

Hello!

Welcome again to my free newsletter, *Living the Dream*, for people who are committed to living and working every moment with joy and creativity. It's been a long cold winter, but spring is nearly here and with it will come a bounty of inspiration for self-renewal. What will the warmer weather move you to do? Get in shape? Look for the perfect job? Seek new relationships? And if you really want to do all that, where do you begin? The next three issues of *Living the Dream* will offer tips on how to make those big changes in your life and career really happen. So get ready to rock the boat! If you'd like some help getting started, e-mail me at CoachSoph@CreativeCoachingPlans.com. As a recipient of this newsletter, you're entitled to a complimentary 30-minute sample coaching session. And if you enjoy *Living the Dream*, then share the good energy! Please pass it on to your family and friends. And think spring! Take care, and all my best,

Sophronia

Living the Dream

One coach's stories and tips on how to live a fulfilling, creative life

by Sophronia Scott

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QUOTES OF NOTE

“The road to happiness lies in two simple principles: find what it is that interests you and that you can do well, and when you find it, put your whole soul into it—every bit of energy and ambition and natural ability you have.” — John D. Rockefeller III

“As human beings, our job in life is to help people realize how rare and valuable each one of us really is, that each of us has something that no one else has—or ever will have—something inside that is unique to all time. It’s our job to encourage each other to discover that uniqueness and to provide ways of developing its expression.” –Fred Rogers (with thanks to Kristin Taliaferro)

CAREER QUEST

The job thing. Lately I’ve been finding that a lot of people (friends, clients and acquaintances) want to talk about their jobs. And it’s not all good stuff. People hate their jobs, they’re bored with their jobs, they’re not fulfilled by their jobs, they’re frustrated with their jobs, they’re ambivalent about their jobs. Most of all, they want to change jobs—or even their careers. There’s nothing wrong with that. We spend a tremendous chunk of our lives at work, so it makes sense that we want to feel good about what we do. At a certain point, just getting by and making a living doesn’t cut it anymore. But because work is so important, it deserves more thought and planning than just jumping ship and heading for the first good offer that comes along. Here are some ideas to help you make that next change the right one.

TEN TIPS FOR CAREER SHIFTS

1. Make the Present Perfect.

If you really hate your job, this tip might seem difficult, but find 5-10 reasons why you’re grateful for your job. Focus on these reasons each morning before you start your day. Why is this so important? Because if you believe you’re in a totally horrible situation, your focus is solely on running away. Chances are, you’re not even looking where you’re going. If you flee a situation, you’re more than likely to end up in a job with similar problems. By making the present perfect, you can take the time to really evaluate who you are and what type of work would best suit you. When you do make the move, you want to be moving towards a great new situation, not just running away from a horrible one.

2. Dream.

Now that you're settled with your current job and not feeling totally averse to having it a little longer, let's start focusing on where you want to go. For this first round of thinking, don't limit yourself. Pretend that you're a kid again and can be anything you want to be. What would the perfect job situation look like to you? Write it down, with as much detail as possible. Are you working from home? Are you traveling to wonderful foreign destinations? Are you working outside with your hands? Who do you work with? Children? Creative types? Animals? Trees? How much money do you make? Does it matter? Is it fun? How do you feel when you get up to go to work everyday? Invest this vision with as much passion and energy as possible, so much so that you feel drawn into the picture. Got it? Good!

3. Know What You Need.

What does your new job or career absolutely have to have in order for you to be at your best while you're doing it? These are your needs, and they could be anything: consistent feedback, lots of vacation, an office with a door, flexible hours and regular teamwork. A client recently told me she hates the solitary nature of her job. She works in a cubicle and rarely speaks to others all day. She needs to be around people, and the next career she chooses will definitely have a strong community component. What do you need at work? (See my Newsletter No. 5 for more on Needs.)

4. Know What You Value.

You'll also need to know what you value. Values are behaviors and beliefs that you are naturally drawn to. When you are living in alignment with your values, you are truly living from the inside out with everything (your job, home, relationships) being an expression of who you are. For your career, perhaps you value honesty, innovation, creativity, contribution, a sense of history, community service or leadership. You'll want your next job or career to be a true expression of your values and in turn, it will be a true expression of you.

