

*Before you decide what you want
you need to know who you are.*

VISTA

LIFE/CAREER CARDS



Owner's Manual

A Colorful Way to Discover and Integrate
VALUES, INTERESTS, SKILLS & TRAITS

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INTRODUCTION

The VISTa Life/Career Cards provide a simple, experiential and effective tool for self-understanding and discovery. The 300 beautifully-colored cards and their accompanying exercises can help to illuminate personal issues, career and job-related questions, and many other situations a searching person may want to explore. There are 75 cards in each of the four categories: Values, Interests, Skills and Traits. Choose one category or do all four to learn more about yourself so you can get clarity and focus for your life. And best of all, they are fun to do!

Part One

Chapter 1 discusses problems we face in finding **fulfillment***(See glossary for definition) and happiness, some of the scientific studies about happiness, and the way in which the VISTa cards can help you bring more fulfillment into your life. Chapter 2 through Chapter 6 teach you about the VISTa process and different ways to lay out the VISTa Life/Career Cards. You will find step-by-step instructions about how to select and then arrange your cards into patterns that provide information you can use, based on your unique Values, Interests, Skills and Traits relevant to your life situation.

Part Two

Chapter 7 through Chapter 13 teaches you to implement the information you have acquired through the exercises in Part One. Case studies will show you how others have used the information gathered from the VISTa process in their own



lives. You will also learn about additional tools and resources to help you incorporate the information from the cards into your everyday life so you can save time and energy, and reduce frustration and disappointment by focusing on what really is important to you.

Appendices, Notes, Glossary and Forms

The final part of the book includes Appendices which provide samples of the **Pyramid Profile***, a **Blueprint***, **Touchstone Matrix*** (See glossary for definitions) that may be used with the VISTa cards. In addition, there is a list of all the cards, and a list of all the websites included in this book. The Notes provide the sources of additional reading that might be helpful to you. The Glossary defines a number of terms used throughout the book. These definitions are not necessarily the dictionary definition; instead they provide information about the ways the terms are used here.

People who find themselves using the VISTa cards have come to a point of transition in their lives and need help to figure out where to go next or how to get there. There is nothing wrong with that. Smart and successful people are consistently reinventing themselves. As we grow older our Values, Interests, Skills and Traits change and so too must our directions in life. It is a courageous person who is willing to seek help and take the time to figure out what is best for them.

It's easier to go up into the mountains to catch tigers than to ask others for help.

Chinese Proverb



History of the Cards

It was the last day of a three-day coaching conference. My brain was on overload and I was in the hotel room resting before returning to the grand finale of the conference. As I sat there, a small idea came into my mind. I took out some hotel notepaper and started to make notes.

I have been a Career Counselor for over 10 years. When people think about career counselors, they think of aptitude assessments or tests that will tell you what you should do when you grow up. That's what I did, primarily with adults who were unhappy with their work. They would come into my office and be given a battery of inventories measuring their personality, interests, and skills.

When I worked with a client, and after all the tests were complete, I'd spread the results out on a table. Working with highlighters, I would color-code the themes that emerged from the various assessments. I would tell the client that two of the things I look for when I work with people are patterns and inconsistencies. Together we would review their attributes. From this information, we would start to develop a plan to explore the types of work that would be most satisfying to them.

As I sat in the hotel room on that beautiful spring day in San Francisco, the thought that rang in my head was, "bypass the middleman" (or woman, in this case, since I was talking about me). Instead of me highlighting these words and phrases, wouldn't it be easier and simpler if the client had a vehicle to help select their own highlighted words and phrases? A comprehensive, color-coded easy to use tool that



would clearly identify the information necessary to move them forward with a focus.

This would serve two purposes. While I love being the “expert,” much of my time is spent explaining information from the fill-in-the-bubble inventories people have traditionally used. Wouldn’t it be empowering if the client controlled the process? Wouldn’t it also be more accurate if they selected the cards themselves?

After the close of the conference, the idea of the cards persisted. After looking at the tools available on the market and finding no assessment tool like the cards I was envisioning, I felt there was a need the cards could meet.

Thinking again about my traditional way of laying information out on the table, I gathered all the relevant career information I had acquired through years of study and private practice, and started to compile cards that would help people identify their attributes in the areas of personality Traits, innate or transferable Skills, Interests, and Values.

Since that spring, the cards have been used by clients, other career counselors, mental health therapists, and of course, by my family and friends. They have been used for coaching individuals, as well as by groups and in guided workshops.

Who Uses the VISTa Cards?

Who gets the most value from the VISTa experience? What life situations are most helped by the cards? What is the best way to work with the cards?

As a career counselor and coach, the initial goal of the cards was to help people in career confusion get clarity and a sense



of direction. As more people with varied life challenges used the VISTa cards, the process expanded into multiple areas. I have discovered the VISTa process is appropriate for anyone interested in personal growth and a greater understanding of who they are, and of their strengths and motivations.

In times of transition or challenge we are most likely to ask the big questions, “Who am I? Why am I here?” VISTa can help provide the answers to those questions, and can create an experience that allows the user to gain a stronger connection and appreciation for who they are.

People are drawn to the cards because of their beautiful colors. Most people are inquisitive and want to learn more about themselves. As people become involved in selecting their forty cards, there is a shift that occurs as the person asks, “Who am I really?” Simple curiosity is changed into a wonderful inquiry. As people get involved in the next phase of integrating the cards into themes, another transformation takes place. The process shifts from a curious self selection activity into a thought provoking experience resulting in a confirmation or new awareness of who we really are. The cards are no longer on outside tool, but begin to feel like an expansion of the person. They are no longer looking at words on pieces of colored cardboard, but at an extension of themselves. The result is a variety of words and terms that can then be used to accurately describe themselves to anyone who asks.

In those moments the cards become a mirror that reflects the soul of the person. The experience often resembles an earthquake that rumbles in the solar plexus. With this acknowledgement of **identity***, an irrevocable and positive shift occurs.



*A mind stretched to a new idea, never returns
to its original dimension.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Once a person experiences this self-awareness, the information from the cards can be effectively applied to a variety of life situations.

This book will present a sampling of case studies from clients who represent a range of personalities in different situations. I've included their stories to give you some practical understanding about how the cards and process can help in your life. The names of clients and small details of their stories have been changed to respect their confidentiality.

Although the case studies will be explored in greater detail in Part Two—the chapters about implementation—some of the life situations for which the VISTa cards have been used, are described briefly here. (Note: This is not a comprehensive list of every situation in which VISTa can, or has been used. Even if your personal situation is not specifically listed, be assured that the VISTa process can help.)

Personal Awareness and Growth

This is a primary reason people are drawn to the VISTa process. Christa has allowed me to use her as an example through the first part of the book. Included with the instructions for the various activities are Christa's results and her reactions to the cards. This will provide a context in which to frame the VISTa experience.

Christa is the Assistant to the head of the Math Department for a large university. She has spent a lifetime learning and



growing as an individual. By reading Christa's story, you will see how the VISTA Cards can be integrated in numerous variations of the process and how each adds to your personal awareness.

In addition to Christa, many of the examples in Part Two demonstrate how people have used the VISTA cards to change their lives.

Exploring Careers & College Majors

Marie struggled in high school. Her grades were average and she questioned her ability to succeed in college. She loved helping people and wanted a career that would allow her to be of service. You will see how Marie used VISTA to explore career options as a college student. (See Chapter 8)

Early Career Change

Tony was in his early thirties and considering his third career change since graduating from college. In Tony's story, you will see how two totally different career directions can be personally fulfilling. (See Chapter 9)

Midlife Career Change

David had been fired after working for the same retail establishment for twenty-eight years. Having started to work for the company when he was eighteen, he had never taken the opportunity to explore career options. David had committed time and energy to raising a family and being a supportive husband. Now that his children were raising their own families, David found that he was on his own to plan for the rest of his life. He was eager and willing to start over to create a brand new life for himself. David's story illustrates how VISTA can help mid-life career changers. (See Chapter 9)



Retirement Planning

Meet my husband Jeff, maintenance supervisor for a large beverage company as he explores engaging activities as he plans for retirement. (See Chapter 10)

Entrepreneur Creating a Distinctive Marketing Plan or “Brand”

Sally had recently finished Law school after a full career as a nurse. By completing the VISTA process she saw the similarities between her newly chosen career as a lawyer and her first occupation as a nurse. With this new awareness, and capitalizing on her unique strengths, she was able to develop a way to market herself as a divorce attorney, capitalizing on her unique strengths. (See Chapter 11)

Overwhelmed Entrepreneur

Mark has his own business specializing in computer repair. When he participated in the VISTA process, he had not had a vacation in three years, being on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. He was a workaholic. He confided that he couldn't even take the time to get a haircut, for fear a client would call and need him. You will find out how VISTA helped him see the ways in which his personal strengths were not serving him. With that information, he was able to find more balance between his professional and personal life. (See Chapter 12)

Stuck and Can't Move Forward

Lori came to the VISTA process on the recommendation of her therapist. Lori was mourning a relationship that had ended a year before. While she was happy in her work,



she was unable to move forward with her life as a result of this break-up. In Lori's story, you will see how using VISTa helped her to overcome internal obstacles and barriers. (See Chapter 12)

Paralyzed by Procrastination

Read my personal story about trying to get this book written. The VISTa cards were printed, boxed and being sold. Both clients and professionals were raving about the cards, but the Facilitator's Guide that originally accompanied the cards just wasn't comprehensive enough. The struggle to write this book was overwhelming. Read my story and learn how I used VISTa to reframe my thinking so I could find the motivation to begin, persevere and ultimately finish writing this book. (See Chapter 12)

Example is a bright looking-glass.

Michel de Montaigne





PART ONE





CHAPTER ONE

Framework for VISTa Cards

Anyone who has seen a baby trying to crawl or watched a toddler learning to walk knows the child is relentlessly driven by instinct or need. While parents and caretakers encourage and cheer the child's attempts, one only has to look into the child's eyes to see the determination there. That determination exists regardless of praise from parents or others.

Whether it is crawling, walking or talking, as humans we all have drives that push us to expand and explore our horizons. As soon as we have accomplished one set of goals, we are quickly on our way to the next set.

Like the drives to walk and talk, we have a drive to be and express who we are. We long to know who we are and then to express ourselves within relationships and activities. We yearn for our life to have meaning, for it to be more than the just the search for food and shelter. But we live in a very complicated world. We are bombarded by mixed messages about who we should become, and what happiness and meaning are.

The VISTa process provides a way to connect with who we are and what we are drawn to do that allows us to express our true or core self. Upon completion of the Cards and writing up the Blueprint, many people look down at their cards, beaming, and say, "That's me! That's who I am!"

When a client comes to work with me, we spend our initial time together talking about them. We don't need to discuss anything other than their own personality and history to fig-



ure out what makes them passionate, engaged and living on purpose. Sometimes these **touchstones*** are found easily and sometimes the hunt requires more concentrated effort.

As I've used the VISTA cards and worked with clients for many years, it amazes me how remarkable human beings are. Through these experiences, I know, beyond doubt that within each of us is the key to our own happiness and fulfillment.

Lies My Culture Tells Me

If we have everything we need inside us, why are so many of us not happy? Why are people stressed and anxious? Why are people frantically pushing ever harder for little return?

Part of the problem is that we have been taught to believe a number of things that are just not true. We've been taught these things since we were quite young and as a result, it's difficult to think in other ways.

The Lie About Money

One very powerful lie is that the key to happiness is based on what we have. We are taught to believe that when we get enough money and acquire enough stuff, we will be happy. When you have gone through a particularly difficult period in your life, have you fantasized about winning the lottery? Many of us envision a happy-ever-after if only we had enough money.

It's not money that brings happiness, it's lots of money.

Russian Saying



The Lie about Leisure

In addition to trying to solve problems with money and stuff, we've been led to believe that happiness exists when you have nothing to do, when you are completely at leisure. We are told that if we work really hard for thirty or forty years, then we can spend the rest of our lives doing nothing or being involved in nonstop play, and then we will be happy.

The Lie about Becoming Perfect

Many of us were taught that in order to be happy, we have to do everything perfectly, or at least excellently. If you weren't good at spelling in school, your focus then became the improvement of your spelling weakness. You spent lots of time studying to improve your spelling, but little time discovering and developing your innate strengths.

There is nothing wrong with having minimal standards for every child to master. What has been lost in the process is the student's ability to recognize their natural talents. This isn't just limited to so-called underachieving students. The student who appears to be good at everything is just as likely to feel lost and to be unaware of his or her true abilities.

*Nothing outside yourself can save you; Nothing
outside yourself can give you peace*

Course in Miracles

How the Lies Began

In the middle 1880's, policy-makers in Washington discussed how much money the average working class family needed to exist. Based on their initial calculations, it wasn't much. As a result, wages were purposely set at minimal level.



The latter part of the 1800's produced a period of increased inventions. This heightened time of innovation resulted in everything from the automobile to the telephone to light bulbs. As a result of this increase in commodities, the policy-makers experienced a shift in their thinking about working class people. Policy-makers realized that if these people earned more money, they could buy more things, and which in turn would contribute to the growth of the economy, ultimately making wealthy people even wealthier. From this idea the concept of consumerism was born, and since that time, an industry has developed to make sure you believe that your happiness depends on a new car or a pair of designer jeans.

The initial phase of industrialization was dehumanizing and dangerous. People worked long hard hours in physically demanding work. Whether on the farm or in the factory, free time was a luxury to be coveted. It was a reprieve from grueling backbreaking work.

People in power originally believed that the less free time working people had the better. With the advent of consumerism, it became apparent that people needed free time to shop, and therefore leisure time became increasingly important.

Today, we still covet our leisure time. But do we use it as a reprieve from work, or as an opportunity to pursue happiness?

Are We Happy?

Americans have acquired increasingly more wealth and leisure time. But, are we happier now than in the past? Surveys conducted by Forbes¹ found that the wealthiest people in the world rated their happiness as 5.8 on a scale of 1 to 7.



Ironically, the modest-living Inuit people of frozen northern Greenland also rated their happiness as 5.8.

If the wealthy rate their happiness in the same category as do people who have very little, we can surmise that happiness is not a result of wealth or leisure. Perhaps it is a matter of what we do with our wealth and leisure. Perhaps it is a matter of using your talents, gifts, wealth and leisure time in a different way?

Have-Do-Be

Most of us live in a Have-Do-Be paradigm. If you *have* the income you want, then you will get to *do* the things you desire and as a result you will *be* happy. Are you working from that perspective? The problem with the Have-Do-Be paradigm is that the bar keeps getting higher. We are programmed to push for more. To have more, do more and therefore be more!

