

Career-Map[®]

tools for designing a career path that fits your life



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Parsons Associates Coaching

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SESSION 1: REDISCOVERING SUCCESS

Let's begin with a small exercise. Quickly, without giving it too much thought, jot down your definition of success. (There are no wrong answers.)

To me success is

Here are some definitions of success I've heard from clients over the years:

- growing my business aggressively
- doing what it takes to achieve my goals
- owning a great house and car
- having the time and money to travel widely
- experiencing freedom and flexibility
- attaining balance and simplicity
- making a difference
- having a purpose

The New American Heritage Dictionary defines success as, "The achievement of something desired, planned or attempted." My personal definition of success is this: "Success is getting what you want and taking time to enjoy it." No doubt, there are as many definitions of success as there are people to ponder them. And, indeed, perhaps the difference between success and failure is in the eye of the beholder.

"To laugh often and love much, to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children, to earn the approval of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others, to give of one's self without the slightest thought of return, to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a rescued soul, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition, to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exaltation, to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived is to have succeeded."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson



When I ask new clients, “How do you define success at this point in your life?” their initial answers usually center around material possessions and finances. When they dig deeper, many often discover that in striving to build or achieve “the good life” they have fallen into the trap of overwork or of measuring their success against other people’s standards. After years of sacrificing their hobbies and personal pleasures, neglecting self-development and, in some cases, living with mediocre relationships, they feel frustrated, depressed and STUCK.

Among the behaviors, habits and attitudes that lead people to become stuck are these:

- putting yourself under constant pressure
- believing you can’t have what you want or cynicism
- spending time with people who are negative, struggling and problem-oriented
- allowing fear of the unknown to dominate your perspective
- doubting your competence.

Are any of these familiar to you? Do you see a connection between these behaviors and your beliefs about yourself and about your ability to heed your life’s calling?

Here are three great strategies for transforming these patterns and crafting a new definition of success that fits you uniquely.

Take time to dream. I often ask clients to spend time each week daydreaming, even if it means doing nothing and being bored. I make this request because I have learned that quiet time and daydreaming allow us to see beyond the clutter of our daily roles and activities and begin imagining new possibilities. Once you begin to get clear about what you really want, you can set goals, develop action steps and cultivate environments that support you along your path.



Reframe failure. Most of us would agree that we learn something from each failure we experience. The important questions to ask are:

- Did I learn a positive or negative lesson?
- Did the experience lead me to be a better employee, manager, leader or person?
- Did I draw conclusions that lead to self-blame, worthlessness and a lack of ambition?

Reframing failure is like taking a photograph out of a tattered old frame with broken glass and putting it in a shiny new frame made of gold. Reframing failure means you transform your references from those that hold you back to those that serve you. For example, “I’m an idiot, I couldn’t do it!” is reframed as, “I didn’t have the skills and knowledge at the time; now, I can learn what’s needed and improve results.” This reframing helps position you for success by fine-tuning your belief system so it stays healthy and serves you well.

Keep the goal posts steady. In Session 5 you will begin setting goals for career and life success. For now, it is sufficient to say that once you achieve a goal (for example: earning a promotion or bonus, winning a new account, updating your resume, buying a new home, investing your savings, organizing your office, completing a time management course), be careful not to shift your focus onto the next hurdle too quickly. Don’t get me wrong — ambition is a great thing. But it is important to mark and celebrate your achievements along the way. That way, instead of sending messages to your brain that you can never be good enough, you experience success at each step of your path. This prepares you mentally for even more success.

One important note about success: When you take time to define success for yourself, you avoid the trap of letting your life be run by someone else’s definition of success (including your parents, cultural conditioning, consumer advertising, etc.). Only after you define success for yourself can you chart a path toward doing what you love and having the experiences that are most important to you.



Case Study

Leo was a successful engineer who had spent most of his 40-something years pleasing everyone but himself — parents, teachers, wife, boss and so forth. He hired me as his coach to help him find a job closer to home so he could spend more time developing a home-based Web design business. As we explored career options it became obvious that Leo really wasn't interested in engineering. He'd fallen into the industry because his father had encouraged it and he did well at the coursework. During our first months together, Leo explored what success meant to him. At my suggestion, he re-framed his self-talk. For example, instead of saying, "I'm stuck and I'll never be happy at work," he said, "Though I'm unhappy at work now, I'm exploring options that fit me better." Leo began listening to and following his heart by looking inside for answers. He regularly made time to daydream and began writing down his goals and dreams. Using his new self-knowledge, he wrote out a personal mission statement. Based on that, he began making decisions that supported this vision for his future.

Leo's self-discovery process led to a clarity that made it easy for him to create and implement action plans. This produced RADICAL life changes. He ended an unhealthy relationship, relocated to the West Coast and pursued a new career path that he feels passionate about. Nearly every aspect of his new life fits his new definition of success for himself, which goes something like this: "I am successful when I stretch myself every day in some area of my life, when I give love and appreciation to others, and when I exceed my financial expectations and listen to my gut." Today, Leo is tackling a new hurdle — fear of success — and learning to be comfortable in his new skin. Overall, his self-confidence is at an all-time high. He takes great care of himself and is building healthy relationships. In every way, Leo is one of the most successful individuals I've had the honor of coaching.



Your Turn

Take time for your own self-discovery, so you can become clear about what success means to you.

