

## Clarity at a Career Crossroads

By Rebecca Wells

### Do you:

- Feel unhappy at work but feel paralysed with fear to do anything about it?
- Suffer from a churning stomach every morning?
- Struggle to find clarity of an alternative path?
- Find you have lost interest in your job need a career that truly excites you?
- Want to feel energised from the moment you wake up to the time you go to sleep?

If you want different results, greater success and more fulfilment in your career, our top tips might help!

### Step 1: Get brave and *choose* to do something about it ...

#### 1. The 'ideal job' is not wishful thinking

People often talk themselves out of being happy professionally because they believe 'something better' just isn't possible.

Remember: there are always, *a/ways* options available to you.

Ask what does the belief, "There's no such thing as an ideal job for me" *get* for you?

Does it give you security and certainty? In other words, by doing nothing and by telling yourself there's nothing better for you out there, does it keep you safe?

Do testing the boundaries or trying something new expose you to error, disappointment or failure?

Decide if your current situation is working for you. If it is not, don't spend the next 10, 20, 30, 40 years (you get the picture) wallowing in your own fear.

Take command of your life and make a positive change to have more of what you want in your life and career. Eight hours a day for the rest of your working life might be an awfully long time if you're doing something professionally that you hate...

## 2. You're never too old for a career change

It is *never* too late to change career, so long as you have a structured and well thought through strategy to support you.

What does 'too old' mean anyway? Too old for *what*?

'Age' is just another barrier that people erect to protect themselves from potential failure or rejection.

Sure, some recruiters might be looking for a younger employee. But others are looking for experience, a mature head, a seasoned strategist, an experienced leader, a creative thinker, an inspiration...

If you want to change careers but are more 'senior', still run through our process. By discovering your passions, setting goals and using your contacts you are giving yourself your best chance to make change happen.

**YOU** are the biggest barrier to your own success.

How's *that* for hard hitting???

## Step 2: Get moving

### 3. Discover your passions

When exploring what an alternative career might look like the key is to step out of your current headspace. Chances are you've been regurgitating the same beliefs and thoughts about what you're capable of (or 'not capable of' in most cases) for a long time.

Careers become stale for a reason and it's essential that what you 'do' professionally is congruent with your values and passions, what drives you and what makes you feel most fulfilled.

Decide first and foremost what makes you happiest. Brainstorm everything that gets you going – whether it's the kinds of people you enjoy being with most, the interests that get your blood racing, the activities that make you feel most centred or alive.

Write them all down on a piece of paper and don't stop until you've got at least 30 things written down.

Now circle the words that jump out at you, that get your heart racing, that make you smile. Choose one and write it in the middle of a piece of paper.

Explode that idea out into anything that springs to mind.

If for example, you wrote down 'animals' as your interest area, exploded areas might include: zoos, wildlife parks, vet. From that you might explode further to: game keeper, animal specialist, front of house, veterinary nurse, animal charities, animal products, pet food.

Keep exploding the ideas out until your page is absolutely swamped with ideas all related to that initial interest area 'animals'.

#### 4. Look around you for contacts

You will know more people than you would ever think possible.

Write a list of all the people you know.

There may be people around you who can give you advice. There might be others with friends who work within your areas of interest. There might be people who you could ask for a work experience placement or the opportunity to shadow them during a working day.

Use all the resources available to you and all the experience of those around you to help you research your potential career areas and to help you decide whether or not those interest areas match your values and get your pulse racing!

### Step 3: Take action

#### 5. Find out what you're dealing with

When travelling into unknown territory it's easy to talk yourself out of it. People commonly litter their inner monologues with fear-based statements and questions:

"If I do X, Y might happen."

It's essential to feel prepared so find out as much as you can about the current situation. Research the alternatives open to you. Remove 'what if' questions from your vocabulary by finding out the answer before you ask it.

Knowing exactly what you're dealing with, what hurdles you might need to jump and what you may need to do to make something happen puts you in the position of power.

Those 'What ifs...' are the statements and questions of victims.

You are not a victim. You are a pioneer on a journey of self discovery. Armed with the facts, you take the driving seat and can then make reasoned judgments about the path you should take.

## 6. Set some goals

Be clear on what you want by establishing some short, mid and long term goals. If the career you are passionate about requires further study consider what impact that might have on your timescales and budget.

Set yourself clear, simple goals that describe what you want (not what you *don't* want) and then follow Tips 7 and 8.

## 7. Break it down

'Career change' as a statement or thought could easily be regarded as being overwhelming.

Once you have decided on your overall /'end' goal, break it down into something more manageable. Then break *that* down into something more manageable again.

It might take 5, 10 or 20 steps for you to reach a 'first' step that feels manageable for you to tackle right away but that's fine. What you want is an end goal and then a list of small step goals needed to help you achieve that overall goal more easily.

Once each step is achieved tick it off, reward yourself and look to the next one!

## 8. Put some deadlines in place

It's easy to set yourself a task but then allow other things to get in the way and hinder your progress.

Remember, if you're committed to making this change you will **do what it takes** to make it happen and will refuse to be distracted from the task at hand.

Set yourself deadlines for when you want to have achieved each step by. Ensure your end goal, and each smaller step goal, have dates assigned to them. This will give you focus, remove a little pressure and give you a solid strategy as opposed to leaving your career change to chance.

If you miss a deadline for one of your step goals, don't panic. Just look at what a more realistic date might be and then stick to that.

## 9. Actively look for your options

If you have discovered a potential career option there are always different ways you could approach it to make it come to life.

So for example if you need to do further study to change career, you might see this as an obstacle. So flip the situation over and decide what the opposite, solution-driven view might be.

So if you're thinking, "The only option is full time study" ask, "Can I study part time?"; "Can I study during evenings?"; "Can I distance-study?"; "What else *could* I do?"

You may not achieve an outcome or obtain the response you want immediately. Take a deep breath. See the 'problem' as a 'challenge' and think around it. Get flexible. Get resourceful. Look for what the alternative angles might be.

Remember – there are ALWAYS options but to be successful you have to take a role of leadership and *actively* look for them.

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