At one point, my husband and I lost most of our worldly possessions when we sold our failing business. He was able to obtain a very good job in a new state where we could start over. He was making a very nice income and I remember thinking that when he got to a place where he was making a certain amount per year, then I would be happy. He got to that point and guess what? I wasn't happy. I realized that my happiness was not based on how much money he made or what we acquired.

In 1987, I returned to school to get my Master's Degree in Career Counseling. As I completed the program, an instructor and I became friends. We opened a career center, and I was the happiest I had ever been. But a few years later, we had to close our doors and dissolve our partnership. Once



again I had fallen into the Have-Do-Be trap. My happiness was based on the external feeling of status from the career center and of doing the work of a career counselor.

People base their happiness on how much they earn, the home or community they live in, the prestige or status of their job title, or their company affiliations. When those things change or end, people often suffer a loss of identity.

The problem with the rat race is that at the end, you're still a rat.

Lily Tomlin

What if you stopped racing? What if you start with who you are and find the activities that allow you to express who you are? When you do that, happiness becomes the byproduct of expressing who you are.

The Science of Happiness

Psychology has spent much of its history involved in researching and understanding mental illness, but there are only a handful of individuals who have contributed to the understanding of mental health and happiness.

Through his research, Psychologist Abraham Maslow² found that some needs take precedence over others. For example, if you are hungry, you will need to take care of that before you are able to address your needs for safety, belonging or self-esteem. In other words, before you can move up Maslow's pyramid (see below) toward **self-actualization***, you must handle the needs that take precedence.³



If self-actualization means simply doing what you were cut out to do and is the highest expression of who you are and what you desire to be, then each of us has moments of self-actualization. Maslow identified these moments as **peak experiences***. A person having a peak experience, as Maslow described them, is “more truly himself, closer to the core of his being, more fully human.”

While few may attain a state of perpetual self-actualization, everyone can have those moments where they live authentically.

More recently, Psychologist and writer Martin Seligman⁴, presented a theory of happiness. He believes that happiness is expressed in three forms: pleasure, engagement and meaning.



Pleasure

Pleasurable happiness is based on momentary bodily senses. The sense organs are quite literally hooked to the brain to receive a positive emotion from touching, tasting, smelling, body movements, seeing and hearing.

To understand this kind of pleasure, all we have to do is look at the amazing array of foods available in the world today. Nutritional needs can be met with very basic foods, but the desire for pleasure keeps us experimenting with new and different ways to tantalize the taste buds. At least a part of the reason for an overweight society is the pleasure we derive from food. This helps explain addictive behavior connected to the senses. When people refocus their energy into other forms of happiness, can they move beyond depending solely on pleasurable happiness?

Engagement

The second form of happiness is engagement. Seligman's ideas of engagement came from the work of Mikaly Csikszentmihalyi⁵ (pronounced chick-sent-me-high-ee) and his work on flow.

Flow is defined as the state of gratification that we enter when we feel completely engaged in what we're doing. Flow contains a sense of exhilaration when we perform a task that requires complex abilities that leads to a challenging goal. It appears evolution has built into our nervous system the need for complexity. We experience enjoyment when we are challenged by a new activity that uses and stretches our talents. The key to this form of happiness is tapping into the unique activities that you personally find engaging.



*The only thing that will make you happy is
the experience of what you really are.*

Gary Renard

We don't all become engaged in the same activities. In chapter 13, I write about my husband building an experimental aircraft. There is absolutely no part of the activity I would find interesting, let alone engaging. Each of us has our own unique abilities and characteristics that make certain challenges engaging to us. It is through engaging in an activity that we get to express our personality. Gratification and happiness come from the joy of being able to express our identities in new and challenging activities.

Meaning

Beyond engaging in a fulfilling activity, there is another level of being to which people can aspire. Seligman refers to this as the level of meaning—one connects to a higher purpose of life or calling. Living through purpose means connecting to something larger than oneself. This is a level of living that transcends the self or ego.

In *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*, motivational leader Dr. Steven R. Covey tells us that each one of us has a longing to:

*Live a life of greatness and contribute-to really
matter, to really make a difference, to live a life
of significance.*

Once again, this is a state which few may live in continually, but everyone can visit. Purpose is a quest and everyone can



have meaningful projects that connect us to something bigger and more powerful than ourselves.

How Vista Can Help

If you know who you are, you will make wiser and better decisions. From this awareness, you will be able to live a more engaging and meaningful life. You will be able to understand what drives and motivates you. You will know your talents and passions. You will understand what you need to live a self-actualizing life. Understanding who you are is the purpose of the VISTA Life/Career Process.

*If you know who you are and live from that,
you will make better choices in all areas of
your life.*

The VISTA Process helps you identify your unique factors, or **core components*** necessary for engagement. It will help identify your talents and passions. Through the interrelationships of the cards you will see the breadth and depth of your identity. You can *be* who you want to be, and *do* what you want to do, regardless of your life situation now, or your situation in the future.

It appears that we are wired to find fulfillment and happiness by expressing our unique nature, by participating in work or activities that engage us, and have meaning to us beyond ourselves. Happiness is, then, a natural byproduct of who we are and what we do. Pursue self-expression and contribution, and you have the opportunity to find **satisfaction*** and a meaningful life.



CHAPTER 2

Four Decks Explained

When someone asks, “Who are you?” what’s the first answer that pops into your mind? For most of us it’s often the roles we have. “I’m a mom.” or “I’m a physician.” We could be describing external characteristics, such as, “I’m a man,” or “I’m a westerner.” But, do those statements really describe who you are?

One of the purposes of the VISTa process is to help you find the words to describe who you are beyond the roles you play. The process allows you to ask the question, “Who am I?” in a very profound way.

*Identity-who you are, Personality-how you
express who you are.*

There are four decks of cards in the VISTa process. These decks represent four aspects of your identity. Two decks, TRAITS and VALUES represent the “be”ing aspects of your identity. SKILLS and INTERESTS are the “do”ing aspects of your identity. These represent the activities you are naturally drawn to and engage in effortlessly. It is the integration of both your “be”ing and your “do”ing that help define your identity.

Completing the VISTa process is different than most personality or career assessments. While the information you learn about yourself is similar, there is another aspect, not available with other inventories. The process of selecting your cards and completing such as the Blueprint other activities through VISTa is experiential. Not only are you acquiring



information from the process, but you also connect deeply to experience who you are.

Another unique quality of the VISTa process is the ability to integrate the cards into different arrangements. In the VISTa Blueprint, you are looking at themes or **satisfaction touchstones*** or just **touchstones***. You can also arrange the cards to represent your way of processing to solve problems, or the VISTa cards can be selected and arranged to help you connect to your purpose.

Utilizing both the right and left hemispheres of your brain through the colors, words, and tactile use of the cards creates a whole brain experience. In addition to being whole brain, the process is holistic. TRAITS represent the **essence*** of your personality. SKILLS represent the capabilities of your mind. INTERESTS represent the passions of your heart. VALUES represent your spirit or what feeds your soul. The VISTa process allows you to reconnect to yourself in a new and more holistic way.

Traits

The TRAITS cards represent your personality. Your personality is how you express yourself in the world. Your personality comes from your **essence***. The word essence comes from the Latin word *esse*, which literally means “to be”. Essence describes your nature and individuality. Traits are the outer manifestation of your essence. By looking at your Traits, you can glean or infer your essence.

Values

The VALUE cards are the other “be”ing cards and describe the things that are important to you. Through your values you find your motivation and sense of satisfaction. Be careful not to equate values with morals or ethics. The VALUE



cards do not describe what is good versus bad or right versus wrong, but instead, what is intrinsically important to you.

In working with people who were unhappy in their work, I have found most people were not meeting their values. When asked why, most believed they couldn't make a living around their values. Once again, this doesn't imply they were compromising their ethics or morals, but compromising something potentially more important—their spirit.

Skills

Innate capabilities are represented by the SKILLS cards. Everyone has things they naturally do well. Because people do them well naturally, skills are often not recognized or honored. People often don't recognize that what comes naturally to them does not come as easily to others. We sometimes assume that everyone can perform a task as easily as we can. In addition, we don't value our natural skills because we've been taught to value most the things we have to struggle for.

Interests

The INTERESTS Cards represent where you find your passions. Some people get a thrill out of a mathematical problem, while others can become enraptured with helping a friend mend a broken heart.

*If you're doing what you love, you'll never
work a day in your life.*

Harvey Mackay

Identify your Interests and you identify what makes your heart sing.



From the process of selecting your unique VISTa cards, you answer the question, “Who am I?” in a novel way. Not only are you reconnecting to yourself, you are experiencing you in a meaningful way. You walk away from the process with a fuller sense of what it means to be YOU.

Six Colors

The cards in the decks are separated into six colors that represent different personality groupings.

The color groupings are based on the work of Dr. John L. Holland, Psychologist and Professor Emeritus at Johns Hopkins University. Holland looked at different personality types and concluded that characteristics could be arranged into six broad groups or **domains***. He also concluded that environments could be broken into the same six broad categories. For example, a person likes to use his hands to build and erect things. That is a part of his identity. It is a way to describes who he is. This person would most likely work in an environment where construction is taking place and would most likely enjoy associating with people who also like constructing. For this person to be satisfied and fulfilled in his life, he needs to be expressing his identity through constructing, in an environment where construction is taking place with others who also like constructing. Having a satisfying life is based on both knowing what brings you satisfaction and being able to express yourself through satisfying endeavors.

While Holland’s six domains were originally designed to help people find fulfilling work, they can be used in other aspects of life such as hobbies, volunteer work and finding your purpose.



A complete list of the cards arranged by color is found in Appendix A, but we will summarize the domains here.

Yellow - Realistic

People who like to use their hands and/or like physical activity. They have athletic or mechanical ability, prefer activities with objects, machines, tools, plants, or animals, or to be outdoors.

Orange – Investigative

People who like ideas: to observe, learn, investigate, analyze, evaluate, or solve problems.

Pink - Artistic

People who are creative and/or have artistic, innovating, intuitional abilities, or who like unstructured situations, using their imagination or creativity.

Purple - Social

People who like to interact with people to inform, nurture, enlighten, help, train, develop, cure, or are skilled with words.

Blue - Enterprising

People who like influencing people: persuading, leading, or managing for organizational or personal goals.

Green - Conventional

People who like data, have clerical or numerical ability, and who like following through on projects.

Each person will select a combination of the six colors. Most people have two to four colors that dominate. Once you know what your dominant colors are, you can apply the information in a number of different ways. But, first you need to select your forty cards.





CHAPTER 3

Creating the Pyramids & Profile

A large playing surface is needed to select ten cards from each deck, prioritize them into pyramids, and transfer them to the profile which is included with your cards. (See Appendix for sample Profile.) It generally takes between ninety minutes and two hours complete the process.

Completing one deck at a time, select ten cards that most closely represent or describe you. While the decks can be completed in any order, it is recommended TRAITS be done first, followed by SKILLS, INTERESTS and VALUES.

The Sort

Traits

Step 1: Remove the top three dark blue cards from the TRAITS deck. Place them horizontally on the table.

DESCRIBES ME THE MOST	DESCRIBES ME SOMEWHAT	DOES NOT DESCRIBE ME
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Shuffle the remaining cards. Work through each deck as quickly as possible. Ignore the color of the cards, focus on selecting the words you think best describe you.

Read through the deck of cards labeled TRAITS. Remember Traits are examples of personality characteristics. They can describe your essence. Look at each card quickly and ask, “Does this describe me?” Because people take on different



roles for different environments, it is key to select the cards that are *most representative* of your core personality. After looking at each card, place it in the most appropriate pile. There are seventy-two cards in the deck, so no more than thirty cards should be in **DESCRIBES ME THE MOST**. It doesn't matter how many cards are in the remaining two piles.

Step 2: When all the cards from the first deck are separated into three piles, keep the pile labeled **DESCRIBES ME THE MOST** and remove the other two piles, as they won't be used again in this exercise.

Step 3: Scatter the remaining cards face up, so they are all in plain sight. Select the ten cards that best describe you and put the rest of the cards to the side.

Selecting only ten cards may be very difficult. Many people struggle with this, especially in the **TRAITS** exercise. However, it is important to get the cards to a workable number, so keep working at it.

Step 4: Look at the remaining ten cards and arrange them in order from “most important” to “least important” creating a pyramid. How you arrive at the pyramid is based on how you make decisions and interpret information, but any method is perfectly acceptable. Here are three suggestions to help to help you decide:

- ❖ Intuitively select cards for each location.
- ❖ Continue to separate the cards into piles; a pile of six and a pile of four, a pile of three and three, then two, then one.



- ❖ Put the cards into one long vertical line. Pick the top card and evaluate it against the second card, selecting the more important of the two. Keep the selected card, placing the card not selected back in the line. Compare the selected card to the next (third) card and pick the most important of those two. Compare the selected card to the next (fourth) card and continue working to the bottom of the line. When this is complete, the final card in should be the most important card. Now take the second card, ignoring the first card, follow the same procedure down to the bottom of line. The remaining card will be the second most important card. Continue the procedure until all the cards are in line from Most to Least important. You can now arrange them in a pyramid.

Step 5: Copy the pyramid onto the profile provided. Put the first letter of the domain (R, I, A, S, E or C) in the square, followed by the word or phrase. (*Example: E (Enterprising) in the square, followed by the word “ambitious”*). Using the colored pens, **highlight** the letter or if you want a very colorful profile, continue to highlight the whole word/phrase.

Once you have completed writing your descriptors in the profile, add the number of cards of each color and write that number in the corresponding column to the right. Proceed to the next deck.



Skills

Step 1: Remove the top three dark blue cards from the SKILLS deck. Place them horizontally on the table.

MOST PROFICIENT	SOMEWHAT PROFICIENT	NOT PROFICIENT
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Shuffle the remaining cards. Read through the deck of cards labeled SKILLS. SKILLS are examples of things you do innately well. For this exercise, it's not important whether you enjoy using the skill, but only whether or not you do it well. Look at each card and ask, "Do I do this well?" If you have never performed a particular skill, give your best guess as to whether or not you think you would do it well. Place each card in the most appropriate pile. Work quickly, taking the first response. There are seventy-two cards in the deck, so no more than thirty cards should be in **MOST PROFICIENT**. It doesn't matter how many cards are in the remaining two piles.

Step 2: When all the cards from the second deck are separated into three piles, keep the pile labeled **MOST PROFICIENT** and remove the other two piles, as they won't be used again in this exercise.

Complete Steps 3 through 5 as described in TRAITS.

