



THE CAREER CATALYST

Work Likes & Dislikes

Fill the following chart out, dividing your work into 3-5-year blocks so you can identify specific times and projects instead of everything at once. Include volunteer experience. This section is for things you liked about the job. Note anything you especially liked in **boldface**. Be as specific as possible so that you can explain this to anyone who might help you!

Job title	Boss/supervisor	Coworkers	Tasks	Years

For this next section, use the same 3-5-year blocks but instead note the things you disliked about each job or volunteer gig. This section is for things you liked about the job. Note anything you especially disliked in **boldface**. Again, be as specific as possible so that you can explain this to anyone who might help you!

Job title	Boss/supervisor	Coworkers	Tasks	Years

Keep these ideas in mind to guide you:

- Boss/top management
- The company
- The industry
- Products or services
- Organizational structure
- Political climate
- Culture
- Compensation (including benefits)
- Duties and responsibilities
- Geography
- People
- Peers
- Employees
- Customers
- Vendors/consultants
- Physical space
- Facilities
- Tools and equipment
- Stress level
- Tasks/projects/activities
- Travel

Think through each entry carefully. Where were you in your life? What were your big challenges? Your big successes? Your major failures or disappointments? How were you and your boss getting along? How did you feel about the organization and its mission? Were you proud and happy to be working there?

This exercise isn't designed to be short or to end today. Keep thinking about it, and keep your notes where you can reach them. Ponder the exercise for several days, or even several weeks. Aim for longer, more detailed lists rather than short generic ones, even if you feel like previous jobs were completely terrible or your memories are so good that you think you're making it up. The more specific information you have, the easier it will be to identify patterns.

Drill into this assignment and dig deep. You'll be rewarded with great results.

Finishing the Exercise

1. Review your lists and look for patterns. You might say, "I see I've always liked working as part of a team, but that last job was team in name only. For my next role, I want to get examples of teamwork before I make any decisions."
2. Look at the extremes. Look over those boldfaced items you loved and the ones you hated. (You might want to print the documents and highlight or underline those things you loved in one color and the ones you hated in another.)
3. Make extra copies of your lists and distribute them to a few trusted family members or friends, or even an old work mentor. Discuss your preferences with others to see what insights they have. Those who know us well often see connections we miss.
4. Begin to decide what you want in your next job—and what you *don't want* in the future. Begin to determine what you *must have*—these are the absolute essentials— then think about what would be fun, but perhaps frivolous. A window view of the ocean? Three weeks of paid vacation? The ability to work from home one day (or more) per week.
5. Spend some time generating this list. It will really guide you as you consider your next moves.