

Reinventing Yourself: Work-Life Transitions and Transformations 101

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Abstract

Everyone (not just people who have been fired or fear they are about to be) reinvents themselves personally and professionally at some time or other...deliberately or inadvertently, strategically or impetuously. In fact, the author argues that professional reinvention is not only a good defense, but a great offense, pointing out how reinvention can help you take charge of your life as well as accommodate new work world realities. To support and encourage professional reinvention, the author couches the value of being able to transform yourself professionally in the context that health education itself is a profession that is constantly reinventing itself. The article includes a definition of reinvention and discussions about who reinvents themselves and when and why, and stories of six health educators and how they reinvented themselves. The article ends with suggested reinvention pre-requisites to foster successful work life transitions and transformations, and a list of ten tips for successful professional reinvention(s).

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Do You Dare?

If you're thinking, "Hey, I don't need to read this. I've never been fired and I won't ever get fired," here are three important news flashes. One: if you're going to survive and thrive in your personal life as well as in your work life, you need to be able to reinvent yourself. Two: reinvention is something you are doing all the time already, just unconsciously; so consciously can only help. Three: there's a pretty good chance you will get fired, merged into unemployment, urged into early retirement, or purged in a lay off somewhere along the line — and so what? You'll survive. I did!

Writing this article is part of my nth professional reinvention — this time as a "Career Development Lifeguard" — after 40 years of work experience...since high school. That experience includes four so-called "careers" (a term I find too confining) in my work life, 15 full-time jobs, and dozens of part-time jobs. Therefore, I have not only become a fervent believer in personal and professional reinvention, I have become a staunch advocate of it!

As a health education specialist who is also certified as a senior professional in human resources, I am eager to present the concept of reinvention — or worklife reincarnation, if you will — within a career development context and its value as a core career development skill — right up there with strategic thinking, creativity, problem solving, writing and speaking skills, and so on. We will explore what it means to "reinvent yourself", how you might reinvent yourself, and when you might do so. In short, we will discuss how being able to reinvent yourself — once, twice, or as many times as professionally politic or personally pleasing — can be a key to your success.

Health Education, The Reinvention Profession

If any profession should value and encourage reinvention, it's health education. Over its 100-year history, health education has reinvented itself many times.

Originally, in the early 1900s, when epidemics were of major concern, health education was conducted through journalism, public speaking, and information sharing.

Beginning in 1910, interest shifted to alcohol and drugs and elementary school health programs were launched with an eye toward producing draft-worthy adults to better defend our country and its ideals. Health education was conducted through lectures and pamphlets.

This continued into the late teens and twenties, when, after the influenza epidemic and World War I, communicable diseases (particularly sexually transmitted diseases) were the focus of attention. Hospital and community-based lectures and pamphlets were enhanced by other methods of information communication: newsletters, films, filmstrips, and exhibits. Physical education was very important and went hand in glove with health education.

During the 1930s and 40s, and as the first masters degree program in public health education began to graduate students, community organizing became a major health education intervention.

In the 1950s, after World War II, veterans' health was a major concern, and hospitals and clinics jumped onto the health education bandwagon. Written and oral communication skills continued to be the sine qua non of good health education, but there was a definite change in emphasis from publicist to educator.

Self-help and consumerism were all the rage in the 1960s as was social engineering. Health education began to include service planning and evaluation, behavior change, and group dynamics.

By the 1970s, worksite and occupational wellness programs were being implemented by employers, unions, health maintenance organizations, and public agencies. Interventions became behavior-change theory based and the focus shifted to lifestyles and personal behaviors and chronic disease management. Outreach and follow up became important health education tasks.

With the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s, communicable diseases emerged once again as a major health concern and joined chronic disease

management as a critical health education focus. Interventions included traditional information sharing strategies, community organizing and individual and group behavior change therapies. But new health education methods were also being introduced or solidifying their toe-hold in the health and medical communities: audio-visual communication, mass media campaigns, and advocacy. Initiatives were introduced into prisons and other institutions.

Though health education skill and competence requirements clearly were ever-changing depending upon the health issues of the time, the 1978 Health Education Role Delineation Project set out to identify core health education responsibilities. Following the role verification process and the national Conference for Institutions Preparing Health Educators in Birmingham, AL in 1981, the *Framework for the Development of Competency-Based Curricula for Entry-Level Health Educators* was published in 1985. The framework outlined seven areas of entry-level responsibilities for health education specialists, including 79 sub-competencies. The framework gave direction and focus to the professional preparation of health educators and was supported by a new national health education specialist certification exam first administered in 1990.