Interests

Step 1: Remove the top three dark blue cards from the INTERESTS deck. Place them horizontally on the table.



ENJOY MOST	ENJOY SOMEWHAT	DO NOT ENJOY
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Shuffle the remaining cards. Read through the deck of cards labeled INTERESTS. INTERESTS are activities you enjoy. For this exercise, it is not important whether or not you do the activity well. Look at each card and ask, “Do I enjoy doing this activity?” If you have never participated in a particular activity, guess whether or not you think you would enjoy doing it. Place each card in the most appropriate pile. Work quickly, taking the first response. There are seventy-two cards in the deck, so no more than thirty cards should be in **MOST ENJOY**. It doesn’t matter how many cards are in the remaining two piles.

Step 2: When all the cards from the deck are separated into three piles, keep the pile labeled **Most Enjoy** and remove the other two piles, as they won’t be used again in this exercise.

Complete Steps 3 through 5 as described in TRAITS.

Values

Step 1: Remove the top three dark blue cards from the VALUES deck. Place them horizontally on the table.

MOST IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
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Shuffle the remaining cards. Read through the deck of cards labeled VALUES. Values are those things most important to us. Values represent the



things that motivate us and where we find the most satisfaction. (Remember: values in this context are not to be confused with morals or ethics, but simply things that are a source of satisfaction.) Look at each card and ask, “Is this important to me? Do I need this in my life to have fulfillment?” Place each card in the most appropriate pile. Work quickly, taking the first response. There are seventy-two cards in the deck, so no more than thirty cards should be in **MOST IMPORTANT**. It doesn’t matter how many cards are in the remaining two piles.

Step 2: When all the cards from the first deck are separated into three piles, keep the pile labeled **MOST IMPORTANT** and remove the other two piles, as they won’t be used again in this exercise.

Complete Steps 3 through 5 as described in TRAITS.

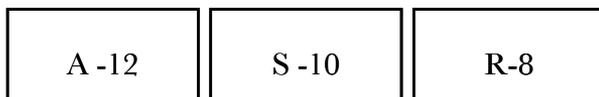
Once you have selected your top ten cards from each of the four decks, you will have forty cards that describe who you are and what you do when you are at your best.

Complete the profile by adding the numbers on the far right column. For example, add up the four groups of **REALISTIC** cards to determine your grand total of cards in that domain. Place that number in the in the place provided at the bottom right corner. Complete adding the next five domains.

Once you have added the numbers from the column and entered the sum into the chart at the bottom, you will have a grand total for each domain. Notice the three boxes at the bottom right of the profile sheet. Insert the numbers of your dominant domains in these boxes. For example, if you have 8 **R**(ealistic) cards, 12 **A**(rtistic) cards, 4 **I**(nvestigative) cards,



10 S(ocial) cards, 3 E(nterprising) cards and 3 C(onventional) cards, your boxes would look like this:



If you have a tie in the top two domains, select one for the first box and the other in the middle. If you have a tie between the third and fourth letter, select one to put in the box or put both in the box.

You have now completed the VISTa Pyramid Profile. It is helpful to put the date on your profile. When you complete the process again in the future, you will be able to compare and note changes.

Reviewing Pyramid Profile

With the completion of the Pyramid Profile, you have a RAISEC Code based on your self-selected Traits, Interests, Values and Skills. What is unique to VISTa is that you also have all the components that went into creating your code, i.e. your forty cards.

There are a number of assessments using the Holland RAISEC code. If you have taken any of the other inventories, you may find a different three-letter code. This can happen for a number of reasons, but the other assessments may measure different personality aspects.

While there is a wealth of information obtained through engaging in the VISTa process, much of the value has to do with the conversation that is generated. Initially, the conversation is going on as you look at each card asking, “Does this describe who I am?” Throughout the process you are



continually asking, “Who am I really?” We don’t get much opportunity to sit down and think about that question in our culture. Continue to take the time now to look at your cards and think about who you really are.

Once the cards have all been selected and entered into the Pyramid Profile, review the cards. You may be reviewing the actual cards laid in pyramids or you may be reviewing your profile. Either one will work, however, there is something added when you are able to pick the cards up as you review them.

As you study the completed pyramids, think about your reaction to the color, the words and phrases and how they all come together. If given the option, you might want to lay the cards out in the pyramids to answer the following questions.

Do the Skill cards represent your special gifts and talents?

Do the Interest cards indicate your passions?

Are the Value cards where you find your motivation and satisfaction?

Do the TRAITS cards represent who you are when you’re at your best?

Are the colors consistent within each pyramid?



What different colors are in the four pyramids?

What patterns emerge in colors, words, or themes?

Are you surprised by the colors with what you know about yourself?

Remember, TRAITS and VALUES are “be”ing cards, while SKILLS and INTERESTS are “do”ing cards.

Comparing the Trait and Value pyramids to the Skill and Interest pyramids, do you see any different patterns?

Do you see similar words appearing in different forms?

What do these cards confirm about you?

Do the cards support the work you are doing now, have done in the past, or want to do?



Do you learn anything new about yourself or a new way of looking at yourself by looking at your Pyramids?

These thought provoking questions provide an opportunity to really explore the cards and their relationship to each other. It also allows you to continue to gain awareness about yourself in a different way than when you were selecting your cards.

People have different reactions to their cards. At first, many aren't sure what they are looking at. By answering the questions, they may begin to see patterns and how the cards relate to their lives.

Most people are naturally impressed with their cards. The beautiful colors and words mirror back to them the very best of who they are and what they are capable of being. There is no judgment or comparison. It's just you looking at you.

VISTa was designed as a tool you can use in a number of different ways to help you create the life you want. With that said, if you don't do anything more with the cards than what you have already done, you've received value from the process. Your awareness of who you really are has been expanded by completing the VISTa card selection.

When clients say, "But this is stuff I already knew about myself," I respond by saying, "Exactly, *you* selected the cards. This process validates what you know about yourself."

What is different about the VISTa process is that you get to see the whole you, both the bits and pieces of the individual cards, plus the cards all laid out together. VISTa creates an experience, and provides information.



*What is necessary to change a person is to
Change his awareness of himself.*

Abraham Maslow

Meet Christa

Christa has worked with VISTa more than anyone, other than myself. Christa and I have been friends since high school. Besides being intelligent and great with words, Christa is inquisitive and willing to “play” with me. Whenever I needed to try out a new card arrangement, Christa was eager to accept the challenge.

Christa is Assistant to the Head of a mathematics department for a large university. She is also a writer and someone who is continually engaging in personal and spiritual growth. Christa has agreed to let us see how she completed the VISTa process. In this way, you can see the subtleties and impact of arranging the cards differently.

Because she is a writer, she wrote down her impressions as she was laying out the VISTa cards for the first time. You can see Christa’s first card sort at www.vista-cards/manual/links.html. Click on *Christa’s Profile* link. (You will also see that she elected not to arrange the cards in a pyramid form.)

I have included notes from her journaling as an example of the thought process that one person experienced while doing the cards.

“Well. This has become a nearly painful revelation.” (I’m saying this as I’m initially trying to avoid the awareness. Lots of time passes as I look at the #%&# cards.)



“As I’m looking at the cards [remaining], other than the things I like to have in my private life, and the environment with which to conduct my work life—I’m a #%&# scientist. What the HELL!?”

Lots more time passes as I continue staring at the cards, still trying to avoid the conclusions my mind and spirit are racing to, and thinking things like “Oh holy #%&#. More school.” or... “Wa-a-a-ah,” and “No wonder I love my math geeks so much. I am one.” and “Do you think I coulda learned this just a BIT earlier?” (This was directed at the universe at large, my parents, you, myself, etc.)

And finally gratitude because for the first time, I get it and all the things that brought me to this moment—except Matthew’s death—suddenly make sense. (You know that feeling, as if the tumblers of a safe all fell into place.)

I don’t know—it just seems like here I’ve got this beautiful colorful bouquet, that I’m still stunned by and enjoying looking at.

Several days later, Christa wrote the following:

It really has made a difference in how I see the world and my place in it.

I have spent a great deal of time, over the last 25 years, researching what I wanted to “be.” I have talked with a career counselor, done aptitude tests, attended lectures, and read all the books. When I sat down with the VISTa cards, I hadn’t anticipated any revelations. “Oh, another kind of test, but it looks fun, anyway.” I thought.

It was so much fun that I did all four of the card pyramids (Values, Interests, Skills, Traits) in one sitting. At the end of three hours, I had a completely new understanding of my own abilities and desires! I feel as if I have reclaimed a lost part of myself. I know myself now, better than ever before, and am thrilled and grateful for the knowledge. The



VISTa cards have helped me to see my work differently, and to approach it with a new understanding and eagerness.

You may not have the same experience as Christa, but allow yourself the opportunity to immerse yourself in the process and to experience the cards fully.





CHAPTER 4

VISTa Blueprint

One of the unique and magical aspects of the VISTa cards is the ability to integrate them into a number of interesting and revealing configurations. In fact, the only limitation to the possibilities of the uses for the cards is time and imagination. Integrate the cards into your “story” and you will see how beautiful you are.

In this chapter, we provide instructions for completing a VISTa **Blueprint**, based on your unique themes. You can arrange the cards into themes identifying your unique Touchstones. Your Touchstones identify the core components you need to be fulfilled in your life. Touchstones provide your unique criteria for fulfillment.

Arranging the cards into themes is only one way the cards can be arranged. At the end of the chapter, there are additional suggestions for Blueprint arrangements. Others have used a variety of ways to gain insight. Experiment with the different arrangements to see which gives you the greatest value.

Spend time thinking and talking about what you see. Allow the cards to remain on the table until you identify and discuss the relationships among them. This discussion leads to a shift that occurs allowing you to experience your own identity. You may have the sense of literally exposing your core self on the table as you explore and talk about the themes. Although you may feel a bit nervous to be so exposed, you will also find the experience empowering and ennobling.



Instructions for Creating Your Blueprint

Just as a Blueprint is the plan for constructing a building, your VISTa Blueprint is a guide to your inner identity. As you create your Blueprint you are integrating the individual cards into themes. By understanding these themes, you will be able to identify the Touchstones you need in your life to find fulfillment.

This exercise can be tricky because the cards are already in themes according to color. You will be arranging them into your own unique themes. Your personal themes will incorporate the color themes, but should not be ruled by them. Most themes will involve more than one color.

You will need a fairly large workspace similar to the one you used to create the pyramids.

Step 1: Consolidate your unique VISTa cards into one pile. Place the top card in the center of the table. You may want to move it later, but this will get you started.

Step 2: Draw the next card and ask yourself, “Does this card belong with the one on the table?” “Belong” means that the cards have similar meanings or they support each other. If you believe the cards go together, place it next to the card already on the table. If you don’t believe the cards belong together, place it on another part of the table.

Step 3: Look at the third card asking if it belongs with the other two cards. Place it next to the other cards or create a new theme. There is no right or wrong way



to do this, so have fun with the process. Keep in mind you're looking for cards that belong together.

Here are some examples of how cards may go together. These are just examples which may or may not apply to you. As you start laying your cards down, you will find there are numerous cards saying the same or similar thing in different forms.

In Social (purple), you find a Skill card with Teach/instruct, a Value card with Teaching/instructing and an Interest card with Teach children/adults.

Most likely, but not always, those cards would go together in the same theme.

In addition, there are cards that are similar, but have different colors. Dependable is a *Conventional* (green) Trait; Dependability is a *Realistic* (yellow) Value. Likewise Ideas is an *Investigative* (orange) Value and Generate Ideas is an *Artistic* (pink) Skill.

Even though these cards are different colors, they would most likely go into the same themes.

There are cards that support each other and could therefore go into the same theme. Work for Charity is a *Social* (purple) Interest and Coordinate events is a *Conventional* (green) Skill. Those cards could support each other in the same theme.

Finally, there are cards that may not initially appear to have anything to do with each other. Lead is an *Enterprising* (blue) Skill and Help is a *Social* (purple) Skill. The person who put these together saw them



falling under the theme, “Connecting with others to serve for a greater good.” In that context, he felt the cards went together.

It’s important for you to find your unique themes. These support your individuality. No two people would have the same exact cards or the same themes. Although people may have similar themes, no two people will carry out those themes in exactly the same way.

Try not to have more than four to six themes. Any more than that and they tend to get diluted in their meaning and value. You may find that some cards play a supporting role or appear to be a subset of a theme. That’s okay. Separate them by a small space.

Step 4: Once you have completed your themes, look to see if you have any cards that could fit in more than one theme. Most people have universal cards that override the themes or could fit in multiple themes. These cards may be **Inspiration** or **Guiding** cards. If you have cards fitting this description, place them at the top of your table.

Once you have completed the layout, it’s important to spend time looking and discussing the cards, and what they mean. Discuss the cards and how they relate to each other. Start to identify each of your themes. Initially, many people will start by describing the themes in very general terms. Some examples of themes by be; this is who I am, this is what I enjoy doing, this is the internal me, this is my process.



In order for the themes to become Touchstones, you need to translate them into particulars. Select one theme to begin. As you look at the theme, you may identify cards that fit together in subgroups within the theme. Looking at your first theme, start to describe the relationship between the cards and why you put them together in one group. If the theme was *things you enjoy doing*, describe the activities you enjoy. The temptation will be to simply read the cards, but try to find the similarities between the cards.

For example, Steve had the following cards in one theme; R-Being adventurous, risk-taking-I, E-Taking risks-V, A-Imagination-V, A-Creative-S, A-Independent-T, A-Independence-V and E-Operate your own business-I. As he discussed this theme, he decided the cards are related to his being able to create a vision of what is possible. He is willing to think outside the box, loves being independent and creative to generate possibilities of things he can do and be. Steve is an actor as well as a commercial real estate agent, so working a nine to five job isn't of much interest to him. His first Touchstone is **Creating a vision of what is possible**.

Conversely Steve had these cards in another theme; S-Trustworthy-T, R-Dependability-V, C-Responsible-T, C-Organization-V, C-Organize-S, C-Follow-through-S, I-Math-I, and C-Setting up spreadsheets-I. In discussing this theme he said that these cards represent the foundation that allows his vision to become a reality. He needs both to be successful. This Touchstone is **Having a foundation that supports the dream**.

The Touchstones describe who you are, what you need to be fulfilled in your life, and what you have to offer the world. In looking at his Touchstones, Steve talked about a



new Internet business he is starting and how he is exploring additional opportunities in that area. He loves discussing new ideas and possibilities with partners he has in various ventures. Creating new visions describes how Steve operates in the world. He can easily generate new business goals. It is also what he gets excited thinking about when talking to others. While it comes naturally to him, not everyone is good at seeing future possibilities. Regardless of whether he is expressing himself as an actor, a real estate agent or an Internet entrepreneur, creating new visions is an important Touchstone for Steve.

