

How to Get the Courage to Pursue Your Dream Career

By Raymond Gerson

Congratulations. After much thought and research, you have discovered which career is right for you. The thought of it fills you with passion, enthusiasm, and inspiration. This career will give you the opportunity to use your favorite and best talents to make a great contribution. This is the type of work that Joseph Campbell referred to when he said, “Follow your bliss.”

Ahead of the Pack

You’re ahead of many others who have not discovered their “bliss.” You feel grateful that you discovered your right livelihood, but now you face a dilemma. There are risks. Do you quit your present job or business and plunge ahead into your dream job or business? Will you be able to pay your bills? What will your family and friends think? Is this career practical?

Heart and Mind Conflict

Your heart says, “go for it.” Another part of you is scared and urges caution. Fears you didn’t know you had start appearing. You wonder, “What if I fail?” When you listen to your heart or that part of the mind that says, “go for your dreams,” fears often come up. The self-preservation part of your mind raises concerns. Both parts of yourself are attempting to support you. Both parts need to be heard and considered. Before making your final decision, you may experience intense inner conflict between these parts of your mind.

You may feel like a war or boxing match is going on inside of you. I once experienced this inner turmoil before I resigned from a secure job to begin full-time self-employment. I had a steady salary, excellent benefits, and was less than three years from receiving a retirement pension. Some of my friends and family cautioned me against leaving my job to follow my dreams. I decided that leaving was best for me.

The Choice Is Yours to Make

I am sharing my experience to let you know that I have experienced this dilemma, not to influence you to do it the way I did. The ideal is to start a part-time business and build it before leaving your job, or to go from a job to a job. However, what is right for one may be wrong for another. Only you can decide when to leave your job and whether to do it slowly or quickly. It depends upon your personal makeup, circumstances, and finances.

Questions to Consider

How can you decide whether to pursue your passion? Here are some questions that can help.

1. What will be the costs for you and your loved ones if you don't pursue your dreams? What are the costs of leaving your current job or business?
2. What are the benefits of pursuing your passion? What benefits will you lose if you quit your present employment?
3. What if you fail? When you come to the end of your life, would you rather have tried and failed than to have never tried?
4. What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail?
5. How will you feel about yourself if you pursue this inner calling? What will your feelings of self-worth be if you don't try?

Steps to Overcome Fear

Also consider the following:

1. Begin moving toward your goal, no matter how slowly. Start it as a hobby, or as volunteer work, or part-time employment. Take the first step even if it's a small one. Emerson told us, "Do the thing you fear and the death of fear is certain." Action is powerful! According to Goethe, "Whatever you think you can do, or believe you can do, begin it. Action has magic, grace, and power in it."
2. Read the biographies of others who took risks, overcame failures, and succeeded.
3. Place inspiring quotations and pictures in your home and office.
4. Listen to CDS that lift your spirit and motivate you.

5. Reflect deeply on how you want to live the rest of your life.

You were born for a purpose that you are worthy of fulfilling. The world needs your talents and contribution.

I leave you with a powerful quote by Helen Keller that had a positive impact on me when I was battling the fear of following my passion. I hope it will inspire you to pursue your dreams.

“The marvelous richness of human experience would lose something of rewarding joy if there were no limitations to overcome. The hilltop hour would not be half so wonderful if there were no dark valleys to traverse.”

Copyright 2007. Raymond Gerson

Raymond Gerson has a masters in psychology and over forty years experience teaching personal and career development. Career counselor, job placement specialist, trainer, and former owner of an executive search business, he teaches college success strategy courses. He is the author of five books, including Create the Life You Want. Two of his e-books, How to Create the Job You Want and Effective Job Search Strategies are available for free at <http://www.raymondgerson.com> along with numerous articles on success and study skill strategies.