Finding Long-Term Career Satisfaction Through Career Fit
by Dr. Larry Richard
LawyerBrain LLC
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Moderator Bio
Dr. Larry Richard is recognized as the leading expert on the lawyer personality. Since 1981, he has counseled over 500 lawyers and has gathered personality data from over 25,000 lawyers.

He holds a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, and Ph.D. in Psychology from Temple University. He spent the first 15 years of his practice counseling lawyers on career change and career planning. Formerly a consultant with Hildebrandt, he now heads his own firm, LawyerBrain LLC, which helps law firms with leadership, resilience and change management issues.

He is the author of numerous articles on career planning and career satisfaction for lawyers, and the recent book The New What Can You Do With A Law Degree, co-authored with Tanya Hanson.
Finding Long-Term Career Satisfaction Through Career Fit
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Agenda

• The Inner-Directed Approach
• Personality: How your personality style affects your career satisfaction
• The Lawyer Career Satisfaction Model

Inner-Directed Approach to Career Satisfaction

• Most lawyers approach the career change process backwards.
• Tempting to first ask, “What’s out there?”
• Why it doesn’t work.
Benefits of Inner-Directed Approach

- You may only need to make a small adjustment, rather than a major career change.
- People you network with will find it easier to remember you and help you.
- You will be more attractive to potential employers.
- You are more likely to find a position before the job requirements are fixed.
- You are more likely to find a job that fits you and is satisfying.

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The “Normal” Lawyer Personality
The Lawyer Personality
- More intense
- Traits are atypical, outliers
- Helps lawyers be more effective... as lawyers...
- ... but less effective in “people” roles e.g., leader, manager, supervisor, rainmaker, etc.
- Data on 25,000+ lawyers over 30 years

The normal lawyer personality
- Let’s look at data
- Caliper Profile
- 52 years
- 5 million+ college-educated subjects
- Over 5000 lawyers, including 225 MP’s
- 6 of 18 traits!

The Percentile Curve
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**Sociability**

- Lawyers: 14
- General Public: 50

90% of lawyers score below the 50th percentile!

**Abstract Reasoning**

- Lawyers: 84
- General Public: 50

**Resilience**

- Lawyers: 30
- General Public: 50
Low Resilience: A Special Case

- Possibly the greatest hidden source of “personality risk” for lawyers
- 90% of all lawyers score in the bottom half
- Explains a lot
- Under stress, all 6 traits get intensified
- But Low Resilience is by definition a poor response to stress

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- The Lawyer Career Satisfaction Model
Steps to Achieve Career Satisfaction

1. Discover your career identity.
2. Develop your job criteria.
3. Then direct your attention to the job market. Take action.

Model for Long Term Career Satisfaction

- Values
- Psychological needs
- Communication Style
- Motivated skills
- Career interests

Diagnostic Emotions

Values: Disappointment, Anger
Psychological needs: Frustration
Communication Style: Confusion
Motivated skills: Emptiness, Tedium
Career interests: Boredom
The Importance of Repetition

• Gather data using multiple methods, multiple tools
• Look for the repetitive data, especially across different types of data sources
• Best reassurance that you’ve identified core parts of your stable career identity

Career Identity Element #1: Your Values

• What are values?
• Analog quality – continuum
• Most important part of your career identity
• “What matters to you?”
The “Career Anchors” Model

Values: Career Anchors Model
- Security: Your identity includes a need for security, predictability, or certainty.
- Geographic security
- Tenure security
Values: Career Anchors Model

• **Autonomy:** Your identity includes a need for autonomy. You want freedom from being controlled by other people.

• **Entrepreneurial:** You are driven by “building something creative.” Your identity is connected to the concept of taking an idea and developing it into a reality.

• **General Manager:** You like climbing the hierarchical ladder, making tough decisions, and managing people, capital, and information.
Values: Career Anchors Model

• Craft or Technical-Functional Competence: You already have identified with a particular skill, craft, or competency that you are good at and that you want to be better at.

Values: Career Anchors Model

• Principle: You identify with a particular cause or principle, and it must be part of your work experience.

Values: Career Anchors Model

• Pure Challenge: You are driven to be “the best,” to compete (either against yourself or others), to be constantly challenged.
**Values: Career Anchors Model**

- **Lifestyle**: Work, for you, is just one way to balance all the elements of your life. You want a job that allows you enough time and money to enjoy your family, your friends, your hobbies, and your life.

**Your Values: Career Anchors Model**

- Which is your primary career anchor?

**Your Values: Sample Values Card Sort**

- Change and Variety
- Autonomy
- Help Others
- High Earnings
- Exercise Competence
- Influence People
- Make Decisions
- Precision Work
- Meaningful Work
- Power
- Time Freedom
- Security
Career Identity Element #2: Your Psychological Needs

Psychological Needs

- What are psychological needs?
- Digital quality (vs. analog) – on-off switch
- Basic psychological needs:
  - Affiliation or inclusion
  - Power or control
  - Openness
- Other common psychological needs

Career Identity Element #3: Your Communication Style
Communication Style

• Patterns in the way we interact with people, deal with data, make decisions, and schedule events
• Based on Carl Jung’s Theory of Psychological Types
• Different tools that measure personality preferences identified by Jung
• Best-known and most widely used is Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

MBTI

The MBTI

4 Basic Dimensions

- (S) Extroversion ←Introversion (I)
- (S) Sensing ←Intuition (N)
- (T) Thinking ←Feeling (F)
- (J) Judging ←Perceiving (P)
Extraversion vs. Introversion

Sensing vs. Intuition

Thinking vs. Feeling
Judging vs. Perceiving

16 MBTI "Types"

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Lawyers’ Types Compared to General Population

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(Lawyers in boldface; GP = General Population)
Career Identity Element #4: Your Motivated Skills

Motivated Skills

- Special trap for lawyers
- Why did you go to law school?
- Motivated skills card sort
  - www.careertrainer.com
- Gallup StrengthsFinder
  - www.gallupstrengthscenter.com

Career Identity Element #5: Your Career Interests
Career Interests

- Least influential of the five elements
- Least consistent over time
- Difficult to combine all interests in one job or career
- Can be misleading (example: law school classes)
- Interests alone not sufficient
- Interests card sort – www.careertrainer.com
- The New What Can You Do with a Law Degree
- What Color is Your Parachute?

Steps to Achieve Career Satisfaction

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Job Criteria

- Must Have
- Would Like
- Must Avoid
Model for Long Term Career Satisfaction

Career Identity

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- Motivated skills
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Line of work

Environment & Conditions

Job

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Ideal Job

- Job Environment and Conditions
- Type of Job (Line of Work)
  - Law Jobs
  - Law-Related Jobs
  - Non-Law Jobs

Law Jobs: Potential Adjustments

- Firm (size, client base, work culture)
- Geographic setting (urban vs. suburban vs. rural; different town, city, state)
- Practice area
- Working conditions (reduced hours, telecommuting)
- Work setting (government, business, law school, etc.)
Law-Related Jobs: What You Can Transfer

- Legal skills
- Substantive expertise
- General knowledge or understanding of the legal profession
- Contacts in the legal profession

Non-Law Jobs: How to Make the Transition

- Longest transition
- Repackaging yourself
- Multi-step transitions
- Networking is key

Steps to Achieve Career Satisfaction

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Conclusion

- Invest in the self-assessment process – you will get out of it what you put into it.
- Create a support network – don’t try to do this all by yourself.
- Many lawyers have made job and career transitions – you can do it, too.

Audience Questions?

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?  ?
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