In the same way that Creating Visions is an important Touchstone to Steve, so is establishing a supportive Foundation. Steve is not content to just sit around dreaming lofty dreams. In order for his visions to become a reality, he needs to have a Foundation that keeps him grounded. Foundation to Steve means having an organized environment. Equally important, Foundation is how he operates in his relationships. He has an incredible sense of integrity he brings to his visions. Like the first Touchstone, the Foundation Touchstone describes Steve's marketable strength, and what he needs in order to be fulfilled in his life.

Almost everyone who completes the VISTa Blueprint has one group of cards off to the side representing things they do for play or fun.

Determine if you have such a group. Artistic, outdoor, and physical cards are often found in this theme. Everyone needs activities to renew themselves emotionally and/or spiritually. These are rarely activities for which you get paid. They are done for the sheer joy of doing them. In some cases, these activities involve a creative endeavor or viewing the art of



others. These activities may involve nature, being in nature, or participating in some physical activity.

Turning themes into Touchstones personalizes the cards into your unique Blueprint. No one will have your exact cards arranged in the same way that you do. It is from you identified Touchstones that you get a fuller appreciation of who you are and what you need to be fulfilled in your life.

Reviewing the VISTa Blueprint

Spend time reviewing and thinking about your Touchstones. It is helpful to discuss these themes with someone else. It is easy for the Blueprint to feel like a forest where you can't see the trees. You will want to copy your Blueprint on the back of your profile so you can refer back to it, or you can easily translate the Blueprint into an Excel spreadsheet.

Use the following questions to help you review your Blueprint:

What are the 2-4 dominant themes you need for satisfaction in your life?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Are you currently engaging in endeavors that allow you to express yourself through your dominant themes? Put another way, are you currently engaging in endeavors that al-



low you to *be* who you are at your best and allow you to *do* what you do best?

Looking at your cards, how do you renew yourself?

Are you currently involved, on a regular basis in activities where you can renew yourself?

In our particularly frenzied world, some of the first things that go by the wayside are these renewing activities. If you are not currently engaging in something that renews you, consider making the time to bring these into your life.

If you are involved in paid work, are you getting to use your themes in the work you do?

How much time or what percentage of your time at work is spent using your themes?

How much of your time is spent in activities other than your themes?

Do you feel comfortable with this ratio?

If you are not working for pay, are you using your themes in other activities, such as hobbies or volunteer work?

Continue to spend time examining and thinking about your Blueprint. It can literally become the Blueprint for your life. Look at the words and the meanings they have for you. Understand the reason the cards go together the way they do. Finally, think about how your Touchstones are being



expressed in your life. Are the moments you spend utilizing the themes from your Blueprint few and far between? Are you lucky enough to spend most of your time utilizing your themes? What can you do to more fully express the themes in your Blueprint?

Christa's Blueprint

You were introduced to Christa as she reacted to her forty cards in the last chapter. It was some time later when Christa completed her Blueprint. As part of a longitudinal study, Christa redid her Pyramid Profile. There are differences in some of the cards she selected. The themes and overall interpretation of the cards remained the same. Each time Christa completed a different arrangement of the cards, she gained new insight and awareness about herself. You will find Christa's Blueprint at www.vista-cards/manual/links.html. Click on *Christa's Blueprint* link.

Christa's Blueprint resulted in four themes. The first theme, in the bottom left hand corner represents how she renews herself. It is how she feeds her spirit. Surrounding herself in beauty and engaging in creative and adventurous activities renews Christa.

The center column of Christa's Blueprint provided an interesting revelation for her.

Note: *To make reading the cards easier, the RIASEC letter is first, followed by the content of the cards and ending with one of the four decks-[T]raits, [S]kills, [I]nterest or [V]alue. For example, when we say E-Liaison-S, we mean that the card is Blue (Enterprising), the word on the card is Liaison, and the card is from the SKILLS deck.*



With E-Liaison-S, S-Relationships-V, G-Proofread/edit-S and A-Language-V, Christa saw herself as an interpreter of language and ideas. The theme on the upper left hand corner has Artistic dominating cards, and the theme on the right hand side has Investigative dominating cards. These groups indicate the marriage of both the right and left brain functions that Christa relies on in her gift for communicating a message to a particular audience.

Christa's Touchstones are the need to use her 1) creativity, balanced against 2) concrete analysis that results in 3) the ability to communicate or translate other's communications in the most effective way possible. These Touchstones are what she has to market to the world. Engaging in them is what brings her joy and satisfaction in her work and life. She renews her spirit by 4) having beauty and adventure in her life.

By completing the Blueprint process and spending time understanding the interrelationship of the cards, Christa was able to more fully understand how she operates in the world. On one hand, the information didn't tell her anything she didn't already know about herself. But, it gave her a fuller awareness and appreciation of what she has to offer the world and most importantly, a clearer definition of what she needs to be fulfilled.

Blueprint as Process

Arranging your forty cards into themes is only one way the cards can be arranged. As Christa completed her Blueprint, she became aware of how the cards can be arranged in different ways offering unique and different perspectives. Human beings are problem-solving agents. If you look at all of the



wonderful gadgets and tools in our world, everything is there because someone was solving a problem. People approach problem-solving in different ways. Some people solve problems best through collaboration with others. Some people solve problems using intuition and some through experimentation and research.

Christa realized she could arrange her forty cards in a way to explain her problem-solving process. After completing her Blueprint, Christa saw the relationships of the cards to her **process***. She then arranged the cards to represent her unique style of problem solving. You can find her Blueprint Process at www.vista-cards/manual/links.html Click on *Christa's Process* link.

Understanding her process allowed Christa to add an additional level of understanding about how she operates. Through the experience, she has learned to trust her process. She knows that solving the problems that come up each day may take a bit of time. She has developed the practice of saying “Will you let me get back to you on that?”

She knows now that the problem is often solved without her conscious mental participation. She has learned to “back-burner” things, and to go on with her day. Suddenly, the answer or solution will leap to her mind, and she gets back in touch with the original caller.

In particular, this process has been extremely helpful in the space-planning/personnel part of her work. She says finding the right office or meeting space for their very large and crowded department is a bit like a puzzle with several pieces missing! But she knows now that the solution is nearly always available. She just has to ask the question and then waits while her subconscious seeks out and finds the answer from all the choices it has available.



Other Ways to Create a Blueprint

The goal of the VISTa Blueprint is to integrate the forty cards into a story that makes sense to you. Arranging the cards into themes resulting in the Touchstones is the primary way I have clients arrange the cards, but there are other arrangements that are equally successful.

People have reported examples of ways they have arranged the cards. One therapist wants her clients to arrange the cards without any instruction from her at all. She simply asks them to arrange the cards in a way that makes sense to them. She had one client who arranged the cards into four corners labeled: What I Do, How I Do It, What I Enjoy and Who I Am.

The same therapist gave similar instructions to another client. This time the results were completely different. The cards were arranged in more of a domino fashion, with similar cards linked end to end. She added arrows connecting cards that weren't linked. In both examples the therapist and client spent time discussing the cards, their arrangements and relationships between them. The Blueprint became a tool the therapist used to open dialog, identify problem areas and develop future conversations.

Blueprint for Couples

The VISTa Blueprint is a great tool for couples. The key to doing the process as a couple is to avoid giving each other advice about what cards to select. It is also important not to make comments or judgments about the cards the partner picks. Comments like, "I can't believe you picked that card. That's not like you at all," is inappropriate. It has



to be done in an atmosphere of mutual sharing and acceptance. The process can open communication and connection about the things two people have in common, as well as their differences.

Blueprint in Business

A business coach used the VISTa cards with a trio of business partners in a unique way. She had them work together to select the forty cards that best described their business. They had to form a consensus as to the identity of their business. Once they identified the forty cards, they arranged them into a Blueprint. This allowed them to communicate in a way they never had before. It helped them come together to create a shared vision of what the business was. It also provided a safe way for them to discuss the differences they had concerning the business. It opened up communication as they debated and exchanged ideas about their core business and their vision for growing it in the future.





CHAPTER 5

Purpose

What do we mean when we say the word **purpose**? Webster defines purpose as “an intention; something to be attained,” but there is a larger meaning that I prefer to use here. Finding your purpose answers the questions, “Why am I here?” and “What am I supposed to do with my life?”

When people ask these questions, they are looking for a deeper answer than the next goal they want to attain. In the quest for purpose, people are looking for a sense of direction. They are searching to find a greater meaning for their lives.

Discussing purpose is frightening to some people. The spiritual overtones may be a turn-off for some. For many the idea of searching for a purpose and not finding it may prevent them from attempting the inquiry. Finding a purpose that is too daunting or intimidating may prevent some from even beginning the search. While most people ask the question, “Why am I here,” many fail to seek or find and answer.

*Most of us go to our graves with our music
still inside us.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Finding your purpose needn't be an intimidating and formidable process or outcome. Purpose is simply a small voice inside you that works like a compass letting you know when you are living in **integrity*** with your identity. Living in integrity means that you are willing to be yourself and not what others think you should be. (Or not what you think oth-



ers think you should be!) It's living authentically. While the voice of purpose may be small it creates a way of connecting to something larger than just your personal well-being.

It appears some people have a clear sense of purpose from the beginning. For most of us it's a choice we make to say we matter, and that what we do matters. Purpose becomes a commitment we make to ourselves. We can choose not to live our lives from purpose if we wish, but a feeling of aliveness and meaning comes when we choose to live from purpose.

Using VISTa to find Purpose

The VISTa Cards are an excellent tool for identifying and connecting to your purpose. You will continue to use the original forty cards you selected for your pyramid profile. Once again, you will arrange the cards in a different way to uncover new and exciting information about who you are and how to live your life in the most meaningful way.

With your cards stacked in a deck, look at each one and ask yourself the questions, "Does this card help me describe 'who I am meant to be' or 'why I am here'?" These questions will help you identify your purpose cards. Take a moment to really look at each card to determine which pile it goes in. Lay the cards that answer either or both of the questions in one pile and put the remaining cards in another pile. While everyone is unique, you can expect approximately half of your cards to go in one pile and half to go into the other non purpose one.

Once you've gone through the stack of forty cards and placed them in the appropriate pile, place the purpose cards in front of you and the other cards off to the side.



Your purpose can be divided into three different aspects. Identifying each of the components and how they come together will help you connect to your purpose.

Essence is the first component of purpose. Your essence is the quality you emit from your core into the world. It is the glow that emanates from you. Essence is a state of being, so your essence will most likely be described in either TRAITS or VALUES cards.

Look at the cards in front of you and select and group the ones you think best represent or describe your essence. Do these cards best describe who you are meant to “be”? There may be a word contained in the cards or there may be new words used in combination of more than one card. Finding the word(s) that best describe your essence may jump out at you, or you may have to think about it for a while. If you’re not sure what is the best word(s) to describe your essence show trusted friends or family the cards you’ve selected and see if they can help.

The second component of purpose is **gifts**. Gifts are what you came into the world to do. We were all designed to do something. As we discussed earlier, gifts come to us easily and naturally, although we may work toward perfecting them.

*I have to trust what was given to me if I am
to trust anything...I must be led by what was
given to me.*

W.S. Merwin

Look at the cards in front of you and identify the cards that best describe your gifts. Move them into a group. From these cards, can you create a word or phrase that best describes what you came into the world to do?



Finally, look at your remaining cards to identify **passions** or what moves you. These cards should contain an emotional element that inspires you.

Identify the cards, the passion or emotion that comes from them. Put them in a group.

You have now arranged the aspects of purpose. You can call these many things: Essence cards, Gifts cards, Passions cards. You may now want to arrange the cards in a way that makes sense to your purpose. Spend some time looking and thinking about the cards and the answers you've received. At the conclusion, see if you can arrive at a phrase or sentence to describe your purpose. Write this phrase down and keep it where you can read it often as this will help you stay true to your purpose.

For purpose to have meaning, it must be expressed through who you are and what you do. Purpose or the aspects of purpose don't have to be used all of the time in order for you to have a meaningful life. But, the more you are able to express your purpose, the more meaningful your life will become.

In addition to your purpose cards, you have the remaining cards. These cards may not be core to your purpose, but will often give you an indication of how you may best express your purpose in the world. Take some time to look at the remaining cards to see if they play a supporting, but important role in helping you carry out your purpose.

Christa's Purpose

Christa decided to select forty new cards for the purpose exercise. After selecting her forty cards, she went through the



deck, asking the questions, “Does this card describe who I am and/or why I’m here?” When she was done, there were twenty cards she felt were her purpose cards.

She then arranged all the purpose cards on the table into two groups. One group represented her essence cards and the other group represented her gifts and passions.

She arranged her gifts and passion cards in the following order:

E-Initiate Change-S	
E-Liaison-S	
C-Proofread/edit-S	A-Generate ideas-S
A-Write Creatively-S	I-Draw Conclusions/ Synthesize-S
A-Conceptualize new ideas-I	I-Reasoning-S
A-Originality-V	A-Beauty-V

As Christa looked at her cards and started to put them together, she focused on the bottom two cards initially saying, “Originality and Beauty are the starting place. There is a need for these two things in the world. Beauty is not when things are beautiful, but when things are just and right. Those times when you know you’re walking the path you’re meant to walk-that means you’re walking from a place of beauty. You start with those [cards]”

She continued, “I try to see how I can say things differently, bring that beauty into other, different lives. Most people think they’re ugly or damaged. Everyday, I try to show people they are whole, beautiful, original.”

“Others see editing as criticizing. It’s about showing a person’s beauty. It’s about taking away the parts that detract from beautiful. Ideas are strong, beautiful and powerful.”



As Christa looked at the cards, she came to see her purpose is to help people voice their beauty.

Her essence cards, which follow, describe who she is and what she has that allows her to express her purpose.

S-Humorous-T	E-Resilient-T
E-Dynamic-T	C-Practical-T
R-Frank-T	C-Common Sense-T
I-Autonomous-T	I-Intellectual-T
C-Order-V	R-Being adventurous/ Risking taking

In discussing the value of the exercise, Christa said that completing the process helped her laser into a deeper level of awareness, adding to her other VISTA experiences. She was able to get greater clarity and understanding into what she needs in order to create meaning in her life.

Purpose provides a place to live and work from. It gives a voice to the yearning inside of you that longs to be heard.



