

FREE
WORKBOOK

CAREER PSYCHOLOGY



Career Clarity Workbook

5 Signs You Are Choosing the Wrong Career

REFLECTIONS · PSYCHOLOGY · STRATEGY · CLARITY

“I’m a psychologist who talks about careers.”

Dr. Safina

PSYCHOLOGIST · CAREER PSYCHOLOGY · MENTAL HEALTH

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Career Clarity Workbook



A psychologist's guide to choosing a career
that protects your mental health



Career Clarity Workbook

5 Signs You Are Choosing the Wrong Career

First edition — published by Dr. Safina, Career Psychology.

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This workbook is intended for personal reflection and educational purposes. It is not a substitute for individual psychological assessment, diagnosis, or treatment. If you are experiencing significant distress, please reach out to a qualified mental health professional.

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BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

Welcome

A personal note from Dr. Safina



“I’m a psychologist who talks about careers.”

People ask me all the time — why? Why would a psychologist talk about careers?

Because every single day, I sit with clients experiencing anxiety, depression, burnout, and that deep hollow feeling of being completely lost. And when we work through it together — really go deep — the same root cause keeps emerging.

Their career was never truly theirs. Chosen from fear. From pressure. From not knowing themselves well enough. And their mind was paying the price — through anxiety, depression, and burnout.

This workbook exists for every 16–30 year old standing at a crossroads. For every student feeling the pressure. For every young professional who suspects the path they’re on might not actually be theirs.

Read slowly. Write honestly. Career clarity is not a luxury — it is the foundation of your mental health.

With care,

Dr. Safina

@drsafinacareerpsych



INSIDE THIS WORKBOOK

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The most important career decision you will ever make is the decision to know yourself first.

— DR. SAFINA



Why Your Career Affects Your Mental Health



Most people treat mental health and career as separate conversations. They are not. They are the same conversation.

You will spend approximately 90,000 hours of your life at work — one third of your entire existence. When what you do for one third of your life is misaligned with who you are, your mind notices. Every single day.

90,000

hours at work over a lifetime

1 in 3

career choices driven by pressure

67%

feel career regret by age 25–30

As a psychologist, I see three patterns that connect career misalignment to mental health struggles:

01 Chronic Low-Grade Anxiety

Wrong career = persistent low-level stress. Sunday night dread. Difficulty relaxing. Relentless overthinking. Not dramatic — just perpetually off.

02 Identity Fragmentation

When your career doesn't reflect your values, you spend every day performing a version of yourself that isn't real. This is exhausting. It creates deep emptiness.

03 Accumulated Burnout

Burnout in a misaligned career is not about working too hard — it is about working hard at the wrong thing. The distinction matters enormously.



How to Use This Guide



This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. This is a structured conversation between you and yourself — the most important conversation most people never take time to have.

01 Find a quiet moment

Give yourself 20–30 uninterrupted minutes. Your future deserves your full attention.

02 Answer before you think

Your first instinct is your most honest answer. Don't edit. Write what is true.

03 Use every reflection space

Writing makes vague feelings concrete. Concrete feelings can be worked with.

04 Hold it lightly

What you discover is information, not a verdict. Clarity is a process, not a moment.

05 Come back in 3 months

Re-read your answers. Growth is visible when you document where you started.



PART III

The Five Signs You Are Choosing the Wrong Career



A GUIDED SELF-ASSESSMENT — ANSWER EACH, THEN SCORE

You chose it out of fear, not desire

01

Fear is the world's most disguised career advisor.

It doesn't announce itself. It shows up as 'being practical', 'making a sensible choice'. Fear whispers: this is safe, this pays well. Fear doesn't feel like fear — it feels like wisdom.

But there is a fundamental difference between choosing a career toward something and choosing one away from something scary. The first gives you energy. The second slowly drains it.

SIGNALS YOU MIGHT RECOGNISE

- You chose it because the alternative felt too risky
- You find it hard to explain what genuinely excites you about it
- You feel relief at having decided — not genuine excitement
- You would choose differently if failure wasn't possible

The psychological cost of a fear-based career accumulates. Year by year, the tension between who you are and what you do grows — until your mind can no longer absorb it quietly.

REFLECTION 1

If you could not fail, what would you choose?

Write the first thing that comes to mind. Don't edit it.

YOUR ANSWER

REFLECTION 2

What are you actually afraid of?

Name the fear specifically. Vague fear has more power than named fear.

YOUR ANSWER

You cannot explain your 'why' without others

02

Whose dream are you actually living?

One of the clearest signs of a misaligned career is when your 'why' belongs to someone else. 'My parents want this.' 'Everyone in my family does this.' 'My friend is doing it.'

