

# EsquimaltNEWS

## Coach aids self-discovery

By Mark Browne  
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Finding one's true calling in life can be a difficult journey.

But people who are having a hard time figuring out what kind of job is best suited for

them can always reach out to a career coach like Esquimalt resident Michele Waters.



Sharon Tiffin/Esquimalt News

**Michele Waters interviews clients to help find out about their interests.**

Finding the right vocation is a process that amounts to taking "baby steps", Waters explains while sitting in her office in her Saxe Point home.

"It's a journey of a thousand steps," she says.

Waters sees a wide range of clients through her business, Career Quest Coaching. Her typical clients tend to be mid-career professionals - often facing a mid-life crisis - who hate their current jobs, she says.

Waters' approach to her clients is essentially a spiritual process. Rather than acting as a counsellor, Waters considers herself a coach or a "guide on the side".

Waters begins coaching her clients by asking them why they want to make changes, who they really are as people and what it is that they're passionate about in life, she says. After that, Waters helps her clients learn to "think big" and create a "map" about what career direction they

want to take in life.

"It's this mystical process of going out and coming to know who they are with a map in hand and meet up with kindred spirits-" Waters says.

Waters helps her clients determine if they should go back to school for more training, engage in volunteer work as a way of learning skills and updating their resumes.

"It's basically a life-career action plan," she says.

It's important, Waters says, that her clients look back to their youth and think about what they were passionate about at that point in their lives. After all, it's when people are young that they tend to have a strong sense of what they're passionate about in terms of potential future vocations.

One of the biggest challenges for some clients is addressing negative beliefs, Waters says.

"That's the biggest obstacle," she says.

While some clients are receptive to the spiritual approach and language that is employed by Waters, it's not for everyone, she says. That said, it's necessary take a different approach to some clients.

"I customize the service to the individual," Waters says.

While focusing on people's passions is crucial, it's also important to be realistic, she says.

"I'm a very reality-based person," Waters says.

The services Waters offers don't always involve talking to clients. She also provides them with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as a way of assisting clients find themselves.

Waters prefers talking to her clients in person rather than over the telephone or by e-mail.

"I want that face-to-face contact because I can get more information and establish that meaningful bond," she points out.

Waters established Career Quest Coaching nine months ago following a lengthy career as a career counsellor with Canada Employment that began in the early 1980s.

Prior to that, Waters earned a B.A. in Germanic studies from the University of Victoria. She studied more of that discipline in Germany on a scholarship before returning to Canada where she took a job as a teaching assistant at the University of British Columbia.

Waters then began her career with Canada Employment before moving to Seattle to work as a vocational rehabilitation counsellor in the late 1980s. Upon returning to Victoria she eventually landed a job as a career counsellor with the Shoreline Employment Project, which was funded by Human Resources Skills Development Canada.

Funding for the project ran out in April 2005 when the federal government decided to use one large company for employment assistant projects.

While Waters was unemployed she had an "epiphany" in June 2005 when she decided to set up a career coaching business in her home where she lives with her husband and cat.

And so far, so good.

"It's going really well. I'm actually making money," Waters says. "What's nice about being home-based is that I can bring my cat to work."

For more information visit [www.careerquestcoaching.com](http://www.careerquestcoaching.com).

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