

# The Occupational Adventure Guide

A TRAVEL GUIDE TO THE  
CAREER OF YOUR DREAMS

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# The Occupational Adventure Guide

*A Travel Guide to the Career of Your Dreams*

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## *Acknowledgments*

# Thank You! Gracias! Tack! Arigato! Kiitos! Merci!

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# Introduction

*Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.*

– Mark Twain

This chapter will...

- Introduce the idea of your career as an Occupational Adventure.
- Outline how to use the book.
- Introduce the idea of using a “travel journal” for your career.

Think of your career as a journey in which there are infinite potential destinations, and countless paths to get there. Along the way there will be amazing sights, sounds and smells. There will be interesting people, new experiences, and different ways of seeing the world. There will also be potholes and, much as you'd

like to avoid them, there will probably even be bouts of the career equivalent of Montezuma's Revenge.

Since you're reading this book, you may have reached a point in your career where you have finally taken your eyes off the path you're on, scanned the landscape around you and thought, “Uh oh...I think I'm lost.”



Whatever your career looks like right now – whether it's an exciting expedition or a grueling forced march – there is an Occupational Adventure just waiting to unfold, *a career path that taps into the core of who you are, lighting you up, inspiring you, and filling you with energy and a lust for life.*

Your Occupational Adventure isn't some far-off destination. It begins the minute you take the first step toward creating a career that makes you feel alive. Each step along the way is part of the Adventure.



This book is a travel guide created to help you discover that Occupational Adventure. It doesn't provide "The Answers" – you are far too complex for a cookie cutter solution. The answers themselves will come from you (and you *do* have them!). This book offers a framework that enables you to find those answers, discovering and defining a path that, if you make a commitment to yourself to follow it, will bring you treasures untold in the form of a fun, fulfilling, and energizing career.

For many, the path to Occupational Adventure is overgrown with a nearly impenetrable thicket. It is buried so deeply that they can't even see it. It's so out of sight that they question whether it really exists, or if it is just another myth.

Others get the occasional tantalizing view of what it could be from the trail they have chosen. They know they want to pursue

it, but the key to how to get there remains elusive. They feel stuck and in a rut.

The lucky few actually get to live their Occupational Adventure, living out a career that is fulfilling and chock full of meaning and a sense of play. The goal of this book is to help you become one of them.

## *What's Different about This Book?*

None of the ideas I address in this book are rocket science. Once you get it, it's simple and straightforward. Unfortunately most people *don't* get it, because we live in a culture built on a cult of action that seldom encourages people to stop and take a look inside.

The self-exploration approach recommended in most career books, while beneficial, falls short. By taking it a step farther and consolidating the resulting knowledge, it is possible to turn random insights into a useful and easily applied tool to help you move forward.

In this book, you will consolidate your self-exploration insights to create your Passion Core, the internal compass that points the way to a career that lights your fire. Similarly, identifying the Rapid Route factors you can use to create a faster, easier path – as well as potential Roadblocks – gives you a "topographical map" for your journey that you can refer to throughout.

Finally, through The Occupational Adventure Guide model, this book offers a framework to follow that is both structured and flexible as you explore and pursue your passions.

## Using This Book

Each chapter has four main elements:

- Overview of key concepts
- Body of information
- Exploration or action exercises (spread throughout the chapter)
- Chapter summary

If your style is to jump around and dig into whatever piques your interest, I encourage you to at least focus on the Passion Core chapter first. An understanding of your Passion Core – your internal compass – is the foundation on which the rest of your Occupational Adventure is built.

## Travel Journal

*Writing about your path can be a powerful tool. As with physical travel, keeping a journal of your career journey can help you deepen your understanding of what you are experiencing along the way.*

*Throughout this book you will find ideas for your travel journal. No doubt you will come up with ideas of your own. What goes into your travel journal and how it unfolds is up to you. It might just be brief notes jotted down as bullet points. Or it might be an ongoing narrative. Or a combination of the two. It could be a story. You could dabble in the visual, drawing what you are experiencing.*

The book consists of the following chapters:

- **Chapter One: Introduction** – A basic outline of the book and ideas for preparing for your journey.
- **Chapter Two: Preparing for Your Journey** – Ideas for getting ready for your exploration so you can get most out of the process.
- **Chapter Three: The Occupational Adventure Guide Model** – An overview of the elements of the career passion model on which this book is based.
- **Chapter Four: Passion** – Explanation of career passion as it is defined in this book.

- **Chapter Five: Passion Core** – Explanation of the Passion Core concept in detail, with exercises to help you create your own.
- **Chapter Six: Destination Exploration, Part 1** – A look at the idea of filling the funnel with Passion Core based career path possibilities as a way to get beyond the blinders and begin with a full spectrum of opportunities.
- **Chapter Seven: Destination Exploration, Part 2** – A look at the process of narrowing down the options, exploring the best ones, examining their feasibility, and choosing a new career path.
- **Chapter Eight: Map It, Part 1** – Goal setting and identifying steps to reach those goals.
- **Chapter Nine: Map It, Part 2** – Identifying the topographical landscape of your career path (Roadblocks and Rapid Route factors).
- **Chapter Ten: Hit the Road** – Taking steps, maintaining motivation, and avoiding pitfalls.
- **Chapter Eleven: New Destination** – Things to remember in your new career.

## *It's about Depth, Not Speed*

It's easy to be impatient and to want "The Answer" right away, but you will have better luck and make more of a long-term impact if you recognize that the answers you need are the deep ones, not the fast ones.



## *A Parting Note*

Your career is a journey, and any journey is inherently about change. Where there is no change, there is stagnation. As the journey unfolds, you can either hang on for the ride and hope for the best, or take an active approach and let who you are guide you to rich and fulfilling destinations.

As with physical travel, your career journey will be filled with the unexpected. There's no way to control everything. But you can be aware of where you're going and why, and how you'd like to get there. This book is about traveling with your eyes open, rather than blundering forward with them screwed tightly shut.

With the tools in these pages, you can harness that inevitable change and direct it along a path that you can really love.

Buen viaje! Bon voyage! Lycklig resa! Have a great trip!

## *Chapter Summary*

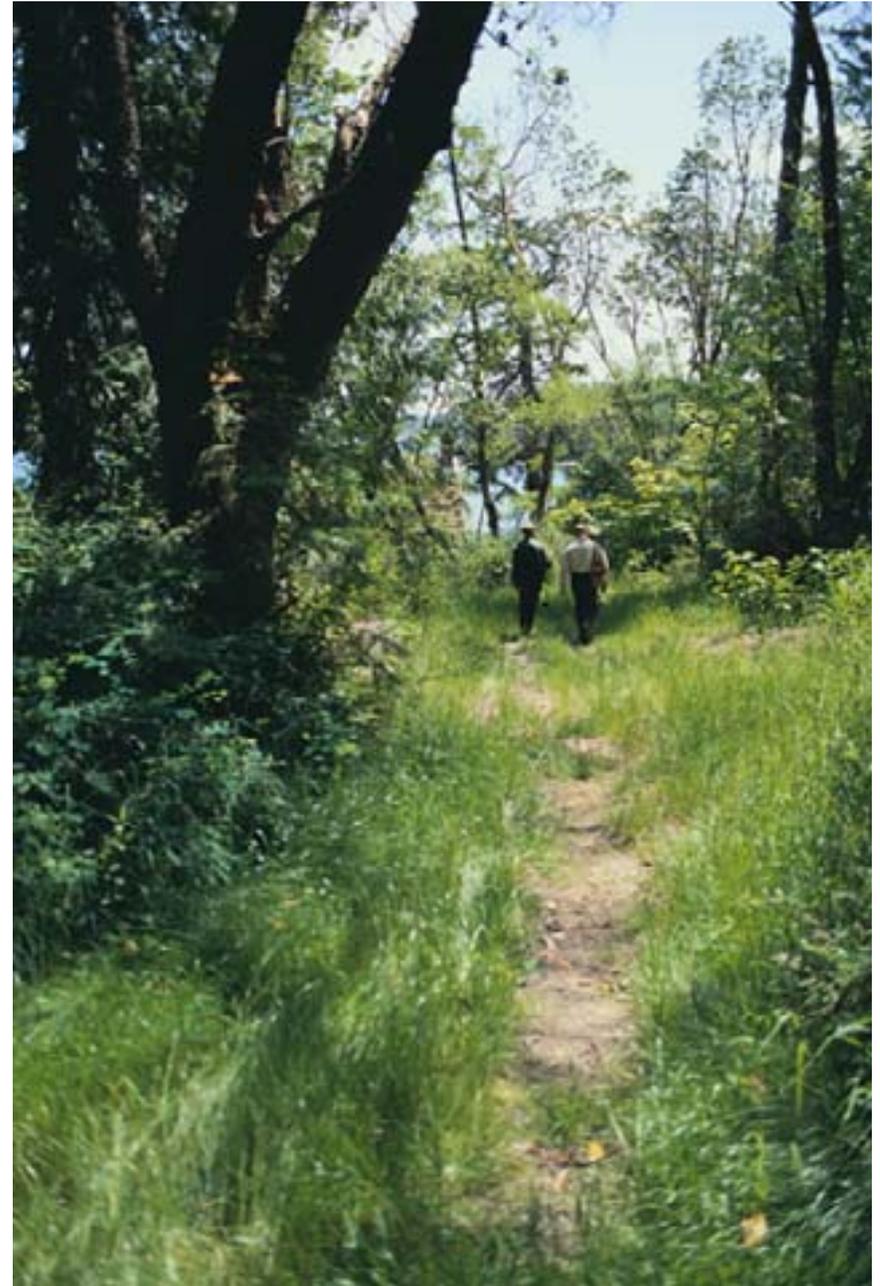
- An Occupational Adventure is a career that makes you feel energized and alive.
- Your Occupational Adventure starts the minute you take steps towards making it happen.
- This book is based on The Occupational Adventure Guide model, and offers a framework for exploration and action.
- This book doesn't have the answer – but you do! This book offers a framework for you to find those answers.
- In going through the exercises in this book, you will compile the information you discover to create tools to apply to your journey.
- Creating your Passion Core is the key step in pursuing your Occupational Adventure.
- The answers that have maximum benefit in this process are the deep ones, not the quick ones.

# Preparing for Your Journey

This chapter will...

- Offer ideas for creating a structure to prepare for your journey.
- Outline the basic learning styles.
- Pose questions to help you understand your learning style.
- Help you take advantage of your learning style as you go through this book.

Before you embark on your journey, spend some time in preparation. In the following pages, you will find ideas to help you get the most out of your efforts.



## *Find Space for a Home Base*

Find a place that you can call home base for your journey. Whether it's a home office or a small desk in a corner of the room, give your quest a dedicated physical workspace to start from. Keep it organized, so clutter doesn't distract you from your purpose.

## *Make Space for Your Information*

Make space for the information you generate. Create folders for notes from exploration exercises, random ideas, news clips that catch your eye, and so forth. It will be easier to make sense of the puzzle as it unfolds if you have ready access to the pieces. It also helps to go back through this information and review it on occasion to refresh your memory and spark new ideas.

Another space for the things you discover along the way can be your Travel Journal (see more information on this on page 6). Buy yourself a nice journal. Make it a visible reminder to yourself that you are committed to this process.

## *Make Time to Make It Happen*

How you approach your quest from a time perspective depends on how you work best. Some people prefer a rigid structure (e.g., every day from 7:00 to 8:00 I'm going to read or journal). Others work better with looser goals and guidelines. How do you work best? You may need to experiment to figure that out. However you do it, remember that it won't happen on its own – one way or another, you have to make the time.



## *Include Others in Your Journey*

One of the challenges of using a book like this is that it's easy to get a great galloping start and then fall off the wagon. One useful tactic to counter this tendency is to involve somebody else in your process. It could be as simple as telling a friend or loved one, "this is what I'm doing," and arranging for them to check in on your progress once a week. Or you could connect with another person or group of people who are in the midst of their own exploration process.

## *Take Stock of Where You Are*

As you prepare to go through this book, take stock of where you are. Ask yourself the following questions:

## ***What Is My Motivation?***

What compels you to focus on discovering your Occupational Adventure? Do you feel stuck in your job? Were you on track once, but have wandered off the path? Were you never on the right path to begin with? Be honest with yourself. Without honesty, this process means nothing. What will the payoff of your Occupational Adventure be? What will life be like?

## ***Am I Open to Different Ideas, Approaches, and Ways of Looking at Things?***

The path you are about to set foot on brings with it growth and change. An openness to exploring allows you to get the most out of this process. Being open doesn't mean jumping on any bandwagon that comes along. It simply means leaving a door open and being willing to entertain new perspectives, even if you don't embrace them wholeheartedly.

## ***Am I Willing to Commit to This for the Long Haul?***

If your career is off track, odds are good that a just-add-water solution isn't going to work for you. It will take time and effort on your part. Are you prepared to spend that time and effort? (It's worth it!)

## ***Am I Willing to Commit to Myself?***

People often ask me if there are any common characteristics among people who are likely to have success as a Passion Catalyst client. You bet! It's the willingness to commit to themselves. This process isn't about anybody else. It is 100 percent about you. Are you ready to make a commitment to yourself?

## ***Leverage Your Learning Style***

An understanding of your learning style can be helpful as you move forward in your journey. While an in-depth picture of learning styles is beyond the scope of this book, a short overview follows that looks at:

- Different learning styles
- Questions to help you identify your own learning style
- Suggestions for bringing your learning style into the process

## ***Different Learning Styles***

There are numerous ways of looking at learning styles, but for our purposes, we will say there are three main styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Visual learners make up around 65% of the population, auditory around 30%, and kinesthetic around 5%.

Visual learners learn best by if they are able to see things. They may need to have things written out, or to close their eyes to picture a concept. Auditory learners learn best by hearing.

They benefit from situations where they can listen to information, such as a lecture or discussion with friends and colleagues. Kinesthetic learners learn best by doing and movement. They may need to build a model of an idea, pace while they think, or work standing up.

## ***Questions to Help Determine Your Learning Style***

Here are some questions to help you determine your dominant learning style.

### ***Visual***

- Do you often remember things by picturing them in your head?
- Are you more likely to learn something well by seeing it in a book than by hearing it in a lecture?
- Do you usually take notes during lectures to review later?
- Do you prefer maps to spoken directions?

### ***Auditory***

- Would you rather learn something new by listening to a lecture than reading it in a book?
- Do you find yourself reading out loud when learning something new from a book?
- Do you prefer following verbal instructions to written ones?

- Do you remember things you hear more easily than things you read?

### ***Kinesthetic***

- Do you dislike sitting still? Do you find yourself fidgeting?
- Do you need to actively do something in order to learn it?
- Do you enjoy working with your hands?
- Do you prefer learning by doing experiments and seeing what happens?

You may find yourself leaning strongly in one direction, or you may find that your learning style is a combination of two or even all three. Whatever the case, you can bring those insights into the picture to help you get the most out of your efforts in going through this book.

## ***Suggestions for Bringing Your Learning Style into the Process***

Following are some ideas for bringing your learning style into the process as you go through this book. As you explore, experiment with what works best for you and refine your approach as you go.

### ***Visual***

- Keep a journal as you go through the exercises.

- Take notes from what you read in this book.
- Get a whiteboard and multiple colored markers to explore ideas.
- Color code your journal notes.
- Use mind mapping (discussed in Chapter Five).
- Make flashcards for ideas.
- Create visual representations of concepts you are exploring.
- Use collaging as an exploration tool (discussed in Chapter Five).
- Make a visual representation of your Passion Core (as described in Chapter Four).

### *Auditory*

- Read sections of this book that feel especially relevant out loud.
- Journal and read your journal entries back to yourself.
- Verbalize questions and reason through the answers out loud.
- Teach somebody else the ideas you're learning here.
- Find an exploration partner that you can discuss your explorations with.
- Read from this book and record it and listen to it in the car.

### *Kinesthetic*

- Go for a walk with a question or set of questions in mind. Keep a small notebook or recorder with you to record your thoughts.
- Make models that demonstrate key concepts.
- Tape a conversation of a discussion you have with an exploration partner and play it while doing something active. Keep a small notebook or recorder to record your additional thoughts and reactions to what you have said.
- Go to a bookstore or library and wander through the aisles. Bring a small notebook or recorder to note what you find yourself being drawn to.
- Create a tangible mind map using different colored paper, scissors, and glue.
- Get a whiteboard and pace while you explore different questions.

### *Chapter Summary*

- Structuring your process
  - Create a home base that you can dedicate to your journey as you pursue your Occupational Adventure.
  - Organize your space to keep track of your exploration and insights.
  - Get a nice notebook or journal to use as a travel journal.

- Make space in your schedule to commit to this process.
- Bring someone else into the picture as you go through this book to help keep you accountable for moving forward.
- Leveraging your learning style
  - There are three primary learning styles – visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.
  - Visual learners learn best when they can see something.
  - Auditory learners learn best when they can listen to something.
  - Kinesthetic learners learn best when they can touch or do something.
  - When you identify your learning style, you can tailor your process to take fullest advantage of it.

# The Occupational Adventure Guide Model

This chapter will...

- Give an overview of the Occupational Adventure Guide model.
- Provide a brief explanation of each component of the Occupational Adventure Guide model.
- Introduce the concept of “traveling consciously.”

## *Discovering Your Occupational Adventure*

This book is organized according to the Occupational Adventure Guide model, which is summarized in the following pages.

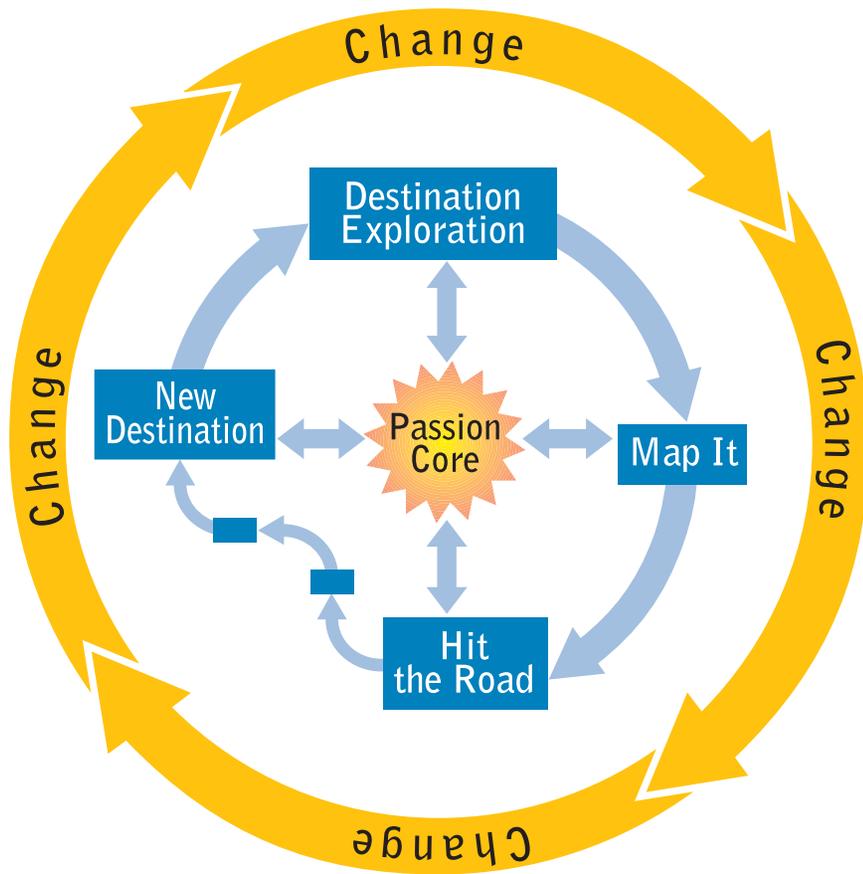
The quest for your Occupational Adventure can be divided into five distinct areas:

- Identifying your Passion Core
- Exploring and identifying a destination
- Mapping out the path
- Hitting the road
- Reaching your new destination

The model looks at your career as a journey. Each segment of that journey has a chapter devoted to it. See the graphic on the following page for a visual representation of the process.

## *Elements of The Occupational Adventure Guide*

Below is a summary of the key elements in The Occupational Adventure Guide. Each element is explored in depth further on in the book.



## *Passion Core*

At the center of the model is your Passion Core, the internal compass that allows you to plot your career course in a direction that energizes and engages you. It consists of the underlying reasons why you find things fun, meaningful, etc. It's all the things at the core that make you *you*. Referring to your Passion Core every step of the way will keep you on course.

Chapter Five focuses on identifying your Passion Core.

## *Destination Exploration*

Once you've identified your Passion Core, you can explore where you want to go.

The Destination Exploration stage is a two-step process. In the first stage, filling the funnel, you use your Passion Core to help you generate as many ideas as possible for careers that would incorporate some or all of the items in your Passion Core. Use your Passion Core to help guide your exploration. Look at it and ask, "What destinations have these characteristics? What careers incorporate these elements?" The idea is to get beyond our blinders and expand our horizons to see the full scope of possibilities.

The second stage of the Destination Exploration process is the process of funneling those possibilities down. Using a five-step process, you will narrow the possibilities down from the broad range of ideas you have generated to a handful of options that you can then research, explore, and get a deep understanding of before making a decision on a new career path.