In the 1990s, involvement in public policy setting became a significant health education skill as chronic and communicable disease management issues were joined by environmental hazard issues. Health education efforts and programs became geared to the home and to pre-school settings. In the past decade, new skills have been integrated into the health educator's repertoire: social marketing; computer technology; distance learning; grant writing; evaluation; translating research into practice; and diffusing best practices. Issues such as crisis management and terrorism, particularly bioterrorism and emergency preparedness have driven most government funding programs.

In 1998 the Competency Update Project began and in 2006 the second edition of the *Competency-Based Framework for Health*

Educators was released by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc.. The framework was reinvented to include 82 sub-competencies with three levels: Entry, Advanced I, and Advanced II. The certification examination was reinvented/revised accordingly in time for the October 2007 test (NCHEC, 2006).

Therefore, if “reinvention” is “in our blood”, is it not wise for us to learn more about and perhaps consider preparing for our own professional reinvention transfusions?

What Does It Mean to “Reinvent Yourself”?

“Reinvention is any type of change, from the material to the spiritual, in which you become a whole person or a different person, hopefully a better person, but certainly a changed person” (Davidson, 2001). Reinvention is about taking charge of who you are and where you’re going and what you’re doing, and it usually involves a willingness to take calculated risks, to start all over again, and to weather some setbacks.

Reinvention is a proactive, not a reactive activity. People who choose to reinvent themselves, for whatever reason, are, by and large, assertive people, with a sense of personal responsibility and accountability for their lives (Chandler, 2004). They reject the role of “victim of circumstance” and assume ownership, if not total control, of situations and set about seeing what they can do about them. They refuse to be part of the problem; they insist, instead, of being part of and often the driving force behind the solution (Chandler, 2004).

Personal reinvention can involve changes in one or more aspects of your life. Reinvention is about shifting, reframing, reformatting, restructuring your perspective, attitude, and actions to whatever degree is necessary in response to a particular trigger. It doesn’t have to imply or involve a wholesale upheaval in who you are and how you do things — though for some of us at some time, it might actually come to that. It can mean adjusting your attitude toward life; your body and the shape it’s in or out of; your relationships or lack thereof with people, your community, your money, any

higher power you might believe in; how and with whom you spend your discretionary time; and, the focus of this article, your work life.

Who Reinvents Themselves and Why?

If you’re thinking about reinventing yourself, you’ll be in very good company. Some well-known people have reinvented themselves — some once, some twice, and some on a regularly ongoing basis. For Michael Jordan, the basketball player turned baseball player, turned basketball player, turned team owner, turned basketball player, “retirement” seems to be just another way to say he’s found another opportunity to reinvent himself. Stars of stage and screen have become members of Parliament (Pollan & Levine, 2003) and presidents.

Bradley Richardson (2004), author of *Career Comeback* says that the average person will have about 11 different jobs in five or six careers, and many others agree (Canada Career Consortium, 1999; The Employment Situation, 2002).

In health education, the stories of reinvention may well be the norm rather than the exception. After a HEDIR (Health Education Directory) posting requesting stories, I was swamped with responses, a few of which I will share with you here to prove Richardson’s point.

Some reinvention postings were about the variety of different jobs you end up having in your life and underscore how settings and job responsibilities shape which of our talents we use when and which we put on hold until they’re needed. For example, do you recognize this health education pioneer and icon: farmhand, bowling pin setter, janitor, timekeeper, experimental farm assistant manager, Marine squad leader, pizza cook, high school drivers’ education and health teacher, Korean high school principal, community college anatomy teacher, professor at five universities in four states, worksite health promotion contract manager, and director of an AIDS education and training center. Hard to imagine he’s kept all that experience under one ten-gallon cowboy hat, isn’t it? (W. Cissell, personal communication, April 28, 2007)

