

## The Seven Stories Exercise<sup>®</sup>: Discovering Your Motivated Skills

[The Seven Stories Exercise](#) was created by Kate Wendleton at the Five O’Clock Club and is based on the work of Bernard Haldane. Haldane worked for the US government in the 1940’s, helping military personnel transition their skills to the civilian workforce. Kate Wendleton recommends this exercise as a tool to help you develop an understanding of the skills you are adept at and enjoy doing. The overall result can also help provide you with content/direction for writing your resume and preparing for interviews.

**Step 1:** Thinking back on your life, make a list of 25 experiences that you enjoyed, did well, and made you feel proud. It does not matter that the results were unsuccessful or unrecognized. What counts is that you enjoyed the experience and performed well. Draw on a variety of past experiences from hobbies and extra-curricular experiences, volunteer activities, class projects, part-time and full-time jobs, internships, military experience, etc. Don’t only think about the recent past. Experiences from your youth (i.e. elementary school) are important to include as well. Don’t be too critical of what to include and be patient. This activity may take you 4-5 days to complete.

**Step 2:** Select 7 experiences from your list of 25, and rank them in order of importance to you.

**Step 3:** Write a paragraph about each experience. What was the setting? Who was involved? Did you act alone or with others? What did you do and what did you accomplish? Why was it enjoyable?

**Step 4:** Analyze your stories. Look for patterns or common traits & skills in your stories. The following questions can help you identify them:

What was the experience?

What about it did you enjoy most?

What did you do best?

What motivated you to do this?

What about it made you proud?

What prompted you to do this?

What enjoyable skills did you demonstrate?

What was the subject matter?

**Step 5:** From your analysis, identify the skills or elements in a job or career path that will be enjoyable for you. Then, think about how these skills or elements might apply to your choice of career. For example, if your stories reveal a common theme of creating and building things, then a career involving mundane, monotonous tasks may not be a good fit for you.

\*\* If you have questions, please read the linked article, first, for clarification.