

# A Life Of Options

CAREER COACHING FOR ANALYTICALLY MINDED PEOPLE

with Lindsay Gordon

## Session 5 Topic: What could be next?

[1. One-Pager \(or 'Everything I've Learned About Myself'\)](#)

[2. Odyssey Plans](#)

### 1. One-Pager (or 'Everything I've Learned About Myself')

We've done a lot of exercises and learned a lot! I want to make sure you finish our engagement with it all condensed into one page (ish) where you've distilled all the learnings from the last 3 months. Think of this as a cheatsheet for yourself in the future, something you can pull out any time you need to make changes or want to continue this work. You can put it together in a way that's useful and inspiring to you.

It may include:

- Values (Session 1)
- Activities that give or drain your energy (Session 2)
- Working Conditions (Session 3)
- Strength Statement (Session 4)
- StrengthsFinder and associated narrative exercise (Session 3 and 4)
- Things to think about as you look to improve an existing role or when you're looking for new ones
- Steps you want to take going forward
- StrengthsFinder Ideas for Action that you want to implement, can be something to review weekly/monthly (Session 3)

Clients tend to think about this exercise in 3 ways, feel free to do any or all of the following:

1. **The facts of what we discovered** - Similar to the list above, useful for job hunting, communicating clearly with a boss or an interview, clear distillation of the exercise outcomes
2. **Inward focused** - What do I want to remember from this experience? What was I surprised to learn about myself that I want to keep top of mind? Where did I have a mindset shift about how I see myself, where can I be kinder to myself?

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3. **Jumping off point for the future** - You've done a lot of work in the past 3 months and you may be ready to put it aside briefly. If that was the case, make sure the one-pager is a good enough jumping off point when you return in order to get right back into action.

One final implementation can be a version geared towards starting a new job if you're in that situation! If that's the case you can focus on additional topics such as:

- **What specific things do I want to get out of this job/this stepping stone?** How do I want to design my engagement with this job? (E.g. Embrace this complete switch of industry and push the boundaries of my curiosity and abilities, take the opportunity to learn everything I can about what it means to start and run a business from the CEO who has started several businesses, etc)
- **What challenges do I anticipate running into/what am I worried about and how might I work through them?** If you're worried about loneliness, make a list of what you'll do if you find yourself being lonely (cultivate relationships early through lunches, coffees, etc) or if you're worried about feeling unsuccessful or not achieving enough, think through what you'll do in that situation (refer back to my own definition of success, remember that I pride myself on being an independent thinker and don't want to be the product of an assembly line, etc)
- **Living a "whole life" in the new job** - Starting a new job can be pretty consuming, what are the non-work parts of your life that you want to make sure you keep up with?

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A few examples:

### Everything I've Learned About Myself

<b>Personal Values</b> Authenticity Community Adventure & Possibility Joy & Delight Social Impact Curiosity & Growth Pride & Prestige	<b>Personal Strengths</b> Relator Communication Strategic Individualization Learner  <b>Motivations</b> Helping others Feeling uniquely qualified	<b>Skills to Build On</b> <b>Communicate ideas</b> in ways that are <b>accessible</b> to people of <b>different audiences</b> <b>Problem-solving</b> : identifying the root quickly, tailoring to <b>individual needs</b> Understanding others' <b>perspectives</b> , wants and needs Providing <b>guidance</b> to others, especially through <b>storytelling</b> or <b>identifying trends</b> Working <b>without structure</b> <b>Poking holes</b> in plans or processes, anticipating and proactively addressing issues <b>Managing</b> people Lightweight <b>policy</b> and <b>operations</b>
<b>Company Wants</b> *Mission-driven *Efficient *Data-driven *Demonstrable Impact *Advancing / Learning *Financially Sustainable Fast-Paced	<b>Team Wants</b> *Mission Driven *Unquestionably Smart *Inspiring Leader *Inspiring Teammates *Experienced Manager Diverse (Age & Ethnicity)	<b>Role Wants</b> *Clear connection to mission *Variety *Responsibility to grow or create something *Creative problem-solving *\$100K+ Relationship emphasis Opportunities to present/lead Data & analysis  Single primary learning axis (content or role) Direct, scalable, observable impact If external, then client/partner (not donor / sales) No Project Mgmt emphasis No inherited direct reports

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## Who I am and what I bring to the table

### **My Values** (in no particular order)

#### **Independence & taking risks**

Not sitting in my comfort zone for too long

#### **Growth**

Often seeking ways to better myself

#### **Learning**

Challenged to learn new things regularly

#### **Meaningful work**

#### **Community**

### **My Top 5 Strengths** (per StrengthsFinder)

#### **Empathy**

Can sense others' feelings by imagining myself in their lives/situations

#### **Learner**

Desire to learn and improve continuously

#### **Input**

Enjoy collecting & archiving all kinds of information

#### **Analytical**

Search for reasons and causes; think about all factors that might affect situation

#### **Individualization**

Intrigued with unique qualities of individuals; can figure out how different people can work together

