

Life-Work Discovery Report

The newsletter of futureDESIGN STUDIO INC.

Why Choose a Career Coach?

The notion of a personal coach has become very trendy these days. You can go to a gym and hire a personal trainer to put together an exercise routine, develop a diet plan and guide you through your routine. You can hire a coach to teach you how to sing, dance, or act. You can hire an aviation instructor to teach you how to fly. Whatever the discipline, there is undoubtedly someone who can and will train you in it. Do you want a coach? Do you need one?

Why do people choose a coach? Let me suggest some possible reasons. First, if we are beginners choosing a new activity, it may be because we are keenly aware of our lack of knowledge and want to confer with someone who knows much more than we do. Second, we recognize the activity is important to us in some fundamental way and we want

to attain a certain proficiency. Third, we may take up the activity on our own, become disappointed with our early results and seek out someone who can shorten our learning curve. Whatever the reasons, it is important to clarify for ourselves why we are considering a coach and what we hope to gain from the relationship.

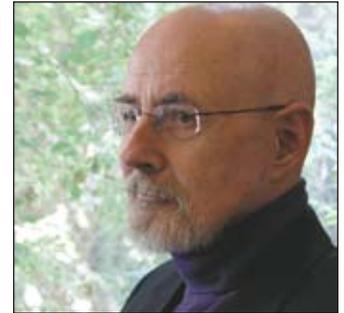
There are many people who call themselves coaches today. Some bring great credit to the profession and others are nothing more than manipulative con artists. The knowledge, experience, style, and personal characteristics of a coach or trainer are very important.

A coach must bring a special kind of knowledge to the situation. It's one thing to sit in a classroom and listen to a professor lecture on some arcane subject. It's quite another to learn archery with an instruc-

tor standing beside you and guiding your hand as you pull the bow and arrow back while you line up a target. A professor imparts knowledge, often quite useful, while a coach rehearses you in the action steps of a discipline.

A coach must possess broad experience. She must have proven herself over time, working successfully with a variety of students or clients, each with their own special challenges, in a diverse situations.

A coach must provide encouragement and support. He may assertively challenge clients to stretch themselves, to push beyond self-perceived limitations. But his goal is to strengthen rather than tear down. The personal styles of effective coaches may vary tremendously, but their intent is always the same: to empower individuals to realize their goals.



Why should you choose a career coach? Do you think you can design and secure a career on your own? Perhaps you can, but perhaps not. The job marketplace is far more complex than ever before. The exponential growth of information, technology and globalization has transformed our world. Manufacturing and technology are being outsourced to nations far beyond our borders. Corporations are restructuring and downsizing executives and mid-level professionals.

Older workers were never trained to manage their careers under these conditions. Mid-life professionals

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Perhaps the most important question is: "What would I do with my life if I knew I could not fail?"

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Create a Career You Love!

According to a recent survey, 80 percent of Americans report dissatisfaction with some aspect of their jobs. These people are employed but express boredom, frustration, or anger about their work lives. The unemployed may have felt the same about their jobs but now face the additional stress and challenge of finding work, any work, to support themselves and their families. Uncertainty about the health of our economy has only compounded that challenge.

Psychologists report that searching for work is among the most stressful challenges most of us will face in our lives, ranking right up there with exiting a marriage, losing a loved one, or facing the prospect of our own mortality. Traditional job search methods simply don't work for many people. It doesn't help matters when we reflect that most of us were never trained to identify and secure

meaningful, rewarding work.

Do we delude ourselves in thinking we can find work we love? I think not. My personal experience and that of my clients suggests that there is a holistic, empowering approach to career planning and development. But before we take up the challenge, we would be wise to look inward and ask ourselves several probing questions:

- What do I really want in my life and career?
- What gifts has my Creator/the Universe given me?
- Am I just going through the motions on my present job?
- What would I most like to change about my life and my work?
- Do I deserve meaningful, rewarding work?

Self-exploration is not self-indulgence. It is a precious key to unlocking the treasure chest of who we are and what we want and deserve out of our lives. Self-exploration,

done with courage and compassion, can help us touch our own uniqueness, our own worth, and make explicit what is holding us back from the success each of us deserves. Self-exploration is our gift to our selves.

Perhaps the most important question we could ask ourselves is What would I do with my life if I knew I could not fail? How we approach this question will tell us much about how we see ourselves and life itself.

If we consider the question itself as ridiculous and not worthy of scrutiny, we might be unwilling to put aside our conditioning and our resistance to change. We might discover we are swimming in a sea of such thoughts as "I do have dreams but I have to be realistic," or "I'd really like to change careers, but I have to consider the wishes of my wife/children/parents," or "If only I had made better deci-

sions earlier, I could..." This is useful information. We might then want to investigate how holding on to such beliefs helps us.