This next health educator is a restless and remarkably energetic and determined woman who recognized and harnessed those aspects of her personality to her advantage early on. "I've had several careers (not just jobs as I was really moving up) but then I also had five different majors as an undergraduate. After 13 years, two children and one divorce, I got my BS degree in health, but spent the majority of my time working in sports medicine. I worked as a pharmacy technician in both a retail and hospital setting after that. Then, I got my MS degree in Exercise Science but spent all my free time/electives in substance abuse (research, not practice!). I became certified through the American College of Sports Medicine as a Health/Fitness Instructor and I also got my CHES during my masters program. I then worked as a fitness specialist and adjunct faculty until I came to Texas to get my Ph.D. in health. I worked as a personal trainer and as a health education specialist while completing that degree. [Since] receiving my Ph.D., I've been a faculty member in health education. Now I'm looking at moving into health policy as I strongly believe that the social determinants of health largely outweigh the individual behavior changes we preach. I've also relocated from Texas to Nevada to Idaho to Texas and am considering moving again. I get bored easily...can you tell?"

Another story is from a health educator who questioned the use of the term "reinvention." "[My] career has translated into having worked 11 distinct jobs in nine different agencies and spending a year self-employed completely outside my professional context. Add to that some very diverse consulting jobs in addition to regular employment and two master's degrees and you have the context of a rich and flexible set of skills. I have managed, taught, designed and researched — all very different skills... I have worked in asthma control, lead poisoning prevention, tobacco control, substance abuse, youth mentoring, college health, childhood immunizations, national service, and HIV/AIDS prevention... Maybe getting a second master's degree was a stab at reinventing, maybe my move to Santa Cruz was another stab at [it] but... I prefer to think of it as a constellation. I

can't wrap my head around the idea of career reinvention. My word would be a *career constellation*" (M. Fulop, personal communication, April 30, 2007).

The fourth contribution, from a health educator who asked to remain anonymous (personal communication, May 1, 2007), also challenged the term "reinvention." "You call it reinvention. I think of it as survival! I started off in a large medical center as a research assistant, and wasn't really fulfilled. I finished grad school and (surprisingly) took those skills to an Instructor position at Cortland State. I married (a major cause of reinvention) and worked as a program coordinator at a college of osteopathic medicine. Most of my reinvention was pragmatic. [First] I needed to support myself and earn a living. I reinvented myself into an adjunct faculty member and learning disabilities tutor. (Out of Ohio on to Massachusetts) I reinvented myself as a program coordinator for a multiple county voluntary health agency, moved up to the state level (WA), and on to the National office (NYC). I got laid off and reinvented myself as a contractor/consultant for community and school health. [Later], with my husband's health issues, I needed to support my family. I have changed work sites over the past 31 years to make that work. Zoomed back to the adjunct world, plus lots of other fascinating "stuff." I actually had a job title of health educator for a while — 2002-2004, at a Children's Hospital. Then I reinvented myself as a Health Marketing Specialist for a State Immunization Registry. My health education skills have always helped, and I've augmented them by additional education/training when needed. They just didn't teach all you need in 2007 when I was in grad school in 1975!"

And sometimes, we reinvent ourselves personally in order to survive professionally. As S.G., a health educator with more than 30 years of experience (S.G., personal communication, May 4, 2007) wrote: "My career as a health educator has been varied — so I guess I reinvented [myself] several times. I went from a volunteer with the Red Cross teaching first aid courses to a part-time staff person with the Red Cross directing the Health and Safety programs

at a local chapter to teaching at a high school, to college level teaching, to a full time curriculum developer with a science education organization (writing the health component of the curriculum) to a project officer at CDC to a consultant, to an Executive Director of a professional association. Is that what you had in mind? I also reinvented myself as I was coping with an adolescent child who was having serious problems. The reinvention was to redirect my thinking from "Why me? What did I do to deserve this?" and a focus on her and her problems to, "What am I supposed to learn out of all this?" It was a huge change and made a big difference in my ability to cope ([though] it did not change her acting out)."

A final story, anonymous because of its sensitivity, (personal communication, May 11, 2007) underscores the importance of doing due diligence before reinventing yourself. This health education graduate student decided to reinvent herself when advised that her current health education professional preparation program would prepare her for great success and great future marketability in another field. She therefore studied for her Certification in Alcohol/Substance Abuse Counseling (CASAC) in addition to health education, only to discover she had reinvented herself into a product that was no more marketable than either profession separately given who decision makers were hiring (clinicians) for counseling positions.