### **I really enjoy...**

**Improving/Streamlining existing programs & processes**

**Identifying/Analyzing problems/trends and providing multiple solutions**

**Gathering data and finding patterns/errors**

**Building relationships**

## What I'm looking for in my next job

### **My Role**

#### **Daily Work**

Projects are deadline and goal-driven

NOT sales/fundraising or event planning

Clear connection to mission

Variety (new projects, not repetitive year after year)

Challenges me to learn and improve

Data + analysis + relationships

Building new connections/partnerships

Part of a team of decision-makers

#### **Environment/Logistics**

Traditional work hours (8-5) most of the time; flexible

\$60k+

### **My Colleagues**

Engaged and invested in our work

Experienced manager trusts my decision-making; committed to my professional growth; considers team's current workload and gets team buy-in before taking on new projects

Diverse (in all senses of the word)

CEO/Executive Director is someone I respect

### **My Employer**

Mission-driven with well-defined elevator pitch; demonstrable impact

Has and uses metrics to make decisions

Ability to create change quickly

Treats employees fairly and equitably

Efficient and financially stable/sustainable

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## what I value



connection



progress



stability



discovery



recognition



autonomy



beauty

## good work

- ✓ solves the right problem, solves it well.
- ✓ improves yourself and the people around you.
- ✓ represents the kind of work you want to do.
- ✓ is cohesive and intentional.
- ✓ is self-aware and doesn't take itself too seriously.
- ✓ reduces inequality.

## good conditions

- ✓ brings value to customers
- ✓ work-life balance, close to home
- ✓ opportunities to grow + tackle big problems
- ✓ understands my strategic value
- ✓ inclusive, egalitarian culture with good people
- ✓ fast-paced environment

## good activities

- ♡ research
- ♡ idea generation
- ♡ setting up systems and processes
- ♡ solving puzzles
- ♡ mentoring

## what I'm good at

- ☆ restorative
- ☆ strategic
- ☆ individualization
- ☆ relator
- ☆ learner



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## 2. Odyssey Plans

From the book [‘Designing Your Life’](#)

**“Dysfunctional Belief:** I need to figure out my best possible life, make a plan, and then execute it.

**Reframe:** There are multiple great lives (and plans) within me, and I get to choose which one to build my way forward to next.”

Original worksheet is [here](#) or I’ve put the information in a doc [here](#) so it’s a bit easier to input your info

1. Create three alternative versions of the next five years of your life using the worksheet provided (you can include personal and non-career events as well). They can be practical, they can be dream lives, they can be aspirational, etc. I want you to practice fleshing out a few to see what could be possible. This is not a 5 year plan that you have to commit to following.
2. Give each alternative a descriptive six-word title, and write down three questions that arise out of each version of you.
3. Complete each gauge on the dashboard—ranking each alternative for resources, likability, confidence, and coherence.
  - a. Resources (Do you have the objective resources—time, money, skill, contacts—you need to pull off your plan?)
  - b. Likability (Are you hot or cold or warm about your plan?)
  - c. Confidence (Are you feeling full of confidence, or pretty uncertain about pulling this off?)
  - d. Coherence (Does the plan make sense within itself? And is it consistent with you and what you’ve learned about yourself?)
4. Take a closer look at whatever version of your Odyssey Plans was coherent, likable, and exciting, and that you’re somewhat confident you could do. What are your questions? What would you like to understand better by prototyping the experience?

Examples:

If you like to see how others have approached this exercise, feel free to check out anonymous Odyssey Plans from past clients [here](#).

Questions this plan addresses: (examples from previous clients)

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- Could our family live on 1.5 salaries? I assume I would like the experience of a full-time office job with room for growth, what would it be like to lose the flexibility of working from home by gaining colleagues and a team?
- How could I make a move that leads me toward managing and developing people?
- Am I able to start my own business now? How would I develop clients? What would I want to focus on? Who would I want to collaborate with?
- Can we downsize enough to have a travel-focused life? What are we willing to give up to have that? How does this work if we want to have kids?
- If money were not a concern, what do I really want to do? What would it look like to actually make NYC my home and not just a yearly vacation?

### Prototyping conversations/experiences:

- I have an assumption that career path X will fulfill my value of Y, I need to have a conversation with 3 people in that role to test that assumption
- I think I want to move towards being a designer, in order to prototype that experience I want to attend a meetup about designers and take one class at a local college
- How do I know how fast I might be able to make the move from where I am now to this new career path? I'll talk to a few people who have made the transition to see what timeline is realistic
- I want to be a designer but I don't have any experience yet so my first prototyped experience will be to add 10 pieces to a portfolio and see how I feel about that experience
- I've always thought about being a nurse but I'm not actually sure I could stomach what they see every day, I could answer that quickly by shadowing a nurse for a day

### Another way to approach the exercise:

Another option if you're someone who thrives on a vision, is to create a plan that spells out what you want to be true in 5 years (stable and consistent social community, not in the US, proud of what I do, able to leave work at work, etc) and then from that vision, ask yourself:

- How am I tracking towards each piece of my vision? If I were to rank progress in each area on a scale of 1 to 10, what would I give myself?
- What would it look like for me to be 10/10 in each area? What actions could I start taking? How would I "be"? What stepping stones are there for me to take?