5. Pick 5 Jobs.

What do you want to be when you grow up? When was the last time you heard that one? Now's a good time to ask yourself this question again and write down five different answers. What jobs would really make your heart

leap with joy and excitement? Forest ranger? Tour guide? Entrepreneur? Documentary filmmaker? Florist? Author? Interior decorator? Remember, you can be anything you want to be!

6. Try It On For Size, Part I

Now that you have your list of five jobs, go out and find people who do have those jobs. Interview each one and get the feeling of what it would be like to be in their shoes. How did she become a forest ranger? Did she have to go to school for that? For how long and where? What's the best part of her job? What are her day-to-day duties? What are her surroundings like? Anything she wishes she didn't have to do? As you speak to the person, pay attention to how you're reacting to what he or she is saying. Are you excited? Engaged? Do the negative points seem tiny to you? Do the positive points light you up like Times Square? If so, then you're on the right track to finding your ideal job.

7. Try It On For Size, Part II

Once you have a job or career you think you might want to do, then do it! Just don't quit your day job yet. Find time to experiment with actually doing the job either after work or on the weekends. I've had two unrelated people recently tell me about creating their own little internships. One person is taking a day off from work each week to work for free at a totally different job to see if she likes it. The other is offering to work for free on Saturdays at a Japanese shop so she can learn the art of flower arranging. This is a great way of trying out a career with very little risk since you would still be earning a paycheck. So why not try it?

8. Build Reserves.

Earning a paycheck is important. It is, after all, why most of us work. But it's always the reason why so many of us stay in jobs way longer than is good for us. We can't afford to make the break, and that causes a lot of fear. The only way to handle the fear is to handle the money. How much would it take for you to feel comfortable with leaving your current job? Six months worth of living expenses? Eight? Figure out how much you need, then start building that reserve of cash. Cut whatever expenses you need to, and when the going gets tough, think of it this way: how much is it worth to do the work you love?

9. Take a Really Long Vacation.

This tip is all about getting perspective. Sometimes it can be hard to see how your life can be different when you're all caught up in living it! I know of a lawyer who doesn't want to be a lawyer anymore, but she hasn't been able to figure out what she wants to do instead because she's too busy with work. Talk about a Catch-22! How can you dream when there's no time to dream? So step outside of your life for a bit. When I worked in an office, every year I would take one of my vacation weeks and not go out of town. I would pretend I worked from home and scheduled my life accordingly. I spent my days writing, having lunch dates and working on my own projects. Eventually this "pretend" life became my real one. You can do the same on a larger or smaller scale. If a long vacation or a sabbatical is out of the question, do your own at-home retreat. Hole up in your favorite room with your journal, some books and whatever other inspirational elements you need. Tell your spouse and children that you need a day of quiet time to yourself. Then dream up that new career.

10. Be Intuitive.

Now that you know what you want to do, and can see the possibilities for actually living the career you've imagined, start paying close attention to what comes up. Once your intentions are clear, the universe has a way of bringing opportunities to you. All you have to do is be aware enough to recognize the chance and seize it when it comes. It could be in the form of a person or a trip or an item you're buying in a department store. Because you're so focused on what you want, you'll know in your gut when the right opportunity comes along. You won't even doubt it, because it will feel too good! And yes, it is possible to feel that good every single day of the week. THAT'S life, not the drudgery we've been led to believe. So make this juicy, good, everyday feeling your life. You deserve it.

GETTING TO WORK

Still having a hard time figuring out what your ideal job would be? Coaching can help. A coach would partner with you to uncover your true talents and guide you towards career choices that allow you to be true to yourself. And

with a coach, you can speed up a process that could otherwise take many, many months or even years! Switching careers can be a tough journey. Why go it alone?

If you'd like to explore your career dreams further and experience how one-on-one coaching would benefit you, then try one of my free 30-minute sample sessions. As a recipient of *Living the Dream*, you and your family and friends are entitled to sign up. So forward this offer and e-mail me at CoachSoph@CreativeCoachingPlans.com for an appointment. Until then, take care and happy job hunting!

Talk to you soon,
Sophfronia

Sophfronia is a writer and a career and personal development coach affiliated with Coach U., the internationally renown institution of personal and professional mentorship. Her first novel, *My Brother's House*, will be published by St. Martin's Press in 2004.

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"Live the Life You've Imagined"

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