



Self-knowledge – the key to great career choices

Aristotle said “*knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom*”. But what does self-knowledge have to do with building one’s career? The answer is ‘*everything*’.

It doesn’t matter whether you’re a university student in the middle of studying for your degree, a recent graduate trying to get a foothold in the job market or an experienced professional planning your next career move, the key to making sound career decisions and securing the positions you want is to have an open and honest knowledge of yourself – your personality style and your mindset as well as your strengths and blind spots.



One's opinions and behaviours may change over time, but personality characteristics such as extraversion and introversion, tough-mindedness, sensitivity, independence, self-control, and openness to change are much more resilient. This means personality is a good indicator of how someone will work and perform long term. So depending on your natural temperament, some career paths, work environments and company cultures may be better suited to you than others.

Your mindset, or world view, plays a crucial role in career decisions too. Mindset can be thought of as a total merging of your attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, fears, worries and desires. It influences not only your choice of career, but how your career subsequently develops and grows (or not, as the case may be). In her book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, the psychologist Carol S. Dweck discusses the differences between a fixed and growth mindset. A fixed mindset assumes that our innate qualities and abilities are fixed and static, whereas a growth mindset believes they can be cultivated and grow. Dweck reveals how success in almost every area of life, including careers, can be influenced by how we think about our talents and abilities. In short, a growth mindset is essential to career success. And the good news is that it can be nurtured.

But what of your strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments and shortcomings? Examining your positive attributes, as well as blind spots can help to clarify what does and doesn't work for you in terms of work, allowing you to move forward with

clear goals and firm career objectives. However, the challenge in all of these areas is how to achieve a fair and balanced appraisal of oneself? When it comes to self-examination, we all have a tendency to overlook or minimise, exaggerate or overstate. It is hard to be rigorously self-honesty on one's own.

Fortunately the tools needed to achieve frank and meaningful personal insights are available and they are now being used across all areas of recruitment. Science-based personality and cognitive assessments, such as those found at **PeopleHawk**, are designed expressly to help you define your strengths and career goals so that you can better align yourself to the role you want. Armed with a detailed and objective insight to your particular strengths and attributes, you are much better placed to shape the conversation with potential employers and pitch yourself as the ideal candidate for their vacancy by showing you have the personality traits, work style and skills needed to fulfil the role.

So there you have it – self-knowledge is the key to great career choices. The insights you can gain from personality and cognitive assessments can facilitate the process of career decision making, allowing you to strategically manage your career and enhance your overall life satisfaction.

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