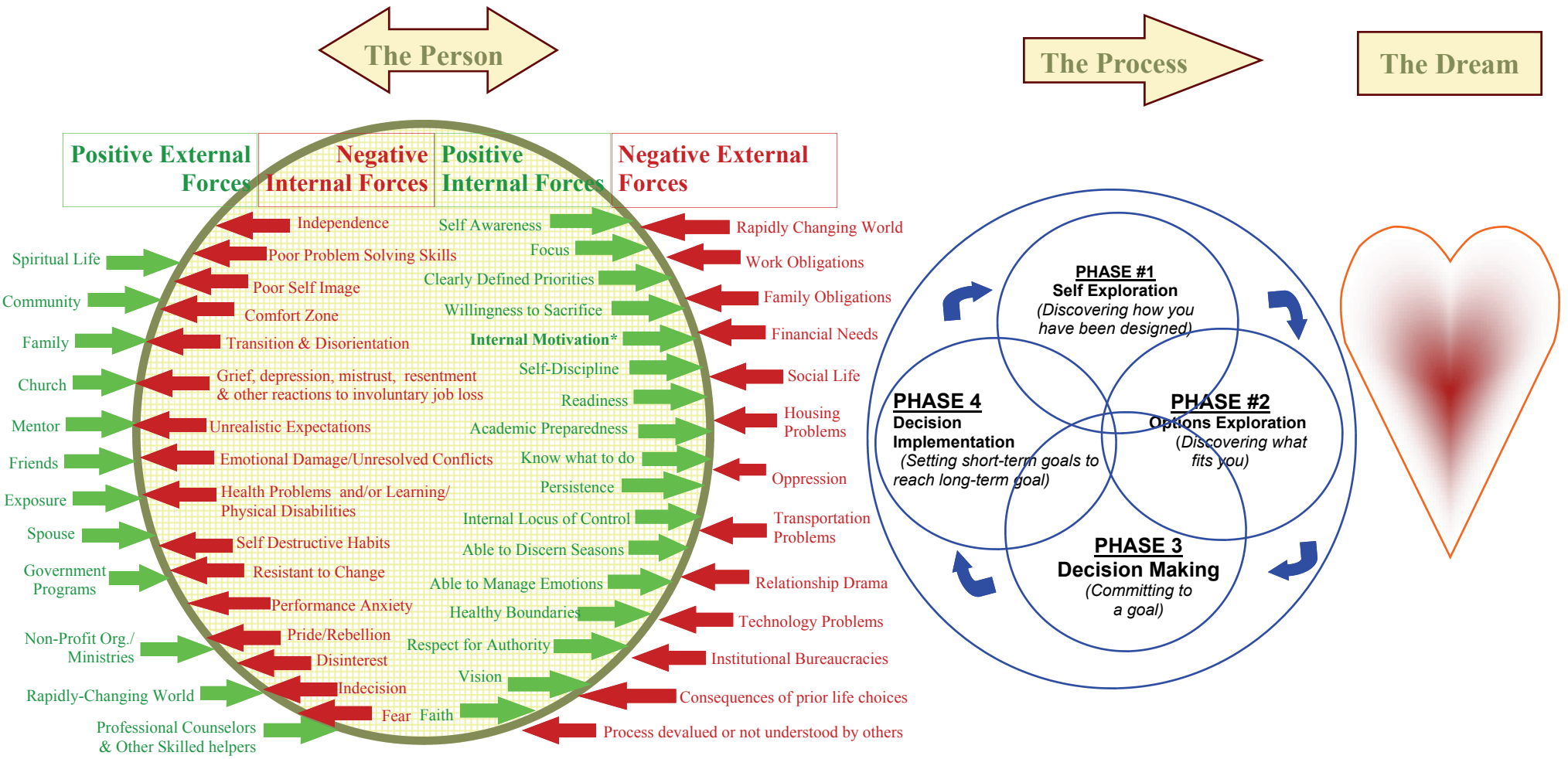


A Dream Chasers & Goal Setter's Journey



**Research shows this is the single-most important variable to predict success.*

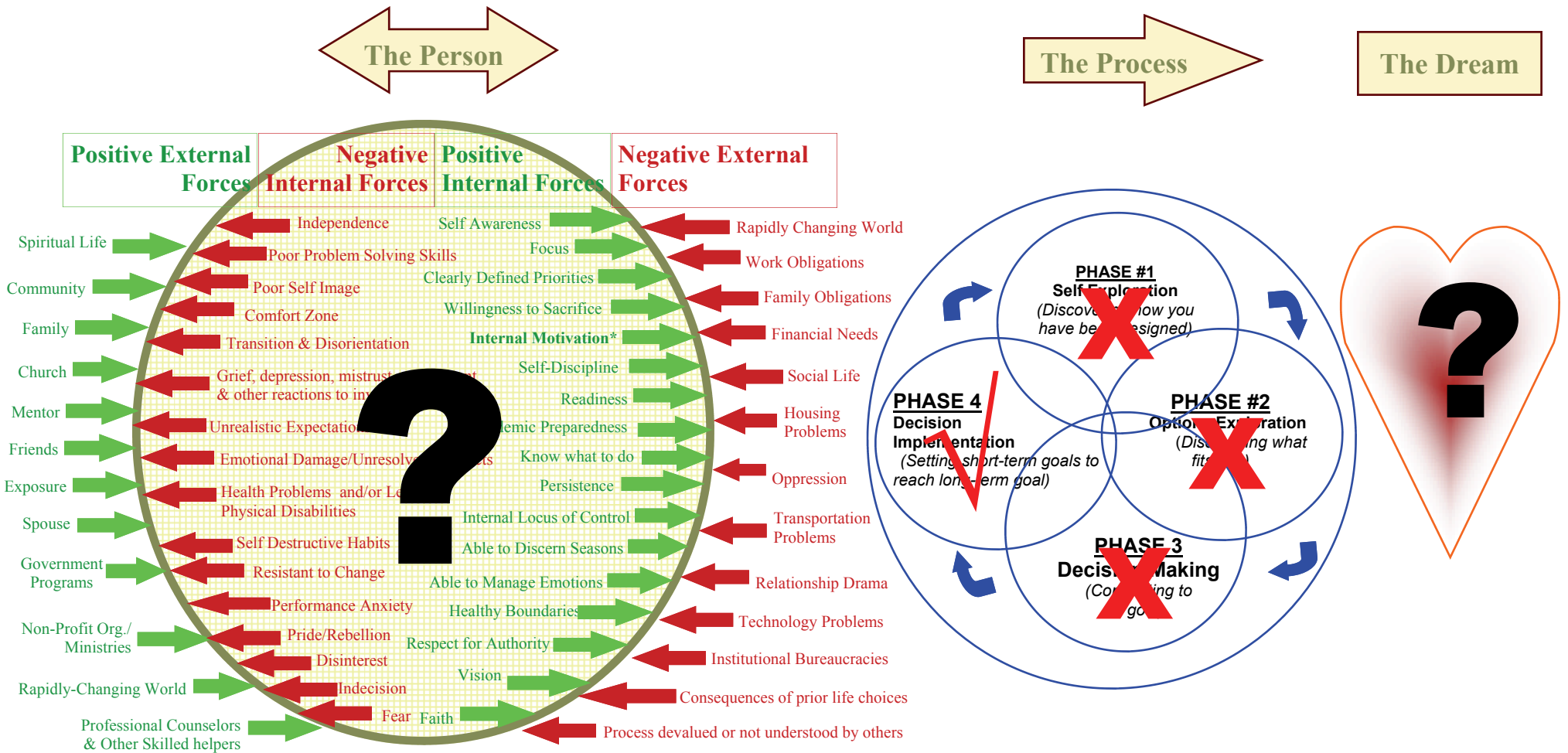
The person is affected both positively and negatively by environmental factors outside the person, as well as factors within the person. The factors mentioned are common, but not necessarily an issue for everyone.

Finding and achieving the dream involves a journey where the person engages in an ongoing cyclical process until the dream has been realized.

Most people have trouble reaching the dream because they may be good at either chasing dreams, or setting goals, but not doing both in an integrated fashion.

The Journey—Interrupted:

(Why So Many Don't Finish What They Start)



**Research shows this is the single-most important variable to predict success.*

The person is not aware of, or prepared, to deal with all of the variables that impact their journey. Therefore, they are much more likely to either give in to the negative forces, or not seek the help of their positive forces.