Ultimately, you will home in on the one that feels best for you and identify your new career path.

Chapters Six and Seven focus on the Destination Exploration process.

## *Map It*

Once you have a career destination in mind, it's time to create a map for how you're going to get from here to there. Again, it's a two-part process.

In the first step, you will identify your goals and the steps you need to take to get there. You will look at it from both a long-term and a short-term perspective.

In the second step, you will look at the topographical landscape you will be navigating as you pursue your Occupational Adventure. What are the obstacles in your way, both internal and external? How will you navigate around them? On the flip side of the coin, what things can you tap into to move you faster, more easily down the path?

Chapters Eight and Nine focus on the Mapping It process.

## *Hit the Road*

All of the above exploration is nothing but armchair traveling if you don't continue on to the next vital step – hitting the road.

To travel anywhere, you have to move. You have to set things in motion. Cliché as it is, the old adage about “a journey of a thousand miles beginning with a single step,” really is true.

Your first step is to commit to doing it. Tell yourself you're going to. Say it out loud. Write it down. Tell a friend. Ideas have a way of becoming reality once you start to give them life.

Your next step is to act! Today! What can you do right here, right now, to move you towards your goals? It doesn't need to be a huge step, but forward motion leads to more forward motion, and without it you're stuck. Remember, action creates opportunity!

Whatever you do, don't wait for the perfect situation. The time will never be right. Ever.



Be willing to take small steps as you travel. Your destination will probably be the cumulative result of smaller interim destinations.

The path from beginning to end will probably not be a straight one. Accepting and even welcoming this idea will open you up to a much richer experience. Explore the side paths. Take unexpected forks in the road if they speak to your Passion Core. Welcome serendipity. The destination you arrive at may very well not be the one you started out for, but if you have used your Passion Core as your compass, it will still be the right one for you.

Chapter Ten offers tips for staying engaged and motivated once you begin.

## *New Destination*

So often, people focus on a destination in their career and say, “that’s where I want to go. That’s my goal.” When they reach their goal, they find themselves surprised when they start feeling that wanderlust again.

They’ve fallen prey to The Final Destination Myth. In reality, nothing stays “right” forever. Until your career is over, there is no Final Destination. You will always be changing, shifting, and growing, and so will the world around you.

The Occupational Adventure Guide isn’t just a model for figuring out what to do next. It’s a model you can use over and over throughout the rest of your career, and even into retirement, to help you make decisions that will lead you to meaningful, fun ways to spend your days.

Throughout your life, you will return again and again to the Destination Exploration phase to identify the next stage of your journey. The alternative is stagnation.

That feeling of wanderlust is a natural and healthy piece of your career progression. Approaching your career journey with that in mind, and using your Passion Core as a compass to guide you every step of the way, will help you continue to create and re-create a rich, fulfilling career.

Chapter Eleven focuses on your New Destination, and what comes after that.



## *Traveling Consciously*

As you progress through the model, one of the most important concepts to keep in mind is the idea of traveling consciously. It’s a simple concept; all you have to do is be aware. Yet most of us go down our career path, if not completely blind, than with sizeable blinders on.

Understanding your Passion Core is the first step in traveling consciously. When you understand your Passion Core, you can consciously evaluate how the decisions you make move you closer to alignment with your Passion Core, or farther away. Every decision you make, every fork in the road, has the potential to move you towards or away from your Passion Core. Traveling consciously lets you tap into the cumulative potential of making the decisions that are right for you.

Traveling consciously also means recognizing the roadblocks that are bound to be a part of your journey. If you can recognize them when they appear – a tendency to be overly self-critical, for example – you won't fall prey to them unwittingly, and you can figure out a way to navigate around or through them.

On the flipside of the coin, traveling consciously also means being fully aware of the strengths and abilities you bring to the table so you can fully apply them to your journey. When you are conscious of your abilities, you can ask yourself, "How do I apply these to move me down the path?"

## *Chapter Summary*

- The quest for your Occupational Adventure can be divided into five distinct phases:
  - Identifying your Passion Core
  - Exploring and identifying a destination
  - Mapping out the path
  - Hitting the road
  - Reaching your new destination

- The Passion Core is the heart of the model. It is your internal compass that will point the way towards the career of your dreams.
- In the Destination Exploration phase of the process, you will come up with ideas based on your Passion Core, and then narrow them down.
- You can use your Passion Core to help you evaluate ideas based on how well they match the things that light you up.
- In the Map It phase of the process, you will identify:
  - Goals and steps to reach them.
  - The "topographical" landscape – things that will get in your way and things that will make the path easy to move down.
- To make anything happen, you have to Hit the Road.
- When you reach your new destination with a career you love, remember that eventually the whole cycle will begin again.
- Traveling consciously means being fully aware of the elements in your journey, and making decisions accordingly.

# Passion

This chapter will...

- Elaborate on the concept of passion as it is defined in this book.

The fuel that drives your Occupational Adventure is passion. Some people have the impression that passion is something only within reach for a chosen few. The reality is, passion is possible, and it's readily accessible to each and every one of us.

What is passion?

Passion is the energy you get by bringing more of YOU into what you do.

Quite simply, passion comes from being who you are. It comes from being in alignment with what comes naturally.

For many people, work is about getting up in the morning and heading off for a day of being who they're not. Day after day they wear a mask, and that takes energy. They drag themselves to work in the morning, and dig into their energy reserves just to get through the day.





The effect of that doesn't stop with them. There is a ripple effect into the world around them. Their work affects their outlook on life and saps their energy, energy that could be invested in their relationships and their contact with the world around them.

Pursuing your passion, on the other hand, and doing work that reflects who you are and what lights you up on a core level is an amazing source of energy. The positive impact ripples outwards as well, to your loved ones, and to the people you work with. It keeps going to the person you have a pleasant interaction with at the grocery store, and to the guy you don't get mad at on the freeway because you're in a happier state of mind.

Tapping into the power of passion is like the difference between allowing water to flow along its natural course in a riverbed, and trying to push it up and over a mountain.

Can you get the water up and over a mountain? Sure. You can build a pipeline and power a pump to send it over, but not without a lot of needlessly spent effort and energy. And you have to keep putting energy into making it happen.

Contrast that with the water coursing along the riverbed. There is energy inherent in its flow. It doesn't have to be forced along its path – the energy comes because of the path it is taking.

It's the exact same thing with passion. You can either follow the course in your career that's natural, that makes you feel energized or engaged, or you can force it along an unnatural path.

### *Doing What Comes Naturally*

Cooper, a high-tech professional in his late 30's, was feeling "claustrophobic and stuck" when he came to me. He had reached a place where he no longer had the energy to do the quality of work that he felt good about. Everything about his career seemed wrong.

Throughout his professional life, Cooper had pursued money and success in the business world. There was just one problem – he didn't really belong there. Wearing a career mask that he no

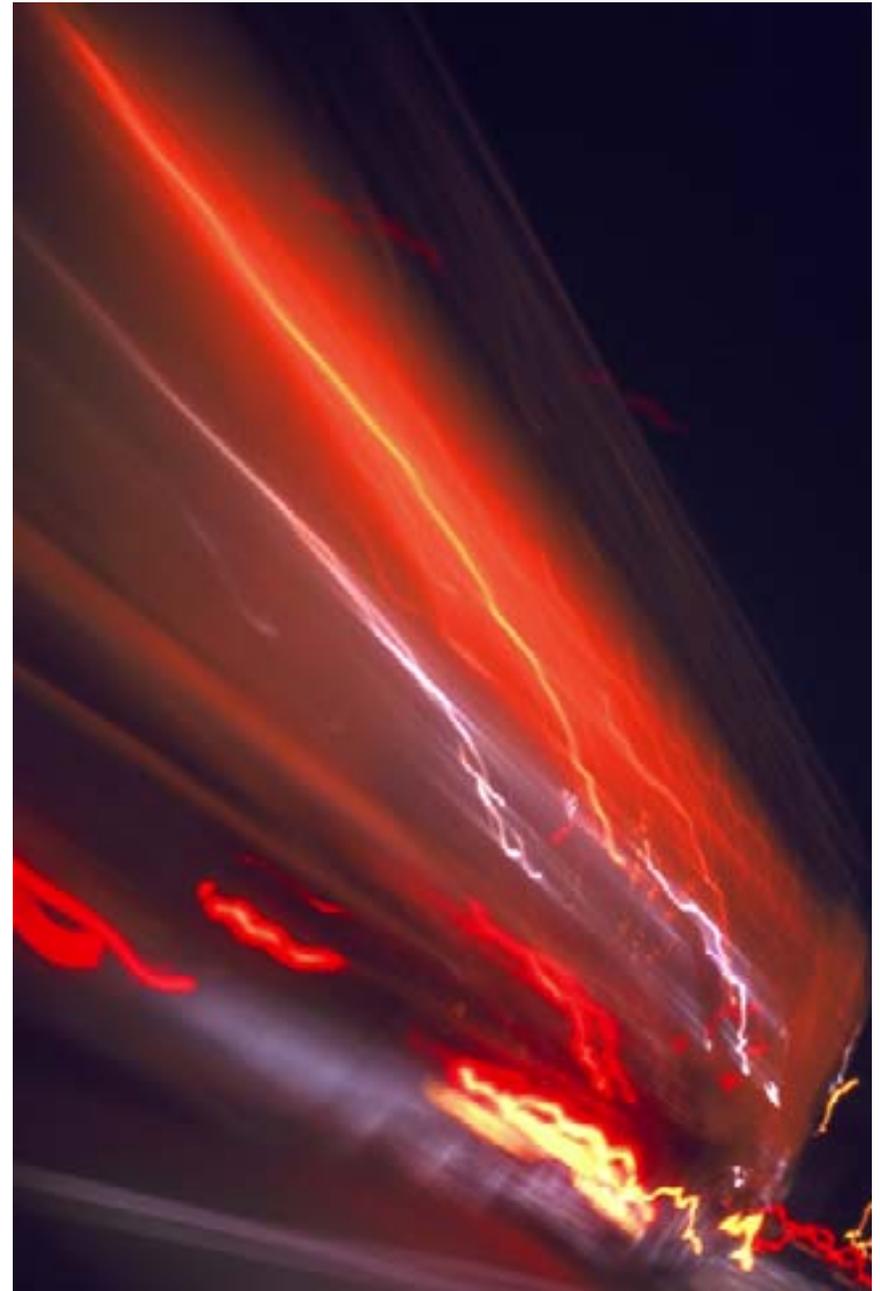
longer had the energy to maintain, Cooper was chasing a train that deep down he didn't really want to catch.

Creating his Passion Core and seeing the elements that light him up consolidated in one place was a watershed point for Cooper. He looked at the components in his Passion Core and the light went on in his eyes. "I could be this?!" Having it in front of him validated who he was – as opposed to who he had always thought he should be in his career – and it gave him a renewed sense of possibility.

Cooper ultimately left the career that didn't fit, and began exploring a path that taps into the things that make him feel alive. He is currently in the midst of the re-creation process, building on his gifts for music and facilitation of both group and self-exploration. There is a momentum and synchronicity behind his endeavors that was completely missing when he was trying shove himself into a mold that didn't fit.

Recently I asked him what the biggest difference between his career now and his career before he started exploring his passions. "My energy now is a lot more forward looking," Cooper said. "Now, I'm focused on finding what's possible, versus finding what's wrong."

My own journey reflects the vast difference that doing what comes naturally makes as well. Before I discovered my passion for passion, I was a Professional Malcontent. More accurately, I was a self-employed marketing consultant. It paid the bills, but I knew that wasn't "it." I didn't know what "it" was, but it definitely wasn't marketing. I was frustrated and spinning my wheels, going nowhere fast in my career.



The realization that my career needed a change came a couple years earlier while I was still on the corporate ladder track. Looking in the mirror one day, I came to the sobering conclusion that unless something changed I was not on the fast track to the top as I had always assumed I would be. I was on the fast track to a role as a bitter, ineffective, unhappy middle manager. My consulting practice was a way to tread water while I waited for inspiration to strike on what I should do with my career.

When I discovered my work as a Passion Catalyst, everything changed. Suddenly I was doing something that struck so deep into the heart of who I was and how I saw the world, I couldn't help but bounce out of my chair when I talked about it (OK, so I'm predisposed to bouncing anyway, but you get the idea). Rather than digging into my internal energy reserves and using up my own energy to "get the job done," I felt like I had a fire-hose of energy blasting through me. Suddenly, I became one of those people with vision!

The impact of finding something that aligned with who I am really is that significant. I've seen that effect repeated again and again, and I have no doubt that each and every person out there has the potential to find that for him- or herself. They just have to wake up to the fact that they are in the driver's seat and begin their journey by making the choice to say, "Yes, I want to start following my passion path."

## Chapter Summary

- The definition of passion is, "The energy you get by bringing more of YOU into what you do." It comes from being who you are.
- Whether or not you pursue your passion can have a positive or negative ripple effect on the world around you.
- Passion comes from following the course that comes naturally.



# Passion Core

This chapter will...

- Explain the Passion Core Concept.
- Provide an example of a Passion Core.
- Offer exercises that will help you create your own Passion Core.

Behind the power of this model lies the simple idea mentioned in the previous chapter. It's worth repeating:

*Passion is the energy you get by bringing more of YOU into what you do!*

Of course, the first step to bringing more of you into what you do is getting a deep understanding of what "being you" means. Creating your Passion Core is about identifying what lights your fire at a core level. Your Passion Core consists of the underlying characteristics of the things you find fun and fulfilling. It's about the reasons why you find things meaningful.

Understanding that provides you with an internal compass you can use to point the way down the path to a career that is vibrant, fun, and fulfilling.

- You can use your Passion Core to:
  - Generate new career path ideas.
  - Evaluate career options.
  - Evaluate choices.
    - Do I take this job or that job?
    - Do I do things this way or that way?





## *Any Direction Is Based on Where You Are*

My inspiration for the concept of the Passion Core, that internal compass, came from the ancient Mayan view of center as a direction that is just as important as the more familiar directions of north, south, east and west. It was a direction that held tremendous religious and ceremonial importance as the location of The World Tree, which joined the surface world with the subterranean and heavenly planes in their cosmology.

The idea of center as a direction makes sense when you think about it. There is no absolute direction. What's northeast to me in Seattle isn't northeast to someone in Cleveland. Any given direction is relevant to where you are.

That same idea is a vital piece of living your Occupational Adventure. Before you can choose the direction that is right for you, you first need to know where you are. You need to understand your Passion Core.

If your career is a journey, realize it or not you are always looking for some sense of direction. Because we live in a culture that is hyperfocused on action and results and low on introspection, most people haven't spent the time looking inside to know what really lights them up at a core level. They don't have an awareness of that internal compass, so they look around and find an externally generated compass, one made of the standard factors so many people use in their career decisions, for example:

- Cultural definitions of success – wealth, power, status, etc.

- Societal expectations of what path we should take.
- The “shoulds, have-tos, and oughtas” we internalized from our parents (however well-meaning they may have been).

Unfortunately, none of these things have *anything* to do with who they are, or what makes them feel alive.

So in effect, they take a compass reading from someplace they’re not. If I’m standing here in Seattle and take a reading off a compass in Cleveland, it’s bound to lead me to the wrong place.

No wonder so many people are dissatisfied with their jobs! Identifying your Passion Core – and making choices accordingly – is the single most important thing you can do to create a career that keeps you energized and engaged year after year.

Perhaps you bought this book because you know too well the effects of a career that isn’t in alignment with your Passion Core. Stress. Boredom. Lack of energy. Feeling stuck. The creeping dread of a Sunday night, followed too soon by the “oh-no-it’s-Monday” blues.

It’s never too late to start making decisions based on what’s truly good for *you*. It’s never too late to embark on your Occupational Adventure – and the time to start is now!

Your Occupational Adventure is unique to you. It is your own story. As you look at the horizon, contemplating which direction to take, remember that your Occupational Adventure isn’t just limited to one potential destination. Once you discover your Passion Core, you can use it to identify countless potential destinations, any one of which is exactly right for you. That’s

part of the power of the Passion Core. Without it, finding your Occupational Adventure amounts to closing your eyes and rolling the dice, hoping to hit the jackpot.

And what, you ask, is your Passion Core? Boiled down to its simplest description, it is made up of *the underlying reasons why you love the things you do*.



## *Example Passion Core*

To give you a feel for what a Passion Core looks like, here is my own. The categories you see (exploration and discovery, social good, etc.) don't apply to everyone. They're unique to me. You have your own unique set of Passion Core elements. If your Passion Core has anything in common with mine, it's pure coincidence.

If something I do in my career has the majority of the following elements, odds are good I will be on fire about it. If they're missing, my feet will be itching and I'll be looking for the door.

### *Passion Core Example #1 - Curt Rosengren's Passion Core*

#### Exploration and Discovery

- Stimulation of the new
- Change
- Choices
- Morphability
- Lack of the mundane
- Facilitating light bulb experiences

#### Social Good

- Helping people
- Making a positive impact on individuals' lives

- An individual face to the difference I make
- Making the world a better place
- Creating a ripple effect of good energy
- Creating good karma

#### Being a catalyst

- Being a positive change agent
- Connecting people
- Having a multiplier effect

#### Authenticity/individuality

- Express myself as I am – not wear a “professional mask”
- Be who I am, not who I “should” be
- Free to express emotion

#### Ego

- Feeling alive as the center of attention
- Being the expert – this is what I think, feel, see, etc.

#### Fun

- Feeling of play
- Dancing outside the box
- Laughing or joking

#### Creating

- Giving structure to chaos

- Building or creating something new
- Doing things in a new way
- Artistic

#### Social interaction

- Energy from personal interaction
- Curiosity: Finding out about people

#### Balance

- Time for rich nonwork personal relationships

#### Independence/flexibility

- Ability to create my own future
- Ability to set my own schedule
- Free-form

To give you a feel for how other Passion Cores look, here are two more from past clients:

### *Passion Core Example #2 – Client*

#### Benefiting people

- Having an indirect benefit vs. direct

#### Feeding off interaction

- Interaction with people – give and take – challenge
- Working with bright people
- Team-oriented

- Connection
- Collaborative

#### Intellectual stimulation

- Problem solving
- Being challenged
- Constant stimulation
- Learning

#### Intimately involved

- High-touch
- Hands-on

#### Multifaceted

- Intercultural, international

#### Creativity

- Function over form

#### Spiritual

#### Constant stimulation

- Lack of the mundane
- New
  - Fast pace
  - No routine
  - Freedom

#### Immediate gratification

- Validation loop
- Feedback
- Seeing results

### *Passion Core Example #3 – Client*

Organized, logical, prepared

- Planning
- Logistics
  - Complexity
  - Preparation
- Analytical
- Being prepared
- Being able to visualize the path or outcome
- Framework to build on
- Frame of reference
- Learning and building on past experience

Teaching, helping, sharing

- Helping others
- Sense of sharing
- Teaching others
- Getting to vicariously experience success
- Meeting people’s needs

Connection

- Openness
- Getting from surface level to deeper and more personal
- Two-way dialogue
- Teamwork

Dreaming

- “What if we...?”

Outside the norm

- Pursuit of perspective

Big picture versus granular split

Being active

Balance

- Bringing family into the picture
- B&B time
- Out of the rat race, but with opportunity to visit occasionally

Challenge

- Making things happen people don’t necessarily think is possible

Security, some predictability

## *Using the Passion Core*

Your Passion Core is a powerful tool to figure out a new, fulfilling career direction, but it's more than that. It is also invaluable for evaluating the choices you make every step of the way.

As you travel down the path to your own Occupational Adventure (i.e., as you develop your career), your Passion Core helps you make sure that you don't get lost along the way. When presented with a choice or a new opportunity, you use your Passion Core to evaluate the fit.

So often, people follow opportunities as they come up, without really thinking, "is this right for me?" They don't travel consciously. Perhaps opportunities were presented that they took because the money was good, or there was more prestige in the job, or it just seemed like they shouldn't turn down an opportunity.

Then one day they stop, look around, and wonder, "*How did I get here?*"

Using your Passion Core as your career compass ensures that you don't get off track or, if you already are, it helps you get back on track and stay there.

Once you understand the underlying pieces, you can also use those insights to evaluate existing opportunities. Imagine you're in the job search and need to decide whether a particular job is a good fit for you. With your list of underlying characteristics of the things you love doing, you can take a look at that job opportunity and say, "Does it have these elements?" If not, it's a pretty good bet that you won't be happy there for the long term.

Because it focuses on the core of who you are, your Passion Core doesn't relate only to your career. It's a holistic picture that takes into account what is important to you at a deeper level. That's why it has so much power in helping you guide your journey.



## *Creating Your Passion Core*

The following pages offer guidance and exercises to help you create your own Passion Core. The process has three basic steps:

- Uncover your Passion Core elements [page 31]
- Compile your Passion Core [page 36]
- Organize your Passion Core [page 37]

## Uncovering Your Passion Core

How do you uncover your Passion Core? You dig. You poke and you prod. You peel back the layers of the onion. You explore and look within until you have a deep understanding of what makes you tick. In the following pages, self-exploration exercises help you identify the elements in your Passion Core.

