the real you as God’s workmanship. Many people believe that your natural capacity and personal passions, ignited by the Holy Spirit, are transformed into spiritual gifts which are used in ministering for the good of others not only in church and religious efforts, but also in your home and work life.

DISCOVERING YOUR UNIQUE QUALITIES

1. **Self-Assessments:** Think of these exercises as interviewing yourself. See exercises on pages 3-4 thru 3-6 for the three key elements to a self-assessment:
 - ❖ *Background:* Places you’ve worked; Work you’ve done
 - ❖ *Accomplishments:* You are a STAR! Describe each accomplishment in terms of the...
 - Situation you faced
 - Task to accomplish
 - Action you took
 - Result you achieved
 - ❖ *Attributes:* Abilities; Interests; Personality; Values
2. **Reference Assessments:** You’ll ask six or more people you know to tell you how they see you. The goal of this exercise is to help you learn more about yourself. You should ask people from your work, your family, and the community. See exercise on page 3-7.
3. **Professional Career Assessments:** Many professional assessments are available; many online. While we suggest taking a variety of assessment, we always recommend one assessment in particular: The *CareerDirect® Online Complete Guidance System*. See exercise on page 3-8.
4. **Spiritual Gifts Assessments:** If the “X” Factor is operating in your life because of your personal faith and following Jesus Christ, then we recommend you learn more about your spiritual gifts and how they can be used to minister to others. To help you assess your giftedness, take the PLACE Ministries online assessment for FREE instead of \$4.95. Go to www.PLACEMinistries.org. Choose the “I have been given a partner code” option. Enter the **Partner Code AGYECYTAF** to access your Online Assessment.

Once you have entered the Partner Code in the space provided you will gain access to 1 online assessment and at that time you will be given your own personal User ID and Password. You will use this ID and Password if you wish to return to your assessment at a later time. **Do not use a Partner Code more than one time.**
5. **Putting It All Together:** Summarize what you’ve learned using the process outlined on a simple form that helps you see everything on one page. See exercise on page 3-9.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR UNIQUE DESIGN

Look at your “Putting It All Together” exercise sheet. See if there are themes or key words and phrases that are repeated as it relates to you background, abilities, interests, personality and values. For example, do you see that some of your abilities are the same as some of your interests? The more you can align the five factors of your design with a work opportunity, the great you will maximize your career potential.

You may feel awkward or even confused at first. Share your exercise sheet and thoughts with people who know you well. Ask them for their perspective. If you are going through the guide with a coach or in a small group, show them your assessments and worksheets. Do they see any themes?

Still confused? Many people need more help in understanding their unique qualities. You may want to work with a professional career counselor or coach—someone objective, whose job is to guide you through this process.

It's often difficult for people to know when they've gone far enough with this exercise. Some people love this kind of work. If you're this type of person, you'll easily postpone looking at the market, because you're learning so much about yourself! For others, the challenge is to stick with this process and not *rush* through it.

To help you take the next step to **ALTITUDE**:

1. **Practice presenting key factors of your design to others.** If a person were to ask you to tell them what you uniquely offer, you'd want to give a short, clear answer about something deeper and more unique than perfect attendance or many years of experience in your present job. In fact, you'd want to touch on *background, abilities, interests, personality, and values*.
2. **Remember – God is not finished with you yet.** He will keep perfecting you and revealing more to you about yourself. Write down what you have, and take the next step, understanding that you will learn and return to this exercise as you are walking through the six steps!

SELF –ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND  EXERCISE

Start with your **background**. List the places you've worked since high school and all the jobs you've had. Include both the work for which you were paid and all major volunteer and community service work, educational projects, internships, and extracurricular activities you did while you were in school and since you've graduated. Mark or highlight those jobs and places you loved and those you'd never want to repeat. See any trends?

Places You've Worked	Work You've Done

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS  **EXERCISE**

While reviewing the self-assessment of your experience, think of as many accomplishments as you can. List at least three accomplishments, and then make key notes about each one in four ways. What **Situation** did you face? What was the **Task** to be accomplished? What **Actions** did you take? What **Results** did you achieve? Learn how to answer these four questions about accomplishments well, and you will become a **STAR** candidate!

ACCOMPLISHMENT _____

Situation You Faced	Task to Accomplish	Actions You Took	Results Achieved

ACCOMPLISHMENT _____

Situation You Faced	Task to Accomplish	Actions You Took	Results Achieved

ACCOMPLISHMENT _____

Situation You Faced	Task to Accomplish	Actions You Took	Results Achieved

SELF-ASSESSMENT ATTRIBUTES  **EXERCISE**

Now think about yourself in each of these four categories. Write down key words and phrases that come to mind about you in each category. If you have a hard time with this exercise, ask God to refresh your thinking so you can clearly see yourself. Use what you've learned from the exercises and reflection in this step. Review this with others you trust: a mentor, colleague, or spouse. Or all three.

