

“Work you Love: Self-Organizational Principles on Career Success”

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When beginning the process of personal introspection, seekers come to understand that they are much bigger on the inside than they have ever realized. Discerning a new job is not about finding better pay, a flexible schedule, easier work, or high prestige; within all of those aspirations one's ego is distracting the seeker from discovering work they truly love (Boldt, 2004; Perlman 1992). Becoming whom you desire to be means escaping from the illusions you have built up over the course of your life as a means of defining "success" and embarking on self-discovery of your own gifts, talents, and passion (Furnham, 2002). Discovering work that excites you, creates energy within you, and drives you to excel each day is the work that you should seek to discover and pursue at all costs or risk. Henry David Thoreau says "most [people] lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them" discovering your passion means taking a chance on yourself and going beyond your comfort zone; do not risk your dream to play it safe (Thoreau, 1998).

Over the course of this paper, we will discuss four key principles of organizational change for one to discover and seek out the opportunity that the heart desires. Contrary to popular belief, no one person can change another person; we alone can change how we understand our self, interact with others, and how we choose to lead (Flin, 2002). If we desire to seek a new career, then we cannot move forward with who we have been, but we must change our self from the inside and

believe in the work we have accomplished (Boldt, 2004). The four key principles consist of discernment, companions, development, and transition. These principles cannot be rushed or skipped; a seeker must live each one and wait until they have reached maturity before taking the next step (Boldt, 2004). Mindfulness will be a concept that will be revisited throughout this discussion as a tool to keep the seeker focused in the present, aware of what is around her/him, and focused on the work at hand (Wicks, 2009). Each key principle will have a practical application resource for the seeker to utilize in discovering work that they can fall in love with for life.

Discerning your call to work

Knowing what gifts come from the heart, is deep and it reflects a person's honest-true self (Palmer, 2000). Discernment requires a quiet listening that pushes away all other noise; it is allowing one's heart to speak without reserve and interruption (Palmer 2000; Wicks, 2009). This does not call for absolute silence or being in isolation, it means honestly reflecting on life and asking the question "who am I" and "what am I good at"? Our gifts and talents lay just beneath the surface of life and are scattered across a person's timeline in moments of affirmation from others for work well done. Discerning who you are and what your gifts are help to answer the fundamental question of "What is it that I am truly passionate for in my life?"

The initial journey of self-reflection may begin within the silent solicitude of the mind, but also consists of listening to the trusted advice from others. Parents, teachers, mentors, friends, colleagues, bosses, and other working professionals can be the sounding board for discerning gifts for the call to work. Later we will discuss

networking in-depth, but for the moment consider the opportunity for networking as a way of feeling out a new profession. While it may be overwhelming to consider going to a professional networking event where one is not a member of that profession, it is an opportunity to see if the professionals within that environment resonate with the same passion seeker has for the desired field. One's goal is not to give out business cards or get job offers. In this moment it is to purely meet and converse with other people. If a sense of shared community or passion for the common work is discovered then a "tribe community" has been discovered (Boldt, 2004; Godin 2008). Developing a network of support and community in a future career is important because it builds status for the seeker within a professional life, creates self-confidence, and may lead to future job opportunities.

One of the best tools of a person looking to switch their career is Google. Asking for and giving Google information about an intended career can yield useful information that may have otherwise been missed. One important aspect of career discernment is taking career assessment tests to see what jobs align with a passion for work. O-Net (www.onetonline.org) will have the most up to date information on any form of employment within the United States. They will also be able to connect a seeker to various forms of work assessments that can be completed online.

When beginning to discern the course of action for a career change, obtaining additional support like a career coach can be a worthwhile investment. A career coach can even proctor personality-work assessments to help answer questions honestly regarding what a person's passion is and gifts are for the world of work.

Companions for the journey

Stage 2 begins with the creation of a network of professional support for the chosen career path. The two best resources for developing companions and contacts can be found through Google and LinkedIn. Building this network is not meant to be temporary, but rather should be used as an opportunity to develop career-lifelong friendships. Some of the connections may lead a seeker to their next job, others may be professionals with whom one may socialize, a select older few may become mentors, and most will be connections on LinkedIn with whom professional correspondence remain with over time in a professional career.