One step in other career books that consistently gets missed is consolidating the information you have worked so hard to uncover. Putting the information in one place turns it from random insights (which you may or may not recall at any given time) into a useful, easily applied tool.

### Trip Tip: Mind Mapping

*As you go through this book, a great tool for fleshing out ideas and exploring possibilities is mind mapping. Mind mapping taps into multiple parts of your brain, letting you visually represent ideas and connections.*

*The basic idea is simple. Think of it as thought bubbles radiating outward from a central idea, each connected to the one before it by a line. Let's say you want to explore what you need to do to achieve a goal you have set.*

*Maybe you're exploring why you really enjoy cooking.*

*Start by writing the topic you are exploring - cooking - in a circle in the middle of a sheet of paper or a whiteboard. From there, work outwards in all directions, adding reasons why cooking is so enjoyable to you in "thought bubbles" surrounding the central topic. Each reason gets*

*a separate bubble, and is connected to the central topic by a line.*

*Some of the reasons why cooking is so fun might be creativity, variety, and pleasing people. Each of those new ideas, in turn, can generate still more ideas. Ideas radiating out from creativity, for example, might include flexibility, new combinations, and tangible results. Each of those, again, could be the source of a new round of ideas leading to an ever more detailed level of insight.*

*You can expand on the visual potential of mind mapping by using different colors associated with different lines of thought, as well as images representing concepts. Your mind maps can be as intricate or as simple as you want. I tend to use "stick man" mind maps with little more than lines and bubbles. Others get more intricate with multiple colors, images, and symbols.*

*The beauty of mind mapping is that it not only incorporates the non-linear part of the brain into the thought process, it also puts the ideas into a format that can be readily seen and absorbed.*

*You will find more mind mapping resources in the Recommended Reading section.*

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## Travel Journal

*As you explore, make a list of the insights you come up with. This forms a starting point for creating your Passion Core.*

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## What Do You Already Know?

The first thing I ask any client I work with is, “What do you already know?” There’s no need to recreate the wheel trying to find insights you already have. Make a list of things you already know are a part of what fires you up. What are the things you know you want as you create your career?

## Passion Profile

A key step in identifying your Passion Core is understanding the underlying characteristics of the things you really love. Think of them as your passion’s building blocks.

Make a list of all the things you can think of in your life that have made you come alive. I call it the “Buzz List.” What has been really fun, or meaningful, or stimulating. These can be events, activities, periods of time, work, play...there are no rules.

Once you have that, pick one of the items on the list and ask yourself “why?” Why was it so fun, why did it resonate so deeply for me? Once you have an answer, ask yourself why again, and again. The deeper you dig, the more you’ll discover. As you go

through the things on your list, you’ll probably see common themes start to develop. It helps to have a whiteboard or large piece of paper to write on as you go, as well as another person to help facilitate.

Why is this such a powerful exercise? Because when you say “I’m passionate about \_\_\_\_\_,” or “I love doing \_\_\_\_\_,” that’s not really the complete picture. Whether you’re conscious of it or not, what you really mean is “I love doing \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.”

You identify your building blocks by exploring those underlying characteristics. Having an understanding of those characteristics can open up a whole new world of potential.

It’s like an erector set for your career. Once you have the basic pieces, you can start taking a look at all the different things they could be when they come together.

Thinking about the *what* of the things we love doing tends to have a limiting effect. For example, I’m passionate about travel photography. OK, so what can I do with that knowledge? It seems to suggest one possible path...be a travel photographer.

Exploring the *why*, on the other hand, expands your horizons, providing the raw material to help you look further. It yields the building blocks that you can look at and ask, “what other kinds of opportunities incorporate those elements?”

So instead of, “I’m passionate about travel photography,” I dig into the reasons why and find out that I’m passionate about travel photography partly because it’s about exploring new things. Why is that so appealing to me? Because it’s about discovery, and seeing things in a different way. Again, why? Because exploration and discovery means I get constant stimulation of the new. OK, peeling back one more layer of the

onion, what is the appeal of that? Well, I have the attention span of a gnat, so the things I enjoy generally have that aspect of something new always waiting just around the corner. I need that constant stimulation of “what’s next?”

So it’s not just taking pictures in exotic locales that juices me. It’s *exploration and discovery*. It’s the *stimulation of the new* I get from it.

Those building blocks, and a number of others, bubbled to the surface repeatedly as I explored the different things I have loved doing over the course of my life (and, not so coincidentally, they are all huge pieces of what I get out of my Passion Catalyst work).

Remember that the things you explore don’t need to be work related, a lesson I learned the very first time I worked with a client on this idea. The first thing he chose to dig into was his time at a weekend racing school for car enthusiasts. I thought, “Great...shot down in flames right out of the starting gate.” I couldn’t imagine what a recreational car racing school could possibly yield in terms of career passion insights. We ended up peeling back the layers of that onion for about an hour, and what we found was incredibly relevant to what he wanted in his work world. Things like:

- Single-task focus
- Sharing an experience with those with common interests
- Opportunity for mastery and control

Another example is the client who loves being involved in team sports.

Why is team sports so enjoyable? Largely because of an element of shared success. So what is it about the shared success that feels so important? It’s about being in a situation where everyone achieves success, and there’s that sense of win/win. What is it about that? Part of it is creating that win/win, listening and understanding people’s strengths and weaknesses, and putting them together in an optimal way. In a way, it’s a puzzle.

It’s easy to back off too early and miss out on some great insights, so challenge yourself to ask yourself five layers of, “Why?” as you do this exercise. It can also help to incorporate someone else in this exploration to keep prompting you.

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### **Trip Tip: “Why?” Is a Powerful Question**

*You can get more juice out of just about anything by following it up with “why?” It helps you dig below the surface and get to the root of things. Understanding what’s behind it all helps you explore avenues that may not have originally been obvious.*

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### ***Wildest Dreams***

Another variation is the wildest dreams list. What would you do in your wildest dreams if you weren’t saddled with the need to be “realistic” and “practical?” Come up with as many ideas as you can (and of course don’t exclude any dreams just because they actually are realistic and practical).

Then start exploring. Again, ask “why, why, why?” Why would you like to do that? What kind of fulfillment would that give you? How would it feel? What is the source of that dream?

### ***Motivation from the Heart***

A useful exercise to help you explore your values is to momentarily set aside common motivators such as wealth, power, and status and ask yourself what motivates you from the heart. What is important to you deep down? Identify at least five things, then dig out that trusty old question, “Why?”

### ***Personal ROI (Return on Investment)***

Imagine that your journey takes you to a far-off land, where money isn’t used as an incentive. Your pay comes from the feeling you get from the work you are doing. The most “highly paid” people in the work force are the people who have found a career that is deeply aligned with what is meaningful and fun for them.

What would you do that would make you “well-paid?” What feelings would you get paid in?

### ***Begin with the End in Mind***

In his book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey encourages us to “begin with the end in mind.” He suggests picturing your funeral, with a eulogy delivered by a person in each part of your life – career, family, etc. What do you want them to say? What will have been important? What

difference do you want to have made? How does that compare with where you are now?

### ***Miscellaneous Questions***

Self-exploration questions fill entire books by themselves, but just to prime the pump, here are a couple more.

- What are you most proud of about yourself? Why?
- Who are your role models? What do you admire about them? Why?
- When are you at your best? (What does “at your best” mean to you?)
- When do you feel most motivated? Why?
- When do you feel fulfilled? Why?



## *Visual Exploration*

It can help to incorporate a different approach into your exploration, especially if you are visually inclined. These exercises are designed to help you explore what lights you up using visual, creative techniques. Using different techniques for exploration allows you to tap into different insights, and increase the robustness of your understanding.

Visual exploration taps into a different part of your brain than the standard verbal exploration and analysis does.

Let yourself play with the idea. Don't get attached to creating an "outcome" – just let the process flow. Approach it with a

sense of curiosity. "I wonder what will come of this? I wonder what kinds of trends I will see?"

For some people, these exercises will flow naturally. For others they will feel unfamiliar and awkward. That's OK. The key is to stretch your exploration in multiple directions, to give yourself an opportunity to build as comprehensive a picture as possible on which to base your future.

## *Image and Word Exploration*

Start with a variety of magazines. If you don't have any old magazines sitting around, ask your friends if they have any they would be willing to part with. Get at least ten to start with.

Start flipping through the magazines. If anything catches your eye, whether it is a picture or words, cut it out. Don't censor yourself, wondering if it's relevant. Simply cut it out and keep going.

Once you have gone through all the magazines, turn your attention to the items you have cut out. Look through them and watch for recurring themes. Sort them into different piles (you could do this multiple times, with different themes of piles each time). What do you see? Do any of the things you cut out have an especially strong impact?

Add journaling to the mix. What do you notice about the things you cut out? What do you notice about the piles you have sorted them into? What is it about the ones that have an especially strong impact that touches you?

## *Image and Word Association*

For each of the Passion Core elements you identified above, cut out images or words that jump out at you that seem associated to that concept. Resist the urge to reason through their relevance. Group the images and words according to each Passion Core element.

Journal about what you find. What do the images and words say about what that element means to you? Do you see any connections between elements?

## *Symbols*

For each of the Passion Core elements you identified above, try coming up with a symbol that represents it. Play with different ways of putting them together. This is the first step toward creating a visual map of what you want in your career.

## *Compiling Your Passion Core*

The key to creating your Passion Core is putting it all in one place. Go back through the exercises you've done – both written and visual – and pull out the key elements that came out of it. Don't worry if it feels like you have too many. The next step is to group them into similar clusters, which makes it feel more manageable and easier to remember.



## Organizing Your Passion Core

Once you have a list of key elements in your Passion Core, spend some time looking for common themes. Refer back to the Passion Core examples to see how others have done it. What is that common theme?

You can find an example of how the process of organizing your Passion Core unfolds on page 38.

### Step One: Create Clusters

Start with the list of Passion Core elements you have identified. Which items seem like they belong together? Which ones have a similar flavor? Which ones have a similar underlying theme? Which ones simply feel like they belong together?

Group them in clusters accordingly. When I created my own Passion Core, for example, these elements felt like they all belonged in one conceptual group:

- Exploration and discovery
- Stimulation of the new
- Change
- Choices
- Morphability
- Lack of the mundane

Play with several different combinations. There is no “right” answer.

### Trip Tip: Multiple Options

*There are multiple options for how to approach this. You can organize them by writing in your journal, creating a document on your computer, or physically arranging and rearranging them using index cards or sticky notes on the wall.*

### Step Two: Identify the Underlying Theme

When you feel comfortable with the clusters you have created, ask yourself what the main underlying theme to each cluster is.

One cluster from a client’s Passion Core exploration was grouped like this:

- Helping others
- Sense of sharing
- Teaching others
- Getting to vicariously experience success
- Meeting people’s needs

He decided that the category description of this was **Teaching/Helping/Sharing**. For him, all of those concepts were different facets of the same idea.

As another example, here is the group of elements I identified above for my own Passion Core:

- Exploration and discovery
- Stimulation of the new
- Change
- Choices
- Morphability
- Lack of the mundane

I realized that everything really related to the concept of **Exploration and Discovery**. That became my category name for that cluster of elements.

The underlying concept of the category might not even be listed specifically in the individual items. Look at this cluster, for example:

- Validation loop
- Feedback
- Seeing results

The client decided that these were really all about **Immediate Gratification**. Each of these bullet points are facets of how that immediate gratification need plays out.

You may end up with elements that stand alone. That's OK. They might be the start of a new cluster, or they might simply be categories in and of themselves.

## *Step Three: Order by Importance*

Once you have created clusters and identified their central themes, rank each of those groups by order of importance to you. Put the most important at the top.

## *Clustering Process Example*

Here is an example of how the clustering process might unfold.

### **I. Raw Passion Core elements list**

Start with your list of Passion Core elements.

- Being a positive change agent
- Stimulation of the new
- Facilitating light bulb experiences
- Helping people
- Making a positive impact on individuals' lives
- Dancing outside the box
- An individual face to the difference I make
- Morphability
- Making the world a better place
- Laughing, joking
- Exploration and discovery
- Creating good karma
- Feeling alive as the center of attention

- Lack of the mundane
- Being the expert – this is what I think, feel, see, etc.
- Ability to create my own future
- Feeling of play
- Change
- Time for rich non-work personal relationships
- Choices
- Creating a ripple effect of good energy
- An individual face to the difference I make
- Lack of the mundane
- Having a multiplier effect
- Express myself as I am – not wear a “professional mask”
- Independence
- Be who I am, not who I “should” be
- Free to express emotion
- Giving structure to chaos
- Building or creating something new
- Doing things in a new way
- Artistic
- Free-form
- Energy from personal interaction
- Curiosity: finding out about people

- Connecting people
- Flexibility
- Ability to set my own schedule
- Balance

## II. Passion Core element clusters

Group them into clusters.

- Exploration and Discovery
- Stimulation of the new
- Change
- Choices
- Morphability
- Lack of the mundane
- Facilitating light bulb experiences
- Helping people
- Making a positive impact on individuals’ lives
- An individual face to the difference I make
- Making the world a better place
- Creating a ripple effect of good energy
- Creating good karma
- Being a positive change agent
- Connecting people

- Having a multiplier effect
- Feeling alive as the center of attention
- Being the expert – this is what I think, feel, see, etc.
- Feeling of play
- Dancing outside the box
- Laughing, joking
- Individuality
- Express myself as I am – not wear a “professional mask”
- Be who I am, not who I “should” be
- Free to express emotion
- Giving structure to chaos
- Building or creating something new
- Doing things in a new way
- Artistic
- Energy from personal interaction
- Curiosity: Finding out about people
- Balance
- Time for rich non-work personal relationships

- Independence
- Flexibility
- Ability to create my own future
- Ability to set my own schedule
- Free-form

### III. Final Passion Core

Identify the overall concept or underlying theme for each cluster and rank them by importance.

#### Exploration and Discovery

- Stimulation of the new
- Change
- Choices
- Morphability
- Lack of the mundane
- Facilitating light bulb experiences

#### Social Good

- Helping people
- Making a positive impact on individuals’ lives
- An individual face to the difference I make
- Making the world a better place
- Creating a ripple effect of good energy
- Creating good karma

### Being a catalyst

- Being a positive change agent
- Connecting people
- Having a multiplier effect

### Authenticity/individuality

- Express myself as I am – not wear a “professional mask”
- Be who I am, not who I “should” be
- Free to express emotion

### Ego

- Feeling alive as the center of attention
- Being the expert – this is what I think, feel, see, etc.

### Fun

- Feeling of play
- Dancing outside the box
- Laughing or joking

### Creating

- Giving structure to chaos
- Building or creating something new
- Doing things in a new way
- Artistic

### Social interaction

- Energy from personal interaction
- Curiosity: Finding out about people

### Balance

- Time for rich non-work personal relationships

### Independence/flexibility

- Ability to create my own future
- Ability to set my own schedule
- Free-form



## *A Final Note*

Identifying your Passion Core takes time and effort, but don't let that deter you. It is a crucial step in finding your Occupational Adventure.

Many people have an urge to jump straight to the end result – identifying their new career. But choosing a new career without a deep understanding of your Passion Core is like building a house without taking time to lay a proper foundation. It's faster and immediately gratifying to see the new house go up without waiting for the decidedly unsexy process of digging a hole and pouring concrete, but in the long run it is a bad idea. The house needs that foundation.

As you create your Passion Core, don't expect it to be perfect and complete right out of the starting gate. Most people have developed a lifetime habit of being who they're not when it comes to their work identity. It takes time to develop a good picture of who you really *are*.

## *Chapter Summary*

- If passion is the energy that comes from bringing more of YOU into what you do, then the first step in bringing more passion into your career is to figure out what "being you" means.
- Your Passion Core is a compass that points you towards a career that lights your fire.
- Most people make their career decisions based on an external compass (factors such as money, status, external expectations, etc.)

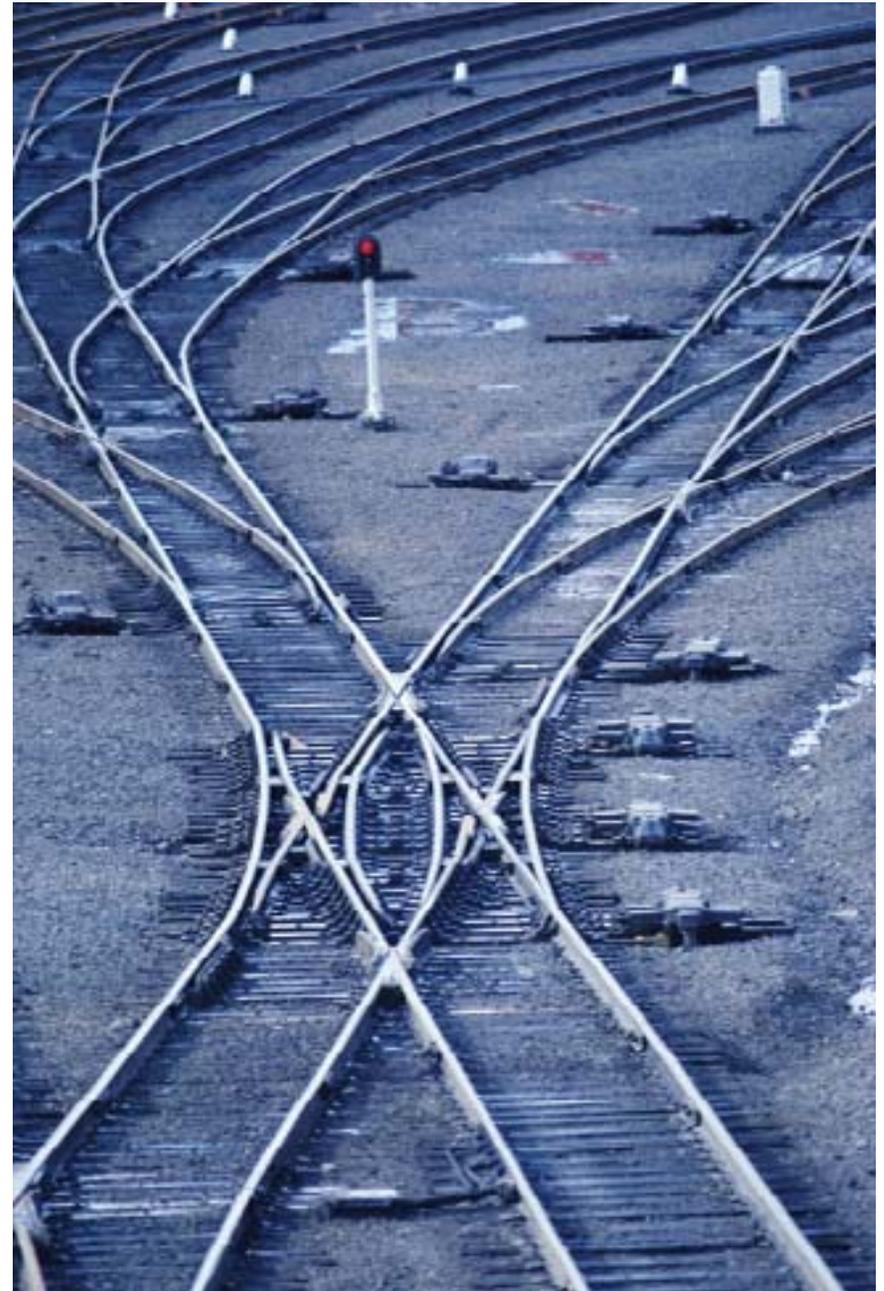
- Your Passion Core consists of the underlying characteristics of the things you find fun and fulfilling.
- You can use your Passion Core to:
  - Generate new career path ideas
  - Evaluate career options
  - Evaluate choices
  - Do I take this job or that job?
  - Do I do things this way or that way?
- Any direction is relative to where you are. Identifying your Passion Core helps you understand "where you are" so you can pick the right career direction.
- Choosing a new career without understanding your Passion Core is like building a house without laying a foundation first. Resist the urge to go straight for the immediate gratification of the end result (a new career) before doing the work to create your Passion Core.
- Be patient, and allow yourself time to explore and understand.

# Destination Exploration, Part 1

This chapter will...

- Introduce the funneling approach to finding a new career path.
- Explain how to expand your scope of possibilities by filling the funnel.
- Take you through several steps to help you generate ideas and fill your funnel with possibilities based on your Passion Core.

Creating your own itinerary is the name of the game in discovering your Occupational Adventure. Decide for yourself where you want to go and what you want to do once you get there. Too many people approach their career as a packaged tour – getting on and off the bus with the herd and going where they're told. Sadly, they don't even realize there's another way.





The good news is, *you do* realize it! And now that you have an understanding of your Passion Core, you can use it to help you come up with ideas for potential career paths that play specifically to what lights *you* up.

The Destination Exploration process is based on a funneling concept.

- Step 1 (this chapter): Fill the funnel by generating as many ideas as you can.
- Step 2: Apply the funnel by evaluating the ideas and narrowing down the options.

As you begin defining your future, don't fall prey to a compulsion to take the logical next step. The logical next step from stuck is...stuck – and that can be the death of Occupational Adventure. Try to get outside the box with your ideas. Don't stop with the first things that come to mind. Do an initial brain dump and say, "OK, here's where I start. Now what am I missing?" Get creative.

