

How to love your job.



or find a new one



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Full details about the book and where it can be bought are found here:

<http://www.thecreativepenn.com/lovejob/>

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Preface for 2012 Edition

Last New Year's Eve I was at a party with some old University friends. I stood in the corner talking to Kate while the greatest hits of the 80s played on MTV.

"How's work?" she asked. I told her about my latest novel and how my business, The Creative Penn, was going.

"Wow," she said. "You sound so enthusiastic and happy. Your face is just shining."

It was at that point I realized I had finally made the life change I had been working towards for the past four years. Because every other New Year's Eve for the 13 years of my corporate consulting job, I had always changed the subject whenever anyone asked this question. I had never wanted to talk about work because what I did every day wasn't my passion. But this year was different.

I originally wrote this book in 2008 when I was trapped in a corporate job that I hated and couldn't see a way out. I knew that I had to get out somehow and so I wrote this self-help book to try and help myself. I thought that studying how I could improve my situation might also help others, so I put the information into this little book.

At the time, I had no idea how following my own advice might actually change things but **it's now May 2012 and I'm a full-time author-entrepreneur.**

I have published two novels that have sold over 35,000 copies. *Pentecost* and *Prophecy* combine my passions for psychology, religion, art history and kick-ass action-adventure novels, and I'm working on more to come. I run my own business, *The Creative Penn*, which helps people to write, publish and market their own books.

I'm an international speaker, running workshops to help other people fulfill their dreams. I sell online multi-media courses which provide the backbone for my online business. TheCreativePenn.com has also been voted one of the Top 10 Blogs for Writers two years running.

I truly didn't imagine that my life could change like this, which is why I'm rebooting this little book in 2012.

After I wrote the first version, I followed the steps I had outlined and changed my own life. Perhaps it will also help you to change your life and find the work that is most meaningful for you.

I want you to see that change is possible but that the incremental steps are often tiny. You may not realize how far you can get if you just look at what you achieve in a week or a month. But each step changes something in you. Over years, great things can happen and your life can totally change. Mine has.

“Most people overestimate what they can accomplish in a year - and underestimate what they can achieve in a decade.”

Tony Robbins

I hope you find the book useful, and you can always contact me with any questions:

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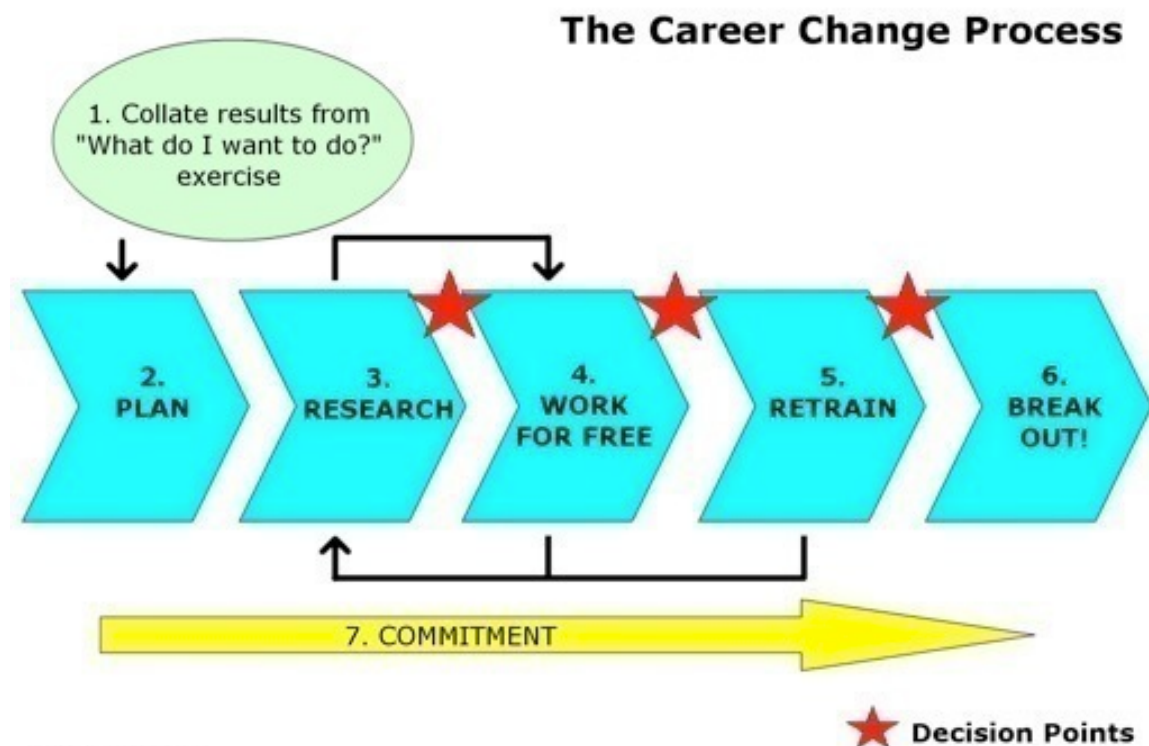
Joanna Penn, June 2012.