PART TWO





CHAPTER 6

Connecting to the Power of You – Meet Tom

One of the strengths of the VISTa process is that it allows a person time to be still, and take an opportunity to connect with themselves. That is not an experience to be taken lightly. Before you go dashing into the next exhilarating phase of your life, take a moment to revel in the joy of being you.

While most people use the VISTa Cards to help make a life change or find a new career, some people just enjoy the process for its own sake. Tom came to see a career counselor because his grandfather suggested it. Tom was the black sheep in the family. He had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder as a young student and spent most of his school years feeling frustrated. His grades were mediocre and yet he knew he was quite intelligent. Academically, he always felt like a square peg trying to fit into a round hole.

Tom was saved by his athletic and social abilities. One of the things he was most proud of was petitioning the school to let him join the swim team despite his less than stellar grades. He credited his accomplishment to his ability to woo appropriate school officials in addition to his gifts as an athlete.

Even though he struggled in school, he graduated early through an independent program offered in his district. He chose not to attend college. This was something he says he didn't regret, but as the only one in his family who hadn't completed college, he felt that his parents were disappointed in him. At the time of his career counseling, he was in his



early twenties working as the warehouse manager for a software company. He enjoyed the work, but didn't know where he was going next. Therefore his grandfather suggested he see a career counselor.

Tom didn't like reading or working with words, but enjoyed handling the VISTA cards and their colors. He enjoyed the process and it allowed him to really think about himself in a new way. Most of his life people told him how he wasn't living up to standards, and it was nice to acknowledge the strengths he possessed.

As Tom reviewed his Blueprint, he began to understand why school had been difficult. Seventeen of his forty cards were *Realistic*, meaning Tom loved physical activity and working with his hands. His next highest group was *Enterprising* with nine cards, meaning Tom loved being competitive and in charge. His final cards were split with four each for *Investigative*, *Artistic* and *Social*. He didn't have any *Conventional* cards. You will find a copy of Tom's Blueprint at www.vista-cards/manual/links.html Click on *Tom's Blueprint* link.

As he arranged the cards, excitement entered his voice. He enjoyed finding the relationships between words as he integrated them into themes. In discussing his Blueprint, he determined his Touchstones were 1) Somewhere to go↑; up, out that included learning or being physical; 2) Body movement→, involving adventure, risk-taking combined with 3) Being on you own or being your own person, competition.

Seeing his forty cards laid out in front of him was a profound experience. As Tom stared at the Blueprint, he exclaimed, "For the first time in my life, I feel complete." In that moment, Tom was able to connect to something powerful within. He was able to see himself in a new way. His life made sense



for the first time. In that moment, he allowed himself to just “be” in the fullest sense of the word.

Tom went on to explore different career options. He decided to stay with the job he was in, but began exploring entrepreneurial opportunities. The value Tom received from the VISTa experience was the new awareness he had of himself. He would no longer look at himself as the academic loser he’d felt going through school. He’d been able to tap into his personal power and strengths. He understood why school had been such a challenge and how he could shift that experience to be successful as an adult.





CHAPTER 7

Creating a Vision

As you saw in the last chapter, the increased awareness gained by completing the VISTa process is enough for some people. Just by selecting your forty cards, you see yourself in a different way. You will have an expanded awareness of yourself.

Most people who participate in the VISTa process want the information to help them lead a more fulfilling and satisfying life. People are drawn to the cards for a variety of reasons. Some are interested in a career change, others are seeking personal growth opportunities and some are at a crossroads. With the information that is gained from the cards and their integration, VISTa is also a good first step in creating a vision.

Vision statements have been a practice in the business community for quite some time. The value businesses get from creating a vision statement can also be a valuable tool for the individual. In business, the vision statement is usually a concise one-sentence statement stating the picture of the desired future for the company. While you may want to write a vision statement, the information you have acquired from the VISTa is especially good for creating a **vision collage***.

To create a vision collage you will need the results from all the VISTa exercises you have completed so far. If you have only completed the Pyramid Profile, that will be sufficient for creating a vision collage. The more information you have, the more complete the collage will be.



While you can make your collage any size, in this case, bigger is better. Get a large piece of poster board. You will also want to get a good selection of magazines, catalogues, and brochures to select from. Make sure you have materials relating to your specific interests and passion. For example, travel brochures and magazines for travel, vacations or renewing spirit. You might want to include a recent picture of you and your family members, business associates and friends you want to include in your collage.

It is not recommended that you use the actual VISTa cards for your collage, but you may want to duplicate some of the words either by cutting them out of a magazine or printing them from a computer. If the colors from your three letter code resonate with you, include colored paper in your collage.

Before you begin, decide what vision you are creating. You can create one vision collage for all the aspects of your life. If you want more balance in you life, you may want to include both work and play activities in your vision. You may want to create a collage that speaks just to your purpose. You may want to use the Touchstones or themes from your Blueprint as the basis for your collage. In fact, you may want to include a copy of the Blueprint in the center of your collage.

Once you have decided what vision you are creating, start collecting pictures and words that represent your vision. As you create the collage, you may want to form a vision statement to include in the collage. Cut out words to use as your statement. Let yourself have fun with this project. Use a lot of color and pictures that touch your core. Be excited about both the process and the vision you are creating. Let your imagination flow.



When you have completed your vision collage, share it with others. For fun, have them explain what they see in the vision collage. If they can't adequately explain the vision, you may want to go back and add to the collage.

When complete put the vision collage in a prominent location where you can see it often. It will act as inspiration that will motivate and stimulate you.





CHAPTER 8

Career Exploration using Pyramid Profile – Meet Marie

VISTA provides bridge connecting your personality strengths to specific occupations. This is quite helpful to high school and college students and people with limited knowledge of careers and occupations. Using the three-letter RAISEC code from the Pyramid Profile, you can identify specific occupations that are a good match for you.

Generating an Occupational List

Once you have completed the Pyramid Profile, you have determined your three-letter RAISEC code. You can use your code to identify specific occupations that match your personality. Keep in mind that there are successful people with your code in all types of careers. For young people or those who don't have much experience, the code provides a good place to start exploring careers. At www.vista-cards.com/occupations you will find a drop-down list of occupations arranged by the RAISEC letters.

Selecting the first two letters of your code, you can click on the corresponding link in the drop down menu on the site. This will give you a list of occupations. For some letter combinations there may only be a couple of occupations. For some there will be a significant list. Click on any occupation of interest and you will link to the O'Net site, developed for the U. S. Department of Labor. The O'Net (Occupational Information Network) is a comprehensive listing of the major occupations found in the United States. Contained within



each occupation is a very comprehensive description of the work, tasks, knowledge needed, required abilities, activities, work context, education level, work styles, work values, related occupations and wage information. Also contained in the occupation descriptor, under the interest heading, are the words that correspond to your three letter code. For example, if you have Enterprising in your code and select an occupation from the Enterprising list, you will find Enterprising listed under interests in the occupation description.

Once you have selected an occupation that looks interesting to you, read the descriptions in the O'Net and then compare it to the information in your profile. When you find occupations that are a good match to your profile, or that look interesting, save or print the information so you can refer to it later.

Arrange your top three letters into all the different combinations to get the maximum occupations to review. For example, RAI can be arranged in six different configurations; RIA, IRA, IAR, ARI, and AIR. If you have any additional letters you want to include, do so. If you are just starting to explore careers or occupations, you might want to explore between ten and fifteen occupations.

In addition to linking directly to the occupations from the VISTA website, you can go directly to the O'Net website <http://online.onetcenter.org/find/descriptor/browse/INTERESTS/#cur> where they have occupations arranged by RAISEC code. At this site, you will find the six domains under the Interests folder. Click on the first domain and you will link to a list of occupations ranked by the level of training necessary. The lower the number, the less training required.



Above the list of occupations, you will find a place to put your three domains into boxes to search for occupations. You may have already located some of the same occupations through the VISTA website.

Once you have selected between ten and fifteen occupations, you can begin to narrow your choices by doing more research. Read the story of Marie to get ideas as to how to research careers.

Exploring Careers for College Students

Marie was a freshman in college when she decided to get some career counseling. High school had been difficult for Marie and she was nervous about being successful in college.

Marie completed the VISTA Pyramid Profile. In reviewing the profile, things started to become clear to her. Marie knew she was a people person, but was surprised that nineteen out of forty cards were *Social*. When coupled with her four *Enterprising* cards, Marie had twenty-three “people” cards. She chuckled as she related how difficult it was for her to study quietly by herself.

The *Investigative* cards she chose intrigued Marie. She realized that she loved to analyze and observe people and to learn how they operate and function. Marie was interested in researching careers where she could help people in the medical arena. She was particularly interested in working with young children. The results of Marie’s Pyramid Profile were: *Social*=19, *Investigative*=7, *Realistic*=5, *Enterprising*=4, *Conventional*=3, and *Artistic*=2. You can find Marie’s Pyramid Profile at www.vista-cards/manual/links.html. Click on *Marie’s Profile* link.



Using her Pyramid Profile, Marie created the criteria she would need in a career. Marie was looking for a career that would allow her to be:

- Involved with the medical profession or helping people
- Specifically young children
- Ultimately, would allow her autonomy
- Required a four-year degree (no more and no less)

Armed with her three-letter code and criteria, Marie went to the Internet to generate her list of most interesting occupations. She generated her list by linking to the O'Net through www.vista-cards.com/occupations site. She also used the O'Net browser <http://online.onetcenter.org/find/descriptor/browse/INTERESTS/#cur>, which generated a list of occupations based on her Code. One occupation she was interested in wasn't mentioned, so she added it herself. Marie generated the following list of occupations:

Social Investigative

Audiologists

Social Realistic

Physical Therapists/Assistants

Licensed Vocational Nurses

Occupational Therapists

Radiation Therapists

Investigative Social

Physician Assistants

Investigative Realistic Social

Kinesiotherapist

Respiratory Therapist



Realistic Investigative Social

Radiologic Technologists

From her own list, Marie included:

Early Childhood Teacher

If Marie had not felt her list was extensive enough, she could have taken her profile to parents, friends and teachers to ask for additional suggestions

Researching Options

Marie read about the occupations in the O'Net and she narrowed her focus to the following choices:

Social Investigative

Audiologists

Social Realistic

Occupational Therapists

Investigative Realistic Social

Kinesiotherapist

Realistic Investigative Social

Radiologic Technologists

From her own list:

Social Artistic Investigative

Early Childhood Teacher

Using the written materials in her college career center, Marie was able to learn about each of the professions on her list. Marie also used the Internet, to research each of the occupations. Your local library or favorite bookstore can be a great place for further research.



She was also able to find various professional associations for her occupations. Professionals associations exist to promote their profession. This is an excellent place to learn about occupations, meet people who are working in the profession and to network. Many professional associations have journals or publications which often post job announcements and feature interesting and timely information about the industry. Some even list local events and offer special services for students.

By the time Marie completed her written research, she had narrowed her focus to three options: Early Childhood Teacher, Occupational Therapist and Registered Nurse. She is aware that as she completes her schooling, she may change her mind, but she is pleased with the choices she made and glad to have something to focus on.

Teenagers and young adults often feel frustrated when they don't have a clear direction with regard to a career. Many want the decision made and to be done with it. People entering the working world during the early years of the twenty-first century face a very complex and complicated occupational environment. Technology and globalization are only two factors contributing to this complex world. Mergers, acquisitions, bankruptcy, lay offs are all reasons that people will be forced to changes jobs throughout their life time. We no longer live in an environment where we graduate from college, work for the same company for 40 years and then retire. As a result, most people will continue to experience increased job and career change. It is important that everyone, but especially young people, learn a process they can turn to over and over again as they reinvent themselves around their changing situations or as their interests, values, skills and traits change.

Marie has developed a system she will be able to use for the rest of her life. Understanding her personality, her abilities and her touchstones, Marie will know what she needs from her work. In addition, she will know how to research and evaluate occupations based on her criteria.



CHAPTER 9

Career Change using VISTa Blueprint – Meet Tony and David

As you saw in the last chapter, the Pyramid Profile provides a great introduction into career exploration through the RAISEC codes. By the process of selecting forty cards, the individual develops a more complete grasp of their personality. This gives them an advantage when they start exploring career choices.

As you will see in Tony's story, many people have a sense of what they do well or what they want in a job. What may be missing is the integrated or global perspective that can be gained from completing VISTa. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how Touchstones derived from a VISTa Blueprint can assist in career decision-making. I will also introduce the **Career Matrix*** and show how it can be used with the VISTa Blueprint to assist career changers.

When you complete the VISTa Blueprint, you are able to integrate the cards into themes that resulted in Touchstones. These Touchstones become your criteria for satisfaction not just in your work, but in your life. Your Touchstones provide the criteria to evaluate life choices as well as career options in your life, career and other activities.

Career Change in Early Thirties

The next story illustrates how a client used his Touchstones to evaluate a career path. By understanding his Touchstones, he was able to understand why his first career choice was unfulfilling. He was also better equipped to evaluate his current career as well as a new one he was considering.



Tony was in his early thirties when he completed his VISTA Blueprint. He was considering his third career move and wanted to see if it made sense, based on his abilities and personality. You will find Tony's Blueprint at www.vista-cards/manual/links.html Click on *Tony's Blueprint* link.

Tony graduated with a degree in Computer Science. He worked in that field as a programmer for a few years, but it wasn't fulfilling to him.

In the center of Tony's Blueprint are:

I-Observant-S
I-Analyze-S
I-Analytical-T
I-Research-S
I-Evaluate/diagnose-S

Tony acknowledged this narrow Investigative band in his work as a computer programmer; however, he felt there were many aspects of his personality that were not fully expressed in his first career.

Leaving the career as a computer programmer, Tony made a complete shift to become a mortgage broker. He found this suited his identity much better. Being a mortgage broker still allowed him to use the research and analytical side of his personality. After approximately five years, he was considering a third career, going to graduate school to become a psychologist.

On the surface, it wouldn't appear that a mortgage broker and a psychologist would have much in common as careers. As Tony reviewed his Blueprint, he realized that not only did both careers have a lot in common, both were extremely compatible with his identity. In both careers, he would continue to use the investigative abilities he used as a programmer.



What was missing for Tony as a computer programmer could be met with these two careers. One of Tony's Touchstones was to have an edge to his life. He liked *E-Taking risks-V*, and to *E-Initiate Change-V*, and *E-Operating your own business-I*. In addition, Tony had a Touchstone that would allow him to help people. He liked to *S-Communicate-S*, be involved in *S-Relationships-V*, and to *S-Counsel-I* and *S-Encourage people to be successful-I*.

