The Flower Exercise: Taking Inventory of Who You Are

—

From *What Color is Your Parachute?*

How do you talk about yourself?

You are not a role.

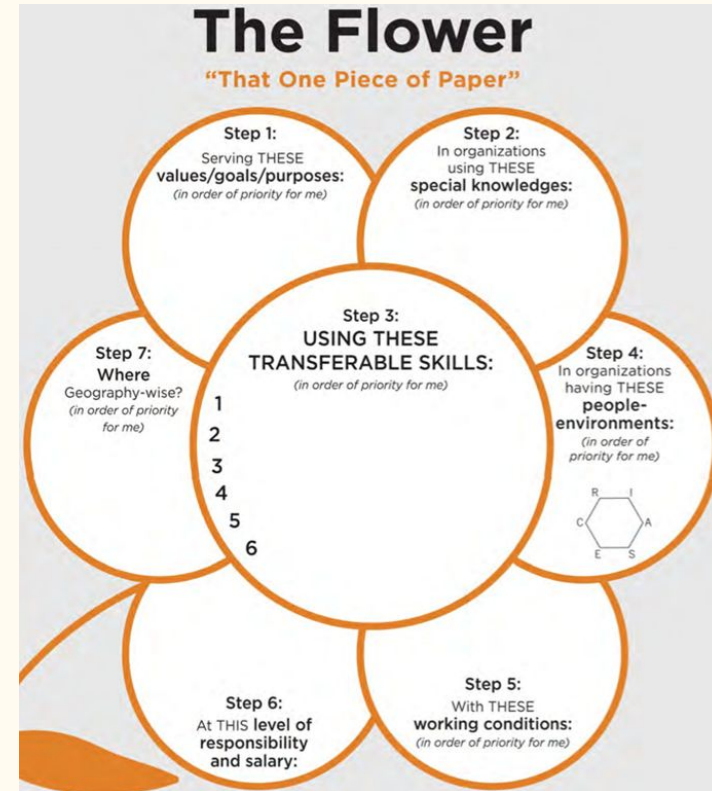You are a person with many skills, talents, experiences, and goals.

Objectives for today's session:

- Describe yourself in 7 different ways to potential interviewers
- Describe in detail the kind of position you're looking for based on these descriptions

Who Are You?

Describe yourself in 7 ways:

1. What you know
2. Who you most want to work with or most want to serve
3. What you can do; what your transferable skills are
4. Favorite working conditions
5. Preferred salary and level of responsibility
6. Preferred geographical location or surroundings
7. Goals or sense of mission/purpose in life; Or goals/mission of the organization you'd like to work

The Flower
"That One Piece of Paper"

Step 1: Serving THESE **values/goals/purposes:** (in order of priority for me)

Step 2: In organizations using THESE **special knowledges:** (in order of priority for me)

Step 3: **USING THESE TRANSFERABLE SKILLS:** (in order of priority for me)
1
2
3
4
5
6

Step 4: In organizations having THESE **people-environments:** (in order of priority for me)

Step 5: With THESE **working conditions:** (in order of priority for me)

Step 6: At THIS level of **responsibility and salary:**

Step 7: Where **Geography-wise?** (in order of priority for me)

I am a person who...knows these particular things

Goal: Summarize **everything** you know! You must talk about subjects you already know a lot about and enjoy talking about

Bonus: What would you like to learn?

Tips: Knowledges are nouns

Good example: Graphic design, data analysis, how to repair a car, how to run an organization, cooking

Bad example: Prompt, thorough, analyzing, persistent, communicating
(these are traits and transferable skills)

