



1. If anything was possible, what would your dream job be, and why?

My definition of a 'dream job' is a job that I'm good at, I'm happy doing, and I'm paid fairly. So, I'm not really sure if I still have a dream job because it could be anything. I have come to a point in life where there really is no such thing as a dream job. But based on my definition, I don't have a dream job; I have a dream job condition. I've come to this realization because I've personally grown content with life and have concluded that I cannot affix my identity to a certain career. What really matters is how I work and how I deal with my colleagues. Character over title.

I, personally, believe that all work is sacred because it has been a divine ordinance since the time of creation. So, my mindset is all work is equal. If it is done honestly, with integrity, and with the intention to provide for the needs of your family, then that is good enough for me.

2. Have you ever experienced a stressful situation in your past workplace (college if fresh graduate), what was it, and how did you overcome it?

The call of the sea has and always will separate people from their friends and families. So, if I'm counting days when I experienced stress, it would be the whole contract. But if I were to mention one, I would probably choose the times when we were tasked to clean the cargo holds of the vessel. To put it in perspective, each cargo hold is designed to hold around 10,000 metric tons of cargo. It's a pretty big room, and we have to clean it. I find it stressful because, never mind the manual labor, cleaning the cargo holds often comes with a tight schedule, and that results in sleepless nights and mind-numbing body aches. Not to mention the relentless demands of charterers and shippers to finish the job as soon as possible. The entire system borders on abuse. As I compose this, I must pause and think, "How *did* I overcome it?" The answer would probably be more complex, but the main factors would probably be my faith and my attitude. I broke the task down in my mind and concentrated on completing "mini tasks." The fleeting positive sensation from completing a "mini task" helped me to accomplish the major tasks. And I believe it was God who helped me get through it all.



3. In your previous position, what task did you find most challenging and why? What task did you enjoy most, and why?

An Ordinary Seaman's job description is composed of only two sentences, but those are vague sentences that are designed to be that way so that any tasks can be given, even those that seem to be far off from the actual job description but can just be justified by the loophole of the ambiguity of the job description. With all that said, the most challenging task that I faced that did not involve grueling physical labor was probably accommodating ship visitors and inspectors. The visitors were going on board the vessel for business purposes; accommodating them required that I should have mastery of the vessel so that when they asked for or about something, I knew where to find it. Time is, in fact, gold for vessel operations, so knowledge of the whereabouts of anything can save a lot of time and, thus, lessen the expenses of the vessel owners. But it doesn't stop there. I also had to have the mastery of areas of concern on the vessel. I had to know areas that were posing increased hazards so that I could guide the visitors and warn them of the threats to those areas. It also does not help that those inspectors and visitors often have a sense of entitlement. Treating the vessel like a five-star hotel where they can just order everybody around. I could say so much more, but I think that about explains the whole ordeal of accommodating visitors and inspectors on board.

Though the overall vessel experience is challenging, there were tasks that I enjoyed. For my personal experience, the task I enjoyed the most was dismantling tools and equipment for maintenance and repair. There is just a satisfaction in opening an equipment and seeing the insides and how each part contributes to the overall function. Making the machinery function properly then brings a sense of fulfillment. You saw what it was before, but after a few spritzes of WD-40, a few pats of the hammer, and a few scrubs of the steel brush, ta-da! Good as new.

4. How would your past colleagues or managers describe your work ethic?



I've had my share of bad encounters with managers and officers, but those were usually when they were not thinking about us and just giving out orders and expecting us to follow unconditionally, like we're robots. Those encounters, however, were settled amicably and professionally. Despite the encounters, all my superiors gave me recommendation letters at the end of every contract. All of them were recommending me for higher positions. The common inclusions of the recommendation letters were acknowledgement of my skills, my industry, my diligence in learning about things that I was not familiar with, my willingness to help even if it was way past my shift, and my overall contribution to the vessel. All my superiors verbally commended me and expressed their gratitude for my help in their work. Not to toot my own horn, but the fleet manager would often receive messages from captains and chief officers, requesting me to be lined up with them in a vessel. It's not a promotion, but that gives me a sense of fulfillment, knowing that my work was acknowledged by my superiors and those who have not even worked with me.

5. What personal or professional accomplishments are you most proud of?

The professional accomplishment that I am most proud of is the time when I was placed in charge of overhauling the entire vessel safety management system records in preparation for back-to-back audits and inspections. I had to check for updates from our central SMS system in Japan to determine if our records were up to date. Unsurprisingly, the records I inherited from the previous crew were all outdated and required a major overhaul. The master and chief officer agreed that I should be placed in charge of the task. So, I was formally tasked to finish the project within the voyage duration, which was 34 days. It required a lot of work because I was alone in doing all those things, and the scope of the work was not only document revisions using the PC but also taking pictures of equipment, detailing the present condition, maintenance plan, and rectifications (if necessary). It was difficult. But when the audit and inspection came, we received a 'zero-deficiency' recognition, which improved the vessel's 'Rightship' score (a score system used by vessel charterers to help them choose which vessel to charter, because it indicates how likely a vessel can be detained and thus affect profitability). I was not formally acknowledged for it because those responsibilities were supposed to be for the officers, but it didn't matter to me. What mattered is the fact that I did my best, and it got me the result I desired. I couldn't ask for more.