



Optimization Driver Assessment

We all have something we're optimizing for at work. Most of us have never named it. This assessment helps you identify what's actually driving your decisions, your energy, and your avoidance so you can use it more deliberately.

Most frustration at work isn't a skill or person problem. It's a mismatch between what you need and what the work is giving you. Name your driver and you stop guessing why some tasks drain you and others don't.

The Eight Drivers

Read each one. Which one speaks to you most? Don't overthink it. There's no right or wrong answer.

Stability

I need to know what's coming. Predictability and security matter more than opportunity.
I feel this when unexpected change puts me on edge even if nothing has actually gone wrong.
Having a clear routine makes me noticeably more productive.

Recognition

I need to know my work is seen and valued. Being appreciated fuels me.
I feel this when a genuine thank you energizes me more than I'd expect.
Being overlooked bothers me more than it probably should.

Autonomy

I need control over how I work. Being told what to do drains me.
I feel this when someone questions my process and I immediately want to push back.
Doing the work my way produces my best results.

Craft

I need to do the work at the highest possible level. Mediocre output bothers me.
I feel this when I'm unsatisfied with something others think is fine.
Sending work out before it's ready stays with me.

Efficiency

I need to get the most out of my time and energy. Waste frustrates me.
I feel this when a meeting runs long without a clear purpose and I'm already thinking about what I'm missing.
A process that could be faster and isn't bothers me more than most people understand.

Meaning

I need to believe the work matters beyond the task. Purpose drives me.
I feel this when I can't answer why we're doing something and I lose motivation quickly.
When the work connects to something bigger I can push through almost anything.

Income

I need financial security and growth. Compensation is a real motivator, not a dirty word.
I feel this when financial uncertainty creeps in and it's hard to focus on anything else.
What something pays is part of how I evaluate whether it's worth my time.

Comfort

I need to protect what's working. Change for its own sake costs me more than it gains.
I feel this when a new initiative lands and my first instinct is to figure out what it's going to disrupt.
When something is working I need a real reason to change it.





Circle Your Driver

Circle one or two that feel most true right now. Not what you wish were true. Not what sounds best. What's actually driving you today.

The most useful answer is the one that's true, not the one that sounds good.

Most people feel a few of these to some degree. You're looking for the one or two that feel non-negotiable.

If you circled more than two, ask yourself:

Which one would you protect first if the others were threatened? That's your primary driver.

How to Use Your Driver

When you're stuck with something that fights your driver, the point isn't to escape it, it's to name it. A Craft person forced into rushed, sloppy work can't avoid the assignment, but naming the mismatch stops them from mistaking frustration for failure.

Before you choose between two paths, a role, a promotion, a move, compare them against your driver, not just title or pay. Autonomy people feel a loss of freedom as a real cost, even with more money attached.

If you keep avoiding a task, that's usually a driver conflict, not laziness. Efficiency people bristle at slow work. Meaning people stall on work they can't connect to a point.

When you ask for something, name the driver directly. "I need more autonomy on this" lands harder than "I'd like more flexibility."

This works on you. It also works on the people you work with or manage. If someone keeps resisting something that should be easy, you may be negotiating against their driver without knowing it.

Now Make It Real

Think of a current project or task you're working on right now, or one that comes around regularly and always feels harder than it should.

One task, project, or responsibility I keep finding reasons not to finish is...

I think that's because I...

This ties back to the driver I circled because...

