



A Plan for Aligning Purpose and Professional Practice

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Great Lakes Addiction Technology Transfer Center

**A Workbook for Human Service Professionals
Developed for The ATTC Leadership Institute
2004 – 2005**



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What am I supposed to do with my life?

What I've done so far is what I was supposed to do up to now. That includes the mistakes, the consequences, the lessons, and all the ways I've changed. Who knows why? The universe fits together, and I'm part of it.

My sense of purpose is sometimes strong, but my thoughts about what I'm supposed to do are often confused or conflicted. I also keep forgetting that everything hinges, not on what I accomplish, but on what I am. How I treat the next person I see may have a greater impact on my future than how well I perform my tasks.

God is my boss, and He's everyone else's boss too. Forgetting this fact is the easiest thing to do, and remembering it is the most important thing. My sense of purpose is wonderful as long as it keeps listening.

I'm building my future every minute, **this minute**. It's a gift—to me and from me. What do I choose to give?

—Pam Woll

From "Small Answers to Big Questions"



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A document whose nature and tone are as casual and as personal as those of this workbook is a departure for the ATTC Network, whose main focus is on uniting science and professional practice. My thanks to the Great Lakes ATTC for understanding the importance of a personal focus in an exploration of this nature, and for choosing to make it a Great Lakes ATTC product.

Considerable gratitude also goes to my fellow travelers in the Great Lakes ATTC Leadership Institute that began in November, 2004 and finished its formal phase in September, 2005. To Tiffany Kilpatrick, Regional Director of the Great Lakes ATTC, thanks for using her formidable event-planning talent to create a most gracious atmosphere for our process.

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And finally, I'd like to thank you for picking up this workbook, for doing the work you do, and for having the courage to take a careful look at the relationship between your accomplishments and your purpose in this world. No one can explain to me what keeps people working so hard to help so many people whose needs are so desperate—and doing so on resources that are often so scarce—except, perhaps, by citing the human capacity to love. For this I am most grateful.



Introduction

This document started out as one woman's attempt to harness both heart and mind to find a higher direction for her career. It's a process for:

- Gathering information about the work you're doing, the work you most want to do, and the work that may be most important for you to do (not necessarily the same things!)
- Placing this information within the context of the practical and financial realities of your chosen field(s), the economy in general, and your life
- Making decisions about how you choose to spend your time and effort
- Setting up systems and relationships that will help you carry out these choices successfully

This process was created around the needs of people who work or have aspirations in human service fields. It would work for people in other fields, too, but many of the issues addressed (e.g., higher purpose, helping people, preparing others to carry on in our absence) are particularly challenging and important for people in the human services.

Background

I first developed this process as my central project in the first Leadership Institute (LI) hosted by the Great Lakes Addiction Technology Transfer Center, 2004-2005. The Institute was developed for professionals in the field of addiction treatment by the Southern Coast Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC), in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration/Center for Substance Abuse Treatment's Partners for Recovery project and the USDA Graduate School.

The Institute provided support, inspiration, and direction in a time of great doubt and confusion in my professional life. It gave me the courage to try new things—including the process laid out in this workbook—and to begin projects I'd only dreamed. *The Magnet* began as an exploration of my own direction and options, and later grew into a more comprehensive plan for people seeking to align their work with their sense of purpose.

Plan Components

The Magnet addresses the planning process on several layers:

- **Direction:** This chapter looks at several aspects of finding direction, starting with your on higher sources of direction, then moving into the more practical realms.
- **Strengths:** This chapter begins with an assessment of work-related strengths, then looks at your strengths in general—and the challenges that lie at the extreme end of those strengths.
- **Challenges and Resources:** A rigorous “Challenge/Resource Worksheet” helps you identify challenges in a number of areas (confidence/motivation, direction, interest/ aptitude, knowledge/skill, physical well being) that may be keeping you from fulfilling your purpose, and match these challenges with ideas for overcoming or compensating for them.
- **Assessing Jobs and Projects:** An honest assessment of the pros and cons of a particular job or project is an important step toward your purpose—whether the job is one you fill right now or one you're considering taking. An extensive "Job/Project Screening Worksheet" examines the potential of each job or project in five areas of priority (higher purpose, authority, positioning, generativity, and gut instinct).
- **Staying vs. Leaving:** This chapter takes a careful look at your options when you're unhappy or unsatisfied in your current role, organization, or field. Two worksheets help you compare a range of options, then further explore the options you choose.
- **Timekeeping:** If you lack the self-discipline to remain on task when you're not under immediate pressure, this chapter provides the format and formulas for two Excel spreadsheets that can record hours worked and provide motivation to increase your productivity.
- **Magnets:** If you're better at honoring commitments to others than you are at honoring commitments to yourself, this chapter sets up a system for finding, recruiting, and becoming answerable to other people who are interested in your projects.
- **The Plan:** This chapter provides a worksheet that summarizes some of the major elements of who you are (your mission, strengths, challenges, and resources) and what you're going to do (your goals, learning priorities, jobs or projects, obstacles, solutions, time commitment, and Magnets).

You have the option to pick and choose specific chapters, or worksheets within those chapters, or to take yourself through the whole process in order. Your “gut” instinct will tell you which way to approach it. I hope you enjoy the process!



Workbook

Direction

Strengths

Challenges and Resources

Assessing Jobs and Projects

Staying vs. Leaving

Timekeeping

Magnets

The Plan



Direction

When we operate without a Plan, direction is often simply the sum of all the things people ask us to do—or whatever else sounds okay at the time. We say “yes” until we have so much on our plates that we absolutely can’t take on any more, then we start saying “no.” That’s the selection process. So the question first arises, “How would I direct my career if it were mine to direct?” But before the answer even comes, another question worms its way in: “If it’s not mine to direct, whose is it?”

What has driven my career so far? Has it been my own desires? Other people’s needs? My sense of duty? Have I been directed all along by a higher power that has allowed me to stumble into whatever I was supposed to stumble into at the time? Is my current desire for a change a sign that my direction should lead elsewhere?

If I don’t have a Plan, I may spend the rest of my life simply reacting, and never do the things that are in my heart to do. But if I do have a plan, I might try to stick to it rigidly, and miss important cues. As I’ve often heard, “If you really want to make God laugh, show Him your Plan.” If I do create a Plan, how do I keep it flexible and responsive to new information?

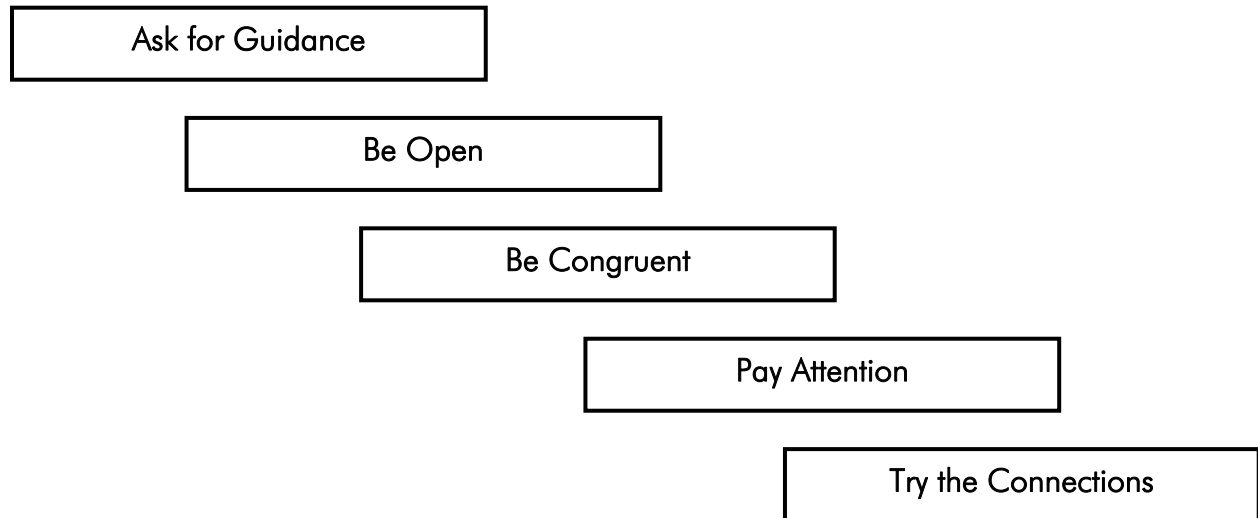
This chapter begins with a new notes on finding higher guidance, followed by four worksheets:

- Direction Worksheet (including a Mission Statement and some questions for testing it)
- Directions for Future Learning (to find out what you really want to learn more about)
- Direction Summary Worksheet (to look at the goals that drive you, and have driven you)
- Considering the Possibilities: Roles in the Human Services (to give you a few more ideas)

Notes on Finding Higher Guidance

For those of us whose “still, small voice” is only one of many running in our heads, we often need more than just the resolution to look for higher guidance for our lives and careers. We need to know how to recognize that guidance and what to do with it.

