

# **Managing Your Career**

## **Professional Development Workshop Series The Essentials**



**Presented By**

**Kathy Brady & Carol Kanarek**

**January 15, 2009  
8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

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**January 15, 2009**  
**8:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m.**

### Agenda

8:30 a.m.-8:45 a.m.	Introduction
8:45 a.m.-8:55 a.m.	Explore Impact of Life Cycle on Career Choice
8:55 a.m.-9:30 a.m.	Understanding the ABCs of Career Audits
9:30 a.m.-9:50 a.m.	Set Your Course: Develop a Focused by Flexible Career Strategy
9:50 a.m.-10:00 a.m.	Q&A

*This program will fulfill 1.5 practice management credits of the NY MCLE requirement.*

*This program provides transitional and non-transitional credits for all attorneys, including those who are newly admitted (less than 24 months).*

# **Managing Your Career**

**Professional Development Workshop Series**



**By Kathy Brady & Carol Kanarek**

# Managing Your Career

By Kathleen Brady

The basic questions in every career are:

- What needs to be done?
- What can you do?
- What do you want to do?

Take some time to think about what you *really* like to do. You **MUST** consider your abilities, skills, strengths, passions, preferred work style, goals, values and ideals, contributions, interest areas, temperament, accomplishments, special knowledges and motivations if you hope to achieve personal and professional growth.

The best way to begin is to focus on your abilities and skills. Abilities are those things which come easily and naturally to you; skills are what you acquire through education and experience. Ideally, you want to build skills to enhance your natural abilities.

## ABILITIES/SKILLS EXERCISE

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### Qualities needed for success in the Practice of Law\*

The following traits are among those essential for the practice of Law. For each characteristic, indicate the extent to which you believe you possess that quality.

(1 = Very Little...5 = Very Strong)

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#### I have the ability to:

Accept responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
Adhere to deadlines	1	2	3	4	5
Adapt to change	1	2	3	4	5
Apply legal principles	1	2	3	4	5
Analyze data	1	2	3	4	5
Assemble deals	1	2	3	4	5
Assimilate new data quickly	1	2	3	4	5
Be self-directed	1	2	3	4	5
Be responsive, reliable and conscientious	1	2	3	4	5
Build internal/external networks	1	2	3	4	5
Collaborate with colleagues	1	2	3	4	5

Communicate well orally	1	2	3	4	5
Communicate well in writing	1	2	3	4	5
Compete	1	2	3	4	5
Conceptualize	1	2	3	4	5
Conduct legal research	1	2	3	4	5
Confront	1	2	3	4	5
Counsel/advise clients	1	2	3	4	5
Decide in pressure situations	1	2	3	4	5
Delegate	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrate commitment	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrate good judgment/common sense	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrate political judgment	1	2	3	4	5
Develop business	1	2	3	4	5
Develop rapport and trust	1	2	3	4	5
Digest large quantities of material	1	2	3	4	5
Draft documents	1	2	3	4	5
Edit	1	2	3	4	5
Empathize	1	2	3	4	5
Explain complicated ideas in simple terms	1	2	3	4	5
Facilitate	1	2	3	4	5
Follow through	1	2	3	4	5
Formulate strategy	1	2	3	4	5
Gather facts	1	2	3	4	5
Initiate	1	2	3	4	5
Inspire confidence	1	2	3	4	5
Interview	1	2	3	4	5
Keep confidences	1	2	3	4	5
Lead	1	2	3	4	5
Listen critically	1	2	3	4	5
Manage complex tasks	1	2	3	4	5
Manage people	1	2	3	4	5

Mediate	1	2	3	4	5
Motivate	1	2	3	4	5
Negotiate	1	2	3	4	5
Organize	1	2	3	4	5
Persuade/Promote/Sell	1	2	3	4	5
Predict/Forecast Trends	1	2	3	4	5
Prioritize	1	2	3	4	5
Produce quality work	1	2	3	4	5
Put in long hours	1	2	3	4	5
“Read” people	1	2	3	4	5
Research	1	2	3	4	5
Resolve Conflicts	1	2	3	4	5
Retain information	1	2	3	4	5
Schedule deadlines, set goals and maintain ‘systems’	1	2	3	4	5
Solve problems creatively	1	2	3	4	5
Speak persuasively	1	2	3	4	5
Summarize	1	2	3	4	5
Supervise	1	2	3	4	5
Synthesis	1	2	3	4	5
Take risks	1	2	3	4	5
Theorize	1	2	3	4	5
Tolerate delays/Waiting	1	2	3	4	5
Train/Teach	1	2	3	4	5
Troubleshoot	1	2	3	4	5
Understand objectives, practices and standards of work	1	2	3	4	5
Use technology proficiently	1	2	3	4	5
Work well under pressure	1	2	3	4	5
Work efficiently	1	2	3	4	5
Write persuasively (reports, memos, proposals)	1	2	3	4	5
Write technically	1	2	3	4	5

For each characteristic you ranked 5, go back and add the phrase “for instance,” and provide an example. For those you ranked low, consider whether you can or want to develop this skill further.

