

# The Bowl of Skills and Knowledge (BOSK) Reflection Tool

Often when asked the question, “Tell me about yourself,” we answer with a title from work. Does that tell the full story of what you know, the skills set, and knowledge accumulated across your lifetime?

Probably not. Imagine seeing yourself differently.

The following exercise can help you redefine the way you shape that explanation and presentation of who you are – first to yourself, and then to others. You can recognize and affirm the wide variety of skills and knowledge gained from your first encounter with work and how they impact the person you present in a conversation, a resume, a third-party introduction and more.

Complete this exercise to step outside of the limitation of titles to reframe the lens of what you know, can do, and might become. Exercise:

1. Think of your first job. List at the bottom of the “bowl” what you learned (i.e., the importance of being organized, meeting timelines, customer service, working in teams, the importance of patience, etc.)
2. Look at your curriculum vitae/resume in chronological order, going back to the early days of your career.
3. Without using job titles, document what you learned on the job. Each line in the bowl will grow, showing a larger picture through the progression of years and experience. Keep moving up all you have written, and add to each following line new learning, skills, and knowledge.
4. On the top line, this will be your current state. If you like, you can create a word cloud in order to see the full picture on one page. Some people also choose to take small note cards and drop them into an actual



bowl as they complete the exercise. At the end, you can spread out all the cards and take a picture of the cumulative skills and knowledge.

5. The result is a picture of the whole person, separate from official job titles.
6. Post the word cloud, picture, or bowl somewhere where you can be reminded of all you have learned over time.
7. Consider how this might help you present yourself for any promotion, new position, or simply a different response to “Tell me about yourself.” It can also help to do this as a team to see the collective wisdom and any skills sets that might be enhanced.
8. Look for words that suggest a trend, such as leadership.
9. Discuss your findings with others, possibly a few colleagues, friends, or family.
10. The result is yours for any application where it might be useful.

Hopefully, this exercise will help you see the confinements of titles and expand the ways you and others can see all that you have learned and the skills gained across a lifetime.

**“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.”**  
– Aristotle