In my own recent search for direction, I've identified five things I need to do on a consistent basis. These are not steps, to be taken in sequence, but layers of effort that I'm striving to undertake all the time.



These are the five layers:

- **Ask for guidance:** I'd like to say that in prayer, meditation, and affirmation, I continually ask for direction and guidance in finding my way. But the truth is that I often forget. I keep thinking I'm supposed to figure it all out. So I've taken to hanging signs in a few prominent places, like those buttons that the hardware clerks wear: "Just Ask!"
- **Be open to guidance, in any form:** I need to remind myself frequently that the guidance I receive may come in unexpected forms, and from sources I might be inclined to dismiss or overlook. This layer is just about cultivating an open mind, being willing to wait patiently for answers, and—as Rainer Maria Rilke suggested in *Letters to a Young Poet* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1934)—learning to love the questions.
- **Be congruent:** Our availability to higher guidance may often depend on our level of congruency with our higher values—how much of the time we're thinking, speaking, and acting according to our values and moral codes. In this society we're often rewarded (financially, socially, or professionally) for sacrificing some of our values. But it stands to reason that, if I'm thinking or acting in ways that don't reflect my higher values, I'll probably be inclined to smudge up my spiritual window a little bit, so I won't have to see myself too clearly. Then I'll miss important information, including information that would help me find my way.

- **Pay attention:** There seems to be something magical in the way the outer world—the things I see and hear around me—and the inner world connect. I’ve received important guidance on a number of matters from songs on the radio, stories on the news, things people have said, books or articles I’ve read, objects I’ve passed by on the road, and countless other sources. In most cases I wasn’t looking or listening for that particular answer at that particular time. I just happened to be looking or listening, and the answer came in. Then I knew it was an answer because of the way it resonated with my inside experience, my thoughts and feelings. But if I hadn’t been paying attention, I would have missed it.
- **Try the connections:** I once read somewhere that creativity is the combination of things we hadn’t thought of combining before. One piece of information combines with another to form something that answers questions, solves problems, brings people joy or healing, or takes us a little farther on our journey.

A few examples:

- You might find out that a new position is opening up just when you’ve been thinking for the first time about doing that kind of work.
- Just when you’re at your wits end with a client with a particular family history, you might read about the benefits of a new treatment model for people with similar family histories.
- This workbook is another example: I needed to do a project for the Leadership Institute, and I also needed to find a way to become more deliberate about the direction of my career. So I put those two needs together and started the professional development plan that later became this workbook.

I call this layer “**try the connections,**” because not all connections reflect higher guidance, and many of us have found reason to regret our blind belief in things that we thought were “signs” or brilliant ideas. As we try making new connections, we need to use all the other layers to test those connections:

- Ask for guidance about whether or not this idea will take you in the right direction
- Be open to new information that either supports or counsels against acting on this idea
- Remember your values and standards while you’re in this process
- Pay attention to what’s going on around you, and inside you
- Keep testing the ways in which your new idea would affect other areas of life

I don’t think there’s any foolproof way of making sure our Plans are informed by higher guidance. But we can continue to seek that guidance—in whatever ways work for us—throughout the planning process, and be prepared to change our minds and our Plans. It comes down to one of the central challenges in being a human being: balancing confidence in our course with the openness to change course if it would make things better. Balance is difficult, but lack of balance can lead to stagnation or destruction. The choice is ours.

With these thoughts as background and foundation, the next few pages describe (one by one) the exercises in this chapter.

Direction Worksheet

The Mission

If, like me, you went through high school when there was still sufficient funding for the arts, you might remember learning to draw in perspective. Your mission statement is like the little dot the teacher made you draw somewhere near the center of the paper. All lines lead to that dot. A good mission can keep you from losing conviction and getting bogged down in all the frustrations that can be counted on to arise in human efforts.

In *Prioritize Organize: The Art of Getting It Done* (Shawnee Mission, KS: National Press Publications, 1992), Jonathan and Susan Clark name three qualities of a good mission statement: 1) It should be distinct, yours and no one else's. 2) It should be stimulating, stirring you to action. 3) It should motivate, inspire, and excite you.

One way of doing a mission statement is to keep it short, including only your ultimate vision and how you'll work toward it. It might include:

- *Your vision:* This is the "prize," your ultimate aim in your journey. The vision might be a statement of what you want to promote through your work; or a brief description of the way the world, a field, or a group of people will be better off if you fulfill your mission.
- *How you'll work toward it:* This is what you'll do to reach that vision. (You might also include something about the quality of the work you'll do.)

There's no one right format or structure for a mission statement:

- Some statements read something like this: "To [promote your vision] by [how you'll work toward it]." (For example, the mission statement I developed in the Leadership Institute was "To promote human well being, dignity, and growth through my words and actions.")
- Others might read like this: "My mission is to [how you'll work toward your vision] so that [your vision will come about]." An example of this might be, "My mission is to provide the best counseling services possible, so my clients will be happy, healthy, and free."

Again, you don't have to use any particular format for yours. Do it in a way that feels right and inspiring to you. Your mission statement should be clear enough and central enough to guide difficult decisions that you may face in the future. For example, if your mission statement says you're going to make revolutionary improvements in your field, that will help guide your decision (or change your mission) if someone asks you to leave the field for a much easier job in another field.

The Litmus Test

If the mission statement is the dot on the horizon, the Litmus Test is the first set of sketchy lines pointing toward that dot. Its centerpiece is the old question, "If you had just six months to live, what would you want to accomplish?" When you fill out the Litmus Test form, I very much hope you have no immediate threats that make its questions seem more realistic, but I suggest you pretend as thoroughly as you can, putting aside all thoughts of what you "should" want to accomplish, or the desires of the people you most want to please or impress. Promise yourself you don't have to show anyone else your answers—then answer with your heart.

If the information you get in this exercise suggests any changes to your mission, go back and change them before you move on.

Messages That Have Shaped Your Direction

This page asks you to look at some of these messages—direct or indirect guidance you've received in your life, the powerful "old tapes" that often affect our conscious and unconscious choices. What are the messages that propel you toward your chosen direction, and where did they come from? What are the messages that have slowed you down, stopped you, or turned you in other directions? Where did they come from, and what are some alternative messages you might choose to give yourself?

Future Learning and Concentration

One common challenge that many people in the human services face is the fact that we spend most of our time doing what we already know, and too little time learning things that would make our work more effective or take us in new directions that would be more fulfilling. Often we're so busy that we don't even take the time to define the areas of learning we'd like to pursue. This worksheet will help you at least put your wishes on paper and use them in defining your goals.

- It begins with a very "loose" brainstorming exercise, in which you think of as many subject areas that are interesting to you as possible, in no particular order.
- Next it asks you to think about the relationships among these areas of interest. If a number of your interest areas are related, this will give you a clue about their importance to you. If, on the other hand, your interest areas seem not to be related, this may help you understand why it's been hard to pursue all of them.
- Question three asks you to step back and look at your list and think of a few major categories that seem to summarize and contain some of the smaller interest areas you've named.

- Then question four asks you to prioritize four topics (smaller areas of interest or major categories) from your answers to questions one and three.
- Question five asks you to take those four topics and (for each) sketch out some goals and describe what you still need to learn in order to reach those goals.

Considering the Possibilities: Roles in the Addiction Field

Depending on your role and your career path, you may or may not be positioned to accomplish what you want to accomplish. An essential part of direction is an exploration of role options. If you're in the addiction treatment field, this worksheet might help you in that exploration.

Sometimes we feel as if we don't have enough options, not because we don't, but because we don't know what they are and we're too busy to find out. This worksheet is by no means an exhaustive list of roles in the addiction field, but it might help you think about some possibilities. You'll be asked to check the roles you might be interested in occupying, then for each one think about:

- The types of settings in which you might want to occupy this kind of role
- What draws you to this kind of role
- What you would need to learn to fill this kind of role most effectively
- How you would need to develop as a human being in order to be most effective in this kind of role

Direction Worksheet

Mission Statement

The Litmus Test

1. If you had six months to live, what would you want to accomplish in that time, and why?

Why? _____

Why? _____

Why? _____

2. If you had only a year to live, what else would you want to accomplish, and why?

Why? _____

Why? _____

Why? _____

3. If you had two years to live, what else would you want to accomplish, and why?

Why? _____

Why? _____

Why? _____

Messages That Have Shaped Your Direction

4. How would you describe the direction indicated by your mission statement and the tasks you identified in your litmus test (on the previous page)?

5. What are some direct or indirect messages you've received in your life (from family, teachers, bosses, the media, experience) that tend to make you believe you **should** go in that direction? For each message, write the source of that message (person, situation).