However, if we see the question as a way of exploring a universe of unlimited possibilities, we are free to examine our options without, for the time being, the intrusion of our internal critic. Does the question free us up in some way? Does exploring the question provide a sense of excitement and give us energy to continue our journey? We might then seek to field test our ideas in the real world.

If you are dissatisfied with your present job, are downsized and looking for work, or entering the job marketplace for the first time, you may want to engage in some serious self-exploration. Try it out and see what happens!

Why Choose a Career Coach? (continued)

are still wedded to outmoded strategies of researching the marketplace. Young people are not effectively counseled in high school or college; they will need to plan for multiple careers if they are to successfully ride the waves of change.

A trained career consultant and coach should offer a broad package of services to help you to

- Envision a meaningful career as well as a job
- Identify your talents and skills

- Work through your fears and resistance to attain your goals
- Tap into your success pathways
- Design and implement strategies to bring you face to face with the person who can hire you, give you a consulting contract or fund your business

Each of these modalities is essential to any well-designed career plan. Don't consider any coach who cannot provide you with all of them.

Ask any coach to provide you with credentials and an extensive list of current and former clients. Querying current and former clients is one of the best ways to evaluate whether a prospective career coach is appropriate for you.

One final caution: The one thing a coach cannot give you is your commitment, drive and determination to succeed. Commit yourself totally to your quest and a good career coach will serve as a powerful catalyst to enable you to identify and find work you love.

Creating a Vision of Our Lives & Careers

When I work with my clients, one of the things we focus on first is creating a vision of what they want out of their lives and careers. For many, it is a very difficult issue. Vision in its most literal sense refers to our eyesight, our ability to see. Seeing, in turn, involves looking inward and outward, reflecting our ability to penetrate ourselves and the world we live in.

For most of us, the way we live is shaped by our DNA, the events which have shaped our lives and our belief systems. We cannot change our genetic code or past events. We can, however, examine our belief systems to explore whether they are congruent with reality and whether they truly serve us well. Our belief systems largely shape how we see ourselves and the world.

The model I use with clients is what I call Life-Work Discovery. It is a holistic, integrative process that encourages them to identify what brings them joy, what skills are found in their toolboxes, and what they can offer the world as employees, consultants or business owners.

Joanna Macy in her wonderful book, *World as Lover, World as Self*, presents four basic world views that most of us hold to one degree or another. It should be stressed that we may shift between views depending on what events and issues are presently in our lives.

The World as Battlefield:

"...wherein good and evil are pitted against each other, and the forces of light battle the forces of darkness...life being a proving ground to test your mettle...leading to a sanctioning of competition and survival of the fittest..."

The World as Trap:

"wherein we are persuaded to disentangle ourselves and escape from a messy world... wherein, extricated, we attempt to ascend to a higher, super-phenomenal world... wherein, trying to escape from a world on which are dependent breeds a love-hate relationship with it and inflames a two-fold desire – to destroy and to possess...which tends to downplay any role the world with its very pressures, pains and risks could play in our discovering our own true and vast nature..."

The World as Lover:

"...wherein the world is beheld as a most intimate and gratifying partner...and every being, every thing, every phenomenon can become an expression of an ongoing erotic impulse impelling us to

seek to discover the lover of each life-from..."

The World as Self:

"...wherein we are apt, when falling in love with the world, to fall into oneness with it as well...and notions such as separation, isolation, and fragmentation become understood as strictly self-limiting beliefs and not in the nature of reality at all..."

It is important that as we look at what we want out of our lives and careers, we examine carefully how we see ourselves and see the world and the beings within it. Are we carrying beliefs that are preventing us from growth and realizing our true potential?

What is your prevailing world view?

Renewal

Modern life poses ongoing challenges for all of us. Television, radio, the internet, cell phones and other electronic toys flood us with sounds and images demanding our attention. We are encouraged to buy those things that will make us perform better, look younger, and act more quickly. In our working lives we are continually asked to work faster, make critical decisions with all due speed, and to produce superior results.

The impact of economic globalization, the tremendous growth of knowledge disseminated throughout the world through the internet, the

thrust of world-wide terrorism, the mastery of technology by Third World nations have transformed how we view and live in the world. Change is everywhere and all enveloping. The impact of all of these factors impacts our physical, emotional and mental health.

The ancients saw many of these challenges in the growth of city life in agrarian societies. The wise men of the times urged city dwellers to retire, if only for short periods, to the countryside to enjoy the nurturing qualities of nature and respite from the demands of the city, with its noise, commerce and pollution. Today the world and its inhabitants

are grappling with how best to preserve the beauties and sustenance of Mother Earth. We are literally facing the ultimate destruction of our worldly home.