---

## Travel Journal

*If you want to get outside the box, the first thing you have to do is figure out what your box looks like. How do you do that? Before you begin generating potential career ideas, take a look at:*

- *Your assumptions.*
- *"Can'ts" (i.e., what you believe you can't do, or can't be done, etc.).*
- *Shoulds, have-tos, and oughtas.*
- *The old tapes in our heads (parental, cultural).*
- *Decisions you make where your reasons for making them aren't your own.*

The goal for this idea generation stage of the Destination Exploration process is to get beyond the blinders that keep you from seeing the full range of career possibilities. Those blinders are created by the inertia of your past path, ingrained notions of what is and isn't possible or feasible or realistic, and societal and cultural pressures, to name a few.

The blinders many people wear often limit the possibilities they can see. Even when they decide to think "outside the box," all that happens is that the blinders open up a little wider. They still miss all of the juicy opportunities beyond their normal field of view.

By filling the funnel as your first step you can cast the net wide to include ideas you may never have thought of, or felt were possible.

As you fill the funnel, resist the urge to censor the ideas. So often, people see a tender shoot of an idea push up through the ground, and they immediately stomp on it. WHUMP! Down comes the boot. "That won't work," they think as they grind the tiny green shoot into the ground without ever knowing if it was a weed or a fruit-bearing plant.

The reality is they usually don't have enough information to make that decision. As you come up with ideas, remember that it costs nothing and involves zero risk to simply let an idea exist. There will be a time in the process to research and evaluate ideas (Destination Exploration II), but the idea generation phase isn't it.

Remember, in the idea generation stage, it's *about quantity, not quality*. You will have an opportunity to evaluate the ideas for quality (i.e., "Do I want to do it?" and "Is it feasible?") in the next chapter. For now, it's time to simply dream.

In this chapter you will:

- Begin with the ideas you already have.
- Brainstorm new ideas, both by yourself and with a group.
- Add to your list of ideas by doing online research.

The following pages take you through a step-by-step process to help you fill the funnel, opening up the full spectrum of possibilities to choose from. Those steps are:

- Create a "That'd be cool!" list of career possibilities that readily come to mind.
- Expand on your Buzz List (from the self-exploration in the Passion Core module).
- Solo brainstorming.
- Brainstorming with others.
- Using job lists as a tool for generating ideas.

---

### Trip Tip

*You will likely find yourself saying, "No, that doesn't make any sense" to some of the ideas. Make a general rule for the idea generation stage – if it pops into your head, write it down.*

---

## *Filling the Funnel*

### *That'd Be Cool!*

Once again, start with the low hanging fruit. What jobs have you thought, “That would be really cool to do” over the course of time? Make a list. Are there any others that come to mind?

### *Expand Your Buzz List*

In the Passion Core chapter, you created a list of things that you really love doing (your “Buzz List”). What kinds of jobs incorporate those things?

For example, if one of the things you love is “spending time in nature,” some job possibilities are:

- Wildlife researcher
- Forest ranger
- Ropes course instructor
- Logger
- Wilderness guide
- Water quality scientist

If cooking turns your crank, some possibilities include:

- Chef
- Personal chef
- Kitchen supply sales
- Cooking instructor

- Food scientist

As a tool to help spark more ideas, do a Google search combining the words on your Buzz list with words such as career, job, and occupation.

Try to think of as many as possible for each item on the list.

### *Brainstorming Solo*

Use your Passion Core as a point of departure for brainstorming new career ideas. For each element in your Passion Core, try to come up with as many jobs as you can that incorporate that element.

Take an important element in one recent client’s Passion Core, for example, Problem Solving. What kinds of possibilities have the Problem Solving element?

- Engineer (any variety)
- Turnaround specialist for foundering companies
- Carpenter
- Plumber
- Customer service
- Technical support
- Mediator/conflict resolution
- Mathematician
- Management consultant

In my own Passion Core, Exploration and Discovery is a huge factor. So what jobs (besides my Passion Catalyst work) incorporate that characteristic? For example:

- Travel photographer
- Research scientist
- Genealogist
- Private investigator
- Anthropologist
- Research librarian
- Forensic investigator
- Psychologist
- Therapist

The list goes on and on. Would I want to do all of those? No. But during the funnel filling stage, that's not relevant. We're just trying to get as many ideas as possible flying around. Remember – resist the urge to censor.

Once again, you can use a Google search combining the words in your Passion Core with words like career, job, and occupation to come up with more ideas.

---

### Visual Exercise

*Create a mind map on a large sheet of paper taped to the wall or a whiteboard you can dedicate to this exercise. Put “Passion Core” at the center of the mind map, and then each of the main elements you identified as the first level of ideas. Come up with as many career possibilities as come immediately to mind for each of those main elements and add them to your mind map.*

*Leave the mind map up on the wall where you can see it. Over time, as ideas come up, add them to the mind map.*



## *Brainstorming with Others*

Bringing others into the picture is a great way to expand the scope of ideas. Gather a group of friends and/or colleagues and, using some butcher paper or a whiteboard so everyone can see the ideas, have a group brainstorming session.

By bringing more people into the picture, you benefit from different perspectives and the cross-pollination of ideas as they bounce back and forth.

Before you begin, share these instructions for the Passion Core job possibility brainstorming session:

- Explain the Passion Core concept.
- Explain the rules of brainstorming.
- Explain that you want to come up with as many ideas as possible for jobs that include one or more of the elements of your Passion Core. Emphasize that this is a process for coming up with as many ideas as possible, not for identifying the “right” job. Emphasize that they should focus on coming up with ideas based on the elements in the list, not just jobs they can see you doing. Any job is relevant at this stage, and the place in the process to weed out the jobs that don’t fit you comes later.

You can even try breaking the group into two teams and making it a fun competition to see who can come up with the most or wildest ideas.

One client of mine took a different approach to the group brainstorming and created a Web page listing each of the elements in his Passion Core. Under each element, he put a box in which people could write. He explained what he was doing,

asked for people to come up with as many ideas as they could under each element for careers that included that element, and gave some examples to get them started. He ended up getting a tremendous amount of ideas.

## *Rules of Group Brainstorming*

- There are no bad ideas. Brainstorming is about the free-flow of ideas. The ideas that ultimately don’t work are the lubrication for the ones that do. Censoring ideas as they come out chokes off the idea-flow.
- No criticizing of ideas is allowed.
- Build on one another’s ideas. One person’s idea can spark even more ideas from another person. Sometimes, the ideas that are “out there” can be the ones that spark the “right” idea.
- Quantity, quantity, quantity! In brainstorming, it’s quantity over quality. The more ideas, the better.

## *Lists of Jobs*

There are several internet sites that offer extensive lists of careers you can use in your idea generation process. Here are some examples:

[Occupational Outlook Handbook](#)

[British Columbia Work Futures](#)

[O\\*NET Code Connector](#)

## *Moving on*

Now that your funnel is filled with career path possibilities, it's time to move to Phase II of the Destination Exploration, evaluating the possible paths.

## *Chapter Summary*

- The Destination Exploration process is based on a funneling concept.
  - Step 1 (this chapter): Fill the funnel by generating as many ideas as you can.
  - Step 2 (next chapter): Apply the funnel by evaluating the ideas and narrowing down the options.
- Filling the funnel helps you get beyond the blinders most people wear when it comes to looking at new possibilities.
- You can use your Passion Core to help you brainstorm career possibilities that incorporate the characteristics that energize you.
- In the idea generation stage, it's about quantity, not quality.

# Destination Exploration, Part 2

This chapter will...

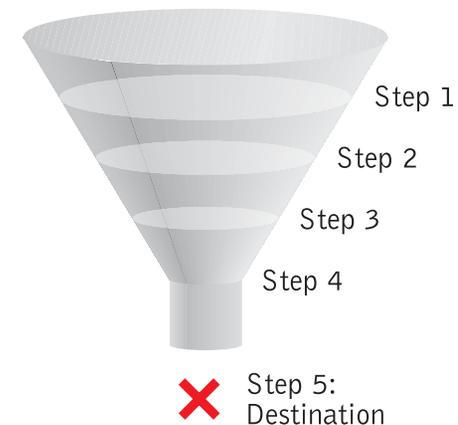
- Explain the five-step funneling process to narrow down your career path possibilities.
- Offer insights on how to research and explore career path opportunities.
- Explain the iterative nature of career change.
- Introduce ideas on how to evaluate both the short-term and long-term feasibility of the career path possibilities you are considering.

By this time you have generated more career ideas than you know what to do with. In this chapter, you will apply the funneling process to narrow down the broad spectrum of ideas you generated in the previous chapter.

With a five-step evaluation process, you can home in on the potential career paths that both are the most interesting and have the most potential.

While the previous chapter was about quantity of ideas, in this chapter you have an opportunity to evaluate the ideas for quality (i.e., “Do I want to do it?” and “Is it feasible?”).

Going through the work in this chapter allows you to make a decision based on a deep understanding of how a career fits with your Passion Core, what the career really entails (not just rose colored glasses), and both the short- and long-term feasibility of making it happen.



## *The Five-Step Funnel*

Think of zeroing in on your new career path as a funneling process. The five steps in the graphic below are:

Step 1: Eliminate what doesn't make sense.

Step 2: Eliminate what doesn't match your Passion Core well.

Step 3: Research and explore each remaining career possibility.

Step 4: Evaluate short- and long-term feasibility of each remaining career possibility.

Step 5: Choose a new career path (new destination).

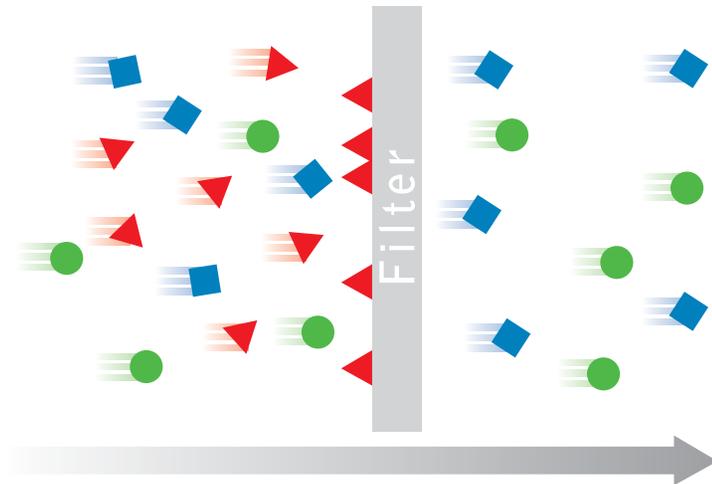
### ***Step One: Eliminate What Doesn't Make Sense***

Eliminate the career ideas you wouldn't want to do. While brainstorming, you were encouraged not to censor any ideas. Now you can eliminate those that don't make sense.

For example, being a research scientist was an idea that came out of the Exploration and Discovery element of my own Passion Core, but I have no interest in doing that. So out of the funnel it goes.

### ***Step Two: Eliminate What Doesn't Match Your Passion Core Well***

In this step, you will use your Passion Core as a filter. Look at each of the remaining career ideas and ask the question, "How well does this match the elements in my Passion Core?" Doing this filters out the opportunities that don't fit well with your Passion Core (and consequently don't fit well with the things that light you up).



One way to approach this is to go through each of the career ideas and rate them on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = completely lacking and 5 = jam packed) for each of the Passion Core elements.

The filtering process isn't an exact science. It's subjective, and you need to make a judgment call for each one. It helps to keep these two things in mind:

- If the career idea lacks a majority of your Passion Core elements, consider discarding it.
- If the career idea lacks the Passion Core element(s) that you have identified as most important, consider discarding it.

Mark, a professional in his 40's, had a long-standing notion that he wanted to open a retail store and included that in his list of career path possibilities. The idea met many of his Passion Core criteria, but the more he researched it the more he realized

that Intellectual Stimulation – a key Passion Core component – was missing from the actual day to day reality of running a retail store. He realized he wouldn't be happy and discarded the idea.

In my own journey, I was actually surprised to discover that travel photography, something that had long been on my list of fantasy careers, didn't make the Passion Core cut. It has several things that really appeal to me (not least the Exploration and Discovery element), but is missing one element that is a huge factor for me – Social Good.

It's possible that I might bring travel photography into the picture at some point in the future, but it would need to be either combined with something else, or approached in such a way that it has a substantial Social Good spin to it.

Note that the only criterion you are using at this stage to continue considering a career path is its alignment with your Passion Core. You will evaluate ideas based on external factors (e.g., feasibility) later in this module.

If you end up with more than five career path ideas, pick the five that look most appealing to you, and hold the remainder in reserve for possible consideration later.

### ***Step Three: Research and Explore***

Now that you have five career path possibilities that align with your Passion Core, it's time to dig deeper.

In Step III, you will:

- Deepen your understanding of each of these career possibilities through:
  - Research.

- Experimentation and exploration.

### ***Research***

#### **Online Research**

Begin your research online. Here are some suggestions to get you started.

Start by making a list of key words. For example, if you want to explore massage therapy. Some of your key words could include:

- Massage
- Massage therapy
- Relaxation
- Stress
- Stress relief
- Rehabilitation
- Injury rehabilitation
- Reiki
- Massage career

Once you have your list, search on each of the terms. Some good search engines to use include:

- [Google](#)
- [AltaVista](#)
- [Yahoo](#)

You will probably find more terms to add to your list as you search. Once you have gone through all of them individually, start mixing and matching. Try combining each of the terms with words like career, job, and profession as well.

If you haven't already come across them in your original search, blogs (short for weblogs, an online journal, often with a particular subject matter focus) can be a good source of personal perspective. Try mixing your search terms with the word *blog*.

E-mail lists can be a good source of information. You can find a list of mailing lists at [www.isoftware.com/lists/listref.html](http://www.isoftware.com/lists/listref.html).

Other ideas for places to look for more information include:

- Discussion groups
- Message boards (BBS)
- Newsgroups

## ***Library Research***

### **Librarians**

The library is an excellent place to research potential careers. The reason? Librarians! They're trained to help you find the information you need.

Go to your local library and talk to a reference librarian. Tell them what you're doing and ask them to help you find information about the careers you're interested in.

### **Magazines**

The library most likely has an extensive collection of magazines. Once again, librarians are a great resource to help you find what relevant resources are out there. What magazines

you look for depends on the career you are exploring, and the librarian can point you in the right direction.

### **Databases**

Among other things, the librarian can probably point you to a computer and one of numerous databases. Some libraries offer access to their database subscriptions online as well.

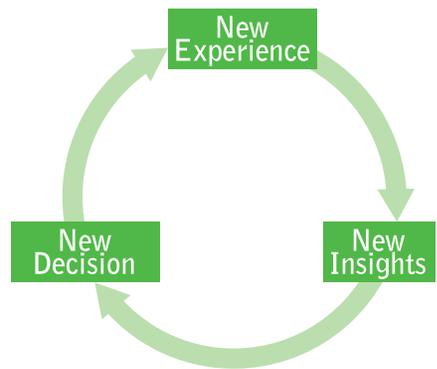


## Exploration and Experimentation: Gaining First-Hand Insights

Once you have explored the information available through secondary research, you can explore the options first-hand (primary research).

This means gaining insights and information for yourself. This can take the form of informational interviews, shadowing someone on their job, taking a class, or even doing a test run yourself of the job you're considering.

Think of this part of the process as experimentation. As you explore, you're not just looking at new job possibilities, but also evaluating and re-evaluating who you could be.



### The Iterative Nature of Career Change

Resist the urge to go for the quick fix. It's natural to want the answer (and want it now!), but the reality is that discovering the career that makes you come alive is an iterative learning process. What you learn through your experiences gives you more insights. Those insights in turn shape and refine your ideas

about where you want to go, and lead you to new decisions. Those decisions then lead you to more experiences, where the process begins again.

This part of the process is about the knowledge gained by actively exploring possibilities. It's sticking your feet in the water and seeing what it feels like. It is learning by doing.

In her excellent book that covers this idea, "Working Identity: Unconventional Strategies for Reinventing Your Career," Herminia Ibarra has this to say about the way we move into a new career:

"Research on how adults learn shows that the logical sequence – reflect, then act; plan, then implement – is reversed in transformation processes like making a career change. Why? Because the kind of knowledge we need to make change in our lives is tacit, not textbook clear; it is implicit, not explicit; it consists of knowing-in-doing, not just knowing. Such self knowledge...can only be acquired *in the process of making change.*"

The purpose of gathering these first-hand insights is to get a real-world perspective. Is the career path really as interesting as it seems in your imagination? Could you see yourself doing it?

Gathering first-hand insights begins to make the possibilities real. By gaining your own experience with these possibilities, they start to gain substance and a potential reality.

### Low Risk to Higher Risk

You have numerous options to pursue as you explore potential career paths. They range from low risk (e.g., informational interviews) to much higher risk (e.g., quitting your job to jump into a new one). Focus on the low-risk options early in the exploration process.

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### **Trip Tip: Processing What You Learn**

*As you begin to experiment, you will need to process what you are learning. Here are some ideas:*

- *Use your Passion Core. How does the opportunity match your Passion Core?*
- *Gut check: Your gut is a valuable tool as you evaluate your opportunities. How do you feel about it? Can you see yourself doing it?*
- *What appeals to you about the opportunity? What doesn't?*
- *Is the career path what you thought it would be? If not, how does it differ?*

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### **Informational Interviews**

A great way to get a real-world perspective on a potential career is to ask people who do it for a living. For each of the five career ideas you have identified, identify three people to interview. If the career you are looking at isn't a standard one, look for people who are doing similar things.

An informational interview can help you:

- Understand what a job or career is really like.
- Understand how to get there.
- Discover possibilities you didn't see before.

### **Informational Interview Guide**

#### Identifying People to Interview

- Start with the people you know. Ask friends, family, old teachers, colleagues, etc. if they know anyone doing \_\_\_\_\_.
- Contact the career center and/or alumni office of your college or high school. Explain what you're doing and ask if there are any alumni they can recommend.
- Identify professional associations for the career in question. The American Society of Association Executives has a comprehensive listing on their site at [www.asaenet.org](http://www.asaenet.org)
- Call companies directly and ask for the HR department or appropriate department that would include the position you are interested in. Explain what you are doing and ask if they can direct you to the right person. Be sure you let them know that you're not looking for a job, just doing some research.

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### **Travel Journal**

*List each of the career paths you are considering. For each of the paths, identify three people you can contact to begin conducting informational interviews.*

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### Trip Tip

*Contacting people out of the blue and requesting their time can feel daunting if you're not used to it. It can help if you put yourself in their shoes. How would you feel if someone contacted you and said, "You have insights and knowledge that would be really helpful to me. Can I ask you a couple questions?" Most people feel flattered and happy to help if they can.*

*If you run into someone who is abrupt or too busy, don't take it personally. It's not about you. Just thank them politely and move on.*

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#### Questions to Ask

- Highlight the key Passion Core elements and ask to what degree their job incorporates each of them.
- What are your responsibilities in this job?
- What does a typical day or week look like?
- What is most challenging about this job or career?
- What is most frustrating about this job or career?
- What is most rewarding about this job or career?
- What skills or talents are most essential in this career?
- What path did they take to get where they are?

- Do they have any advice on how someone interested in this career should approach getting into it?
- What steps would someone changing careers to this career need to take to make it happen?
- Do any other careers come to mind that also involve \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with Passion Core elements)?
- What kinds of hours do people in this job or career typically work?
- Are the hours flexible or set?
- What are some of the directions the career path for this job could take?

### More Exploration and Experimentation Ideas

#### Shadowing

Another great way to get a real-world perspective, if it's feasible, is to shadow someone on their job to get a feel for what it's really like. Shadowing gives you an opportunity to see first-hand what a job is actually like. By observing the work as it's being done, you can get a deeper understanding of what is entailed.

#### Volunteer

Some career paths lend themselves to obvious volunteer opportunities that would give you a feel for how you like doing the work. For help locating volunteer opportunities, start online at SERVENet at [www.servenet.org](http://www.servenet.org).

## Trade or Professional Associations

Involvement in professional associations can give you an opportunity to learn more about the career ideas you're exploring. Volunteering to help with meetings, etc. gives you a forum to meet people with relevant knowledge. Again, The American Society of Association Executives has a comprehensive listing at [www.asaenet.org](http://www.asaenet.org). There is also a good list at [www.ipl.org/div/aon](http://www.ipl.org/div/aon)

## Career Expos

Go to career expos and talk to people with the kinds of companies you are targeting. See the informational interviewing section on page 56 for question ideas.

## Take a Class

Taking a class can be an excellent way to get a fast understanding of what a particular career path is like. There are numerous possibilities, both in person and online. For example:

- Community colleges
- Adult learning centers
- Online courses

## Side Trips

One possible path of exploration is starting something on the side. Let's say you want to get into high-end woodworking. Rather than quitting your job to start a business from scratch, you might start a small woodworking business on the side. You could get a feel for what it's really like and what is required, as well as gain experience and build a reputation, all while having the monetary safety net of your current job.

## Ask the End User

Another tack to take is identifying the people who would make use of whatever it is you want to do. If you want to put together events, talk to people who regularly hold events (e.g., nonprofits that do fund-raising events) that utilize third party services to organize them. What do they want from that? What are their concerns and challenges? How can someone who is planning and organizing events meet their needs best?