_____ Source: _____

_____ Source: _____

_____ Source: _____

6. What are some direct or indirect messages you've received in your life that tend to make you believe **you can succeed** if you go in that direction? For each message, tell where that message came from.

_____ Source: _____

_____ Source: _____

_____ Source: _____

7. What are some direct or indirect messages you've received in your life that tend to make you believe you **shouldn't** go in that direction, or **can't succeed** if you do? For each message, tell where that message came from.

_____ Source: _____

_____ Source: _____

_____ Source: _____

8. What has been the major effect of all those messages on your career?

9. What are some alternative messages that you'd like to try giving yourself?

5. List the top 4 subject areas (or larger, combined subject areas) identified in question 3 on the previous page. For each, name a few goals for your work in that subject area and what you still need to learn in order to accomplish those goals.

Priority #1:	
My goals for this subject area	What I still need to learn

Priority #2:	
My goals for this subject area	What I still need to learn

Priority #3:	
My goals for this subject area	What I still need to learn

Priority #4:	
My goals for this subject area	What I still need to learn

Direction Summary Worksheet

Almost done. This worksheet gives you one page to summarize the work you've done in the previous two worksheets, and compare it with the forces that have driven you up to now.

Mission Statement

Goals

In the left-hand column, list the most important goals from your Litmus Test and from question five of Future Learning and Concentration.

In the right hand column, list the goals that have seemed to drive your study, your work, and your planning processes up to now.

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What does this page tell you? _____

Considering the Possibilities: Roles in the Addiction Field

Please keep in mind that any of these roles might arise in a variety of settings. These settings include: Public vs. private sector; full-time jobs vs. consultation; prevention vs. treatment vs. recovery support; clinical vs. training vs. administration; various clinical settings (e.g., treatment facilities, mental health centers, social service settings, EAPs, schools, corrections, medical settings); various training and education settings (e.g., agencies, training centers, educational institutions); and various levels of government (e.g., municipal, county, state, national).

Types of roles that might interest you	Preferred setting(s)	What draws you to these roles?	What would you need to learn to take these roles?	How would you need to develop to do well?
Some Common Clinical Roles				
<input type="checkbox"/> Peer Mentorship and Coaching				
<input type="checkbox"/> Outreach Work				
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Management				
<input type="checkbox"/> Intake/Assessment				
<input type="checkbox"/> Counseling				
<input type="checkbox"/> Clinical Supervision				
<input type="checkbox"/> Clinical Direction				
<input type="checkbox"/> Psychiatry				
Some Common Administrative Roles				
<input type="checkbox"/> Reception				
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Assistance				

Types of roles that might interest you	Preferred setting(s)	What draws you to these roles?	What would you need to learn to take these roles?	How would you need to develop to do well?
Some Common Administrative Roles (Continued)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting and Bookkeeping				
<input type="checkbox"/> Program Marketing				
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Supervision				
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources				
<input type="checkbox"/> Development (Grant-Writing, Fundraising)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Management				
<input type="checkbox"/> Administration				
Some Common Roles in Training, Education, and Research				
<input type="checkbox"/> Event Planning				
<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing of Events				
<input type="checkbox"/> Design/Development of Written Materials				
<input type="checkbox"/> Training				
<input type="checkbox"/> Higher Education				
<input type="checkbox"/> Research				



Strengths

Very few people lack the strengths necessary to accomplish wonderful things—and odds are you’re not one of them. More often, we have significant strengths that are in conflict with one another; we go a little overboard on some of our strengths, so they become challenges; or our combination of strengths isn’t the best one for getting to our goals. This chapter looks at all of these possibilities.

There are two purposes for our exploration of strengths: 1) to understand the strengths that can support us in reaching our goals and 2) to explore the limits of those strengths—the places where we need to develop more strengths or come up with systems to supplement our efforts.

The following chapter (Challenges and Resources) will look a little more directly at specific challenges that we might meet that are more directly related to our goals and purposes. First, this chapter looks at who we are—as professionals and as human beings—and how our strengths tend to support (or not support) our goals.

This chapter has three worksheets:

- Working Strengths Worksheet
- Life Strengths and Challenges: The Double Continuum
- Strengths and Goals Worksheet

Working Strengths Worksheet

The Working Strengths Worksheet is divided into five general areas: Energy, Locus of Initiative, Focus, Planning, and Interactions With People). Each area has two or more lines, and on each line you're given two opposite statements. For each line, you're asked to place a check or an “X” in one of three boxes: identifying with the first statement, identifying with the second statement, or somewhere in the middle.

The items on this worksheet are of particular importance to our working lives, although some of them probably have implications for our pursuit of our goals in our non-working lives.

After you complete this worksheet, you'll find some comments on the following page that might give you some ideas for interpreting some of your answers.

Life Strengths and Challenges: The Double Continuum

This worksheet expands the discussion to include characteristics that are equally important in working and non-working areas of life. These are general human characteristics, patterns that we tend to follow, or personality traits that we tend to display. The worksheet examines these characteristics along a double continuum, with common human strengths in the center of that continuum, and counterproductive patterns at either end.

This worksheet also is followed by a page describing some of the common patterns, and some of their implications for effectiveness in professional practice.

Goals and Strengths

This worksheet combines what you learned in the direction exercises in the previous chapter with the strengths and challenges you identified in this chapter, and takes it a couple more steps. For each goal you've prioritized, you'll be asked to look at the strengths that might support your progress toward that goal, the strength and challenges that might work against your pursuit of that goal, and ways of overcoming or compensating for those challenges. Sometimes it's good to see everything on one page, and you'll be using some of this information in later chapters.

Working Strengths Worksheet

✓ Check here if you identify more with this side		Check here if you're mixed or somewhere ✓ in the middle		Check here if you identify more with this side ✓
Energy				
<input type="checkbox"/>	It's easy for me to be still and calm.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a hard time sitting still.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I tend to be sort of contemplative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I tend to be action oriented.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Locus of Initiative				
<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm more likely to do something for someone else.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm more likely to do something for myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm at my best when I'm responding to other people's requests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm at my best when I'm doing things based on my own initiative.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	My strongest spiritual guidance comes through other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	My strongest spiritual guidance comes from things I do alone.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm most comfortable when other people are in charge.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm most comfortable when I'm in charge.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Focus				
<input type="checkbox"/>	My attention tends to focus itself on one thing at a time, even when things are going on around me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	My attention often goes in several directions, letting me juggle thoughts and ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I focus on a few key ideas, and develop them in my head.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I get so many ideas it's hard to decide which things to do.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I like working on the same tasks or projects over the long term.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like finishing one task or project and starting another.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning				
<input type="checkbox"/>	I plan things for a long time before I do them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I jump ahead and start doing things, and plan as I go along.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I tend to start projects early and work hard long before deadlines approach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I tend to put things off until I'm under deadline pressure.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	It's more important to me to do things as well as possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	It's more important to me to do things as quickly as possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interactions With People				
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a strong sense of purpose about other people's well being.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like being responsible only for my own well being.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I spend more energy and attention on my relationships with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I spend more energy and attention on my relationship with myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	It's easier for me to work with other people around.	<input type="checkbox"/>	It's easier for me to work alone.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm better at listening than I am at talking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm better at talking than I am at listening.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm more comfortable collaborating with other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I'm more comfortable having full control of how things are done.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I like working with the same people from day to day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	I like working with different people every day.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Some Hints for Looking at Your Answers to the Working Strengths Worksheet

When you look at the five areas on this worksheet (Energy, Locus of Initiative, Focused, Planning, and Interactions With People), you might find that, the more harmony among your answers in a particular area, the less conflict you'll experience in that area. Another general observation: A mark in the center column indicates strengths that are more balanced and flexible, while a mark at either end indicates strengths that are more extreme and more dynamic.

