

happy

Cassandra Gaisford

work

Job hunting for mid-lifers

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ADVANCE PRAISE

Mid-life is a crucial point in the life cycle. Childhood, the warrior and power decades are past. Mid-life is an invitation to resolve the complexes not yet made conscious and move forward into the so happy years of creativity and health, of full abundance.

Max Gimblett

Visual Artist

Guides are necessary throughout mid-life, this book is a guide. Teachers to face and touch are guides. Mid-life will not be rushed. Everybody experiences mid-life. It is a sacred journey, a sacred path, the Way.

I know Cassandra as a fellow spirit and friend. She was with me on the island of Maui participating in my sumi ink workshops. I have experienced with her some of her mid-life passages. I trust her, respect her, and understand that her book is invaluable.

I urge you to utilise this book as an inspirational tool and carry it as a treasure. Persevere with your mid-life, bring into consciousness your childhood dreams, as they will become your living realities.

Happy@work: Job hunting for mid-lifers is brimming with passion, ideas and inspiration as Cassandra Gaisford walks her talk in living her purpose and showing the way for others wanting to do the same. Given that we spend so much of our lives working, it is vital that we do what we have energy and passion for. We are living and working longer so it is very important that we align what we do with our deeper sense of calling and what gives us meaning and purpose.

Jasbinder Singh

*Business
Psychologist,
Executive Coach
and Author of Get
your Groove Back*

I am delighted to say that this book is a wonderful compendium for anyone wishing to design their future as they cull the best of their present and past and shape their new destiny. Sometimes we are forced into taking stock and reviewing our careers and lives. We may also do it by choice, many times, along our life path. And mid-life is a significant time and critical turning point for many.

Happy@work: Job hunting for mid-lifers is a positive and enabling companion and offers much. It encourages us to identify our passion and interests, to live from our core values and use our signature strengths creatively. It highlights that it's never too late to make changes, to get on the path of true fulfilment and make a living.

Dig into this book and let Cassandra be your guide, inspiration and coach as she calls forth your creativity and gives practical steps to take you where you need to go next. Step into this ride joyfully and start creating the future today!

Work. It's how we spend our lives. But how many of us are spending that time wisely and happily? That's the million dollar question this book sets out to answer.

Work – at it finest – should be a wonderful form of self-expression. It was Confucius who said that once you do what you love, you'll never work again. What a great way to approach a working life. Perhaps it is the only way.

And yet for far too many of us work is just the opposite. A drudgery which drains us of energy and self-esteem. Horizons shrink and the joy of living itself seems to seep away affecting not just our hours on the job, but our lives outside of work also.

In this book, Cassandra Gaisford provides lots of insights and strategies to help many more of us reach our potential and utilise our talents.

We have known Cassandra over a number of years and have always been impressed by her boundless enthusiasm for life as it might be lived. She paints, she writes novels, she is a noted public speaker and human resources consultant.

Cassandra's entire life has been dedicated to improving the lot of the average working person by imbuing them with the conviction that work should be a fulfilling and creative endeavour aligned with our talents and values.

Is this dreaming? Read on and decide for yourself. Perhaps this book will help you to turn your dreams of a happy working life into a fulfilling reality.

**Mike Fitzsimons
and Nigel Beckford**

*Authors of You
Don't Make a Big
Leap Without a
Gulp*

“PERSEVERE WITH YOUR MID-LIFE,
BRING INTO CONSCIOUSNESS YOUR CHILDHOOD
DREAMS, AS THEY WILL BECOME YOUR
LIVING REALITIES.”

MAX GIMBLETT, VISUAL ARTIST

INTRODUCTION

“ ALL WE NEED TO
MAKE US REALLY HAPPY
IS SOMETHING TO BE
ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT. ”

– CHARLES KINGSLEY, NOVELIST

- Do you feel trapped in a job that pays the bills but fails to give you a buzz?
- Do you yearn for something more from your work and your life but can't see any alternative options?
- Have you ever been told it is unrealistic to expect job satisfaction?
- Do you feel uninspired, lost and uncertain about what you can offer and how you might move forward?
- Deep down do you feel you're too old to change, or trapped by your current circumstances?

Well, you're not alone! Over 43% of people, that's nearly half of the working population, suffer from career dissatisfaction. Many people stay stuck in jobs that don't fulfil them because they can't see any better options or don't know how to deal with obstacles preventing them from finding a job which would make them happy. Others lack the confidence and energy to make a positive change.