## **BELIEFS/VALUES/MOTIVES**

Values are those intangible beliefs, principles and standards that bring meaning to your work and motivate your involvement and commitment. You need to ask yourself what your values are and which hold the most meaning and importance to you. People tend to feel most comfortable when surrounded by others who hold similar values and in situations where their values are appreciated. The following exercise will help you further identify career/work values and factors crucial to your job satisfaction.

## EXERCISE

Rate the importance of each item.

A = VERY IMPORTANT    B=IMPORTANT    C=NOT IMPORTANT

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Achievement            | <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Morality               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advancement            | <input type="checkbox"/> Family                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Appearance    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics             | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Environment   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affiliation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Focus                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasure               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Altruism               | <input type="checkbox"/> Fringe Benefits             | <input type="checkbox"/> Popularity             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Authority & Power      | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Power                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Autonomy               | <input type="checkbox"/> Harmony                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being Needed           | <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Physical Fitness     | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious Observance   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boss You Respect       | <input type="checkbox"/> High Profile                | <input type="checkbox"/> Respect                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Challenge              | <input type="checkbox"/> High Risk\High Reward       | <input type="checkbox"/> Responsibility         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Holistic Approach           | <input type="checkbox"/> Routine                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Closure                | <input type="checkbox"/> Honesty                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Salary                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commitment to Goal(s)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Improving the World         | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Relevance       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competition            | <input type="checkbox"/> Independence                | <input type="checkbox"/> Specialization         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complexity             | <input type="checkbox"/> Individuality               | <input type="checkbox"/> Stability              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Control                | <input type="checkbox"/> Influencing People          | <input type="checkbox"/> Status                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courage                | <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Structured Environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity             | <input type="checkbox"/> Integrity                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Impact          | <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Stimulation    | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervision of Others  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discovering New Things | <input type="checkbox"/> Interesting Work            | <input type="checkbox"/> Training               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity              | <input type="checkbox"/> Interpersonal Relationships | <input type="checkbox"/> Traveling              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Return        | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Security                | <input type="checkbox"/> Upward Mobility        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Justice                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Variety                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Effectiveness          | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Working Alone          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Growth       | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership of Others        | <input type="checkbox"/> Working on Teams       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure Time                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other_____             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellence             | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifestyle Integration       |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excitement & Adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring                   |   |

Review the values ranked "A" and rank them from 1 to 10 in order of importance to you.

### Motives

Many of us spend more time planning our vacations than we do planning our careers.

We are not particularly clear about what is most important to us and arrive at decisions not on the basis of any reason at all, but on the basis of feelings and intuitions.

Why did you decide to become an attorney? It seems like a simple enough question yet it is surprising that many attorneys can not respond. People usually cite the customary, obligatory reasons like "to create a better society" or "to put my intellect to good use"; they tend to avoid the responses that they became lawyers for the money, or because of the glamour portrayed on TV and in the movies or simply because it was there.

To help you articulate your motives, you need to ask yourself:

- What are my priorities?
- What do I want from life? What am I after?
- What am I willing to sacrifice to achieve my goals?

People tend to be motivated by what they like not by what makes sense. It is important to play to your "evil secrets"--those things that you might be embarrassed to say out loud but which really should be considered when evaluating career options.

As people accumulate work experience, they begin to make choices. From these choices they begin to acknowledge what is most important. Up until that point, people may have a vague sense of their talents, motives and values, but it is only when confronted with difficult choices that dominant themes emerge. When all needs cannot be met, it is important to know which one has the highest priority. That priority can be defined as the "career core," a combination of perceived areas of competence, motives and values that you would not give up. It serves as an anchor and shapes the career choices we ultimately make.