Looking at both sides of the coin gives you a full picture of what's involved, and can even suggest different ways that your interest could take shape.

## Moonlighting

A similar option to the side trip is moonlighting, working a second job that allows you to build skills and knowledge in a new arena.

## Sabbatical or Extended Vacation

If it's possible, another option is to take some time off to explore a potential career path more completely.

## *Step Four: Evaluate the Feasibility*

Now that you have a deeper understanding of the potential career paths you are exploring, evaluate their feasibility. Asking, "Is it feasible?" is an important part of the process. Can you realistically make it happen, whether in the short term or the long term? Does it fit with the life you want for yourself?

In step four, you will:

- Examine your Three Facets of “Reality” (i.e., things getting in your way) to determine what you do and don’t have control over.
- Evaluate the short-term and the long-term feasibility of each career idea.
  - Take into account various feasibility factors:
    - Skills: Do you have the skills to do it?
    - Family: Does it fit with your family needs?
    - Money: Will it meet your monetary needs?
    - Balance: Does it allow you to have the balance in your life that you want?
    - Time frame: How quickly could you realistically make it happen?

## *Reality*

As you evaluate the possibilities you have identified, be sure you’re not succumbing to what I call The Reality Syndrome.

The Reality Syndrome happens when people see the obstacles in their way and define their entire reality in terms of those obstacles – for now and all eternity. Because of that, they see no possibility for change or forward motion.

The truth is, nobody’s current reality is completely permanent. Life is always in flux, and you have the power to influence the direction it takes. The change may not be

immediate – it may need to happen incrementally over time – but ultimately, the power is yours.

As you evaluate your options, ask yourself if you are falling prey to The Reality Syndrome. If you find it rearing its head, here are some steps to sidestep it.

1. Your “real” reality (the kind you can point to as fact rather than opinion or belief) is made up of numerous facets. To get a better understanding of what you’re working with, try breaking the things standing in your way into:
  - Things you can change (whether immediately or over time).
  - Things you can’t change.
  - Things you could change, but don’t want to.
2. Examine your “perceived” reality. This is the reality that’s all in your head. What beliefs do you hold that are getting in your way? Are they valid?
3. Once you better understand the areas where you can make a choice and make a change, do it! Begin by identifying one thing that is getting in your way, and figure out one small step that would move you towards getting rid of that obstacle. Then another...and another.

## *“Real” Reality*

There are two kinds of “real” reality – static (reality that can’t be changed) and choice-based. There is nothing you can do about the first, but you *do* have control over the second.

If you find yourself saying, “I can’t because...”, look at your reasons and ask yourself if they are static or choice-based (and if you think they are static, look again and ask, “Are they really?”). You might be surprised how much say you actually have over your future.

Exercising your power of choice – even in a series of small choices over a longer period of time – can have a tremendous impact on what your career becomes. You can choose to alter your lifestyle. You can choose to start learning something new right now. You can choose to say, “OK, here are the baby steps that I can take, given my current reality.”

The route isn’t always be the easiest one. Imagine yourself as a single mother with two kids, no child support, and a full time job selling life insurance. Now imagine that what you really want to do is write books. How easy would it be to look at your situation and say, “If only my reality were different,” and never set your sights on making it happen?

J.A. Jance, a best-selling author with 31 published novels to her credit, knows the answer to that. Instead of sitting and wishing, she started taking steps to make her dream a reality. “I wrote between four and seven AM before getting my children up to go to school and getting me dressed to go sell life insurance,” says Jance.

She made a choice to follow her dreams, one page at a time, and figured out a way to make it happen. She didn’t let her reality be her limitation...and wrote her first three books that way. Challenging? Definitely. Was it worth it? You bet!!



### *“Perceived” Reality*

Sometimes the reality that gets in our way is 100 percent in our heads. This perceived reality could stem from things such as insecurity, (I’m not good enough to do that. I don’t have the background), or fear (I’ll fall on my face – guaranteed). The idea that things could be done a different way might never have occurred to us, or we could simply be buying into others’ ideas of “the way things are.”

In his career as a world-class climber, Erik Weihenmayer has accomplished things that most of us wouldn’t even dream of. He has climbed some of the highest peaks in the world, including the highest of them all...Everest.

He also happens to be completely blind.

After losing his sight at age 13, he could easily have fallen into the trap of saying, “I can’t because...” He has certainly heard it from other people. But Erik isn’t one to pay too much attention to what other people think he can or can’t do. Erik recognized that what most people saw as a reality that couldn’t be changed was really a matter of choice. He couldn’t choose whether or not to be blind, but he definitely *could* choose how he would let it affect him. Rather than become an obstacle, his Perceived Reality became “of course I can.” And he found a way to make it work.

Erik chose a reality that has allowed him to pursue his passion with vigor. He now makes a great living combining his adventures with a career as a motivational speaker.

Reality isn’t a static phenomenon. It is ever shifting. When people say, “I can’t because...” I say, “Maybe you can’t right now, but you could someday, *and the time to start taking steps is right now.*”

Erik’s journey to (literally) the top of the world didn’t start at base camp. It started years earlier as a teen, when he took his first stumbling steps on a trek in the Andes with his family. At that point, the summit of Everest wasn’t remotely part of his reality – he just wanted to be able to make it through the trek. Everest wasn’t something he could realistically accomplish, but over the years, that reality shifted.

### ***Make a Choice and Make a Change***

Once you better understand the areas where you can make a choice and make a change, do it! Identify one thing that is getting in your way, and figure out one small step that will move

you towards getting rid of that obstacle. Then another...and another.

Reality isn’t a static phenomenon. It is ever shifting. And even if you can’t do something today, there is a good possibility you can in the future if you start taking steps now.

Whatever your reality looks like, you have the power to make decisions that move you in the direction you want to go. It might not be an overnight transformation. It could be a longer-term approach. Rather than an immediate career change, your reality might dictate that you need to take a five-year approach. Or a ten-year approach. You could say, “In ten years, this is what I want my life to look like,” and then you start making decisions accordingly.

Take a look at your reality, get an understanding of your real constraints as well as your perceived ones, and take that first step. The journey is worth it!

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## **Travel Journal**

*When you think about pursuing your passion, what are obstacles that immediately pop into your head? List as many as you can think of. Then go through that list. Which of them are set in stone, never to be changed no matter what you do? Be honest. Which ones could be changed? Which ones are you willing to change, either in the short term or the long term? Which ones could you change, but just aren’t willing to go there?*

## ***Short-Term vs. Long-Term Feasibility***

One last thing to keep in mind as you evaluate the feasibility of the career paths you have identified is that what is not feasible in the short term is often feasible in the long term. If you are drawn to a career idea, but after careful consideration, decide that you can't make an immediate change to that career, ask yourself, "Could I make it happen in the long-term?"

## ***Feasibility Factors***

There are many different factors affecting the feasibility of a career path. Here are some areas to help guide your exploration. For each career path possibility you have identified, explore each of the questions on this list.

### ***Skills***

- What skills are required for this career path?
- Do I have them?
- Can I get them?
- How?
- How long would that take?

### ***Family***

- Time/balance: Will it allow me to spend the time with my family that I want to spend?
- Upcoming obligations
  - College

- Medical expenses (e.g., braces)

### ***Money***

- Current: How much do I need?
  - What are my current commitments?
- Future: How much will I need?
  - Also: What could I change?

### ***Balance***

- What is the time required by this job?
- When does this work typically take place (daytime, evening, etc.)?

### ***Time Frame***

- How long would it realistically take to make the transition, assuming you could start right now?

When you have gone through this exercise, go through and assign each of the categories a Feasibility Value on a scale from 1 to 5.

1 = Not remotely feasible

5 = Extremely feasible

There is no equation that magically determines the best option, but assigning values to each of the feasibility factors helps you get a more concrete picture when you compare the different career path possibilities.

---

### **Trip Tip: Beware the Abominable No-Man**

*In considering your options, just as in brainstorming, beware the urge to say “No, that won’t work.” It’s so easy to blast an appealing idea out of the water with reasons why not. That’s the “Abominable No-Man” talking – and he can keep you from ever achieving what’s well within your reach.*

*When you find yourself saying “No, that won’t work because (\_\_\_\_\_),” try this – sit down and do a brainstorming session on how it **could** work. What are alternative ways of making it happen? What assumptions are you making that you can challenge?*

*Approach it with the premise that there **is** a way. Get creative.*

---

### **Evaluate the Options**

By this point you have gained a much deeper perspective on both how the career paths you are considering align with your Passion Core and their short- and long-term feasibility.

Now use all that information to evaluate your options. Given everything you know, which career idea would you like to pursue? You can take the following steps as you evaluate:

1. Rank the ideas by your degree of interest (most interesting first).
2. Begin with the most interesting option and evaluate the feasibility
  - Can I do it now?
  - If no, can I do it in the long-term (e.g., five years)?
  - If still no, is there anything I can change that would enable me to make it happen in the long-term?
3. Repeat for each career idea.

There is no magic formula for choosing your path. It won’t fit into an equation that guarantees you the right answer. But if you have done the work to understand both what the career involves and its feasibility, you should have what you need to make a decision.

### **Intuition**

Don’t rule out the role of intuition in making your decision. If something looks good on paper but feels wrong in your gut, it probably is wrong. If something feels intuitively right, listen to that.

## *Step Five: Choose a New Career Destination*

When you choose your new career path, remember that it is possible (even probable) that your career path focus will shift as you get more real-world experience. As discussed earlier, career exploration isn't a neat and tidy bundle. It is an iterative process, and what you learn – both about potential career paths and about yourself – shapes your decisions as you move forward.

You may discover an opportunity that you never realized was there before you started. Or you may learn some things as you take action that cause you to change direction. It's all a natural part of the learning process.

The important thing is that you commit to a direction and start to take action. Remember, even if you can't say with 100 percent certainty (and you probably can't), you will be much more focused in the right direction than you were at the onset.

So, without further ado, write down your new destination and congratulate yourself. It's time for the next stop: mapping it!

## *Chapter Summary*

- This chapter is about evaluating ideas for quality (e.g., “Do I want to do it?” and “Is it feasible?”).
- A five-step funneling process helps you home in on the potential career paths that both are the most interesting and have the most potential.
- The steps in the funneling process are:
  - 1: Eliminate what doesn't make sense.
  - 2: Eliminate what doesn't match your Passion Core well.

3: Research and explore each remaining career possibility.

4: Evaluate short- and long-term feasibility of each remaining career possibility.

5: Choose a new career path (new destination).

- Your Passion Core can be used as a filter to eliminate ideas that don't match it well (and consequently aren't likely to energize and engage you for the long term).
- Part of your exploration and evaluation is an iterative process. You will have a new experience, get insights from that experience, make new decisions as a result, and have new experiences.
- Once you have narrowed your career options down to four or five, you can dig deeper into each of them. You can do this by:
  - Research (online and library).
  - Gathering firsthand information (e.g., informational interviews).
  - Getting firsthand experience (e.g., volunteering).
- As you evaluate the feasibility of each idea, take a look at the “reality” of the things standing in your way. Reality consists of:
  - Real reality.
    - Things you can change (whether immediately or over time).
    - Things you can't change.

- Things you could change, but don't want to
- Perceived reality – the reality that's "all in your head"
- When you evaluate the ideas, ask yourself:
  - Can I do it now?
  - If no, can I do it in the long term (e.g., five years)?
  - If still no, is there anything I can change that would enable me to make it happen in the long-term?
- Remember to listen to your intuition as you evaluate your options.



# Map It, Part 1

This chapter will...

- Introduce the idea of creating a map to follow in your Occupational Adventure.
- Encourage you to examine your concepts of success.
- Introduce Virginia Satir's change model as a tool for evaluating how much change is realistic and how fast you can go.
- Give an overview of goal setting.
- Offer exercises to help you establish long-term, short-term, and process goals in your Occupational Adventure.
- Help you identify steps to take in pursuit of your goals.

Now that you have identified a new career destination, it's time to figure out how to get there. This chapter will help you identify your career goals and map out how to achieve them. It will help you create a plan.



The map you will create has two components:

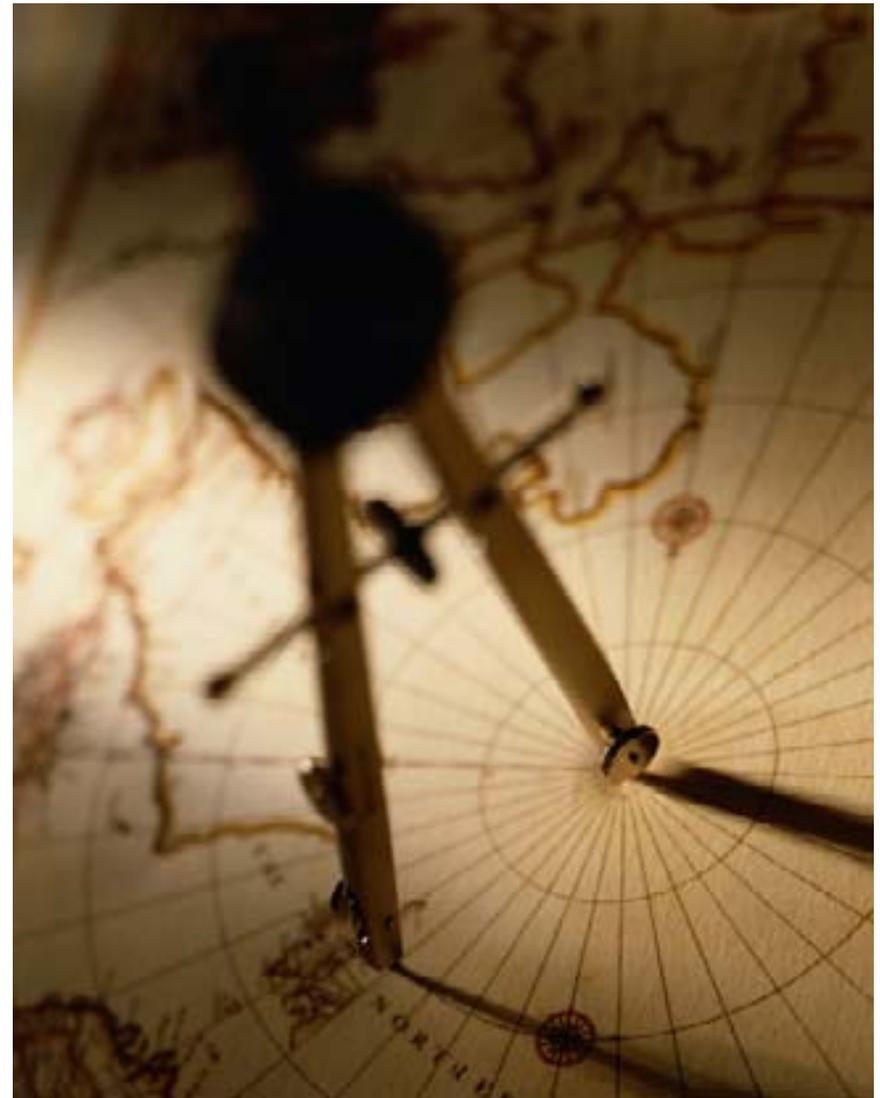
1. Your goals and a step-by-step plan for reaching them (the focus of this chapter).
2. The topographical landscape, with both the Roadblocks and the “Rapid Route” factors that help you move forward more quickly (covered in the next chapter).

Begin the planning process by looking at where you want to go – the new career destination you identified in the Destination Exploration chapters – and breaking the path there down into smaller, more manageable goals.

The planning process is about creating an action-oriented map to your future. As you create that map, you will:

1. Evaluate the rate of change you are realistically able to incorporate.
2. Identify your long-term goals.
3. Identify the short-term goals that cumulatively lead you to those long-term goals.
4. Identify the steps to take that enable you to achieve those goals.
5. Create a timeline.

Completing this chapter will give you an in-depth picture of how to get where you’re going, from both a long-term and a next-step perspective. The plan you create will help keep you on track and moving forward.



## *Using Your Map*

### *Why Create a Plan?*

Your map is a plan to help you create the future you desire. It helps you both see the big picture and understand how what you are doing right now is moving you toward it. By taking an organized approach, you can move faster and more efficiently toward your destination. It also forces you to think through the possibilities.

Creating your plan enables you to keep track of your progress as you move forward and see at a glance what has worked and what hasn't.

### *Flexibility*

Once you create your plan, follow it, but don't adhere to it too rigidly. It is meant as a living document, not something chiseled in stone. As mentioned earlier, changing careers and pursuing your passion is not a cut and dried process, but an organic, ever-unfolding affair. As you head down the path, you learn and grow, and adjust your approach accordingly.

You will find opportunities you didn't realize were there, identify important elements you hadn't realized existed, and run into obstacles you couldn't have known about. Resist the temptation to white knuckle your plan. Be flexible and remember that your plan is there to serve you, not the other way around.

## *Success*

Before you begin your goal-setting, think about what success means to you. So often, there is a generic, whitewashed picture of what success looks like – usually something to do with money, status, power, etc. Since you're in the driver's seat for your Occupational Adventure, doesn't it seem like a good idea to make sure that the measuring stick you're using to gauge your success really is relevant?

### *Travel Journal*

*How do you define success? If you were to take money out of the picture, what would success look like? How could you incorporate goals for achieving that success into your plan?*

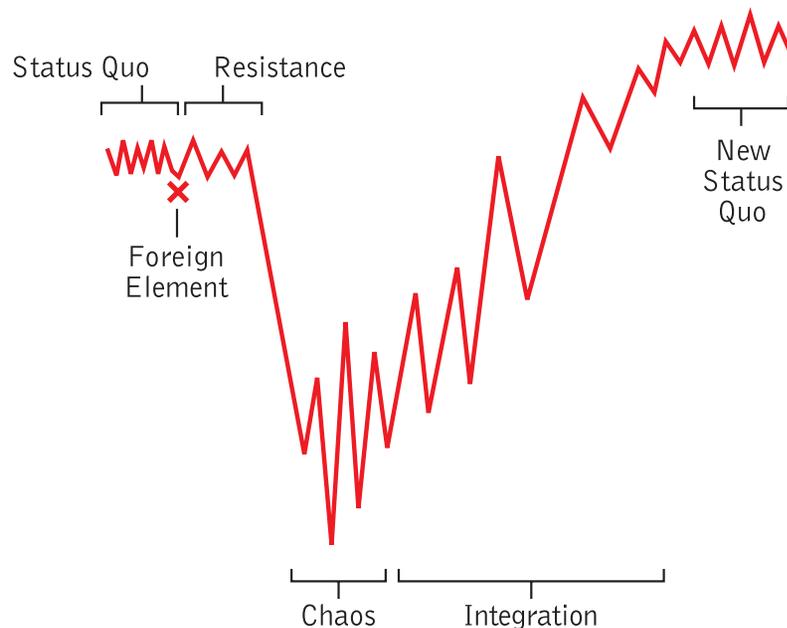
## *Jet Plane or Slow Train? A Model for Change*

To get to your destination, you can either hop on a jet or grab a walking stick and put one foot in front of the other. Both will get you there, but the speed differs substantially. Before you set off, you need to decide how fast you want (and are able) to reach that new destination.

How fast you can move depends greatly on your current reality. How much change can you incorporate into your life and still stay afloat? Before you start creating goals and timelines,

ask yourself honestly, “How much change can I handle at one time?”

Psychologist Virginia Satir developed a change process model that offers an excellent way to conceptualize how much change you can realistically incorporate into your life (and consequently how fast you can go with that change).



## I. Status Quo

Everyone's life has a status quo. For some, life is pretty stable. For others, it swings wildly up and down, and they have to expend a lot of energy just dealing with the day to day.

Change causes stress. How much stress depends on (1) how big the change is and (2) how calm or stormy your status quo was to begin with.

You can deal with the stress of change more effectively if the rest of your life is stable. If, on the other hand, your relationships, financial situation, emotional state, and so forth are in a wild state of flux, you have less energy available to effectively cope with the stress of the change.

## II. Foreign Element or Change Catalyst

At some point a catalyst for change is introduced into your life. Say you finally reach the point at your job where you realize that you have to make a change, or you have a milestone birthday that calls attention to the fact that you aren't where you want to be in life.

The change catalyst is the spark that starts the process.

## III. Resistance or Denial

Peering over the precipice at the possibility of change, it's common to encounter resistance or denial. Faced with the prospect of a career change, for example, we often assure ourselves that it's not realistic to even consider, because \_\_\_\_\_ (insert your favorite reason why you can't make a change here).

## ***IV. Chaos***

When the change finally happens, inevitably there is chaos. The familiar is no longer there to rely on. We're trying to find our footing. We don't feel as capable because of the changes underway. We're uncertain and we don't have the answers.

The extent of the chaos depends on the size and speed of the change you're making, and the stability or volatility of your original status quo.

## ***V. Integration***

As you begin to find your footing amidst the chaos, the integration process begins. You learn what works and what doesn't, sometimes making progress, and sometimes backsliding.

## ***VI. New Status Quo***

When you reach your new status quo, you have successfully made the change. You have mastered new skills and found a new comfort zone.

