

The Mid-Life Challenge: Make a Plan to Re-ignite Vocational Passion

by: Craig Nathanson Nobody will stop you in the hallway at work to ask if your career provides meaning and personal fulfillment. Recognizing that something's missing in your vocational life and taking the initiative to change must come from within. Serena Williamson found a way to turn her passion — helping writers hone their skills in order to get published — into the catalyst for a new, more fulfilling life. Serena now runs her own small publishing house. Software engineer Bonnie Vining needed a new career that would value her warm personality, not suppress it. So she left the high-tech world and opened Javalina's Coffee and Friends. After Anita Flegg lost her engineering job, she embarked on a program of self-improvement. The journey led to personal discoveries and her calling: She provides information and support to those who, like her, suffer from hypoglycemia. I have found that many high achievers who lose enthusiasm for their work share common traits: Their work has little connection to the things they really care about. Work is a barrier rather than a path to fulfillment. While they may be doing something they're good at, it isn't something they want to do. Unfulfilled professionals haven't taken time to align their abilities with their interests. They have never made a long-term plan to guide them toward a more fulfilling vocational life. They tend to set short-term goals, or set no goals at all. As they reach mid-life and understand the need for meaning, they turn to their current workplace as a source of what's missing. Most organizations, though, are structurally incapable of providing nourishment for the soul. So the mid-life employee's frustration grows. Mid-lifers like Serena, Bonnie, and Anita take stock of their lives and careers. They develop a plan to re-ignite their energy and enthusiasm for work. The process involves a number of steps, but the common thread involves taking responsibility for making life changes. Here's how: Identify what's most important to you, then develop and work a plan to get there. The plan should involve short-term goals that lead to a long-term objective. When Bonnie decided that engineering management was no longer for her, she applied the discipline of the corporate world to her new career: owning a gourmet coffee shop. Bonnie learned everything she could about specialty coffees and how to run a coffeehouse. She made good use of experts in the field. She then moved quickly toward her goal of opening Javalina's Coffee and Friends in Tucson, Ariz. The thorough approach increased her chance of success. Make a list of your abilities and interests, and then see how they match. You may be doing something you're good at, but don't enjoy. Instead, find something you enjoy and then learn what it takes to get good at it. Serena was fortunate that her vocational calling was right under her nose. For years she helped friends and colleagues improve their writing skills through informal coaching sessions. She realized that the gift for teaching others how to transform ideas into prose wasn't just a hobby. It was a vocational calling. Today, she runs Book Coach Press, which has launched 13 book titles (including my own "P is for Perfect: Your Perfect Vocational Day"). Don't be afraid to move toward your goals. Many people understand the need for change but are frozen in place. There's fear that we may be jumping from the frying pan into the fire. When Anita lost her engineering job, she avoided self-pity and instead grasped the possibilities of her new freedom. She began a journey of self-discovery that uncovered a long-undiagnosed illness, hypoglycemia and with it a new calling. She soon wrote a book on hypoglycemia. Now, she helps others understand and manage the disease. Anita turned what could have been a series of unfortunate events into a new calling that has brought vocational passion to her life. Remember: No one will pull you aside at work, look you in the eye, and ask if you're really happy with your career and your life. The power to understand what's missing and do what's necessary to find it is yours alone. Take responsibility for change, and change will happen.

About the Author

Craig Nathanson is The Vocational Coach™ and the author of the new book, P Is For Perfect: Your Perfect Vocational Day by Bookcoach Press and the publisher of the free Ezine, "Vocational passion in mid-life". Craig believes the world works a little better when we do the work we love. Craig Nathanson helps those in mid-life carry this out! Visit his on-line community at <http://www.thevocationalcoach.com>

Source: <http://www.serverforever.com>