



Feeling Stuck in Your Career?

3 G's of Evaluating a Change

Written by Cam Yenokida

©2024

www.achieve-excellence.com

Achieving YOUR Excellence is our only mission.

Have you ever thought that your career ladder was leaned up against the wrong wall?

When I was a 42-year-old executive with over 20 years invested in my professional career, I suddenly found myself disconnecting ever so slightly from the world. It started with talking a little less, sleeping a little more, and snapping at a moment's notice; usually towards my wife or kids. My head was in my phone constantly; social media, emails, texts, sudoku, wordle, etc...

"If you hear a voice within you saying, 'you are not a painter,' then by all means paint and that voice will be silenced." – Vincent Van Gogh

When your career ladder is leaned against the wrong wall, one can become disengaged and de-energized. In my case, I was becoming an empty shell of my former self.

I didn't get it and I certainly didn't like it. I had a beautiful wife and family that I loved, a house in an incredible neighborhood, a successful career with an impressive compensation package. What more could I ask for?

It turns out that there are many working professionals going through a similar story in life and often don't know where to start or how to think about making a change in their career. The important piece of this is to recognize the presence of a potential inflection point in your life.

This is a turning point or opportunity to evaluate our existing beliefs, behaviors, and habits to improve our future performance and fulfillment.

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do." – Steve Jobs

The good news is you are not alone. According to the Gallup organization's recent "State of the Global Workplace" report, roughly 60% of people are emotionally detached at work and 19% are miserable.

That is a staggering number of people, and this article offers those folks a practical process to address those realities.

It can be daunting to confront the very thing you've attached most of your identity to, your career. When in fact, it could be the very source of your discontentment.

So, if you're one of those people, I'd encourage you to Get Clear, Get Help, and Get Going.

"Are you bored with life? Then throw yourself into some work you believe in with all your heart, live for it, die for it, and you will find happiness that you had thought could never be yours." – Dale Carnegie

Step 1. Get Clear

Getting clear is about defining exactly why you are feeling this way and requires you to focus on the facts and dispel the fears that can quickly surface throughout the process. Here are some

www.achieve-excellence.com

Achieving YOUR Excellence is our only mission.

common examples of what these fears might sound like:

- “But I’ve invested so much time into this company or role.”
- “I’ve got a family to support, I can’t just go find another job.”
- “At least I know what I’m doing here.
- Who knows what I’ll find if I start looking.”

“Every strike brings me closer to the next home run.” – Babe Ruth

While there may be countless other thoughts out there, a good rule of thumb is to recognize any thought that comes up which causes you to pause or stop going through the process of evaluating a change. Write it down, acknowledge it, and keep moving forward.

Getting clear demands that you define your WHY. Why are you dissatisfied with your current situation? WHY are you seeking to improve your performance, success and fulfillment?

To do this, you must evaluate multiple aspects of your career. The best way to do this is to create a “love & despise” list.

I’d suggest creating one for your role and a second for your organization, separately. Your “love” list should consist of things that give you energy and invigorate you throughout the days/weeks/months/years.

While your “despise” list should be things that utterly detest you. Notice how I use the word

“despise” and not just dislike...in most situations, there will be a multitude of things that you do not like but must tolerate and do exceptionally well.

These are common and it isn’t practical to list all the items that simply annoy you. Focus on the ones you absolutely despise.

The ones that make you sick to your stomach. The ones that potentially create misalignment between your personal integrity and your professional goals. The ones that you’re embarrassed to tell your friends and family about.

“The most difficult thing is to act; the rest is merely tenacity.” – Amelia Earhart

Now, the reason for doing this both for your current role and your company is because it is completely possible to be in a great organization and simply the wrong role. Or, in the right role to excel, but the wrong organization to succeed.

“Don’t be afraid to give up the good to go for the great.” – John D. Rockefeller

Once you have these two lists, take time to rate each item on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being the most important in your life). Consider, for example, if travel was on your “despise” list and you’ve come to the point in your life where you just can’t fathom jumping on another plane for work, then you’d put a 5.

www.achieve-excellence.com

Achieving YOUR Excellence is our only mission.

Conversely if compensation was on your “love” list but ultimately it was less important than most others, perhaps you would put a 3.

“A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.” – Albert Einstein

Tally up your rankings.

If your total count in your “love” column outweighs your “despise” list, then I’d argue that your career might not be the source of your discontentment and perhaps it’d be best to seek a licensed therapist to help navigate through the challenges you’re facing. If, however, the total rankings in your “despise” column is greater, you’re probably onto something important.