Most people have never sat down and thought consciously about their career choices. They often say they “*just fell into it.*” Others made their choices based on other people's expectations. Hannah said she chose nursing to get away from her family. John, a dissatisfied lawyer, said he chose law because his father was a lawyer. Mary, an unhappy accountant, chose her career because

she was good with numbers. Alex chose a career in the IT industry because that was where all the jobs were. He hates it. “*Every day I go to work, grit my teeth and bear it,*” he says.

Perhaps you can relate to some of these stories. Maybe you have ones of your own. Whatever the reason for your unhappiness the great news is that where there's a problem there is a cure!

THERE IS A CURE

What makes you spark? What inspires you? What gives you so much satisfaction that you would do it for free? What are you passionate about and how can you translate this into a rewarding career? These are questions many people changing careers never ask. The answers lie at the heart of the cure.

Many mid-lifers have had years of conditioning during which they were told that work was something to be endured not enjoyed. During The Great Depression of the 1930s people considered themselves lucky to have a job. School reinforced this scarcity mentality by channeling people into a limited range of gender specific roles. But times have changed. Social, technological and economic changes have lead to greater opportunities for people. Gone are the days of a 'job for life' and the times when men and women were steered into a narrow range of career paths. People's expectations about the role work should play in their life has changed too. Now more than ever increasing numbers of people are seeking satisfaction and fulfilment from their work. Even the word 'career' is going through a process of reinvention. What does the word career mean to you? 'Vocation, calling, heart's desire, who I am, life purpose' are words many happy people use to describe their careers.

Doing what you love and doing it well is also a cure during economic downturns. There will always be a demand for people who are good at what they do and who do it well. The key to recession proofing your career and surviving and thriving in the face of uncertainty is knowing how to do what you love and still pay the bills. This book will show you how.

YOUR LIFE IS WAITING

One of my clients told me, “*I’ve spent 40 years looking out of the window wishing I was somewhere else.*” Now that’s not only depressing but it’s also such a huge waste of talent and precious time. Life is too short to spend days, weeks and years in a job that robs you of energy, zest and enthusiasm. We spend over 3,000 hours a year at work, and when we’re not at work we’re thinking about it. Career-related issues are one of the major sources of stress for people today. Left unresolved career unhappiness can spill over into other areas of your life, infecting your relationships with colleagues, family and loved ones.

The key to beating the job blues and making effective career decisions begins inside out. First you need to determine who you are, who you want to be and what you want to contribute to the world. In working this out there is no better place to start than working out what sets your heart on fire.

GET THE EDGE – PURSUE YOUR PASSION NOT YOUR PENSION

To succeed and be happy in life you have to be passionate about what you do. As author Neale Walsh said, “*Passion is the fire that drives us to express who we really are. Never deny passion, for that is to deny who you are and who you truly want to be.*”

Passion is about zest, enthusiasm and joy. It is about following your heart’s desire.

Passion gives people the energy, enthusiasm and commitment needed to succeed. Passion provides the clues to your natural knacks and talents, and helps you discover who you are and what makes you tick.

Following your passion might feel strange to you. For years you may have ignored the important role of your wants, desires, interests and aspirations. But work is a major source of self-identity and it’s hard to succeed at anything unless it feeds you as a person and allows you to contribute to the things you feel are important.

When you discover and tap into your passion you will find a huge source of potential that seems to be fearless and to know no bounds. Pursuing your passion is profitable on many levels. Firstly, when you do what you love, this is most likely where your true talent lies, so you’ll stand out in your field. Secondly passion can’t be faked – you’re instantly more credible. Thirdly, you’ll be more enthusiastic about your pursuits – you’ll have more energy and tenacity to overcome obstacles, and more drive and determination to make things happen.

When you do what you care most about and believe in with passion, your work will not be something that you endure but something that you enjoy. More importantly, work will become a vehicle for self-expression and it will give you the edge you need to stand out from the crowd.

PASSION@WORK

Thousands of people have chosen careers, businesses and companies they want to work for on the basis of their passion, and achieved huge success. Joe Rubino reinvented his own life when he left a lucrative dental practice after 16 years to pursue his passion for coaching excellence in others. It worked for him: he’s now an internationally recognised personal-development trainer, with best-selling books available in 14 languages in 22 countries.

English entrepreneur Richard Branson, and New Zealanders Melissa Clarke Renolds and Eric Watson, are passionate about creating new businesses and have made millions of dollars in the process. They started with very little cash but loads of passion!

Working with passion is a win-win employment outcome. Everyday hopeful job seekers passionate about movie-making beat a path to filmmaker Peter Jackson's door. Passionate employers like Peter win the war for talent, and talented employees get to work for companies who share and nurture their passion. So if you want to get the edge and discover your dream job – pursue your passion not your pension.

