

How to handle a career identity crisis

When your career gets stale all hope is not lost. The solution is good planning and self-assessment.

Average life expectancy has lengthened, people are more active, and technology is increasing its presence in daily life. These things among many others are causing people to reevaluate their lives at a higher frequency than in the past. One of the first things people want to change is their career. Their daily grind is no longer fulfilling. When someone reaches this plateau all hope is not lost. A personal assessment and good planning can breathe life into an otherwise depressing existence.

The most important thing to do is a personal assessment. It is necessary to establish a solid foundation for change. First of all, pinpoint exactly what it is about your current occupation that is leaving you dissatisfied. Is it that you don't earn enough money? Do you dislike your work environment? Do you feel your job isn't sufficiently mentally challenging? Maybe, your profession is not allowing you to use your education and talents as much as you'd like. Whatever the reason is, make sure it is important enough in your mind to enact a career upheaval. After you make up your mind without a shadow of doubt, take a good look at your finances. Examine your regular monthly debt to determine what you usually have left over as net income. Then compare your net to the amount of cash you have in savings, or any other cash flow at your disposal. Taking stock of your financial foundation will give you an idea of how long you can survive without a paycheck in order to find another job. It will also give you an idea of how much money you have to work with if you are trying to start your own business.

Personal assessment will set the stage for your dynamic change. After this, your plan of action is to decide exactly what you want to do and how you are going to do it. Figure out where your passions are the strongest. Combine that knowledge with your reasoning about why you don't like your current occupation. Then decide if you would like to acquire additional skills or if you desire a geographical change. All these elements comprise your arsenal for change. When your arsenal is complete you can then pinpoint exactly how you are going to do what you want to do.

One of the most important things to do is network. Gather all the names of those who could be contacts to help you with your change. No contact is too old or inappropriate. Anyone that you know that can help you with your endeavor is a contact. It is not necessary to have a deep personal friendship with someone to consider him or her as a good networking contact. A contact is any person that can give you advice, introduce you to helpful individuals, provide you with capital, give you support, or act as any vehicle to help you institute your change.

Once you get your contacts together, begin to use them. Explain your personal plan well, in order to obtain the most effective help. Most importantly, do your research. Make sure that you are well equipped to make your change. If you need more education, set yourself up for its acquisition. If you need to update your resume, do so before you even get good job leads. Most



importantly, if you need references, begin cultivating them immediately. A good reference is from anyone who will comment favorably upon you. Once you have solidified your change, formed your plan of action, and set yourself up to begin your new endeavor, there is one more thing to remember: do not quit your current job until you are certain you are prepared to. The worst thing you could do is to quit out of anticipation and impatience. Anything worth having is definitely worth the time to plan well.