## CAREER CORES EXERCISE

**STEP ONE:** Consider each of the eight endings to the following phrases and rank order them according to which completed sentence is most like you. The ending most like you should be ranked 8, the one next most like you 7 and so on with the one least like you ranked 1.

1. My ultimate career goal is:
  - a) to be recognized as an expert in my field \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) to manage people and processes \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) to be autonomous \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) to obtain financial and employment security \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) to start my own business \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) to make the world a better place \_\_\_\_\_
  - g) to be constantly challenged \_\_\_\_\_
  - h) to achieve life/work balance \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. For me to feel satisfied in my career, I must have a job that allows me to:
  - a) develop technical skills to the highest level of competence \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) lead an organization, making decisions that affect many \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) have complete autonomy and freedom \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) be financially secure \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) own my own business \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) serve the community \_\_\_\_\_
  - g) solve “unsolvable” problems \_\_\_\_\_
  - h) work to live not live to work! \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. I would rather leave my current position than accept a promotion that would:
  - a) take me away from my area of expertise \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) eliminate my managerial responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) restrict my autonomy and freedom \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) jeopardize my security \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) limit my creative input \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) undermine my ability to be of service to others \_\_\_\_\_
  - g) be too easy \_\_\_\_\_
  - h) compromise my ability to pursue outside interests \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. I will be “successful” when I:
  - a) am recognized as an expert in my field \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) manage the careers of others \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) am in a position to define my own tasks, schedules and procedures \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) feel secure \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) can unleash my creative energies \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) help those in need \_\_\_\_\_
  - g) feel challenged \_\_\_\_\_
  - h) have a life \_\_\_\_\_

STEP TWO: Add 5 points to the highest ranked ending for each of the four phrases. (Those endings ranked 8 now become 13.)

STEP THREE: Total points for each letter response. Circle your highest score.

Total: a\_\_\_ b\_\_\_ c\_\_\_ d\_\_\_ e\_\_\_ f\_\_\_ g\_\_\_ h\_\_\_

Research suggests that most people can be described in terms of 8 “*self-concepts*” or “career cores.” The career core can shift or lie dormant as we pass through different life stages, but ultimately, the career core is tied to our self-image. This short test was designed to help you to identify the one thing you would NOT give up if forced to make a choice.

Total

\_\_\_A TECHNICAL COMPETENCE

People who scored highest in this category are drawn to the *content* of the work. They develop a technical expertise and commit themselves to a life of specialization. Most people begin their careers by specializing as a means to climb the ladder of success, achieve security, branch out on their own, etc. However, those with a TECHNICAL COMPETENCE CORE are motivated by the need to be a recognized expert in their field. They measure success through “external equity”, comparing their salaries and responsibilities to others at comparable organizations with comparable skills. They will tolerate administrative and management tasks, but are irritated by general managers who impose directives despite their limited expertise.

\_\_\_B MANAGERIAL COMPETENCE

People who scored highest in this category view specialization as a trap. They want to know enough about several functions within the business/industry to be able to move up the ladder of success. They develop analytical competencies that enable them to identify problems/solutions cross-functionally and they develop strong interpersonal skills in order to influence, supervise, lead and manage others within the organization. They measure success through “internal equity”, comparing their compensation to those above and below them within the hierarchy and seek promotions that would elevate compensation and responsibilities.

\_\_\_C AUTONOMY

People whose career core is AUTONOMY have an overriding need to do things their own way. They like clearly delineated, time-bound assignments within their area of expertise, but they want complete control regarding how to complete the assignment. Autonomously driven people measure success in terms of merit pay for performance and they seek promotions that provide them with greater autonomy.

\_\_\_D SECURITY

Those who scored highest in this category organize their careers so they feel safe and

secure. They focus on the *context* of the work, preferring future events to be predictable so they can relax in the knowledge that they have “made it.” They prefer jobs/careers with tenure and good retirement plans. They identify with the organization, no matter what level of position. They measure success in terms of continued employment.

\_\_\_E CREATIVITY

People in this category have an overriding need to “create” a new business, product or service or “reshape” existing ones to meet their own specifications. This need stems from the desire to prove it can be done as a result of *their* expertise, talents and motivations. The driving force is not money, nor even challenge, but ultimate “ownership” of the creation.

\_\_\_F SERVICE

Those who score the highest in SERVICE are oriented more by values than actual talents or competencies. Their motivation is dedication to a cause. They define success as the ability to serve/help others.

