



MARCH 2009

Issue No. 73

IN SIGHT *for Oregon Lawyers*

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

REINVENT, REJUVENATE, HAVE SOME FUN

You work hard for your clients. You listen to them, respond to their needs, and deliver the expertise and service to meet those needs. You have been successful and earned the respect of your clients. But, in the course of your career, have you ever wondered “what if?” What if I had followed a different path, pursued a passion, followed a dream, or explored the options that got put on the shelf when “life” got in the way. Even in this economic downturn, it is the perfect time to do some career due diligence.

Despite what you might think, it is never too late to take those old dreams off the shelf or explore new ones. It is never too late to reinvent yourself, rejuvenate an interest, or just have some fun getting out of your usual routine. If you are curious about what it would be like to work in a different profession, taking your dream job for a “test drive” (“vocationing”) is a great, low-risk way to experiment with another career.

Why Spend Time Vocationing?

1. To try out something before committing.
2. To find a mentor.
3. To learn the “ins and outs” of the business.
4. To make contacts in the industry.
5. To boost your confidence.
6. To explore your passion.
7. To satisfy your curiosity about “the road not taken.”
8. To test possible careers when you don’t know what’s next.
9. To experience an unusual, invigorating vacation.

10. To try something new and challenge yourself in new ways.
11. To gain perspective on your current job, lifestyle, and future.
12. To reconnect with a dormant part of yourself.

Giving yourself permission to test-drive your dream job can produce any of several different reactions:

- “Wow, this is definitely something I could see myself doing!”
- “This was great, but I’ll stick to my day job and pursue this as an interest.”
- “What was I thinking? Glad I found out now before I quit my day job!”
- “I’ve learned several things from this experience that will help me do my job even better and maybe even make my work more fulfilling.”

No matter what you decide, you will have learned something valuable about yourself – even if it’s just that you’re actually content where you are right now.

So how would you complete this sentence? I have always wondered what it would be like to be a (fill in the blank). Now, consider: Would you want to switch careers to do this? Do it “on the side”? Or just satisfy your curiosity and enjoy a new experience? There are no wrong answers here. Everything is possible. Listen to your head and your heart to discover the best answer for you.

As an attorney, you bring a lot to the table, no matter how you want to pursue your dreams. Your negotiating, research, presentation, and relationship-building

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OREGON ATTORNEY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

503-226-1057
1-800-321-OAAP
www.oaap.org

Lawyers Helping Lawyers

- Alcohol & Chemical Dependency
- Career Change & Transition
- Gambling Addiction
- Mental Health
- Procrastination & Time Management

A free, nonprofit, confidential program for you.

skills translate well to so many fields. For example, say you always wondered what it would be like to own your own bakery. While your secret recipe for honey wheat bread may be a starting point, your experience and understanding of zoning codes, health regulations, financial resources, employment law, vendor contract negotiations, and managing client expectations would all be extremely valuable assets in running the business. Your legal skills and experience are transferable to many professions – the challenge is finding the right match.

If you are ready to step out of your comfort zone and explore the possibilities, here are some questions to consider and some advice to get you started on your adventure.

Assess Your Situation

Are you truly dissatisfied with your career, or is it your job circumstances or work environment that need a change? Maybe you would enjoy another area of the law or a different firm culture.

Do you want a new career, or do you need an outlet for your creativity or interests? Will projects at home or in your community give you the outlet you need? For instance, maybe designing a water feature in your yard or helping to remodel part of the local senior center will satisfy your passion for architecture or design.

Do Some Research

Spend some time researching opportunities in a few of your areas of interest. Discover what types of jobs are available in those industries. Do the descriptions of the occupations match your expectations and increase your interest in a particular field? Or does the actual work involved sound less “glamorous” or appealing after you know more about it?

Find a couple of experts in your field of interest who are willing to share not only the positive experiences and advantages of working in that profession, but also the drawbacks as they perceive them. Because everyone’s experience in a given career is unique, talk to several people to get a more complete picture.

Poll Your Supporters

It can sometimes be difficult to get a total perspective on what “makes you tick.” Talk to your family and

friends. Ask them what they view as your strengths and passions. What types of work, hobbies, or interests do they see utilizing your skills and talents?

Call the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program and take a personality assessment test. You may have done this in the past, but your focus and interests may have changed or grown stronger. How do you think your personality traits might mesh with the job requirements of the career that interests you?

Go For It

VocationVacations® offers the chance to test-drive your dream job or simply have fun exploring the career path not taken. The company provides career immersion experiences from one to three days under the guidance of expert mentors, who share their knowledge of and experience in their professions. More than 150 types of vocations are available in more than 30 states. Vocationers have ranged in age from 18 to 80, with Baby Boomers and Generation Xers comprising the largest percentage of participants. To date, approximately 20% of vocationers either have changed careers or have undertaken strategic steps to transition to their dream job. For more information, go to www.vocationvacations.com.

Take inspiration from the stories of people who have already tested their dream jobs. You may not want to reinvent yourself entirely and pursue another profession like the investment banker who became a dog trainer or the air traffic controller who became a baker. You may just want to rejuvenate your interest in a particular field by taking classes at a community college or volunteering. Or perhaps you just want to “walk in someone’s shoes” for a few days like the general counsel who lived out his dream of being a baseball team manager and now volunteers his time with the local little league back home.

Whether you want a career change, a new hobby, or a childhood dream fulfilled, go for it. Take that “road not taken,” seize that opportunity, and bring a whole new dimension to your life.

Brian Kurth

VocationVacations®

Brian Kurth is a career planning and mentorship expert and speaker. He has appeared on CNN and NPR, and his career advice has been

featured in articles in The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, to name just a few. He is also the author of Test-Drive Your Dream Job – A Step-By-Step Guide to Finding and Creating the Work You Love (Hachette, 2008).

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