The patterns within and among the five areas can also be very important. For example:

- **If in a particular area your answers all line up on one end**, that indicates a level of strength that is very powerful but not very flexible. For example, in the area labeled Energy, both of my answers fell in the left-hand column. My ability to be still and contemplative can be a significant strength, but it doesn't do me much good when it's time to clean up my office or get the filing out of the way.
- **If one area has all extreme answers, but they are at opposite ends of the line**, you may be experiencing some conflict in this area. For example, in the area of Planning, I learned that I tend to plan things for a long time before I do them, then put off actually working on them until I'm under deadline pressure. That creates a conflict in itself, because it reduces the amount of time available to spend working on a project. On the third line I identified still another conflict: It's more important to me to do things as **well** as possible, rather than to do them as **quickly** as possible. So, by putting off starting on projects, I'm putting myself in a situation that makes it harder to live up to my standards.
- **Even if only two answers in an area are at opposite extreme ends**, it can cause conflict depending on the two answers. For example, under Locus of Initiative I learned that I'm more likely to do something for someone else than I am to do it for myself, but I'm at my best when I'm following my own initiative. So the projects that might be most effective and most fulfilling for me tend not to get done, because I'm the only one who wants them.
- **If each of two different areas has extreme answers—but the answers for the two areas as a whole are at opposite extremes**—you might want to look at the two areas to see if there's any potential for conflict. For example, under Energy, I learned that I'm still and contemplative by nature. But under Focus, I learned that my attention wants to juggle many ideas at a time, I get so many ideas it's hard to decide what to do, and I like to finish completely with one task or project and leave it behind for another. It's hard for a low-energy person to follow a million ideas through to completion.
- **If one area has some extreme answers and other answers in the middle**, that area tends to be more stable. For example, under Interactions with People, I have more answers in the center than at either end. That tends to be a relatively stable area for me.
- **Regardless of the patterns in and among any of these areas, any one answer can indicate challenge** if it conflicts with a circumstance that's very powerful in your working life. For example, under Interactions with People, I learned that it's easier for me to work with other people around, but I work for myself, and most of the work I do is done in solitude. This has been one of the biggest challenges I've faced in my consulting work.

Life Strengths and Challenges: The Double Continuum

This worksheet expands the discussion of strengths to life as a whole. I developed it in 1997 for a workshop on resiliency. I'd noticed for many years that most things that we think of as counterproductive characteristics or behaviors are really strengths taken to the extreme. Human choices seem to exist on a double continuum, with the strengths at the center and the counterproductive stuff at either end. We tend to move back and forth along this continuum quite a bit. For each of the lines listed below, check the box of every characteristic that you display sometimes. Evaluate each one separately, regardless of what else you've checked on that line.

Extremes	Strengths	Strengths	Extremes
<input type="checkbox"/> People-Pleasing	<input type="checkbox"/> Diplomacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Honesty	<input type="checkbox"/> Indiscretion
<input type="checkbox"/> Being a "Doormat"	<input type="checkbox"/> Gentleness	<input type="checkbox"/> Assertiveness	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggression
<input type="checkbox"/> Pessimism	<input type="checkbox"/> Realism	<input type="checkbox"/> Optimism	<input type="checkbox"/> Delusion
<input type="checkbox"/> Passivity	<input type="checkbox"/> Faith	<input type="checkbox"/> Initiative	<input type="checkbox"/> Need to Control
<input type="checkbox"/> Cowardice	<input type="checkbox"/> Caution	<input type="checkbox"/> Courage	<input type="checkbox"/> Foolhardiness
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Neglect	<input type="checkbox"/> Altruism	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Selfishness
<input type="checkbox"/> Following Without Question	<input type="checkbox"/> Loyalty	<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Tyranny
<input type="checkbox"/> Low Self-Esteem	<input type="checkbox"/> Humility	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Esteem	<input type="checkbox"/> Grandiosity
<input type="checkbox"/> Irrational Beliefs	<input type="checkbox"/> Imagination	<input type="checkbox"/> Logic	<input type="checkbox"/> Rationalization
<input type="checkbox"/> Being Simplistic	<input type="checkbox"/> Simplicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Complexity	<input type="checkbox"/> Over-Complication
<input type="checkbox"/> Reactivity	<input type="checkbox"/> Sensitivity	<input type="checkbox"/> Detachment	<input type="checkbox"/> Insensitivity
<input type="checkbox"/> Dependence	<input type="checkbox"/> Interdependence	<input type="checkbox"/> Independence	<input type="checkbox"/> Lone Ranger Syndrome

Some Hints for Looking at Your Answers to the Life Strengths and Challenges Worksheet

This worksheet isn't focused as directly on working patterns as the last one was, but you may find that some of the characteristics or patterns you've marked provide some insight into challenges you're experiencing in your working life.

Here are some common patterns:

- **You may spend most of your time in the center two columns**, responding to the needs of the situation, then shoot over to one end or the other under extreme stress. So your working attitudes and behaviors may be peaceful and productive until the stress reaches critical mass.
- **You may find yourself under extreme stress far too often in your working life**, leading you to ask yourself why you're putting yourself in extremely stressful situations over and over, what you might be doing to set up the stressful circumstances, or why you often don't see them coming.
- **You may be extra heavy on the left or the right side of the page**, wavering between strengths and challenges on that side, and very seldom exploring strengths and challenges on the other side. You may be exploring only half of your potential, as a human being and/or as a professional.
- **You may find yourself going to one extreme end—or both—more often than you really have to under the circumstances**. It may just be an automatic habit, reacting in extreme ways. You may be losing a lot of energy to internal chaos, and your working relationships and reputation may be suffering.

In general, the extreme poles of the double continuum have a strong magnetic force, because of the "black-and-white," all-or-nothing thinking that human beings develop as children. The closer we get to the center of the continuum, the more we miss the certainty and simplicity of the more extreme characteristics. Instead, we're feeling the pull of both magnetic poles, and embracing the duality that's part of life, whether we like it or not. This duality may feel uncomfortable, and so we're tempted to drift toward one counterproductive pole or the other. And then we remember how much more painful and exhausting it is when we're living in the challenging characteristics at the extreme ends.

Goals and Strengths

This worksheet gives you a chance to look at ways in which your strengths may or may not be supporting your goals.

1. In the left-hand column below, write the most important goals that you listed in the left-hand column of your Direction Summary Worksheet, the goals you've begun to define during this process—and/or new ones, if you think of a way to improve upon your earlier list.
2. In the second column, list some of your strengths that might support each of these goals. You can take them from earlier exercises, or think of new ones.
3. In the third column, list some of your strengths or challenges that might **not** support each of these goals, or might even work against them.

Goals	Strengths That Might Support Them	Strengths/Challenges That Might Work Against Them

In the next chapter you'll explore some possible ways of overcoming, or compensating for, the challenges in the third column.



Challenges and Resources

When I've been trying to get unstuck, I've usually needed more than a short list of my challenges. While I agree that endless analysis is counterproductive—and action is the only thing that creates action—I also have a healthy respect for the depth, power, and cleverness of my inertia. Since I already knew poking myself with a sharp stick wouldn't work, I decided I needed a fairly complete inventory of my challenges that would match those challenges with resources for overcoming them or compensating for them.

The worksheet for collecting and analyzing information about challenges is divided into five sections: Challenges to Confidence and Motivation, Challenges to Direction, Lack of Interest or Aptitude, Gaps in Knowledge or Skill, and Physical Challenges.

The information about your challenges will come from the information you wrote in the third column of the Goals and Strengths Worksheet (Page 31) and from your own honest introspection, intuition, and logic. The next page or so explains why I chose the categories of challenge in the worksheet, and some of the things I learned in completing them.

Areas of Challenge on the Worksheet

Challenges to Confidence and Motivation

No matter how many things I've done well, I haven't figured out how to store up enough confidence from project to project and year to year. And my motivation to apply myself to my work seems to start out slowly, build as the project progresses, and dissipate when it's done. Like food and water, my confidence and motivation seem to require frequent replenishment. Tired of condemning myself for a wimp for requiring replenishment, I finally decided to identify and use resources that would provide it.

Challenges to Direction

Sometimes, even when we've defined our ideal direction, we find ourselves stuck because of loyalty to our current direction, financial realities, reluctance to give up other activities that are taking up our time, or a fear that our new direction is less important or less worthwhile than our current one. This section explores some of those possibilities.

Lack of Interest or Aptitude

Some challenges are worth overcoming, with possible positive effects on a number of areas of life. Other challenges are likely to be with us forever because they're closer to our basic nature, but we can find ways of compensating for them by getting help from people, organizations, and a variety of information sources. First we have to identify them and look honestly at our lack of motivation to change.

Gaps in Knowledge or Skill

These gaps are usually significant opportunities for learning experiences that will bring us great satisfaction and fulfillment—but at first, they just feel like obstacles. This page is a place to collect information about these gaps and some resources you can use to fill them.