FINDING YOUR DREAM JOB

When it comes to finding the job of your dreams, the key lies in increasing your level of self- and career-awareness. This means not only increasing your knowledge of who you are and what your key non-negotiable criteria for job satisfaction are but also how your next move will impact on the realisation of your longer-term career and life goals.

Happy@work: Job hunting for mid-lifers addresses what you can do right now to find a job that will make you happy. It will increase your awareness of your personal satisfactors, and how they transfer into career options you'll enjoy. It will help you to think outside the square, dream and visualise your preferred future and plan an effective strategy to get you from where you are now to where you want to be. It will challenge, encourage and coach you to pursue your dreams and the life that you deserve.

This book is unique from other books which help people change careers because it takes a holistic approach. I'll help you tap into your intuition, boost your confidence, strengthen your self-esteem, manage stress and achieve the work-life balance that so many mature workers yearn for.

My hope is that your success will inspire others to have the courage and conviction to believe that happiness at work is something anyone can pursue – whatever their age and stage in life.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Happy@work: Job hunting for mid-lifers takes the stress out of changing careers by tapping into the power of creativity. Right from the start we'll stretch your awareness of what you think is possible. This book will help you make informed career choices that allow you to be true to yourself and that stand the test of time. It provides a systematic, structured and inspirational way to facilitate both self- and career-awareness, and to help you have faith in yourself and confidence in your decisions. The key components of determining what you want to do and what others will pay you to do are presented in bite-sized portions that make it much easier to assimilate. Journal exercises, atmospheric photographs and dozens of inspiring quotations will help feed your desire for a new, improved life.

Throughout this book I will encourage you to make positive changes in your life, step by step, by applying the strategies discussed. We've created plenty of space for you to write and apply the tools and techniques I've designed especially for you. My aim is to make *Happy@work: Job hunting for mid-lifers* as interactive as possible by combining a minimum of theory with a maximum of practical tools and techniques that you can apply to your own personal situation. I hope that this book will serve as your 'virtual coach' – encouraging and challenging you and providing new insights that allow you to make huge advances in your life.

There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to work with *Happy@work: Job hunting for mid-lifers*. It is a very flexible tool – the only requirement is that you use it in a way that meets your needs. For

example, you may wish to work through the book and exercises sequentially. Alternatively, you may wish to work intuitively and complete the exercises in an ad hoc fashion.

Whilst it is recommended that the chapters and the exercises are worked through in the order they appear, each chapter can be read independently. You may wish to read a chapter each week, fortnight or month. Or you may wish to use your intuition and select a page at random. The strategies presented are not exhaustive – largely due to space restrictions – but also because too many words can be overwhelming. Less really is more!

The use of web links throughout the book and the supplementary resources included in the appendix will help encourage further moments of insight, inspiration and clarity about the career path that's right for you.

To gain even more benefit from *Happy@work: Job hunting for mid-lifers* I recommend that you buddy up with friends who are facing similar issues and establish your own 'Happy@work' support group. In this way you can coach each other and maximise your own learning and success in the process.

THE CAREER PLANNING PROCESS – DEFINING YOUR NICHE

For many people, the prospect of sitting down and planning their careers is simply too overwhelming. Over the years I have helped thousands of people to find their dream jobs. Prior to coaching the majority of my clients have said, “*I could do anything I wanted if I only knew what it was!*” Working out the ‘what’ often begins with discovering the ‘why.’ Your answers will provide the reasons and motivating forces which drive career decisions.

The key to your career success also lies in being clear about the skills and talents you

bring to the marketplace, having the market awareness to know what others will pay you to do and knowing how to bundle together your transferrable skills and experiences.

Happy@work: Job hunting for mid-lifers will guide you through the process of identifying your unique PassionPoint – the intersection of your favourite skills, interests, career and life drivers and market forces. It will do this in a logical, step-by-step way. To make each step clear, the book is divided into seven sections. Let's briefly look at what each section and chapter in this book will cover:

PART ONE: THE CALL FOR CHANGE

There has never been a better time for people in their middle years to make a change. Exercises in this section will help you gain a positive expectation by increasing your awareness and understanding of global changes in the world of work. This will allow you to harness the forces at work prompting and enabling you to reinvent your career and your life and use these successfully as you prepare to change.

Chapter One, “Unhappiness@work,” will help you identify the key causes of your job dissatisfaction. Where there is a problem there is a cure. We will turn negatives into positives by adopting a solutions-focused approach to resolving current concerns. This chapter will help you gain greater clarity about what you want to change and how to direct your energies positively toward your preferred future. You will gain greater insight into your personal passions, and criteria for job satisfaction. Knowing these things will help you begin the process of creating your dream role.

