



TEXAS McCombs

FUEL YOUR CAREER GROWTH

High Impact Life Design Exercises for the
Working Professional

Prepared by MBA Career Management and Coaching

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WHAT IS LIFE DESIGN?

Life Design, originally introduced by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans at Stanford University, is about applying the innovative principles of design thinking to the wicked problem of designing your life. A ‘wicked problem’ is best defined as something that doesn’t just have one answer. In other words, there are multiple, possible pathways in which you could be happy and successful.

By acknowledging that there are various positive outcomes for your work life, then you can start designing those paths and start prototyping.

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WELCOME

All Texas McCombs MBA students have access to a range of resources and support from the Career Management and Corporate Relations (CMCR) team and from one of the largest and most engaged alumni networks in the world.

From providing a support system for your customized career development, to implementing leadership training programs for the skills you need, our dedicated McCombs team's systematic approach to life-long achievement helps you build on your current career and prepares you to leverage the Texas McCombs global network beyond the program to fulfill your long-term goals.

As you evaluate the next step in your professional career, whether that's continuing an upward career trajectory, seeking a transition, or considering your MBA program options, it's important to reflect on your experiences, insights, and curiosities.

In this workbook, developed by Texas McCombs' CMCR team, you will be introduced to or get a refresher on the principles of life design. The workbook includes two self-awareness tools aimed at helping you evaluate where you are right now and your growth as a professional. Research shows that having a greater sense of self-awareness helps create the basis for a joyful and well-lived life.

You'll have the tools to make it here.

Are you ready to see what happens next?



Sarita Soldz

Senior Director, Career Education & Coaching for
Working Professional Programs and Alumni

OUR DEDICATION TO YOU

Our team has advised thousands of full-time, working professional, and executive students to successfully prepare for their next opportunity, whether they want to advance along in their current trajectory, make a career pivot, or start their own new venture. We are excited to offer you a glimpse into our suite of career resources aimed at helping you meet your goals as you prepare to submit your Texas McCombs MBA application. As a Texas McCombs MBA, you'll have access to a variety of resources, including:

- **Career Advising;** You'll have unlimited access to a team of dedicated career consultants for professional advising and to connect you with resources such as planning, training, and alumni support.
- **Employer Connections;** Almost 400 different employers participate in various Texas McCombs MBA recruiting events - networking receptions, career fairs, information sessions, and more. There are countless ways to meet your future employer while pursuing your MBA.
- **Specialty Coaching;** Our specialty coaches are seasoned experts who are ready to work with you one-on-one to refine your skills in communication, leadership, strategy, organizational culture, and much more.
- **Education & Training;** Learn how to successfully transition into a new career or accelerate your current one through our career education courses. Our career curriculum follows the academic curriculum and is modeled after the way companies approach launching a new product - and you are the product! Our team will walk you through a market assessment, determining your value proposition, and sales tools like resume writing, interviewing, negotiating, and more. You'll develop the skills necessary to make strides in your career during the program and after graduation.
- **Alumni Network;** As a Texas McCombs MBA, you will join a passionate and powerful network of over 500,000 active Longhorn alumni around the world.

Best of all, our career support and professional development resources are available to you beyond graduation. As a Texas McCombs alum, you will receive lifelong access to free professional career coaching, salary negotiation guidance, and access to our exclusive job boards.



EXERCISE #1

LOVE-PLAY-WORK-HEALTH DASHBOARD

This activity is a life design exercise we often use to help Working Professional MBA students check in with themselves throughout their time in the program. The exercise was developed by Burnett and Evans, authors of *Designing Your Life*, and is used by our students to gauge 4 key areas: love, play, work, and health.

Think of the dashboard as a set of fuel gauges, measuring the four core facets of your life. Each of these areas is integral to leading a full, meaningful existence. It's important to occasionally take inventory of these areas, to ensure that we are scheduling and making time for each of these in our life.



Love

Think of the love gauge as a measure of how you feel about relationships that are important to you, as well as social cohesion. Are you committing adequate time to your spouse, children, family, friends, and other people within your social network? What relationship could you immediately strengthen with a short email or Zoom call?



Play

The play gauge measures your energy spent doing activities that are fun or for personal enjoyment. This includes the activities you pursue purely for enjoyment and are not tied to compensation or self-improvement. It may be a hobby or creative outlet.

This gauge can be a little trickier because certain activities like participating in a leadership role, activity, or team sports, could tie into how you define 'Work.'



