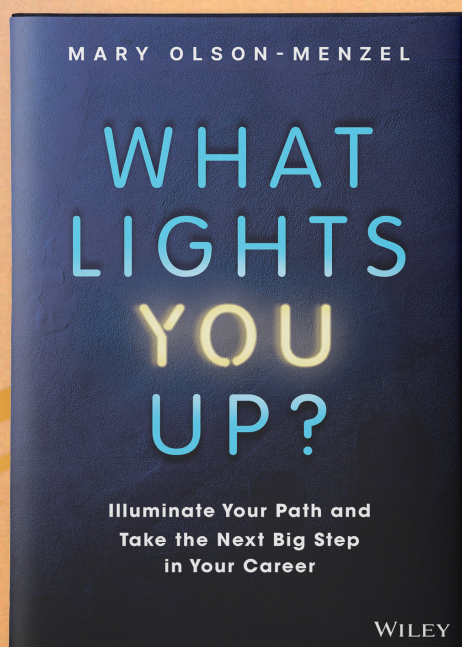


A LIGHT JOURNAL:



The Workbook
Companion to Help
Launch and Accelerate
Your Journey to
What Lights You Up?

BY MARY OLSON-MENZEL





Dear Reader,

Thank you for picking up my book, it means the world to me! It is true that everyone needs a little help now and then—and even the most successful people understand that a coach makes them even better. As you read *What Lights You Up?* I'll be offering advice and cheering for you every step of the way as you embark on the great adventure of what's next for you!

"A Light Journal: The Workbook Companion to Help Launch and Accelerate Your Journey to *What Lights You Up?*" consists of the same exercises that you will find printed at the end of your book, with a few more added as a bonus for you here! These pages can be printed out using this file if you don't want to write directly in your book, if you want to make drafts of your answers, or if you plan on loaning your book to someone else without sharing your private notes. The important thing is finding a way to make this book applicable to your life so you can get the most out of it and discover what lights you up and thrive in your career!

To dive right in, consider starting with these activities to help you along:

Page 3: if you're just beginning your journey and are deciding on your direction

Page 20: if you're ready to apply to jobs or need to prepare for interviews

Page 34: if you've gotten a job, want to help yourself level up, or want to make sure your team is on the path to success

For even more personalized coaching for yourself or your teams, visit mvpexec.com to learn more about how we can help you succeed with your goals and spark your passions.

Yours in light and cheers to much success,

Mary Olson-Menzel

What Is Your Current Employment Situation?

1. Are you employed today? (Yes or no)

2. Do you have a vision of what your next job looks like?

3. How much money do you need to make to cover the basics?

4. How much do you realistically want to earn this year?

5. What kind of a work/life balance do you need?

What Makes You Unique?

1. List three words that best describe what makes you unique. This could be in the context of work or at home. Think of qualities that you like about yourself.

1.

2.

3.

2. Describe your sense of generosity.

3. Describe your sense of humor.

4. Describe yourself as a problem solver, or someone who can get things done with efficiency.

5. Describe your abilities around kindness, empathy, and care.

6. Describe how you embrace a positive attitude in work.

7. Describe how you use your intuition at work.

8. Describe how your listening skills enhance your performance.

9. What qualities might set you apart from others at work or home?

10. List three things you are most proud of in either your personal and/or professional life. This can include accomplishments, activities, skills, behaviors, and so on.

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

If you have a hard time identifying this, ask a friend or a family member. These qualities typically come so easily to you that you might not even think of them, but they do lead you to your light.

What Are Your Interests and Hobbies?

List things that interest you and keep your light on and give you energy. This could include anything from mentoring junior employees at your organization to running the charity 5K. Do you have a side hustle, a passion you're doing in the hours when you're not working (for example, photography, art, traveling, playing an instrument, speaking another language, hiking, boating, or yoga).

What's on Your Bucket List?

