

10 Steps to Escape the Job World and Create the Life You Really Want

By Valerie Young

1. Get the Point – Of Life, That Is

It's one of those things that is worth repeating – life is all too short. And, few among us will look back in our old age and wish we'd gone to more meetings or put in more overtime. The point is, despite pressure to "play it safe" by sticking with your day job ("But dear, you have a good job, you want to be HAPPY too?") you have every right to follow your entrepreneurial dreams. Once you get that life is to be lived and not, as they say, merely endured, you'll understand too that it is up to you and you alone to create the kind of livelihood – and life – you really want. As Beverly Sills once said, "You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you don't try."

2. Get the Right Picture

Instead of focusing on what you DON'T want – meaningless work, annoying office politics, someone else calling the shots, start with a positive picture of what you DO want. Five minutes a day spent visualizing your ideal work-life and fashioning a plan to get there will move you far closer to your goal than 30 minutes of complaining. The route to figuring out the perfect at-home WORK starts with envisioning the kind of LIFE you want. What do your surroundings look like? Do you want to work outdoors or indoors? With others or alone? Is travel a part of your picture? Do you see yourself working primarily with your head, your hands, or both? Bottom line: You won't see yourself doing it until you can see yourself doing it.

3. Get Passionate

Entrepreneurs who love what they do are more apt to be successful. Discover your passion by paying attention to situations or things that grabs and keeps your attention. Focus less on your skills (what you CAN do) or your resume (what you HAVE done) and instead, try to tune into what it is you really LOVE and WANT to do. What types of things did you love to do as a child? What kinds of characteristics or talents do others compliment you on? What kind of jobs/careers do you envy? If you don't yet have the knowledge or skills to turn your heart work into a business venture, get passionate about filling the gaps.

4. Get A Grip On "It"

In her book "Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway," Susan Jeffers says IT is what scares you – and ultimately, what's holding you back from going after your dream. Perhaps your fear centers on money, or that you're not "smart enough," or that you'll fall flat on your face. Let's face it, shaking up your life is scary. Yet, "Unless you walk out into the unknown," says Tom Peters, "the odds of making a profound difference in your life are pretty low." So go ahead and indulge in your worst-case fantasy. Then get busy figuring out what steps you can take to prevent it from happening.

5. Get Real

You've seen the easy money pitches: "Earn \$1,000 a week stuffing envelopes in the comfort of your own home." Sounds great, right? Now, snap out of it! Launching your own business takes time and effort. You should also expect a drop in income – at least in the beginning. Now is the

time to revisit the ideal life you outlined in Step 2 and ask yourself, "How much do I really want my ideal life? What am I willing to do or give up to get it?" If you are serious about living life on your own terms, the sacrifice will be worth it.

6. Get Informed

Things always seem scarier when we have either inadequate, or worse, inaccurate information. Go to the library. Join associations. Talk to people who have started similar businesses. Take classes. Read trade publications. Take advantage of resources like the Small Business Association and other national, state or local programs designed to assist entrepreneurs. The more informed you are, the more manageable – and less "risky" the risks become.

7. Get Ready

A goal has been described as a dream with a deadline. Even if you don't yet have all the details of your new business worked out, it's important to set a target date for when you want your "new life" to begin. Once you select a date, write it on the calendar. Besides being a great source of motivation, knowing how much time you have between now and "D (departure or dream) day" lets you create a realistic plan for hitting it. Other ways to "get ready" include: Get any elective surgery out of the way while you still have such a thing as paid sick leave. Take maximum advantage of any and all opportunities, resources and contacts at your current job. Buy what you'll need for your future business now while you're still bringing home that paycheck.

8. Get Support

Enthusiasm is contagious, but so is pessimism. Avoid the Naysayers and make an effort to seek out others who share your passion for working from home. Consider meeting weekly with other aspiring entrepreneurs to generate ideas, share information and help each other stay on track.

9. Get Going

As one Chinese proverb reminds us, moving a mountain begins by lifting one stone. To keep from being overwhelmed – yet still make headway – break your larger goal down into more manageable steps. Then, no matter how hectic things get, pledge to take at least one action a day. Even the smallest actions – jotting down a new idea, reading a single page, or making one phone call – start to add up. And, once you actually get the ball rolling, it's hard to stop!

10. Get Gratitude

At the same time that you are setting your sights on achieving your future goal, be mindful of how much abundance you have in your life RIGHT NOW! Changing course is a journey. Count your blessings and enjoy the ride because, as John Lennon once said, "Life is what is happening when you're making other plans."

Off the beaten path career counselor, Valerie Young, abandoned her corporate cubicle to become the Dreamer in Residence at <http://www.ChangingCourse.com>, offering free resources to help you discover your life mission and live it. An expert on the Imposter Syndrome, she's presented her How to Feel as Bright and Capable as Everyone Seems to Think You Are program to over 30,000 people.

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