

Retail Placement Associates

Retail Placement
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Associates

"In Hot Pursuit Of Your Recruit!"



January - March 2005



What Should You Do With Your Life?

Are you currently mired in a career or job when you would really rather be doing something else? When hiring new employees, carefully explore your potential employee's motives and passion for the position. Put yourself in their place.

Have you ever found yourself wondering if you've found your passion in life? Are you truly content in your career and your life, or have you just settled because you've hit a few stumbling blocks and have convinced yourself that you don't have the time or money to pursue what you really want to do?

Po Bronson, author of The New York Times Bestseller *What Should I Do with My Life?* explored this ultimate question with a diverse group of people, young and old, each sharing how they successfully found their true calling. How did they do it? They courageously pushed their fears aside and dared to be honest with themselves in pursuit of their passion. Most of the 900 people he interviewed were searching for "a place where they can be content, grow roots a little, and make an impact."

Here are five points to ponder from Bronson's book to help you figure out your path in life:

1. From your fears come miscon-

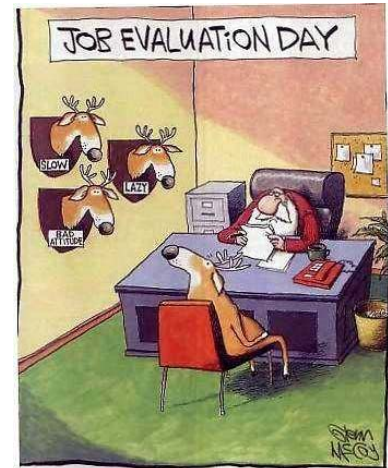
ceptions.

The uncertainty of exploring your passion can lead to irrational fears and unlikely conclusions. Many are afraid that pursuing their passion will put them in the poorhouse. Others fear that the path to their true calling may lead them in some irreversible direction or limit their future options. Bronson observes, "Often we burn 70 percent of our emotional energy on what we fear might happen (90 percent of which won't happen)." These psychological stumbling blocks are most often overblown, worst-case scenarios that keep people from finding themselves. He adds, "What I found is that, if you take care of these obstacles, you create an environment where the truth is invited into your life." Get rid of the fear factor and pursue your dreams.

2. Don't wait for clarity.

Many people wait and hope that their calling will come to them in the form of an epiphany. Don't wait for a "big moment" or a sign. Sometimes the obstacle isn't that you don't know what makes you happy, rather it's hard to imagine that what you love could be a profession. It's possible to bridge these two worlds together with a little hustle, training and determination. Having an epiphany is great, but so often they tell you

Just For Laughs



DATES TO REMEMBER:

January

- 1 - New Year's Day
- 17 - Martin Luther King's Birthday



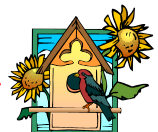
February

- 2 - Groundhog Day
- 9 - Ash Wednesday
- 14 - Valentine's Day
- 21 - Presidents Day



March

- 20 - Palm Sunday & First Day of Spring
- 25 - Good Friday
- 27 - Easter Sunday



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something you already know in your heart.

3. If you aren't happy, don't stay.

Bronson's book is filled with stories of real life examples of people who left jobs that compromised their values, consumed far too much of their lives, were no longer interesting, or created feelings of constant fatigue or insomnia. They were doctors, lawyers and investment bankers who left the jobs that were dragging them down and have found happiness as a massage therapist, bakery owner or catfish farmer. It's not selfish to deny what will make you happy. Life will evolve naturally if you listen to your inner self and pursue what you truly enjoy.

4. Experience speaks for itself.

Real wisdom is found in experience, yet people too often ignore the strong message of their experience. They fail to embrace their experience because they believed their calling was to be figured out intellectu-

ally. If you have no idea where to start, there's some insight waiting for you in the experiences you've already had.

For some that may mean changing sides like the oil company geologist who was morally troubled by his environmental clean-up work. He took a county government job to fight the very same company he used to work for. For others it means finding a career in doing what they love more than anything. Bronson shares a story of a college grad who had held 16 jobs in eight years. His true passion was golf and he really wanted to use his love of the sport to help others play better. He had even designed a golf swing trainer and putter grip. With a little nudge and using his sales experience, he took a job selling golf equipment and has already pitched his ideas to the United States Golf Association (USGA) and demonstrated his grip prototype at a couple of golf expos.