Put together a list of things you have done in the past that you now look back on with joy and gratitude. And then create a bucket list of what you would like to do in the future.

There are no rules when it comes to your bucket list. No matter how big or how small, if it's something you've done or something you'd like to do, put it on this list. Have fun with this and let yourself enjoy the process!

Gratitude List

Future Bucket List

What Are Your Passions and Dreams?

1. What did you dream of doing as a child?

2. What aspects of your past or current job(s) are related to your childhood dreams?

3. What are your dreams now, and how have they changed since you were a child?

4. What are you most passionate about right now?

5. What makes you the happiest right now?

Create Your Daily “Light Log”

Make a list of all the things that bring you joy.

These don't have to be big things; you can start with the simple pleasures in life, such as enjoying a good cup of coffee. It can be your dog greeting you with kisses after your morning run. It might even be a partner, child, or friend giving you a much-needed hug. Even the pleasure of crossing items off your to-do list can bring joy and satisfaction to your day. Whatever it is, list it, and keep paying attention throughout your day to anything that brings a smile to your face!

[illegible]

Creating Your Narrative

Now that you understand the importance of your story, let's get started on creating it. Answer the questions below to the best of your ability. Think carefully about the path you have traveled and what it means to you. Additionally, focus on which parts of your story highlight your strengths and character and what aspects of your story might be compelling to a future employer.

High School (or earlier)

List two to three jobs or experiences that you had that might have led you to your career path.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

College

Why did you choose to attend a particular college?

How did you decide on a major or minor?

Did you change your major?

Attend graduate school?

What inspired you to make these decisions at this time in your life?

What were your motivations for making these choices?

Alternate Path

We all follow different paths, and there is no wrong answer here. If you didn't go to college, that is a part of your story. What was your alternate path when you finished high school?

Employment Experience

Answer the following questions for two favorite jobs that you've had in the and for your current job.
(If you're not currently working, you can answer for a third past job.)

Job 1

What were your job title and job responsibilities?

How did you get the job?

Did you enjoy your work? In other words, did the work "light you up"?

If not, what parts do you want to avoid in your next job?

What new skills did you learn?

What did you learn about yourself?

What contributions do you feel you made to the organization and how did those contributions make you feel at the end of the day?

Why did you leave?

What other skills would you like to learn in the next job? (for your own thought process)

Job 2

What were your job title and job responsibilities?

How did you get the job?

Did you enjoy your work? In other words, did the work “light you up”?

If not, what parts do you want to avoid in your next job?

What new skills did you learn?

What did you learn about yourself?

What contributions do you feel you made to the organization and how did those contributions make you feel at the end of the day?

Why did you leave?

What other skills would you like to learn in the next job? (for your own thought process)

Current Job

What were your job title and responsibilities?

How did you get the job?

Did you enjoy your work? In other words, did the work “light you up”?

If not, what parts do you want to avoid in your next job?

What new skills did you learn?

What did you learn about yourself?

What contributions do you feel you made to the organization and how did those contributions make you feel at the end of the day?

Why did you leave?

What other skills would you like to learn in the next job? (for your own thought process)

These answers are for your eyes only. You will use the information to craft your story, and being totally honest with yourself will help you to further zoom in on where you want to go. There are no wrong answers. Do not judge yourself on where you've been. Honor your path and recognize why you made the decisions that have led you to where you are today. Pay attention to when you listened to your heart and when you were the happiest. Also, notice which of your decisions and experiences led to feeling unhappy or unfulfilled. There is so much to learn from this exercise besides creating a personal narrative, so take your time and answer each question carefully.

Now, let's look back at everything you have written.

What patterns do you see?

What kind of narrative is emerging?

Go back to the questions. Where can you go deeper?

Are there things that you can now answer a little more clearly as you revisit the questions and look at the bigger picture?

What are you learning about yourself along the way?

