

Let's get started



It's about a job: Let's get started

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Ma Te mahi Ka tino ora. Work brings health.

Why work? Well, people work for all sorts of reasons. Working gives us a sense of achievement, a sense of contributing to the world around us and of being part of what's going on. It gives us opportunities to use our skills. It helps us grow as people. It can even take us off in exciting new directions. What's more, we get to have some fun and make good friends along the way. When we think about what work really means, it's no wonder we hear stories about lottery winners who say they won't be giving up their day jobs!

Meaningful work (work that satisfies us) is good for our mental health and wellbeing, regardless of who we are. But for people living with mental illness and/or traumatic brain injury, having a job can sometimes make health problems easier to live with. Work can even assist with recovery.

Of course, having a job is not plain sailing all day, every day. The reality is everyone finds work at least a little stressful now and then. These worksheets will give you a few tips for managing stress so the everyday strains of working don't bring you down.

Right now, though, it's time to think about why you want to work.

Why is work important to you?

Would a giant rugby player like Jonah Lomu make a champion jockey? Not likely.

Would a city-loving hip-hop artist like Scribe actually prefer singing old-style country music down on the farm somewhere? No way!

So, if we're going to be happy and successful in our work it stands to reason that our skills, abilities and personalities need to match the job we do.

Before you start job hunting, you need to think about what drives you. What are you looking to gain from a job? Are you keen to be around more people? Are you chasing new challenges? The *Begin with the end in mind* exercise (on the following page) will help you discover the answers to these questions and more.

Why do this exercise? Because once you know what you want out of a job, you can build a much clearer picture of the work and working environments that suit you best. What's more, later on you can use your 'wish-list' to help you weigh up a job's pros and cons.

“During the periods when I couldn't work, I always tried to do something, even if it was only unpaid voluntary work. I have a very active mind. Staying at home would be too difficult for me. I like being out in the community and using my brain. And I can't live off the benefit alone because I have a mortgage on my home.”

Anna (36), a former registered nurse and now an early childhood education teacher

Begin with the end in mind

This exercise helps you to:

- understand why working is important to you
- think about what you may gain from working.

Method

Read the statements below and rate each one in terms of its value to you. Add any other factors that are important to you and rate them as well. You can use the same rating (or number) more than once. If some of the statements have equal value to you, give them the same number rating.

RATE EACH STATEMENT ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5 AS FOLLOWS:

- 1** *Being of no value or importance to you*
- 2** *Being of little value or importance to you*
- 3** *Being of reasonable value or importance to you*
- 4** *Being important or valuable to you*
- 5** *Being extremely important to you.*

- Wanting to come off a benefit
- Paying for the basic necessities
- Having more money to spend on extras
- Having a greater sense of purpose in my life
- Making a greater contribution to society
- Having greater social status within my community
- Wanting more opportunities for personal growth
- Seeking new challenges
- Using my skills
- Fulfilling my potential
- Wanting more structure and routine in my day
- Wanting to achieve more in life
- Seeking a greater sense of belonging
- Wanting to forge a stronger identity for myself
- Wanting to build my self-esteem
- Seeking greater opportunities for adventure in my life
- Wanting to feel part of my community
- Wanting to learn new things
- Wanting to improve my health

The **three** most important things that came out of this exercise for me were:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____