Work

While it may speak for itself, this gauge includes most of what you are doing in your daily life. This can be a mix of your 9-5 job, a leadership position, volunteering, a business venture, or a passion project. Work gives us a sense of purpose and is critical for our feeling of self-worth. How would you rate your engagement, enjoyment, and the meaning you derive from work?



Health

The health gauge is a measure of your assessment of your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health at the moment. Do you feel relaxed and positive most days, or are you anxious or feeling burnt out? Is there one aspect of health that is struggling while another is thriving?

The most important thing to remember is that your dashboard gauges will likely not be full at a given time – and that's normal. The dashboard is a tool to help you check in and be mindful of where you are at in a certain moment. For example, if you decide to pursue the Texas McCombs Working Professional MBA, your work bucket will likely be full with both your job and the MBA program. To balance it out, you may have to say “no” to or cut out things that do not contribute towards one of your gauges. Another alternative would be to make little steps toward filling your other buckets, for example by adding 10 minutes of mindfulness to your day.

LOVE-PLAY-WORK-HEALTH DASHBOARD ACTIVITY

To complete the exercise, start by filling in your dashboard as it currently stands. Use the guidelines to help you determine how you stack up in each category. What do you observe? Where are you doing a good job? Where can you make the biggest improvement?

Then, think about the improvements you can make right now, over the next few weeks, and long-term. Start putting a plan in place to begin making those adjustments. And finally, check back in periodically to evaluate your progress.

Love	0	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	FULL
Play	0	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	FULL
Work	0	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	FULL
Health	0	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	FULL

Mark your dashboard as it currently exists. What do you observe?

If you could make one adjustment on your dashboard, what would it be?
Redraw your improved dashboard.

Love	0	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	FULL
Play	0	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	FULL
Work	0	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	FULL
Health	0	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	FULL

Improved Dashboard: What is one thing you could do to move in this direction?



EXERCISE #2

PEAK EXPERIENCE

Understanding your most powerful motivations in your work and personal life is essential to a happy, fulfilled life. In *"Find Your Why,"* Simon Sinek articulates a practical guide for discovering your purpose. Our career management team has adapted it to specifically help Working Professional MBA students. We call this exercise "Peak Experience," and we hope that you will have some fun with it!

In this exercise, we ask you to reflect on a time when you were in flow; when you lost track of time and were totally absorbed by and enjoying what you were doing. Once you've identified this experience, you will describe the experience in detail as if you were re-living it. Once you've thought through a few experiences, compare what is common in each regarding your strengths, values, beliefs, and impact.

Recalling and comparing these experiences may lead you to find the work that is best for you by aligning it to your bigger purpose. We've seen this exercise work for many students – and for ourselves! In career management, we love what we do because we are passionate about helping others achieve their full potential.

PEAK EXPERIENCE ACTIVITY

Find a quiet place and close your eyes. Think about a time when you were at your best and answer the questions below. Repeat this for three different experiences where you were at your best.

Experience 1

What were you doing?

Who were you with?

What impact were you having?

What aspects made this experience important to you?

What about this experience stands out?

PEAK EXPERIENCE ACTIVITY

Find a quiet place and close your eyes. Think about a time when you were at your best and answer these questions for experience 2.

Experience 2

What were you doing?

Who were you with?

What impact were you having?

What aspects made this experience important to you?

What about this experience stands out?

PEAK EXPERIENCE ACTIVITY

Find a quiet place and close your eyes. Think about a time when you were at your best and answer these questions for experience 3.

Experience 3

What were you doing?

Who were you with?

