

**In this interview, Tim Crowden offers excellent and relevant advice on creating the work you always wanted to do.**

The great thing around careers at the moment and particularly looking to the future is that you really can decide what you want to do. If you don't like what you're doing, you can change.

It's very different from the past ten or twenty years when people had very long careers with one employer or doing the same job. We can now have jobs that help get us to the next post and the next. And we have many avenues of study to help us progress. We can also have multiple careers at the same time that support each other, utilise different skillsets and provide various networks, all of which can help move us towards our dream career or what I call 'the encore career'.

### **Plan for 'the dream.'**

#### **Step 1: Visualise your future**

Dreams are good, but the plan is always better. When I'm career coaching, I always get my client to think about the job they'd like ten years from now.

The one they'd like to see themselves in that is not constrained by immediate day to day needs, geography, financial constraints (like the mortgage payment) or what they think they should be doing. It is the first step of actively planning for the 'dream career'.

#### **Step 2: Define what really matters**

After thinking about where and how they'd like to be working in 10 years, I get them to go a little deeper. Here's a bank of reflective questions I use to help people better define what really interests them, and matters to them.

1. What gets me out of bed in the morning?
2. If I didn't need money, what would I do in life?
3. What most fascinated me as a child?
4. What most fascinated me when I was at university?
5. When am I happiest in my current job?
6. When in my life, have I been so passionately focused on doing an activity that I completely lost track of time?
7. What do I want to be remembered for in life?
8. What is my legacy?
9. Why was I put on this Earth?
10. What's the thing on my gravestone, or what are people saying in my eulogy about me?
11. What do I believe I do best?
12. What do others say that I do best?
13. What am I most recognised for in my life and my work?

*It's with introspection that your values and sense of purpose in life will come through.*

I had one of those “significant” birthdays a little while ago, and a good friend of mine came up to me and said ‘so what are you going to do when you retire?’ I was taken aback by that because I thought ‘well I’m actually at a pinnacle in my career. Why would I be thinking about something that is coming up in five or ten years?’

It prompted me to start asking questions like the ones above, and to get better clarity about what I enjoyed and what I wanted to do in life, I involved others - my partner, my colleagues, my friends, the people I trust. And guess what happened?

- I now know what gives me energy when I wake up in the morning
- I know what I love doing
- I know what my interests are
- I know the things that excite me, and
- I know what I’m here to do.

See, when I started talking to people, I was expecting ‘you’re good at strategic planning’, ‘you’re good at crisis management’ or ‘you’re good at managing projects’ not ‘you’re good at getting people motivated through coaching, mentoring and leadership’ but that was what kept coming up, and it made sense. I do love coaching and mentoring and have been actively involved in staff development and graduate programs for a long time. I mentor staff, people in other departments, even in other organisations. How could coaching not be part of my encore career?

### **Step 3: Proper Planning...**

We all know the 5 (or is it 6?) p’s related to goal setting: Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance so once you are clear about the real future you want, it’s time to set goals with some deadlines for achieving it. A plan without a timeline will always remain a dream. If you’re at goal setting/strategy stage, here are some more questions to think about.

1. Will this opportunity or decision take me towards where I want to go?
2. Is this a step sideways that will help me reach my goal? Or even better clarify my goal?
3. Do need to take a step backwards to take a step sideways to take those two steps forward?
4. Am I completely clear of what I want to achieve? And what my big goal might be? My dream career?

This process might seem daunting, but I promise it is worth it. As a coach, I’ve been witness to many people’s excitement when they find their ‘encore career’. I’m a perfect example. I still have my Public Service career, and I’m coaching because, at the moment, it’s about getting the boat as close to the dock to make the jump into my encore career, and I’m loving every moment. I recently read an HBR article on [Why You Should Have \(at Least\) Two Careers](#). As someone who has a lifelong career - and two relatively new ones - this article hits the mark on fulfilment and how complementary careers benefit each other.

**Final word**

We all know or can recall a favourite person we've worked with that when they walk in the room, the energy in the room lifts. I believe it's because they've found their dream career, the one that meets their values and a sense of purpose.

Get connected with that, and your dream career is also possible.