



## I Am Building Positive Self-Esteem

I maintain a positive outlook.

- I am assertive.
- I have a sense of humor.
- I am self-confident.
- I am enthusiastic.
- I use positive self-talk (affirmations).
- I visualize success.
- I have multiple intelligences.
- I learn from role models.
- I initiate action.
- I am persistent.
- I am disciplined.
- I demonstrate emotional intelligence.
- I set goals.
- I am self-reliant and career resilient.
- I am flexible.
- I have passion.
- I am responsible.
- I have vision.
- I am an innovator.

The ultimate goal is to know yourself and feel comfortable in your skin, to like yourself. The more you appreciate yourself, the more likely you will be to achieve your personal and career goals. Our sources of self-esteem are deeply rooted; at a very young age, we begin to formulate a concept of ourselves based on our upbringing, our schooling, our culture, and our life experiences. This book contains resources that will help you develop positive self-esteem and project it into your personal and career development and in essence create your unique brand. The concept of personal and career branding was originally introduced a decade ago by Tom Peters, a well-respected author of successful business books. His idea is that branding yourself as unique will contribute to your success. He called it "Me, Inc." It's essentially the same process that large companies use to develop a brand like Nike, Starbucks, or Apple. The goal and outcome of developing your career fitness profile will be to identify "You, Inc." You will clarify what makes you stand out so that your uniqueness becomes part of what others think of you and why others seek you out. Your brand, or reputation, reflects your philosophy, your values, and your consistent demonstration of who you are, so that people in your personal and professional life know they can count on you for consistent performance. This reliability of character and action makes you a valuable and desirable asset both personally and professionally.

Dan Schwabel, an expert personal branding blogger, says that before establishing your brand and taking it online via a blog, website, or participation in social networks, you must go through the process of self-discovery so that you know your worth and your competitive advantage in the work world. Your competitive advantage is your unique self, distinct from anyone else in the job market. As you begin to understand and hone your personal assets, you become more able to set yourself apart from the pack and differentiate your brand so that you stand out from the crowd and you become the obvious choice for the job.



▲ Positive self-esteem is critical as you move forward with your career.

### TIPS FROM THE PROS

Employers have an idea of who they want to hire. It is always someone with a combination of the personal assets that you will explore in this chapter. Cultivate these assets to gain your unique competitive edge.

This chapter, as well as every other chapter in the book, helps you in this self-discovery and branding process. Your career success will be accelerated and enhanced to the degree that you know yourself and are able to communicate your uniqueness and brand in the marketplace. The building blocks of positive self-esteem are listed in the sidebar and discussed next.

As you read each section, make a quick assessment. How would you rate yourself on each of these essential assets? Which of these assets have you already developed? Which do you need to work on? As you identify the areas in your life that need work, pay attention to the suggestions for improvement. The exercises in the chapter will help you build positive self-esteem and a success profile. These are both essential components of your ultimate goal in reading this book, which is to identify, develop, and enjoy a successful, satisfying career. Although the word success means many things to many people, success in general usually means the progressive external demonstration of internalized life goals. In other words, success refers to the step-by-step movement toward the attainment of an object, quality, or state of mind that we value and wish to possess.

Establish small goals that you can meet along the way, and give yourself credit for small successes. For example, although at this point, you may not know what you want to do careerwise, you are reading this book, one chapter at a time, you are thoughtfully completing the exercises, and you are taking a course in career development to further your chances of identifying a satisfying career that fits you.

### TIPS FROM THE PROS

Even when you're not sure of your goal or the final destination, the process of moving forward, doing something that you sense might help, will serve to ultimately clarify your path. You are, in fact, leaning into your goal.

Congratulate yourself for taking this first step toward reaching your goal. Now complete Exercise 2.1, which will help you take the pulse of your self-esteem.

## EXERCISE

### 2.1 Past Actions and Influences

This review will help you apply the building blocks of self-esteem to your life and future career. Fill in each blank carefully and honestly. Be true to yourself; don't try to please anyone else with your answers.

1. I am proud that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. One thing I can do now that I couldn't do a few years ago is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Name the person you most admire. This person can be living, historical, or fictional. Write down the specific characteristics that you admire in this person.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## EXERCISE 2.1 Past Actions and Influences *CONTINUED*

4. Name a person who is like you, and describe this person in your own words.

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5. In the last two weeks, which activities gave you

the greatest feeling of being energized? \_\_\_\_\_

the greatest feeling of importance? \_\_\_\_\_

the greatest feeling of self-worth? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What have you always wanted to do in your life? What's keeping you from doing it? What action could you take in the next year to get closer to this goal?