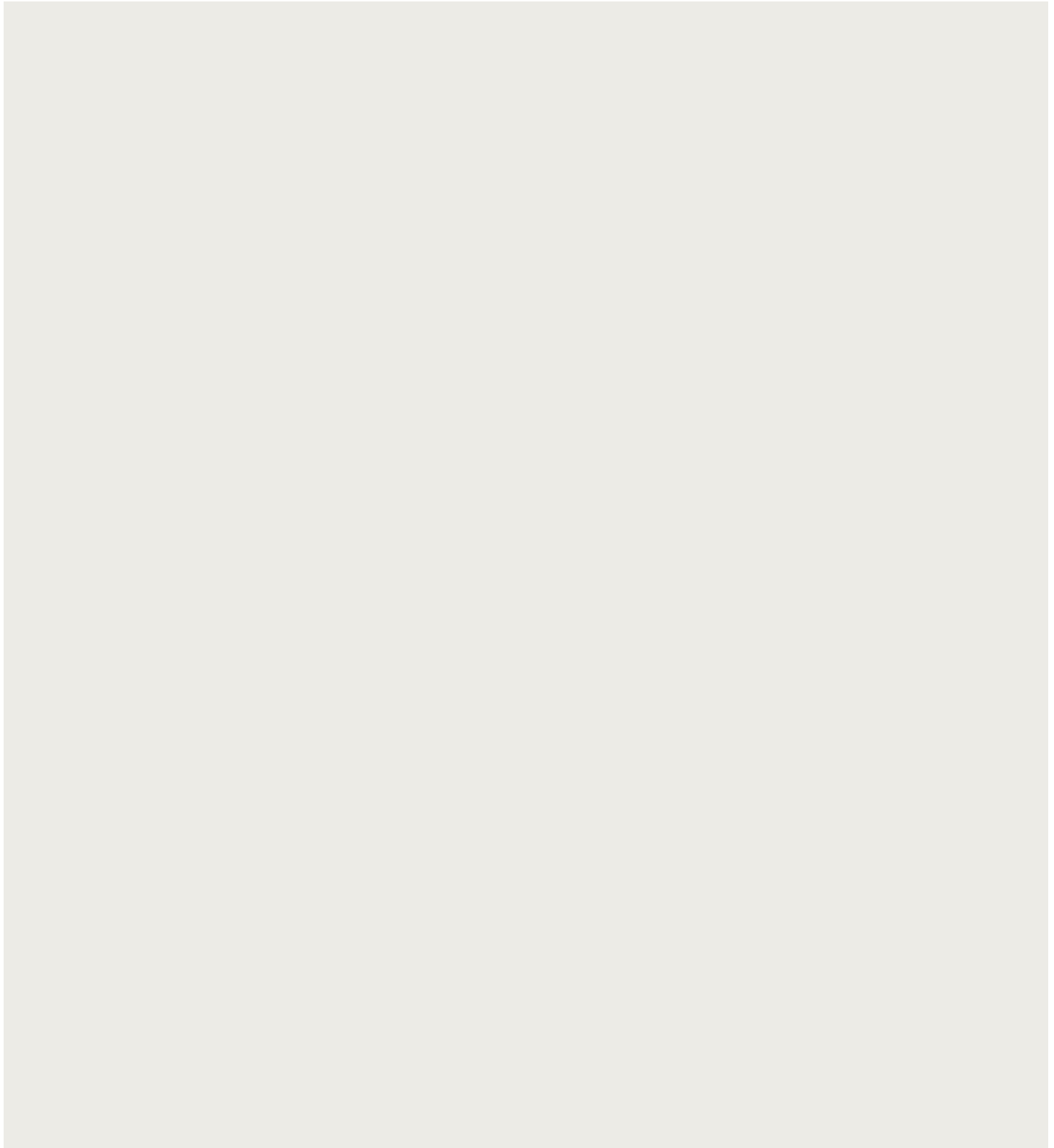
What impact were you having?

What aspects made this experience important to you?

What about this experience stands out?

PEAK EXPERIENCE ACTIVITY REFLECTION

Compare your three experiences. What are the common themes across all three experiences? Consider if there are any intersections across impact, leadership, and other skills you enjoy using.



COMMITMENT

Having reflected on all the activities in this workbook, and as you commit to making a change in your life, what is one action you will take now to make a difference in your life?

Complete this sentence: **One action I commit to doing now is . . .**

NEXT STEPS

You've completed these life design exercises. We encourage you to conduct routine check-ins throughout the year to ensure you're on track with your goals. One of the best ways to experience our career development offerings and global network is by visiting us! Join us in-person or virtually for an information session, admissions chat, application workshop, or campus visit.



Start Your MBA Application



Register for an Event



Read our McCombs MBA Insider Blog

ABOUT TEXAS McCOMBS

At Texas McCombs, you have the freedom to make it yours. You can focus entirely on your studies in a [Full-Time MBA](#) or stay on the executive course and renew your professional career as an enterprising leader with an [Executive MBA](#). You can immediately apply what you are learning in the classroom to your job through our Working Professional MBA, which we offer in the [Evenings in Austin](#), or on alternating weekends in [Dallas](#) or [Houston](#). All programs share our expert faculty, international brand recognition, lifelong career management services, and networking opportunities.

At every stage of life, you choose how, when, and why you make it.

Ways to Connect

[Register for an Event](#)

Email Us

TexasMBA@mcombs.utexas.edu

Call Us

+1 512-471-7698

Follow us on Instagram

[@UTexasMBA](#)

