

Aptitude Testing After Age 35

Original Article by Brenda Smith
Revised by Alicia Bergfeld
Senior Test Administrator

Inquiries to AIMS about the efficacy of aptitude testing after age 35 have been made with increasing frequency by men and women who are frustrated with their present life situations. The “mid-life crisis” reported by so many is closely related to a sense of dissatisfaction and restlessness leading to career changes at this stage in life. The AIMS aptitude evaluation program is valuable to adults contemplating a change in vocation, but it is necessary to understand that the results and recommendations may not be helpful for every adult.

With Middle Age comes wisdom. Unfortunately, it also comes with physical and emotional challenges, as well as increasing financial pressures. The fear of disease and poor health are ever-present. The need to care for aging parents becomes a reality, and children go off to college and start their own lives. In looking at their own progress and achievements, many individuals feel that their material and personal accomplishments do not meet their original expectations. Because of these changes, many middle-aged people look inward with an intensity they have never before experienced.

Too often, we have clients who find themselves dissatisfied with their careers, struggling to understand the reason. Sometimes it is as simple as a promotion that has placed an individual behind a desk instead of interacting with clients. Consequently, promotions can remove a person from the activities at which he or she excelled, those that helped earn the promotion in the first place. Others realize their dissatisfaction stems from the realization that they have spent most, if not all, of their adult life in the wrong career. It is this group for which the services provided at AIMS can be extremely beneficial.

For example, a business systems analyst for a large computer corporation discovered that he had no natural talent for the computational and problem-solving activities required in computer sales. He possessed some of the aptitudes associated with sales, but proved to have a strong ability for spatial and three-dimensional thinking. This aptitude, called Structural Visualization, had no outlet in his current field. His customers were not interested in the machine itself; they were only interested in the information the computer could produce. In order to release his structural ability, at the same time building on his sales experience, he solved the problem by changing to selling airplanes to private individuals and small companies. He and his clients were interested in the mechanical features of the product, not just the service it was capable of rendering. This individual combined his natural abilities and previous career training in order to find a more suitable career field.

Some people make rather drastic changes in their careers to match their aptitudes. A client whose results revealed the appropriate abilities for mechanical repair: a Specialist-Introvert Frame of Reference, high Dexterities, high Diagnostic Reasoning, high Design Memory, and low Ideaphoria, had no tools of expression in her job as a high school English teacher. Her solution to the problem was to learn camera repair from a man who owned a camera shop. She spent her summers and holidays honing her new skill; the result of her efforts was a booming business in camera repair. She achieved the sense of satisfaction she craved by challenging her aptitudes.

In deciding on the possible value of aptitude testing, you should evaluate the options that are changeable in your situation. If the sacrifices required to make a career change are viewed as being too great, the test results may intensify rather than assuage your frustrations. If you are an adult considering the AIMS

testing program, use the following guidelines to determine whether or not the results will be the type of information that you need at this point in your life.

SHOULD I TAKE THE AIMS TESTS? – GUIDELINES TO CONSIDER

The AIMS aptitude testing program can help in these cases:

1. You are unhappy with your job activities – THE WORK ITSELF – and you want to know what careers would better fit your natural abilities.
2. A career change is possible, but you want more information about yourself before you make such a decision.
3. You are considering the aptitude tests in order to increase your knowledge of yourself.
4. You can absorb the financial setbacks that accompany career shifts, retraining, or continued education.
5. You do not expect the magic answer to your career problems.

The AIMS program *will not* be helpful in these cases:

1. You like the work you do, but you are unhappy with your present situation because of your boss, your company, your location, or other factors unrelated to your job duties.
2. You know what kind of work you find satisfying, but you simply want to make more money.
3. You cannot take a significant decrease in salary in the first phases of a new career.
4. You need to change jobs quickly, and you do not have time to fully investigate the AIMS recommendations.
5. You know what kind of work you want to do, but you need more information on how to make a career change. The information you receive from AIMS can help you determine career objectives. It **WILL NOT** outline a procedure for finding the specific jobs that may help you to achieve these objectives.

After you decide that a career change is possible, your chances of making a successful transition depend upon your motivation, your perseverance, your willingness to research the possibilities, and your ability to present yourself positively to potential employers. Through the AIMS program, clients gain an understanding of how to use their aptitudes to the fullest potential, as well as how to avoid the frustration that brought them to AIMS in the first place.

Oftentimes, clients leave our offices with a sigh of relief, comforted that their frustrations are justified. A sense of clarity is borne from learning of one's unique abilities, providing a sense of confidence that change and satisfaction are within reach.