We Are In The Midst Of A Career Paradigm Shift!

Can you feel it? There is a paradigm shift occurring in this country. It has been building for a few years. After 9/11 and other recent world events, I observe that more than ever before, you and I want to make more of a difference in the 21st century workplace. We want to be inspired and no longer wish to view our career as simply a way to pay our bills or purchase more “stuff”.

There seems to be a transition from the old career philosophy:
- Work is a way to pay the bills
- Work is what allows me to enjoy the weekends
- Work is what keeps my (spouse or parents) off my back
- Work is what you are supposed to do to feel responsible
- Work is an alternative to boredom
- Work is what you do for forty years so you can retire and die in peace
- Work is the opposite of play
- Work is same %@*$+, different day
- Work is a necessary evil!

To the new career philosophy:
- I don’t know what to call it, but I want to help other people
- I want to wake up every morning and look forward to my job
- I want to come home from work every night and know in my heart that I made a difference
- I want to be memorable and make my family proud
- I know I have a special gift, I just have not found the right outlet for it yet
- I want to be like the small percentage of people I have met who actually love their job!
- I want to take pride in describing what I do for a living
- I want to know that I mattered

As a professional career advisor, I meet countless individuals who seek to find their authentic self, change their career and regain their passion. More than ever, individuals want to improve the quality of their life and feel the exhilaration that comes when working with a purpose. They want to move into a more creative or rewarding occupation. The challenge is most people really have no formal training on career success and no idea how to achieve a better outcome.

If you feel this way, let me ask you:
- When did your dream die or be consumed by your realities of bills, responsibilities and deadlines?
- When did complacency, procrastination and apathy creep into your life?
- When did you allow yourself to be consumed with daily routine and ignore the importance of taking time each and every day for self-awareness and personal career planning?

A select few are fortunate to have a revolutionary idea for a new product or service or possess skills in high demand. But often they still fall prey to procrastination. They put off achieving their full potential with rationalizations like, "I'll do it tomorrow." Sound familiar?
In my experience, I have found that there really are three types of career seekers:

1. The career seeker who makes things happen (the doers!)
2. The career seeker who watches things happen (the drifters!)
3. The career seeker who wonders, what happened? (the dreamers!)

Which are you? Ever notice that some people seem to actual delight in being unhappy, and appear to enjoy commiserating with others for their inability to find their calling? There is no honor in complaining about how unhappy you are in your work life. If you are in bad place emotionally, mentally or attitudinally, to change your current momentum, you must become a proactive career-seeker by first assessing your passions.

Regardless of your educational level, whether it be GED or PHD, you must be willing to say Yes to possibility, Yes to change in order to be successful, and be willing to soul search to target what talents and skills you have, and most importantly, what makes you unique. This is the first step on the journey to achieving your calling. Take an honest inventory. Many people avoid this self-evaluation because they are afraid of the results when they look in the mirror.

Fear not! By simply making slight changes, you can yield dramatic results! And you need not be especially intelligent or gifted to realize your aspirations. You just need to be clear on your desired outcome. The most important question you can ask yourself is, “What do you really want”?

You control your direction…not the economy, not the president, not the political landscape, housing market or oil prices, etc. You are not a victim, but rather the captain of your own ship! Create an internal plan that makes such external considerations while relevant, not the deciding factor in your personal course of action. Remember these three keys:

1. The objective of work is to find a contribution that makes you truly happy, referred to as your career calling
2. What makes you truly happy is an internal set of feelings and emotions rather than material possessions or external rewards. Finding your calling and obtaining happiness is a function of training your mind and body; by re-inventing your perspective and attitude
3. Each of us has the unique power to find our calling, it is not a random event or luck

Successful people are simply average people with a clear vision. I have found that many people spend more time analyzing what automobile to purchase (model, make, consumer reports, gas mileage, safety tests, etc.) than they spend on improving their career! As a result, they drift through life without purpose or direction. Avoid this pitfall at all cost! As the great motivator, Zig Ziglar, states, “most people are wandering generalities versus meaningful specifics”. Often, it is only a minor shift in attitude, meeting a new contact or adopting a brand new philosophy that completely changes your life. Ignite that unique flame that resides in you!

What do you stand for? I have a close friend who is fond of saying that, “if you don’t stand for something, you will fall for anything.” Have you recently stopped and considered the reality you are building for yourself? The combination of your thoughts, both positive and negative, comprises your reality. What is your reality? Here is a dose of reality. Every role model you identify with as a success; did not get there without adversity, obstacles and challenge. They simply focused on their outcome and did not allow themselves to become sidetracked with guilt or excuses. “Ask and you
shall receive, seek and you will find.” They focused on exactly what they wanted and formulated the internal belief and attitude that it was attainable. The common denominator for success in the 21st century workplace is clarity and attitude.

Did you know that it takes an equal amount of energy to formulate a positive thought as it does to create a negative thought? Positive thinking (an overused phrase if there ever was one) is ultimately about structuring your belief system, that is, substituting negative images for positive images. It is the process of consciously filtering out unhealthy thoughts and cleansing the mind. Focus is the key. If you have a clear vision and know exactly what you want, you filter out information not relevant to your objective. Ignorance is not bliss and contrary to popular belief, what you don’t know, can hurt you. Without a clear vision of what you want, any information that exists is allowed to penetrate your mind, confuse you and create inner turmoil.

We are indeed in the midst of a career paradigm shift, and the good news…you control the outcome!

Christopher Kuselias is a nationally recognized career expert whose latest book, “Thank God It’s Monday! - A Guide to Finding Your Career Calling”, will hit bookstores this fall. Chris can be reached at chris@christopherkuselias.com or through his Public Relations Manager Joy Berg at 203-407-8800.