
GROWTH POINTS

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

Changing Careers: Part 2

Once a pastor determines a career change is in order (see last month's issue), it's then time to consider a new calling, i.e., career. Put the following ideas into practice to help chart the future.

Charting a New Direction

First, explore a no-fail dream.

If you're going to change careers, you might as well try to find the most exciting option. So, if you knew you couldn't fail in your next career, what would you do?

Put your dream career on paper. For the best value, take a yellow pad and write out your ideas by hand (print if you wish), but putting words on paper will help you process your thoughts better than typing on a computer or tablet.

Write out thoughts, including the kind of work you would do, where you would live, how much you would earn, your typical day, your surroundings, what you would wear, and other ideas that occur to you. Think about your personality and what makes you thrive, feel alive, and challenged.

Would you work alone or on a team? In a large company or small one? Live in a big city or smaller one? Be in a high-pressured environment or a relaxed one? Have a flexible schedule or standard hours? Travel or be at home?

This exercise helps you to identify what's important, items that you should try to incorporate into your next career.

Here's an example of how this might work. Myron, a pastor who had found general pastoral ministry unsatisfying, wrote, "I'd like to start my own small non-profit business to help the less fortunate. I would travel locally identifying people and businesses who would partner together to care for others in our community, and help them improve their lives. I'd have a team of volunteers to follow-up my contacts, organize the work, but I'd be the front person making the initial contacts and the final decisions."

Take a look at what Myron wrote. He likes to network, work with a team, meet new people, care for the unfortunate, travel locally, but be in charge. These are the key elements he needs in his next career. He may not find them all in his next position, but at least he knows what's important.

Now, look at what you wrote in your own scenario. Show it to a family member, some friends, and to your life coach. What are the patterns that you and others see?

Ask yourself the following two questions. First, what elements of my dream career are not found in my current ministry role? Second, which two elements must I have in my next career to be happy and fulfilled? What you note to these two questions are the core elements.

Second, interpret your findings.

Look at your core elements and think about them broadly. How do you understand them. For example, Myron wrote that he cared for the unfortunate. He now has to interpret what he means by *unfortunate*. Does he want to focus on the hungry or people without shelter or those without jobs, or? If he means those without jobs, he may want to join an existing non-profit that works to help people find employment, rather than try to start his own company.

The better you can interpret your own core elements the closer you'll be to finding a new career.

Third, create a list of your skills.

On a piece of paper, list the skills you

use well in your current position. Example: recruit volunteers, organize events, public speaking, etc. Add other skills you are good with, but perhaps don't have opportunity to use in your current position. When finished, put a star next to the skills that bring you the most satisfaction.

Fourth, determine possible positions.

Look over your no-fail dream, its core elements, and list of skills you do well. Talk to others, describe your skills and core elements, and inquire about what positions might fit them. Key question: "Who earns a living doing something like I've described?" Search the Internet for information about careers that use your core elements and skills. Determine 3-5 possible positions, companies, or fields that appear to fit you.

Fifth, network, network, network.

Changing careers today is more about networking than writing a resume. Now, you will need a resume, but speak with people in the fields you are interested in. Ask questions, find out what each opportunity involves, narrow down to one or two and test the waters. Doing so will lead you to a fresh opportunity, an opportunity that may be a better career (*General Call*) for you.



Growth Points is published twelve times a year. Subscription price is \$29 (US Funds) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. For other reprint usage, advance permission must be obtained.

Copyrighted 2023 ISSN 1520-5096