## ***Change: How Much? How Fast?***

Looking at Satir's model, it's obvious that the chaos of making a transition takes energy to navigate. The road to successful change is paved with much smoother stones if you take into account how much energy you really have to put towards making that change and make your decisions accordingly.

To take realistic stock of how much change you can handle, you need a realistic picture of what your current status quo is. As a general rule:

- A stable status quo makes it easier to handle large changes.
- A volatile status quo makes it more difficult to handle large changes.

## Change Feasibility Factors

Multiple areas of your life contribute to your status quo. To start getting a feel for your status quo, rate each of the following:

### Financial

Highly	Somewhat	Somewhat	Highly
Volatile	Volatile	Stable	Stable
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

### Relationships

Highly	Somewhat	Somewhat	Highly
Volatile	Volatile	Stable	Stable
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

### Emotional

Highly	Somewhat	Somewhat	Highly
Volatile	Volatile	Stable	Stable
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

### Health

Highly	Somewhat	Somewhat	Highly
Volatile	Volatile	Stable	Stable
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

**Note:** There is no magic formula that points to how much change you are able to undertake. Ultimately it's a judgment call on what works for you. The intent here is simply to make you fully conscious of the factors that influence your experience. Some people are naturally more tolerant of uncertainty and risk. What may be an acceptable amount of change induced chaos and stress for them may be unacceptable for others.

As you evaluate your change feasibility, remember that the bigger the change you decide to make, the more it impacts other areas of your life (financial, family, etc.), and the more energy it takes to work through.

## *Big Change, Short Time Frame vs. Small Change, Longer Time Frame*

The question is not, “Can I change?” but “How will that change unfold?” If you determine that an immediate, drastic change isn’t feasible (which is the case for most people), simply extend the timeframe and look at the change process as a series of smaller, more manageable changes that cumulatively lead you where you want to go.

## *Goal-Setting Basics*

### *Step by Step*

As you start mapping your career path, look at the destination you have identified. What is it going to take to get there? What are the steps and requirements? Start with a 30,000 foot view. What are the big picture steps that you need to take to make it happen?

As you begin setting your goals, remember this basic truth: You are in control. You have the ability to set the course of your life, and you have the ability to take the steps to create the life you want.

Goal setting has been proven to vastly improve our ability to achieve what we set out to do. When you set your goals, be sure you keep them S.M.A.R.T.

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable

- Relevant and Rewarding
- Time-based

**Specific:** The more specific you are in setting your goals, the easier it is to envision what it is you want to achieve. It helps to ask yourself:

- Who is involved?
- What do I want to accomplish?
- Where am I going to do this?
- When will this occur?
- Why do I want to accomplish this goal?

Put your goals in writing.

**Measurable:** Making your goals measurable gives you something specific to shoot for. Measurable goals let you know when you have “succeeded,” and the sense of accomplishment that comes with meeting your measurable objectives can act as a motivator.

**Attainable:** Challenging goals have been found to be the most effective, so set your goals high – but make them attainable. This is especially important for short-term goals. If there is no hope of attaining your goals, they will be a drain on your motivation, rather than an inspiration.

**Relevant and rewarding:** Make sure your goals fit with what you are trying to accomplish, and make sure you can see how you will benefit by achieving them. Write down the specific benefit of achieving each goal to keep that benefit in your sights.

**Time-based:** Assign each goal a completion date. By what date will you have accomplished this goal? Not only does setting

a completion date give your subconscious fodder for achieving the goal in that time frame, it also gives your mind a concrete deadline to work toward.



## Goal Setting

As you set your goals, focus on three different kinds of goals:

- Long-term goals: The goals you see yourself achieving in the long term.
- Short-term goals: The smaller goals you will accomplish that will move you towards achieving your long-term goals.
- Process goals: Goals that are focused less on “what” and more on “how.”

## Identify Long-Term Goals

The first step in identifying your long-term goals is to summarize what you ultimately intend to achieve. For example, “I will be a highly successful professional organizer with a waiting list of clients,” or “I will be a highly sought-after professional speaker who speaks to groups around the world on the topic of career passion.”

### Travel Journal

*Write down your long-term goals.*

## Identify Short-Term Goals

Your set of long-term goals is the destination towards which you will direct your energy and efforts. After identifying your long-term goals, your next step is to identify the short-term goals that allow you to accomplish them.

Use mind mapping as a tool to help you explore the possibilities. In the center circle, write your long-term goal. From there, write down all the different areas you can think of that would contribute to making your long-term goal a reality.

For example, two of the components of achieving a career as a highly sought after international public speaker are speaking engagements and public awareness.

Goals could be set for each of the terminal points of the mindmap (e.g., number of unpaid opportunities to speak, number of paid speaking engagements, number of articles in magazines, etc.).

## **Reverse-Engineer**

For each long-term goal, identify the short-term goals that will lead you there. Start with your end goal and reverse engineer the process of achieving it. What are the major components that need to be in place for your long-term goal to be a reality? What pieces need to be in place to make each of those components happen? Break it down until you have short-term goals that are manageable and immediate.

### **Travel Journal**

*(Visual exercise) Look at your goal-setting as a pyramid. What are the foundational pieces? What do you have to accomplish first? What is at the next level, building on the foundational pieces? And the next level?*

## **Identify Process Goals**

In addition to setting goals for the tangible outcomes you want to achieve, set process goals. Process goals focus on what you do and how you do it, rather than specific outcomes. It's the little things – the things that process goals encourage you to focus on – that lead to success.

Examples of process goals:

- I will spend at least \_\_\_ hours per day/week networking.
- This week, I will note any negative self-talk and consciously reframe it into positive self-talk.

- I will meditate at least fifteen minutes each day.
- I will meet with a friend and summarize my progress once each week.
- I will create affirmation cards and spend ten minutes focusing on them each day.
- I will spend \_\_\_ hours per day/week doing \_\_\_\_\_, an activity that fills the well and keeps me energized.

Always remember – it's the process that gets you where you want to go.

### **Travel Journal**

*Make a list of process goals that will enable you to reach both your short-term and long-term goals. You can add to it and revise as you go.*

## **Identifying Possible Steps**

Just knowing what your goals are isn't enough. You have to couple that knowledge with action. In this section, you will identify the steps to take to achieve each goal, and create an action plan.

The first thing to do is to get a full spectrum picture of the possible steps that could move you toward your goal.

## *Brainstorming*

Brainstorming can be a valuable part of this process as well. For each goal, spend some time coming up with as many steps as you can think of that could conceivably help you achieve it. As before, don't censor or analyze as the ideas come. You want to encourage free flow.

## *Mind Mapping*

You can apply the mind-mapping process you used in the short-term goal exploration to this process as well.

## *Questions*

Here are some questions to help you explore the possible steps for moving toward your goal:

- How have others achieved this goal?
- What skills do I need to develop?
- What knowledge do I need to gain?
- Who do I need to know? Where do I need to build my network?
- Where can I meet those people?
- What step do I need to take before I can do anything else?
- What achievements will help me reach this goal?
- What resources do I need in order to achieve this goal?



## Evaluating Possible Steps

Once you have a list of possible steps for each goal, put them together in an action plan. Here are some questions to help you evaluate and prioritize the steps to be taken.

- Which steps are absolutely vital?
- Which steps will best move you towards your goal?
- Which steps are both productive and readily taken (i.e., what is the ripe low hanging fruit)?
- On the flipside, which steps wouldn't contribute much to your process?
- Which steps feel like they are incidental rather than part of the core process? Eliminate them and focus on what will best move you forward.

## Creating a Timetable

When you have fully explored your short-term goals and the steps required to achieve them, put them together in some variation on the following theme:

Long-term goal

Short-term goal

Step

Step

Step

Short-term goal

Step

Step

Step

Short-term goal

Step

Step

Step

Once you have identified the goals and the steps needed to accomplish each one, combine them with the awareness you gained of how fast your journey can realistically unfold. Set a timetable for your goals. What do you want to have achieved, and by when? By what date will you have accomplished each step?



## *Putting It All Together: Creating the “Map”*

Finally, once you’ve done all this work, create your “how do I get there” map by combining your timetable with the following information for each goal:

- Goal
- Benefit of achieving this goal
- Target date to achieve this goal
- Support and Resources (What support do I need – money, contacts, knowledge, etc. – and where will I get it?)

- Result and review: Did I achieve my goal? What worked? What didn’t? What did I learn that I can apply in the future?

## *Chapter Summary*

- This chapter focuses on identifying your goals and creating a step-by-step plan to get there
- As you create your plan, you will:
  1. Evaluate the rate of change you are realistically able to incorporate.
  2. Identify your long-term goals.
  3. Identify the short-term goals that cumulatively lead you to those long-term goals.
  4. Identify the steps to take that enable you to achieve those goals.
  5. Create a timeline.
- Your plan will:
  - Help you see the big picture and understand how what you are doing right now is moving you towards it.
  - Help you take an organized approach so you can move more efficiently and faster towards your destination.
  - Force you to think through the possibilities.
  - Enable you to keep track of your progress and see at a glance what has worked and what hasn’t.
- Your plan is a tool, not your master. Be flexible.

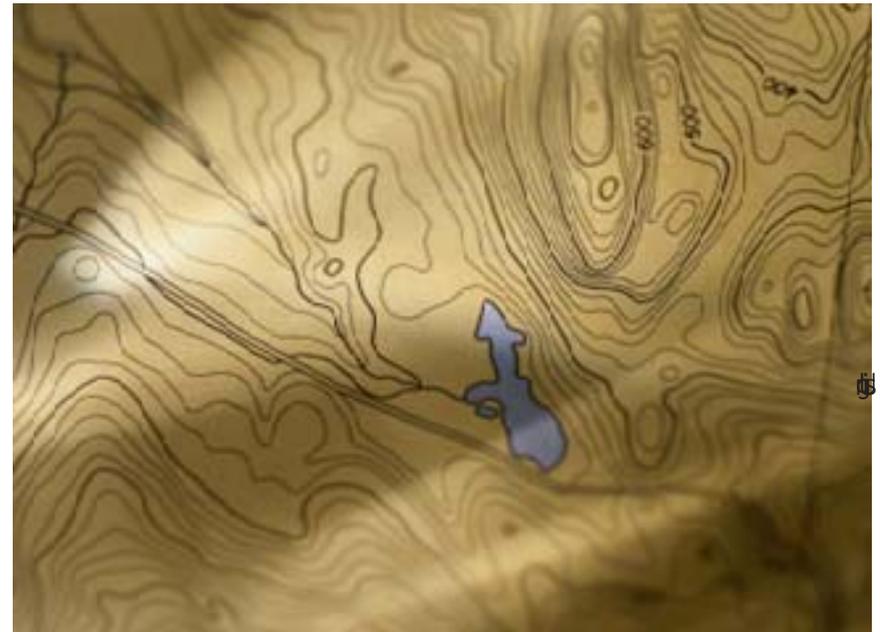
- How stable or volatile your current situation is has an impact on how much change you can realistically try to make at any given time.
- Virginia Satir's change model helps you think about how much change you can make.
- Sometimes change needs to happen over a longer period of time.
- When you set your goals, be sure you keep them S.M.A.R.T.
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Achievable
  - Relevant and rewarding
  - Time-based
- Set three kinds of goals.
  - Short-term goals
  - Long-term goals
  - Process goals – goals that focus on what you do and how you do it, rather than specific outcomes.
- Identify the steps that allow you to achieve each your goals.
- Put it all together in a timetable outlining long-term goals, short-term goals en route to the long-term goals, process goals, and steps.

## Map It, Part 2

This chapter will...

- Explain the idea of examining the topographical landscape of your career path.
- Explain the concepts of Roadblocks and Rapid Route factors.
- Outline the benefits of identifying your Roadblocks and Rapid Route factors.
- Offer questions to help you identify both internal and external Roadblocks.
- Offer questions to help you identify both internal and external Rapid Route factors.

Any orienteer will tell you that a good map doesn't just tell you where the path is, it also tells you what the topographical landscape looks like. It shows the terrain so you can see where the going gets difficult, and find the routes that will speed you on your way.



There are two kinds of landscape that affect your journey, the internal landscape and the external landscape.

The basic elements to consider as you are mapping your topographical career landscape are:

- Roadblocks – The internal and external obstacles that block your progress in your journey.
- Rapid Route factors – The internal and external factors you can apply to create Rapid Routes to help make your journey faster, easier, and smoother.

In completing the work in this chapter, you will be able to:

- Identify the obstacles in your path and possible ways around them.

- Identify the factors that allow you to move forward in your journey as quickly as possible.



## *Internal Landscape vs. External Landscape*

The landscape through which you travel on your Occupational Adventure has both internal and external elements.

The *internal elements* are the things you bring to the picture – both the strengths and skills you can apply to your journey and the ways you get in your own way.

Conversely, the *external elements* consist of the “rest of the world.” They’re the things you can leverage to move forward, and the things that get in your way.

## *Roadblocks and Rapid Route Factors*

As you already know, as you create your topographical career map you will:

1. Identify the Roadblocks that are standing in your way.
2. Identify the Routes that will move you forward quickly.

Identifying your Roadblocks, both internal and external, is the first step in finding a way around them.

External Roadblocks are often clear. “I don’t have enough money to make the change smoothly.” “I don’t know anyone in the field I want to explore.” Internal Roadblocks can be more challenging to identify, because often they are such a habitual part of how we see the world that we don’t even realize that we’re looking through their lens.

Examining your Rapid Route factors helps you identify the tools in your toolbox that you can use to make your path as smooth and easily traveled as possible.

External Rapid Route factors are external things that you can tap into to speed you on your journey. For example, maybe you have an extensive network, or a solid group of people who will support your efforts.

Internal Rapid Route factors are the skills, strengths, and insights you can apply draw on as you move forward.

## ***Why Identify Your Roadblocks and Rapid Route Factors?***

Identifying your Roadblocks and Rapid Route factors allows you minimize the impact of the obstacles in your path and maximize your ability to leverage your strengths and resources that can move you forward.

The idea of traveling consciously is a big part of examining your Roadblocks and Rapid Route factors.

Often, we let things get in the way and stop our progress. Sometimes we see them but assume there is no way around them, while other times we don't even realize they exist.

Shining a light on the Roadblocks in your way enables you to:

1. See clearly what's getting in your way.
2. Turn both your creative and analytical abilities to identifying potential ways around those obstacles.

Without that awareness, it's easy to run repeatedly into the Roadblock and get stuck or give up altogether.

The same idea applies to the Rapid Route factors. We often excel at applying our gifts and abilities to work, or our friends' and colleagues' situations. But somehow when it comes to focusing those same abilities on our own process, we forget what a great set of tools we have.

Shining a light on those strengths and skills enables you to stop and say, "How can I apply the tools I have to move me forward?"

Likewise, being fully aware of the external options you can leverage to facilitate forward motion helps you make the most of your journey.

## ***Roadblocks***

When you take a deep look at what is getting in your way, you can step back and say, "OK, now that I see it, how do I get around it?" The first step to change is awareness.

## ***Internal Roadblocks***

As you explore your internal Roadblocks, ask yourself, "Where am I getting in my own way?" Be honest with yourself. Some of your Roadblocks may be readily apparent. Others may make themselves obvious only as you begin moving in the direction of where you want to go.

In the following pages you will find an overview of some of the common roadblocks people encounter.

## ***Questions: Identifying Your Internal Roadblocks***

Exploration of the ways we get in our own way is worth a whole book by itself. Here are some questions to help you begin exploring your own internal Roadblocks:

- How do I typically get in my own way?
- Looking at my plan for how to create this career, how might I get in my own way?

- Do I have any fears about the idea of pursuing this career? What are they? Are they realistic? Are they likely?
- What are my assumptions about what is and isn't possible in my career?
- Am I allowing external influences to impact my decision-making? What are those influences? Are they relevant?
- Are there any old messages I keep telling myself that are no longer valid?
- What are my self-inhibiting beliefs?

### Travel Journal

*What are the internal voices that want to dissuade you from change and maintain the status quo? Note them as they come up. Explore what's behind them. Ask yourself, is this valid? Is there anything I can do to counter this?*

### Assumptions

Our assumptions can create powerful Roadblocks in our journey, especially because we are often not even aware that we are making those assumptions.

We make assumptions about what is and isn't possible, what we should and shouldn't do and more. Often we never stop to think, "Is that really true?" What a shame to be stopped from finding your passion by an assumption that it was never true!

### Travel Journal

*What assumptions am I making about my career path? What assumptions am I making about what I need to do? What assumptions am I making about what career has to look like? What assumptions am I making about what is and isn't possible? What are some possible "alternative realities" to those assumptions?*

### The Failure Pit

The "failure pit" is an excellent example of a self-induced Roadblock.

There is a tendency to take one "failure" and paint our entire identity with it. We don't measure up to our expectations and suddenly we see ourselves as completely incapable.

The reality is, *if you don't fail along the way, you are either very, very lucky, or you aren't really trying.* When you stumble over bumps in the road, don't fall into the trap of equating that stumble with ultimate failure. Don't throw yourself in the failure pit. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, ask yourself what you've learned, and move forward a better-informed traveler.

Learning from the bumps in the road is a vital part of moving your journey forward. All the contemplation in the world of what the map from here to there looks like is only going to yield a partial view. The only way to complete that map is through real life experience. When you do stumble, spend some time

evaluating what you've learned. How can you apply that to your next step?

Like it or not, your travel plans will go awry somewhere along the way. Rolling with those changes and learning from them makes your journey immensely more rewarding, and increases the likelihood that you will reach your destination.



## *Fear*

Fear can be a huge boulder in your path, preventing you from being able to see any of the route beyond it.

Everybody has fears to confront. Too many people let those fears keep them from embracing their Occupational Adventure. What kinds of fears? Here is just a small sample, based on my discussions with people looking at their own careers (and it's *far* from all-inclusive!):

- Fear of change.
- Fear of the unknown.
- Fear of failing.
- Fear of getting outside the comfort zone.
- Fear that they are too old to change now.
- Fear of being frivolous – work is not supposed to be fun or something that is enjoyed.
- Fear of losing money – the lack of a guarantee.
- Fear of being broke.
- Fear of not having what it takes.
- Fear of being wrong.
- Fear of not being able to make such a monumental transition.
- Fear of what friends, family or colleagues will think.
- Fear of success.
- Fear that what they thought was possible is really self-delusion and it will be exposed.
- Fear about what will they do if they fail and no longer have that dream to hold on to.
- Fear of being who they are.

The point of this list is that *everybody has fears!* There is just no way around it. And everybody can find ways to confront and move beyond those fears.

You *could* play it safe, stay put and ignore the call to your Occupational Adventure. But that has a price too. Avoiding the discomfort of venturing into the unknown (or less known) can keep you chained to a career that isn't really you – a career that sucks at your energy and robs you of the incredible experiences you *could* have.

You will never look back and regret confronting your fears. But you *will* regret letting your dreams wither on the vine.

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### **Travel Journal**

*What fear is holding you back? What can you do to minimize the impact of that fear?*

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### **Self-Inhibiting Beliefs**

Just as we have elements in our belief systems that can be invaluable in helping propel us forward on our journey, we have self-inhibiting elements to our belief systems.

One of these is the much talked about and little understood box, of “getting outside the box” fame. In this case, the box is our existing assumptions on what we can and can't do, what is and isn't possible. It is the role we have learned that we have to play.

Our beliefs about what we can and can't do can also play a self-inhibiting role. If we look at our dreams and are convinced, “That's not the kind of thing I could ever make happen,” the likelihood of those dreams ever coming to fruition is close to zero.



### **External Roadblocks**

External roadblocks are part of the package as well. You can think of the roadblocks in two broad categories, barriers and shifting, shaky ground.

## **Barriers**

We all have things standing in our way. Some common external barriers include:

- Experience needed
- Education needed
- Money needed to make it happen
- Lack of the right connections or network

## **Shifting, Shaky Ground**

In addition to the boulders in your path, take a look at the ground you're standing on as you begin your journey. Is it stable, or is it shifting and shaky?

In Chapter Eight, you examined your current "status quo" (from Satir's change model) to help you evaluate a realistic rate of change. The elements in that status quo that have a lot of chaos can also be seen as external Roadblocks. For example, financial struggles are sources of a lot of chaos. It could also be a more positive chaos, like the birth of a child and the time and attention that takes.

Some of the areas where people commonly experience chaos include:

- Current relationships
- Employment
- Financial situation

- Family life cycle (recently married, new child, death in the family, etc.)
- Personal life cycle

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## **Travel Journal**

*What is happening externally in your life? Are the waves of your external status quo soft rollers, or are they crashing up and down?*

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## **Money**

This Roadblock (whether the barrier is real or perceived) looms large enough that it merits its own section.

There's no way around it. Money, your relationship to it, and its role in your life is a big factor in how your journey unfolds. Explore this area. For many, this is a major obstacle. For some, the obstacle can be the perceived need to make a lot of it, and the ensuing, "well you can't make enough money doing that." For others, it's the "money is the root of all evils" syndrome.

When you look at the role money plays in your life, what do you see? To what extent do you equate money with success? Is money something to be avoided because it's "dirty?" What are your current financial obligations? What obligations can you change? What obligations are you willing to change? How will pursuing your passion impact this? What does your financial picture realistically need to look like in the short term? The long term? It's time to be brutally honest with yourself.

