

CAREER LEAP ONLINE COURSE

Making it Work

Transcript

Ok. In the last lesson we talked about the first two tyrannies of progress - your inner dialogue and time. Now we are going to focus on the third - energy.

Your career leap takes work, and a lot of thinking. You need to use your brain's capacity wisely. I liken the thinking part of the brain (the pre-frontal cortex) to a battery. As you sleep it recharges, but as soon you get up in the morning and start doing work that requires you to think, analyse and process information, that battery starts to drain. So by the end of the day the battery is pretty low.

You use your brain wisely by focusing on the most energy-intensive tasks — for example, important phone calls or industry research — in the morning, when you are most alert. You also don't waste your brain's energy on things that don't matter, such as checking Facebook or getting a haircut, unless it's needed for that important job interview!

It's been suggested that during his time in the White House, Barack Obama owned only two types of suits. The logic? Why waste mental energy on choosing what to wear each day? Even if that story is fiction it's a great example of using your brain wisely!

A key tip is to not follow the fallacy of multi-tasking. Research shows the only thing that multi-tasking does is ensure you take longer to get your core task done. Turn off all electronic distractions so you are focused on one thing at a time.

There are even apps to help wean you off frivolous activity that you can't resist. Apps like Forrest, Freedom, AntiSocial, Cold Turkey and TrackTime all seek to help you be more productive.

I take this approach to work everyday, while also scheduling in time for exercise and 'down time', both of which are critical. When you are busy it can be hard to prioritise you, but your body needs time to rejuvenate to ensure it operates at peak performance.

If this sounds structured, it is! What I can tell you is it can shave hours off your work day. You'll be way more productive, and less likely to waste time and energy on irrelevant activities.

Another person I interviewed was Marc Alexander

He has made a number of career leaps, through transport, logistics, offshore commercial fishing, wine making and retail sales roles. His biggest and most recent leap was moving from being a music teacher and professional performer, to working in financial services.

When we spoke, he told me that the transition took approximately 30 months of constant, steady effort. He said it was hard as he needed to refocus himself from a sprint - his natural tendency - to a marathon.

Staying the course when the leap takes a long time is challenging. There were a number of key

CAREER LEAP ONLINE COURSE

Making it Work

things that helped Marc.

His advice? Be patient. Believe in yourself and your direction. Seek professional career advice. Take counsel from those already in your target area. He also stressed the importance of building relationships with connected and progressive leaders in your new industry, and ensuring you learn your target industry's language — read broadly and deeply he told me.

At this stage in your career leap journey you have already decided to leave your job to pursue your leap wholeheartedly. Great! That means your leap is your new job and you need to treat it as such. You have a destination and a plan. You know where you are going and have mapped out the key steps to get you there. You've packed your bags, but you are not yet ready to head to the airport to catch your flight.

There may still be more things you need to do before you leap, including meeting key people, researching, preparing for and going to job interviews, or perhaps building the infrastructure required to get your business off the ground.

Alternatively, you may have decided that you need to stay in your current job until you are a bit more prepared or you have landed a new role. If that's you then you need to make work work for you. Why? Because at this point you must continue to work effectively and deliver value to your employer. You can't let your current job suffer, along with your reputation, just because you've decided you want to do something else.

And so what you want to do is look for opportunities to create connection points, or areas of overlap, between your current work and where you want to leap. These connection points may be knowledge or skills you can acquire or people you can meet. You might get an opportunity to go on a course and build more skills that could help you when you transfer.

This is about you becoming the master of your job role. Be strategic about any extra work you take on or projects you get involved in. This is a busy time as you will be juggling your current work along with job interviews, meeting people, researching, developing and planning your exit — another reason why it's important you manage your dialogue, time and energy effectively.

Throughout the Career Reinvention Cycle, you'll need to use your negotiation skills, whether in relation to a new contract or working arrangement, a business agreement, or how and when you exit your current role. A failure to negotiate well can have a huge impact on how you land your leap. The three core elements here are readiness, relationships and resolve.

So firstly, you want to get ready. Successful negotiators know they can't just 'wing it' and hope for a good outcome. You are far more likely to achieve your goals if you're ready for the conversation. If you can maintain a calm demeanour and manage your feelings, your mind will be much better

CAREER LEAP ONLINE COURSE

Making it Work

equipped to handle the discussion. If, on the other hand, your pre-frontal cortex (the thinking part of the brain) is overpowered by 'fight or flight' triggers (that is, the emotional centre of the brain) or is simply tired, you'll be less able to make reasoned and well-considered decisions. Your wise one will have abandoned you!

When you are entering a new career, a negotiation can feel harder than it might have felt in the past. This is because you're dealing with a new range of uncertainties. You may be uncertain about how much money to ask for, as you don't know what the market pays. You may be worried that if you negotiate too hard, they'll withdraw the offer and you'll lose what may feel like your one chance to make the leap.

This starts with talking to people in the market and finding out what's standard practice and the going rates. There will be a low entry point and a high entry point. If you ask for too little, people will worry that you aren't any good at what you do. If you go too high, you may price yourself out of the running.

Find the sweet spot, which will usually be more than you feel comfortable asking for.

Think of yourself as a luxury product. Ensure your packaging matches your price. This isn't about expensive clothes and designer-wear; it's about being well groomed and professional and having all the behavioural attributes of the role you aspire to.

Secondly, it's about relationships. Long term ones.

