

## Life Changes Spark Personal and Career Reinvention

By Sue Marceau

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Layoff. Love lost. Recovery. Empty nest. University gap year. Sabbatical. Extended travel. Leave of absence. Educational adventure. Add your own circumstance to the litany.

Symptoms vary, but the diagnosis often boils down to a muddled outlook, for which the preferred prescription may be reinvention.

Some people have repositioned themselves so many times that the effort has become as routine as cream in their coffee. The task for others has lapsed into chasing the proverbial big fish that always manages to elude the hook. Life most often fails to drop absolute perfection in anyone's rowboat – except in bestsellers and the movies.

The pursuit of an ideal place in life – whether personally or professionally – generally requires extensive soul searching, overcoming obstacles and holding steady or adapting to new signals when the road winds up less traveled. Re-invention merges life's journey and skills into a career that embraces one's passion and emulates a soothing walk in the park. It's doing what you love and getting paid for it.

The logical starting point recommended by experts involves putting your goals and dreams in writing. Words staring at you from a sheet of paper are hard to ignore or block out.

Marylyn Clark, Ph.D., a local counselor, proposes that you “create your ideal position, even if writing it as a fantasy. When people sit down and write, they come up with some of the most beautiful things that they otherwise would not have allowed to cross their minds.”

Similar advice originates with Janis Best, who just underwent a reinvention after moving to Prescott from New



**Prescott Counselor Marylyn Clark, PhD, encourages clients to put their ideal jobs, goals and programs in writing. She says people often sabotage their professional or personal lives with limiting thoughts.**

Photo by Kay Lyons

York City and finding her niche as a radio show host. (See related article in January's Quad Cities Business News.)

“Make a list of what you like to do,” Best advises. “Write down what you're good at. Look at your skill set. Say to yourself, ‘This is what I have done; now, where can I take these skills?’ Then, look at the community where you're living and see what the opportunities are.”

While navigating the reinvention process, Best also urges activities such as trying to meet as many people as possible, networking, taking classes, studying industries, getting permission to shadow someone in a field of interest, becoming a mentor, volunteering to see if charitable service can evolve into a profession, and in general, investigating possibilities.

“Open yourself up to whatever has intrigued you and follow up on that,” Best explains. “And take control of your life. Follow your passions. Life is short. If there is something you have always wanted to do, find a way. Ideas are easy. The hard thing is doing something about it.”

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The difficulty of acting on ideas is brought home when the economy, breadwinning, family obligations and distractions enter the mix. Risks must be assessed and managed. Having someone else to pay or share the bills, for example, might encourage more risk tolerance.

Clark, who has conducted career counseling and now specializes in addictions, often assists clients who “sabotage” themselves by thinking they cannot do something or that they “are not good enough.” People can unknowingly limit their potential with feelings of insecurity, a tendency to be easily intimidated or exhibiting symptoms of low self-esteem. Anyone can be negatively affected by self doubt and thus fail to reach a goal.

Identifying blocks to personal or professional success is “a challenge because each individual needs to be treated individually,” Clark adds. “What’s going on with you is not necessarily what is going on with someone else. It’s not a roadmap, so to speak, for how you go about treating it.”

The reality is that suggestions and knowledge guide us through life’s labyrinth when we are wise enough to persist.

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