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Stevie Awards Blog August 1, 2013

12 Career Questions You Need to Ask Yourself, From a Stevie Awards Winner

Posted by Liz Dean on Thu, Aug 01, 2013 @ 10:19 AM

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Career Woman, Inc., in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., won a Gold Stevie® for [Blog of the Year](#) in the [media awards](#) categories of the 2012 [Stevie Awards for Women in Business](#). (August 28 is the entry deadline for the 2013 awards. If you haven't already done so, you can [request an entry kit here](#) and it will be emailed to you right away.) With the dog days of August upon us, we wanted to share the following thoughts from Lisa Quast, Founder & CEO of Career Woman, Inc.

Finding a job you're passionate about isn't always easy. Life goes by quickly and, before you know it, you may find yourself stuck in a not-so-great job, working for a not-so-great boss, and wondering how on earth you got there. How do you find your career passion? Try taking a time out from the chaos of life and the workplace and use it for some personal reflection.



Work v. Personal Life

Shortly after I graduated from college, I struggled to figure out what kind of work I wanted to do for my long-term career. At the time, I was working in a job I hated for an insecure manager who seemed jealous of all her employees. Due to the workload, I was working long hours and my attitude, personal life, and health had all started to suffer.

One evening my sister took me out to dinner. Over dessert, she handed me a wrapped box with a bow on top. "What's this?" I asked. "Just a little something I saw and I thought of you," she said.

When I unwrapped the gift I found a beautiful picture frame. In it was a picture with the caption: "Find your passion."

I thanked my sister and then sighed: "But that's exactly my problem. I can't seem to figure out my passion at work."

"Maybe you're trying too hard," she replied. "Sometimes you just have to take a step back, relax, and try to see the bigger picture. Stop worrying about finding another job and start thinking about what makes you happy. Uncover the things you're great at doing."

My sister had a good point. It's easy to get so caught up in the minutiae of work that misery becomes overwhelming and ends up being the focus. When that happens, there's a tendency to look for a new job. But jumping from one job to another can often cause even more heartache (and headache), especially if it's from one ill-fitting job to another.





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A Walk on the Beach

I heeded my sister's advice and took a personal time out. The next weekend I went for a relaxing walk on the beach and thought about my life and myself. Then I sat in the sand, pulled the notepad and pen out of my bag, and began answering these questions:

1. What makes me happy?
2. What adjectives would people who know me use to describe me?
3. What are my core values in life?
4. What is my definition of success?
5. What things at work am I good at accomplishing?
6. What things at work do I hate?
7. What do I want to be known for?

Completing this exercise confirmed to me that I was in the wrong job. I realized there were certain jobs I was just not meant to be doing because they didn't match with what I was really good at, what I liked doing, and what I wanted to accomplish in life.

The Next Step

My answers motivated me to take the next step of trying to clarify the type of job that would better fit my skills, values, and my passions in life. A week later (after another walk on the beach), I wrote down answers to my next set of questions:

1. What would be the description of my "perfect job"?
2. With what kind of people would I be working?
3. How would my work benefit me?
4. How would my work benefit other people?
5. How would my work make me feel?

Answering these questions helped me begin exploring other career options. That exploration led to a career I loved in marketing and then into other areas of business, such as strategic planning. For me, finding my career passion was as much about learning to understand myself as it was about finding a job that was a better fit. And once I found a job I loved, great things began happening in my career.

Bottom Line

Being successful at whatever you choose means taking the time to find your passion. If you're passionate about your work, it will come across to everyone around you and help you fill your life with meaning. One way to help find your career passion is to give yourself a time out for personal reflection and exploration.

About Lisa Quast

[Career Woman, Inc.](#) founder Lisa Quast's blog is committed to offering unique and timely insight on topics and problems that are relevant to everyday businesswomen. With thoughtful and engaging entries, interviews with successful career women from around the world, and real examples of her own experiences as a corporate executive, Lisa lends women useful advice to achieve their professional goals. As a result of the success from her blog, Lisa has solidified her position as a top women's career expert. She's become a regular contributor to *Forbes* Magazine and is frequently sought out by national publications for her workplace wisdom.

About Career Woman, Inc.

Career Woman, Inc. is a Seattle-based career coaching and consulting agency founded by women's career expert, Lisa Quast, a certified career coach, mentor, and award-winning author. Founded in 2005, Career Woman, Inc. is a top choice for women who strive to grow professionally, maximize their job potential, develop a new career path, or need a business consultant to help develop their company.