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## I Use Positive Self-Talk (Affirmations)

Positive self-talk improves self-image.

One of the most effective ways to improve your self-image is the deliberate use of positive self-talk. You already talk to yourself; we all do, and probably more often than we'd like to admit! But we usually are not consciously aware of our internal dialogue. Sometimes we are prone to self-defeating, negative messages that promote a poor self-image. Raising this internal dialogue to a conscious level can enable you to take charge of your self-talk. By repeating positive messages, you will be more apt to reinforce a positive self-image. These messages are commonly called **affirmations**.

An affirmation is a statement or assertion that something is already so (Gawain, 2000). It is an existing seed or thought in the present that reinforces your desires and aspirations. It is not intended to change what already exists but to create new possibilities. Remember, all events begin with a thought. If you think you can, and you apply yourself as if you can, you can! Anything a person can conceive can be achieved. Top performers build not only their bodies but also their minds. The thoughts you are thinking motivate your actions. Negative thoughts adversely affect your ability and strength. You have the power to influence your career path. Therefore, a career in which you can imagine yourself being happy and successful is a realistic and achievable goal.

However, while you develop your affirmations, remember you are planting a seed that must carry information about the exact thing you want to grow into, or produce—the result you desire. When you become specific about what you want, you are focusing the power of your mind's energy (your thoughts) on your desires. The more specific you are about your goals, the more focused you become about what must be done to reach them. You know you are being specific enough when you can visualize details about what you want. For example, if you want to become a college professor, you must be able to visualize yourself on a college campus in a specific classroom, working with students, interacting with other professors, and doing all the preparation work before class, including correcting papers!

Let's put this technique into action. Think of a quality you want to develop in yourself; we'll use enthusiasm as an example. Your first instinct might be to say or think, "I'm not very enthusiastic." As soon as this thought comes to mind, replace it with the opposite thought: "I am enthusiastic." Repeat the phrase over and over, day and night, until you feel you own it; soon it will feel comfortable. At the same time, picture yourself doing something with enthusiasm. Imagine that you are explaining to your boss why you deserve a day off, starting a conversation with a stranger, or confidently disagreeing with an instructor during class. Picture

### TIPS FROM THE PROS

"Acting as if" while you are developing a quality accelerates the process of owning the quality you desire. Act as if you are enthusiastic, even when you don't feel it. The feedback you receive while "acting" will support and reinforce your action, and before you know it, you will own it! Fake it until you make it!

Use mental rehearsal for success.



## I Visualize Success

Visualization, much like affirmation, is mental practice. It is the conscious implanting of specific images in your mind. Through repetition, these images will become part of your unconscious and then conscious mind, evoking and enhancing abilities, habits, and attitudes. Visualization differs slightly from affirmations because it involves specific mental imagery as opposed to *verbal expression* of positive thoughts. Indeed, visualization is referred to as *mental imagery* or mental rehearsal.

When we marvel at the mastery of an expert, we often assume the person was born with extraordinary talents or skills. We forget that every champion athlete, every great performer, every skilled surgeon, and every professional developed expertise through endless hours of physical and mental practice. They visualize their performance, engage in positive self-talk ("I can," "I'll do better each time"), and, through repetition, they become closer to the example of what they desire to be.

Until you begin to understand yourself, it is difficult to contemplate success fully, in both personal and professional matters. Choose your own vision in which specific results, qualities, and abilities are evident and consistent with your definition of success.

Visualization is one of the most powerful tools that promote personal change. It is the process of maintaining a thought long enough for the mental picture we create to evoke an emotional response. This emotion causes conviction, and conviction influences reality. Thus, change in reality begins with visualization, which generates emotion, sparks conviction, and results in action.



## SUCCESS strategies

### Creating Effective Affirmations

Here are some hints to follow when stating or writing down your own affirmations:

1. Always phrase the affirmation in the *present*, never in the future; otherwise it may remain in the future. For example, if your goal is to be less tense or nervous in challenging and stressful situations, use an affirmation such as "I am calm; I am in control of my feelings in this situation," rather than "I *will* be calm."
2. Phrase your affirmation in the positive rather than the negative. In other words, don't affirm what you don't want. Instead of writing, "My present job doesn't bother

me anymore," it would be more effective to write, "My work is wonderful" or "I enjoy my job."

3. Maintain the attitude that you are creating something new and fresh. You are not trying to manipulate, redo, or change an existing condition.