YOUR FAVORITE SUBJECTS MATRIX

HIGH

EXPERTISE

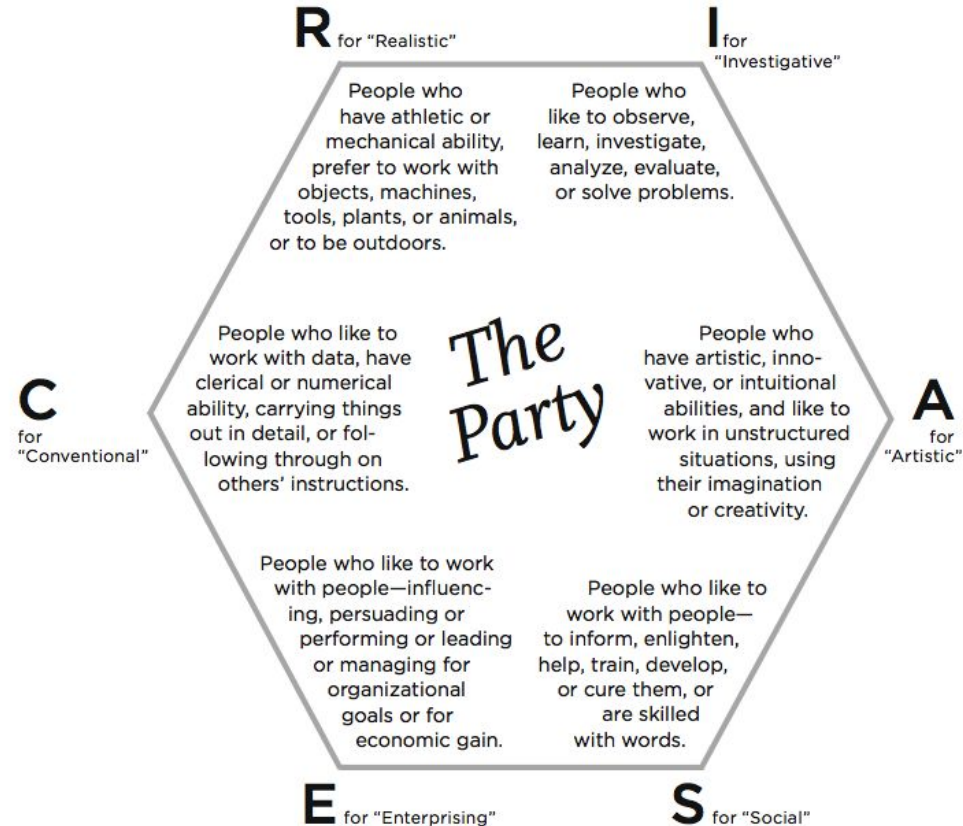| 3. Subjects for Which You Have Little Enthusiasm but in Which You Have Lots of Expertise | 1. Subjects for Which You Have Lots of Enthusiasm and in Which You Have Lots of Expertise BINGO! |
| 4. Subjects for Which You Have Little Enthusiasm and in Which you Have Little Expertise | 2. Subjects for Which You Have Lots of Enthusiasm but in Which You Have Little Expertise |

LOW   ENTHUSIASM   HIGH

I am a person who...has these kinds of favorite people

Goal: To avoid past bad experiences with people at work, focus on the people you most like to work with

Create 2 groups:

1. Who you would most like to work with
2. Who you would most like to "serve"

Party Game: Which corner would you want to stand in at this party?

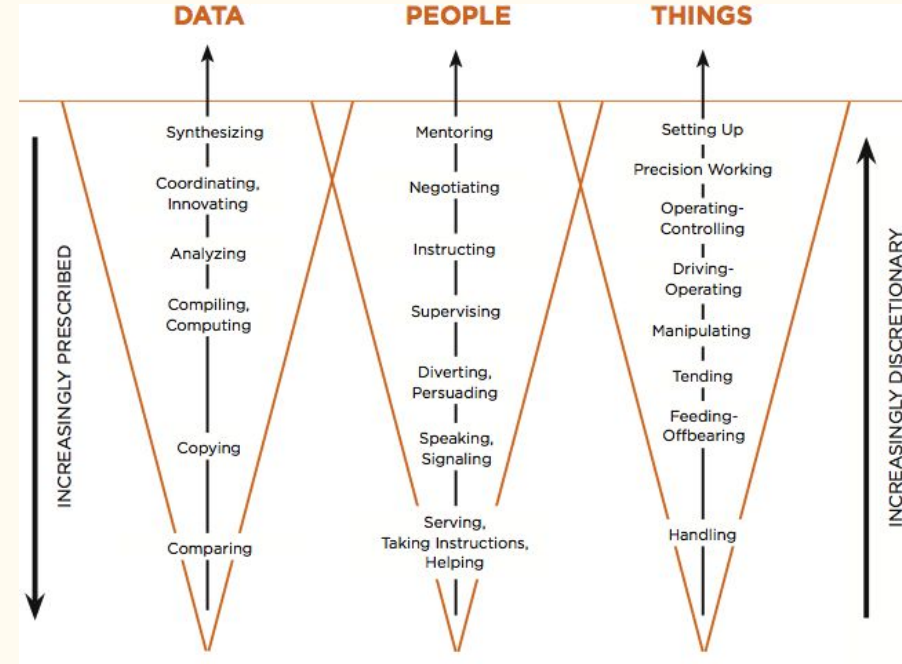# I am a person who...can do these particular things

Goal: To discover what your transferable skills are

Create 3 groups:

1. People skills
2. Skills with data
3. Skills with things (your talents/gifts)

Tips:

- Not just what you *can* do, but what you *love* to do!
- Skills are verbs or gerunds (ending in -ing)

DATA | PEOPLE | THINGS

INCREASINGLY PRESCRIBED

INCREASINGLY DISCRETIONARY

DATA:
Synthesizing
Coordinating, Innovating
Analyzing
Compiling, Computing
Copying
Comparing

PEOPLE:
Mentoring
Negotiating
Instructing
Supervising
Diverting, Persuading
Speaking, Signaling
Serving, Taking Instructions, Helping

THINGS:
Setting Up
Precision Working
Operating-Controlling
Driving-Operating
Manipulating
Tending
Feeding-Offbearing
Handling

I am a person who...has these favorite working conditions

Goal: State the working conditions and surroundings that would make you happiest and enable you to do your most effective work.