How will your financial picture impact your travel speed? Can you make a wholesale transition with little financial worry, or do you realistically need to take a long term view on your journey?

Take a look at your lifestyle. You have a lot of control over how you choose to live. Take a comprehensive look at where the money is going. How much satisfaction do you really get from each of those places?

Money, your relationship to it and how that relationship can get in your way is a subject big enough for many books. You will find a selection of books to help you more deeply explore the question of money in the Recommended Reading chapter at the end of this book.

### ***Questions: Identifying Your External Roadblocks***

Here are some questions to help you begin exploring your external Roadblocks:

- What experience do you need to have that you don't currently have?
- What knowledge do you need that you don't currently have?
- Do you have the financial means to start something new?
- Do you have the connections you need to make it happen?
- Is your home life stable or chaotic?
- Are the relationships in your life stable or chaotic?
- Is your current employment stable or chaotic?

- Is your current financial situation stable or chaotic?
- Are there substantial barriers to entry to the path you want to take?
- Is there an existing market for what you want to do, or will you have to create the market and educate people yourself?

### ***Finding Ways around Your Roadblocks***

Now that you have identified your Roadblocks, explore possible ways around them. Brainstorm. Challenge your assumptions. There are often multiple ways to overcome or get around obstacles in our path that don't come to mind immediately.

Talk to people. Ask friends and colleagues for assistance in helping you come up with solutions. Look for the unusual answer. Make it a game, a challenge to come up with the most creative detour around the obstacles

You're entering uncharted territories, but that doesn't mean that others haven't made similar journeys. Spend some time learning from other people's experiences, whether that is first-hand or in books. What was getting in their way? How did they find their way around it? How might that apply to your journey?

## *Balance*

As you make your way through sometimes uneven terrain, good balance is paramount. Identify what good balance looks like for you. Life isn't all work, and it isn't all play. It isn't all family and it isn't all financial.

Balance is highly individual. Only you can say what balance actually means. When you define the different elements that constitute your balance, and how you want them to look, you can consciously make choices accordingly.

## *Rapid Route Factors*

Just as everyone's journey inevitably has its fill of Roadblocks, each person has access to internal and external factors they can use to create a smooth and easily traveled path. When you apply your Rapid Route factors, the road is easier, and you move faster.

The key here once again is traveling consciously. Often the Rapid Route factors you bring to the table are so much a part of who you are and how you approach things that they don't even occur to you. Shining a light on them enables you to consciously ask yourself, "How can I apply this to my journey? How can I use it to make my path easier and more effective?"

## *Internal Rapid Route Factors*

Each of us has an amazing set of gifts, skills, knowledge, and abilities to bring to our journey. Often, we excel at applying those elsewhere (work, colleagues' and friends' situations, etc.), but somehow we forget to apply them to our own endeavors.

Look inside and ask yourself, what are the strengths and skills that I can apply to this journey?

## *Help a Friend*

It can be surprisingly difficult to put your finger on your own strengths and skills. One way to start exploring the factors that help you move forward on your new career path is to take yourself out of the picture. Pretend you have a friend whose situation is identical to yours. That friend has enlisted your assistance. How would you approach it? What skills would you apply to moving them forward? What tips and tricks would you offer?

## *Skills*

Take a look at the skills you identified back in Chapter Seven: Destination Exploration Part 2. Which of them could you apply to the process of pursuing your new career? How?

## *Belief System*

What are the positive, self-enhancing ways that you look at the world and the opportunities around you? Are you characteristically optimistic? Do you believe you can do anything you put your mind to? Are mistakes and "failures" something to learn from, rather than a reflection on you? Any of these are Rapid Route factors.

## Questions to Help You Identify Your Rapid Route Factors

Here are some questions to help you identify your internal Rapid Route factors.

- What knowledge do I have that I can apply to this process?
- What experiences in the past do I have that I can draw from that share similar characteristics to what I am doing now?
- What characteristics do I have that will help me succeed (e.g., persistence, risk tolerance, openness to different possibilities, etc.)?
- When I approach a big hairy challenge, how do I do it? What is my approach?
- When I get stuck, how do I get unstuck?
- Where do I shine? Where do I feel truly good at what I do? When do I feel like I have a fire-hose of energy blasting through me? When do I feel most motivated? How can I build that into my process?

### Travel Journal

*Set aside a few pages in your travel journal to list your internal success factors. What are the strengths, characteristics, and skills that will help you succeed in your journey? Keep adding to them over time as more occur to you.*

## External Rapid Route Factors

If you look around you, there are also external Rapid Route factors you can tap into. Here are some questions to help you begin identifying them.

### People

- Are there people I can turn to for emotional support?
- Are there people I can turn to for knowledge support (e.g., a mentor, or a friend with insights in the arena you are moving toward)?
- Do I have an existing network I can tap into?
- Is there an existing community I can tap into (e.g., college alumni, religious organization, etc.)?
- Are there people or groups I can partner with that would help me achieve my goal? Mutually beneficial synergies to be created?

### Opportunity

- Is there a trend for an increasing need for what I want to do?
- Is there a growth trend in that arena?

### Resources

- What other resources do I have that I can put to work towards my goals?



## *Mapping the Landscape: Putting It All Together*

Now that you have taken a deep look at the Roadblocks, the detours, the Rapid Route factors, and possible ways to apply them to your journey, compile all the information in one place so you can refer to them at a glance.

- Internal Roadblocks
  - Detours
- External Roadblocks
  - Detours
- Internal Rapid Route factors
  - Ideas for applying them
- External Rapid Route factors
  - Ideas for applying them

# Hit the Road

This chapter will...

- Stress the importance of simply taking steps.
- Offer ideas for maintaining your momentum as you go.
- Offer ideas for avoiding pitfalls along the way.

*The beginning is the most important part of the work.*

– Plato

*If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.*

– Henry David Thoreau



## *Take Those First Steps*

While vital to your journey, everything up to this point in this book is little more than armchair traveling if you don't actually do something with it. It's time to step out your front door and hit the road.

The first step is simple. *Commit to making it happen.* Let it out of your brain and into the open. Say, "I am going to do this." Say it out loud to yourself. Say it to a friend. Put it in writing and put it where you can see it. Once it's out in the open it will have room to grow. And that's exactly what you want!

The next step is to *act!* Today! The time will never be "right." Something is always going to be less than optimum. So don't wait! Do something right now that moves you toward your passion.

It doesn't have to be a grand-scale act. You don't need to build Rome in a day. What you *do* need to do is to start taking steps, because those steps bring the next steps, and the ones after them – the steps that eventually take you where you want to go.

Create a system for your journey. Is there a routine or way of doing things that particularly helps you both start moving and *keep* moving? Would it help to make a schedule? How about goal setting? Creating a series of check-in times with a friend to create some peer pressure for your forward motion?

Make a list of steps you can take right away. Small, doable steps to help you get momentum. Maybe the first step is to begin research the potential destination(s) you have chosen, or make a call to someone who has valuable insights. It doesn't matter what those first steps are, as long as you take them and build on them.

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### Travel Journal

*It helps to have the steps to choose from right there in front of us, especially for those times when we are feeling stuck or having a hard time getting in gear. Jot down as many possible steps as you can think of. They could be large or small. Then pick one and do it!*

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### Trip Tip

*As you move along the path, try identifying the Daily Step each day. What one thing can you do today that will have the most impact on moving your journey forward?*

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Sometimes the next step toward your Occupational Adventure looks alarmingly like where you've already been. That's OK. Remember the discussion of "reality" in Chapter Seven. Sometimes reality dictates that you *can't* make a big change. The next step might be less of a sweeping change of scenery, and more of a commitment to making a change, a definition of direction, and the first of many small steps that will bring you there.

The important thing is to begin your journey and to keep moving.

### The Passion Path

*It is good to have an end to journey towards; but it is the journey that matters in the end.*

– Ursula Le Guin

Your journey won't be an automatic. It takes time and effort, and you may encounter serious obstacles along the way. Creating your Occupational Adventure takes a real desire on your part. It takes commitment, motivation, a belief in yourself and your

dreams, and last but not least, permission to yourself to actually do it.



As you embark on your journey, remember that it's not solely about the destination. There is an inherent value to taking steps with passion, so savor the process of getting there, the experiences it offers, and the learning it inevitably yields.

Make plans, but hold them loosely, staying open to the possibilities. Embrace serendipity along the way. Keep planting passion seeds as you go – you never know what is going to take root and grow.

Keep scanning the horizon for more opportunities to incorporate those passions.

As you travel in your journey, keep your eye out for new perspectives. Curiosity is your friend – spend time exploring. Savor the side trips. The truest manifestation of your passion may not even come from the main path that you are on.

Don't rush your journey. Let it unfold at its own pace.

As you go down the path, you are constantly faced with choices – crossroads or forks in the path. Remember, these are opportunities to get closer to the direction that your internal compass is showing you.

On occasion you will come up against dead ends. Any time you are charting unknown territory, you're going to run into unexpected results. Don't be afraid to say, "Oh, I guess that wasn't the right road after all." That's all part of the exploration process.

As you set out on your journey, be ready for choices and change, and embrace them with a sense of adventure, exploration, and openness.

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### **Trip Tip**

*Schedule a regular check-in with yourself. Look at the decisions you have been making and the direction you are taking. Is it moving you closer to alignment with your Passion Core? If not, what changes do you need to make?*

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### **Course Correction and Milestones**

In the model on page 16, there are arrows running between the various segments and your Passion Core. That means that each step of the way you are checking in with your core to make sure that what you are doing is taking you in the right direction.

Ask yourself, how is my progress? Is what I'm doing and where I'm going staying true to my Passion Core? What course adjustments do I need to make?

Also, set yourself milestones, so you can see what kind of progress you're making. When you it feels like all you are doing is spinning your wheels, it really helps to go back through and see how much you have actually accomplished.

## ***Maintaining Your Momentum***

*Motivation is the single most important factor in any sort of success.*

– Sir Edmund Hillary

Let's face it. As exotic and exciting as travel can seem, there are times when it is just plain frustrating. If you set out on this journey, it's guaranteed to be a bumpy ride from time to time. Obstacles in the path can make your destination seem unachievable. The inevitable tedium of travel can set in, challenging your patience as you move step by step toward your destination. It's important to anticipate that and consciously apply ways of maintaining your momentum.

There is no one solution to maintaining your momentum. The more tools and techniques you can use, the better off you'll be. Here are some suggestions.

## ***Identify What Motivates You***

### ***Travel Journal***

*What really motivates you? Is it hitting milestones? Is it positive feedback from people you respect? Is it money? Is it competition? Is it the joy of knowing something you didn't know yesterday? How can you build a motivation mechanism into what you are doing?*

## ***Make Steps Manageable***

Trying to pack the whole journey into one huge step is a sure-fire recipe for anxiety and stress. Breaking it down into pieces that are more manageable alleviates some of that stress (see the discussion about Satir's change model in Chapter Eight).

Manageable steps also makes it easier to move. Think back to a time when you had something really big to accomplish. Something where you had no idea how you were going to get from here to there. How did you do it? In all likelihood, whether consciously or unconsciously, you looked at the various pieces that you would need to do to make it happen.

It's the same with the road to your Occupational Adventure. Baby steps accomplish great things.

## Identify Your Travel Team

In the interviews I've done with people who have made their dreams reality, the support they got from others was the strongest common theme in the factors that were vital to making it happen.

This support took various forms. Sometimes it was family. Sometimes it was friends. Sometimes it was business colleagues. But almost all of them said they couldn't have done it without that support.

Look around you. Where could that support come from? Is it already there, with your family or friends? Could you find a passion partner, somebody else who is working towards making his or her dream a reality?

There are different kinds of support. Take a look at where you get your support in these three areas:

- Emotional
- Coaching (helping you explore, discover, and figure out what to do)
- Tactical – support helping you make it happen

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### Travel Journal

*Make a list of people to whom you can turn for emotional, coaching, and tactical support.*

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Career expert Barbara Sher talks about creating success teams. I call them Travel Teams, a group of people with whom you can meet on a regular basis, each of whom is on their own passion path. Think of it as “passion pursuit support groups.” The focus is on group discussion, individual exploration, idea generation, and working together to help each person move towards her or his dreams.

It's a chance to draw on the ideas, creativity and collective energy of a group of people with the same goal as you...to find and create a passion-filled career. The others in your Travel Team can help you look at things with a fresh perspective, and motivate you to keep moving forward.

## Identify the Reasons Why

When the path of change starts feeling arduous, and you're tempted to just fall back into the comfortable old way, focus on the benefits of that change. In these instances, the important thing isn't just knowing what the Occupational Adventure is, it's being aware of how you benefit from creating it. Figure out ways to remind yourself why you are doing what you are doing.

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### Travel Journal

*Identify the reasons why you want to get to where you're going. Answer, “What's in it for me?” What are the rewards? What will it look like when you get there? What will the benefits be? How will it feel? How will it be different than where you've been?*

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Your Occupational Adventure offers any number of rewards. There are nonmonetary rewards – like the energy you feel doing what you really love, or simply being happier. There are collateral rewards, sort of happy byproducts. Better relationships because you are in an emotionally better place, for example. And then of course, there are the potential monetary rewards. When you write down what you expect to get out of your efforts, you can refer back to those paragraphs from time to time as a reminder to help you remember that it really is worth it.

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### Visual Exercise

*Create flashcards with the benefits that you expect to come out of your journey. You can simply write the words or create a visual representation of the benefits. Flip through the cards daily to help cement them in your mind.*

*The other side of this idea is to remind yourself what the alternative is – going back to what you have done all along. Once you start to get a taste of what living your passion can feel like, a permanent return to the same old thing seems pretty unpalatable.*

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### Accountability

Creating a system of accountability for yourself is a key ingredient in maintaining your forward momentum.

The system can be as simple as accountability to yourself. Start with a plan for what you intend to accomplish, how, and when. Building actions and deadlines into your plan gives you something to aim for and makes it clear whether you have accomplished it or not.

Try logging your activities and accomplishments on a regular basis. Once a week, check them against your stated intentions. If you didn't do what you said you would, ask yourself why not?

Are you dragging your heels? Do your expectations need to be adjusted?

Accountability to ourselves can be an effective tool, but it can be easy to let it slide, or to do something half way. Another very effective way to create accountability is to bring other people into the picture. This could be as simple as telling a friend, "I'm going to do this." Find someone to whom once a week you can say, "I'm planning to do x, y, and z this week." Schedule a time the next week to come back and say, "This is what I did," and make additional commitments for the following week.

The same idea applies to regular meetings with a passion partner or Travel Team. Find someone you can tell what you intend to do, and who will ask, "so how'd it go?" Think of it as voluntary peer pressure.



### ***Take Inspiration from Others***

Sometimes the power to keep going doesn't have anything to do with you and what you are doing at all. You need to look elsewhere for inspiration.

It may not feel like it, but others have trod the path you're on before. Identify people you admire and learn from their experiences. Read about those who have overcome great obstacles.

The first few months of building my Passion Catalyst practice were challenging for me. The bills were piling up much faster than the business was growing, and sometimes it all seemed completely overwhelming. I was beginning to stumble and could scarcely imagine how I was ever going to make it happen.

At one particularly challenging point, I happened to go to a talk by the late adventurer and motivational speaker Göran Kropp (who tragically died a year later in a rock-climbing accident). There on stage, this 6'3" Swede told about his experience bicycling from Sweden to Everest, summiting Mount

Everest solo, using no supplemental oxygen and no Sherpas to carry his gear, and then bicycling back home. It was awe-inspiring.

I came away from that thinking, "If he can do *that*, I can make *this* happen, no problem!" I drew inspiration from his accomplishments, and continue to do so.

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### ***Travel Journal***

*Who are the people you admire? From whom can you draw inspiration?*

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You don't have to wait for a motivational speaker to come to town. Go to your local library and check out biographies. Soak

up the success stories. Read up on people who have defied the odds and made their dreams reality. Get to know your heroes.

Over the course of my Passion Catalyst work, I have come across some incredible stories that make me feel like anything is possible. One of the most inspiring people I know is Erik Weihenmayer, who is blind. After a climbing career that led him to the top of Mount McKinley and up The Nose route on El Capitan, among others, Erik summited Mount Everest in 2001.

As I read his book, *Touch the Top of the World: A Blind Man's Journey to Climb Farther than the Eye*, I realized how quickly we give up when things start to get challenging, or confusing, or just feel like they're downright taking too long. I was able to apply both the insight and inspiration to my own journey.

Motivational books or motivational tapes can be another great source of inspiration.

Don't forget real live people, up close and personal, as potential sources of inspiration. Look around you. Is there anyone you know who has made a transition to a life they love? Anyone who has overcome the odds? Don't underestimate what you can learn from the people right within your reach.

### ***Set Yourself a Big, Hairy, Nonwork Goal***

Having something big to work towards that has nothing to do with your Occupational Adventure can be motivating in and of itself. After hearing Göran Kropp tell his incredible Everest story, I decided I needed something that was clearly beyond my current abilities, but within reach with some hard work. I stumbled on the idea of kayaking the Columbia River from

source to sea, a distance of 1200+ miles. Suddenly I had this breath-of-fresh-air dream to occupy my mind that had nothing to do with my career path. I researched, I talked to people, I dreamed, and that all spilled over to a renewed enthusiasm for my Passion Catalyst path. In the end I never did pursue it, but the dream was a source of inspiration when I needed it most.

### ***Build Your Self-Confidence***

Somewhere along your journey, your self-confidence is bound to flag. Just about everybody I have talked to who has lived their passion pursuit has questioned their ability to make it happen at some point. The key is minimizing the impact of those lapses.

### ***Turn to Your Travel Team***

Your travel team, the people around you that you have enlisted for support, can play a big role in helping you through these times. It can be as simple as saying, "I'm starting to wonder what the heck I was thinking. I need some encouragement." An outside perspective can work wonders when you are starting to question yourself.

### ***Start a Kudos File***

Another tool is the Kudos File. Take a folder, label it Kudos, and any time you get praise, or somebody makes a positive observation about something you've done or accomplished, write it down, date it, and put it in your Kudos File. I have a Kudos File folder in my e-mail. Any time I get an e-mail that makes me feel really good, I put it in there. From time to time I browse

through to remind myself of the view from the outside. It's so easy to get mired down in the day-to-day frustrations of creating something new that it's really helpful to reinforce the positive that others see.

### ***Create a Small-Scale Success***

Take on (or create) a project that uses your skills and has meaning for you. Something you can feel good about. Small and manageable is preferable. Do something that reinforces your awareness of the fact that you have what it takes to get things done. Create a small-scale success, and build on that.

### ***Show a Memory Movie***

Make a list of accomplishments in your past you feel good about. Replay in your mind how you made each of them happen and what allowed you to be successful.

### ***Make a List of Why You're Great***

Make a list of why you're great. What do you do well? What do you like about yourself? What do others like about you? What skills and abilities do you have? Review the list on a regular basis.

### ***Celebrate Your Ongoing Successes***

Take time out on a regular basis to ask yourself, "How have I succeeded?" Celebrate those successes. Congratulate yourself for doing a great job. Let yourself know how that is really

moving you forward, and how much you appreciate and admire the work you've done.

Log your activity each week, as well as the things you have accomplished. Review them on a regular basis to remind yourself what you've done. Track the steps you've taken, the results you've achieved, and the growth you've seen.

### ***Rewards***

Sometimes, nothing beats a good old-fashioned bribe. Tell yourself, if I do \_\_\_\_\_, or accomplish \_\_\_\_\_, I will treat myself to \_\_\_\_\_.“ Maybe the reward is for achieving a certain goal, or simply as reinforcement for sticking with it for another month.

Set up big rewards for large, longer-term goals, and numerous smaller ones for interim steps along the way. The reward could be a treat of some kind. You might contribute money on a regular basis to an Occupational Adventure treasure chest. Every week you accomplish the steps you have committed to for that week, you put money in the pot. After a certain number of weeks – say, twelve – you can reward yourself by using the money to treat yourself to something you wouldn't ordinarily have done or bought.

For some, it helps to use the stick as a flipside to the carrot. Using the Occupational Adventure treasure chest as an example, you could add money every week, but if you lapse one week you would take all the money you have added thus far, contribute it to a charitable cause, and start over.

## Competition

After my first visit to Mexico, I decided that the experience would have been much richer if I had been able to speak Spanish. I bought some books, tapes, and Spanish language music, and set about teaching myself.

At the same time, a friend of mine was just beginning to learn Spanish. We had long since recognized that we both had pretty competitive personalities, and one day over lunch we made a bet as to whose Spanish would be better after a year's time (we were going to hire a Spanish teacher to test us).

For months, the competition between us barreled forward. We were constantly checking in to see how the other's Spanish was coming (or wasn't). It motivated us through those hardest first weeks of learning a language, when you don't know anything and it's so easy to just let it drop.

We never did follow through on the testing, but I learned more Spanish in that year than I would have thought possible. And it was all because I tapped into something that really focused my motivation.

## The Power of the Mind

Your mind is a powerful tool. Most of us have been conditioned from an early age to think and analyze, but that is tapping into just a small part of the potential that our gray matter has to offer.

## Visualizing

Visualizations can be a powerful way to support your journey. Some of the greatest stars in sports spend their pre-competition time with eyes closed, visualizing the success that is just about to come their way.

