

Forget the Résumé, Look at Your D.A.T.A.

In a world of dejobbed workplaces, everything is a market and everyone around you — whether or not you are employed — is a potential customer. An ever-changing world is constantly creating unmet needs that represent new opportunities for work.

Today's workplaces cry out for new initiatives. How can you take advantage of those opportunities? What personal attributes can you use to create work?

Don't use your résumé to guide you. Your qualifications are much deeper, more complete, than what is described on that résumé. To find out what you really have to offer, you must survey your desires, abilities,

"You need to get off the merry-go-round of wanting to do something new but only knowing how to do the old thing."

ties, temperament, and assets (D.A.T.A.).

Your Desires

Take a piece of paper and make a complete list of everything you desire. Now look over the list.

Some items are just wishes (for example, "I wish I were younger").

Other items are pragmatic ("I want to get more exercise"), materialistic ("I want a stereo"), or idealistic ("I want to contribute something to the world").

Look for the deeper meaning of every desire. Do you want money to be free to quit your full-time job? Do you want to write a novel because you are looking for the opportunity to create?

Also ask yourself these questions:

- Where do you want to live?
- Where do you want to be living and what do you want to be doing ten years from now?
- What do you want to accomplish in your lifetime?

The goal of the exercise is not to create a wish list. It is to determine exactly what you *really* want out of life. It is to discover the long-term goals for which you are willing to work hard, sacrifice, and even change your lifestyle.

Your Abilities

What are you really good at? To identify abilities that can be applied to find work, you must go beyond surface, specific skills such as mathematics or writing, for example.

And, again, forget the résumé. It will only put you on a merry-go-round and lead you right back to previously held job positions.

If a teacher looking for work counts on a résumé, he or she will inevitably end up in another teaching position.

But think about the teacher's

Who Are You?

1. What do you want out of life? The answers are your *Desires*.

2. What are you really good at? Those are your *Abilities*.

3. What kind of a person are you? In what kinds of situations are you most satisfied? That is your *Temperament*.

4. What advantages can you use from your life history or life situation? These are your *Assets*.

qualifications this way: He or she may be good at sensing people's motives, seeing the relations among clusters of ideas, staying focused on tasks, showing others new perspectives, learning quickly in different situations, and explaining things.

Now for what position is the teacher qualified? The possibilities are endless.

Your Temperament

What kind of person are you? In what kinds of situations are you happiest?

For example, do you like to work alone or in teams? Do you like clearly defined goals or general priorities? Do you like working with customers or in a laboratory?

Temperaments vary as widely as people but should be key factors in designing the best work for you.

Your Assets

What advantages do you have? What can you draw from your life history or life situation and use to your advantage in a work situation?

The key as before is to get past your résumé, and think about your personal assets. Cultural diversity, bringing new perspectives or language skills, is this type of personal, non-professional asset. Volunteer jobs, travel, family history, and contacts are all assets that are invisible on the résumé but can help you design your new job. ☆

Skills vs. Abilities

Don't confuse formal skills with abilities. Skills are specific to tasks. Abilities have wider adaptations. For example:

- Microwave cooking is a skill. Learning to operate unfamiliar appliances and machines or being able to take data from several sources (for example, recipes) and merging them into innovative combinations are abilities.
- Speaking French is a skill. Learning foreign languages easily and picking up cues from others as to what the rules are in different situations are abilities.
- Familiarity with megabank policy is a skill. Understanding how bureaucrats think and how the financial world arrives at decisions are abilities.
- Operating spreadsheet programs is a skill. Deciphering complex instructions, remembering a large number of arbitrary steps, and thinking in numerical terms are abilities.