Once you have answered the questions above, put an asterisk next to or circle those answers that highlight your strengths or your character the most. Then do the same for the answers that are most relevant to your current job search. Use the selected answers as the key points to create your narrative. Once you've identified the key points you want to include in your narrative, weave in personal stories to make it more interesting and compelling.

Prospects, Pivots, and Passions

Use the tables below to record your prospects, pivots, and passions, following the guidelines given here.

Prospects

The first step is to create your target list of companies that you are interested in. Your usual prospects list is the easiest place to start! On this list, you will start to identify companies or organizations that you may have admired for a while or that you may have recently found intriguing that are in the same industry and where you are currently working or have prior experience in. This will involve a fair amount of research to determine which companies are worth pursuing and which companies might be the right cultural fit for you.

Pivots

A pivot is a conscious change in strategy to a different industry, a different role, or a complete change into a new field. It usually takes a little more thought and effort than a prospect, but most of the time it's worth it, when you're ready for a change. This is where you're ready to take a new perspective, or a slight shift. These are also companies or organizations that you may have admired for a while or have a new interest in, where you could possibly imagine taking your existing skills and moving them into a slightly different industry or organization.

Passions

This is where you get to dream! Under your "passions" column, you will want to include companies that align with your passions and your hobbies that might enable you to do something that you're truly passionate about. You can refer to your "light log" to identify what some of those passions are and then explore how you can align your natural gifts, your strengths and your existing skills with your passions and make money.

Prospects

Pivots

Passions

Prospects, Pivots, Passions: Making the Connection

Company Name	Prospect, Pivot, or Passion	Connection to Company	Last Date of Contact/Details	Pertinent Information About Company	Next Steps

Recruiter Name	Connection to Recruiter	Last Date of Contact/Details	Last Date of Contact/Details	Pertinent Information About Recruiter	Next Steps

Build Your Toolbox

Your toolbox consists of five key things:

- **Your authentic light (see Chapter 1)**
- **Your story (see Chapter 2)**
- **Your resume**
- **Your LinkedIn profile and professional brand**
- **Your network**

Make sure your resume and LinkedIn profile are in working order with these checklists.

Resume Checklist

- ☐ I have included all relevant work experience, especially ensuring that it is easy to identify my job titles, former/current employers, start and end dates of each job, and my education.
- ☐ I have highlighted my skills, especially those pertaining to: creativity, clear communication, collaboration, analytical thinking, organization, intelligence (emotional and intellectual), flexibility/adaptability, quick learning, resilience, problem-solving, and enthusiasm.
- ☐ I have addressed potentially disqualifying pitfalls, such as photos and unprofessional email addresses.
- ☐ I have made sure to spell check and proofread the entire resume to ensure there are no errors.
- ☐ I have asked someone else to spell check and proofread my resume, as well.
- ☐ I have clearly and professionally formatted my resume.
- ☐ I have my resume available in multiple formats (.docx or .pdf) and will submit the file as requested on the job listing.
- ☐ I have browsed resume templates online and considered resume-writing resources.
- ☐ I am prepared to address any gaps in my resume.

LinkedIn and Networking Checklist

- ☐ I have checked my resume against my LinkedIn profile to ensure it is accurate and visible for recruiters and job posters.
- ☐ I have added a professional photo on my LinkedIn profile.
- ☐ I have written an attention-grabbing headline for my LinkedIn profile that explains what I do and shows my passion and value.
- ☐ I have drafted a compelling summary for my LinkedIn profile that focuses on my career accomplishments.
- ☐ I have ensured my LinkedIn profile is well-organized and easy to scan for keywords.
- ☐ I have added skills (both high-level and niche) to my profile.
- ☐ I have gotten endorsements from past and present co-workers or employers for my profile.
- ☐ I have included volunteer experience and special causes (non-profits) on my profile.
- ☐ I have reached out to connect with past and present coworkers and employers on LinkedIn to grow my network.
- ☐ I have looked at any other of my public social media profiles with an eye to how potential employers would view them.

