

Introduction

How can you design your life so that you never, ever again experience that horrid, dreaded realization that it's Monday already? So that you never have to wrench yourself out of bed to get ready for work? So that you never feel the knot that comes in your stomach when you think of another week at your job?

My answer: find work that you enjoy and that fulfills you. Maybe it's a new job or a new career. It could even be the job you have now, but with a new you doing it; a person who knows her passions, her purpose, and who has a plan.

This is a book about career changes. It is written for the woman who wants to discover the best way to express herself through her work. I describe a system of career change that starts from the inside out, meaning connecting *who you are to what you do*.

Why does this connection matter? When we find a match between who we are inwardly and what we do outwardly, we become happier, more powerful, and can make a real contribution to the world. And Mondays are no longer Mondays; every day is a Friday.

Who doesn't want all of that?

Change can be mysterious, exciting, and full of possibility, so in this book you'll read about the joy of change. And since change causes

many of us to feel apprehensive, uncertain, and anxious, you'll also learn ways to manage the stress of change. They are all simple.

My own careers have brought me adventures and joys that I could not have imagined as a girl—a girl who thought she could only choose between being a teacher or a nurse. While these are two worthy professions, happily we live in times with more options. I have found fulfillment through finding a “right” career and then changing, twice, to new careers. I want to empower other women to do the same: to imagine. To discover. To change, if that's what you want to do.

I also write about career change because we spend so much time at work. Since where we spend our time is where we spend our precious energy, career has the potential of being an energy drain or an energy giver. When we become energized by our career, we energize our world. We all win!

How Much Time Do You Spend Working?

Let's dive right into a simple exercise. Do you know how many hours a week you spend on work and work-related activities? (If you do, feel free to skip this exercise.) You prepare for work, commute to and from, work, and then unwind. Many women also bring work home or wake up at night worrying about work. If you are a full-time mom,

you definitely bring your work home with you!

Please write down below how many hours you spend *per day* and then *per week* on work and work-related activities. Be sure to include preparation, the commute, and worry time. If your work schedule is irregular, just use an average.

For example, I used to spend one hour per day preparing for work, two hours commuting, ten hours at work, and roughly one hour unwinding. (For the job I'm using in this example, I did not bring work home and rarely thought about work once it was over.) That gave me a total of fourteen hours per day. 14 hours per day x 5 work days per week = 70 hours per week on work-related activities.

_____ Your daily estimate (preparation + commute + work + unwind + work at home + worry)

_____ Number of days per week

_____ Your weekly estimate

Now, please write down how many hours you spend per week sleeping—you know, that necessary activity that heals and refreshes. To estimate, average your nightly hours and multiply by seven. Be sure to average, since you may sleep longer on weekends than during the week.

_____ Your weekly estimate of sleep hours

Now add your work-related hours to sleep hours and subtract it from the total hours in a week, 168 (24 x 7).

When I first did this, I got forty-eight. Wow! I only had forty-eight hours a week for friends, family, spiritual practice, walking the dog, email, movies, volunteer work, reading, eating, exercise, cleaning, special projects, paying bills, shopping, etc. More time was spent on work than anything else!

If work is (or soon will be) your top time-grabber, why not make it as enjoyable and meaningful as possible? Why not choose to do something that you—as incredible as it might seem—would do even if you weren't paid for it? (But you still had a means of support, of course.)

After reading this book, you might find yourself changing careers. Or maybe a career tweak is enough. Whatever you do or don't do, I'll guide you to make your changes from the power of your inner, deeper self.

The Career Change Epidemic

Career dissatisfaction seems to be an epidemic. How many women do you know who are happy—vibrantly, enthusiastically happy—with their careers? Think of your five closest friends. How many of

them are looking for new jobs? How many do you think will be in the same job this time next year? How many are dreaming of a new career?

A 2007 Reuters survey says that sixty percent of workers in the United States have either recently made a career change or are planning one. That makes changing careers more popular than marriage! ¹ If you are considering making a career move, take heart in the fact that YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Why Women?

Are more women dissatisfied now with their career than ever before? I don't know. Careers and the freedom to choose careers is still relatively new for women; if your grandmother had a vibrant career she was probably ahead of her time, and unusual.

National Public Radio has a segment called "This I Believe" during which listeners write or call in their strongly held beliefs. Since this is my book, this is my "This I Believe" segment.