Chapter Two, “The Gift of Longevity,” will highlight the opportunities that demographic and social shifts have created for mature employees. Research suggests that many mid-lifers have a negative expectancy about their ability to

find meaningful work or new employment. Activities in this chapter will help strengthen your self-belief and confidence, and overcome any lingering doubts about re-inventing your life at your age and life stage. Emphasising age as an asset will help encourage you and enable you to target your job hunting activities positively.

Preparing for change is an essential, and often neglected, part of effective career transitions. Chapter Three, “Stress Less,” will help you develop effective strategies to manage any stress you may already be experiencing. It will also provide you with some useful tools to help you build resilience throughout the change process. Building a good, stable foundation is an important component of successful career transitions.

Chapter Four, “It All Begins with an Idea,” highlights the role of creativity in defining the work you want to do. Traditional career paths are fast disappearing and the jobs of the future have yet to be invented. This chapter will introduce you to some techniques that will help you gain greater clarity about what inspires you. This will help you clarify what you want to do and to begin the process of creating the job of your dreams.

PART TWO: WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY

So many people I coach have no idea what makes them happy. This section will increase your self-awareness and help you identify your ingredients for career happiness and success.

Finding a job you love is impossible without enthusiasm, zest, inspiration and the deep satisfaction that comes from doing something that delivers you some kind of buzz. Chapter Five, “Pursue Your Passion Not Your Pension,” will help you continue the process of discovering your own passion and career options. I will share with you case studies of people and organisations who have achieved success by doing something they believe deeply in and have a talent for.

Tapping into your passion will help you discover untapped gifts and talents. It will also help you to unleash latent potential.

Chapter Six, “Get the Edge, Find Your Purpose,” shows you how to harness the motivating force that comes when you are living and following your life purpose. Clarifying the things that give your life meaning and purpose will help you tap into latent ambitions and desires, and to identify career options that will be deeply fulfilling. This chapter will also help you to make sense of past and current experiences and use these to clarify the work you were born to do.

Chapter Seven, “Prioritising What’s Important,” will emphasise the importance of finding work which aligns with your values. Many people don’t even know what their values or needs are. If you are one of these people the exercises in this chapter will help you identify and prioritise your most important career values and apply them to career decision-making.

Chapter Eight, “Looking for the Strengths that Lurk Within,” will help you tap into your hidden potential and gain greater awareness of the wealth of skills and abilities that you already possess and how they transfer into new and varied careers. As one of my clients who hated her job told me, *“I’m good at what I do, but does anybody ask me if I enjoy it?”* Importantly, this chapter will also help you to identify your favourite skills and the activities that bring you joy.

Many people think that unless they have a qualification they don’t have any skills. Chapter Nine, “Valuing Natural Knacks and Talents,” will build on the previous chapter and help you market your transferrable, or ‘portable,’ skills. Strategies in this chapter will also help you to get over the skills gap.

Chapter Ten, “Inspiration Used to Carve Out an Opportunity,” will highlight the role your deepest interests have in finding a career you will love.

PART THREE: YOUR BEST-FIT CAREER

In this section I will show you how to generate career options and evaluate these to make sure career satisfaction and success are maximised.

Chapter Eleven, “Your Best-fit Career,” will help you to integrate the insights gained from the previous chapters and apply these learnings to the process of defining your unique PassionPoint and generating career options for you to explore.

Chapter Twelve, “Evaluating Options,” will build on the previous chapter and introduce you to a variety of decision-making techniques including logical analysis, emotional intelligence and intuition. Combining logic with emotion will help maximise your ability to choose the right career for you. It will also help you to adopt a creative approach to solve current levels of dissatisfaction.

In Chapter Thirteen, “Love It, Don’t Leave It,” we will also look at tips and strategies to help you realign your passions within the context of your current situation whilst preparing for your preferred future.

Lack of work-life balance is a major cause of unhappiness with work and life, and causes many people to leave jobs they love. If lack of happiness is causing your job blues Chapter Fourteen, “Maintain the Balance,” will help you identify ways to get your work and life back on track. It will also help you ensure you pick the right job for you in the future.

Increasing numbers of people have found creating their own business is the most effective way to gain happiness@work. Chapter Fifteen, “Employ Yourself,” will introduce some tips and helpful resources to get you started.

PART FOUR: GOING FOR IT!

In this section we’ll concentrate on strategies to help you take concrete action to achieve your goals and strategies to ensure your success.

Chapter Sixteen, “Go with the Flow,” will highlight the guiding role of intuitive intelligence in maintaining a positive outlook and determining the right steps to take.