Thus, even before you implement your affirmation by enthusiastically taking some action, you have prepared yourself mentally for a positive outcome of your action. Your chances of experiencing the positive outcome improve because you are projecting a positive self-image. Try it!

Visualization can have a profound impact on your mind. Your subconscious *does not* distinguish between *imagining* something and actually *experiencing* it. (Try imagining you are biting into a lemon; can you taste it?) You can change your opinions, beliefs, aspirations, and levels of expectation by vividly imagining the circumstances and experiences you select. Of all the species on earth, only human beings can visualize the future and believe it can happen (Dyer, 1992).

A pessimist says, "I will believe it when I see it," whereas an optimist says, "I always see it when I believe it." What you see is what you get. The critical first step is a mental one. You must believe in and be able to see the possibilities and outcomes in your mind before you can hope to realize them in your life.

A high jumper visualizes a successful route to clear the bar; a golfer sees the putt dropping into the cup and follows that vision. Strong visual messages are reinforced with appropriate positive affirmations. This process will assist you in achieving what you want to accomplish. Conscious visualization of yourself as a success is a key step toward a positive self-fulfilling prophecy.

Those who use visualization successfully do so regularly over a period of time. This is the key to the success of mental rehearsal. Research indicates that a goal must be visualized a minimum of 30 minutes a day for at least a month to obtain results. This discipline distinguishes visualization from random daydreaming, an effortless activity in which we all engage from time to time! It is no secret and no surprise to learn that Michael Phelps, who won eight gold medals in the 2008 Summer Olympics, used both affirmations and visualization to reach his goal.

## I Maintain a Positive Outlook

Do you have your own personal definition of success? Regardless of the particular goals you have in mind, you need to think positively to attain them. Have you ever heard the saying, "It's all in your head"? The people who say this believe our mental attitudes have control over our body and our life and can, therefore, program our success or failure. Although many of our attitudes and beliefs come from early messages we received from our parents and teachers, as adults we can choose to keep or change these messages, depending on how helpful they are to us in achieving success and satisfaction in life. Examine your philosophy of life. How you see life in general is how you lead your life. A quick way to identify your philosophy is to examine how you visualize the future. Read the following scenarios and select the one that best relates to your point of view.

The future is a great roller coaster on a moonless night. It exists, twisting ahead of us in the dark, although we can see each part only as we approach it. We can make estimates about where we are headed, and sometimes see around a bend to another section of track, but it's pointless because the future is fixed and determined. We are locked in our seats, and nothing we may know or do will change the course that is laid out for us.

The future is a mighty river. The great force of history flows inexorably along, carrying us with it. Most of our attempts to change its course are mere pebbles thrown into the river: They cause a momentary splash and a few ripples, but they make no *true* difference. The river's course can be changed, but only by natural disasters like earthquakes and landslides, or by massive, concerted human efforts on a similar scale. But we are free as individuals to adapt to the course of history either well or poorly. By looking ahead, we can avoid sandbars and whirlpools, and pick the best path through any rapids.

Remember the times you've thought the following:

- "That's just the way I am."
- "I can't control what I do."
- "I just can't seem to finish anything I start."
- "I would like to do that differently, but it's just too hard to change."
- "Yes, it happened again."
- "I've never been good at that."

The future is a great ocean. There are many possible destinations, and many different paths to each destination. A good navigator takes advantage of the main currents of change, adapts the course to the capricious winds of chance, keeps a sharp lookout posted, and moves carefully in fog or uncharted waters. Doing these things will get the navigator safely to a destination (barring a typhoon or other disaster that one can neither predict nor avoid).

The future is entirely random, a colossal dice game. Every second, millions of things happen that could have happened another way and produced a different future. A bullet is deflected by a twig and kills one person instead of another. A scientist checks a spoiled culture and throws it away or looks more closely at it and discovers penicillin. A newly renovated home is destroyed by an earthquake. Because everything is chance, all we can do is play the game, pray to the gods of fortune, and enjoy what good luck comes our way.

One of these scenarios may reflect your own perception of life. Is your life a roller coaster, beyond your control; a mighty river to which you must adapt; a great ocean with many directions and options; or just a game of chance? Are you a positive thinker or a negative thinker? The second and third scenarios represent more positive reflections. Your belief system will affect how you see your life. If one of the first two scenarios is more representative of your philosophy, you may find it more difficult to create the results you want. Your mind tends to believe what you tell it. And, yes, you can if you think you can. Cultivating a positive, assertive outlook on life is the most crucial factor in the difference between those people who have successful, satisfying careers and lives and those who don't. In other words, your most dominant attitudes and thoughts influence what happens to you. In a sense, you create your reality by how you choose to think about what happens to you. This phenomenon is called the **self-fulfilling prophecy**.

