

THESE EXERCISES ARE REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM:

# THE ENCORE CAREER HANDBOOK

[encore.org/handbook](http://encore.org/handbook)

A complete guide to finding passion, purpose, and a paycheck in the second half of life.

## Exercise 1

### What Issues Pull You In?

How would you describe the issues you're drawn to or the kinds of people you might want to help or serve?

If you've volunteered in the past or followed a particular issue with a strong interest, it's likely that you already have some inkling of the issues you care about. But it's possible that you've never thought of yourself as especially motivated by any social issues—or even if you have been, you may never have given any thought to what it would be like to focus your work on something you care about rather than thinking of work solely as a means of generating income.

If you're having trouble coming up with anything, think about what you're drawn to when you read the newspaper, watch the news, or flip through magazines. Are there any societal problems you wish you could help solve? If you've volunteered, what kinds of issues and causes have attracted you? If you had to commit to volunteering, what kind of program would interest you? What kinds of charities do you contribute to when you donate? What do you find yourself doing when you have free time and absolutely nothing you have to do?

Still stumped? Spend some time on [Change.org](http://Change.org) (the “Top Causes” section) or [Dowser.org](http://Dowser.org), two websites focusing on social change issues.

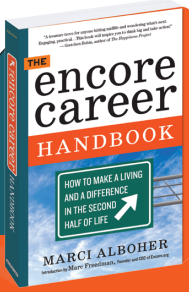
Write down six areas that interest you. For each area, start with a vague category and see if you can narrow it down a bit. (Broad: working with young people. Narrowed down: helping children of immigrants get ready for college.) To help focus, try asking questions that use the words *what*, *where*, or *how*. Helping women in what way? What kind of students? What kind of teaching? What kind of mentoring? What kind of mediating? How can I help older people? Where can I learn about community needs? How can I serve the animals of my community?

1. **Broad:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrow:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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2. Broad: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Narrow: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Broad: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Narrow: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Broad: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Narrow: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Broad: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Narrow: \_\_\_\_\_

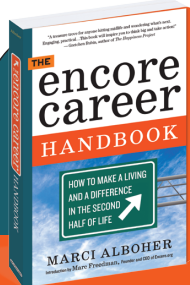
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6. Broad: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Narrow: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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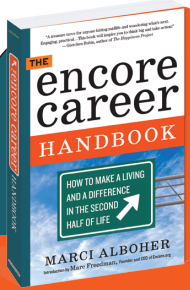
## Exercise 2

### What Roles Appeal to You?

As you consider your encore options, it's helpful to think about the kind of role you'd like to play. You may be drawn to contribute in a way that leverages your past experience or you may want to stretch. Even if you don't know what you want, you may have a good idea of what you *don't* want to do.

Which of the following appeals to you right now? (Mark all that apply.)

- ☐ **Direct service**—*Working directly with those in need—individuals, groups, or communities.*
- ☐ **Advocacy**—*Speaking out for those in need. This work may be focused on a specific cause, community, group, or individual.*
- ☐ **Teaching/Coaching/Mentoring**—*Working in an educational/coaching role to help people learn, gain new skills, and grow.*
- ☐ **Policy**—*Shaping the laws, treaties, regulations, and policies that impact key issues and communities.*
- ☐ **Fund-raising**—*Raising the money that allows others to provide direct service, advocate, and develop policies for specific causes and populations.*
- ☐ **Leading/Directing**—*Creating an organization or helping a cause or existing organization have more social impact. This could be at a strategic level, management, or day-to-day operations.*
- ☐ **Program Design/Management**—*Developing and implementing programs to provide services to an organization's clients.*
- ☐ **Communications/Marketing**—*Getting the word out about an organization and its work to create social change.*
- ☐ **Research/Evaluation**—*Conducting research on best practices and program results to ensure an organization's efforts are as effective as possible.*



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**Roles That Appeal to You.** Do you want to continue the same kind of role you've had in the past? Or would you like to transition to a different role?

