



Figure 11-1. Concept map of characteristics of present job.

providing resources on a smoking cessation hotline because it provides a similar connection with others, incorporating the concept of mattering in her work.

Many older people thinking of retirement consider *bridge careers*—employment that takes place after an individual has retired from full-time work, but before one has left the workforce entirely. According to Kim and Feldman (2000) and Cahill, Giandrea, and Quinn (2006), those accepting bridge employment were more likely to be in excellent health, have been in a job for an extended period of time, and had a working spouse and dependent children. Those who were older or had a higher salary were less likely to accept bridge employment, and were more likely to retire completely when leaving their job. The research indicates that bridge employment was strongly correlated to both retirement satisfaction and overall life satisfaction. Cahill et al. (2006) also indicated that current older adults may work longer than the cohort of older people reaching retirement age in the early 1980s. A qualitative study of older workers in the Washington, D.C. area (Ulrich & Brott, 2005) indicates that bridge jobs provide the means to define retirement as a positive opportunity. Those participating in a bridge job viewed retirement as a continuance of their previous life because it incorporated aspects of responsibility, obligations, and choice.

## What Am I Looking to Reinvent?

Even before one starts the process to find a new career, it is important to find out what one is trying to change. After being in a career for a long time, it is quite common to view challenges in the workplace as unfixable, and only tolerable in the short term. Part of the preparation for a new career should involve looking at the strengths and weaknesses of one's present career and clarify the problems one is trying to solve by making a career change. Using a tool such as concept mapping (<http://www.udel.edu/chem/white/teaching/ConceptMap.html>) or mind mapping (Buzan, 1996) is helpful to ensure that all relevant concepts and ideas are considered. While concept mapping was originally developed to help people learn new information, it is also extremely useful in getting a better understanding of a given topic. A concept map or mind map can easily be hand-written on paper. In addition, there are many concept mapping and mind mapping software tools available for computer, tablet and smart phone.

Figure 11-1 is an example of a concept map developed by 66-year-old Jonas, who is trying to decide whether or not he should leave his job of 15 years. As a result of drawing the concept map, Jonas found that he has several areas in which he feels a good deal of job satisfaction, particularly enjoying his relationships with coworkers and clients, and the sense of independence he feels while doing his work.

When asked about it, Jonas says he definitely he feels that he matters in the work environment. However, he does find challenges in the following areas: salary, physical challenge (he is exhausted at the end of the day), a long evening commute, and lack of intellectual challenge. By working