Let's examine some of the aspects of a positive philosophy and outlook so you can build a mind-set for career success. Employers often say they can teach anyone the skills of a job; but if applicants do not have the mind-set for success, they cannot teach this and therefore these applicants are not hired or promoted. To ensure you are a competitive candidate, you must assess your success quotient, identify and develop any aspects of your success profile that need attention, and demonstrate this positive attitude in your interviews and on the job.



▲ Enthusiasm is contagious.



## I Am Enthusiastic

Building on the example of enthusiasm that you completed in Exercise 2.2, when employers are asked what traits they look for in prospective employees, enthusiasm is always among those at the top of the list. What kind of people do you want as friends, associates, and colleagues? Chances are you want people who are optimistic and have a zest for life. They are people who support each other through praise, encouragement, and networking. When asked about their career goals, instead of saying, "I don't know," they say, "I'm in the process of discovering my career goals," or they list specific goals knowing that they may change given new information and life experiences.

You can become more enthusiastic about life by getting involved in something that has meaning for you. A hobby, volunteer work, mastery of a skill, or a new relationship all provide opportunities to generate and express enthusiasm. On the job, displaying a professional attitude includes acting as if things are fine even when you feel upset or depressed. Although it may seem phony, you will find that acting positively pays off. Not only do you come across as mature and professional, but as you begin to act with enthusiasm, you receive positive feedback from others. The smiles, nods, and positive words of others begin to make you feel enthusiastic, and you soon discover you are no longer acting: You genuinely feel better! This is another example of the self-fulfilling prophecy at work.

Employers rate enthusiasm highly.



## FACTS & FIGURES

### What Makes Workers Succeed?

In a study by Judge and Hurst done in conjunction with the data compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, approximately 12,000 people were studied between 1979 and 2004. The results indicated that those who rated themselves most highly on traits related to positive self esteem experienced more success and quicker career advancement both early on and throughout their careers (a span of 25 years) than those whose self evaluations were lower. Positive self esteem does pay off!

#### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Review the 19 strategies to develop positive self-esteem that are explained in this chapter. Review your answers to Exercise 2.6, which help you analyze your current

success profile and strategize a plan to increase your success.

2. As you look at your areas to develop and identify the action steps you need to take, what one step can you commit to taking today to jumpstart your effort?
3. Who can you look to as a mentor and coach in developing your success profile?
4. Looking at your top six success factors, who might benefit from your expertise in these areas? Who can you mentor?

Source: From a study by Timothy A. Judge and Charlice Hurst, "How the Rich (and Happy) Get Richer (and Happier): Relationship of Core Self-Evaluations to Trajectories in Attaining Work," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93 (4): 2008. Information accessed 8/18/11 from Strategy+Business, <http://www.strategy-business.com/article/re00046?gko=ed2a4>.



## I Have Passion

People who are passionate about life express an enthusiasm and zest for living that is noticeable and enviable. They are focused and committed to their purpose. Passion comes from loving what you are doing and wanting to do it whether or not you are paid. As Confucius said, "Find something you love doing, and you will never work a day in your life." Ideally, you will find this kind of work through the purposeful career planning in which you are currently engaged. Outside of work, passionate people are doing what makes their heart and soul sing. They are in tune with their inner needs and find ways to express them. Oprah Winfrey is a prime example of an individual who has used her passion to reach her goals. There are people in all walks of life who exude a passion for their work and play. Can you think of three others you know?

Passionate people understand their purpose, the "why" underneath whatever it is they are doing at the moment. They realize some activities that might otherwise be viewed as "have to's" are simply steps along the way to their chosen passion. They view these tasks as choices, and their attitude about completing them is positive and purposeful. They have adjusted their attitudes to maximize their enjoyment and enthusiasm. Passionate people attract others who want to work with them and support their goals. Would Bill Gates have been able to accomplish what he has without passion? How did he attract others who supported his goals? Think about the difference between a passionate teacher and a teacher who is not passionate about teaching. What a difference in impact!



## I Am Flexible

The world of work has never offered a greater array of choices and possibilities. A common response to this seemingly endless horn of plenty is to look desperately for the one right choice that will offer certainty and stability. Although it is an understandable response to want to relieve the anxiety of uncertainty, it is unrealistic in today's turbulent, fast-paced, global economy. Instead, we must cultivate a sense of acceptance regarding the ambiguity, uncertainty, and change that challenge our every plan. We must learn to recognize and accept the fact that life happens as we're making plans and that everything that happens influences our decisions.