Once a career has been discerned, a seeker can use Google to locate the local and national chapters of the professional organization. Learn about the local organizations and join both levels, then attend the next local chapter meeting. Being the “new kid on the block” is rarely fun, but these meetings will allow a person a multitude of professional opportunities. When a seeker arrives at the local membership meeting, dress professionally and be prepared to mingle. It is important to remember that this environment may not lead to a job, but immersing in the people and the culture of the desired profession provides an insight as to what a candidate for the future job will look like. It also provides a chance to practice the language of the tribe which will be beneficial during the interview process. According to Godin (2008), when President Kennedy was a child, he recalled him and his friends wandering the neighborhood and approaching these very high walls. His buddies would grin as they all took off their hats and threw them over the wall. Why did they do this? They threw their hats over the wall so

they would have to make it over the wall, no excuses. Similarly by investing in the professional memberships of a future career a seeker is “throwing their hat over the wall”. While one may not have years of experience within the new field, being a member of it by virtue of belonging to a professional organization gives an initial experience and edge over non-members. We will talk more about the interview process later, but at this point a seeker wants to focus their mind and heart on believing in their new professional identity because they belong to the professional community (Boldt, 2004).

LinkedIn as a professional agent for change enables a seeker to begin to craft their professional identity online. One will want to find the aforementioned professional associations on LinkedIn and join them. Once a part of a professional organization, a seeker can connect with anyone in the group, this is a great way to expand a professional network. It is important not to view LinkedIn as one would Facebook or another social media network. This is not a place for friends from home or a place to post personal information. Imagine LinkedIn as a giant professional networking event: all the same rules of business etiquette and behavior apply. The people a seeker wants to connect with are the type of people with whom they desire to be working in the future. If possible, a seeker will want to break the 500 mark of connections on LinkedIn because it creates a strong professional network online. This demonstrates that an understanding of social media, and that the seeker takes their professional life seriously online. One will want to join the maximum of 50 groups that all have a relationship to the future field. Like a resume, LinkedIn shows how a seeker spends their professional free time and personal

development through the groups to which they belong. Everything on one's LinkedIn page speaks volumes about the person—a wise seeker uses this social media to their best advantage.

Development of self for tomorrow

Changing careers cannot happen without professional development. As one seeks out professional organizations and interact with other professionals they will develop an understanding of their educational background, certifications, and licensures. If possible, a seeker discusses with a newly found mentor the best avenues of personal investment for professional development. While having a pending academic or professional credential in process on a resume may not influence many hiring managers, if a seeker uses it as an opportunity to demonstrate their passion and commitment to the field, it can add to the value of their character. A wise seeker only invests money into their development that they have to invest. Seekers are creative in how they pursue education and understand that if they want a new career they have to work for the position--no one will just give it to them. Seekers use Google to research educational opportunities or consultant with an online accredited University like Capella University (www.capella.edu) to discern future academic possibilities.

The cultural transition

The interview and the first 90 days on the new job is a new and brave frontier for every individual regardless of age. Utilize a career coaching service that specializes

in this area of transition, or use the resource of the Career Services Center at the college from an Alma Mater. If neither of those options are available, utilize the field mentors. Ask them to conduct a mock interview or invite them out for coffee to discuss what interviewing in the field for a particular position would feel like. Be prepared to receive hard criticism and ask for feedback on what is needed to improve one's chances of success. Regardless of the critiques a seeker may receive they do not take it personally. Anyone who is willing to take the time to sit with someone seeking advice is a person who believes in the seeker.

Seekers accept every interview possible and use it as an opportunity to improve their professional self. Honesty in a resume and interview is the strength of a seeker. Worst-case scenario when a seeker provides false information is that they would actually get the job and spend the rest of their time while employed in fear of being discovered and rightfully fired for lying on an application or resume. Conversely, a seeker wants to align the talent and experience they have from prior work to their future job. Taking the information they have gathered on their new profession from networking and research, the seeker connects past job experiences into their resume. In every interview a seeker sells their experience, one wants to present confidence to the hiring manager that they have the passion, experience, and ability to complete the tasks required in their future job. A mentor or career coach can assist a seeker in developing their resume so it accurately reflects their work experience while aligning to their future job.

Organizations such as VIP Global LLC (www.vip-global.com) are valuable in building up a person's work experience and expanding their professional

connections. While one may desire a full time position,—companies first hire contractors through professional organizations like VIP Global and use the interim contracting period to decide if they want to offer the person a full time position. Even if a person cycles through a few companies as a contractor, they are gaining experience from working with different companies and developing their resume for time in a particular position through consistency with VIP Global.

Finally in all that has been shared, in preparing oneself for a solid cultural transition after securing the position, take time to get to know co-workers, managers/leaders, and supervisors. Where a professional works must feel like home. Apply professional networking skills to engage co-workers on a socio-professional friend level: take interest in their work, offer to help when appropriate, make time to do lunch with the team, and be yourself. You will know your transition into a job is complete when you feel like the people you work with are like family and you are passionate about the work that is set before you. Good luck and be amazing!

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