Physical Challenges

We in the human services tend to ignore the physical challenges associated with our work. After all, we're strong people, and we're working for the good of humanity. We tend to face our limitations only when they threaten our ability to work. The fact that this runs counter to any advice we would give any other human being doesn't seem to affect us. Here are some common physical challenges and examples of ways of preventing or remedying them:

- Repetitive stress from typing (voice recognition software, ergonomic keyboards/mice, wrist supports, macros and templates for information that's often repeated, anti-inflammatory)
- Too much walking (assistive devices, moving things around, changing schedules)
- Too much standing (portable stools, moving furniture, changing schedules)
- Too much noise (earplugs, reorganizing space, creating a conversation space)
- Posture that causes stress (ergonomic furniture, lumbar support cushions, reminder signs)
- Too little sleep (earplugs, setting better bedtime boundaries, reducing activities or TV)
- Too little exercise (keeping exercise commitments, finding exercises you can do while you're working, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, simply moving more rapidly)
- Poor air quality (ventilation systems, air conditioning, dust masks, opening windows)
- Hazardous driving (more realistic schedules, refusing to ride with hazardous drivers)
- Exposure to disease (face masks, washing hands, immune system-building supplements)
- Dangerous people (never working or walking alone, cell phones, self-defense measures)

Challenge/Resource Worksheet

Challenges to Confidence and Motivation

1. What is your overall level of confidence in your ability to do the work you want to do?

0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

2. Where does your lack of confidence come from? _____

3. Where does your confidence come from? _____

4. What does your lack of confidence try to tell you?

5. How does your confidence answer that?

6. When have you felt most confident about your work in the past, and why?

7. How can you re-create some of those conditions?

8. Who are three people who believe in your work?

9. Why do you want to do this work?

10. What sights, sounds, words, or images strengthen your motivation to do this work?

11. Who can you talk to, or think of, to strengthen your motivation to do this work?

Challenges to Direction

12. Is the direction that's right for you likely to require that you leave your current job? _____
How hard is that likely to be? 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

13. How practical is the kind of work you're contemplating in terms of financial survival?
0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

14. If it's not very practical, how much time can you afford to devote to it right now?

15. Are there any people or organizations who might be willing to help you do this?

People or Organizations	Resources They Might Provide

16. What else is taking up your time that you could give up without breaking a commitment to others or to yourself?

17. What would you need to do to give that up?

18. How important is this type of work in the eyes of the field? 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

19. How important do **you** consider this work? 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

20. Why do you consider it important?

21. Who else besides you considers it as important as you do?

Lack of Interest or Aptitude

22. In the table below:

- In the first column, list some of the challenges that have kept you from fulfilling your purpose (from the third column of Page 31, from this worksheet, from your self-knowledge).
- In the second column, list some other areas of life in which those challenges also cause problems.
- In the third column, circle the number that shows how ready you are to overcome these challenges by changing some of your attitudes, behaviors, and life choices.

Challenges	Other Areas of Life	Readiness to Change
		0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
		0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
		0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
		0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
		0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
		0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
		0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
		0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
		0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

23. If you marked your readiness to overcome any of those obstacles as a 0 or a 1, that might mean that you just don't have (or don't want) what it takes to make that particular change. You might someday be ready and willing to overcome these obstacles, but while you're waiting for that day, you might want to think of some ways of compensating for them.

Stubborn Obstacles	Possible Ways of Compensating for Them

Gaps in Knowledge or Skills

24. In the kinds of work you want to do, what subject areas do you wish you knew more about, and where can you go for education or information?

Subject Areas	Sources of Education/Information

25. What skill training do you still need, and where can you go to get it?

Skill Areas	Training Resources

Physical Challenges

26. Check any work-related physical challenges, and possible remedies (see Page 34):

- Repetitive stress (from typing, etc.)—Prevention/Remedy: _____
- Too much walking—Prevention/Remedy: _____
- Too much standing—Prevention/Remedy: _____
- Too much noise—Prevention/Remedy: _____
- Posture that causes stress—Prevention/Remedy: _____
- Too little sleep—Prevention/Remedy: _____
- Too little exercise—Prevention/Remedy: _____
- Poor air quality—Prevention/Remedy: _____
- Hazardous driving—Prevention/Remedy: _____
- Exposure to disease—Prevention/Remedy: _____
- Dangerous people/surroundings—Prevention/Remedy: _____
- Other _____ Prevention/Remedy: _____



Assessing Jobs and Projects

If I really believe I have a hand in my own direction, then I must believe I have a right to choose whether or not to take a particular job or project—or whether or not to stay in a job I've taken. Rather than continue to use my traditional favorite criterion for choosing to take or stay in a particular job or project—how afraid I am of leaving or saying “no”—I decided to design a worksheet that would help me look at a number of more important considerations.

You can use copies of this worksheet to:

- Assess your current job or project, to find out if it's a good place for you to be
- Assess jobs, projects, or career directions you're considering.

If you use the worksheet on your current job and find yourself ambivalent about keeping it, the following chapter (Staying vs. Leaving) has a couple more exercises to help you weigh your options.

The worksheet begins with a space for the mission statement you created in the chapter on Direction, something to remember throughout the job/project assessment process. Then it looks at the job's or the project's possible benefits on five dimensions:

- **Higher Purpose:** How well the job or project is likely to fulfill (or lead to fulfillment of) your higher purpose
- **Authority:** The amount of knowledge or authority you have on the subject matter, and how well the project might increase your authority on that subject
- **Positioning:** How well your involvement in the project might move your career or your life in the direction you want to go
- **Generativity:** Whether or not the project will help you pass along what you've learned or prepare people to find others to fulfill their needs when you're no longer doing this work
- **Gut Instinct:** The elements of all the other dimensions that stand out as most important in your decision—and the decision you would make if fear were not a factor

Job/Project Assessment Worksheet

Your Mission: _____

Name of Job or Project: _____

Your Title/Role: _____

Area A: Higher Purpose

How well is this job or project/role likely to fulfill (or lead to fulfillment of) your higher purpose?

1. Who needs your work in this job, in this role, or on this project, why, and how much?

Who Needs It	Why They Need It	How Much They Need It
		1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
		1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
		1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

2. What's the range of impact of this job or project, or your role in it (# people, systems, etc.)?

3. What is the possible depth of this project's impact on individuals? (Check all that apply.)

- It may help someone/some people improve one or more life circumstances
- It may help someone/some people avoid making painful or dangerous mistakes
- It may help someone/some people lead happier, more fulfilling lives
- It may help someone/some people avoid or recover from potentially devastating conditions
- Other: _____

4. How much will this work help move your field forward? 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

5. What might be the effects of this job, role, or project on your field?

6. How strong is your sense of purpose about it? 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

7. What elements of your mission does it help you fulfill, and how does it do that?

8. At the end of your life, how important might it be to you that you did it? 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Why?

Area B: Authority

How much authority do you have on this subject matter, and how might this job/role/project increase your authority on this subject?

9. Where does your current knowledge of this subject come from? (Check all that apply.)

- Your own experience
- Experiences of people you know
- Articles, studies, or books you've read
- Other: _____

10. Of the most important subject areas relevant to this project, how extensive is your knowledge?

Subject: _____	Your knowledge: 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Subject: _____	Your knowledge: 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Subject: _____	Your knowledge: 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

11. Of the most important subject areas relevant to this project, how **deep** is your **understanding**?

Subject: _____	Understanding: 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Subject: _____	Understanding: 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Subject: _____	Understanding: 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

12. When you write or speak about this, how strong is your voice? 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
Why?

13. What do you still need to learn/practice to be ready to do this well, and how will you do that?

What You Still Need to Learn or Practice	Possible Resources for This

14. How does or will your work on this project increase your knowledge, understanding, skill, and authority?

Area C: Positioning

What might your involvement in this project do to move your career and/or life in the direction you want it to go?

15. How interesting is the subject matter to you? 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

16. How does it relate to the subject areas you prioritized in the "Direction Worksheet"?

17. How much do you enjoy doing this kind of work? 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

Why? _____

18. Which of these purposes does this project/role seem like it will satisfy, and to what extent?

- 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 Higher purpose
- 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 Enjoyable work and/or working conditions
- 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 Financial security
- 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 Diplomacy
- 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 Freedom
- 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 Stretching your courage and capabilities
- 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 Doing something really well; having something to show
- 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 Exposure to new, broader, or better markets for your work

19. On a continuum from chaos to peace, how would you describe the potential effects on your life if you take or stay in this job/project right now (e.g., level of responsibility, level of stress, time commitment, disruption to your schedule, personalities involved)? (Circle or X the spot.)

Chaotic – – – – Disruptive – – – – Uncomfortable – – – – Manageable – – – – Peaceful

Why? _____

20. How much would you like to be doing this kind of work in a year? 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

21. How much would you like to be doing this kind of work in 5 years? 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

22. If you had six months to live, would this be one of the things you'd do? Yes No

Why? _____

Area D: Generativity How does/will this job/project help you pass along what you've learned or prepare people to replace you when you leave?

23. How does/will this job/project let you help people find their strengths and capabilities?

24. How does/will this job/project let you help people empower themselves?

25. How does/will this job/project let you help people find greater freedom?

26. How does/will this job/project let you help people progress in their lives and/or careers?

27. How does/will this job/project help you pass along your knowledge and skills?

28. How will this job/project improve knowledge, understanding, skills, or attitudes in the field?

29. How does/will this job/project help you prepare others to do the kinds of work you do?

30. How will this let you help your clients find others who can fulfill their needs in the future?

Gut Instinct

31. After reading everything you just wrote, what's your **strongest gut instinct** about this job or project's level of benefit/importance to your life right now? 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

32. What argument for taking/keeping this job/project seems to stand out ahead of all others?

33. What argument for **not** taking/staying in this role seems to stand out ahead of all the others?

34. What would you choose to do if your fears (e.g., financial fears, fear of failure, fear of the unknown, fear of disappointing people, fear of what people will think) were **not** a factor?