\_\_\_G CHALLENGE

These people build their careers around conquering the ‘unconquerable’! Success is derived from overcoming obstacles, solving “unsolvable” problems or winning out over an extremely tough opponent. To feel successful, people in this category must be able to consistently exercise a competitive skill.

\_\_\_H LIFE/WORK BALANCE

For these people work is important and satisfying only if it can be successfully integrated in their lifestyle. Success is measured in terms of flexibility to achieve work goals within a context of limiting interference with personal/family needs.

## CONDUCT: What must you DO?

### Establish Goals

**You** have the power to create the career—and the life—you want. It is simply a matter of deciding *what* you want and then *choosing* to invest the necessary time, energy and resources to move you in that direction. You *can* accomplish everything you want; you *can* achieve life/work balance and define your niche in the workplace, providing you are to take the necessary action steps.

Start by listing at least twenty-five things you want to accomplish during your lifetime. Think about what you *want to have*; what you *want to be*; what you *want to do* and what *impact you want to have*. Consider all areas of your life career/financial; social/cultural; spiritual; family/home; education; health/fitness. Dream big and be specific. “*I want to be financially secure*” is meaningless. “*I want to pay off my students loans in 5 years and save 10% of my income each year*” is better because it is specific and measurable.

Write down your goals. Written goals give your dreams structure. They create a long term perspective and enable you to prioritize so that you can manage conflicting goals. Written goals heighten awareness of opportunities, helps you manage transitions, stay focused and make better decisions.

Once you see everything on paper, you can begin to prioritize your goals. Determine which things on your lifetime goals list can be started and/or accomplished in the next 5 years. (Some goals need seeds to be planned early on that you may reap the benefits 15 years from now.) Now your life is beginning to take shape. From your 5-year plan you can determine what 2 or 3 things you want to accomplish during the coming year and establish action steps to make things happen. Repeat this process annually to update your goals and revise your action plans. Remember, goals needs to be adjustable to new information, otherwise you feel trapped. Flexible goals allow you to change course if a great opportunity presents itself. Often, when the unexpected comes along and is pursued, it turns out to be a disguised stepping stone to the original goal.

When constructing your goals, always think *when*, not *if*. When you feel discouraged because things are not progressing the way you might like, control the negative thoughts by reminding yourself it is a matter of time, not possibility. It is important to manage the way you

interpret events .It is not the event that is determinative; rather, it is the way you choose to experience the event. Attitude drives behavior and a positive attitude is critical to success. Readjust the prism through which you view setbacks and you can use them to your advantage.

### **Monitor the Marketplace**

External realities also play a role in shaping your life and helping you define your career objectives. Pay attention to economic forces and world events. Make sure you understand the impact on your practice and the world of work. Today's business world is changing constantly and smart attorneys are both up-to-date in their practice area and in the world around them. You should always be in career building mode and consistently working at:

- investigating the world of work;
- identifying people, organizations and industries doing the type of work you are interested in doing;
- understanding how your skills can be used in those settings;
- learning the cultural norms and buzz words used in different settings or alternative careers;
- uncovering live job openings you might not otherwise know about;
- being knowledgeable about compensation levels.

The internet makes it easy to conduct such on-going research. There is a plethora of information that can assist you in keeping abreast of marketplace trends and highlight the skills you need to stay current. Visit trade or professional associations as well as alumni sites. Sign up for industry news alerts through professional associations or papers like *Law.com*. This will enable you to keep tabs on market activities and remain in the "information loop." Information is power. It will ensure you know where the next business opportunity is likely to come from before anyone else does. Thirty minutes once a month is all the time you need to invest in such activities.

As useful as the internet is, you cannot hide behind your computer screen. You need to talk to people. People are the single most valuable resource. They have more current, detailed and accurate information about what is happening in the world of work than any website, book or article ever can. It is extremely important to use these relationships to broaden your field of vision in order to make informed, smart decisions. You can learn about upcoming assignments and projects, business development and pro bono opportunities, career paths you never thought, shifts in business

practices and industry trends, etc. Don't think in terms of identifying a single mentor to rely on for guidance. Instead think of creating a support system or Board of Advisors to tap during periods of assessment and transition. Don't limit yourself to mentors who look like you or share your interests. A network of mentors will allow you to learn from different styles, develop a range of skills and consider various perspectives of an issue.

