

PATHLESS

A Pathless Remix

Tim Urban Yearnings Ranking

Adapted From The Essay “How to Pick a Career (That Actually Fits You)”

I loved Tim Urban's essay, “How to Pick a Career (That Actually Fits You),” but I thought the most interesting thing was the yearnings template. And the most valuable thing is how he forces you to downrank certain values and trash them. It forces you to really figure out what you are actually optimizing for. For me, it helped me clearly see that freedom was such a strong North Star for me, and I was willing to compromise a lot for it.

My other values exercise pushes you to list out your top values, and it's easy to list these out. Usually, when you do have to do some trade-offs, it never forces you to rank values much lower than other ones to clearly see what you value at higher levels.

— Paul

Mark one shelf for each yearning. Targets: Non-Negotiable 1-2 · Top 1-3 · Middle + Bottom 10-15 · Trash 3-7.

	NON-NEGOTIABLE	TOP SHELF	MIDDLE SHELF	BOTTOM SHELF	TRASH
Personal					
Achieving Your Potential	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Self-Esteem	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Passion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Meaning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lifestyle					
Means	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Freedom	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Balance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Flexibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ease	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social					
Power	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Approval	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Appreciation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Inclusion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Status	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Respect	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fame	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Moral					
Impact	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Well-Being Of Loved Ones	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reduce Suffering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Improve The Future	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Practical					
Being Not In Debt	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Having Food	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Security	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

My shelves

NON-NEGOTIABLE

“The NN bowl is for yearnings so important to you that you want to essentially guarantee that they’ll happen—at the expense of all other yearnings, if necessary.”

TOP SHELF

“Your group of top shelf yearnings is mostly what will drive your career choices—but top shelf placement should also be doled out sparingly (that’s why it’s not a very large shelf).”

MIDDLE SHELF

“The middle shelf is good for those not-so-noble qualities in you that you decide to accept.”

BOTTOM SHELF

“most yearnings should be on the middle shelf, the bottom shelf, or the trash can.”

TRASH

“Then there’s the trash can, for the drives and fears you flat-out reject—those parts of you that fundamentally violate the person your wisest self wants to be.”
“Shelf placement is as much about de-prioritizing as it is about prioritizing..you’re choosing which parts of you to intentionally leave wanting or even directly opposed”

Good targets

Non-negotiable: 1-2 yearnings · Top Shelf: 1-3 yearnings · Middle + Bottom Shelf: 10-15 yearnings · Trash Can: 3-7 yearnings

Quotes: Tim Urban, “How to Pick a Career (That Actually Fits You),” Wait But Why.