Staying vs. Leaving

Very few decisions are as loaded with emotion as our decisions about what to do when we're not happy in our current work situations. If you count all the organizations I've worked in, consulted for, and "temped" in—especially if you include my misspent youth, which lasted until I was close to 40—you can safely say I've had a lot of chances to observe how organizations work, and how people function and relate in organizational structures.

I can honestly say that, in all that time, I haven't seen any bad organizations, any bad jobs, or any bad people. But I have seen a whole lot of bad matches.

- I've seen people take jobs that are beneath their skill levels and tangential to their aspirations—just hoping their employers will see their potential and promote them to more meaningful positions—and end up angry, frustrated, and unproductive.
- I've seen people hired or promoted into jobs that are above their levels of skill or intelligence, lapsing into permanent patterns of poor performance despite repeated efforts to groom them and/or compensate for their shortcomings.
- I've seen people learn and grow beyond the limits of their positions, and of their organizations' ability to occupy them. I've seen them suffocate for lack of challenge and growth, but remain too loyal to leave.
- I've seen people drown in stress, fatigue, or burnout in worthwhile organizations whose missions and scope of services were simply too big for their resources.
- I've seen managers and employees locked in the destructive dance of scapegoating—the employees denied the support and direction they need to improve their performance, and the managers lost in their frustration and anger, not knowing how to work with employees who push their buttons the way these ones do.

I've also seen people in all these positions turn it around—persevere and triumph, break through the glass ceiling, gain difficult skills through hard work, bring in more resources, change their behavior patterns, heal their working relationships. I haven't seen it very often, but I have seen it. Every time, it's been extraordinarily inspiring—the phoenix rising from the ashes. More often I've seen people leave, psychologically caved in after months or years of being overlooked, overstressed, or scapegoated—only to be sighted a few months later, happy and glowing with confidence from a new job that turned out to be a good match.

In all of these cases, everything about the situation was difficult for everyone concerned: the staying, the going, the relationships, the behavior changes, the words, the emotions, the loyalty, the sense of betrayal, the feelings of being trapped, the jumping off into the unknown. If you're dealing with what might be a bad match, please know that I know how hard it is.

A well kept secret: If you're unhappy in your job, your boss probably knows, and doesn't know quite what to do about it. If loyalty to your boss or your organization is keeping you in a job that's causing you pain, then it's quite possible that your boss's and your organization's loyalty or protectiveness toward you is keeping them in a painful situation too.

Another well kept secret: If you're working with people whose behavior is inappropriate, insensitive, or unkind, the best way to start to remedy the situation is to look at the way you behave in reaction to their behavior. If any of your words or actions falls short of your own standards, you need to clean that up first. This doesn't mean you have to stay in your job, or in the organization. But it might begin to heal the situation—and even if it doesn't, you'll be entering your next position with your actions more in line with your values and standards.

As a species, and as a society, we're very much oriented toward blame. It's much easier to blame ourselves or others—or to bounce back and forth between the two—than it is to step back and look at the situation with a combination of rationality and compassion toward all parties. Sometimes we can become mesmerized just watching the exchange of blame—like a dog wagging his head back and forth at a tennis match—when we should be getting into action, making plans, and focusing on what we can do to improve things or get out.

The Options Worksheet on the following page looks beyond the two most obvious outcomes (staying and leaving), because sometimes these aren't the only two options. It's a fairly standard analysis of pros and cons, except that it looks at multiple options:

- **Things stay the same** (if any change would be more uncomfortable than the status quo)
- **You stay and change your behavior** (if you'd like to see if you can help heal the situation)
- **You stay and change positions or negotiate a role redefinition** (if the organization is a good match, but your role is the problem)
- **You decrease your involvement** (e.g., decrease your time or become a consultant, if you're just too tired, too stressed, too bored, or too deeply immersed in the situation)
- **You find another job, then leave** (if you can remain stable and tolerate the discomfort while you find a graceful way out)
- **You leave ASAP, with or without another job** (if the situation has deteriorated too far and your confidence is eroding every minute you stay there)

Feel free to fill out any or all squares on this worksheet, depending on your situation. If you already know that some of the options are out, feel free to cross out their headings and use them as extra space for writing about the options you are considering.

Options Worksheet

Things stay the same	You stay, but change your behavior	You stay, but change roles or positions	You decrease your involvement	You find another job, then leave	You leave ASAP, with or without another job
Because change would be more uncomfortable	Because the situation might be healed this way	Because another role would be a better match	Because a modified role would be better for you	Because you'd rather wait & leave gracefully	Because it's too painful, taking too high a toll
Benefits of this option:	Benefits of this option:	Benefits of this option:	Benefits of this option:	Benefits of this option:	Benefits of this option:
Costs of this option:	Costs of this option:	Costs of this option:	Costs of this option:	Costs of this option:	Costs of this option:
	Ways you should change your behavior:	Position that would be a good match for you:	Role and level of time commitment you want:	Steps you'll take toward finding a new job:	Interim plan for survival, and deadline for leaving:

Zeroing in on Key Options

When you look at the squares you filled in on the Options Worksheet, you may find that one or more options clearly have more benefits and/or fewer costs than the other options. Complete this "Zeroing In" worksheet for each option that you're seriously considering:

1. What is the option? (Describe it in detail.)

2. Why is this a viable or preferable option?

3. How does this option fit in with your mission and goals?

4. What are your own psychological obstacles to this option?

5. What strengths and resources might you use to overcome these obstacles?

6. What are your financial or logistical obstacles to this option?

7. What strengths and resources might you use to overcome these obstacles?

8. What reactions (positive and negative) can you expect from other people?

9. Who can be counted on to give you support and encouragement through this process?

10. What are the steps you plan to take toward this option, and what are your deadlines for taking them?

Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____
Step: _____	Deadline: _____



Timekeeping

If you're one of those people possessed of a natural capacity for self-discipline, don't even think about reading this chapter.

But if you're at all like me—almost always preferring to do something impractical, motivated to focus on work only by a fear of the drama and chaos that accompany missed deadlines—then this chapter might help you.

In a life that is strung together from little pieces of time, with a limited amount of time left (I don't even know how limited), I found myself wasting far too much of my life. Add to that the fact that I've discovered some important professional goals that no one is likely to hire me to pursue, and I realized that I risk wasting a lot.

Lacking the self-discipline chromosome, I had to construct an external system that does for me what my impulses would have done if my genetic makeup had only been a little more cooperative.* First, of course, I took time out to analyze all the social, spiritual, and psychological reasons for my pervasive professional paralysis (like anybody cares). Then I had to construct an external conscience that would:

- Capture the time I spend on everything—the work I want to do more of, and the time-wasters I want to do less of
- Compare the amount of time spent on work with an ideal number of hours I should be spending on it, and give me immediate feedback when I fall short
- Keep a running total of my shortfall from week to week (appearing in red, of course), correctable only by working extra hours in subsequent weeks
- Display the time-waster totals in red too, so I can feel sufficiently guilty
- Keep track of time lost due to mitigating circumstances (e.g., illness, working on finances) and time spent in life-enhancing activities (e.g., exercise, music, dancing, spending time with family)—with this information not affecting the shortfalls, but at least making me feel better about them

*None of this might have been possible if the great Leonard Jason, PhD hadn't shown me—many, many years ago—that sometimes simply recording things helps us change them!

The Timekeeping System

If I had a database program, I could do all sorts of fancy things with it, but all I have is Microsoft Excel, so I used spreadsheets to construct my external conscience. I have a master spreadsheet (aptly called "Conscience"), where I record all my time totals for each week. I tend to update these totals daily, so I can see how I'm doing or not doing. Sometimes it inspires me to work harder. This spreadsheet also calculates how far over or under my work quota I am (printing the negative numbers in red), and keeps a running total of over- or under-quota figures from week to week.

Because in my consulting practice I charge for my time, I also keep a simple little spreadsheet for each client, in which I record my starting and ending times and the total time worked (in quarter-hour increments). But in my goal-setting process, I realized that I have legitimate work to do beyond the projects my clients hire me to do. So I have another spreadsheet to keep track of everything I could legitimately call work that no one else has hired me to do. I call that spreadsheet "Pam Time."

Even though things like finances, marketing my services, and organizing my office also contribute to my career survival, I decided that my goal for working hours for each week would not include these things, because they don't produce any direct products. Only the time I record in my work for clients, plus the time recorded on my Pam Time spreadsheet, would help me reach my quota.