I believe that if more women felt *fulfilled* in their careers, the world would be a better place.

What do I mean by fulfilled?

¹ According to 2006 U.S. Census Bureau data, less than fifty percent of American households are in traditional, male-female marriages.

I don't mean achieving higher status, earning more money, or gaining more power. I'm certainly not against those achievements; I'd like more myself! But I'm old enough to know that they don't bring deep-down satisfaction, nor do they necessarily improve the world as a whole.

The Oxford Dictionary says that fulfilling one's self means developing one's gifts to the full. In a fulfilling career your needs are met and your gifts are shared with others. Fulfilled means that who you are connects with what you do, and that the inner you has found its place in the outer world.

I believe that women can lead the way in creating fulfilling work, and by doing this, can lead the way to creating a better planet.

Am I being too simplistic to think that a...

Woman more fulfilled with career → Greater happiness
→ Positively affecting those she influences → Circle of fulfillment and happiness expands

Recall what it's like to be around someone who's genuinely positive and upbeat when you aren't feeling that way. Did you go away feeling uplifted? Yes, and that's what I'm talking about. It's an

epidemic of good health. Instead of spreading a virus, we can spread the experience of joy, purpose, and fulfillment.

But why women? Why should women be the leaders in creating fulfilling work that leads to a better world for all of us?

First, we are less tied to the traditional ways of working than men, so we are more likely to try something truly new. We haven't been the ones leading the corporations. We haven't led the government. We haven't led the universities. We certainly haven't led the army. We are less invested in keeping things the way they are.

Second, just as we haven't led in traditional workplaces, we have benefited from them less. And people who have less to lose usually are freer to create change.

In the United States, after years of equal employment laws and lawsuits, a woman now earns just seventy-seven cents for every dollar that her male counterpart earns.² But it's not just money that motivates us. A 2006 survey shows that women are leaving corporate jobs for entrepreneurship at two times the rate of men.³ Why? Some say it's because corporate life is not amenable to balancing work and home. But the top reason executive-level women left was to take risks

² Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2005

³ Cheskin Research, 2006

and to test their personal limits.⁴ In other words, women leave to grow.

Finally, women can lead the way to fulfilling work because we tend to be more aware of our feelings and more likely to value them than men. It's this "feeling" dimension that adds meaning to many of our lives, and it's generally been missing from the workplace. Whose idea was it that "feelings" have no place in a productive work situation? Well, most likely it wasn't a woman's.

As girls, we were socialized to talk about our feelings and about relationships. Having this permission means we are often quicker on the uptake than a man is to know that a particular job is untenable for us—that we don't *feel* good about it. And we are also quicker to know when something at the workplace needs to change. If we are bold and willing to stand up against the status quo, we can try to change how our workplace works. If that's not right, we can change our workplace altogether.

Many women are more willing to admit that something in the world these days just doesn't "feel right." We don't need much more than that to support a change. We don't need the studies or the statistics. We are willing to do something new because it "feels like the right thing to do."

⁴ Survey by Korn/Ferry International, Columbia Business School, and Duran Group, 2001

How This Book Can Lead to Fulfilling Work

This book is a “how-to” guide that reveals:

- Career myths that make you feel crazy if you believe them
- How to know whether your angst comes from being in the wrong career, or something else
- How to begin or further your discovery of your heart’s purpose: who you are
- How to assess your current career in light of your heart’s purpose
- How to change careers, if that’s what you decide, in the way that is right for you—gradually and gracefully or with emergency precision
- How to use the inner secrets of change to guide your career changes

The book provides many exercises to help you achieve these goals. You can complete the exercises as you go, or you might want to read the book straight through and return to the exercises after finishing. It’s up to you.

Who Are You?

I wrote this book for anyone who works and who cares about making the most of her career. You might be a:

- College student facing her first career
- Mom who works for her family and is re-entering the outside work force
- Baby Boomer burnt to a crisp with a job she has outgrown
- Senior wanting to pass on her wisdom and
- Anywhere in between

Anyone can read this book and benefit from it. But if you are a guy, here's one warning: I had to learn what seemed like hundreds of sports and war metaphors in order to function in the corporate world (some of which I like, such as "my bad"). The metaphors you'll read in this book are my revenge.