External validation is not a career foundation. A career built on satisfying others will quietly hollow you out — because no matter how well you perform, the satisfaction belongs to them, not to you.

SIGNALS YOU MIGHT RECOGNISE

- Your reasons for this career mostly involve other people
- You feel proud mainly when others approve of your choice
- If your family had no opinion, you would choose differently
- You struggle to connect this career to your own values

You cannot build a mentally healthy life on a foundation of other people's dreams. At some point, the life has to be yours.

REFLECTION 1

Finish: 'I want this career because...' — then cross out every reason involving another person. What remains?

Even if very little remains — especially if very little remains.

YOUR ANSWER

REFLECTION 2

What would you choose if no one's opinion existed?

No judgment. No consequences. Just you and your honest answer.

YOUR ANSWER

Ten years of this creates dread

03

Not every day will be exciting. But dread is different.

There is a critical difference between the normal tiredness that comes with work and a deep, persistent dread of the future you are building. One is healthy. The other is your mind sending an urgent signal.

When you imagine yourself 5 or 10 years into this career — not the exceptional days, but the ordinary Tuesdays — how do you feel? If the answer is anxiety, emptiness, or feeling trapped, listen to that.

SIGNALS YOU MIGHT RECOGNISE

- You avoid picturing yourself in this career long-term
- The thought of 'this is my life now' creates anxiety, not comfort
- You focus only on short-term goals to avoid thinking further ahead
- You have more enthusiasm imagining leaving than staying

The ordinary days are 90% of your career. Your mental health will be built on those ordinary days.

REFLECTION 1

Describe a regular Tuesday in this career — in 5 years.

Morning. Work. Evening. How do you feel? Be specific.

YOUR ANSWER

REFLECTION 2

Does that image give you energy or drain you? Why?

Explore the feeling honestly. Don't rush to reassure yourself.

YOUR ANSWER

You avoid thinking about the future

04

Avoidance is not patience. It is anxiety in disguise.

When something feels wrong, the mind protects itself through avoidance. You stay busy. You change the subject. You tell yourself you'll figure it out later — and later never arrives.

Psychologically, avoidance maintains the problem. Every time you avoid thinking about your career direction, you signal to your brain that this topic is dangerous. The anxiety grows. The avoidance grows with it.

SIGNALS YOU MIGHT RECOGNISE

- You feel anxious when asked about your career plans
- You change subjects or give vague answers to avoid the conversation
- You stay deliberately busy to avoid sitting with these questions
- You tell yourself you will 'figure it out later' — repeatedly

If avoidance is your default response to career questions, that is one of the most important signals in this workbook. The fact that you're reading this is already a form of courage.

REFLECTION 1

What specifically are you avoiding thinking about?

Name it precisely. Naming it begins to reduce its power over you.

YOUR ANSWER

REFLECTION 2

What might you discover if you stopped avoiding?

Often the fear of what we'll find is worse than the thing itself.

YOUR ANSWER

You talked yourself in, more than it excited you

05

Genuine alignment does not require constant convincing.

Pay attention to how often you have to argue yourself into enthusiasm versus how often this career naturally pulls you forward. If you frequently explain why it's 'actually a good choice' — that pattern matters.

When something is genuinely right for you, it has natural gravitational pull. You don't have to manufacture excitement. The motivation arises naturally, even on the hard days.

SIGNALS YOU MIGHT RECOGNISE

- You have explained to yourself why this is 'actually good' — many times
- Your enthusiasm feels performed rather than felt
- You focus on the status or security, not the work itself
- When you talk about this career, you feel flat rather than energised

Status and financial security are real and important. But they cannot replace genuine alignment. Your mind will ensure that — regardless of how much you tell yourself otherwise.

REFLECTION 1

Count how many times you've convinced yourself this was right.

Reflect on those moments. What did you have to override each time?

YOUR ANSWER

REFLECTION 2

When you talk about this career, do you feel energy or flatness?

Describe the feeling in detail. Be as specific as you can.

YOUR ANSWER



PART IV · BRING IT TOGETHER

Scoring Tracker



For each sign, sit with what you wrote and ask honestly: how true is this of me right now? Score from 0 (not at all) to 5 (completely). There are no wrong answers — only honest ones.

0 — Not at all · 2 — Sometimes · 4 — Often · 5 — Completely

#	The Sign	Score
01	I chose it out of fear, not desire	
02	I can't explain my 'why' without others	
03	Ten years of this creates dread	
04	I avoid thinking about the future	
05	I talked myself in more than it excited me	
Total out of 25		

A gentle reminder: a high score is not a verdict — it is information. It simply means your inner signals deserve attention. Turn the page to understand what your number is telling you.



