

Career Rx

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As appeared in TheAlternativePress.com on October 1st, 2009 (www.TheAlternativePress.com)

Prioritizing Change and Overcoming Fear

At this time of year, with the change of seasons and the start of a new academic year, I find myself trying to juggle all of the different changes in my family's lives. The change from the care free summer days to the structured school days forces me to establish and synchronize new routines for each of my family members. Who has to be where, and when, always adds some start up challenges. New routines need to be established by rehearsing new actions over and over again. Eventually, these routines are repeated enough to form habits. A habit is an acquired pattern of behavior that often occurs automatically. The habit becomes second nature. Have you ever driven automatically to a destination that was no longer part of your new routine?

Think about when you were in college and a semester ended. There was a pattern established with your class schedule, how you engaged your classmates and professors, and what was expected of you as outlined in the course syllabus. You knew what you needed to accomplish in order to succeed. Completing the assignments, research papers, labs and internships was a priority. Juggling responsibilities of your social life, possibly work, and getting good grades was your focus. You had flexibility regarding how you juggled the demands as long as you delivered the results. How successful you were depended on how you engaged and how you prioritized.

Do we learn to adjust our style based on natural consequences – i.e., grades? How adaptable was your style as you shifted from semester to semester, professor to professor?

Think about your first work experience. Remember the learning curve when you started a new job? You needed to understand the company's culture, unwritten rules of conduct (usually learned through observation and modeling), and your boss' expectations. Do you recall what you liked and disliked and how it began to shape your experiences?

When you engage in a project, whether at school, in the workplace or as a volunteer, what energy do you bring to the task? Each individual develops their own style, based on influences from family, school, work and social interactions.

This past year has been a time of uncertainty for many people in business and in life. As you encountered changes in your established routine, how have you reacted? Were you able to flow with the change or did you overreact? Over reactions are typically based on fear. Fear is an emotional response to a future event – a threat from something that is unknown or unpredictable. Being unemployed can invoke fear in some. The longer one is without a new job, the more one's fear may grow. Fear can be seen as a continuation of a situation that is unacceptable. Overcoming fear is very powerful if one wants change to occur. We need to understand who we are while being open to embrace the changes that are happening and overcoming our fears is an important step in making that next change in our life. To accomplish this, think "what is the worst thing that could happen if..." Typically, the answer is within an acceptable consequence. Only when you tackle your fear can you embrace the changes that are happening and take that next step in your life.

If we allow ourselves to continuously grow and develop new skills, appreciate new insights, and discover new truths, then we are able to build confidence within ourselves. Changes in life are only insurmountable if we give up learning and discovering. Embrace the changes that happen in your life and develop the spirit to make them great.

"Your imagination is your preview of life's coming attractions."

--Albert Einstein

This column provides thought provoking strategies for getting unstuck along your career journey. A certified Executive and Career Coach can be instrumental in guiding you in your efforts to gain a new perspective. I invite you to contact me @ Lisa@ChenofskySinger.com

Lisa Chenofsky Singer is the Managing Director of Chenofsky Singer and Associates LLC www.ChenofskySinger.com, providing Executive and Career Coaching and Human Resources Consulting.

Lisa's extensive human resources and coaching experience with Fortune 500 companies, small enterprises, medium-sized firms, and non-profit organizations gives her the unique ability to bring together wide-ranging perspectives on career transitions, executive and leadership development. She has consulted with a wide variety of sectors — consumer goods, financial services, healthcare, media and entertainment, pharmaceutical and life sciences, publishing, professional services, technology, and non-profit. Lisa has a passion for motivational speaking, conducts career forums, and provides executive and career coaching.

Lisa's greatest strength is that she enables individuals and organizations to see themselves in new ways, freeing them to achieve their goals. Lisa can be reached at Lisa@ChenofskySinger.com.