Macro problems require broad, consensual, and comprehensive solutions embrace by the world's governments acting in concert and are clearly beyond the scope of this newsletter. However, there are strategies we, as individuals, can employ to step off the treadmill of modern life to renew and restore our body-minds. Indeed, designing and implementing such strategies is crucial if we are to effectively address the demands of

modern life, much less be able to understand and contribute to the solution of world problems.

We need time to allow our bodies and minds to slow down, rest and restore our equilibrium and equanimity. In short, we need to schedule time for renewal. It is really not an option: renewal is imperative if we are to function at our best in our lives and careers.

Yoga, meditation, fitness regimens, and frequent vacations are all options for renewal. Take time out to examine your life and see whether you need to take more time for renewal. You won't regret it.

Resting in the River of Our Lives

It's no wonder most of us live lives of quiet desperation. The media feature stories on the war on terror, impending threats to Medicare and Social Security, rampant violence in our neighborhoods, and job lay-offs throughout the economy. "Bad" news sends us off to work grumpy many a morning. The pace and intensity of modern life is much faster and more intense than that encountered by our grandparents. The price we pay is stress within our bodies and minds that, if left unchecked, can send us to doctors, therapists and our local pharmacy seeking relief from the physical and psychic tension we carry with us throughout our day.

Most of us "know" about the dangers of stress; it's a topic frequently mentioned in the health sections of our newspapers and magazines. But how many of us are actually able to deal with stress in our lives? Tara Brach, a therapist and meditation teacher, offers a wonderful tool for finding peace and calm in the midst of the chaos of our lives. She calls it "the sacred pause."

The sacred pause is a way of stepping off the treadmill and resting in the present moment. It's especially useful when we find ourselves caught up in regret for the past, worry about the future, grasping for desired results, or pushing away reality's unwanted gifts.

We can take a sacred pause whenever and wherever we find ourselves.

To create your own sacred pause:

- Choose a time when you are caught up in a result-driven activity: cleaning, paying bills, working a crossword puzzle.
- Stop what you are doing, sit with a relaxed, yet alert posture and close your eyes.
- Take several deep breaths and "tune in" to the quality and duration of the in-breath and the out-breath.
- Notice what you experience as you live within the pause. What sensations, feel-

ings, thoughts arise in your body... in your mind? Do you experience boredom, restlessness, or some other quality that tries to pull you back into activity? Just notice without judgment.

- Gently allow yourself to be with whatever is happening in this sacred pause.

For the next month, try out this simple, yet effective, process at various points in your day: upon arising, while at work, before you slip into sleep at night.

Try this approach and observe what happens. Feel free to share your responses. I would love to hear from you.

Resources For You

You know a book, painting, or place has touched you deeply when you are able to call it to mind years after you first experienced it. In this section of our newsletter, I will be suggesting various resources to enrich your life and career. But I am also interested in printing your suggestions. Send them to nealgriebing@futuredesignstudio.com

The Way of the Ronin by Beverly Potter

The information revolution and globalization have transformed our world, accelerating the pace of change. In this third edition of her ground-breaking book, Potter asks career seekers to emulate the Japanese samurai and ride the waves of change for career fulfillment and a meaningful life.

Fun is Good by Mike Veek

The subtitle "How to Create Joy & Passion in your Workplace & Career" says it all. Veek is president and part owner of six wildly successful minor league baseball teams. Mike's credo is "Make work fun and you'll create a culture of creativ-

ity where the best people will want to work and customers will want to spend their money."

The Light Inside the Dark by John Tarrant

Tarrant takes us on a journey through the interior life whereby we explore spirit and soul while cutting through our dark shadow to ultimately experience light and joy in our lives. On the journey he brings together ancient Eastern traditions with Western philosophy to illuminate our inner geography.

Graceful Passages

This is an extraordinary 2 CD collection of spoken words and music that speak to the final rite of passage in our lives, our death. Disc one has just the music, disc two, both words and

music. The collection embraces and transcends all religious traditions. It is a must gift for those who are contemplating their leaving this life. Available from Companion Arts, LLC. Toll free: 888-242-6608

How to Succeed as an Independent Consultant by Herman Holtz & David Zahn

Zahn updates Holtz' 1982 classic work on establishing yourself as a consultant. This 2004 edition integrates questions to determine whether you should consider consulting as a career, time-proven techniques for designing your particular practice, and a thorough analysis of the economic trends emerging in the 21st century. Highly recommended.

The Pathfinder by Nicholas Lore

Lore is the creator of the Rockport Institute, Career Choice Program a highly regarded career counseling program. Lore focuses on helping people find more engaging, fulfilling work. It's not a quick read, but rather a dense, rich book requiring the reader's full attention. It's a most rewarding read.

Rich Woman by Kim Kiyosaki

Kim is the wife of Robert Kiyosaki and a very successful business woman in her own right. She writes very knowledgeably about how women can overcome the internal blocks and barriers to acquiring financial knowledge and wealth. The material is well written and easy to understand.