

10 Ways to Your Dream Career

Have you seen *The devil wears Prada*? There's a classic scene in it, where Meryl Streep (the boss) says to her 'new Emily' (the name she calls her new assistant, because she can't be bothered learning her actual name) *'Everyone wants to be us!'* She soon discovers that's not the case.

Apart from being quite a funny movie, I think it's a great example of how some people can make ridiculous personal sacrifices to please their bosses and fall into the trap of working incredibly hard on achieving someone else's goals, at the expense of their own.

I'm happy to be able to say I'm one of the fortunate people who's followed their passion and created their ideal career. But, it wasn't always that way. The great thing about what I do now, is that it's scalable, so I can still do work that I love on a small scale and enjoy being a first-time mum.

If you're not yet enjoying your dream career, here are ten steps I can recommend to help you find or create it:

1. Start with an inspiring vision:

A powerful vision will energise and inspire you and help you find all the resources you'll need to make your goal happen. Our goals don't exist in a vacuum. They must fit in with our visions for our lives. If you experience any resistance, or perceive obstacles when defining your vision, such as: fear of change, fear of success, fear of failure, potential conflict with significant others, or self-doubt due to any limiting beliefs you might hold about yourself, a coach can help you work through these issues. Imagining what achieving your goal would be and feel like for you can also deepen your commitment and motivation.

2. Get clear on your current reality:

Before setting out on any journey, it's important to acknowledge where you're starting from, to determine exactly how far away you are from where you intend to go. Be realistic about what resources you'll need and how long it might take you to get there.

3. Brainstorm all options:

Allow yourself some time to come up with what's possible. Don't discount or censor any ideas that might come up - just capture them all and write them down. We often forget, when we're operating within our comfort zones, that there are almost infinite possibilities for our working lives.

4. Research your options:

Find out whatever you can about each option. Give yourself a reasonable amount of time to do this, but don't allow yourself to get bogged down in the details!

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5. Assess each option against your purpose, vision and personal values:

Once you've narrowed down your options to a list of serious contenders, assess each one against your purpose, vision and personal values. Unless your goals are aligned with each of these, you might struggle to achieve them. An enjoyable way I found to get clear on my personal values was playing 'The Values Game', which you'll find at www.coachlee.com.

6. Make a choice:

Here's another potential place some people get bogged down or stuck. Two good resources I can recommend and use with my clients are: 1) 'The Big Decision Tool', which you'll find in the book, *Personal best* by David Rock - a great mathematical matrix-style approach to making important choices and 2) www.myprofile.com.au, an online behavioural personality assessment tool that can help you identify your working personality as well as career options that match it. It's a great and inexpensive exercise to do, especially for anyone considering self-employment. I guarantee, both these resources are far better than the 'let the options swim around in my head until something pops out' approach.

7. Create an action plan:

Once you've made a choice, it's time to commit to it and take action. You might not know exactly *how* you'll do it, so to begin with, focus your attention on creating the strategies for your action plan - the *what* you need to do. The relevant actions associated with each strategy will soon become apparent as you start moving.

8. Set a timetable:

Now that you've created a plan, assign start dates to each of your strategies to ensure you get into action. Start dates are particularly helpful if you're a procrastinator!

9. Action the plan:

Get started and get support where you might need it from someone independent who wants to see you succeed, such as a coach or mentor. As well as providing support and accountability, working with a partner will provide you with a fresh perspective to your own, a sounding board and the opportunity to receive valuable feedback - all of which we miss out on when we work alone.

10. Enjoy your dream career!

Remember, our career goals don't always need to be restricted to reaching our desired, ultimate destination. They can also relate to the short-term (the next 3 - 6 months), medium term (within the next 2 - 5 years) or long term, (5 years +) and can act as stepping stones to finding or creating our dream career.

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