You should be concerned with the process of building and using networks as a permanent aspect of your career. Develop relationships *within* your organization. You rely on your skills and experience to impact *what* work gets done. But knowing *how* work gets done within an organization depends upon the network of relationships that exist. And, who you know isn't always as important as who knows you. Network internally to increase the chances of making an impression on decision-makers; monitor the rumor mill, (but don't contribute to it!) and learn about departments beyond your own. Volunteer for committee assignments; attend events; eat lunch in the cafeteria. Be sure to establish a presence within your organization.

Understand office politics. It is not about "sucking up" or abandoning your own belief system to get ahead. Basically, it is the art of gaining "inside" access to the top people and positions in the organization. It is about making sure your contributions are valuable and visible and your goals are known to people in a position to help you achieve them. Use your own informed judgment to decide who you respect most and let the opinions of those people matter most. You will always be affected by internal politics, so it is foolish to imagine yourself above it all and not get involved. Remember, those smart enough not to get involved in office politics are destined to be ruled by people of lesser intelligence.

Align your goals with the organization's goals and your boss' goals in order to expedite your career and solidify your niche. Think about what keeps your boss up at night and attach yourself to the projects, people and areas that will allow you to contribute in a way that makes the person's life easier. The trick is to create and understand your value to the boss and the organization while remaining true to yourself.

Develop, use and nurture personal relationships continuously. Keep in touch with people you meet throughout your career; don't wait until you "need" something from them. Establish a reputation for being helpful. Pass along useful information; introduce contacts to people in your network who might be helpful to them. Always look for ways to build bridges. Drop people notes occasionally or forward articles that may be of interest. People will remember your thoughtfulness

and will be likely to return the favor.

## **Summary**

Managing your career development is an on-going process that includes planning and strategizing based on information about yourself and the world of work, the match between them and the actions you take. With a lifelong commitment to actively manage your career/life, pursue your dreams and honor your personal values you will find happiness in your niche.

# Choose to Succeed

By Kathleen Brady

**You** have the power to create the career—and the life—you want. It is simply a matter of deciding *what* you want and then *choosing* to invest the necessary time, energy and resources to move you in that direction. You *can* accomplish everything you want and you *can* achieve life/work balance, providing you are willing to do what it takes to achieve your goals.

We all have some idea of what we *want*—a better job, more money, love, a bigger house, a nicer car, etc. Yet we don't often think about what we need to *do*, what actions we need to *take* or what *choices* we need to make to get those things. We get caught up in things that keep us busy but do not contribute to our life's happiness; we confuse activity with accomplishment. We don't pay attention to the choices we are making that may hinder our success.

Everything you do requires a choice. There are the big choices: where to live, what career path to follow, who to share your life with, your faith, etc. Then there are the small choices: what time to wake up each morning; what to eat, what to wear, how to spend the day, how to respond to people and events. The small choices seem inconsequential. Some people would argue they aren't really choices at all, but rather decisions dictated by life's external pressures or requirements.

But they are choices.

You choose to get up at 6 a.m. to catch the 7:09 train to get to work despite the fact you'd rather sleep till noon because you know that the price you would have to pay to sleep till noon is too high to pay. If your goal truly is to sleep till noon each day, you would choose a different job and lifestyle to accommodate that goal. The seemingly small choices you make day in and day out ultimately determine the quality of your life. These decisions reflect your character, your values, and your purpose.

Some people construct a reality out of the world around them where success is impossible because they focus on the obstacles that exist to thwart their efforts rather than the *choices* available to overcome or manage them. They fixate on the problems and assign blame. They tell themselves, "*I can't because...*" They blame their boss, spouse, lack of money, the weather, etc. for their inability to achieve their goals. They can't see the choices available to them to overcome the obstacles. They become paralyzed and get caught in the "loser" cycle.

Successful people on the other hand, focus on solutions to problems. They assume responsibility for future outcomes and take control of their fate. They are able to identify the choices they have, understand the price tags attached and design a course of action to achieve their goals. Their faith in their own abilities is undeniable. Unquestionable.

They succeed simply because they *believe* they can.

But how can you train your mind to believe it is possible to achieve your goals when you really truly in your heart of hearts don't believe it?

You do it by altering your *perspective*. Instead of thinking "*I can't because...*" think "*I can if...*" That change in perspective allows you to see the action steps necessary to achieve your goals. It allows you to focus on what you need to do to make it happen.

The secret to success all boils down to the *choices* you make. The question then becomes, are you willing to pay the price to achieve your goals?

Successful people get where they are by following a strategic plan. Your goals should be an ever present part of your life providing direction and encouragement. The five-step career/life planning process outline described below provides a frame for designing an individualized career/life strategy that will enable you to design a professional life that embraces your personal life.

