

Need A Change? Consider a Coach

By Melanie Moeller November 2001

When it comes to career advancement and career change, there has been a huge shift in recent years. For many years people spent most of their careers under the same roof and placed much of the control of their career in the hands of their employers. Life is different today; the rules of the game have changed. Workdays are longer, faster paced and more demanding. With today's technology we are constantly connected or plugged in. How do we stop? How do we create a balance? How do we take better care of our families and ourselves? How can we live life on purpose?

Challenge yourself to answer honestly the following questions:

- What would I do, or who would I be in life, if money weren't an issue?
- What have I dreamed of doing but never done?
- Do my personal values align with my corporate culture and professional values?

As children we spent hours dressing up and playing make-believe pretending that we were anyone we wanted to be – a fireman, a teacher, a doctor. Now midway through our life we find ourselves asking the question, “What do I really want to be when I grow up?” Most of us were raised on the notion that what we do at work is quite separate from who we are. More often than not, we end up in a particular career field following the logic that, “This is what I should be doing because I am good at it.”

Our families, society, and the cultural “shoulds” and “should nots” have taken over our way of thinking. Before we know it we are on automatic. We get caught in the current and go to work in the morning and don't remember the drive. We eat lunch with the same people at the same restaurant and order the same thing. We get to the point where we no longer enjoy our work, but we do it just to get it done. This routine seeps into every aspect of our lives and all of a sudden, it is in the bank account too, just waiting for the check to clear.

We are naturally creatures of habit. But problems occur when those habits become so routine and ingrained that we lose sight of who we are and what we really want. Slowly, over time, our childlike creativity has gone out the window along with our dreams.

At the end of the day if someone were to ask you, “Are you happy?” how would you answer? We have all, to some extent, become inhibited, repressed and hypnotized by our cultural conditioning and education. We see ourselves as powerless to control or change events in our lives. Change is not easy, especially when we manufacture great ways to avoid it. Yet, if we choose to pay attention, there are some powerful indicators for change that show up in our lives. These indicators let us know that despite good jobs, good wages and impressive titles, something is just not working in our lives. These indicators then become the wake-up call. “That the life that I am living is not the life that wants to live in me.” But how do we get out of these old

routines and habits by ourselves? How do we identify our passions? How do we keep our bad habits from derailing our good intentions? And once we find the answers to these questions, how do we stay on track to reach our goals?

In the past couple of years, there has been growing hype about executive coaching. Coaches are showing up as both internal and external support to individuals and companies to groom candidates in the area of effective performance, bottom line impact, and career advancement. Coaches guide the clients from where they are to where they want to be. Executive coaches use an interactive process that helps individuals discover, pursue and achieve those goals in a number of areas: career development, organization and time management, conflict resolution, communication and self empowerment.

If you've dreamed of doing something but have not yet done it, or if your personal values differ from your professional values or those of your employer, then an executive coach may be able to help. A coach will lead you to make your life a seamless expression of who you are.