The time-wasting column was easy. I live and work in a high rise that requires cable access for any television signal, so I have cable. I love movies, and I love escape, so I have a few movie channels. I'm in a constant state of temptation. It's easy for me to figure out what to record in red in the "Wasted Time" column next to the "Total Hours Worked" column on my Conscience spreadsheet.

This system could easily be adapted to help other consultants keep track of their time, or to help employees keep track of the time they spend on different projects (vs. daydreaming, gossiping, complaining, looking things up on the Internet).

The next page shows a simplified version of the weekly Conscience spreadsheet, with the formulas written into the appropriate fields. (Because this Workbook is a Word document, if you want to create an Excel spreadsheet, you'll need to copy those formulas into it. I'm also willing to send a blank spreadsheet with formulas and instructions to anybody who emails me at pamelawoll@sbcglobal.net and requests one.)

The next page after the Conscience spreadsheet shows the general format of a client-specific time-recording worksheet (with one week recorded as an example). This format can be used to record wasted time too!

Weekly “Conscience” Spreadsheet (to be created in Microsoft Excel, or write pamelawoll@sbcglobal.net for an emailed copy)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Week	[Client/Project]	[Client/Project]	[Client/Project]	Work Totals	Wasted Time	Family Time	Exercise
2								
3	5/1 – 5/7	2.250	39.50		41.75	14.00*	10.50	7.0
4					1.75			
5					1.75			
6	5/8 – 5/14	14.50	21.50		36.00	16.50*	12.00	8.00
7					(- 4.00)*			
8					(- 2.25)*			
9	5/15 – 5/21	8.25	20.75	21.00	50.00	10.00*	11.00	6.00
10					10.00			
11					7.75			
Above this line are examples. Below this line are formulas, or cells designed for input from project- or client-specific spreadsheets.								
12	5/22 – 5/28	[input # hrs.]	[input # hrs.]	[input # hrs.]	=sum(b12:d12)	[input # hrs]*	[input # hrs]	[input # hrs]
13					=sum(e12-40)			
14					=sum(e11+e13)			
15	5/29 – 6/4	[input # hrs.]	[input # hrs.]	[input # hrs.]	=sum(b15:d15)	[input # hrs]*	[input # hrs]	[input # hrs]
16					=sum(e15-40)			
17					=sum(e14+e16)			
18	6/5 – 6/11	[input # hrs.]	[input # hrs.]	[input # hrs.]	=sum(b18:d18)	[input # hrs]*	[input # hrs]	[input # hrs]
19					=sum(e18-40)			
20					=sum(e17+e19)			

*Everything with an asterisk (all negative work hours—hours below quota—and all wasted time) shows up in red.

- In the recording row for each week (rows 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, etc.), you type in the hours spent on each project/client, wasted time, and each life category (family, exercise). In column E of the recording row (cells e3, e6, etc.), the spreadsheet calculates the total time spent on work (formulas for doing this are shown in cells e12, e15, and e18).
- In column E of the next row down (cells e4, e7, etc.), the spreadsheet subtracts the number 40 (quota for working hours) from the total worked that week, yielding a positive or negative number (formulas for doing this are shown in cells e13, e16, and e19). Negative numbers appear in parentheses and in red.
- In column E of the row below that (cells e5, e8, etc.), the spreadsheet keeps a running total of amounts over or under quota (formulas for doing this are shown in cells e14, e17, and e20). Negative numbers appear in parentheses and in red. **This cell is always bolded, so I’ll give it special notice.**

Client- or Project-Specific Spreadsheet (to be created in Microsoft Excel)

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Date	Time Started	Time Stopped	Total Time	Project	Explanation		
2	5/1/06	9:00 AM	12:30 PM	3.50	Magnet	Workbook Introduction		
3	5/1/06	2:00 PM	4:00 PM	2.00	Magnet	Workbook Chapter 1		
4	5/1/06	4:30 PM	6:30 PM	2.00	Magnet	Workbook Chapter 1		
5	5/1/06	8:15 PM	11:45 PM	3.50	SBIRT	Opioid Protocols Document		
6	5/3/06	10:30 AM	4:45 PM	6.25	Magnet	Chapters 2 and 3		
7	5/4/06	8:00 AM	4:30 PM	8.50	SBIRT	Day One of Two-day training		
8	5/5/06	8:00 AM	4:30 PM	8.50	SBIRT	Day Two of Two-day training		
9	5/7/06	2:00 PM	7:15 PM	5.25	Magnet	Chapters 4 and 5		
10								
11			Week Total:	39.50	← Formula in cell D11 is =sum(d2:d9) Calculate each week.			
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18								
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22								
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24								
25								
26								
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28								



Magnets

The amount of time spent working is only one challenging aspect of self-discipline. Another biggie is the direction in which that time is expended. As I've mentioned before, I have hopes and dreams for my career and my creativity that no one is yet likely to hire me to fulfill. If a vision exists only in my head, how can I expect someone else to fund it? I need to do at least some of the work first.

In spite of the strength of these dreams, I don't have much of a track record for following my heart alone. Like it or not, I seem to respond far more rapidly to other people's needs than to my own—not an uncommon phenomenon in the human services. If you're similarly afflicted, you may not want your dreams to remain on hold until you develop an internal locus of control. Instead, you'll want to compensate for it.

One way to do this is to appoint a series of "Magnets," people who can inspire you to keep your commitments to yourself on individual projects. Each Magnet should be:

- Not a client or employer, to avoid compromising those relationships
- Not someone who's too busy to play even a minor mentoring role
- Someone positive and encouraging, who doesn't feel jealous of or threatened by you
- Someone who's interested in the project's subject matter
- Someone who resembles and/or is a member of the ultimate audience for the project
- Someone who can keep you honest and remind you (from first-hand experience) of the need for this work

For example:

- When I wrote this workbook, I wanted some of my Magnets to be people who were unsatisfied with their current jobs or careers—and struggling with other options—and others to be people who were knowledgeable and experienced in career counseling.
- If you're an addictions counselor learning a new therapeutic technique, you'll want to have at least one Magnet who's skilled at using and teaching that technique, and one or more Magnets who are former clients or people in recovery.

- If you're starting a new business, you'll want at least one Magnet who has started a successful business, and one or more Magnets who might be potential customers or clients. (This is also a good way of getting potential customers/clients interested.)

The “Potential Magnet List” on the following page can help you organize your possibilities.

Approaching Potential Magnets

I learned a lot about approaching mentors through the Leadership Institute. Magnets—and mentors in general—tend to react to your advances in very positive ways. They take it as a compliment, even if they're too busy to accept. Sometimes the people you least expect to say “yes”—because they're too busy or too important—agree without hesitation. Often the people we admire most have developed their own systems for getting things done efficiently, and they can absorb a mentoring role fairly easily.

Unlike formal mentoring roles, the Magnet's role can be as limited or as extensive as you and the Magnet would like. You can ask questions to find out what kind of role would feel comfortable for the Magnet, and negotiate a simple agreement that works for both of you. The Magnet Agreement on Pages 49 and 50 is one way of doing that.

If your potential Magnet seems too important or too knowledgeable to bother with someone at your current level of expertise, remember that mentors don't expect their mentees to be on the same level with them. Think about how you would feel if someone in an earlier stage of development asked you for guidance on something you knew well. You'd think **more** of that person, rather than less, because he or she was taking steps to improve.

If your potential Magnet seems too “unimportant”—a former client in your therapeutic practice, for example—look again. Nothing can equal the wisdom of first-hand experience, or the clear sight of someone who is looking at your vision with new eyes.

Care and Feeding of Magnets

Once you've recruited your Magnets and agreed on terms, don't make my favorite mistake—forgetting all about them. We live in a society that values independence in the abstract, but seldom even thinks about the healthy interdependence that's often necessary to nourish and sustain independence. We think we're supposed to do everything all by ourselves, so we get stuck and stay stuck. Consider your Magnet Agreement a commitment to yourself, to the Magnet, and to your purpose in this world. **Honor that agreement, no matter what.**

Potential Magnet List

Project	Possible Magnet & Contact Info	Why This Person Would be a Good Magnet

Magnet Agreement

Name of Magnet: _____ Email address: _____

Land Line: (____) _____** Cell: (____) _____** Fax: (____) _____

Project Name/Description: _____

Person Doing Project: _____ Email address: _____

Land Line: (____) _____** Cell: (____) _____** Fax: (____) _____

The Scope of the Magnet's Role

Check all that apply:

- Providing encouragement
- Providing suggestions
- Providing advice
- Receiving project status calls* every: _____
- Meeting in person* every: _____
- Providing information on: _____
Estimated time needed for this: _____
- Providing instruction in: _____
Estimated time needed for this: _____
- Providing training in: _____
Estimated time needed for this: _____
- Critiquing:
Type(s) of work to be critiqued: _____
Estimated amount of work to be critiqued: _____
Elements to be critiqued: Structure Practicality Completeness Accessibility
 Ethical issues Quality of written work Skills Other: _____
Level: Go easy Point out major strengths/challenges Be rigorous/constructive

*Following the schedule on Page 2 of this Agreement

**Write only the numbers people should use to contact you

Schedule for Contact and Meetings

The person doing this project will contact the Magnet in the following ways, and on the following schedule:

Date/Time*	Type of Contact
	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting at: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting at: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting at: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting at: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting at: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting at: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting at: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting at: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting at: _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting at: _____

*For loosely scheduled check-in calls or emails, you can write a time-frame, e.g., "mid-April," rather than a specific time and date.

