

What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?

Quite regularly, people with a lot of ambition come to me not knowing what to do with it. I know how they feel because I suffered from the same problem early in my career. A feeling inside you seems to say, "If I could just find the right field, the right career, I could really set the world on fire." A person can choose from thousands of occupations, professions and self employment areas - but which one is right for you?

Not long ago, a young man with this problem came into my office. (By the way, do not think this problem is restricted to the young - it is not!) He was left in a quandary by his aptitude tests, which indicated he could successfully perform in a wide range of fields. Filled with enthusiasm and energy, he was like a high powered car with no wheels. He was getting nowhere.

I asked him the same question posed by many career counselors. Perhaps you should give it some thought, too:

"If you had a million dollars, tax free, what would you want to do when you got up in the morning?" That is, what do you enjoy doing so much that you still would do it, even if you didn't have to work?

Here are five soul searching concepts; together, they form a list worth posting where you can see it from time to time.

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A dream career deferred need not be a dream denied.

Career switchers often go back and pick up a bypassed interest. Think back and recall the things you enjoyed most. Maybe it was building things with your hands, playing with boats or tinkering with engines. It might have been writing or traveling - or dozens of other things. Remembering what you most enjoyed doing may give you a clue as to what you should be doing now.

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A career change requires considerable self confidence and financial self sufficiency.

The most successful career changes take two or three times longer than most people think. If you're not in the enviable position of having an adequate financial cushion, take the initial timetable for reaching profitability and triple it. Money won't buy happiness, but neither will poverty. Nothing can buy happiness, so the entire premise is absurd. As Abraham Lincoln said, "People are about as happy as they make up their minds to be."

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Listen to your heart.

The happiest, most successful people on earth are those who work in a

field they find so interesting that they would work at it as a hobby, if making a living were no longer necessary. This field of interest is often difficult to pin down. However, if you devote yourself to a vocation, pouring your love and energy into that activity, you develop a certain expertise in the field. The vocation opens itself up in terms of truths and principles. It becomes your friend, building you up as you invest yourself in your chosen work. Any work can serve this purpose, so whatever you choose to do, if done with the right attitude, becomes a joyful activity with the potential of becoming a new, long term career.

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Think about creating your next position.

A time tested method for entering a new occupation or company/industry is to research its problems well enough to create a position for meeting its pressing needs. Focus your discussion on a current problem the organization is having and describe how you are especially well qualified to assist them. This approach may not be easy, but it will be productive. It stands an excellent chance of eliminating any reservations the hiring organization may have about your abilities.

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When the herd is going in one direction, it is wise to take a long, hard look in the opposite direction.

When you decide to try something new in an attempt to better utilize your talents, in most cases, you will have to break old ties and seek new ones. This is difficult and painful, but it is a fact of life. Career transitions that remove you from your old, normal patterns also remove you from the standards of others. So, in most cases, a major career turning point coincides with developing a new group of friends and associates. The very change of "reference groups" often leads to a complete change of aspirations, goals, work routines and achievement levels. As a matter of fact, your choice of "reference groups" is so important that Baron Rothschild, one of the world's wealthiest men in his time, wrote in his rules for success, "Make no useless acquaintances."