The ability to appreciate and incorporate the unexpected twists and turns along the path is the secret to success in today's economy. Rather than resisting change and the unexpected, learn to adapt to the unpredictable. Cultivate the ability to incorporate new information quickly and with ease into your current or emerging career plan. Challenge yourself, not only to experience the unsettled feeling that comes with surprise, but to think positively about the unanticipated possibilities that present themselves.



## I Have a Sense of Humor

Learn to laugh at yourself.

According to journalist Norman Cousins, laughing is "internal jogging," and when you laugh, you are exercising all your internal organs. Not only does laughter feel good, it is essential to good health and a sense of well-being. Cousins had good reason to believe this. Some years ago he was diagnosed with a terminal illness and given just two months to live. Instead of spending his precious time remaining in the hospital, he checked into a hotel and watched, read, or listened to every humorous movie, book, CD, and DVD he could get his hands on. He virtually laughed himself well. Many years later, still in excellent health, Cousins was convinced, as were his doctors, that laughter accounted for his recovery! In fact, even though he wasn't a doctor, the medical school at UCLA invited him to join its faculty to teach interns how to lighten up.

Cousins's amazing story holds a lesson for all of us. We would all benefit from lightening up a little—to find the genuine humor in an embarrassing moment, in a mistake, in a situation that is so serious we need to laugh to keep from crying. Humor at its best means being able to laugh at yourself and your situation. Look for opportunities to see the lighter side of life and to share the experience of being human with others who can laugh with you, not at you. Cultivate the habit of walking on the light side of life. Not only will this improve your outlook on life, but it will help you choose a career that fits your personality. Humor also helps get you through those days when work seems especially frustrating or difficult, or when your job hunting seems fruitless. You also need humor to help you lighten up as you go through the career fitness program and encounter the inevitable rough spots along the path.



## I Am Assertive

Positive, assertive behavior shows self-confidence.

One of the basic choices we make moment to moment is whether to be assertive, aggressive, or passive in response to life situations. Being assertive means being the ultimate judge of our own behavior, feelings, and actions and being responsible for the initiation and consequence of those actions. In essence, assertive people choose for themselves and build themselves up without putting others down. Aggressive people choose for themselves *and* others; they build themselves up by putting others down. Passive people allow others to choose for them; they put themselves down or allow others to do so.

An assertive attitude will help you maintain your self-esteem in today's competitive job market. An assertive outlook enables you to be persistent, seek more information when you run out of leads, weigh all alternatives evenly (incorporating both your logic and your intuition), revise your goals when necessary, and pursue your goals with commitment and purpose. Assertiveness specifically enables you to say what you feel, think, and want. It allows you to be expressive, be open, and be a clear communicator. You are able to say no under pressure, recognize and deal with manipulation, and stand up for your rights in negative, confrontational situations. You gain the ability to be a better listener. Others appreciate your directness and ability to hear them. You enjoy more positive interactions with people and feel more positive about being able to handle life situations.

Assertive personal traits include body language as well as words. It is believed that 93 percent of the meaning of any message is communicated nonverbally. Look at your

appearance, facial expressions, and typical physical movements and posture when you are feeling assertive compared with when you are feeling passive. What does your style of dress say about you? Can changing the color or style of your outfit change the mood you project to others? Have you ever noticed your gestures? Assertiveness is often associated with confident gestures rather than timid ones. For example, begin to notice how people shake hands. A strong, firm hand shake conveys a confident, assertive stance, whereas a soft, limp handshake conveys a sense of timidity and uncertainty. Check out your own handshake by asking friends or classmates to give you feedback on your handshake. If it lacks strength and confidence, practice until it communicates what you want it to.

Positive, assertive behavior suggests that you have confidence in yourself. This behavior conveys verbally and nonverbally that you believe in your own abilities and worth. That positive, confident, and enthusiastic self will set you apart, give you a competitive advantage, make people take notice of you, and ultimately enable you to exercise control over your career and your life.



## I Am Persistent

Persistent people refuse to give up. Particularly in the face of difficulty, they maintain their resolve and push on. They realize that accomplishing any goal takes time and tenacity. They know setbacks occur and that blaming genes for an out-of-shape body or calling it fate when they don't get a job is simply copping out. They recognize that perseverance pays off. What appears to be luck is usually opportunity met by preparation. Persistence is stick-to-itiveness, not just initiating and taking action, but following through because of commitment, conviction, and pure drive.

Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in the Olympics. Only the most persistent and committed athletes are chosen to participate, and all know full well the slim chance of coming home with a medal. Nevertheless, many return time after time, and some eventually triumph. Those who compete gain public acclaim, knowing their participation places them in elite company. Successful people keep trying after not reaching a goal or after experiencing rejection, they push on until their dream is attained. While being persistent and experiencing the unexpected events that occur, they also take advantage of unexpected opportunities and new possibilities. "Unsuccessful" Olympians may get to endorse a product they believe in, scout and coach other hopefuls, broadcast and report on sports events, support causes they believe in, and touch the world in many unimagined ways while pursuing a goal.

In today's unpredictable economy, many of us feel as if we, too, are preparing for the Olympics; this especially holds true for students and job seekers who must face such hurdles as degree and training decisions, financial hardships, interviews, and rejections along the way. Talent and education are not automatic keys to success. Tenacity, determination, and consistent effort are keys to success.

Luck = opportunity +  
preparation +  
persistence.



## I Identify My Goals

People who succeed have clearly defined plans and objectives that they refer to regularly to keep in mind their lifetime goals, as well as to order their daily priorities. Clearly defined, written goals help move us to goal completion. The reason most people don't reach their goals is that they don't identify them. They don't know what they want. If you don't know where you are going, you probably won't get there. Even though you're just embarking on your career fitness plan and you may not have a specific career in mind as yet, you can still begin the process by leaning into your goals. Your first goal might be to read this entire book (one chapter a week), and complete all the exercises with the intent to learn more about yourself, so you can move in the direction of making appropriate career choices. Another goal that you can work on immediately is to build your network. The majority of jobs are found through networking, which means contacting people you know and asking them to put you in touch with people they know who

might be able to assist you with whatever you need. Although there are many ways to network, the Web provides limitless access through social networking sites that are specifically set up for this purpose. Which are your favorite sites? Have you used them for job/career networking? Try facebook.com and linkedin.com to begin this process. Although you may be texting, tweeting, and socially networking for fun, set aside a specific amount of time each week, so you will get into the habit of working on your career fitness plan goals in the same way you would work on a physical fitness plan—with focus, consistency, and commitment.



## I Initiate Action

Successful people realize that goals *activate* people and fears *stop* people. If you dwell on your fears, whether real or imagined, you will be slowed down in the pursuit of your goals. If you concentrate on your goals, you will move toward them. People who are afraid to tell the world what they want, don't get what they want. In what direction are you going—away from or toward your goals? Goals enable you to frame your process in a positive light, whereas fears tend to foster a negative outlook on the possibilities before you. Imagine yourself in your dream job, your fantasy career, the kind of job you would pay to do. Take the job of cruise ship director, for example. Now identify someone who has that occupation. If you don't know of anyone, use your social network and ask your friends, relatives, neighbors, and classmates, all of whom are part of your extended network. Ask if they know someone who actually has your dream job. Next, contact that individual in person, if possible, and arrange a brief informational interview to determine if your dream job really is a good fit.



### TIPS FROM THE PROS

- Build your network by asking every contact if he or she can refer you to anyone else in the field.
- If so, ask the same questions until you have a clear idea of what the job or profession entails.
- Remember to send thank you notes to anyone who has given you their time.

After you have gathered the facts about your fantasy career, ask yourself if it still holds its appeal for you. If so, you've got a career goal! If not, choose another fantasy career to investigate. Complete Exercise 2.3 now to determine what fantasy careers may relate to your success profile.

## EXERCISE

### 2.3 Your Fantasy Careers

"Wouldn't It Be Great to Be a . . . What?"

#### CURRENT FANTASY CAREERS

List your current fantasy careers below. Then think back chronologically to earlier age levels and try to recall some of your past fantasy careers; list them as well. We develop fantasy careers at a very young age. Most children see cartoons, television dramas, and movies about doctors, lawyers, police officers, firefighters, astronauts, teachers, and scientists, to name a few popular careers. Books about solving mysteries create an image of excitement about being a detective. Current movies influence many to dream of being a jet pilot or a gifted performer. What have you read about, seen in the movies, or dreamed about doing as a career?

1. For each career on your list, ask yourself this question: "What about this career appeals to me?" Many of us might have the same fantasy career but for different reasons.

**Current Fantasy Career: What About This Career Appeals to Me?**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_