More Laughs



5. Never give up.

It's okay and even normal to take many years before pursuing or discovering your calling. It's possible to have more than one purpose in life, and you can do them together or sequentially. It really doesn't matter as long as you are focused and pursuing them versus chasing other unimportant things like a job title that will impress people you don't really care about, a top-paying job that is uninspiring or a dream that is someone else's (your parents', your spouse's) and not your own.

*Content courtesy of:
Po Bronson, author of The New York*

Could You be the Boss? **How do you communicate your leadership abilities in an interview or a resume?**

Ready to take on a leadership role at work? In this interview with Marshall Goldsmith, corporate America's preeminent executive coach, he tells you how to show you've got the right stuff:

What are companies looking for when vetting potential leaders?

Basically, they want someone who can mobilize others to turn their organization's values into action and vision into realities. Most often this means they're looking for people who have a global perspective and cross-cultural understanding, are able to build partnerships and alliances and can process information and learn in a highly efficient manner.

For a high-level position, show your ability to think broadly, strategically and for the long-term good of the organization. Discuss your past achievements in terms of how you evaluated situations, processed information and took action by looking at the big picture.

For mid-management jobs, make it clear you achieved great results, but focus on execution and how you helped lead a team to success. Don't make it all about you. Instead, discuss how you helped others develop and how people who worked for you accomplished objectives and achieved results.

What if you haven't held a leadership role before?

One way to demonstrate your interest and aptitude is to seek feedback from coworkers on what you can do to improve. Focus on making just a few changes, and check in on your progress. Not only will your performance and relationships improve, but the feedback can help you make the case for having 'leadership qualities.'

And remember, leaders don't always have to have direct reports. You can be a leader by driving change. As a change-leader, focus on what needs to be altered as judged by who is setting the measurement standard. Make sure the person keeping score - be it a boss, senior management or customer - will find value in the changes you make. And build in ongoing follow-up to ensure your improvements are recognized and working.

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How happy is your staff? To check, you might try looking at the bottom line. A new study by the Forum for People Performance Management and Measurement at Northwestern University finds a direct link between employee satisfaction and a company's fiscal performance.

"This study supports the idea that internal marketing and communications needs to be implemented as rigorously as external marketing and sales programs," says Francis J. Mulhern, Ph.D., associate dean and chair of Northwestern Univer-

Could You be the Boss? (From Page 2)

When sharing these experiences, describe how you helped lead change to meet expectations of those looking for change.

How would you answer the inevitable 'what are your greatest strengths and weaknesses' questions?

Don't give a generic answer. Tailor your response to the needs of the job. Highlight a strength that is needed for the particular position. And by all means, don't mention a weakness in an area that is a major job requirement!

Avoid trite, overused answers like, 'I work too hard' or 'I'm a perfectionist.' Leaders are always learning and improving, so don't ever say you are a hopeless anything.

Position how you learned and improved over time. Show how you obtained feedback from your peers or employees and how you've gotten better and are still working on improvement.

What's the best way to sell yourself - to make them want you and not the other guy?

Mass marketing doesn't work in a job

search, so redo your resume and cover letter, so that it is tailored specifically to each opportunity.

Speak in terms of positives you can bring to the company or job and what you can do for them. Show your skills and knowledge and how you can add value. Adding value is important.

Stay away from messages that say 'I'm wonderful, you should hire me.' No one wants a prima donna.

How can one become a better leader?

By asking a variety of key stakeholders for ideas, opinions and suggestions and modeling continuous learning in your day-to-day behavior through effective listening and reflection.

A good leader is a good coach, so help others around you develop. When giving feedback, keep it positive, simple and focused. And always be forward-looking. You can't change the past, but you can influence the future.

Content Courtesy of:
Kat Lorenz, CareerBuilder.com

Attitude Equals Profit

Satisfied Workers Drive Company Results

graduate program in integrated marketing communications. "After all, the products produced by an organization's employees are the embodiment of the attitudes and behaviors of the employees who produce them."

Key findings of the study:

- ❖ High employee satisfaction is often the result of strong internal communications efforts throughout the organization.

- ❖ Another satisfaction driver: internal competition among work teams to implement organizational goals.

- ❖ Satisfaction leads to a status called "employee engagement." Organizations with engaged employees have customers who use their products more.

- ❖ Employee attitudes affect those of customers.

- ❖ It is less expensive to foster employee satisfaction than it is to acquire new customers.

Organizational culture is the single greatest driver of employee satisfaction levels.

Content courtesy of:
SMM's Performance eNewsletter