Negotiating effectively is much easier if you have a good relationship with the person or persons involved. This isn't always feasible when you are leaping between careers. What you can do, though, is find out as much as possible about the people you will be negotiating with.

These insights will help you understand what they are likely to reject or support. Talk to people who know them or, even better, people who have negotiated with them before. Seek to understand their operating style and what they care about. Most importantly, know the currency that matters to them.

When you have these insights tucked into your knowledge back you can use them to present your pitch on the value you offer in terms of how it will help them succeed and satisfy their needs.

You are far more likely to be successful if you can show that what you are asking for will benefit the other person or the organisation, not just you. You want them to walk away from the process feeling as though they have done well. This means you need to be reasonable and not ask for something they can't give you.

Also, be wary of accepting the first offer that is put on the table. It is a strange quirk of human nature that if we accept the first offer made, the other person is likely to feel unsatisfied. They infer that because you accepted too readily they should have gone in harder or that they've been too

CAREER LEAP ONLINE COURSE

Making it Work

generous.

Learning to negotiate effectively will set you up for when you're dealing with potential employers, clients, customers and, of course, your current boss. It's likely you'll have to negotiate your exit from your current organisation - more on that coming up.

And lastly, resolve.

You may feel that because you are starting out in a new industry or role you have fewer chips to bargain with. From experience, you've actually got more than you think. It's easy to see why the person with positional authority or status — it may be the person doing the hiring, your first potential client or a critical supplier — tends to believe they have more power in the relationship. This feeling of power gives them strength, so they negotiate harder.

Feeling more powerful can impact how you negotiate too. The key word here is 'feeling'. When we feel more powerful, we are more powerful, and we get better outcomes when we negotiate.

The good news is we can all feel more powerful. Here are four practical shortcuts:
Practise and get comfortable with a confident physical stance. Think Amy Cuddy's power poses, which we talked about in an earlier lesson
Sit up straight. Your posture impacts your behaviour and how confident you feel.
Tap into your inner sense of power, which comes from knowing who you are and liking yourself.
Your work on your career identity will help with this.

Make sure you get enough sleep and exercise, and eat well, because feeling physically fit and mentally alert enables you to manage yourself better and feel equipped to get the best out of a negotiation. It's those tyrannies of progress again!

When you negotiate, be deliberate about what you want. It's often simply a case of 'Don't ask, don't get'. You'll never get something if you aren't first willing to ask for it. State your wants objectively by using statistics, data or objective measures that are hard for the other party to ignore.

Try also to remain emotionally detached from the outcome. This isn't easy, particularly if the issue really matters to you. However, the more attached you are to a predetermined outcome, the harder it will be to negotiate.

Negotiation involves give and take — it's not all about you. To be successful you need to be prepared to give things up or trade something to get something else that matters more to you. For example, if you are negotiating working conditions you may be willing to trade money for flexibility, or money for extra holidays.

CAREER LEAP ONLINE COURSE

Making it Work

It's easier to do this when you are clear about your boundaries and priorities. These are your non-negotiables, including the point at which you will walk away from the discussion.

Pause the video now to think about your boundaries by doing the activity in your workbook titled 'My Negotiation Boundaries'

As you negotiate your landing in your new destination, you also need to negotiate elements of your exit from your current working arrangement, if you have one. You may have to negotiate the date you will cease employment, as you may want to leave earlier or later than stipulated in your contract.

Be prepared to be let go on the spot. Some organisations bent on protecting their intellectual property may walk you out the door immediately, especially if you are moving to a competitor. This is done less frequently these days, but it's best to be prepared. Have everything sorted out beforehand so if they do decide to walk you out, all you need to do is go back to your desk and collect your personal items.

In managing your exit there are three cardinal moves to avoid - dummy spits, productivity sags and the dump-and-run. It's likely you've seen most of these play out before. Someone who doesn't handle the exit well, and they tell their boss, and everyone who will listen, how glad they are to be going and how they can't stand working there. The 10 minutes of pleasure you might get from telling it like it is, or telling someone exactly what you think of them, isn't worth it. It will come back to haunt you.

While you may not have enjoyed the role or liked your boss, it doesn't mean you won't need certain relationships later down the road. It's a small and very connected world. If you stop working productively it will impact how your colleagues see you. They will remember that you just 'faffed around' and wasted time after you resigned. They also won't appreciate the impact it has on them, as they'll likely have to pick up the work you don't finish.

Doing the dump-and-run won't paint you in a favourable light either. This is where you store up all the really challenging or problematic work, and then in your hand-over meeting, you gleefully handball it all to the person who is managing the role going forward or until a replacement is found. They will pretty peeved that you've passed them a load of crap that you should have at least tried to fix or resolve earlier.

It may not be possible to tie everything up with a neat bow, but wherever you can, be sure to resolve issues and bring work to the nearest possible point of completion. Never forget, managing your exit is as important as managing your entry into an organisation or new career.

Well done. This wraps up phase three. You've spent time getting yourself ready to leap, shaping

CAREER LEAP ONLINE COURSE

Making it Work

your new identity, building your positioning in the market, and working every day on the activities you need to do to ensure your leap lands well.

You've come such a long way. Yes, there's still more to be done. But the good news is take off isn't far away.

In the next phase, you'll really start to take off. But before you do, let's recap by completing the Career Checkpoint 8 page of your workbook. It is a good opportunity to reflect on your readiness to accelerate your leap.