

Re-‘valuing’ Your Self!

When people describe what matters to them—in their leisure or their lives more broadly (e.g., their work, their relationships, their communities)—these expressions are often a reflection of their *values*. They also reflect what people see as their strengths or “aptitudes” (a natural tendency to do something well). The more we have an understanding of our own values, strengths, abilities and aptitudes, the more likely it is that we will choose life pursuits that enable us to express these values through the things we do. One way to start to think about this is do some “self-evaluation” of your values, strengths, etc. Rather than focusing on your problems it is more important to focus on how to make the most of your personal strengths to overcome the challenges you are facing in your life.

There are many tools and exercises that have been developed to support this. As one example, check out the “Authentic Happiness” website of Dr. Martin Seligman at the University of Pennsylvania (he is the person who has written a lot about “learned optimism” and “learned helplessness”): <http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx>.

After registering, take one or more of the following tests (you can even re-take them again to see if you notice a change in yourself):

- ✓ the Brief Strengths Test
- ✓ the Authentic Happiness Inventory Questionnaire
- ✓ the Approaches to Happiness Questionnaire
- ✓ the Meaning in Life Questionnaire.





Identifying My Strengths, Talents, & Abilities

Below is a list of potential strengths, talents, abilities and aptitudes. Review the list and consider which of these are within you. Circle these. While each of us actually possesses all these potentials *be specific about the ones that you feel are especially available to you*. There are spaces at the end of this list to add others that occur to you.

Friendly	Motivator	Sense of humor	Writer
Innovative	Good with money	Articulate	Committed
Sensitive	Loyal	Forgiving	Empathetic
Creative	Artistic	Psychic	Leader
Imaginative	Kind	Mechanical	Practical
Trouble-shooter	Intuitive	Good with animals	Good cook
Playful nature	Industrious	Good with plants	Wise
Orderly	Planner	Good with children	Logical
Cooperative	Energetic	Patient	Cautious
Hardworking	Good listener	Spontaneous	Fun loving

Others: _____

When you have finished, go back and reconsider each characteristic you circles. Do you think that you are meant to do something more with some of these attributes/strengths/talents? Can you identify some of your strengths which have a special feeling when you think about them (perhaps ** them)? Perhaps they give you a feeling that something that is yet to be done with that strength. As you move forward with planning for your retirement life, think of how you might be able to tap into or build on these strengths as you take steps to create your retirement plan.