Studies on visualization have proven its effectiveness. At the University of Chicago, for example, a study was done in which participants were divided into three groups and tested on their abilities to make free-throws.

Each group was then given different instructions. The first group went into the gym every day and practiced free throws for an hour. The second group was told to come to the gym for an hour a day, but instead of practicing, they visualized making baskets. The third group was instructed to keep their attention away from basketball completely.

At the end of 30 days, the group that practiced every day showed a 24 percent improvement in their free-throw accuracy, and those who didn't think about basketball showed no improvement at all. No surprise there. But the group that visualized making baskets *showed a 23% improvement!*

I once read that "worry is nothing more than negative visualization." Take any energy you're expending on worry about what might happen and instead put it into picturing the joy of what could be. Create a picture of your destination. What will you be doing? What will your days look like? What kinds of interactions will you have? Who will you be working with? How will your work make you feel?

On a regular basis, sit down, close your eyes, and picture that reality.

## ***Meditation***

Meditating doesn't have to mean wrapping yourself into a pretzel and contemplating the sound of one hand clapping. It can be an incredible everyday tool for leaving behind the frantic riot of thoughts and anxieties that so many of us have. It can clear the air, relax you, and help put things in perspective.

An excellent book for easing into meditation, written from the perspective of "it's nothing mystical – it's as natural an activity as breathing," is *Meditation Made Easy*, by Lorin Roche, Ph.D.

## ***Affirmations***

Use affirmations to counter your fears with the positive and to help you create your new reality. They are like creating a container of belief for the future you want to create to flow into.

## ***Share Your Excitement***

Excitement feeds off of excitement. Share your enthusiasm for what you're doing with others and most often you'll find it reflected back at you.

## ***Do Things You Love***

There's an energy that comes from doing things that you really love. If your current path feels like a slogging grind, make a concerted effort to build some activities that really juice you into your weekly routine.

One client of mine, realizing he didn't have enough activity in his life that energized him, created a "juice menu." He made a

list of things he really loved doing and committed to picking one item off the menu each day and doing it.

## ***Travel Journal***

*Make a juice menu. What activities give you energy?*

## ***Change***

Change has the power to stimulate, rejuvenate, energize, and unblock. When you feel your pace slowing and your focus scattering, try making a change. A simple change of scenery – picking up your work and sitting on a bench in a park, or in your favorite coffee shop – can be an easy way to get you going again.

Or maybe what you need is to simply stop what you're doing and do something else for a while. The quickest way to get past feeling burned out isn't gritting your teeth and pushing on through. It's stopping and saying, "Oh, I need to put this aside and focus on something else."

Finally, try changing your environment. Rearrange your furniture. Paint your walls. Bring a spark of the new into your surroundings.

## ***Take a Break***

It may not be a change of scenery that you need, but a real, honest break from what you're doing. Getting away from the daily routine and the responsibilities in your life, even for a short time, can have a tremendous impact. Give yourself permission to

rest, and trust that it will actually have the net impact of allowing you to move forward faster. Maybe that means playing hooky from work one afternoon and going to the zoo. Maybe it means taking a three-day weekend and getting out of town, or even going on vacation.

### *Eliminate Energy Drain*

Take a look at your current environment. How conducive is it to pursuing your passion? I'm talking about both your physical environment and your emotional environment.

Physically, does the space where you live and work have a sense of order, or is it a testament to chaos, distracting your focus. The easier you can make it on yourself to focus on what you are doing, the better. If you've got the chaos monkey on your back, look at what you can do to put things in order.

How about your emotional surroundings? How do the people around you react to the world? Do they support you and help you believe that you can do it, or do they rain on any parade that looks fun and fulfilling.

Start making conscious choices about the people you surround yourself with. If there are people who consistently put a damper on your efforts, you may need to put some distance between yourself and them.

### *Passionize Your Environs*

Look around you and ask yourself how much of your passion is reflected in your surroundings. If the answer is, "Not much," what can you do to change that?

My living room, for example, is like a shrine to my travels. I have Zapotec weavings and pottery from southern Mexico, crystal and glass from various Nordic countries, travel-oriented books, and even a mounted Soviet propaganda poster from a trip to the Soviet Union in the 80's.

It doesn't need to be related to your chosen path. My career focus isn't on travel, but I *am* passionate about travel. Surrounding myself with things that remind me of my travels – times when I have been fully engaged with the world around me – is a subtle reinforcement and stimulation of the energy that comes with it.

What you surround yourself with is an opportunity to reinforce your commitment to your passions. What can you do to reflect your passion?

### *Take Risks*

No change happens without some degree of risk, so if you want to create your Occupational Adventure, risk is something you have to get to know.

That's not to say following the passionate path means putting it all on the line. As with everything else, there are degrees to the risk involved. Making an immediate, dramatic change involves much greater risk than gradually making choices to bring you to your desired destination over time.

Explore your own comfort level with risk. Practice taking risks, small ones at first. Pick something you'd like to do that makes you feel uncomfortable, and do it.

## *Embrace Serendipity*

Once you consciously start moving toward that destination, the path you take will probably not be straight. The destination you reach may not be the one you set your sights on as you began the process.

As you move down the path, new opportunities inevitably pop up. You go around a bend and suddenly there's another path that you would never have seen had you never actually hit the road. You might meet someone during your explorations who sparks a new idea, or maybe you connect with someone who opens a door that would never have been opened. Being too rigidly set on the destination you initially targeted could lead you to lose out on the serendipitous opportunities that appear along the way.

When a new opportunity does pop up, simply look at it and ask, "Does this new direction make sense in light of my Passion Core?" If it does, which destination is more appealing, the original one or the one you've just discovered?

When you reach your new destination, it may look nothing like the one for which you originally set out. By embracing serendipity, you may have ended up traveling in a completely different direction than you originally anticipated. But wherever you end up, as long as you have honestly checked in with your Passion Core each step of the way, it doesn't matter. It will be perfect for you!

## *Connections*

Connections with others will most likely play a key role in your Occupational Adventure. Whether tapping into the support of your travel team, establishing a broader network of others

with similar interests, or making potential business contacts, start actively cultivating relationships right now.

## *Avoiding Pitfalls*

As you move down the road, beware of the pitfalls along the way. Any of these can waylay you and make your journey grind to a halt. As always, being aware of them before they happen makes it easier to avoid or work through them.

## *The Paralysis of Fear*

Fear can lead to paralysis, cheating you of the amazing possibilities that are out there. What's worse is that often that fear is unfounded.

A few years ago I was visiting a small town in southern Mexico. Sitting in the shade, cerveza in hand, I caught the strained notes of brass band drifting through the midday heat. I darted out the door just in time to see a funeral procession disappearing around the corner.

As I watched, the travel photographer in me felt the immediate urge to pick up my camera and follow. I responded just as quickly with a litany of reasons why I couldn't. I was afraid of what the outcome might be. I was afraid of intruding and, even more, I was afraid of their reactions.

I reached a compromise with myself and resolved to take my camera and catch up with the procession. If the mourners were open to my presence, I would take pictures. If not, I would simply walk past like I was headed elsewhere.



Much to my surprise, I was welcomed into the funeral procession. Not only was I welcomed, but before I was done I had shared multiple shots of mescal with some of the men, been invited to help carry the casket, taken some incredible pictures, and tried not-so successfully to coax melodious sounds from the band's big brass sousaphone as a low-key, post-burial fiesta got underway in the cemetery.

"OK, Curt," you're probably wondering. "What does this have to do with pursuing my passion?"

Simple. It's a story about one of the most incredible travel experiences I have ever had. But more to the point, it's a story about an experience I very nearly *didn't* have because I almost let my fear rob me of it. It was the fear that starts with "I can't do that because..."

And in the end, it was a fear of something that didn't exist.

I looked at my fear, and I found a compromise that allowed me to take the step without freezing up. And then (here's the important part) I acted.

Fear is the number one thing that is holding people back from their Occupational Adventure. It takes many shapes – fear of failing, fear of what might happen, fear of what might not happen, and more. If you pursue your Occupational Adventure, you are guaranteed to run into your own fear in one form or another somewhere along the road. The question isn't *if* you will encounter fear on your journey, it's *what happens* when you do?

Below are some ideas.

### ***Do Something!***

Dale Carnegie once said, "Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear, do not sit home and think about it. Go out and get busy."

### ***Expand Your Comfort Zone through Baby Steps***

As mentioned earlier, your career change doesn't have to be a huge dramatic leap. Look at where you want to go and chunk it down into small, manageable steps. The more you do, the more you realize that the next step is possible as well. And the next...

### ***Identify Your Fears***

Don't keep your fears stuffed and hope that they will go away. Let them out in the light. Talk about them. Look at what's really behind them. The more you try to ignore your fears, the larger they become.

## ***Explore Your Fears***

Explore the underlying beliefs behind your fears. Are they valid? Is there another way of looking at things? How can you begin to shift your perspective? Don't be frustrated if that shift in perspective doesn't come immediately – remember, baby steps apply here too.

## ***Share Your Fears***

Find a friend to talk to about your fears and how those fears are stopping you from doing what you want to do. Encourage your friends to challenge you on your fears. An outside perspective can be invaluable.

Find others who are pursuing their passions (or are at least giving it some serious thought). There's a real power in solidarity, and other people can offer insights and ideas that may not have occurred to you.

## ***Plan***

Once you know which fears are stopping you, plan for the steps you can take so that your fear won't come to fruition. When the fear starts popping up, remind yourself of the things you are doing to ensure that the feared outcome won't happen.

## ***Lack of Belief***

Belief in yourself and belief in your Occupational Adventure can be a powerful tool to move you forward.

Unfortunately, one of the most common things standing smack in the middle of people's road to their Occupational

Adventure is a *lack* of belief. Belief in themselves, belief in their dream, even belief in the possibility that work and passion really can merge. If any of these describe you, you're in good company.

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## ***Travel Journal***

*How is your relationship to belief? Do you have a strong underlying belief that you can do this, or are you beset by doubts that you have what it takes? Be honest. How about your belief in your dream? If you do experience a lack of belief, what does it look like? How is that impacting you?*

*As with any of the obstacles in our way, the first step toward getting around them is awareness. Traveling consciously. By identifying what is in your way, you can start plotting a bypass.*

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## ***Ruts in the Road***

The best of journeys can encounter ruts in the road. We get so caught up in making things happen that we forget to look around. What started out as exciting progress becomes rote and habit. Be vigilant for ruts – where are you getting stuck? Where are you repeating the same pattern that is getting you nowhere?

## ***Do a Minutia Check***

When we get heads-down trying to make things happen, it's easy to start losing ourselves in the details. Slowly, ever so imperceptibly, we start to drift off course.

Make it a habit to do a minutia check on a regular basis. Are you getting so wrapped up in the process that you are forgetting why you're doing what you are doing? Check back in with your compass and make sure you're still heading in the right direction.

## ***Getting Unstuck***

There will be times in your journey when you feel inextricably stuck. It's a natural part of the process. Here are a few ideas to help you get unstuck.

### ***Keep Your Feet Moving***

The surest way to stay stuck is to stop moving. Back up and look at different possibilities. Try different solutions to the problem that you are encountering. Be willing to experiment and learn.

### ***Brainstorm***

Alone or together with others, come up with as many ideas as you can for different ways to move your feet.

### ***Break It down***

Look at the obstacle you are encountering. Break it down into pieces and think of ways you can find your way around each individual piece. Concentrate on the pieces that you can wrap your arms around and make progress with.

## ***Say It out Loud***

Describe to someone else what the problem seems to be that you are encountering. The process of going through it out loud can lead you to a way through it.

## ***Check for Assumptions***

Write out what's happening. Where are you stuck? What is getting in the way? Why can't you get around it? Once you're done, take a look at what you've written. For each separate thought, ask yourself what assumptions you are making. Are there any assumptions that aren't valid?

## ***Walk Backwards***

Picture yourself where you want to be and backtrack through the steps that would need to be taken to get there.

## ***Future Focus***

Instead of spending your time focusing on why you can't do something right now, redirect your focus to where you want to go as though you were already there. You may have heard the saying that what you focus on grows. That's really true.

## ***Persistence***

*We can do anything we want as long as we stick to it long enough.*

– Helen Keller

Finally, a word about sticking with it. The world is full of “overnight successes” that took years in the making. More than any other trait, the most valuable asset in your journey is persistence. Keep your feet moving. Keep trying new ideas, new ways of making things happen.

Because eventually, it will happen. And when it does, it is definitely worth the ride.

## *Chapter Summary*

- It is vital to take that first step.
- Course corrections are an expected and necessary part of the journey.
- Identifying milestones helps you track your progress.
- Pay attention to the factors that will allow you to maintain your momentum and build them into your process. Some of the possibilities include:
  - Identify what motivates you.
  - Make your steps small and manageable.
  - Identify your travel team.
  - Identify the reasons why you are on this path.
  - Create a system for accountability.
  - Take inspiration from others.
  - Set big non-work goals.
  - Build your self-confidence.
  - Celebrate your successes.
- Reward yourself.
- Build competition into the picture.
- Tap into the power of the mind.
- Visualize.
- Meditate.
- Use affirmations.
- Share your excitement.
- Do things you love.
- Make a change.
- Take a break.
- Eliminate energy drain.
- Passionize your environs.
- Take risks.
- Embrace serendipity.
- Make connections.
- Be aware of the pitfalls along your path and take steps to avoid them. Some of the potential pitfalls are:
  - Fear.
  - Ruts in the road.
  - Minutiae.
  - Getting stuck.
- Persistence is the biggest factor in success.

# Destination

This chapter will...

- Stress the importance of continually checking in with your Passion Core throughout your career.
- Explain the Final-Destination Myth.
- Encourage you to revisit your Passion Core over time and ask yourself if it has changed.

This chapter is inherently short, because it's about the destination – the peak of the mountain, the exciting new locale. And this isn't a book about destination – it's a book about the journey.

There are, however, three things worth remembering once you've found that groove and your Occupational Adventure is in full swing.

- Keep checking your course
- Beware The Final-Destination Myth
- Occasionally re-examine your Passion Core



## *Keep Checking Your Course*

As you move forward in your career, *keep checking your course with your Passion Core*. The cumulative potential of the decisions we make day after day is enormous. Checking in with your Passion Core as you make those decisions will ensure that you stay on the right track.

When people discover that they have drifted off course, often it's not because they've made one tremendously stupid leap. It's because their career has gone astray little by little, decision by decision.

Check your course often and your Occupational Adventure will last a lifetime.

## *The Final-Destination Myth*

There's a story I hear over and over from people regarding their careers. It goes something like this:

"I used to love what I do. It would light me up and I felt a real charge out of it. But somewhere along the line that spark died. It just doesn't do it for me any more. I can't figure out what's wrong. Maybe I'm working at the wrong company."

There are variations on the theme, of course, but that's the basic idea.

These people have fallen prey to The Final-Destination Myth. They set their sights on a destination. "Ahhh, I've arrived," they say with a sigh of satisfaction. And then they settle in for the long haul.

But the reality is that it won't stay "right" forever. You change. Your environment changes. Maybe you get too good at the job you're doing and it no longer holds your interest. Or you have children and suddenly some of the pieces in your Passion Core have shifted. You, your career, and the world around you are in a constant state of changing, growing, and shifting.

And so the people who have settled in for the long haul inevitably begin to feel wanderlust. Their feet begin itching, and something inside them tells them that it's time to hit the road again.

Some listen to that call. Many don't. And that is where they start to get stuck, and bored, and frustrated.

As you travel through your career, embracing the experience along the way and setting your sights on the next destination, be ready for change. Welcome it, and look to your Passion Core to help you navigate the path.



## *Re-examining Your Passion Core*

Everything changes over time, and your Passion Core is no exception. The basic elements may remain the same (for example, I suspect that I will always find joy in exploration and discovery), but other pieces may come and go. Or they may shift in their intensity.

Some change occurs gradually. Things shift in importance over time, or there may be major events that impact your Passion Core. You may have children, for example, and a desire for time to spend with your family may suddenly take priority for the next few years.

Revisit your Passion Core on occasion to ensure that it still rings true.

## *Chapter Summary*

- Stay on track for the long term by continuing to check your course against your Passion Core.
- There is no Final Destination in your career. No career destination is right forever. Eventually you will want to move on.
- Change is an inherent part of your career.
- You will use your Passion Core repeatedly throughout your career to help identify “what’s next.”
- Revisit your Passion Core every few years to be certain it still reflects who you are.

# Recommended Reading

## Career

[\*Working Identity: Unconventional Strategies for Reinventing Your Career\*](#), Herminia Ibarra

[\*Your Signature Path: Gaining New Perspectives on Life and Work\*](#), Geoffrey M. Bellman

[\*The Way of Adventure\*](#), Jeff Salz

[\*What Color Is Your Parachute? 2005: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers\*](#), Richard Nelson Bolles and Mark Emery Bolles

[\*I Don't Know What I Want, but I Know It's Not This: A Step-by-Step Guide to Finding Gratifying Work\*](#), Julie Jansen

[\*I Could Do Anything if I Only Knew What It Was: How to Discover What You Really Want and How to Get It\*](#), Barbara Sher

[\*Live the Life You Love: In Ten Easy Step-by-Step Lessons\*](#), Barbara Sher

## Overcoming Obstacles

[\*Taming Your Gremlin \(Revised Edition\): A Surprisingly Simple Method for Getting Out of Your Own Way\*](#), Rick Carson

[\*The Resilience Factor: 7 Essential Skills for Overcoming Life's Inevitable Obstacles\*](#), Andrew Shatte and Karen Reivich

[\*Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway\*](#), Susan Jeffers

[\*Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life\*](#), Martin Seligman

[\*How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life\*](#), Alan Lakein

[\*The Now Habit: A Strategic Program for Overcoming Procrastination and Enjoying Guilt-Free Play\*](#), Neil Fiore

[\*Six Pillars of Self-Esteem\*](#), Nathaniel Branden

[\*What to Say when You Talk to Your Self\*](#), Shad Helmstetter

[\*How Full Is Your Bucket? Positive Strategies for Work and Life\*](#), Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton

[\*Honoring the Self: Self-Esteem and Personal Transformation\*](#), Nathaniel Branden

## ***Money and Prosperity***

*Mary Hunt's Debt-Proof Living*, Mary Hunt

*Your Money or Your Life: Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Achieving Financial Independence*, Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin

*The Complete Cheapskate: How to Get Out of Debt, Stay Out, and Break Free from Money Worries Forever*, Mary Hunt

*The Cheapskate Monthly Money Makeover*, Mary Hunt

*Creating True Prosperity*, Shakti Gawain

*A Simple Choice: A Practical Guide to Saving Your Time, Money and Sanity*, Deborah Taylor-Hough

## ***Mind, Body and Spirit***

*Meditation Made Easy*, Lorin Roche, PhD.

*Creative Visualization: Use the Power of Your Imagination to Create What You Want in Your Life*, Shakti Gawain

*Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*, Jon Kabat-Zinn

## ***Miscellaneous***

*The Right Questions: Ten Essential Questions to Guide You to an Extraordinary Life*, Debbie Ford

*The Magic of Thinking Big*, David Schwartz

*A Year to Live: How to Live This Year as if It Were Your Last*, Stephen Levine

## ***Inspiration and Motivation***

*The Impossible Just Takes a Little Longer: Living with Purpose and Passion*, Art Berg

*Touch the Top of the World: A Blind Man's Journey to Climb Farther than the Eye Can See*, Erik Weihenmayer

*If You Could Hear What I See: Triumph over Tragedy Through Laughter* *Kathy Buckley*, Lynette Padwa

## ***Exploration Tools***

*The Mind Map Book: How to Use Radiant Thinking to Maximize Your Brain's Untapped Potential*, Tony Buzan and Barry Buzan

*Journal to the Self: Twenty-Two Paths to Personal Growth – Open the Door to Self-Understanding by Reading, Writing, and Creating a Journal of Your Life*, Kathleen Adams

*Journaling from the Heart*, Eldonna Bouton

# About the Author

Seattle-based Curt Rosengren has experienced first-hand the difference between the fog of an ill-fitting career and the supercharged energy of a path that's right for you. As a Passion Catalyst<sup>SM</sup> Rosengren helps people find passion in their careers through one-on-one coaching, workshops, public speaking, and writing.

Rosengren's articles appear in Worthwhile magazine, a business/life magazine founded by two Wall Street Journal veterans. He has been mentioned as a career expert on CNN and quoted in articles in The Seattle Times, The Toronto Globe and Mail, and Monster.com. He has appeared in live in-studio interviews on Seattle's Q13 Fox News, and has written career passion articles for online newsletters such as job.com and net-temps.com.

Rosengren maintains a career passion blog called The Occupational Adventure, which can be seen at [blog.occupationaladventure.com](http://blog.occupationaladventure.com).

Rosengren's Passion Catalyst work came from literally creating a framework for something he had been doing naturally, informally – and with no thought of getting paid for it – for years. His passion insights have come through clients, interviews with dozens of people who have successfully pursued their passions, and his own career transformation experience.

When he's not catalyzing passion, Rosengren is an avid rock climber, photographer, and travel junkie. He speaks fluent Swedish, functionally ugly Spanish, and can read a menu in French with the help of a dictionary.

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