Exploring the Connection between Professional Goals and Personality

An individual's personality can influence his or her career path. For example, someone who enjoys working with people may want to choose an occupation that allows him or her to work directly with the public instead of behind a desk all day. Someone who prefers a structured work schedule may choose an occupation where the work hours are more predictable instead of variable from week-to-week.

One theory explaining personality types as they apply to occupational success is the Holland Code, developed by Dr. John L. Holland. The theory is based on the idea that individuals are examples of six personality classifications: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Each personality has its own set of knowledge, skills, and abilities that relate to various types of occupations. (Holland, 1985).

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<th>Realistic</th>
<th>Investigative</th>
<th>Artistic</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Enterprising</th>
<th>Conventional</th>
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<td>Includes individuals with mechanical or athletic ability; prefer to work with machines or tools, or prefer to work with nature.</td>
<td>Includes people who enjoy observing and analysis, as well as problem solving, or learning in general.</td>
<td>Includes creative individuals, who have intuitive abilities, or like to work in an unstructured environment in which they can use their creativity.</td>
<td>Includes people who like to work with people, mainly to provide information, or apply the skills of healing; these people also often use language well.</td>
<td>Includes people who like to work with people, particularly in a management aspect, or in a position that allows them to persuade others to achieve organizational goals or economic gain.</td>
<td>Includes people who like to work with data, have clerical or numerical ability, and are detail-oriented, and work independently in accord with others' instructions.</td>
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When evaluating your goals, be sure that your goals are in line with your personality.

Consider the following questions (you do not have to submit your answers):

(1) After reading the guidelines from the Holland Code, which personality type best fits you? Why?

(2) Given your personality type, which occupations might you enjoy the most?

(3) Consider the connection between your values, your personality type, and your goals; why is this connection so important?