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INTRODUCTION

 *The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.” ~ Lao Tzu*

According to a January 2018 report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average person changes jobs 10 to 15 times (with an average of 12 job changes) during their career. Many workers spend five years, or less, in every job, so they devote more time and energy transitioning from one job to another. For those currently experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, and its economic impact on employment opportunities, it is quite possible that those numbers could occur more quickly, or even be higher. However, even under the best economic conditions, rapid changes in technology and employer/consumer needs will also impact the current and future workforce.

As someone who has undergone multiple career transitions over the years, Tzu’s statement above could never be truer when thinking about starting one, whether it be for a new job—or advancement in an existing one. Like building something from scratch and wanting to build it right, you should always start with a strong foundation; and in any career transition, that foundation really begins with you. This step is one of the most important you will need to remember before moving forward. Without it, you might risk missing out on better opportunities; or worse yet, settling for those that put you in the perpetual cycle of having to repeat your efforts and start all over.

To help put you on the right path, this book will cover practical and successful strategies that should be taken in the very early stages of the career transitioning process. I will share easy-to-use tactics and tools that will help you gain a deeper understanding of your strengths, gaps, opportunities and challenges—and how you can use such things to launch a successful career transition. I will also provide you with helpful tips and best practices to help the knowledge soak in. By taking a commonsense approach developed with knowledge, experience and research, think of this book as a pre-planning tool—*BEFORE* you start writing a resume, or conducting a job search.

~Dr. Robert Danielle

IT BEGINS WITH YOU

Like all things that matter in life, considering a career transition really needs to start with an individual taking the necessary steps, time and effort to help put them in the best possible position to achieve their desired goals. Here are two successful approaches that I have shared with others, and have used myself.

Finding or Having a Support System

“Sometimes you’ll be the root of the problem, and you won’t see it. How do you avoid these blind spots? Pay close attention to how others perceive you. Ask for feedback, and most importantly, be open to receiving it. The best kind of feedback is negative feedback, because it is difficult to learn from glowing praise. Accept criticism graciously, so those around you won’t be afraid to continue sharing their observations with you.”

~ *Simon Sinek, 2017*

It goes without saying that moving toward most transitions in your life will require some types of activities that are going to necessitate both changes and effort on your behalf to achieve the goals you set in place.

One of the best ways to gain a deeper understanding of who you are, and what you bring to the table, is to make sure that you are surrounding yourself with people who not only believe in you—but who will also tell you when you have something stuck between your teeth. This person is not the one who tells you what you want to hear, or avoids what they think you should know. It is also not someone who is always going to be hypercritical. You should try to avoid those people that always tell you that you cannot do anything well—because as much as negativity can motivate some, it does have a far more damaging effect to most of us over time.

The person I am referring to is someone who can help you understand all the great things that you can do. More importantly, this person is someone willing and able to let you know what else you need to do today, to become even better tomorrow. Throughout my career, I have found that having such people in my life has not only helped me achieve professional success, it has allowed to me grow personally as well.

Renting Versus Owning

Before I explore this concept with you, I would be remiss if I did not point out that like anything worth getting, you're going to have to put in the time and effort to achieve what you want. The same is true with any career transition; and it's why I feel it is important to understand the concept of renting versus owning. To help explain it, I use an analogy about renting a car—but you could easily replace the vehicle with anything you, or someone you know, has rented before.

That said, for anyone that has ever rented a car, or knows someone who has, please answer the following questions:

1. Did you (or they) ever wash the rental car?
2. Did you change the oil in your rental car?
3. If you have any of those tchotchkes that you can hang from the rearview mirror, did you hang one in your rental car?

If you answered yes to even one of these questions (if more than one, we need to talk—ha-ha!), my point here is that when you rent something, chances are very good that you would not put in the same time and effort as if you owned it. Ownership changes that paradigm, upping the level of commitment needed to achieve your goals.

That is why it is important to remember—if you decide to go down the career transitioning path, you need to make sure that you are willing and able to put in the time and the effort to achieve the goals you set. You must also accept the realization that your goals are not going to happen overnight. And by owning your plan, you are committing to do whatever is necessary to be successful.

In our very first class, I used to tell my students that I was not renting them space in the classroom. They needed to own their education, and I was there to help them learn how to do that. If you understand this concept, and find/have that support system in your life I previously mentioned, you can and will find success in most anything you set out to do.