Most people do not take the time to identify who they are, and consequently what roles will best suit them. Instead, they often simply jump in to a training program without taking the time to determine whether it is a good fit and whether or not they are prepared for the challenge ahead.

In addition to the factors mentioned, many people do not have a clear sense of their true dream (that which brings them genuine joy.)

Dream Chaser's & Goal Setter's Journey¹

Point Of This Assignment: This assignment: 1) Gives a visual image of the journey you need to take to achieve your dreams. 2) Helps you identify what factors in your life will affect that journey.

Instructions

Step 1: Review the Explanations & Definitions:

Positive External Factors:

Spiritual Life¹: A belief that there is a Supreme Being (or “higher power”) that is in control of the universe. This belief allows some people the courage to take necessary risks, believing that such a supreme being will guide and protect them if they are doing what they need to be doing allows the individual to stay focused on the goal in spite of adversity.

Spouse: Also includes any “significant other” person in one’s life who encourages and/or supports mentally, emotionally, financially, physically, or spiritually, one’s desires to pursue his/her dreams. However, if one’s “significant other” resists this process, then they become “Process Devalued or Not Understood by Others.”

Family/Friends/Community/Mentor: Also can include any important person in one’s life who encourages and/or supports mentally, emotionally, financially, physically, or spiritually, one’s desires to pursue his/her dreams. However, if these people resist this process, then they become “Process Devalued or Not Understood by Others.”

Government Programs: Includes Financial Aid, Welfare/CalWorks, Veterans’ Benefits, Unemployment, Social Security, Disability Payments or any other government program that allows/supports you going to school.

Exposure/Culture: Individuals who grew up being told they had choices regarding education, job and career opportunities. If they were told growing up that they should or could go to college, or attended a high school that had a “college-going” culture where everyone was expected to go to college. These individuals were “exposed” to higher education and options.

Professional Skilled Helpers: Includes people like school counselors, career counselors, college admissions representatives, psychologists, pastors, lawyers, financial planners, and anyone else who is highly trained and skilled at knowing how to help you with your journey.

Church (or other place of worship): A community of individuals who share a common belief in a particular religious philosophy. Such communities are often committed to providing for the spiritual, emotional, physical, and financial needs of those in their care.

¹ Dream Chaser's & Goal Setter's Journey is very loosely adapted from Chip Anderson's “Force Field Analysis.”

Faith-Based and other Non-profit Organizations: There are many non-profit organizations that may or may not be sponsored by various religious groups that are committed to helping people succeed at the journey.

Rapidly-Changing World: Losing one's job (*or the threat of*) can sometimes force someone to go to school to upgrade their skills and/or to find a new career.

Negative Internal Factors:

Independence: Generally being self-sufficient is a positive factor. However, there is such a thing as not asking for help when you should. Then, independence becomes a negative factor.

Transition/Disorientation: A life transition is a season of life where individuals have lost one thing, and as a result, gain something new. Life transitions take many forms, such as relationships, jobs, careers, family status, etc. Someone who has not fully processed the ending of the old life or the beginning of the new life can often feel disoriented or distracted. For example, new college students are often overwhelmed as they learn how to adapt to college life. Older/Reentry/Adult (over 25 years) students often return to college as a result of some life transition, so they are often preoccupied with these transitions while trying to navigate their journeys.

Unrealistic Expectations: Older/Reentry/Adult (over 25 years) students and under-prepared students tend to have unrealistic expectations as to what it will take to succeed at their journey. Such unrealistic expectations include: Thinking school won't be hard or require sacrifice, thinking you can finish in less time than what is realistically needed, thinking you can get an education without doing homework, thinking college is only a ticket to a good-paying job.

Self-Destructive Habits: Some people have habits or behaviors where they want to do something positive, but instead find themselves doing something destructive. (Getting drunk before an important interview/test/appointment, etc.)

Performance Anxiety: Some people may experience anxiety over: 1) Having to do something new and unfamiliar; 2) Concern for whether or not they will succeed at a given goal/task. 3) Concern over being evaluated/judged for their performance at such task (*i.e. grades, job performance, interviews, etc.*). This anxiety can cause them to perform less than what they are actually capable of doing. Also the anxiety itself can distract them from where they should be channeling their energies.