Interview Readiness

Use the following checklist and sample questions to ensure you're ready to excel in the interview and be ready to showcase your skills and experience.

Checklist for Interview Readiness

- ☐ Make sure you have a strong knowledge of the industry and the company you are interviewing with ahead of time. Do your research; get to know the company in from every perspective and every angle.
- ☐ Google the profiles of the people you will be interviewing with.
- ☐ Check out their LinkedIn profiles and make sure you know who they are, what they've done, and if you have any mutual connections.
- ☐ Go back to the list you made earlier and practice selling your strengths. What are your distinguishing traits and qualifications that will benefit the recruiter, hiring manager, and company if they hire you?
- ☐ Make the effort to sell yourself and tell your story in an authentic way and let your light and passion shine so that people will remember you.
- ☐ Always use examples from real life. This will add color and credibility to your conversations.
- ☐ Have a list of thoughtful questions prepared to ask them. Listen closely to what they have to say and make sure that your questions are relevant and appropriate for the interview.
- ☐ Reconfirm what they say at the end of the conversation, and make sure you understand next steps and what to do to follow up.

Behavioral-Based Interview Question Examples and Exercises

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

EI is the capacity to identify and understand the impact of your feelings regarding thoughts, decisions, behavior, and performance at work in addition to a greater understanding of others, and how to engage, respond, motivate, and connect with them.

Tell me about a time when you felt confident in your abilities and your work. Why did you feel confident? What was the result?

Think of a situation you faced where you felt frustrated or stressed at work. Why were you frustrated? What was the impact you had on the other people who were involved?

What is an example of something that isn't one of your strengths? What have you done to accommodate this challenge?

Tell me about a time when you faced a significant change. What was the nature of the change and how did you react?

How would your current or previous co-workers, supervisor, and staff describe your communication and interpersonal style? Give an example or two.

Think of a challenging working relationship you've had. What was your part in the difficulty, and what was their part? Tell me about the person and your interactions with them. What did you do to address the relationship or make it more successful?

Tell me about a time your ability to appropriately use empathy turned a tricky situation around. Describe how you were able to transform it into something positive.

Flexibility

Describe a time that you had to be open minded and adjust to a new structure, process, or cultures.

Describe a time when you had to adapt your style while working with a group of people.

Describe a time you had to change your point of view to consider new information or a change in priorities.

Give a specific example of how you have helped create an environment where different perspectives are valued, encouraged, and supported. What did you do? What was the outcome?

Creativity

Give a specific example of what you have done to encourage innovation to accomplish the strategic goals and objectives of your organization. What did you do? What was the outcome?

Describe a time you made a major sacrifice to achieve an important goal. Was it worth it?

Many internal and external factors can impact an organization. Give a specific example of what you have done when the organization's priorities changed quickly. What was the situation? What did you do? What was the outcome or result? What obstacles and challenges did you face?

Goal Setting and Accomplishments

Describe a time when you set a goal for yourself and did not achieve it. What happened? Was there anything you could have done differently?

Successes: Give an example of an important goal you achieved and how you accomplished that goal.

Challenges: Describe a time when you set a goal for yourself and did not achieve it. What were the ramifications of your failure to achieve your goal?

Processes: Describe how you set your goals and how you measure your accomplishments. Did you achieve your goals? If not, why not? Tell me about a major project you recently finished. Specifically, how did you set the goals and track your progress?

Challenges and Wins: Describe a time you were given a goal that you believed would be impossible to attain. How did you handle it and how did you achieve it?

Relationship Management

How do you go about building relationships with key stakeholders to help get the job done?

Give an example of a time when you were able to build rapport quickly with someone in your organization.

Describe a time you collaborated with others in different areas or cross departmentally, to determine courses of action to achieve mutual goals.

Describe a time when you successfully gained the trust of a client, key stakeholder, or someone at work.