As a mortgage broker, Tony specialized in first-time homebuyers. He saw his job as one of counseling young couples to realize their dreams by having a home. He envisioned his role as a psychologist to be very similar; helping people overcome their problems to fulfill their dreams. With his Blueprint in hand, Tony decided to research psychology graduate programs. He felt confident that either staying where he was or returning to school would both be rewarding choices.

Tony did what many college students do when trying to select a career. He chose a first-time career that fulfilled only one aspect of his identity. He failed to understand the importance to him of helping people and of taking risks. As a college student, he didn't know what careers would incorporate all the aspects of his personality. When he actually got out in the world, he realized the career he had chosen wasn't meeting his needs.

Tony's story illustrates how identifying Touchstones prepares you to reinvent yourself. By identifying his Touchstones, Tony realized that he could find satisfaction by staying in his occupation of mortgage broker, or he could reinvent himself around his Touchstones to become a psychologist.

In addition, this story demonstrates that there are many occupations and activities that will allow you to express some



aspect of your personality, but it may be challenging to select activities or occupations that encompass all your criteria. The key is to get a perspective broad enough to identify the criteria you need to feel satisfaction. Touchstones identified through the VISTA Blueprint provide that perspective. In some instances the new found awareness of our Touchstones can lead us to accept that we have chosen a good career, and we can explore other avenues that will meet our needs outside of work such as volunteering if we have a strong need to help people.

Later Career Change – Introducing Career Matrix

Few people are as lucky as Tony above, who already had a new career option in mind. Many people don't know what they want to do. They often don't even know what careers to explore. As I'll show you in the next story about David, creating a **Career Matrix*** is an excellent way to evaluate options.

David started working as a box boy for a large grocery market when he was eighteen. He worked at the grocery store for thirty years. During that time, he rose through the ranks to become a store manager. After a disagreement with upper management, he was terminated. He sought career counseling on the advice of his therapist. In his late forties, David decided to explore other careers for the first time in his life. He wanted to look at all of the possibilities.

David felt that he had been a good store manager. In fact, the dispute with upper manager involved protecting an employee. Relationships were important in all aspects of David's life, but he didn't want to jump immediately into another management position.



Working with the VISTa Cards, David was able to identify his love of working with his hands, solving problems and being creative. One of his proudest accomplishments was setting up displays for special promotions in his store. He also enjoyed being outside, working on his yard and working with animals. David decided his three primary Touchstones were 1) solving problems, 2) working with his hands, and 3) being creative within business setting. You will find David's Blueprint at www.vista-cards/manual/links.html Click on *David's Blueprint* link.

David was in a unique situation; his family was grown, he was single and willing to relocate. He was somewhat reluctant to go to school to finish his college degree. He was willing to take a pay cut to move into more satisfying work. Using his three Touchstones, David generated a list of occupations to explore. The list included everything they could think of.

	Problem Solving	Hands On	Creative	Total
	be with people			
Vet				
Farm/ranch				
Agribusiness				
Train animals				
Landscaping Gardening				
Ornamental Horticulture				
Ecology/Nature				
Environment				
Forest service				
Coaching				
Summer camps				
Fitness trainer				
Ski Instructor				
Guidance Counseling				
Rehab worker				
Mechanics: Repairing				
Real Estate				
Construction				
Carpentry				
Electrical				
Building/remodeling				



David's Matrix includes specific career choices, but a similar matrix can be used to evaluate any set of activities. A blank Matrix can be found in the Appendix, but if you are computer savvy you can create a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel or another program.

The Matrix is created using the Touchstones from your Blueprint. Assuming we're creating a Matrix for career exploration, determine which Touchstones you want to use in your next career. List those Touchstones along the top of your sheet, leaving the first column empty. As you find careers to explore, list them in the first column on the left. Complete the Matrix by using a point system to evaluate each career or occupation against your Touchstones.

At the top of the matrix, David listed his three Touchstones. At the left, he listed all possible occupations he might be interested in. He generated a list of almost 60 occupations. This was way too many to try and research. He needed a formula for narrowing his choices to only those occupations which had the highest likelihood to be a good fit for him.

Using a simple rating system of 1 to 3, David rated each occupation against his top three Touchstones. For example, one of his strongest interests lay in landscape architecture. David thought being a landscape architect would allow him to use problem-solving, be hands-on and be creative. To each of those he gave the highest rating of three. If he couldn't rate the occupation because he didn't know about it, he did further research. Occupations were dropped off his list if they scored poorly and he kept scoring until a manageable list was left.

As a result of the work with the Blueprint and Matrix, David developed a three-step plan to narrow his choices and ulti-



mately move toward his goal. Selling his house in the city, he moved to a small town in the mountains. Initially, he went to work as a sales clerk in a building supply company. This allowed him to learn more about the building trades. Buying land with the equity from his former home, his first challenge was to build a home for himself. When that was completed, he acquired a partner and began the process of becoming a general contractor. David was willing to make major changes in his life to reach his dreams. He was also aware that he wanted to create a life for himself and not just find a job. He knew this process would take a number of years, but along the road toward his goals, the Matrix was a valuable tool for evaluating options against Blueprint Touchstones. It allowed David to develop concrete information to on which to base his career decisions.

In this chapter, you've been given examples of how the VISTa process can be used to explore career options. Whether you're starting in your first job, or changing careers after many working years, VISTa helps identify your Touchstones based on your strengths. Developing a Matrix gives you a tool for rating occupational choices against your Touchstones.





CHAPTER 10

Retirement Planning – Meet Jeff

Through the years, there have been a few people who come to me for retirement counseling. For most, the fantasy of retirement didn't jell with the reality. One woman, who was retired from teaching, was fine through the summer until her teacher friends went back to work. Then she felt alone and isolated. She had not developed any hobbies, and wasn't sure how to fill her days.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, many of us have been conditioned to believe that the ultimate goal in life is to do nothing but play and enjoy life. No where is that condition more evident than in the images we have about retirement. This is especially evident in the media. While playing golf everyday may be enough to satisfy some people, many are left feeling bored and unfulfilled.

As Baby Boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, move into retirement, they will define it in a different way than their parents and grandparents. Estimates indicate that nearly seventy percent of Baby Boomers will continue to work beyond the traditional retirement age. Some will need to supplement their income, but many will choose working to stay engaged and active. Baby Boomers will also get involved in volunteer work and continue educational pursuits in vast numbers. These activities will be in addition to the traditional activities in retirement of leisure and play.

VISTa is a tool that can be of great benefit to adults as they reinvent themselves for this Third Age. Whether the goal is continuing work, creating new hobbies, volunteering, or edu-



cation, the VISTa process provides a place to start exploring the vast opportunities that retirement presents.

Pre-retirement Planning

As my husband was thinking about retirement, we talked about having a plan and an idea about how he would fill his days. He thought this was something best left to explore when he had actually retired.

I told him, the best time to start life planning for retirement is before you retire. If you're used to the structure of going to a job, filling twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year can quickly become overwhelming. For many, lethargy and depression sets in and meaningful activities become harder to discover. Once you are no longer going to work your routine can come to a crashing halt. This can be the end of your social network, the end of your familiar routine and many experience a loss of identity. I explained that a third of retirees die within three years of retiring. One factor that may contribute to this number is that many don't know what to do with their time in a meaningful way. The more a person identifies with their work, the more difficult the transition to retirement can be. Without a daily structure, support network, hobbies or outside interests and responsibilities to focus on, the dramatic change in lifestyle can be quite stressful.

Always willing to heed my advice, within two months of our discussion, hubby had a new project. He decided to build an experimental aircraft. Actually, as I write this, it's being constructed in our garage.

We took a look at his VISTa Cards after he was fully engaged in his new project. As we discussed his project in relation to



his VISTa cards, it was interesting to see how he was meeting every one of his VISTa VALUES by building an experimental airplane. Building a plane is an *I-Complex* and *I-Challenging Problem* that requires a certain level of *E-Risk-Taking*. It also requires *E-Excellence* and *E-Mastery*. Building a plane allows him to use his *R-Workmanship*, but also allows for an element of *I-Experimentation*. Ultimately, the **success*** of the plane, and his life, depends on his ability to attend to *C-Detail* and *C-Accuracy*. You will find Jeff's Blueprint at www.vista-cards/manual/links.html Click on *Jeff's Blueprint* link.

Some of our friends have voiced concern about flying a plane he has built, citing the numerous celebrities who have died in air accidents. I respond by explaining how fulfilled he is by the project. His Touchstones are: 1) using hands/tools that require 2) extreme precision/detail, but also 3) complex thought processing, challenges to be solved. Building the plane allows him to express his Touchstones to his fullest capacity.

Jeff has found a way to express his passions and talents in a way that is challenging and rewarding to him. He is looking forward to retirement as a way to continue in this vein. Building a plane is a dream he's had for many years. As he gets closer to retirement, he is hoping to explore other areas in which to become engaged. He is interested in alternative forms of energy and may find a way to get involved in that.

At the beginning of the book, I discussed the need for humans to be engaged in activities that are mentality stimulating and challenging. Out of necessity, work often means earning a living. If *work* is redefined as the activity you were born to do, then retirement may be the only opportunity



some people will have to fulfill their vision for their lives. Too many people never take the opportunity.

Many of us feel we have just fallen into our occupations or just got lucky when looking for a job. While financial remuneration is usually fifth or sixth in job satisfaction criteria, most people look at work as a way of earning a living. For many, retirement can be an opportunity to reconnect to hidden passions or an unfulfilled purpose. If you are reading this then I can only hope that you will follow through with what is best for you. I hope that VISTa provides the information necessary for you to identify who you really are so that you can find the path that is right for you.



CHAPTER 11

Entrepreneurs – Meet Sally

Identify a Brand

The term “brand” comes from the marketing and advertising world. Companies spend millions of dollars creating an easily recognizable brand for products and services. A brand can be thought of as the perception we have about a product or service.

Recently, the concept of brand has shifted to apply to people. Whether you are an entrepreneur trying to sell your services or an employee wanting a raise or looking for a new job, you project a brand or image.

An *authentic* personal brand or image is based on your authentic or core identity. Everyone has unique qualities and attributes that are marketable in a number of different ways. Being able to identify and articulate your personal brand and your value to a potential buyer is necessary for you to be successful.

One of the goals of the VISTa process is to help you connect to your authentic self. Authenticity is the expression of your core identity. Integrity is being true to yourself by expressing your core identity. All the activities you’ve completed up to now have helped you learn more about who you are and how to express yourself more effectively in the world.

As we will see in Sally’s story, understanding your brand can be a critical step for creating a profitable business. From the information in her Blueprint, Sally was able to clearly understand her strengths and lay the foundation for her new law practice.



Sally was a nurse in a large hospital who returned to school and became a lawyer. She wanted to go into private practice, specializing in family law, and focusing on divorce. Since she was new to her practice, she used the VISTA process to help her identify her Touchstones so she could create her personal Brand. You will find Sally's Blueprint at www.vista-cards/manual/links.html Click on *Sally's Blueprint* link.

Sally was achievement-driven, and loved to master new topics. One reason law school appealed to her was the challenge of seeing if she could get through it. As Sally looked at her first theme or Touchstone, she realized it was important to use her knowledge. She is at her best when she applies her knowledge to a chaotic situation. She likes to see herself as the *prevailing calm in rough waters*. She likes to be the one people can depend on when things get tough. From this place of strength, she also likes to be the one that others turn to for information and advice.

In the lower part of Sally's Blueprint, she identified her process. From her *Investigative* cards, Sally saw that she loves to solve problems in a very analytical way. Whatever the situation, Sally will *I-Gather Information-S*, *I-Analyze-S*, *I-Evaluate-S* and *I-Draw Conclusion-S*. She tempers her strong reliance on intellectual processes with good doses of practical common sense. Once Sally feels confident in her conclusion, she is a force to be reckoned with. Both her competitive and assertive cards indicate she is not averse to fighting for what she believes is right.

At the top of Sally's Blueprint she placed *A-Idealist-T* and *E-Justice-V*. She chose these to be her guiding or inspirations cards. She explained that she believes in fairness. When she senses an injustice, particularly to those who are helpless, she



becomes a fighter. It is her *Idealistic* card that keeps her from becoming cynical in a tough world.

Her last Touchstone indicates the environments where Sally wants to use her strengths. Almost all of these are people cards. Sally likes to use her strengths to help people, but also to influence them. She acknowledged that she would never be happy using her strong intellectual SKILLS in an isolated way, by working in a laboratory, for example. She wants to be connected to people. She enjoys communicating and sharing herself with others. She wants to be where she can help people who need her as an ally and advocate.

Sally jokingly said her family sometimes views her as controlling. With her strong Touchstones, she acknowledges that this could be true. It also shows why she was drawn to both nursing and law. In both environments, Sally could use her great problem-solving SKILLS to help people who may be vulnerable and unable to fight for themselves.

From the Blueprint it was fairly easy for Sally to create her Brand. One aspect of Sally's Brand is attributes. Sally's attributes are her intellectual and analytical SKILLS. She uses her SKILLS to gather information then evaluate, synthesize and draw conclusions. She tempers these SKILLS with common sense and being practical. She uses her attributes to solve complex problems involving people.

Another aspect of Sally's Brand is passion. Sally is passionate about providing justice to help people. When referring to justice, Sally means it in the broadest sense of the word. She believes in justice both for her clients in her law practice, but also that her patients in the hospital receive "justice" meaning the medical care they deserve. She is interested in empowering people by being an influence and/or teaching them what they need to know.

The final aspect of Sally's Brand is her unique knowledge base. As an attorney, she uses her knowledge of the law. She



specializes in the legal knowledge that levels the playing field between divorcing couples.

Sally is interested in helping people by being a strong advocate for them. As we discussed the components to her brand, Sally decided that while she can be a strong adversary, she would prefer to use her qualities to strengthen and empower her clients. This creates a subtle, but distinct difference in how Sally wants to practice law.

In going through this process, Sally was able to articulate her Brand by explaining that she wants “*to provide the encouragement, tools and tactics that support and empower the client during the divorce process.*” For the first time, Sally realized she wants to specialize in clients who are in a power disadvantage with their partner. The target market for her practice will be “people (mostly women) who feel out-gunned, out-manuevered and out-powered by their spouses, [people] who want to level the playing field.”

The VISTA process helped Sally understand that her purpose is to “help the underdog,” whether in her profession as a nurse, as a lawyer or in the other aspects of her life. Professionally, she can reinvent herself around her Touchstones. Her primary themes are 1) a high standard of mastery and achievement that is passed onto others, 2) solving complex problems that serve to help the underdog through 3) using problem-solving skills that involve gathering and analyzing information, balanced against practicality and common sense. What initially appeared to be an odd career choice made complete sense to Sally once she was able to see her process.