Failing to plan is planning to fail. Many people don’t know how to set effective, strategic goals. Chapter Seventeen, “Planning for Success,” will teach you some powerful goal-setting techniques to maximise your motivation, beat procrastination, create a plan of success and overcome any barriers. This chapter will emphasise the importance of inspiration, discipline and a structured approach to achieving your goals.

Chapter Eighteen, “Finding the Courage to Take a Leap,” will help you let desire not fear propel you forward. It will help you re-confirm why following the path with heart is the best move you’ll ever make.

Chapter Nineteen “Boosting Confidence and Self-Esteem” will share powerful but simple strategies to help you develop a strong sense of self, inner confidence and self-belief.

PART FIVE: SELF-MARKETING

In this section I will also share with you some powerful strategies to help you market yourself effectively, placing a special emphasis on the importance of ‘blowing your own trumpet’ and creating some ‘positive spin’ in achieving your goals.

Chapter Twenty, “When Passions Collide,” will highlight the powerful role of The Law of Attraction and synchronicity when hunting for your dream job.

Chapter Twenty-one, “Network Your Way to Success,” will help you tap into the hidden job market. It will teach you the difference between active and passive job search strategies and how to get the job you want the successful way.

Having identified the job you want Chapter Twenty-two “Tailoring your CV,” will show you how to present your skill set in the best light. Using creative, but honest techniques will help you create a winning CV that will help prospective employers say “yes.”

Chapter Twenty-three, “Interviewing for Success,” shows you how to maintain a calm, confident and professional image during the interview stage. It emphasises the importance of sound planning and provides you with sample questions, and an effective method of structuring your responses.

“WHAT IS NECESSARY TO CHANGE A PERSON IS TO CHANGE HIS AWARENESS OF HIMSELF.”

ABRAHAM MASLOW, PSYCHOLOGIST

PART SIX: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

In this section of the book I'll help you develop strategies to maximise your success, maintain motivation, beat procrastination and overcome any barriers, such as money worries and fear of failing that may stand in the way of your success.

In Chapter Twenty-four, “Overcoming Obstacles,” I will help you identify any obstacles that may stand between you and your goals, and develop a plan of action to overcome them.

Unfortunately not all employers are enlightened about the value of maturity and life experience. Chapter Twenty-five, “Turning Age into an Asset,” will help you counteract any ageism you may encounter as you search for your next role.

Chapter Twenty-six, “Employment Strategies for Mature Job Seekers,” will introduce you to job creation and self-promotion activities tailored to mature job seekers.

Challenge your fears in Chapter Twenty-seven, and set yourself free. I'll show you how!

Lack of money is a common obstacle but it doesn't have to be a barrier to career happiness. In Chapter Twenty-eight, “Finance Your Career,” I'll share with you some simple and effective tips to enable your career change.

Chapter Twenty-nine, “Staying on Track,” I'll help you tap into strategies to maintain your focus and the motivation to follow through on your goals.

Chapter Thirty, “Transitions Are a Time of Renewal,” will help you identify where you are in the change cycle. Knowing this will help you build greater understanding of some of the symptoms you may be experiencing as you move toward your preferred future, and help you maintain a hopeful expectancy. This chapter will also remind you of techniques to manage change induced stress.

PART SEVEN: WRAPPING IT ALL UP

Finally in the last section I'll help you integrate all the insights you've gained from the previous sections. I'll show you how to create your Happy@work profile, summarise your unique PassionPoint and create a compelling vision for the future. These exercises will help you stay on track, maintain motivation and successfully manage your career in the future.

“ NO MATTER WHAT YOU DESIRE, BE IT SPIRITUAL GROWTH OR A FACE-LIFT, AT SOME POINT IT IS GOING TO REQUIRE SOME TIME FROM YOU TO MAKE IT HAPPEN. AND THE ONLY WAY YOU ARE GOING TO FIND THAT TIME IS TO DECIDE THAT YOUR DREAM IS IMPORTANT – THAT IT IS VALUABLE. ”

SONIA CHOQUETTE, AUTHOR



To really benefit from this book think of it as your ‘virtual’ coach – try the action tasks, quizzes and additional tools and resources that you will find in all the chapters. Throughout this book you will see symbols and dedicated spaces that indicate where you can get more involved.

These action tasks are designed to facilitate greater insight and to help you integrate new learnings. Resist the urge not to do them, or to just process them in your head. We learn best by doing and research has proven time and time again that the act of writing deepens your knowledge and learning. Writing down your insights is the area where people such as Motivational Guru Tony Robbins says that the winners part from the losers because the losers always find a reason not to write things down. Harsh but perhaps true!



You will also come across plenty of action questions. Open-ended questions are great thought provokers. Your answers to these questions will help you gently challenge current assumptions and gain greater clarity about your goals and desires.