Describe a time when you were willing to disagree with another person in order to build a positive outcome.

Give an example of how you worked with a difficult direct report or colleague. How did you handle the situation? Were you able to get along?

Problem-Solving

Give an example of a time when you actively defined several solutions to a single problem. Which solution did you choose and why?

Give an example of a time when you used fact-finding skills to solve a problem.

Describe a problem you solved that best demonstrates your analytical abilities.

Project Management

Describe a successful program or project that you developed where you had to coordinate and manage a diverse team of people to achieve deliverables.

What processes are important when implementing a new program across multiple business units?

Other Potential Interview Questions

(These questions come from a Harvard Study.)

What is your favorite kind of ice cream or other sweet treat?

How would your parents describe you when you were twelve?

What's the one thing you'll never be as good at as others?

How would your friends describe you in three words?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Describe something that you should start doing, do more of, and do less of.

Please tell me about three failures you've had.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

A Checklist of Questions to Ask Your Interviewer

After all of the questioning in your interview, you still need to have a few questions to ask them if needed. You might be curious about certain nuances of the job that haven't been covered in the conversation.

Here are a few for you to have ready to go in your back pocket if they ask you if you have any questions. Start by asking the interviewer about themselves:

- ☐ How long have you been with the company?
- ☐ What's your favorite thing about working here?
- ☐ How would you describe the culture? What kind of personality will thrive in this culture?
- ☐ Why is this position open?
- ☐ What are your expectations for this position?
- ☐ What are the growth and learning opportunities for this position?
- ☐ What are the biggest strengths and the biggest challenges that you see in this role, and on this team?
- ☐ What is expected in the first 30/60/90 days in this job and by what KPIs (key performance indicators) will I be measured?
- ☐ What is the review culture here and how often will I get a formal performance review?
- ☐ What is the collaboration style of the team and the organization in general?
- ☐ What are the company values and mission?
- ☐ What is the company's vision for the future, in one, three, and five years and beyond?
- ☐ Is there anything else you need from me at this point?
- ☐ What are the next steps in the process?

Is This the “Right Job” for You?

As you start to get closer to an offer, go back to your notes from the beginning of the book. Use them as your guide, now and into the future.

How are you feeling right now? Close your eyes for a moment, take a deep breath, and check in with your heart. Consider the role for which you have interviewed.

Can you imagine yourself doing this job?

Can you imagine working with the people you have met from this company daily?

Do you feel aligned with the work, the mission, vision, and the values of this company?

Do you see a future for yourself at this organization?

Does this role provide the growth opportunities that you want for yourself?

Negotiating the Offer

If this job feels right to you, it's time to start to think about what will happen if you receive an offer.

Does it check the boxes in the areas that are important to you?

Is this the job that will help create that vision that you had for your life?

Will you be happy here?

Will you find meaning and purpose in the work you will be doing?

If not, can this next move for you be a stepping stone in the right direction?

Could it set you up for the next best thing ahead of you?

What is the potential for future opportunities?

Now it's time to negotiate the best offer for yourself. The one that gets you excited to turn on your screen and/or go into the office every day. When negotiating with a future employer, it's important to create a scenario that is a win for you within the constraints of the pay scale that they have budgeted for your role.

Here are the things you need to think about:

- The pay, base salary, bonus potential, commissions
- The work itself
- The benefits—health and other
- The upward mobility and opportunity for learning
- The culture
- The joy it might bring doing something with meaning

Think deeply about how this all fits into your life and into the life that you want in the future. Above all, the big picture for what you want out of life is yours, not anyone else's. Stand firm yet grounded in what you want to achieve in this negotiation.

Your Leadership Signature

It starts with the alignment of the following:

What is your north star? Think of this as your top leadership declaration. What is the essence of who you are as a leader and as an organization?

What is your mission? Your mission should be big-picture, long-term, and meaningful. It's your "WHY."