If the Magnet doesn't receive a loosely scheduled check-in call or email, the Magnet will:

- Do nothing. It's the other person's responsibility to initiate contact.
- Call and find out if the other person is stuck and afraid to call.

Both people are responsible for keeping any scheduled appointments (with time and date).

Other Conditions and Considerations

Describe any other conditions of this agreement, or considerations that either or both people should take into account:

Signed:

Magnet

Date

Person Doing the Project

Date



The Plan

So: How are we going to fit all that stuff you just did onto a couple of pages? It's easiest if you break it down into two categories: 1) who you are and 2) what you're going to do.

The "Who you are" page begins with your mission, because that is—or should be—the main force that drives you. This category also includes your strengths (as a professional and as a human being), your challenges, and the resources you can find for overcoming or compensating for those challenges. You can either copy these from the worksheets you completed in the chapters on Direction, Strengths, and Challenges and Resources, or make up new ones based on what you've learned since then.

"What you're going to do" would begin with your goals for their work. For each goal, you'd want to define or summarize:

- The learning priorities that lead you toward the goal
- Any projects, jobs, or roles you plan to take on in pursuit of the goal
- Any obstacles that might get in the way of your taking on those projects, jobs, or roles
- The solutions to these obstacles that you plan to try
- The amount of time you're willing to commit to these pursuits
- The "Magnets," or people who will serve as mentors for these projects, jobs, or roles

I can think of two ways of completing the Plan for Aligning Purpose and Professional Practice that begins on the next page, and I can't tell you which is better:

- Look at your answers to all the previous worksheets, and copy and summarize information from them when you fill in the blanks on the Plan.
- Read or glance through the previous worksheets, then put them aside and don't look at them. Instead, fill in the blanks on the Plan based on your spur-of-the-moment intuition.

One important suggestion: When you get to the "What You're Going to Do" section, you may be tempted (as I was) to fill in the "Projects/Jobs/Roles" column first, and work backwards to "Goals" and "Learning Priorities." **Please resist that temptation.** We are far too often driven by what we feel like doing—or, more often, by what someone is willing to pay us to do. The effects we want to have on this world, and the knowledge we need to have those effects, are often put aside until we've run out of time.

Plan for Aligning Purpose and Professional Practice

Part I: Who You Are

Your Mission:

Strengths	Challenges	Resources for Overcoming or Compensating

Part II: What You're Going to Do

Goals	Learning Priorities	Projects/Jobs/Roles	Obstacles to These	Solutions to These	Time Commitment	Magnets

Are We There Yet?

Finishing this process calls to mind a paraphrase of the old frog story: Three frogs are sitting on a log. One frog makes a really good plan for getting off the log. Now how many frogs are on the log? Three, of course.

My experience with *The Magnet* has been that it hasn't changed me or my direction all at once, but it has made me more conscious of my destination, more willing to try new things, and better equipped to do the work that's most important to me. How far I can go in that direction, and what new directions I'll want to try in the future, are just two among many mysteries.

When I first thought of offering this process to the workforce, I feared doing harm to the field by stirring up hopes and ambitions in people who are largely underpaid, overworked, and overstressed. Then I realized that the strengthening of the field as a whole will require creativity and enthusiasm from all of us—qualities that are much easier to muster if we're following our hearts and our convictions.

It takes a lot of courage to question, to search, to dream, to commit, to try, to stumble, to get up again, and to keep going even when no one else seems to understand. What I've learned, though, is that many people do understand, and that even the most successful people have dreams they haven't dared to seek.

Every step you take toward your own heart's goals will be a triumph for you; an infusion of life into a world in need; and an inspiration to your friends, your colleagues, the people you serve, and the people who'll carry on when you're done. I wish you grace and joy on your journey.

Pam Woll
January, 2006



Background and Contact Information

About the ATTC Network

Building on a rich history, the Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC) Network is dedicated to identifying and advancing opportunities for improving addiction treatment. The Network's vision is to unify science, education, and services to transform the lives of individuals and families affected by alcohol and other drug addiction.

The ATTC Network undertakes a broad range of initiatives that respond to emerging needs and issues in the treatment field. The Network is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to upgrade the skills of existing practitioners and other health professionals, and to disseminate the latest science to the treatment community. Those resources create a multitude of products and services that are timely and relevant to the many disciplines represented by the addiction treatment workforce.

Serving the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Pacific Islands, the ATTC Network operates as 14 individual Regional Centers and a National Office. Together, these Centers take a unified approach in delivering cutting-edge knowledge and skills that develop a powerful workforce—a workforce that has the potential to transform individual lives.

You can reach the ATTC National Office at (816) 482-1200, or visit its web site at www.nattc.org.

About the Great Lakes ATTC

Recognizing its overarching role as a catalyst for creative partnerships in the field, the Great Lakes ATTC recently defined its individual mission as “building bridges that foster the advancement of treatment and recovery.”

The Great Lakes ATTC is dedicated to making effective, culturally competent, research-based treatment services available to people with substance use disorders. This highly collaborative multi-state center promotes: 1) state-of-the-art addiction science and the infusion of that science into professional practice, using ongoing needs-assessment processes to remain responsive to the field; and 2) effective partnership between addiction treatment and criminal justice, health care, academia, and state and local governments.

The five-state Great Lakes region includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The single-state agencies for substance abuse in all five states are active partners in the Center's regional efforts.

The Great Lakes ATTC provides culturally competent didactic, clinical, and experiential training; services to develop the workforce and upgrade professional standards; curriculum development; information dissemination through a regional Web site; a quarterly *Bulletin*; and a Center for Excellence in Criminal Justice. Special focus areas include the Center's work with William L. White on Recovery Management, a series of products and workshops on healing the stigma of addiction, and a variety of neuroscience products and presentations.

You can reach the Great Lakes ATTC at (312) 996-5574, or visit its web site at www.glattc.org.

About the Leadership Institute

The Leadership Institute (LI) is a partnership between the ATTC Network and SAMHSA/CSAT's Partners for Recovery. It was developed in a collaborative process that included the Southern Coast ATTC and the USDA Graduate School, with the guidance and support of Partners for Recovery. The Institute's first round began in 2004, with each of the 14 ATTCs hosting regional Leadership Institutes for addiction professionals who were selected and supported by their organizations.

The Leadership Institute includes a formal and rigorous assessment process; an intensive five-day immersion training on leadership and management, the pairing of protégés with mentors who can help them define and carry out their leadership activities; the development of individual leadership plans based on the protégés' goals, their organizations' needs, and the areas for further development identified in the assessment process; ongoing continuing education and experiential learning; a six-month refresher session that brings mentors and protégés together once again; the completion of individual leadership projects; and a graduation ceremony in which protégés and mentors gather to hear about and celebrate the completion of the LI projects and the scope and depth of the growth that has taken place as a result.

At this writing, one more round of Leadership Institutes is in the planning stage. For more information on the Institute, see www.nattc.org/leaderInst/index.htm on the ATTC National Office web site, or contact your regional ATTC.

About the Author

Pamela Woll, MA, CADP is a Chicago-based consultant in writing, editing, training, and instructional design. Pam has been researching and writing a variety of materials in addiction treatment, prevention, and other human service fields for the past 16 years, on topics including addiction, strength-based treatment, stigma reduction, cultural competence, technology transfer, evidence-based practices, violence, child development, disaster human services, addicted families, resiliency, gender issues, and mentorship.

Pam is the author of the self-study workbook, *Healing the Stigma of Addiction: A Guide for Treatment Professionals*, published by the Great Lakes Technology Transfer Center (2001, revised edition 2005). She is also the principal author of *A Strength-Based Approach Toward Addiction Treatment for Women*, developed and published by the Chicago Practice Improvement Collaborative, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the Great Lakes Addiction Technology Transfer Center (2005).

In addition to her many instructional materials, Pam is primary author of *Worth Protecting: Women, Men, and Freedom From Sexual Aggression* (with Terence T. Gorski), and second author of *The Call to Write: An Invitation to Aspiring Writers* (with William L. White). She has also served as visiting faculty for DePaul University's School for New Learning.

You can reach Pam at (773) 334-7531, or at pamelawoll@sbcglobal.net.