All work is about solving problems. For an entrepreneur, understanding your Brand coupled with a specific target



market are significant tools that make you distinct from your competition.

The VISTa process was able to help Sally create a literal blueprint for her professional practice by helping to articulate her Touchstones. From her Touchstones, Sally was able to identify her Purpose in life. From that information she was able to identify her target market and the unique Brand she can use to market herself. (As a side note, all of this information was acquired in one two-hour session!)





CHAPTER 12

Overcoming Barriers – Meet Mark, Cathy and Lori

VISTa can help people identify and remove internal obstacles in a number of different ways. One of the interesting outcomes of the VISTa process is that people often come to see that their strengths are not serving them. Put another way, strengths and weaknesses are often opposite sides of the same coin. We've included three stories to illustrate how VISTa can be used to help people work through internal barriers that keep them from a fulfilling life.

Overwhelmed Entrepreneur

Mark repairs computer software and hardware for companies. He has his own business and had not taken a vacation for three years at the time he completed VISTa. He was burned out and trying to decide what to do to get some time off.

You may view Mark's Pyramid Profile at www.vista-cards/manual/links.html Click on *Mark's Profile* link.

In viewing Mark's SKILLS and INTERESTS, it was very clear he was engaging in an ideal occupation for him. He used every one of his nine *Investigative* and one *Realistic* SKILLS in his work. Some of his INTERESTS, such as *R-Work with hands to build and repair* were also used in his work. However, he worked so many hours, he was unable to involve himself in other INTERESTS, those things that might have allowed him reenergize and renew.



The secret to Mark's conflict lay in his "being" cards, his TRAITS and VALUES. As we discussed his Pyramid Profile, he talked about how he wanted to hire someone to work for him, but was hesitant. He felt he had to respond to all client calls himself, something that was evidenced by his *R-Loyalty-T* card. He believed his clients had hired him, and he was reluctant to send anyone else to see them. Mark was concerned about sharing responsibilities with someone else. This was indicated by his TRAITS cards of *R-Self-Reliant*, *I-Autonomous* and *A-Independent*.

Mark felt he had a close relationship with his clients; he enjoyed them and didn't want them to feel let down. This was evident in the *S-Friendships-V* card. When Mark really looked at his Pyramid Profile, he gained a deeper understanding of how his strengths might not be serving him.

From the VISTA information, he was able to move forward to correct his situation. Mark used his TRAITS of *I-Thorough* and *I-Methodical* to compare clients. Through his analysis, he determined that 80% of his revenue was coming from 20% of his clients. He made the difficult to decision to cut back on his client load, keeping the most profitable and enjoyable ones. In addition, instead of feeling pressure to take care of all the clients in his large metropolitan city, he cut back to a geographic area that required less travel time.

From this process Mark was able to reduce his client load without significantly altering his income. As a result of understanding his work habits, he was able to free up his time to develop a new hobby. Wanting to enjoy his INTERESTS of *R-Working with his hands*, and *R-Outdoor activities*, he is building a miniature train layout in his backyard. His life and work



are more in balance, he is able to renew and get reenergized to better serve his best clients and himself.

Mark's story illustrates the significance of being able to look at the different aspects of your personality in the VISTA Cards. We usually think our weaknesses cause the challenge in our lives. In Mark's case, it was his strengths. Feeling commitment to his clients, he was unable to see how the lack of time off hurt him and his business.

Stuck and Can't Move Forward

Lori was having a challenge getting over a love relationship that ended a year before. She was happy in her chosen career, was a single parent of a teenager, but she just didn't feel like she could get her life on track. She wanted to complete the VISTA process to see if it would help her connect to a larger purpose in her life. There were some interesting things she discovered about herself as she completed her Blueprint. You will find Lori's Blueprint at www.vista-cards/manual/links.html Click on *Lori's Blueprint* link.

After she laid out her forty cards into a Blueprint, I asked if there were any cards she wanted to put at the top of the table; cards which belong to more than one theme, or cards that seem to be inspiration or guiding cards. Lori selected both the *S-Nurturing-V* card and *S-Nurture-S* card. She thought these were her inspiration cards. As she discussed the importance of nurturing in her life, she concluded that she had too often given herself away to others through her nurturing.

Her teenager was becoming more independent and needed her less. What she noticed was missing from her life was another man to nurture. As Lori continued to look at her



Blueprint, she was surprised at some of the powerful cards she had chosen. In one theme she had the following:

E-Public Speaking-S
E-Give Speeches-I
S-Communication-V
S-Communicate-S
E-Participate in Politics-I
E-Chair Volunteer Committees-I
C-Follow-through-S
I-Reasoning-S
R-Adventure-V

In another partial theme, she had the following:

E-Make decisions-S
E-Confident-T
E-Assertive-T
E-Taking Risks-V

If someone didn't know Lori, they might assume those were fantasy cards, but as she confronted herself with those cards, she said, almost defensively, "But that is me. I have an MBA. I used to be very successful in business."

As is true with many people, Lori had cards that seemed to contradict each other and her life. On one hand, she had a Touchstone representing her desire to nurture and make a contribution through teaching and encouraging. On the other hand, she had a strong leadership Touchstone and wanted to be involved in the community through politics and volunteering. She saw herself as a strong woman who was confident and assertive.

Lori wasn't expressing her strengths as represented by her cards in her life. She left politics and leadership when she became a mother and teacher, but she had a Blueprint that



showed a strong, vital and powerful woman, even though she was not demonstrating that power in her life.

While this can happen to anyone, it is most prevalent with women who become mothers and demonstrate the loving and caring side of their personalities. As a mother and teacher, Lori focused her energy on expressing the nurturing side of her personality, letting the stronger side become a shadow. The failed love relationship forced her to take a look at her life and she recognized the parts of herself that she was no longer expressing.

Lori decided to get involved in community activities, something she hadn't done since her child was born. She explored joining a Toastmaster's group and went down to the local office of a representative running for reelection.

For Lori, the VISTa process allowed her to reconnect to a lost part of herself. It helped her identify how her nurturing had taken over distorting her life. While she still wanted to express that quality to her child and students, she wanted to reclaim the lost parts of herself. From that awareness, she was able to develop goals to bolster her self-confidence.

Overcoming Procrastination

My own life is a good example of how our strengths can cause problems. I was having difficulty making time to write this book. When I set aside time to work on it, I continually found distractions to keep me from actually writing. In short, I was procrastinating. I really wanted to have the book written, believing it was very important to clarify the process for clients.



What could be the problem in my sitting down to write this book? Since values are a source of satisfaction and motivation, I decided to take a look at my own VISTa VALUES to see if I could find any clues.

At the very top of the VALUES pyramid was the word *E-Excellence*. I think excellence is a wonderful thing in others and in myself. I realized at that moment, that because I had set such high standards for my book, I had become overwhelmed and paralyzed. Valuing excellence was preventing me from actually working on the book! So I decided to physically remove *E-Excellence* as the number one value on my pyramid.

The question then became what Value Cards would motivate me to write this book. My VISTa VALUES Cards are as follows:

E-Excellence
A-Creative Expression
E-Influence Others
A-Being Unconventional
A-Aesthetics
S-Contribute to Society
I-Challenging Problems
S-Personal Growth
I-Discovery
I-Ideas

As I looked at my VALUES cards, I tried to decide which cards would motivate me to write this book. Actually, many of my Value cards could help, but which were the best? *A-Aesthetics* didn't seem relevant, and while I could certainly use this as an exercise in *S-Personal Growth*, it didn't seem to be the best. Ultimately, the cards I felt were most helpful, not only in writing the book, but as key cards in my life are *A-Creative*



Expression and S-Contribute to Society. My primary goal for the VISTa process is to create a tool to help empower people to do and be their best. Finding creative and (I might add) unconventional ways to do this has always been my purpose in life.

E-Excellence is still an important value in my life, but I shifted it from being the most important. The card was a representation of how I saw myself. Once I removed the card, I had to then make the conscious decision to pull back on my own standards as I wrote the book. I still want this book to be excellent, but I shifted from needing to write it perfectly the first time! Calling on an editor, typesetter and others for support has relieved me from the sole responsibility for excellence.

I'd love to say that writing this book went flawlessly from then on. That's not exactly true. There were times when I struggled. At those times, I thought about why I was writing this book and why I had created the cards in the first place. This helped me overcome procrastination and my internal barriers and moved me forward.

There are many times when people get off track not only from their values, but also from their gifts and passions. Living an authentic life is about being able to project who you are—your traits, skills, interests and values—in all aspects of your life. We sometimes feel we are being pulled in multiple directions. The VISTa cards help people reconnect to their authenticity and focus their activities to get their lives back on track.

In this chapter I have shared examples of how VISTa worked to help people identify problem areas in their lives. In my practice, over and over again, I've discovered life difficulties that often occur from strengths. From the information gained from VISTa, these people and others have been able to develop plans to move in a more positive and fulfilling direction.





CHAPTER 13

For Professionals – Who can Benefit from the VISTa Process?

There may be some confusion about who can most benefit from the VISTa cards. When people see the cards, they are naturally drawn to the bright colors and initially assume the cards would be best used with young people. While the cards have been used with children as young as ten and eleven, the words on the cards require a ninth-grade reading comprehension. In addition to youngsters, the cards have been used successfully with at-risk populations, such as homeless women living in transitional housing. People who have a lower reading level get value from the cards by using the definitions list or simply removing cards they don't know. Working with young people or people with limited reading ability has been most successful one-on-one, rather than in groups.

Using VISTa in high school classrooms has been attempted with limited success. When I work with a group, it takes between twenty and thirty minutes to select ten cards from each deck and transfer them to the Pyramid Profile. With four decks, it becomes awkward to work inside the traditional fifty to sixty minute periods of a high school.

While the cards can be used with a wide range of people, it is actually a very sophisticated process with multiple levels of nuance. The color misleads people to think VISTa would be best with younger people, it works quite successfully with executives and professionals.



When working with an individual client, it takes me a minimum of one hour to complete the Pyramid Profile, but only if I write in the answers on the profile while the client selects the cards from each deck. It requires another ninety minutes to complete the Blueprint.

I have found a better use of my time is to have the client select the forty cards on their own. This way they can work as quickly or a slowly without me hanging over them. This is a very individual process so I either mail them a set of cards or have them come into my office early to select the cards on their own. Then I ask them to answer the questions following the profile (See Chapter 3). After they have completed these exercises, we meet, discuss the questions, review the profile and then complete the Blueprint. I allow two hours for this part of the process.

Workshops are a powerful way to go through the VISTa process. While people initially feel reluctant to reveal such intimate information in a group setting, the color of the cards and the engaging process quickly disarm people and they get swept up in the challenge of the activity. Because the cards identify only positive attributes, people are more willing to share with others in a group. The positive energy created as people go through the process together creates a potent and lasting experience resulting in positive impact lives that are different than when someone works alone.

You can adapt and change the VISTa process in innumerable ways to serve your clients and the timeframe you work with. Creating new ways of utilizing the cards can be as exciting a discovery as the information and nuance that are revealed with in them. Another benefit of the cards is they can be taken repeatedly with different results depending on



the situation, in a group or one-on-one. New information can also be acquired when the cards are sorted at different times in your life. For example before leaving one job or after starting a new job.

Additional tools and resources for facilitators are available online at www.vista-cards.com. At the website you will find timelines for workshops. You will also find downloadable templates. The cards can be used with people in many different ways depending on their need and time allotted. Additional resources and new ideas will be added to the website regularly. You can also register for my newsletter so updates can be emailed to you directly!





CHAPTER 14

Conclusion – VISTa as a Lifelong Tool

A decision was made to include only positive attributes when creating the VISTa cards. The principal reason for this decision is throughout our lives we are confronted with our shortcomings. Starting in school, if not before, people compare themselves to, and are compared to others. For many, their perception is that they come up short. There is always someone who is brighter, cuter or more athletic. As a result, most people become adults not appreciating their unique qualities. When asked to list their special gifts and talents, most adults don't know how to respond.

A primary purpose of VISTa is to provide a mirror that reflects the uniqueness and special beauty each individual possesses. Through the exercise of selecting and examining their cards, people learn to experience themselves in a fuller and more positive way.

There are many things that keep us from our goals and happiness. While people usually focus on the external challenges they face, it is often the internal factors that cause the biggest obstacles. In fact, sometimes it is a person's strengths that are getting in the way! While not necessarily easy to overcome, identifying internal barriers is the first step to overcoming them. As Dr. Phil was known to say, "You can't fix what you don't acknowledge." Once internal barriers are identified, strategies can be implemented to help eliminate them.

We live in a complicated world and it is easy to become disconnected from our authentic selves. When people look at the VISTa Blueprint or Purpose, at their Matrix or re-



view their Touchstones, they can identify their unique Core Components to find ways to more fully express themselves.

While the VISTa Cards can be completed only once, it is also possible to revisit the cards to get greater and deeper insight as you grow and develop. When the cards are redone periodically, you can see how you are changing and how you're staying the same over time and how you are getting better and better.



NOTES

- i. This information came from Dychtwald, Kenneth. (2005). *The Power Years*.
- ii. Toward a Psychology of Being (1968), Motivation and Personality (first edition, 1954, and second edition, 1970), and The Further Reaches of Human Nature (1971). Finally, there are many articles by Maslow, especially in the Journal of Humanistic Psychology, which he cofounded. For more information on-line, go to <http://www.nidus.org>.
- iii. Personality Theories by C. George Boeree (<http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/maslow.html>)
- iv. Seligman, M.E.P. (1990). *Learned Optimism*. New York: Knopf. (reissue edition, 1998, Free Press. (1993). *What You Can Change and What You Can't: The Complete Guide to Successful Self-Improvement*. New York: Knopf. (1996). *The Optimistic Child: Proven Program to Safeguard Children from Depression & Build Lifelong Resilience*. New York: Houghton Mifflin. (2002). *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*. New York: Free Press.
- v. *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life*, New York: Basic Books, 1997.

Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention, New York: Harper Collins, 1996.
The Evolving Self: A Psychology for the Third Millennium, New York, Harper Collins, 1993.

Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience, New York: Harper & Row, 1990.





