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## Pursue What You Love and the Money Does Follow

*by Michele Waters*

The process of transitioning from being an employee to being self-employed unfolded like a well orchestrated musical. Indeed, each day that I report to my home- based office as a Career Coach in private practice, my heart sings joyfully. Duty makes us do things well, but love makes us do them beautifully. In the past two years, I have discovered the truth of this particular saying.

As much as the process was easy and actually most enjoyable, upon reflection, I see that there were many forces at play to bring all of the individual “notes” together in a harmonious concerto. In fact, it was a lifelong process to prepare me for the rigors and challenges of being in private practice. And, I arrived at the very place at the appointed time, one step at a time, and one day at a time.

And what was the formula that helped prepare me for my true livelihood as a self-employed Career Coach? I believe there were three essential and equally important elements that worked together synchronistically to establish my private practice.

1) **FAITH**- First of all, I had to believe in myself and that I had something very valuable to offer people would be willing to pay for. I had to acknowledge that my many years of service as a Career Counsellor with Canada Employment and Shoreline Employment translated into a commodity worth promoting.

I also identified that there was a need for private Career Coaching services for people who were employed but frustrated with a lack of fulfillment and purpose in their work lives. From my many years of working in the trenches, I was asked often enough to know that there was a need.

Additionally, during the summer of 2005, I had an epiphany. I realized that I was being called to use my diverse set of gifts to bring healing and hope to the segment of society languishing in work situations that were a very poor fit. My new “mission” in life was to give people hope and to help them create a plan of action to find their unique niche.

2) **SUPPORT** - I was blessed with a tremendous amount of support and a network of people who actually believed in what I wanted to do. First of all, my dear husband was totally behind me when I left the highest paying job that I had ever had to take the time to sort out what I really wanted for the next phase of my career. He trusted that I knew what I was doing and I would figure things out. When I announced my desire to establish a home-based private practice, he rejoiced with me and believed that I would make my new dream a reality.

My friends were most encouraging and unanimous in their opinion that I was well-suited to private practice. They recognized that I am an independent spirit who needs autonomy in my work. They also validated that I had something worthwhile to offer to the community.

My colleagues in the field of employment development also played a key role. Thanks to both Marilyn Henigman and Margaux Finlayson, I was inspired to take the plunge. Even before I opened my doors officially for business, they were referring clients to me. I am forever indebted to them. For many years, I had admired them both for being private practitioners in the field; and now I was joining the ranks of my mentors.

3) **RESOURCES** - The right resources were essential for me to become established. Because my husband and I had been careful with our budgeting, we had a cushion to see us through the time of transition. My husband's pension was sufficient to meet our basic living needs until I started to earn a living.

Serendipitously, we had space in our home to turn into an office. In fact, it was a room that was supposed to be my hobby room and the guest bedroom. Because it seemed cluttered and was furnished with a hodge podge of furniture, I failed to bond with the room. However, once we decided on its new purpose and cleared out every piece of furniture, I became totally enthused about the room and carefully selected appropriate office furniture to create an inviting and aesthetically pleasing space. My clients love looking out the window to see the squirrels scampering up the maple tree and I enjoy having a window that I can open to allow fresh air in.

Because I live in Victoria, I was very fortunate to be able to easily access the necessary resources to do a name search, register my company name, apply for a business license, revise my

insurance coverage, and find an awesome web and graphic designer to develop my branding. I thoroughly enjoyed the collaborative process of creating the website and its content. Besides the Yellow Pages and word of mouth, my website has brought a great deal of traffic to my door. The money that I spent on “Search Engine Optimization” was well worth the investment.

This basic formula orchestrated all that I needed to know and all the connections I needed to make in order to transition from being an employee in an agency to being a Career Coach in private practice. As Goethe said many years ago, “The moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred.”

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