

# Why Career Coaching is So Valuable

By Rick Forbus, PhD

T R O V E  
INSIGHT. MINED. AND APPLIED.

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Career search and pathing is always difficult. This present environment is a real struggle. The American economy rises, falls and people are *always* looking for jobs. Career seekers are a *specific* group inside of the larger context of job seekers. I see career seekers as a more specific group than job seekers. Career “pathers” (my word) are in search for something more than a job. To state the obvious, spending time preparing for a career transition or career move is much different than searching for a job.

Career pathing, and the coaching service that goes along with it, has emerged as not only of high importance but, some would say, has become an essential service. Most everyone wants to succeed in life. Most of us want to find our careers providing three things, minimally:

1. Finance
2. Fulfillment
3. Freedom

These three are the most basic of human need. In some cases, my clients go further by adding two more items to what a career could or should provide:

4. Legacy Living
5. Spiritual Connection

The basic question career inquiry should ask is, “*What job is actually right for my next step in life?*”  
The question that follows is, “*What career path am I actually going for?*”

## Why Don't People Set Out on the Most Aligned Career Path in the Beginning?

What career “pathers” tell me is that when they were young, in college, trade school, or, just launching out after high school on their own, there was an urgency of finance that propelled them into a job. Again, as we look back on life, we find that the “tyranny of the urgent” won, over the strategic decision of *career importance* and *holistic living*. We all know that small group of our friends from high school who knew exactly what they wanted to do and they jumped right on the “perfect career train” and are still doing that today. Others of us, me particularly, didn't know our “rear end from a hole in the ground,” to quote some of my “informal mentors” back in the day.

Others really struggle to see themselves doing certain jobs early on in their adult lives. Unfortunately, many people in their forties and fifties do not know “why they are on the planet” and cannot seem to find the perfect alignment for them between fulfillment, skills and compensation. I have written several things on passion, fulfillment and freedom, so, this writing is more about **how** you can think about and actuate a career path, practically. Before I give you four tips, let me introduce the thinking of an author my research discovered. The author is Linda Le Phan and the article is entitled, “How to find the answer to ‘What career is right for me?’” I came across the article on [www.theladders.com](http://www.theladders.com). In the article she lists nine questions/statements to ponder regarding career pathing. The full article is fabulous but I'm just listing her nine questions/statements below to stimulate your thinking.

1. Don't follow passion alone, follow your “fit” and future.
2. Look for the overlap of three things that make up your career “sweet spot” - (what you're good at, what organizations need done/what the world needs and what you enjoy doing).
3. Ask yourself some honest questions (What do you really want out of your career? What is really important to me? What do I excel at?).
4. Ask people (and experts) that are already “in the field.”
5. Turn your hobby into a career.

6. Give yourself an assessment to gain self-awareness.
7. Ask people who know you well.
8. Take a “non-box” approach.
9. It all boils down to a few questions and factors that apply to you.

I suggest you read the full article. Successful career searches are complex and require diligence and support. That’s why I completely agree that having a career coach is essential. If you are working on a career transition on your own, ask yourself, *“Is what I’m doing in my job search setting me up well for future success and longevity?”*

#### My Four “HELP” Tips

**H - Harness and highlight your professional skills, emotions and abilities.**

**E - Energize and enthuse your personal brand.**

**L - Lift and leverage your social media and other media opportunities to tell your story.**

**P - Produce a plan to support your brand for an interview.**

These four tips will actualize in three areas of your persona, your thinking and your action items. Let me briefly explain:

**H - Harness and Highlight** - You should intuitively, if not assuredly know (through performance reviews and assessments), your tactical skills, your emotional makeup and your organizational abilities. If you don’t, that is even more reason you need a career coach now. Assessing *yourself* is difficult, if not impossible. Once you have identified your tactical and hard skills find a way to begin to harness them in your conversations, interviews and job searches. As a coach, you and I would codify this three things. Using a logic model; a triangle, get these three areas down where you can **see** them, **understand** them and **utilize** them to plan for your future. For instance, if you have the hard skills of a project manager (tactical expertise), write down those attributes and skills to formulate a narrative about yourself. Next, how would you write about your emotional makeup and personality type? What would you say about your ability to manage stress in crises or change?

Again, write a narrative describing these emotions and how they are useful for an organization. Lastly, how would you tell someone about your abilities to “see” culture in an organization? What about intuitions with groups of people? How do you describe your observational skills? To HARNESS and HIGHLIGHT your three areas of tactical, emotional and situational skills, get them down first in a narrative. Write as if you are telling these three things to an interviewer.