Chapter 12. The Career Change Process

Now you have decided what you want to do, this chapter focuses on the actions you need to take to implement the change process in your working life. The flow diagram below represents the steps you need to take in order to turn the ideas you have into reality. Don't worry if you are not 100% sure yet: all you need is an initial direction in which to head.

Great things happen in your life when you make them happen!

Take the first step and you will find the next steps will be revealed to you.



This process and associated questions and exercises are all contained within the [Companion Workbook available here](#).

(1) Look at your results from the previous chapter “What do I want to do for my job?”

Look at everything you have written about yourself and distill those answers into a few key points about yourself and potential jobs. Make it short and concise, for example:

- I’m good with my hands
- I like working with people and helping them
- My priority is to make money and provide for my family
- I want to work four days per week

Make sure these are phrased in a positive way as you will achieve what you focus on. Write “I want to work four days a week”, NOT “I don’t want to work five days a week”. In the first sentence the main emphasis is on four days. In the second sentence, it is on five.

It is important to emphasize what you are aiming for, not what you want to avoid.

On reflection, you may find that your current workplace is not so bad after all, but that you just need a different position, or a change of pace. If this is so, think of possibilities to free up time to enrich your life and focus on developing the skills you need to progress at work.



Distill your answers into concise, positively worded sentences. Write down any ideas you might have at this stage about job options.

(2) Make a plan

You need a plan in order to make these steps happen. It is easy to continue as you always have done unless you make a written plan that lays out what you will do and by when. It could be a few lines that

show your commitment or it could be a multi-page business plan. If you don't know what you are interested in yet, your plan should be to set a date and do some research before then. Then revise as you go.

Your plan can be helped even further by the goal setting activities covered in Chapter 13. Make the first step small and achievable in a short time frame, so that you start to make some progress.

Future steps can build on what you achieved with this first step.

Make sure you add dates to your plan and review it regularly. If you miss the dates on your plan, review why you missed them, learn from whatever happened and move on. Don't obsess about missing dates, as you are likely to be a lot further on than if you had not set a date at all!



Write down the first few steps of your Plan. What will you achieve by what date?

For example, when I wrote the first edition of this book, I wanted to have it published by my birthday in March. I managed it by the middle of April, so yes, I missed the goal but if I hadn't set the deadline, I might still be working on it.

(3) Research

Research is important, as it opens your eyes to what is possible and can give you new ideas. Research is also about testing feasibility and clarifying the details of what certain jobs entail. Keep your personal list in mind at all times so that you're alert for suitable options.

This will help you answer questions like:

- What could I do?

- What do I need to do it?
- What does the job entail?
- What will I get out of it?
- Does it meet my goals and priorities?
- How long will it take to get to where I want to be?

Here are some research ideas:

* **Go to job websites** or sites specializing in career advice and scan them for jobs that resonate with you. You can find approximate pay scales and requirements here too.

* **Read blogs, local and national papers** as they often profile jobs in the career section.

* **Visit University career services** or local council or government funded careers offices. They often have people who can discuss possibilities with you, as well as plenty of books on careers.

* **Investigate recruitment consultancies** in the areas you are interested in.

* **Ask people what they do** and find out the details of their job. Do they enjoy it? Does it sound like it might be for you? Find out what you would need to get into that job.

As you go through the research process, you will reach a Decision Point.

You will find yourself drawn to something in particular and you will need to make the decision to follow up one option. For example, you decided you want to retrain to become a teacher. You will then need

to narrow this down with more research or volunteer work e.g. what subject do I want to teach, what student age, what type of school?

You may make a decision and then find out later it was the wrong path. That's OK.

This is how we learn more about ourselves and what we want. Until you try something, how do you even know what you want? The greater risk is not to try.

WARNING: You can spend forever researching!

This is “analysis paralysis” and is the dangerous state of getting bogged down in too much detail and self questioning. If this is happening, you will need to force a Decision Point on yourself. Decide on one option and pursue that first. If it doesn't work out, you can try the next idea.



Where can you find information about what you are interested in?

Complete this sentence. “I want to _____”. Update your plan with how you will research this.

(4) Work for Free!

Working for free is different for everyone, but it basically means giving the job a trial run. It might be volunteering for a charity or taking on some work in your spare time shadowing someone who does that job. For me, it was writing this book in the evenings and at weekends whilst still doing my full-time job. Then I transitioned to four days a week so that I could grow my online business with lower

risk.

“High performers work for free. The difference between working for free because you’re a loser and working for free because you’re a high performer is what you get from the deal.”

Penelope Trunk

Working for free will enable you to gain valuable experience while still earning at the same time.

This is important, as you may have decided you want to do a particular job but then the reality is different to what you expected. Working for free means that you can give it a try in a low-risk way without giving up your day job. Many jobs have volunteer work that you could do whilst deciding whether this is the right decision for you. Or you can ask a company if you can work for free as job experience, get an apprenticeship or try shadowing someone.

If you are investigating your own business, starting it in your spare time is less risky than giving up the day job. It gives you some security if you decide not to pursue it long term.