1. List the five most successful people you know:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

2. What is it about each person that makes them successful in your eyes? Be specific.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____

3. Use the above information to craft a statement about what success means to you in each of the following areas:
 - a. Relationships: To me, a successful relationship _____

 - b. Work/Career/Business: Being successful in my work means _____

 - c. Wealth: My definition of financial success is _____

 - d. Health: _____
 - e. Spiritual: _____



4. To create your personal definition of success, combine these statements, or find the common theme in them. Refine your definition until it resonates with you:

5. Now create a personal benchmark or two to keep you on track daily. Here are sample benchmarks:

- a. *I know I'm successful when I am enjoying intellectual stimulation.*
- b. *I know I'm successful when I feel deeply connected with other people.*
- c. *I know I'm successful when I am playful and 100% me.*
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____

Here are a few more questions to consider when crafting your personal definition of success.

6. If you could wave your magic wand and do absolutely anything in the world what would it be? _____

Why? _____

7. How does money tie in with your definition of success? What are your beliefs about money? _____

Do these beliefs hold you back or spur you forward? _____



8. List 5 reasons that you work (other than money).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

9. List 10 activities you would LOVE doing every day, whether you were paid or not. Include hobbies, recreation, etc. Anything goes!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

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Your Reward



Congratulations! You're on your way to gathering information about yourself that will guide you to making great choices about your career path and overall life. Now, take a moment to choose an enjoyable activity or activities (from #9) to do every day. Put these on your calendar for after work, so you have something to look forward to.

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Activities to add to my calendar:

Resources

Follow Your Heart: Finding Purpose in Your Life and Work by Andrew Matthews

Whistle While You Work: Heeding Your Life's Calling by Richard J. Leider and David A. Shapiro



Use your answers and your work in previous sessions as the basis for writing your personal and professional mission. (You can write these as two separate missions or combine them into one.) Very important: Be true to yourself! Do not copy or craft your mission statement based on someone else's expectations. Also, keep your statement short and specific so you can commit it to memory.

My personal mission:

My professional mission:

Below are sample mission statements:

- My mission in life is to live my convictions and lead by example.
- My mission is to create music that inspires people.
- My mission is to be a loving partner and teach simple truths to my children.
- My mission is to encourage others and help them find answers.
- My mission is to be a positive force in the lives of others.
- My mission is to always do my best and to give attention, time and enthusiasm to everything I do.



Your Reward

Do something BIG to celebrate all the work you've done! Buy yourself a new interview suit. Give yourself a makeover to match the new you. Plan a weekend of celebration.

Resources

First Things First: To Live, to Love, to Learn, to Leave a Legacy by Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill (contributor), Rebecca R. Merrill (designer)

Power-Packed Tips for Managing Careers, Transitions & Job Searches

10 Tips for Managing Your Career Path

The latest job trend analyses indicate that employees switch jobs about every three years. This means many of us will work for more than 10 different companies over the course of our careers, and today's college graduate can plan on a minimum of 15 jobs during his or her lifetime. Is it any wonder that managing your career path has become a frightening proposition? In today's world, managing your career requires your ongoing attention. Below is a list of tips for defining and navigating your career path successfully. Note that you've already completed steps 1 and 2!

1. Identify and gain an understanding of your values, interests, skills and life goals.
2. Formulate a personal mission statement or purpose and use it as a standard for making decisions, especially job-related decisions.
3. If your current skills don't support your mission and values, develop a plan to learn new ones.
4. Define your future from a big picture perspective and use that as a road map in formulating a job search.
5. Explore all your options. Conduct research, prioritize targets, assess your resources and develop an action plan.
6. Accentuate the positive. Focus on your strengths and what comes naturally.
7. Prepare for success by brushing up on interview and networking techniques.
8. Polish your communication and negotiation skills. Not only will they help you negotiate your BEST OFFER, they will help you be more effective in every area of life.
9. Don't be shy. Learn to market and promote yourself to your target audience.
10. Believe in yourself, and don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion or help from a coach.



10 Tips for Managing Transition

Transitions and change create stress. Even exciting, positive changes shock our systems and cause anxiety. When you find yourself experiencing frustration, anger or depression over a job loss or frustrating change, remember those feelings are part of the natural healing and growth process. Here are tips to help you navigate transitions gracefully.

1. *****Buy the ebook*****

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10 Tips for Successful Job Search Campaigns

Finding your ideal job can take from three months to three years. The following action steps will maximize your efforts.

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Career Management Resources

RECOMMENDED READING

For a more complete list, visit http://parsons-associates.com/pac_books.htm.

- *169 Ways to Score Points with Your Boss* by Alan R. Schonberg
- *Best Resumes for \$100,000+ Executive Jobs* by William Mongag
- *Do What You Are (Discover Perfect Careers based on your Myers-Briggs TYPE Indicator Scores)* by Tieger & Barron-Tieger
- *Don't Send A Resume* by Jeffrey J. Fox
- *Follow Your Heart —Finding Purpose in Your Life and Work* by Andrew Matthews
- *Masters of Networking* by Ivan R. Misner, Ph.D., and Don Morgan
- *Now, Discover Your Strengths* by Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton
- *The Career Guide for Creative and Unconventional People* by Carol Eikleberry
- *What Color Is Your Parachute* by Richard N. Bolles
- *Whistle While You Work* by Leider & Shapiro

Web Resources

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