What is your goal? This is less about values and more about the bottom line. It's actionable and measurable.

What is your value proposition? Prioritize the top values that you hold dearest in your role and for your team. What lights you up?

What is your promise? What is the promise you offer to your employees and to your clients/customers?

What is your mantra? What do you say to yourself and your team every day to ensure that your culture and your leadership are inspiring?

Remember, this is a reflective exercise for you alone. Refer to it regularly, both as a reminder to yourself and to see if anything has shifted or evolved. Keep yourself accountable!

Set a Framework for Success with our “Mad Libs” exercise:

This fun and thought-provoking Mad Libs-style exercise gets the creative juices flowing and helps to clarify expectations and set intentions.

“Filling in the blanks” enables you and a team (if you have one) to identify where their professional goals align with their company’s goals. These don’t have to line up perfectly, but it’s important to recognize the distinction and use that information accordingly. As mentioned, you can do this for yourself and also if you have a team. If you do have a team, use this as a group exercise, to help get everyone to “buy in” right out of the gate.

Individual Goals

My goal for my work is:

The biggest reason I chose this is:

Previously, the three things I was most proud of was:

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

I also faced three big challenges in the form of:

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

What would achieving this goal mean for me? For my life? For my business?

One behavior I must eliminate to achieve this is:

One behavior I must cultivate to help me achieve this is:

My bucket list wish for my work is (dream big here!):

Once you've gotten clarity on your personal goals, look at what you want to achieve in the workplace. If you have a team, how can you be just as intentional about driving results for yourself and your team? Get very clear on what success looks like so you can create a plan to help you achieve it. Remember, you are not alone. Include your teammates and colleagues in this planning as well. Understand each team member's motivations and strengths and assign them tasks accordingly to help move forward together.

Team/Organizational Goals

My team's goals for the business is:

The biggest reason we chose this is:

In the past, the three things we were most proud of were:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

As a team, we also faced three big challenges in the form of:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

What would achieving these goals mean for our team? Our business?

One behavior we must eliminate in our team/culture to achieve this is:

One behavior we must cultivate in our team/culture to help us achieve this is:

Our bucket list wish for our team is (dream big here!):

Now that you have reflected on and put intention into your goals, start to create a strategy for how to make it happen. Try not to get overwhelmed. Break it into baby steps and tackle some every day. This is how we make progress! Set up bimonthly or quarterly meetings to check in on progress and support each other in your shared resolutions. All you need is an hour, a whiteboard, and an open mind to set a framework for shared success.

Gratitude and Goals—for Yourself or Your Team

Time to look back on how far you have come!

What's your focus now?

Are you headed in the right direction?

Where do you want to be at this time next year?

Those big plans, goals, and benchmarks you started planning for in the last exercise will benefit from your own review of what's been working, and where improvements can be made. Tweak what you can now so you end each year on a high!

ABCs—and Gs!

This simple exercise is something I hope you will do with your family, your friends, and your team on a regular basis. This is something that you can always come back to on a regular basis, to keep you motivated and on course at any stage of your career journey.

Achievements: What have you done this year that hit or exceeded your goals? What are you most proud of?

Blessings: What people, things, or situations in your life and your workplace are you grateful for?

Commitments: What will you commit to that will get you to success for the year?

Gratitude: To whom are you grateful for their help and support? How can you express your appreciation to them and how can you pass that energy forward to others?

When we are “lit up” by what we do, loving our work and enjoying our lives, it can have the added benefit of inspiring others to do what they love and to be the best version of themselves as well. We start with ourselves and then we can help others to find that same light. Let’s make this a movement and lift others up as we move forward and into our future. Your future looks bright and I can’t wait to see where you go from here and who you can inspire along the way to your own greatness! Keep spreading the light and keep shining!

Content adapted from *What Lights You Up? Illuminate Your Path and Take the Next Big Step in Your Career* by Mary Olson-Menzel.
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