Volunteering your time and effort gives you the opportunity to try different things without losing your earnings. You may even get a job offer from this work experience. Remember that you can try different options, and even if they don’t turn into your next career, you will get closer to finding out what fits you as a person. You will have learnt a lot and hopefully enjoyed the experience. You don’t know unless you

try!

During this time you will reach another Decision Point: either to pursue this option, or return to the research step if this is not what you want to do.



Is this what I want to do or is there something else that fits me better? What did I enjoy about the experience? What did I not enjoy?

If you are returning to the research step, make sure you think about the reasons you are not continuing down that path and add them to your list. This will help you to keep refining your short list of key requirements.

If you have decided that this is your chosen path, then you can move onto the next step.

(5) Re-train

This step is usually necessary if there are things you need to do in your desired job that you don't know how to do right now, or that you actually need proof of for employment. Chapter 3: Develop Yourself goes into this in more detail.

Examples of re-training may include:

- Full-time or part-time study to gain a Degree, Competency Certificate or a practical skill set
- Correspondence courses. Online, residential, weekend or informal courses
- Apprenticeships
- On-the-job training (which may also be achieved through

volunteering/working for free)



Do I need to re-train in order to change my career/role or job?
How do I achieve this re-training?

Whilst you are re-training, you will be faced with other decisions and questions: what courses to take, what specialty to study, how to pay the bills in the meantime. This process will help you narrow down your field even further.

The main Decision Point you will have at the end of your re-training is, “Am I ready to break out of my job and get into this new career?” You will find you are excited about the process as you have something to aim for other than your current job – the end is in sight!

But don’t feel that this is the end of your choices. You can still return to what you know or pull out of retraining. You can still decide it is not for you.

Here are some of my experiences with retraining.

After studying psychology at school and then writing my University thesis on the Psychology of Religion, I put it aside as a serious career option but continued to read psychology books for fun. After several of my other business ideas failed, I decided to retrain as a psychologist. I’d be able to escape consultancy for something intellectually challenging that would also help people. I went back to University and did a one year, full-time Graduate Diploma in Psychology with the aim of going into clinical practice. It was a fascinating year and I loved the study. But I also found out that the reality of being a psychologist was mainly working on depression or anxiety. Most jobs in New Zealand, where I lived at the time, were in

the prison service, and it seemed that the reality didn't really fit with my dreams of the job. Once again, I returned to consulting and continued my search for what I really wanted in my work.

From 2008, I started to learn about internet marketing and making a living online. Although I haven't done an official degree course, I have spent thousands of hours as well as dollars on re-training for growing an internet business.

I also believe that learning is never wasted, as it keeps your brain alive and there are so many interesting things to learn in the world.

It may be a risk to pursue a path that ultimately doesn't lead anywhere but the greater risk is to remain still and go nowhere.

(6) Break Out!

This is the point where you actually leave your old job behind and start following your new chosen career. It may be part time or it may be a big jump into full-time employment. It may be starting your own business, working from home, or moving cities. It's an exciting time but often a scary one. You will have doubts and fears but also exhilarating periods that will sustain you.

Always remember that you have choices.

You can repeat the process if you decide you want to do something different, or you can always return to what you know as a safety net.

I started with working four days a week at the day job in late 2007. I worked on writing and TheCreativePenn.com on the fifth day as well as weekends and evenings. I continued to work as an IT consultant to

pay the bills at the same time. It wasn't until October 2011 that I finally gave up the day job in order to pursue being an author-entrepreneur full time. So the break-out can be a gradual one! You can read more about my journey in the bonus material at the end of the book.

(7) Commitment

Underpinning the whole process is commitment and persistence.

This is your commitment to yourself and your long-term happiness, as well as the people who want you to be happy. It is your commitment to the process, which means you keep following your plan, even when it is hard.

Persistence is also important, as otherwise you will find reasons to give up.

I have been trying to find my ideal work situation since I started in the corporate world at aged 22. At age 36, after much experimentation, I have found my ideal job as an author-entrepreneur. But there are many years ahead of me as I navigate this new world. Thankfully, the challenges never stop.



Are you committed to this process of change? Why is it so important to you this time? What will happen if you do not go through with this? How can you keep yourself committed?

“On the field of the self stand a knight and a dragon.
You are the knight. Resistance is the dragon. The battle
must be fought anew every day.”

Steven Pressfield, The War of Art

About Joanna Penn

Joanna Penn worked for 13 years as an international business consultant but is now a full-time author-entrepreneur. She is the author of [Pentecost](#) and [Prophecy](#), in the ARKANE series of action-adventure thrillers, as well as non-fiction books.

Joanna has a Master's degree in Theology from the University of Oxford, Mansfield College and a Graduate Diploma in Psychology from the University of Auckland, New Zealand. She lives in London, England, but spent 11 years in Australia and New Zealand.

Joanna is a PADI Divemaster and enjoys traveling as often as possible. She is obsessed with religion and psychology and loves to read, drink pinot noir and soak up European culture through art, architecture and food.

Joanna's business and blog <http://www.TheCreativePenn.com> help people write, publish and market their books through articles, audio, video and online products as well as live workshops.

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