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**Roles You Want to Avoid.** Do you have a been-there-done-that feeling about a particular role? Do you feel you aren't qualified or interested in taking on a particular role?

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**Roles You Would Like to Grow Into.** Are there any roles that intrigue you, but may feel a bit out of reach right now?

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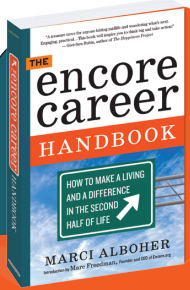
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**"Everyone thinks career discovery should be revelatory, arriving with a lightning bolt on Mount Sinai. More often, it's exploratory."**

—Belinda Plutz, career coach



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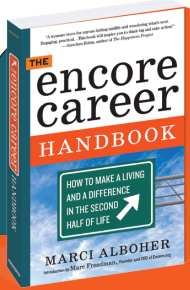
## Exercise 3

### What Are Your Skills and Interests?

Think about the various jobs and roles you've had throughout your working life—everything from being a camp counselor when you were sixteen to working as a cashier in a convenience store to your longer stints and bigger gigs in recent years. In the chart below, list jobs that stand out in your memory in the first column. In the second column, write down some of the things you remember doing in those jobs using words that end in *-ing*, such as planning, talking, building, designing, coaching, cooking, communicating, writing, giving feedback, and so on. In the third column, write down the focus of the job or what the work was about, such as banking, youth activities, health care, law, construction, wildlife conservation, insurance, or technology.

Below is a sample chart (completed using the details from the life of Marci Alboher, author of *The Encore Career Handbook*, as an example), one that includes long career stints as well as short-lived jobs—even internships.

Jobs	-ing Words	Focus/Topics
Nonprofit professional	Writing, speaking, advocating	Encore careers, baby boomers, social entrepreneurship
Lawyer	Counseling, advising, researching, billing hours	Advertising, publishing, business
Journalist/writer	Researching, interviewing, writing, speaking	Careers, work, publishing, nonprofits
Teacher	Lecturing, mentoring, reading	Education, writing
Legal intern, prosecutor's office	Researching, observing, filing, reading, reviewing documents	Criminal justice
Law clerk	Filing, taking notes, doing research, reading, editing	Business, real estate, contracts
Motel desk clerk	Talking, helping customers, answering the phone, giving travel advice, managing conflicts	Travel/tourism



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After you've done that for most of the jobs that come to mind, do the same thing for parts of your life outside of work. Look at what stands out as activities where you've spent a lot of your nonwork time—volunteer work, education, clubs, associations, family time.

Here are a few examples that Marci added to the nonwork part of her chart:

Nonwork Activities	-ing Words	Focus/Topics
Advisory board member, The OpEd Project	Connecting people, coaching and mentoring, advising, writing	Diversity, communications, training, education, writing, women's advancement
Executive committee member, New York Writers Workshop	Teaching, organizing, and promoting community events, coaching and mentoring writers	Writing, community events, publishing
Playing poker	Organizing the game, talking, socializing, analyzing people, honing my card skills	Games, play
Long walks or hikes	Exploring the outdoors, walking, talking, socializing	Nature, environment

Now it's your turn. Fill in as many rows as come to mind, being as comprehensive or brief as you like.

Jobs	-ing Words	Focus/Topics

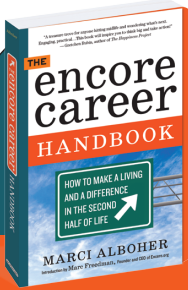
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After you've got the chart nicely filled out, cross out anything in the second or third columns that you know you don't want to carry forward into your next phase of work. Of the remaining items, circle the *-ing* words and the focus/topic words that are most interesting to you at this point in your life.

Use this chart to create a list of your favorites.

YOUR LIST OF FAVORITES	
Favorite -ing Words	Favorite Focus/Topics
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.