Tip: Make these statements very specific

Good example: A workspace with lots of windows, nice view of greenery, relatively quiet, flexible hours.

Bad example: Understanding boss, good colleagues, fun

HELLO
my name is

Happy Worker

I am a person who...prefers a certain level of responsibility and salary

Goal: Gain a realistic picture of how much money you will need or want to earn in your next job as well as your understanding of how much responsibility you want to strive for in your new career.

Tips:

- Think about salary in terms of a range.
- What amount do you envision to expand your quality of life?
- What level of responsibility do you see yourself evolving towards?

I am a person who...prefers to live in a certain place

Goal: Define where you would most like to work and live to be your happiest.

Tip: Again, be specific!

Good Example: First preference: Denver; Second preference: Los Angeles; Third Preference: San Francisco

Bad Example: The West; a suburb; snow

I am a person who...has a certain goal/purpose/mission in life

Goal: Define the "moral compass" or values by which you will continue to guide your life in order to analyze the kinds of organizations or companies you'd like to work for or create.

Consider: Are these values tied to any larger causes or missions?

Tip: Again, be specific!

Good Example: My goal in life is to increase access to quality education for underprivileged groups because I have been a teacher and I want to continue that work by creating technology that increase this access.

Bad Example: More justice in the world.

Putting it all together

Synthesize your notes information onto the "Flower" graphic

Debrief:

- What was easy about this exercise?
- What was difficult about this exercise?
- What did you learn about yourself today?
- What are your takeaways for the job search?

Example
(Rich Feller's Flower)

Salary and Level of Responsibility
1. Can determine 9/12 month contract 2. Can determine own projects 3. Considerable clout in organization's direction without administrative responsibilities 4. Able to select colleagues 5. 3 to 5 assistants 6. $35K to $50K 7. Serve on various important boards 8. Can defer clerical and budget decisions and tasks 9. Speak before large groups 10. Can run for elected office

Favorite Interests
1. Large conference planning 2. Regional geography & culture 3. Traveling on $20/day 4. Career planning seminars 5. Counseling techniques / theories 6. American policies 7. Fundamentals of sports 8. Fighting sexism 9. NASCAR auto racing 10. Interior design

Geography
1. Close to major city 2. Mild winters / low humidity 3. Change in seasons 4. Clean and green 5. 100,000 people 6. Nice shopping malls 7. Wide range of athletic options 8. Diverse economic base 9. Ample local culture 10. Sense of community (pride)

Favorite Skills
1. Observational / learning skills • continually expose self to new experiences • perceptive in identifying and assessing potential of others 2. Leadership skills • continually searches for more resonsibility • sees a problem / acts to solve it 3. Instructing / interpreting / guiding • committed to learning as a lifelong process • create atmosphere of acceptance 4. Serving / helping / human relations skills • shapes atmosphere of particular place • relates well in dealing with public 5. Detail / follow-through skills • handle great variety of tasks • resource broker 6. Influencing / persuading skills • recruiting talent / leadership • inspiring trust 7. Performing skills • getting up in front of a group (if I'm in control) • addressing small and large groups 8. Intuitional / innovative skills • continually develop / generate new ideas 9. Develop / plan / organize / execute • designing projects • utilizing skills of others 10. Language / read / write • communicate effectively • can think quickly on my feet

Favorite People-Environment
1. Strong social, perceptual skills 2. Emotionally and physically healthy 3. Enthusiastically include others 4. Heterogeneous in interests and skills 5. Social changers, innovators 6. Politically, economically astute 7. Confident enough to confront / cry and be foolish 8. Sensitive to nontraditional issues 9. I and R (see page 204) 10. Nonmaterialistic

Favorite Working Conditions
1. Receive clinical supervision 2. Mentor relationship 3. Excellent secretary 4. Part of larger, highly respected organization with clear direction 5. Near gourmet and health food specialty shops 6. Heterogeneous colleagues (race, sex, age) 7. Flexible dress code 8. Merit system 9. Can bike / bus / walk to work 10. Private office with window

Favorite Values
1. Improve the human condition 2. Promote interdependence and futuristic principles 3. Maximize productive use of human / material resources 4. Teach people to be self-directed / self-responsible 5. Free people from self-defeating controls (thoughts, rules, barriers) 6. Promote capitalistic principles 7. Reduce exploitation 8. Promote political participation 9. Acknowledge those who give to the community 10. Give away ideas