

The Career Coach - Column # 1, April 2013

Three Tips for Changing Careers by Elaine Voci, Ph.D.

Life can be miserable if you're in the wrong career. The days are long when you spend your time in a place you don't want to be, doing work that you don't have your heart in. I am here to tell you that it is not only possible to change, but people are making that leap every day. I have assembled three key tips for making a career change so if you are seriously thinking of making a new start, keep reading.

Tip One: Take the time to know yourself. Your next career is not going to come to you in a lightning bolt, but it will result from your research, soul searching and a thorough review of your strengths, what challenges you, what is meaningful to you, what suits your personality and values, and what fits into the future you want to create. It is tempting to think that we can find instant gratification for everything, including a new career, but if you are serious about changing your life, you will need patience and a willingness to commit the energy and time it will take to pinpoint the good, the bad and the ugly about what you never want to do again and what you would love to do more of in your work.

Tip Two: Listen to the wisdom of your heart and let it lead you. There is an unseen common thread that links what you care about, what you know about, what you are curious about and what you are good at doing. When you begin listening to your heart, the link becomes apparent to you and generates a momentum of energy that opens up a world of possibilities. You begin to see how your passion and unique gifts can be placed in the service of something greater than yourself, and that leads to happiness, the kind composed of optimism, courage, love and fulfillment.

Tip Three: Know what it will cost you to change your career. I don't just mean in money, but in time, risks, relationships, inconvenience, and ego. You may have to convince your spouse, for example, that this career is worth pursuing. But other people, money and time are not going to be your problem; how you *feel* about these issues is what will turn them into obstacles or not. When you create a plan that helps you confront and manage these concerns you will liberate yourself from your fears, and be able to work on achieving your career goal while keeping a roof over your head.

There are other steps to be taken as you pursue the work you were meant to do, but these three are the foundation you need in order to make the rest happen. Here are two books that offer inspiration and practical ideas: *What Color's Your Parachute? A practical manual for job-hunters and career-changers* by Richard Bolles (look for the 2013 edition) also has an iPad app called *What Color Is Your Parachute? Job-Hunter's Workbook Tablet Edition*; and *What's Next? Follow your passion and find your dream job*, by Kerry Hannon for those seeking an encore career.

Elaine Voci is a published author and a career coach located in Carmel at Elaine Voci Life Skills Coaching, LLC. Read more of Elaine's musings on her blog located at www.elainevoci.com