Positive Internal Factors:

Note: If you are neutral on an item, leave it blank. If it is truly positive, then highlight it. But, if you are actually **lacking** one of these items, then it becomes a **Negative Internal Factor** so you will need to underline it.

Self Awareness: A healthy and realistic understanding of one's own personality, strengths, weaknesses, preferences, preferred learning styles, life experiences, interests, values, and priorities. Possessing such awareness allows individuals to set and achieve goals that are

appropriate and realistic for the individual. Knowing oneself also empowers a person to deflect inappropriate misjudgments, violation of boundaries, and projection of others.

Academic Preparedness: Includes all the skills you need to successfully complete an academic class/program. Skills such as language proficiency, critical thinking, studying, reading, writing, math and computer skills that may be needed in a given class or program. This can also include other subjects such as a background in science for fields such as the medical professions.

Internal Locus of Control: Your Locus of Control is your perception (*not reality*) of whether or not you believe you have control over your life. If you have an Internal Locus of Control, then you believe you can control what happens to you. If your Locus of Control is External, then you tend to believe things beyond your control will affect whether or not you succeed. You tend to see yourself as a victim of circumstances.

Healthy Boundaries: Knowing what a person is responsible for accepting and what they are not responsible for. People with healthy boundaries understand they do not need to tolerate inappropriate expectations being put on them by other people. They also recognize unhealthy relationships for what they are, and are able to keep individuals who have a negative influence on them at an appropriate distance to minimize their negative influence on their life.

Able to Discern Seasons: Life is not constant, but rather there are differing seasons, where our circumstances and priorities change. When they do, we must deal with them, and respond accordingly. Are you able to recognize when you need to “shift gears” because your circumstances and/or priorities have changed due to a change in seasons?

Respect for Authority: Some individuals are able to trust and show respect for people who have authority, control, power, or influence over their lives (*parents, spouse, supervisor, teacher, institutional administrators, pastor/clergy, police and other emergency personnel, judges, etc.*). This respect for authority allows this individual to find it easier to trust and follow their instructions (*even when they don't make sense*) when necessary. When authority figures see this respect playing out, they are more likely to return the respect and help the individual. Therefore, respecting authority will, in general, cause your journey to flow more smoothly and you will be less likely to experience the “consequences of prior life choices” later in life. Whereas, individuals who tend to mistrust, rebel, or argue with authority often find “doors of opportunity” close in front of them.

Readiness: Readiness is the degree to which an individual is mentally and emotionally able to give the journey what is required to succeed. This includes things such as planning, focus, prioritizing, sacrifice and self-discipline so that he can achieve his goals in spite of whatever life circumstances he may encounter in the process. Readiness does not automatically come with age. Some people are ready to succeed at college when they are 18, some are ready at 50, and some never arrive.

Negative External Factors:

Rapidly-Changing World: Sometimes you can be well on your way to your goal, and you find that changes beyond your control (such as a lay off) can distract you from your goals. This also includes having to take classes you don't need because fewer classes are available due to economic shifts.

Oppression: Oppression takes many forms and goes beyond race and socio-economic status. Individuals who grew up being told they are expected to enter one career over another, or were told their education and career opportunities were limited to what they were exposed to, were oppressed by their environment (culture, family, schools, society, socio-economic status, etc.).

Technology Problems: Problems with technology can hinder an individual's journey. Having obsolete or inadequate computer hardware/software or other technology can interfere with an individual's everyday tasks – especially in today's technologically-driven society. When equipment malfunctions or needs to be upgraded during critical times, individuals can experience unnecessary stress. Some individuals may even give up on a goal, task or class due to problems with technology. Individuals sometimes drop online classes over frustration from not knowing how to use the course management software program.

Institutional Bureaucracy: Sometimes the challenges of trying to fulfill institutional obligations can become a distraction to what you are trying to accomplish (i.e. taking classes you don't need because of some "policy").

Process Devalued or Not Understood by Others: It is rather common for many individuals to find that they may be doing what they need to do, or growing the way they should, but people around them do not understand this. Consequently, these other people are likely going to expect them to stop doing what they assume is bad, wrong or inappropriate, and therefore put unnecessary pressure on the individual by trying to stop them.