PASSION JOURNAL

In addition to writing in this book, you may like to create a passion journal. This dedicated passion journal will provide you with more space to complete the action tasks.

The passion journal is also a great place to store sources of inspiration to support you through the career planning and change process. Check out Chapter Five, “Pursue Your Passion Not Your Pension,” for some tips to help you create your own inspirational passion journal.

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES

Sometimes all it takes is the slightest encouragement – one simple inspirational sentence – to launch oneself into a new and more satisfying orbit. I have included plenty of inspiration throughout the book to help you do just that!

SURF THE NET



Throughout the book I have included a selection of my e-resources. These have been carefully selected to encourage further insight and to enable you to tap into regularly updated resources, including those created by me just for you.

THE CATALYST FOR WRITING

Someone asked me recently: “*What was the catalyst for writing this particular book?*”

At the same time I received this email: “*I’m sure your book will be a fantastic success Cass – I was talking to a lady when I was at work today and she said no one would employ her husband because he was 55 had been in the same job for 25 years until he was made redundant – and said he had no skills employers would want! Ummm what does one say to comments like that So you definitely have market out there.*”

This man’s experience is one of the main reasons I wrote *Happy@work: Job hunting for mid-lifers*. As a career coach helping people reclaim their lives after redundancy, or rebuild self-esteem after bullying or bounce back from the depression of spirit that staying in the wrong job can create, I felt strongly that people need more hope and practical ways to reclaim their lives.

Here is what I actually emailed back to my friend: “*Ohhh that is so sad – so sad because it is not true. That man has lots and lots of skills – he just doesn’t know what they are. That poor man and his wife must be suffering so... I hate*

“ WE ASK OURSELVES,
WHO AM I TO BE BRILLIANT,
SUCCESSFUL, TALENTED
AND FABULOUS? ACTUALLY,
WHO ARE YOU NOT TO BE?
YOUR PLAYING SMALL DOESN’T
SERVE THE WORLD. ”

NELSON MANDELA, POLITICAL LEADER

hearing that... that is why I am writing this book to show it doesn't have to be this way.”

GETTING STARTED

Change can be difficult. It takes considerable energy and determination. We tend to be creatures of habit – to want guarantees and certainty before stepping forth into the unknown. Have faith in yourself and remember you are not starting at the beginning – you already have a wealth of skills and knowledge, and life experience to draw upon as you re-invent yourself and rebuild your career. Life would be boring if you knew all the answers – just as Christmas would be dull if you already knew what lay under the tree. The possibilities are endless – now more than ever you can be, do and have nearly anything you desire. The key is to stay flexible and have fun – then re-inventing your career and your life can be a truly enlightening experience. Enjoy the journey and allow your passion to guide, motivate and inspire you.

Increasing your self-awareness is a crucial first step in moving toward the career of your dreams. Take the time to complete the quick self-assessment quiz on the following page to evaluate where you are now.



SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZ

| | | | | | |
|--|-----|----|---|-----|----|
| 1. I know where I want to be in 5-10 years' time | Yes | No | 12. I have a strong level of self-awareness | Yes | No |
| 2. I have a clear idea of what gives my life meaning and purpose | Yes | No | 13. I am in tune with my body barometer and recognise the signs my body gives me in response to stressful or passionate events | Yes | No |
| 3. I know what I am personally passionate about | Yes | No | 14. I can quickly and easily name three of my weaknesses, bad habits or behaviours that get on other people's nerves | Yes | No |
| 4. I can quickly identify the three things on which I spend the most time in a week – work, kids, love, spirituality, health, relaxation, money, altruism, friendships | Yes | No | 15. I am clear about the things that hold me back and have developed a strategy to minimise these weaknesses | Yes | No |
| 5. I can clearly identify my driving interests | Yes | No | 16. I can quickly name three activities that always relax and refresh me | Yes | No |
| 6. I can clearly define my personal values | Yes | No | 17. I am clear about my preferred way of making decisions | Yes | No |
| 7. I know how my values apply to a variety of jobs and organisations | Yes | No | 18. At any point in time I can readily name my emotions, and I use these to guide my decisions where appropriate | Yes | No |
| 8. I know what my skills and talents are | Yes | No | 19. I am aware of how I may be influenced by the opinions of other people and take care to surround myself with positive influences | Yes | No |
| 9. I know what skills I enjoy using and that give me a buzz | Yes | No | 20. I listen to my inner voice and act on my intuition | Yes | No |
| 10. I know how my skills and passions can transfer into different careers | Yes | No | 21. I know how to use my strengths to minimise my weaknesses | Yes | No |
| 11. I know who I am and what makes me tick | Yes | No | 22. Other: | Yes | No |

If you answered "yes" to 14 or more of these statements you have a great level of self-awareness and are really clear about what drives your career decisions.