### **Career /Life Planning Process**

#### **Step 1      Focus on your skills, strengths, assets and talents, not your shortcomings.**

The best strategy to direct the course of your career/life is to identify your skills and talents. You must be able to articulate what you can do and what you know. While you want to be aware of any shortcomings you may possess, you do not want them to dictate your path and prevent you from following your dreams. An understated assessment of your abilities will not serve you well. Of course, neither will an exaggerated sense of your abilities.

Realize who you are—what your style and temperament is—and create a life to suit it. Too many people try to alter their temperament to suit their "should" goals. Temperaments are a bit like shoe sizes...they can occasionally be fudged, but the results are uncomfortable! It is important to be true to your authentic self!

#### **Step 2      Know what you TRULY want.**

Take some time to think about what is *really* important to you. Do not underestimate the power of passion. The world is filled with examples of people who achieved their goals—against all odds—because of their passion. Consider Neil Parry, the San Jose football player whose right leg was amputated below the knee after a horrific injury in a game during the 2000 season. Hours after his leg was removed, Parry vowed he'd play football again, an unlikely proposition under the circumstances. Yet, in September 2003, Parry was back on the field and fans were hard pressed to notice a difference between his abilities and those of his two-legged teammates. He had the drive and passion to withstand 25 operations and countless hours of rehabilitation and physical therapy to achieve his goal. If you allow yourself to be fueled by your internal drive instead of any external pressures, your shortcomings will have little or no impact on your ability to

succeed. They may present hurdles, but your passion will galvanize your skills, strengths and talents so you can easily clear the bar.

Neil Perry is but one example: With passion, that combination of forces of mind, will, resources and heart, we can move mountains.

### **Step 3 Do not accept conventional wisdom unconditionally.**

There will always be some perfectly logical reason to impede you from achieving your objectives. Anticipate what those reasons might be and decide for yourself if they are, indeed, insurmountable, or merely a hurdle to clear. Remember, conventional wisdom would suggest that amputees cannot play football. Passion is stronger than conventional wisdom; attitude outweighs facts. Do your homework so that you know what the conventional wisdom is and then plan a strategy to deal with it. Always strive to be the exception to the rule.

### **Step 4 Develop an action plan (SET GOALS).**

Think about the direction you'd like your life to take. What do you want to accomplish during your lifetime? During the next five years? The next year? Think about what you need to do to make it happen. **Write it down.** If you were taking a complicated road trip you would write down the directions, yet on the most significant journey of your life, you resist putting a word of the directions on paper! That's just silly. Written goals are concrete, tangible and physically real. They provide a long term vision about the kind of person you want to be and the kind of life you want to lead. They help you stay focused because they enhance your decision-making abilities and heighten your ability to recognize opportunities consistent with your goals. They help you prioritize seemingly competing goals.

If your goals do not move you, if they do not inspire and incite you to action, they are not the right goals. The right goals outweigh any excuses you have to achieve them. You will be amazed at what you can accomplish when you are clear about what you want and have an action plan in place to guide you.

### **Step 5 Make course corrections when necessary.**

Don't run in the wrong directions just because you are near the finish line. Goals have to evolve with you. They may shift as you mature and grow. What moves you to action today may bore you and disillusion you tomorrow. Change should not be seen as a sign of weakness or as a lack of commitment. Change is a strength that allows people to adapt to ever changing circumstances. Every thing we see, hear, touch and experience is judged as good or bad, pleasurable or painful, safe or dangerous. We constantly describe the world to ourselves and every event gets a "label." The event triggers the label which determines our reactions. By dissecting the thought, perhaps we can re-label the event, thereby altering our actions and gaining a new perspective. We can make a better choice. When you learn to respond rather than react your brain is fully engaged and you can make a positive and consistent mental adjustment. A reaction is purely emotional, with no thought of long-range consequences.

## **Summary**

Managing your career/life development is an on-going process that includes planning and strategizing based on information about yourself and the world of work, the match between them and the actions you take. You must make a lifelong commitment to actively manage your career/life and learn to adapt to the inevitable transitions you are destined to encounter. Apply the principles of career development consistently in your day to day life.

Finding the courage to forge your own path and construct a personal definition of success in the face of external obligations and pressures isn't easy. In fact, it is downright scary. Do it anyway. I promise, once you get started you will find the process is more affirming than it is scary. Take a deep breath and take the first step. The rewards will be monumental.

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