APPENDIX





VISTa Cards Arranged by Domain

Realistic

SKILLS

- ◆ Repair
- ◆ Build
- ◆ Operate equipment
- ◆ Physical strength/coordination
- ◆ Cultivate
- ◆ Hand-Eye Coordination
- ◆ Carpentry/electrical/plumbing
- ◆ Work with animals
- ◆ Command
- ◆ Drive
- ◆ Precision-work
- ◆ Drafting/work with blueprints

VALUES

- ◆ Adventure
- ◆ Being physical
- ◆ Function
- ◆ Tradition
- ◆ Dependability
- ◆ Constructing
- ◆ Workmanship
- ◆ Concrete thinking
- ◆ Action
- ◆ Tangible results
- ◆ Common Sense
- ◆ Persistence

TRAITS

- ◆ Reliable
- ◆ Physical
- ◆ Down-to-earth
- ◆ Handy
- ◆ Self-reliant
- ◆ Cautious
- ◆ Sensible
- ◆ Frank
- ◆ Persistent
- ◆ Loyalty
- ◆ Stable
- ◆ Active

INTERESTS

- ◆ Repair or fix mechanical equipment
- ◆ Being involved with construction
- ◆ Operate heavy equipment
- ◆ Engage in sports
- ◆ Gardening/landscaping
- ◆ Raising/caring for animals
- ◆ Working with hands; building or repairing
- ◆ Drive a taxi, truck, racecar
- ◆ Being adventurous, risk-taking
- ◆ Being in the military, police, emergency work
- ◆ Use machinery/power tools
- ◆ Outdoor activities; fishing, camping, mountain climbing



Investigative

SKILLS

- ◆ Evaluate/diagnose
- ◆ Test
- ◆ Analyze
- ◆ Research
- ◆ Reasoning
- ◆ Observe
- ◆ Trouble-shooting
- ◆ Interpret technical/scientific information
- ◆ Scientific experimentation
- ◆ Solve mathematical problems
- ◆ Gather information
- ◆ Draw conclusions/synthesize

VALUES

- ◆ Discovery
- ◆ Exploration
- ◆ Knowledge
- ◆ Ideas
- ◆ Innovation
- ◆ Experimentation
- ◆ Intelligence
- ◆ Challenging problems
- ◆ Researching
- ◆ Logic
- ◆ Complexity
- ◆ Abstraction

TRAITS

- ◆ Analytical
- ◆ Observant
- ◆ Rational
- ◆ Reserved
- ◆ Critical
- ◆ Methodical
- ◆ Intellectual
- ◆ Complex
- ◆ Autonomous
- ◆ Diligent
- ◆ Logical
- ◆ Thorough

INTERESTS

- ◆ Conduct experiments
- ◆ Research long-term impact
- ◆ Observe behavior patterns
- ◆ Solve complex mathematical problems
- ◆ Study scientific theory
- ◆ Invent new products
- ◆ Science
- ◆ Math
- ◆ Medicine
- ◆ Play games of strategy
- ◆ Develop systems
- ◆ Analyze information to reach new conclusions



Artistic

SKILLS

- ◆ Perceive intuitively
- ◆ Creative
- ◆ Conceptualize
- ◆ Generate ideas
- ◆ Visualize
- ◆ Stage shows
- ◆ Design
- ◆ Depict images
- ◆ Musically inclined
- ◆ Decorate
- ◆ Act/perform
- ◆ Write creatively

VALUES

- ◆ Creative Expression
- ◆ Aesthetics
- ◆ Originality
- ◆ Independence
- ◆ Intuition
- ◆ Individuality
- ◆ Emotions
- ◆ Beauty
- ◆ Imagination
- ◆ Sensitivity
- ◆ Language
- ◆ Being unconventional

TRAITS

- ◆ Idealistic
- ◆ Impulsive
- ◆ Intuitive
- ◆ Original
- ◆ Unconventional
- ◆ Spontaneous
- ◆ Passionate
- ◆ Free-spirited
- ◆ Independent
- ◆ Perceptive
- ◆ Introspective
- ◆ Insightful

INTERESTS

- ◆ Act/perform in plays or movies
- ◆ Play a musical instrument
- ◆ Go to concerts
- ◆ Decorate your home
- ◆ Use intuition
- ◆ Visit art museums/galleries
- ◆ Prepare gourmet foods
- ◆ Write poetry and short stories
- ◆ Surround yourself with beautiful things
- ◆ Conceptualize new ideas
- ◆ Dancing
- ◆ Drawing/painting/photography



Social

SKILLS

- ◆ Host
- ◆ Show emotion
- ◆ Facilitate
- ◆ Communicate
- ◆ Counsel
- ◆ Teach/instruct
- ◆ Treat/nurse
- ◆ Nurture
- ◆ Help
- ◆ Entertain
- ◆ Encourage
- ◆ Guide

VALUES

- ◆ Friendships
- ◆ Teaching/instructing
- ◆ Nurturing/compassion
- ◆ Relationships
- ◆ Serving
- ◆ Cooperation
- ◆ Affiliation
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Personal Growth
- ◆ Counseling/advising
- ◆ Contribute to society
- ◆ Consensus

TRAITS

- ◆ Romantic
- ◆ Trustworthy
- ◆ Tolerant
- ◆ Sincere
- ◆ Helpful
- ◆ Patient
- ◆ Emotional
- ◆ Cheerful
- ◆ Considerate
- ◆ Enthusiastic
- ◆ Friendly
- ◆ Humorous

INTERESTS

- ◆ Attend to patients in a hospital
- ◆ Lead tours/provide information
- ◆ Counsel people with personal problems
- ◆ Teach children/adults
- ◆ Minister to people's spiritual needs
- ◆ Work with young children
- ◆ Settle arguments between co-workers
- ◆ Work for a charity
- ◆ Meet people from other countries/cultures
- ◆ Advocate for social causes
- ◆ Encourage people to be successful
- ◆ Participate in group activities



Enterprising

SKILLS

- ◆ Liaison
- ◆ Mediate
- ◆ Interview
- ◆ Negotiate
- ◆ Initiate change
- ◆ Make decisions
- ◆ Sell
- ◆ Supervise
- ◆ Lead
- ◆ Motivate
- ◆ Public Speaking
- ◆ Plan/strategize

VALUES

- ◆ Influencing others
- ◆ Status
- ◆ Authority
- ◆ Leading
- ◆ Achievement
- ◆ Profit
- ◆ Taking risks
- ◆ Justice
- ◆ Recognition
- ◆ Competition
- ◆ Mastery
- ◆ Excellence

TRAITS

- ◆ Ambitious
- ◆ Assertive
- ◆ Confident
- ◆ Decisive
- ◆ Dynamic
- ◆ Eager
- ◆ Energetic
- ◆ Goal oriented
- ◆ Motivated
- ◆ Doer
- ◆ Competitive
- ◆ Resilient

INTERESTS

- ◆ Give speeches/presentations/debating
- ◆ Supervise/manage others
- ◆ Influence others decisions
- ◆ Participate in politics
- ◆ Meet civic/corporate leaders
- ◆ Operate your own business
- ◆ Sell products or services
- ◆ Entertain clients
- ◆ Make personnel decisions
- ◆ Chair volunteer committees
- ◆ Attend conventions
- ◆ Raise money for charities



Conventional

SKILLS

- ◆ Organize
- ◆ Coordinate events
- ◆ Proofread, edit
- ◆ Expedite
- ◆ Count
- ◆ Classify
- ◆ Monitor
- ◆ Set up and maintain financial/written records
- ◆ Implement
- ◆ Estimate
- ◆ Budget
- ◆ Follow-through

VALUES

- ◆ Order
- ◆ Predictability
- ◆ Accuracy
- ◆ Systems
- ◆ Organization
- ◆ Detail
- ◆ Concrete information
- ◆ Being practical
- ◆ Work in teams
- ◆ Structure
- ◆ Stability
- ◆ Security

TRAITS

- ◆ Conscientious
- ◆ Consistent
- ◆ Dependable
- ◆ Efficient
- ◆ Organized
- ◆ Careful
- ◆ Orderly
- ◆ Responsible
- ◆ Respectful
- ◆ Practical
- ◆ Persevering
- ◆ Modest

INTERESTS

- ◆ Accounting
- ◆ Work in an office
- ◆ Maintain detailed records
- ◆ Organize files
- ◆ Programming computers
- ◆ Financial Planning
- ◆ Handle bank withdrawals/ deposits
- ◆ Setting up spreadsheets
- ◆ Manage data
- ◆ Operate office equipment
- ◆ Greet clients and making appointments
- ◆ Quality Control



Glossary

Normally a Glossary would be arranged by alphabetical order or based on where the words appear in the book. The words in this glossary are loosely based on where they appear in the book. Because certain words are connected to other words, they are also listed by their relationship to each other. While every attempt has been made to honor the dictionary definitions, certainly liberties have been taken to clarify how the words are used within the VISTA Program.

Fulfillment - A sense of well-being derived from meeting internal needs or desires. VISTA Cards largely identify these internal factors.

Success – External rewards, goals or achievements that lead to a sense of well being. These could include possessions, lifestyle or status.

Satisfaction – For the sake of this discussion, satisfaction is the combination of both fulfillment and success.

Identity – Who we are at a core level.

Domains – The areas represented by the six colors of the cards. These represent both six broad personality types as well as environments.

Satisfaction Touchstone or Touchstone – Identify the core components you need to be fulfilled in your life. Touchstones are a measure that can be identified and tested. When you complete the VISTA Blueprint, you are able to integrate the cards into themes that result in Touchstones. These Touchstones identify your core components for satisfaction not just in your work, but in your life. Your Touchstones provide the criteria to evaluate options in your



life, career and other activities.

Core Component – Area or aspect of your identity that needs to be expressed.

Self-actualization – When an individual is fully functioning, expressing potentialities. When the aspects of a person are integrated resulting a true sense of self, of feeling fully human. (See Maslow in Endnotes)

Peak Experiences – Situation using the talents, gifts and passions of an individual in a focused manner where the reward is a much based on the joy of engaging in the activity as the goal of the specific endeavor.

Essence – Literally translates from Greek “to be”. It is those qualities the permeate from your true identity.

Blueprint – Arrangement or integration of your unique forty VISTa Cards that results in themes or Touchstones.

Matrix or Career Matrix – System or chart that allows an individual to rate their Touchstones against a list of activity options. The list can be generated to include career choices, college majors, volunteer or hobby activities.

Process – Identifies unique steps and elements an individual engages as they solve problems. Human beings are by nature problem solving entities. The process identified by VISTa may include what problems you like to solve, who you want to solve it with, how you take in information and make decisions.

Integrity – Alignment between who you are (identity) and how you express your life. The integration of the parts of



your life and yourself fully functioning to honor your best interests.

Purpose – In this context, we’re referring to life purpose which answers the questions, “Who am I? and Why am I here?” It is an internal compass the helps identify whether or not a person is living in integrity.

Vision Collage - An artistic composition representing what you want to have happen in the future in your life.



Web Links

This is a list of all the links mentioned in the manual. In addition, there are additional VISTA support links that may be of value to you.

VISTA Homepage

<http://www.vista-cards.com/>

Occupation Database

<http://www.vista-cards.com/database>

Case studies used in manual

<http://www.vista-cards.com/manual/links.html>

Christa's Profile

David's Blueprint

Christa's Blueprint

Jeff's Blueprint

Christa's Process

Sally's Blueprint

Tom's Blueprint

Mark's Pyramid Profile

Marie's Pyramid Profile

Lori's Blueprint

Tony's Blueprint

Cathy's Blueprint

Forms to Download

<http://www.vista-cards.com/forms/links.html>

Hexagon Description (pdf)

Pyramid Profile (pdf)

VISTA Blueprint (pdf)

Touchstone Matrix (pdf)

Word Definitions (pdf) The reading level for VISTA is approximately 9th grade. The definitions list is of the most difficult words.

Abbreviated Instructions for Pyramid Profile (pdf)

Sticker Template (pdf) Four sheets of all VISTA words that can be printed onto Avery Labels 8167.

Facilitator Support-Workshop outlines, licensing information and other supports for professionals who work with VISTA-Cards

<http://www.vista-cards.com/facilitator/links.html>



VISTA Forms

Pyramid Profile



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Build your Vista Pyramid following the instructions from the workbook.
2. Record your responses below.
3. Add the totals for each category on the right side. (See example at right.)
4. Add the Grand Totals for all categories at bottom.
5. Record your conclusions and any additional notes.

EXAMPLE

<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				

TOTALS:

Realistic 2
 Investigative 2
 Artistic 3
 Social 1
 Enterprising 1
 Conventional 1

TRAITS

<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				

TOTALS:

Realistic _____
 Investigative _____
 Artistic _____
 Social _____
 Enterprising _____
 Conventional _____

SKILLS

<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				

TOTALS:

Realistic _____
 Investigative _____
 Artistic _____
 Social _____
 Enterprising _____
 Conventional _____

INTERESTS

<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				

TOTALS:

Realistic _____
 Investigative _____
 Artistic _____
 Social _____
 Enterprising _____
 Conventional _____

VALUES

<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				

TOTALS:

Realistic _____
 Investigative _____
 Artistic _____
 Social _____
 Enterprising _____
 Conventional _____

CONCLUSIONS:

GRAND TOTALS:

Realistic _____ Social _____
 Investigative _____ Enterprising _____
 Artistic _____ Conventional _____

TOP THREE: (First Letter of Each Category)

Name: _____ Date: _____





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From the moment the idea for the VISTa Cards presented itself, supportive people have been there to offer suggestions and guide the development.

The first person I would like to thank is my life partner, Jeff. Regardless of the endeavor, he has unwavering support and faith in my ability to succeed. He is my rock of Gibraltar and I'm thankful every day to have him in my life.

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There is a small group of people who have always been there whenever I need them, however I need them. Thanks to my friend and attorney Michael Goldfarb, his lovely therapist wife Lily, Ron Prescott who offered business and marketing support, and mentor and friend Dr. Gregory Jackson. Lynne



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ABOUT CATHY SEVERSON

Cathy is an excavator. In fact, her first thoughtful career choice, in fifth grade, was to be an archeologist. Fearing the language requirements of a doctorate, she pursued other options. And pursue them she did! By the time, she was thirty-five Cathy's work history was close to twenty jobs, working for Fortune 500 companies to starting a business with her husband.

It wasn't until Cathy returned to school to get her master's in Career Counseling from California State University, Northridge that her work life started to make sense. As a career counselor, she specializes in adult career issues. She has worked with the women re-entry program at Pierce College, conducted counseling and workshops for the Torrance One Stop and Drake, Beam, Morin Inc. But, she always gravitated towards doing her own thing.

Returning to private practice in 2000, Cathy combined her counseling with coaching to help adults create meaningful lives and work. Her life's purpose is to help people unearth their unique greatness. Her passion is to create experiential tools to expand the awareness of how a person sees him/herself. You can find her VISTa Blueprint at <http://www.vista-cards.com/manual/links.html>