If you answered "yes" to more than six but less than 14 of these statements, you are less aware of what drives your career decisions and would benefit from gaining more self-awareness about your own strengths and motivating forces.

If you answered "yes" to five or less of these statements a more focused effort to build awareness in those areas you answered "no" to will really help you build confidence and identify career options that you will enjoy and be good at. Once you are clear about the forces that drive your decisions, finding a job that you like is easy. It won't happen overnight but it will happen! But first you need to get clear about what your perfect job would look like.

“UNLESS WE
TRY TO DO
SOMETHING
BEYOND WHAT
WE HAVE
ALREADY
MASTERED
WE CANNOT
GROW.”

RONALD OSBORN, AUTHOR



PART ONE: THE CALL FOR CHANGE

Increased irritability, boredom, fatigue, feelings of depression and other joyless experiences are classic signs that it's time to change. But many mid-lifers soldier on, staying stuck in a role they've outgrown or stuck in a rut because they don't know how to make a change for the better.

It takes energy and effort, optimism and feelings of hope and excitement to summon up the power to make a change for the better. It also takes a large dose of self-awareness and an ability to think laterally. These things can feel in short supply when you're stuck in the comfort rut or so stressed out you can't see the wood for the trees. The exercises in this section will begin the process of helping you:

- Tune into the signs that it's time to change
- Identify the key causes of job dissatisfaction and begin the process of identifying a cure
- Gain greater clarity about what you want to change and how to direct your energies positively toward your preferred future
- Strengthen your creative thinking skills
- Build hope and confirm there's no better time for mid-lifers to change careers.

“ A HUMAN
BEING IS NOT
ONE IN PURSUIT
OF HAPPINESS
BUT RATHER IN
SEARCH OF A
REASON TO BE
HAPPY.”

VIKTOR FRANKL,
PSYCHOLOGIST
AND AUTHOR



UNHAPPINESS @WORK

One hundred percent of people we recently surveyed told us that it is reasonable to expect to be happy at work. Yet a staggering 39.3% admitted they were miserable. Many stayed stuck in roles that zapped their energy, confidence and self-esteem because they were afraid that there was nothing better out there for them to do.

Are you showing signs of job dissatisfaction? Did you bounce out of bed this morning excited to face the day ahead? Or did the thought of getting up and going to work make you wish you could stay snug in your bed?

If Monday mornings are a low point in your week, it may be a sign that it's time for a new career. Often you know what you want subconsciously before you know it consciously. While you may still be debating whether or not to stay at your job, your subconscious mind may have already decided it's time for you to move on. Perhaps, though, you are like so many of my clients who say, "I *could* do anything if I only knew what it was."

The exercises in this chapter and the chapters which follow will help take the stress out of making a change, confirm your best-fit career and give you the confidence to move toward your preferred future.

A good place to start is to use current dissatisfiers as signposts to your preferred future. Sometimes in life, as in photography, you need a negative to make a positive image of the life you want to capture. Confirming what's causing your job blues will help you get clear about your intentions, options and possibilities. Perhaps you are like many of my clients and wonder whether you, not your job, are the major cause of your unhappiness. Getting clear about who you are and what you need is an important step in confirming exactly which one needs to change.

“ TO HAVE A PATH OF
KNOWLEDGE, A PATH WITH
HEART MAKES FOR A JOYFUL JOURNEY AND
IS THE ONLY CONCEIVABLE WAY TO LIVE. WE
MUST THEN THINK CAREFULLY
ABOUT OUR PATHS BEFORE WE SET OUT ON
THEM FOR BY THE TIME A PERSON DISCOVERS
THAT HIS PATH ‘HAS NO HEART,’ THE PATH IS
READY TO KILL HIM. AT THAT POINT FEW OF
US HAVE THE COURAGE TO ABANDON THE
PATH, LETHAL AS IT MAY BE, BECAUSE
WE HAVE INVESTED SO MUCH IN IT, AND TO
CHOOSE A NEW PATH SEEMS SO DANGEROUS,
EVEN IRRESPONSIBLE. AND SO WE CONTINUE
DUTIFULLY, IF JOYLESSLY ALONG. ”

DON JUAN

LOOK FOR THE TELL-TALE SIGNS

Most people who want to quit behave in ways that are noticeably different than employees who are satisfied with their jobs. Try the following Ready to Quit Quiz to see how many of these ‘quitting signs’ are true for you. For each statement, note whether it is something you never, sometimes or often experience. (If a statement doesn’t fit, feel free to adapt it to your situation or skip it.) If you are unemployed related this to your last job.



