The First Step in choosing a satisfying career begins with self-exploration. Self-exploration is the process of identifying your interests, skills, personality type, and values. To begin this process, you must be your own influence!

**Interests**

The process of choosing a satisfying career starts with this simple step. These are the things you like to do, the things that have captured your passion. Start off by asking yourself some questions:
- What activities are you drawn toward?
- What topics do you like to read?
- What do you like to do in your free time?

**Skills and Strengths**

A skill is something that we are good at doing or a characteristic that we excel in performance. Skills can be cognitive strengths, such as thinking and creativity, or can be physical such as communication and time-management. Skills can also be an area that you show talent or proficiency. Skills are important to identify because the better you are at a given task, the more likely you are to enjoy it.

Internships are a great opportunity to gain valuable skills. When choosing an internship experience, be intentional about choosing an experience that will help you enhance a talent or skill you already have or help you develop a talent or skill that needs more focus.

**Personality**

Personality is another important factor to consider when deciding upon a career. Personality type is comprised of how people think and act based on inborn tendencies. We all show certain patterns or preferences of behavior and thinking over time. It is important to know our own pattern of behavior and how our behaviors interact with other people and different environments.

**Values and Beliefs**

Of all the areas of self-exploration, students are most likely to choose a career based on their individual values. Values can be described in two types: work values and lifestyle values. Work values are associated with job success and satisfaction, such as:
- Prestige
- Job security
- Creativity in the workplace
- Working with like-minded people
- Making a difference in the world
- Making a large salary

On the other hand, lifestyle values are considered in a broader and more comprehensive sense, such as:
- Having time with family
- Ability to work from home
- Leisure time
- Geographic location

Determining your core values and beliefs will help you realize what you want in a satisfying career.