# Job Savvy

# How to Be a Success at Work

Sixth Edition

# Chapter 7: Knowing Yourself

## Video Transcript

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# Title Card

The *Job Savvy* video series for the sixth edition is brought to you by JIST Career Solutions, a leading provider of materials and technology that help build essential skills for career, academic, and life success.

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# Chapter 7 Knowing Yourself

To be a successful employee, you must believe you are a successful employee and have confidence in your abilities. Begin by looking at those tasks you do well. Many of the concepts you will read about in this chapter come from positive psychology, which focuses on helping people build on their strengths rather than fixing on weaknesses. Getting along with leaders in your workplace, coworkers, and customers begins with knowing yourself.

This chapter aims to help you discover the relationship between self-esteem and your performance at the workplace, identify your different types of skills, evaluate your strengths and weaknesses and assess ways to improve personal or career skills.

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# Knowing Yourself

Studies indicate that businesses seek out employees with positive **self-esteem** because they have a higher level of performance. Self-esteem is your overall opinion of yourself—how you feel about your abilities and limitations. When you have healthy self-esteem, you feel good about yourself and see yourself as deserving the respect of others.

When you have low self-esteem, you put little value on your opinions and ideas. The good news is that self-esteem can be developed and improved so everyone can achieve the satisfaction and success healthy self-esteem brings.

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# Work Should be Meaningful

When searching for meaning in a career, people often ask: Why am I here? What is the meaning of life? What is my purpose in life?

Finding meaning in work has been shown to result in higher levels of satisfaction with life, work, and health. In addition, people who feel called to their work enjoy work more, have lower absenteeism, and have higher levels of performance. Psychological studies have even found that people who have a purpose in life live a longer life.

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# Work Should be Meaningful (continued)

To discover purpose in your work, look at your current lifestyle. Consider these questions.

1. What subjects interest you the most? . . . .

2. What do you like to do in your spare time? . . .

3. What are your strengths? . . .

4. What attracts you to friends and acquaintances? . . . .

5. What do you consider an accomplishment? . . .

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# Work Should be Meaningful (continued)

Your first few jobs may not satisfy your search for meaning. Be content with moving slowly toward a meaningful career. While you might achieve a meaningful job in a single career move, it sometimes takes several moves. Your purpose might be accomplished through a series of jobs that lets you reach your long-term goal. Remember adults change over their lifetime. Your goals, what you find satisfying, and your purpose can morph many times over the years. Be willing to change careers until you find one that satisfies you.

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# Work Should be Meaningful (continued)

Many times people do not find a purpose in their jobs but rather through something else in their lives. This purpose might include volunteer work, religious pursuits, raising a family, or improving a community. Their job becomes a way to achieve a purpose. It provides the money needed to live a meaningful life. The key point is to understand that a purpose in life allows us to achieve the fulfillment and satisfaction from a job whether it is the job itself or a purpose outside the job.

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# Work Should be Meaningful (continued)

Sometimes it might seem like everyone at work knows what they are doing except you. That’s not true. No one always feels confident. Anyone can experience low self-esteem, especially when circumstances change abruptly.

Losing a job, being laid off, or coping with the added responsibilities that come with a promotion may cause times of questioning. Having positive self-esteem doesn’t mean you will never question yourself. Asking healthy questions will allow you to compare yourself to the world around you and make wise career decisions.

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# Work Should be Meaningful (continued)

Healthy questions to ask yourself when you’re feeling anxiety or stress about a particular situation will help you sort through worries with a practical approach. For example, A man is laid off after working 23 years in the same manufacturing plant. Rumors spread that the plant will close soon and move to a new location. Questions run through his mind: *Should I move my family to the new plant location? Should I start that auto-repair shop I’ve always dreamed about? What if I can’t pay all the bills?* He has trouble deciding what to do, but he is asking healthy questions. As he continues to ask these questions and sort through his options, a solution will be discovered. If you find yourself really stuck, you may want to consult with a mentor, career advisor, or even a counselor. Sometimes, especially when in crisis due to sudden changes, people with an outside perspective are able to see solutions that you may not see.

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# Work Should be Meaningful (continued)

A psychological concept called a *locus of control* is the way people view how they control events and outcomes in their lives. People either feel they control their lives, or they feel that other people and things control them.

People with positive self-concepts look at their successes and believe that they are responsible for them. They also believe that they are responsible for their failures, but the outcome is also affected by events, things, and people outside of their control. People with negative self-concepts view the world in the opposite way. They credit their successes to luck and never accept the blame for their failures.

You can teach yourself to view life more positively and to gain more control over your own life. Look at the circumstances every time you succeed. Give yourself credit for your success. Remember to look at the small successes that occur every day of your life. Similarly, when you experience failure, examine the reasons for it. Look for those outside factors that contributed to the failure and realize how they affected the outcome.

Believe that you can improve. You can overcome problems or difficulties with time, effort, and, when needed, help from other people.

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# Work Should be Meaningful (continued)

A way to improve your self-esteem is to focus on your character strengths. Character strengths are individual traits that have a moral or ethical factor. Examples of character strengths include honesty, truthfulness, and love. Studies have considered ideas about character strengths for thousands of years. Additional studies have used modern psychological procedures to confirm the most basic character strengths.

For much of the 20th Century, psychologists examined how to “fix” or manipulate people. Managers and leaders were taught ways to improve poor motivation, thinking, and emotions of employees. A concept from positive psychology that many managers use today is to help employees identify character strengths and build on them.

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Self-Concept in the Workplace

A positive self-image helps you overcome doubt about your abilities. Many job-related situations will be totally new to you and might make you doubt yourself. When you start a new job, you might question your ability to complete your assigned tasks. To protect your self-image as you begin a new job, remember two truths.

**You will make mistakes.** Examine each mistake. Decide how you can avoid the same mistake in the future. Learn from your mistakes.

**Your employer wants you to succeed.** Your employer hired you because they believe you have the ability to do the job successfully – not to fire you.

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# Identify Your Skills

Occupational psychologists have developed a classification of job-related skills.

**Self-management skills** reflect the control you have over your life. Self-management skills are necessary to please your employer. Examples include being on time, following directions, and getting along with coworkers and supervisors.

**Transferable skills** are used in many different jobs. For example, a nurse needs good people skills, as does a receptionist or a salesperson. Employers value some transferable skills over others.

**Job-related skills** are used to complete the tasks required for a particular job. For example, a paramedic must be able to take blood pressure and use a stethoscope.

You may be surprised at the variety of skills you have to offer an employer. Many of these skills have been developed through life experiences. Knowing your skills will allow you to improve your position in the work world. Use the skills you identify in resumes, performance reviews, and interviews. Identifying your skills shows your strengths and weaknesses as an employee.

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Learning from Others

To build on your strengths and try to improve your weaknesses, listen to the performance reviews from your supervisor at work. Work to make progress on developing your skills based on feedback from your supervisor.

A good way to learn about yourself is to ask friends, coworkers and your supervisor how they see you. In this chapter the Job Savvy textbook offers a simple step-by-step plan to get more information about your strengths and weaknesses from people who know you. The plan offers some suggestions to help you improve your skills.

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# Conclusion

In truth, if you believe you can do the job, you can do it. To develop a healthier self-image, an appropriate saying might be: “You are what you think.”

Remember to think positively, be proud of your successes and own your mistakes, identify your skills, reward yourself, and accept compliments.

In this video, you hopefully discovered many things about yourself. The information you learned about yourself should help you appreciate others and understand reasons for differences in the ways people act and think.