Serial vs. Sequential Reinvention

A final word, if you will, on the concept of reinvention: reinvention need not be sequential — in fact you can and sometimes have to juggle two or more work experiences at a time. Let me explain.

Most of us think of reinventing ourselves as a chronologic process: First, I was "x" and then (for whatever reason) I became "y." Certainly that's one way of looking at it, but many people are not x's or y's. They're "slashes": x/y...two, or even x/y/z three things at once (Alboher, 2007). It's a great way to try out a new career or work challenge when you already have a job but want to consider changing or expanding what you do for financial or personal fulfillment

reasons. It's easiest when you have a "safe" "cushy" job as your "main" or "anchor" job to then add on additional "orbiters" or secondary or separate jobs. At one point I was Karen Denard, program manager/adjunct/graduate student, and later I became Karen Denard Goldman, professor/ author/ speaker/ Broadway musical parody lyricist. My very favorite "slash" person is a health educator I met this past year who, after attending my career development workshop, told me she is a school health educator/ dominatrix. You can't make this stuff up.

If you are a person of many interests or passions, with an entrepreneurial streak, becoming a "slash person" is an important reinvention option. I certainly wish someone had told me about it a long time ago! If you're interested, Marci Alboher's book is a great place to start!

When Should We Reinvent Ourselves?

Most of us assume that we only need to reinvent ourselves when we get fired or when our current self isn't working. Just like Lewis Carroll's immortal *Mad Hatter* who moved down the table every time he made a mess at his seat at the tea party, we think, "Ok, we've made a mess at this job here. Let's dump this persona and move onto the next one" as if the reinvented you is a completely new you with no real connection to the past (failed?) you.

Others of us assume that reinvention is the privileged prerogative of the chosen few: college students, newcomers/initial starters, those in the official "reappraisal age" (about 28-35 years old), the downsized and outsourced, mid-career restructurists (about 40-45 years old), workers taking an early corporate parachute or public service retirees (in their 50's), and/or traditional retirement age workers (65). Certainly there are expected periods of life and career transitions (Kanchier, 2000) and anticipating and preparing for transitions is important and helpful.

However, as the previous personal communications and [Appendix A](#) show, there are dozens of reasons to think about reinventing yourself (Ballback & Slater, 1996; Harkness, 1997; Helfand, 1995; Solovic, 2003). The

reasons can be personal, job-related, organization-related, industry-related, or world-related! Sometimes one at a time — sometimes all at a time.

You probably know the personal and negative triggers (feelings of pessimism, frustrations, dissatisfaction, boredom, feeling unfulfilled, recovering from an illness or disability). These, I suspect, are the most common reasons you'll hear why people reinvent themselves.

The personal and positive may not come as easily to mind, such as when you come back to work after a hiatus, you have a creative spurt, you recognize that you have some skills or talents you weren't aware of previously, your self-awareness grows through therapy, you want or need more money, you become free(r) in some way, you finish a training program, or you simply feel you need a break/to do something different. These come out of a positive place and are usually overlooked.

At a "higher" level, there are positive and negative job-related experiences that can trigger a desire or need for reinvention. Your job might be eliminated, the work becomes boring, your skills aren't being used or salaries get cut. On the positive side, sometimes you get to reinvent yourself — see, not just have to, but get to — you're your job is expanded — you get to do more — or enriched — you get to go deeper into a responsibility.

Higher still are the positive and negative organizational, industry and societal-level triggers. Again, we're probably more familiar with the negative reasons for reinvention, but should take time to tune into the positive ones.

Transitions as triggers are usually obvious, but some are less so. We recognize transitions or milestones such as graduation, marriage, birth, death, divorce, promotion, and being let go. Other transitions include career stage transitions as mentioned above.

Finally, please note that reasons for reinvention, whatever they are, are relative. Some reasons are internal — related to developmental issues in

your life — and some are external — trends in society and other things we have no real control over (Helfand, 1995). The triggers listed may be either positive or negative depending on the people involved on the situation. For example, a change in supervisor may be a reason for reinvention for one person and a positive trigger for another.

Reinvention Pre-requisites

While there are plenty of reasons to reinvent yourself, doing it is not easy. Many times you know you need to act and yet you just can't. What gets in the way of successful reinvention?

