

## **Career Help** **When and Why to Seek it**

By Clay Parsons

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So you are having career problems and think you might need some help. Before you do something reckless and decide to take a job flipping burgers, consider the following examples of issues a professional career counselor or coach can help you address.

If you are unemployed and have been looking for work for several months with limited results, it is possible that you are going about it the wrong way. For example, sitting at your computer sending e-mails and posting resumes rarely brings the desired results. Mass mailings are nearly always ineffective. It is also possible that something in how you present yourself, on paper or during an interview, is sabotaging your efforts. This can happen easily and may even be unconscious.

If you want to make a career change but are putting off doing anything, your lack of a focus may be holding you back. You cannot plan a course of action, and take action, until you know where you are headed. Once you have decided on specific career goals and objectives, and committed yourself to achieving them, many of the obstacles in your way will dissipate. This effort will also make your process much more efficient.

If you have found an attractive job opportunity but are unsure how to present yourself, a career professional can help you effectively communicate your marketable skills and excel in the most demanding interview. The right approach will also enhance your job search self esteem. Believing in yourself is essential to finding and getting the right job; a career counselor or coach can help give you that confidence.

If you are having problems with your co-workers or your boss it may be something that you are unconsciously doing or not doing – an old habit – that is the cause. Focusing on your job behavior with an experienced career counselor will help you identify those patterns and learn how to deal with them. Getting to know your career self better is one of the main benefits of career counseling. Knowing yourself better also has side benefits, like enhanced personal relationships.

If you are exhibiting signs of personal career burnout such as fatigue, insomnia and frustration, it may be that you need to consider a significant shift in your career direction. Working with a career professional to refocus your career path, make the necessary personal adjustments and implement your game plan will help you avoid the false starts and pitfalls that can trap a novice. Remember that making a major career change is serious business. It will take time and effort. Work with someone who knows how to do it.

If your advancement strategy is not working it may be that you and your company culture do not mix, you and your boss do not mix, or a long list of other possible obstacles are getting in your way. It may be something you are doing that brands you as an outsider or sends the wrong message to your co-workers. If you elect to take a passive approach to the problem you are treading water upstream from a waterfall. Eventually you will go over the edge. Talk with a career counselor experienced in organizational and workplace behavior. There is a cause and a solution.

These examples are just some of the many issues career development professionals can help their clients address. Despite the fact that everyone is different, and life and career issues are very complicated, there are always solutions to career problems. There are also opportunities around every corner. You just need to get moving!