

A fresh start for your career

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What do you need to do to find the kind of enjoyment or progress you want in your career? Joel Garfinkle, founder of Dream Job Coaching, a consulting firm specializing in personal fulfillment and professional transformation based in Oakland, California, offers these suggestions.

Determine Which Aspects of Your Job You Like

Then find a way to do more of whatever that is. When you are engrossed in a project you like, your workday will be energizing rather than draining. You may also find that the tasks you enjoy are the same ones a coworker or boss dislikes. Find out if you can work out a win-win situation.

Learn from the Best Around You

Who in your office seems to really enjoy -- and excel -- at their work? What can you learn from them? People who like coming to work radiate positive energy, and their spirit can be infectious. Let the energy rub off on you.

Determine Your Career Signature

If you had to write down one statement that would encompass who you are (or want to be) professionally and personally, what would it say? Take some time to clarify your unique signature, and use this statement as a guiding force in pursuing what you want to do and whom you want to be.

Recognize What You Can and Cannot Control

Write down the things that stress you out at work. Circle the ones you have control over, and cross out the ones you don't. Vow to stop spending energy on the crossed-out items; redirect your energy on finding solutions to the problems you can change.

Do the Job Above Your Current Position

Offer to take on some of the responsibilities in the position just above you. Becoming familiar with that role makes you an obvious choice for future promotion.

Accomplish Projects That Directly Affect Your Resume

When taking on new projects, try to select those that will most likely benefit you. Be sure to quantify the results of your work and add these accomplishments to your resume, which you should be updating regularly.

Cultivate Friendships at Work

Your coworkers can understand and appreciate what life is like in your office better than anyone else. Take the time to develop friendly relationships with them. You'll benefit personally and professionally from the time you invest in getting to know them.

See the Big Picture and the Little Pictures

What is the big picture -- your overall vision -- for your professional life? Now what are the small daily steps or little pictures that will get you there? Make a small goal, like joining a professional organization or finding a mentor -- something you can accomplish today.

Make Sure You're on the Right Path

Are you really doing what you want to do? Does what you think you should be doing interfere with what you want to be doing? None of the above suggestions will work if your career isn't aligned with your true interests, personality traits and natural abilities. If a career assessment is in order, make this your first priority.

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