And, arguably, if your “despise” list outweighs your “love list” by 50% or greater, then it may still be wise to proceed onto step 2.

Essentially, this is telling you that you detest nearly 33% of your position or company which is 1.65 days out of a 5-day work week. It’s tough to imagine that you are on your path to fulfillment and success with that kind of balance.

Make no mistake about it, this simple exercise might confirm that you are in the right role and/or organization to accomplish your goals.

At which point, I’d encourage you to develop a list of questions and trusted advisors to discuss ways in which you can create steps to challenge yourself and accomplish improved results and peak performance.

Trusted advisors can be a business coach, mentor, or experienced colleague that offer sound guidance and advice.

However, if your evaluation draws the conclusion of significant dissatisfaction, then it’s important to get clear on your **WHY**. You can do this by writing down a simple statement.

“I am not fulfilled in my current role or company because _____, _____, and _____. It has negatively affected my ability to perform and has impacted my life by _____. (Fill in the blanks.)

Only you can provide these answers and it’s important you memorialize your **WHY**. We’ll get back to this in a moment, but for now, congratulations! You’ve just gotten clear, and now it’s time to get help.

“Change before you have to.” – Jack Welch

Step 2. Get Help

Don’t worry, getting help is much easier than it sounds and is pretty simple.

It starts with defining your power. Write a list of your greatest skillsets. Talents, abilities, and expertise that you’ve gained over the years.

If possible, jot down specific examples that come to mind when creating this list (the situation you faced, period of time it occurred, the action you took and the outcome you achieved).

Then, define your passion by writing down jobs, industries, or potential careers that pique your

www.achieve-excellence.com

Achieving YOUR Excellence is our only mission.

interest. You don't have to know anything or everything about these, you just have to be curious and interested in learning more.

“There is only one way to avoid criticism: do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing.” - Aristotle

Finally, create a list of trusted advisors for you to connect with. An executive or professional coach can be a valuable investment to assist in navigating these decisions. They often have experience and knowledge to assist in developing action plans and accountability through the process.

Other trusted advisors could be mentors, friends, or family that have experience making similar career decisions.

Keep in mind that these folks should be people you trust and that can assist you in unlocking your individual passions, potential and purpose.

I'd also caution you to limit the number of folks you engage in these conversations with because having too many opinions can create conflicting messages. Start small and select wisely.

Before you start launching calls or setting up coffee, it will be important for you to do two things in preparation. First, start by being prepared to share your why, your powers, and your potential passions.

Secondly, you will want to prepare a list of specific questions you'd like to discuss with each person.

This could include questions about the process they went through, the steps they would take again or change, about resumes, industries, different types of organizations, etc.

The intent here is to use this as a guide and not a specific playbook for your situation. To gain perspective and support from people that have gone through these types of transitions before.

(Hint, hint – The added benefit of connecting with these advisors is that they may come across a connection or opportunity that could be fantastic for the next chapter in your life.)

Once you have these lists prepared, you're ready to move onto the next step.

“Action is the foundational key to all success.” – Pablo Picasso

Step 3. Get Going

This can be a difficult step for most people because there tends to be a lot of emotion involved.

“You may delay, but time will not.” – Benjamin Franklin

The perceived embarrassment of quitting, the potential guilt of feeling like you're giving up on the team, the fear of uncertainty, or perhaps you've been less stressed as of late or recently hit a major milestone in your career which leads you to believe that it's going “ok” for now.

No matter what the feeling, you've already put in the hard work by identifying a potential inflection point in your life, took time to get clear on the reasons behind your lack of vitality and developed an outline of steps to move forward.

"When I discover who I am, I'll be free."
– Ralph Ellison

This would be the time to re-visit your WHY statement as a reminder of the intense feelings you've experienced and to re-clarify your motivation for making a change.

Now, it's time to develop a plan. Plans should include specific, actionable steps that include deadlines and a consistent review of progress. Here are some examples of action steps you can consider:

- "I will schedule and meet with each trusted advisor by _____."
- "I will update my resume by _____."
- "I will update my LinkedIn profile by _____."
- "I will contact and interview 3 recruiters by _____."
- "I will apply to 3 positions per week by _____."

Notice how these steps only include goals or results within your control. That's because it is more important to focus on the process and remember that consistency is key.

I'd also encourage you to stay positive by revisiting your WHY statement as often as

needed to remind you that you're on the right path to shaping your future by leaning your career ladder against a wall that brings you even greater fulfillment and success.

Good luck and Get Going!

"People grow through experience if they meet life honestly and courageously." – Eleanor Roosevelt