THE READY TO QUIT QUIZ

- 1) I find it hard to get out of bed in the morning.
- 2) I’m often late for work.
- 3) Once I arrive at work, it takes me a while to actually get started working.
- 4) I sit at my desk and daydream.
- 5) I have less patience with customers or co-workers than I used to.
- 6) I spend time at work doing personal tasks.
- 7) I look at job websites on the Internet when I’m at work.
- 8) I get impatient with rules and red tape at work.
- 9) I take longer breaks than I should.
- 10) When I have to phone people as part of my job I spend more time chatting than I need to.
- 11) I feel tired during the workday.
- 12) I don’t bother mentioning concerns to the boss because it’s usually a waste of time.
- 13) If I leave the office during the day, I take my time getting back to work.
- 14) I do the minimum amount of work required.
- 15) I check the time throughout the day to see how close to quitting time it is.
- 16) I feel bored at work.
- 17) I ‘kill time’ during the day by chatting with co-workers or doing other non-essential tasks.
- 18) I schedule medical and other personal appointments during working hours.
- 19) I start getting ready to leave work before quitting time.
- 20) I am out the door as soon as it is quitting time.
- 21) I spend a lot of time complaining about what’s not going right at work.
- 22) On the weekends I look at the job classifieds or surf job websites on the Internet.
- 23) I have called in sick when I could actually have worked.
- 24) I complain to my friends about my job.
- 25) I have trouble sleeping on Sunday nights because I’m thinking about having to go back to work.
- 26) When I’m on holidays I dread going back to work.

Give yourself 0 points for each *Never* answer, 1 point for each *Sometimes* answer and 2 points for each *Often* answer then use the following scores as a starting point to measure your level of job satisfaction.

0-10 points – Very satisfied

11-20 points – Somewhat satisfied

21-30 points – Somewhat dissatisfied

31-40 points – Very dissatisfied

41-52 points – Why are you still working there?

Before you find the cure to your job blues you first need to get clear about what’s causing the problem. The Dissatisfaction Quiz over the page will help.

DISSATISFACTION QUIZ



Perhaps you can identify with some of the common causes of dissatisfaction below. Tick the statements that are true for you. If you are unemployed, pinpointing the things you didn't like about your previous job/s can help you clarify what you need to be happy or to succeed in your next role. Your answers can also highlight which parts of this book will be most helpful to you.

| | |
|---|--|
| • I don't know what my skills are or what I am good at | • I'm not using the skills I enjoy |
| • I'm bored and my job lacks challenge – I can't see any opportunity for growth or advancement | • Lack of recognition – people don't value me and what I do |
| • The culture is very negative | • I don't get on with my co-workers |
| • I feel stuck and can't see a way to make any improvements | • I feel 'boxed' in and don't know how to get into something different |
| • I keep getting looked over for promotion | • I don't know what I want to do |
| • I don't know what makes me happy | • Only the bosses' ideas are listened to |
| • I'm not doing the things that really matter to me | • My job lacks security |
| • This job doesn't meet my values | • Very little about this job interests me |
| • My life feels out of balance | • I have lost my confidence |
| • The workload is too heavy | • I'm not achieving my potential |
| • My job pays the bills but my passions are left as a hobby | • I park the 'real me' at the door – the robotic me goes to work |
| • I have a growing sense – vague though it might be – that I could improve the quality of my life | • Personal issues are impacting on my enjoyment of work – these issues affect my focus, motivation, etc. |
| • I have very little autonomy and control over my work | • The work environment is not very attractive |
| • My work is not spiritually aligned to the things I believe in | • Lack of training and support makes it difficult to do my job well |
| • Office politics get me down | • People are not treated with respect |
| • My job and/or work environment is not fun | • I lack self-esteem |
| • People don't have pride in their work, and poor performance is often ignored | • My role lacks meaning and purpose – I don't feel that what I contribute makes a difference |
| • My wages are too low | • I don't get on with my boss |
| • The organisation is too bureaucratic – policies and procedures slow everything down | • Other: |

Scoring

0-6 Congratulations! Nothing really seems to be getting you down. Perhaps you are just looking for a new challenge. Read on for tips and strategies to help you move in a new direction.

6-18 If you answered "yes" to 6 or more of these statements you are moderately dissatisfied with the way things are going in your life. Develop specific actions for identifying and incorporating passion into your life.

18-38 You are suffering from severe dissatisfaction. You really do deserve to pursue a more satisfying alternative. Take immediate steps now to create positive changes in your work and life. In addition to applying the strategies in this book you may wish to solicit the support of a professional.