

How-To Make a Career Decision You Won't Regret



Even though the modern job market is more competitive now than it's ever been, there's no shortage of resources to help you make the right career decision. Between coaches, training courses, online job boards, and advice from everyone in your professional and personal circle, logic would dictate that finding your dream job shouldn't be all that hard. Believe it or not, there's an argument to be made that it's actually quite the opposite. The information age has people so inundated with data and advice, and the opinions of others, that thinking for oneself becomes next to impossible. With all these fancy tools and resources, there are often lots of career paths to choose.

For this reason, it's easy to make important career decisions for the wrong reasons. It could be advice from a colleague. Maybe you even make a choice out of fear or desperation. Unfortunately, these choices that often lead to shoulda-woulda-coulda's down the road. That begs the question, how do you go about making career decisions you won't regret?

Expertise and Purpose

A great place to start the process is identifying what you're good at and the impact you want to leave on the world. Sure, this sounds a little cliché. But, it's grounded in fact. When you get crystal clear on these factors, the decision-making process becomes pretty simple at its core. Does taking that promotion align with your values? Will staying in your current position allow you to perform at your best and grow? If you can't feel challenged and fulfilled, it's not the right fit.

Get Clear on What's Most Important to You

In order to eliminate all the outside noise regarding your career choice, get clear on what's most important to you. Start by writing things down. What does your dream job look like? How will it fit with your dynamics at home? What goals do you want to accomplish? What does your plan look like to get there? What are you willing to sacrifice? The vision you create should be one that gets you excited. If it scares you a little, all the better. Now you share it with others.

Support is Better than Advice

When you start sharing your vision with other people, they're going to be quick to imply their wisdom. In most cases, that wisdom is anything but ill-intended. However, you need to make it clear that you're clear on the direction you're headed. Let them know that the best thing they can do is offer support with whatever decision you make and not impart their fears and biases.

Filter all the advice you hear. Just because it worked for one person in a specific situation, doesn't mean it's the best advice for you. Ask yourself if the advice you receive makes sense for you. If it doesn't, let it go in one ear and out the other.

What's Popular isn't Always Right and What's Right isn't Always Popular

You got me. I stole that one from my fourth-grade teacher. But it's something that's stuck with me my whole life.

The urge to conform is all around you. There's a human need to be part of a group. It gets back to that whole safety in numbers thing. Whatever it takes, you have to do what's right for you. That takes confidence.

Be Confident

Speaking of which... Whenever you're in the process of figuring out the next step, you're going to experience moments when your confidence is in crisis. It's

important to remember that everyone has confidence issues. It isn't some elusive trait that some people have, and others don't.

You also have to realize building confidence doesn't happen overnight. It takes time. As silly as it might sound, positive affirmations do wonders for your confidence. Whether they're something you tell yourself or, notes you post on your bathroom mirror, self affirmations work to rewire your brain in a beneficial way. With a little practice, you can develop the unwavering confidence to make difficult choices.

Everyone says they want to live without regrets. Sadly, the number of people that actually do, is pretty small. When it comes to your career, you're going to face crossroads and difficult decisions. The last thing you want is to look back and say, "I wish I would've taken that chance when I had the opportunity." The good news is that important career decisions are your choice to make, not anyone else's. They're going to be uncomfortable. You're going to second guess yourself at some point. But, if you're clear about what you want and keep the noise from others at bay, you'll arrive at the right choice for you. With no regrets.

Best Strategies to Build the Confidence You Need to Succeed



At some point in your career, you've dealt with self-doubt of some sort. Am I good enough for this job? Do I deserve this promotion? What if I fail? If any of those questions sound familiar, you're not alone. Everyone goes through times when their confidence is in crisis and fear takes over. Maybe it's something you're

struggling with right now. The good news is that these thoughts of self-doubt don't last forever, and your worst fears rarely come true.

However, if you're going to succeed in the long run, you need to believe in yourself and your abilities. Even though it's not easy, it's a skill that can be learned. This week we talk about the best strategies to help grow your self-confidence.

Remember Your Accomplishments

This is a great place to start if you're working on building your confidence. In times of fear and doubt, it's easy to forget all that you've done. But remember, you didn't get to where you are today without doing some pretty amazing things along the way.

Find a quiet place where you can be by yourself. Write down a list of ten things you're most proud of. They don't even have to be related to your career. Maybe you ran a marathon. What about that time you got a promotion when you least expected it? Put this list somewhere you can see it daily. Tape it to your bathroom mirror or put it on the nightstand next to your bed. After you start seeing your list of accomplishments enough, you'll start to think of yourself in a more positive light and begin silencing your inner critic.

Inner Critic

Speaking of your inner critic, everyone has one. And, it's almost always your worst critic. Unfortunately, your inner critic rarely, if ever, does you any good. Sure, it's an admirable trait to be humble but, your inner critic can be flat out mean.

To silence your inner critic, Dr. Lisa Firestone has some great advice. Start by acknowledging its presence. Trying to suppress it won't do any good.

Next, listen to what that evil voice inside your head is telling you. Write those thoughts down in second person. If the thought is "I'm not good enough," write it down as "You're not good enough." This helps your brain see these thoughts from an outside perspective.

Now, write down constructive responses to these thoughts using “I”. “I might be having a tough time, but I know I have what it takes to get through it.”

By practicing this simple exercise whenever your inner critic rears its ugly head, you’ll start to show yourself some compassion, which is critical if you want your confidence to grow.

