

Make your Motivation List **by Rose Jonas, Ph.D.**

"Why are you going to begin making wedding dresses?" I asked her.

"Because," she said, "I'm an obsessive compulsive, and I can only put so much paint on the walls." Her son was about to enter second grade, and she wanted a career that would let her earn income from home and give her flexible hours. She had go back to an office one day.

She has a sewing machine that does just about everything but send faxes, so sewing's a breeze. She can give a Butterick pattern a salon-quality look. And, she likes the work.

"Actually, I don't know that I like the work," she says. "I feel angry while I'm doing it. But when I was explaining that to a friend he asked, 'Yes, but do you get satisfaction from it?' And I realized that was it! I don't like the work, but I get tremendous satisfaction from it."

Satisfaction. One of the career bottom lines, to be sought, to be used as a measuring stick for your opinion about your job.

You are the only one who can say why a particular job or career is right for you. What motivates you, gives you satisfaction? Making money? The motivation theorists have never gotten it right. They tell us people aren't motivated by money, but they haven't talked to sports professionals, or the happily commission-only sales rep, or the mother staring down the poverty that stands between her and her child's education. Some people are.

Some people are motivated by the attention received, by the social perks or the independence, the distance from work, or the satisfaction derived from getting the job. Is it flexible hours, the need to play golf with clients, the requirement to travel a lot or not at all? Do you like talking with people or pushing paper around?

Make a list of what motivates you or gives you satisfaction. How many things on it exist in your current job? (If you don't have many, you probably are not satisfied.) Work regularly on that list. Add to it. Refine it. It will soon become a unique reflection of you and an excellent direction-setter when you make career moves. Take the list with you when you interview or go for a consult — see how many items a particular opportunity offers you. Knowing what your needs are will make your search easier.

Try as much as you can to bring into your life those demands that motivate you, those things you may not be able to explain, but which make you happy. Your career will have fewer down days.