**E - Energize and Enthuse** - The above narrative forms a “press release” of such. Start there. How would you write a Press Release (don't be shy...it is just for your eyes...unless I'm your coach...then, I get to see it!), about YOU? Honestly, you have to start here. Energize your brand. What does your narrative and this Press Release say to an organization about your brand; your value proposition to them? Spend some devoted time to this process. Be honest and real with this Press Release. It will feel awkward at first. People fall on either end of the continuum of self-perception when it comes to their own branding. Some inflate everything and let their egos over inflate their “brands.” Others, under-inflate and downplay their “brands.” Somewhere in the middle is a nice play to land with this exercise. Remember, we are career pathing, not job hunting. Wouldn't you rather find the perfect place to land by matching your true brand (strengths, what organizations need and what you enjoy doing) with a career opportunity? When you go through this quick process I'm offering here, you will better know where to search for a career opportunity. Why waste time with job interviewing and job hopping? These are both time wasters. Put the urgency in now for a foundational career move, not just quick job applications. Until you have spent years hopping around in unsatisfied “jobs” will you understand the time suck that is taking place. Trust a well-seasoned career coach on this. We have but one life to live, go deep on the first two tips I have just offered.

**L - Lift and Leverage** - Your now-defined brand needs to get lifted above the fray and clutter of the job seekers out there! It is crazy on social media with job seekers. Get your head and brand above the “white noise” of this. In the career coaching environment, I suggest that you begin understanding the career market and how social media plays a role in getting you discovered. It is much like musicians, athletes and scientists that have something they want to tell the world. They want to be discovered and connect to the perfect influencer who can lift and leverage their brand. The first two tips, mentioned earlier, will provide the platform for leveraging your skills, emotional package and situational strengths to the world of career hiring!!

You will want to do some research via the internet on how to position your social media and traditional media brand imprint effectively. Build brand equity not liability. It is beyond the scope of this article, all the details of this, but you will want to learn from the experts and not make a misstep on this. Remember, to be honest about your brand and lift and leverage it to the right places for career pathing success. This is less about your resume, your executive summary and your networking than it is about your ability to know, understand and “tell your story” to the world of opportunities. Please, please take the sufficient time on the first two tips!

**P - Produce a Plan** - A plan to get you in front (in-person or virtually) of the right influencers is your project now. In my career coaching environment, career plans can be pretty involved and intricate. That is why in the introduction of this writing that I said, “*Career seekers are a specific group inside of the larger context of job seekers.*” Career plans are foundational and life-altering, not network plans or a calendar full of “Happy Hours.” Many stories could be told of the know-it-all job seekers that interviewed me (or, one of the Trove team) then not using our career services, but launched out on their “networking” plan on their own. More than once I have held my tongue when they looped back after months, and sometimes years of exhausting networking events. They returned to the concept that career pathing is a different “animal” than job seeking. How can we know ourselves perfectly without some help, right? The old adage says, “If the plan is flawed at the start it will fizzle at the finish.” You can’t properly track to the perfect career opportunity if you’re on a path to find a job. It is just not the same. I will say that sometimes, even the most careless job plan, ends up in great career opportunity. It is a crap-shoot way to go about it, however. It’s like throwing up a deck of cards in the air and selecting the first one to hit the ground. What I’m recommending is: Start by thinking of “pitching your brand” to a buyer. The plan needs to connect to a consumer result. The consumer in this case is the hiring influencer. Who *is* that person? That’s where you plan starts. Here’s a quick way to frame your plan:

- Ask yourself, “What is the mission, purpose and vision for myself?” This forms the “missional foundation” of your plan. (Look at the five things I mentioned in the opening of this writing.)
- Ask yourself, “What does my brand bring to an organization?” (This defines skills, emotional make up and ability to intuit situations.) This forms the “input” of your career plan.

- Ask yourself, “What activities, connections, relationships and career interfaces do I need to prioritize in my plan?” These are your activities inside of your plan. Priorities will need to be rank ordered and calendared. Never launch out without weighing the activity.
- Ask yourself, finally, “what is the clear objective for my career?” You already have this from Tip #1 and Tip #2 in the wiring above.

Since this is a good deal to consider, email me at [rforbus@troveinc.com](mailto:rforbus@troveinc.com) and I'll enlarge the concepts for you. This is a project plan. In some cases, this is an enterprise plan to find the perfectly aligned career opportunity.

Are you a job seeker or a career pather?

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