Stop Comparing Yourself to Others

It’s a habit for people that are struggling with confidence to compare themselves to others. They look at everyone else’s accomplishments and think they don’t deserve the same for themselves. This kind of destructive behavior is poison for your confidence.

The key is to train your mind to think of others and what they have as equal to you. Yes, this is easier said than done but, it CAN be done.

Social media is a great example. When you find yourself scrolling through Facebook or Instagram, you’re looking at everyone’s perfect little life. That’s what they want others to see. The reality is what people post is a far cry from reality. Status updates get blown out of proportion. Pictures are photoshopped to look perfect. The list goes on.

When you can stop comparing yourself to others, you’re on the verge of realizing the self-confidence it takes to succeed in your career and, as a person.

Get Outside Your Comfort Zone

It’s human nature to want to be comfortable. It’s safe and predictable. Unfortunately, there isn’t much room for meaningful growth unless you put yourself in uncomfortable situations.

Think about it in the context of a high school dance. A boy has his eye on a girl but he’s too afraid to ask her to dance for fear of being rejected. The reality is, the only way he’s going to get the girl to notice his existence, is to risk being uncomfortable and asking her to dance.

The same goes for your career and life. If you want to grow and achieve your

goals, you have to take some risks and be uncomfortable.

Contrary to popular belief, confidence isn't something you're either born with or without. It's a skill that can be learned and, it's necessary for your growth, success, health and happiness. If you're struggling to believe you have what it takes to accomplish whatever it is you're after, know that it won't last forever. If you employ some of the strategies above, you might just be surprised by how much your confidence grows in a short amount of time.

How to Be Taken More Seriously at Work



Maybe you're known as the life of the party, the fun guy or just someone that anyone can come to for some needed levity in the office. You're loved by your colleagues for this reason, but something seems to be lacking. You show up early, do more than is expected and stay late. While you're happy to be the lively one at work, you wish your professional efforts received the recognition they deserve. The good news is that you can still let your shining personality make the office fun for everyone AND be recognized for your merits as a valuable employee.

Be Assertive

Maybe you're the one that your colleagues come to for advice or help in difficult situations. You always find yourself giving and expect nothing in return. This is a

wonderful quality to have but if you're sick of being a pushover, don't be afraid to show your confidence. Doing so doesn't mean being the cocky person that toots their own horn, but giving yourself and your team credit and confidently displaying your expertise is contagious. When you adopt this attitude you'll garner the respect of everyone around you and you'll start to feel valued and appreciated.

Confide in a Mentor

If you find yourself struggling to ask others for help, you're not alone. If you want to grow, you're going to need help along the way. Coming to this realization and seeking out a mentor that genuinely has your best interests in mind is invaluable. If you make the effort to let someone experienced know that you're passionate about learning more and becoming more skilled in your job, it can help catapult your career and you'll quickly set yourself apart from other colleagues in your same position.

Be Prepared

There's nothing that lets others know that you care about your work like being prepared ahead of time. Whether it's getting a presentation done in advance or staying an extra hour late to finish up an important project, the smallest of extra efforts and preparedness don't go unnoticed. If you consistently show that you're not just on top of things, but ahead of the game, everyone around you will take notice and your level of respect will go up immediately.

Set Professional Boundaries

While you take pride in the fact that you can be there for anyone at any time, setting boundaries is crucial to your health and that of those around you. It's all too easy for professional and personal lines to become blurred when you're too accessible. Having an open-door policy is great for everyone in your organization but should you find yourself participating in someone's personal affairs, do the professional thing and recommend help outside of the workplace.

Look the Part

As much as we all would like to admit that appearances don't matter at work, they do. There is something to be said for the way you dress as dictated by the environment in which you work. Whether it's a suit and tie or jeans and button-down shirt, people notice the way you dress. Your attire alone isn't going to win you that coveted promotion but making sure your clothes are clean and appropriate for your work environment goes a long way toward earning the respect of those around you.

Look for Opportunities to Help

There is nothing better in a manager's eyes than someone that offers to help. Whenever you have the chance, offer to lend a hand with a difficult project or assignment. Doing so shows not only your willingness to go the extra mile, but sets you apart as a collaborative leader that is willing to take on challenges to learn more, and are capable of doing more. By performing tasks that don't necessarily benefit you directly, you make it known to everyone around you that you're reliable and care about the greater good of the team or organization.

Follow Up

It's one thing to complete a task on time and to the best of your ability. Following up is an entirely different story. If you complete a project you have only satisfied the initial needs. Making it habit to check in every so often to ensure that all needs are met doesn't go unnoticed and can win you long-term relationships that prove invaluable down the road. If you find yourself scattered, give yourself email reminders or alerts so that you can precisely time all follow up communication.

Remember Names

Think about the times you walk into places where you are a repeat customer. Having someone remember you by name sets your experience off on the right foot. Though it's a difficult task, especially if you have a large number of people or vendors you work with, recognizing people's names is paramount. Even though much communication takes place electronically, there is no substitute for the

personal touch of addressing someone by name.

Being taken seriously at work is something we all crave. You want your contributions to be noticed and valued. If you find yourself in a position where you feel that your diligence isn't being praised, take a step back and look at the bigger picture. Chances are that if you implement a few new practices and adjust your attitude accordingly, you'll find yourself on the fast track to more success before you know it.