Step 2: Understanding What Influences Your Journey

The Process:

Notice the large circle on the left. It represents you. Also notice the large arrow on the top. You will see that it is going in both directions. You will also see that there are arrows inside and outside of the circle. (*See above for definitions of terms not commonly known.*) The outside arrows represent those factors that are External to you (environmental). The inside arrows represent the factors that are Internal to you (self directing). The forward (green) arrows are those things that will influence you in a positive direction. The backward (red) arrows are those things that will influence you in a negative direction.

You will likely have a combination of both Positive and Negative, and Internal and External Factors. You are to identify those Factors that are absent or strong in your life.

The Person Factors:

1. Highlight any green arrows you have as Positive Factors (both Internal and External) in your life.
2. Underline any red arrows you have as Negative Factors (both Internal and External) in

your life.

3. If any of the Positive, Internal Factors are absent (*or needs serious improvement*) in your life, then underline them because if you are weak in this area, it becomes a Negative Factor in your life (for example: self-discipline).

Step 3: Understanding the Process - Finding and Achieving Dreams

Notice that there are four phases to the process:

1. **Self Exploration:** Who Am I? *Personality, Abilities, Interests, Values, Skills, Life Experience – What do they reveal about where I belong?*
2. **Options Exploration:** What do I want? *Researching possible options available to you*
3. **Decision Making:** Committing to a choice. *Am I willing to do what it takes to get there?*
4. **Decision Implementation:** How do I get there? *Making appropriate decisions and following through (including the necessary education to prepare for it).*

It is important to understand that this is an ongoing process; and that each step will impact the next step. For example, you may be in Phase 4: Decision Implementation and pursuing the goal of obtaining a college degree in hopes of becoming a teacher. However, you discover during your student teaching opportunities that you do not like working with children (Phase 1) and would rather work with adults. Therefore, you need to set additional educational goals of pursuing graduate education to prepare you to work with your desired audiences. Now you must decide on where you want to attend graduate school (Phase 2). And so on.

The Process: (Answer the following questions):

1. Where are you right now in your process? What phase best describes your present situation? _____
2. What do you need to do to be able to move on to the next phase?

3. Can you identify any prior work you have already done in any of these phases?

Step 4: Reflection

The Person:

Step back from the image on the front and take a “big picture” look at what you have highlighted and underlined. Take a few moments to take note of what you see. What do your markings reveal to you?

What are your support systems? (Review the Positive External Forces that you marked as having.) These are people and/or institutions that you can turn to at times in your life when you need additional support because life becomes overwhelming.

Dream Chaser's & Goal Setter's Journey

Which of your **Positive Forces** (*either External or Internal*) are driving you the most towards your dreams at this time in your life? Are there any that are lacking or neutral, which you believe you need improve?

Most Driving: _____

Most Lacking: _____

Which positive force should you focus on developing first? _____

What goals can you set to develop this positive force? _____

Which of your **Negative Forces** (*either External or Internal*) are the strongest distractions to you at this time in your life? Which are the least distracting to you? Based on this, which distraction should you try to resolve first?

Most Distracting: _____

Least Distracting: _____

First Distraction to be resolved? _____

What goals can you set to resolve this distraction? _____

Since life is not meant to be perfect, most people will have a combination of both Negative and Positive Factors. The secret to success is to have more Positive Factors than Negative Factors. How can you improve your ratio of Positive Factors to Negative Factors in your life so that you have more Positive Factors than Negative Factors?

Test your understanding:

What is the main point of this assignment?

Why were you expected to do this exercise?

What type of person would need to do this exercise?

How well do you fit the profile of the person for whom this assignment was created?

Reflection: (*Write down your response to completing this assignment.*)

ⁱ References to one's "spiritual life" in some assignments are included because, for individuals who do have a spiritual life, it is usually a very significant part of who they are. It would do such people a disservice to ignore the influence of spiritual life on an individual when discussing career and life planning. Such references are simply intended to accommodate those influences in students' lives. Individuals are not obligated to respond to any "spiritual life" prompts if they don't relate. This information will not impact any grades, and will not show up on any tests.