What Your Score Means



Read the band your total falls into. Hold it lightly — this is a starting point for reflection, not a diagnosis.

Your Clarity Reading

- 0–6** **Largely Aligned.** Your career seems to fit who you are. Use this workbook to protect and deepen that alignment — and to notice early if anything shifts.
- 7–13** **Worth a Closer Look.** Some signals are present. This is the ideal moment to explore — small, honest adjustments now prevent larger struggles later.
- 14–19** **Real Misalignment.** Several signs are strong. Your mind is asking for a genuine conversation about direction. You don't need to act overnight — you need to start listening.
- 20–25** **Time to Be Honest.** The signals are loud and consistent. This is not failure — it is clarity arriving. The right support can help you build a path that protects your mental health.

Whatever your number, remember: clarity is a process, not a moment. The fact that you scored honestly is already the beginning of change.



Your Core Values



A career that honours your values feels like home. One that betrays them feels like a costume.
Tick the values that feel most truly yours — then narrow to your top five.

☐ Security

☐ Creativity

☐ Freedom

☐ Helping others

☐ Recognition

☐ Learning

☐ Independence

☐ Connection

☐ Impact

☐ Stability

☐ Adventure

☐ Leadership

☐ Balance

☐ Craft & mastery

☐ Status

☐ Belonging

☐ Autonomy

☐ Growth

☐ Justice

☐ Beauty

My top five values, in order

If you had to protect only five, which would they be?

Does my current path honour these values — or betray them?

Be specific. Name which value is met and which is missing.



Your Energy Audit



Your body keeps an honest record of what fits you. Notice what lifts you and what quietly drains you — the pattern points toward your natural direction.

What gives me energy

Tasks I lose track of time doing.

What drains me

Tasks I dread or avoid.

What do people consistently come to me for?

Others often see our strengths before we do.

When did I last feel genuinely proud of something I did?

What was I doing — and what strength did it use?

Look for the overlap. The work that energises you and the strengths others rely on you for — that intersection is rarely an accident. It is a clue worth following.



The Ikigai Reflection



A meaningful career often sits where four questions meet. Answer each honestly — the overlap is where clarity tends to live.



What I love

What I'd do even unpaid.

What I'm good at

My natural strengths.

What the world needs

A problem I care about.

What I can be valued for

What people would pay for.



Your Next Steps



Clarity is the beginning, not the end. Here is what to do with everything you've discovered:

01 Start with self-knowledge, not career research

Before you research careers, invest in understanding yourself. Your values. Your natural strengths. What creates energy and what drains it. This is the only reliable foundation for a good decision.

02 Name and challenge the fear

If fear has been driving your choices, name it clearly. Write it down. Most fears lose power when they move from vague to specific. Ask: is this fear true — or simply familiar?

03 Separate your voice from other voices

Identify whose expectations you have been carrying. Parents. Society. Culture. Peers. Your career needs to be built on your voice — not a chorus of others.

04 Take small steps before big commitments

Shadow someone. Take one class. Have one honest conversation. Let curiosity lead before commitment follows. You don't need to change everything overnight.

05 Work with the right support

Career confusion at its deepest level is a psychological question, not just a practical one. A psychologist who understands career psychology can help you build a path that protects your mental health.



PART X · A COMMITMENT TO YOURSELF

My Clarity Plan



Insight fades unless it becomes action. Write three small, honest commitments — then sign your name to them. This page is a promise to your future self.



One thing I will reflect on further this week



One small step I will take in the next 30 days



One honest conversation I will have — and with whom

The fear I am choosing to name out loud

Naming it is the first act of taking back its power.

Signed

Date

“Come back in three months. Growth is visible when you document where you started.”



Where to Go Next



You don't have to do this alone. Here are gentle ways to keep going — at whatever pace feels right for you.

01 Follow along for daily clarity

Career psychology, mindset shifts, and honest reflections on Instagram [@drsafinacareerpsych](#) — the one place these conversations happen every day.

02 Revisit this workbook in 3 months

Re-read your answers. What has shifted? What feels truer now? Your own words become a map of your growth.

03 Talk it through with someone you trust

A mentor, a friend, a family member who truly listens. Saying it aloud often reveals what writing alone cannot.

04 Work with a career psychologist

When career confusion runs deep, it deserves more than practical advice. The right psychological support helps you build a path that protects your wellbeing.

“

Career clarity is not a luxury. It is the foundation of your mental health.

— DR. SAFINA



"I'm a psychologist who talks about careers."

You don't have to figure this out alone.

If something in this workbook shifted something in you — if a question came up that you don't know how to answer — I want to hear from you.

SEND ME THIS WORD ON INSTAGRAM

CLARITY

... and let's start the conversation.

@drsafinacareerpsych

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