



# Career Got You Down?

By Dr. Chance T. Eaton

Natalie is on the fast track for a VP role. She cut her teeth in the fast-paced recruiting world, sourcing and hiring high level executives and physicians. Within just a year, she was leading a team, motivated by commissions and recognition. Natalie turned down multiple trips with her girlfriends because she felt they needed to grow up and become responsible for their careers. She went on to receive a variety of certificates and endorsements that help her stand out from the crowd. Annual reviews highlighted where Natalie was weak, and she worked to mold herself into the ideal employee. Natalie got promoted into a department leader role which came with greater organizational responsibilities and she knew how to please the right

people in the business in the name of organizational success. She attended to a variety of leadership seminars and crafts a leadership mission statement, and continually branded herself to be a high achiever. And finally, one day, she reached the pinnacle of success, as she accepted a corporate VP role.

As she revels in her success, she pauses for a moment reflects on all that she has sacrificed to get here. A sadness comes over her. She wasn't there for her family because she was working long hours into the evening and weekends; she returned from vacations early at the request of her bosses; she learned how to ignore the occasional unethical behaviors she saw from some of her colleagues; she quit her spiritual practice because she lost her ability to experience

calm; she divorced twice because she couldn't commit to relationships that took her away from her work; she lost close work relationships due to the hard exterior she built to cope with the barrage of pressure and demands. In a 5 minutes span of time, Natalie has become utterly empty and alone – her entire life has been wrapped up in her corporate identity, and she really has little to show for it other than a resume that symbolically glorifies her path to success.

Her emptiness is rooted in the realization that she has lacked the courage to live an authentic life. She followed the herd mentality in route of success, and lacked in self-discovery and courage to claim life as her own. The war within her psyche between authenticity and the success illusion has become apparent, and she experiences the chill of regret as it flows through her veins. The success illusion takes on a stench as she experiences anger for chasing the wrong things in life.

Despite her long path towards career success, Natalie is suddenly broken. Even though it took her 25 years to reach the pinnacle of success, it took her only 5 minutes to realize she really never really lived life on her own terms. Choices were defaulted to what was right for her company, and her evolving career. This made life a bit easy; never having to decide what was best for her true self, but for the good of a career.

In the pit of angst, and budding hopefulness, she realizes she has to do something different. She must gain the courage to see the world anew, and choose from moment to moment, what adds value to her and others lives. This will not be easy. After a life of defaulted choices rooted in career success, she sees that challenge and responsibility that comes with free will. The art of living must become the backdrop to her new paradigm – but how does one accomplish this? Does Natalie quit her work that she still thoroughly enjoys...does she take a smaller job giving her new perspective...does she sit on her revelation for a safer time? Or does it even really matter 'what' she does; maybe it isn't a question of 'what', but a question of 'how' she lives.

From moment-to-moment, here-and-now, Natalie must be willing to choose how to interpret and experience the world. This means choosing between shortened vacations to solve organizational emergencies and family laughing together over a swim in the lake. This means striking a balance between transactional work results and transformational human relationships. The authentic life requires great responsibility on the here-and-now, and what you deem beneficial to your essence.

In fact, all people are designed with craving for authentic living. The problem is that so few are willing to take the difficult path of choice and responsibility, and default to herd mentality solutions to serve the egos' need for identity and specialness. Only on rare occasions to people have the opportunity to experience a true existential awakening.

All of us have a little Natalie in us, where we look through the lens of ego and success, and miss a world of abundance and joy. Authentic living requires us to dig deep and discover who we are, what we want, and where we are going. It all sounds a little too easy, but it seems to me that authentic living is a rarity these days. As we end out 2017, take a moment to look at your life in its entirety, and decide to choose authenticity over the illusion of success.



*Dr. Chance Eaton has over a decade's worth of experience working in the field of learning and organizational development. Due to his unique educational and work experiences in finance, psychology, leadership and management, education, noetic sciences and agriculture, Dr. Eaton provides his clients with relevant business solutions grounded in theory and research. To learn more about Dr. Eaton's services, visit [www.HRSolutionsInternational.com](http://www.HRSolutionsInternational.com)*