<p style="text-align: center;">Abilities <i>work and activities you're really good at</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Interests <i>work and activities you really enjoy</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Personality <i>key words that describe you</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Values <i>things that really matter to you</i></p>

REFERENCE ASSESSMENT  **EXERCISE**

Ask people who know you for input and feedback. Once you are registered as Career Explorer and log on to the Crossroads website, you can download, save and print this document [Reference Assessment.pdf](#).

Instructions to the Person Completing This Form: Thank you so much for taking the time to fill out this form! Please assess the strengths and weaknesses of the person who gave you this form in each of the six categories. Details are important, and specific examples can be helpful. Feel free to use the back of the form for extra space. You do not have to include your name. Please be as open and honest as possible.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Sometimes we're too modest or too close to our work to see accomplishments clearly. What are the top things this person should remember that they've accomplished?

ABILITIES

What is this person best at? What three or four abilities should be at the core of what they do every day?

INTERESTS

Where do you feel this person most readily invests time, energy, talent, and money? What does he/she seem to enjoy most?

PERSONALITY

What positive personality traits come to mind when you think of this person?

VALUES

What positive values and character strengths does this person have?

BLIND SPOTS/WEAKNESSES

In which of these categories does this person need the most improvement? What things, if improved, would make the most significant impact in this person's ability to be outstanding in what he/she does?

PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT  EXERCISE

Hundreds of assessments are on the market, and more than likely you’ve already taken one or two through school, work or church. Some focus on skills, some on traits. Some can be taken in 10 minutes; others take hours and include follow-up sessions with a counselor. Read wise advice of Richard Bolles, author of *What Color is Your Parachute?* from www.jobhuntersbible.com.

- ❖ Treat all tests as suggestive, only.
- ❖ Take several tests, rather than just one.
- ❖ Don’t let tests make you forget that you are absolutely unique.
- ❖ An online test by itself isn’t as useful as one administered by qualified professional career counselor.

We recommend the *CareerDirect® Online Complete Guidance System* developed by Crown Financial Ministries. This professional career assessment features and benefits include...

- ❖ Analyzes four major career related issues: skills, interests, personality and values
- ❖ Provides clear direction needed to help make sound decisions in either of 3 applications
 - Educational – find college and technical school majors best for you
 - Occupational – search for the best-fit job for you based on your unique design
 - Career Maximization – discover how to you maximize your career potential
- ❖ Based on biblical principles of work, your God-given design, and stewardship of talents
- ❖ Used by over 120,000 people across North America with countless testimonies of help
- ❖ Researched and developed over 10 years and meeting standards of validity and reliability

To see and learn more, go to *CareerDirect®*. A Registration Key for *CareerDirect®* Online is available through participating member churches of the Crossroads Career Network at the substantial discount of 75%: From \$80 to only \$20.

Your *CareerDirect®* reports are instantly available upon completing the assessments which usually takes about an hour. We recommend you summarize your highest ranked qualities right here...

Skills	Interests	Personality Traits	Work Values

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER  **EXERCISE**
YOUR UNIQUE GOD-GIVEN DESIGN

Now it's time to put all of these different views together and create your self-portrait.

- ❖ First, take out all of your assessment worksheets and your professional assessment report, or the report summaries from any other assessments you may have taken.
- ❖ Second, consider any work you have done on mission, vision, or life purpose statements.
- ❖ Third, spread them all out and look for common themes.
- ❖ Then, from these compiled resources, write down two to five of the most important items in each of the following categories.

BACKGROUND

ABILITIES

INTERESTS

PERSONALITY

VALUES

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

BLIND SPOTS/WEAKNESSES

READ & WRITE DEVOTIONAL



GIVE THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING YOU!

Each one should use whatever gift he has received
to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.
 1 Peter 4:10

You are God's gift to others. Blessed to be a blessing! Prayerfully review the exercises you completed and write below the unique spiritual, mental and physical capacities God has given you. Write down whatever comes to mind, big or small. Next, think of people to whom you can give at work, home, community, church, school – wherever you go.

What God Has Given You?	To Whom Can You Give – and How?
Natural Talents	
Skills and Abilities	
Special Knowledge	
Personality Traits	

**GO ONLINE**

Log in and on the Career Explorer landing page, point to and select Career Tools - Aptitude.

**SESSION****For the Next Session: Step 3 – Altitude**

Read and complete instructions, exercises and the devotional. Be ready to talk about what you have learned. Make sure you've gone online to read articles and browse sites that are particularly relevant to your interests and issues right now.

**PRAYER JOURNAL**

Use this rest of this page—or your own journal—for notes, quotes and prayers about specific insights, questions and prayer requests that you have at this point for yourself or others in your group