The 12 closed doors to successful reinvention described by Pollan and Levine (2004) are: thinking you're too old; thinking reinvention is too great a financial risk; thinking a successful transition will take too long; waiting for permission from others to change; believing that you're not living in the right place or that you're not physically fit enough to make the change, or that you don't have enough or sufficient education and training, or that you haven't got what it takes to pull off the reinvention, or that you might fail, or that you might succeed. And some of us are simply too pessimistic or fatalistic to take the next step. Mostly, we need the courage of our convictions (Helfand, 1995). The "wrong" motivator or drive can become a quagmire, pulling you down, down, down, rather helping you up, up, and out! Envy of someone else and feeling unappreciated or undervalued and bitter is not the stuff of which substantive reinventions are made. So, make sure you have a personally compelling, meaningful, and relevant reason to reinvent yourself.

Sometimes our lack of courage is evidenced by a tendency to procrastinate constantly putting off the reinvention process. Or, as NCAA coach Lou Holtz once observed, "When all is said and done, usually more is said than done." Why? Maybe because we don't know what we really want (unclear/unknown goals), or we have so many interests and abilities that we can't seem to commit to any one of them for fear of losing the chance to work in the other areas, or find fault with our alternatives, or because, quite simply, we're insecure and unsure of ourselves.

Reinvention also can be stymied by a fear of change and its consequences known and unknown. We're afraid to take risks (Kanchier, 2000). Though it's change we seek, disruptions of familiar patterns and routines stop some of us dead in our tracks. And what about the consequences of making a change or, my goodness, *changes*? Certainly there are those among us whose fear of the unknown and/or unpredictable effects of change holds us hostage to our present situation. And what about what we'll be giving up? Sure, you really are miserable in your job, but it's your job, you have paid your dues in every sense and have earned the reward of a certain level of job security are you sure you want to give that up? Won't others think you're crazy to, of your own free will, risk job security which is so hard to come by? And what about the financial risk? And loss of status? Are you willing to sacrifice your happiness for the title on the door or your seniority on the floor? Are there too many unknowns? Too many sacrifices?

What about your faith in yourself? Do you trust your own judgment? Do you know your own strengths in terms of your talents, assets, resources, etc.? Do you think you can stand being "new" or at the "beginning" again, even in a higher position? What about having to learn to get along with new supervisors and co-workers? Come to think of it, it's amazing anyone ever moves on, isn't it?

Fear is a huge factor (Helfand, 1995). In fact, the biggest barriers to reinvention include three of our biggest fears: fear of change; fear of failure; and fear of success. Add to that perfectionism; and anxiety, stress, or depression, and it's amazing anyone reinvents themselves at all.

What a successful the topic "fear of failure" has become. There are hundreds of books published on failure! I recommend anything that helps you see failure as a lesson learned about what doesn't work and a chance to make lemonade out of lemons. Remember, 3M post-its were the result of a failed Research and Development glue project!

And what if we do succeed? Oh, my, then what will we do? What *else* have we missed? Can we stand the guilt? Can we live happily ever after in our new situation? Will our colleagues who we left behind make our lives miserable? Can we stand the fact that we did well?

How many of us don't dare take that training job, or do a workshop on evaluation, or draft a proposal, or draw up a program budget because we know we won't do it perfectly and don't want anyone to see us performing at less than a perfect level? Or is it just me? Remember the saying, "Use what talents you possess: the woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best" by Henry Van Dyke?

As well, anxiety, stress, and/or depression are immobilizing and the cycling is relentless: you have done nothing so you feel depressed, stressed or anxious, which makes you more depressed, stressed, or anxious, which freezes you completely.

Two other quick points that might explain people's reluctance to reinvent themselves. First, reinvention requires calculated risk taking and making trade-offs (Griffiths, 2001): giving up one desired value for another. Second, successful reinvention requires self-awareness or self-knowledge (Helfand, 1995). Some typical trade-offs made during reinvention are nonmonetary, such as identity issues, others' expectations/disappointments, and self-esteem. Others are clearly financial, such as salary, insurance, and other benefits. Having created and studied the tradeoff list, try working through this "To Do" list (Helfand, 1995) before making a reinvention decision:

1. Identify your significant life experiences
2. Create a list of transferable/functional skills
3. Categorize transferable/function skills into clusters
4. Identify your specific content/special knowledge
5. Prioritize them according to what you'd like to see involved in your next career
6. Identify issues about which you are passionate

7. List products/program/services/causes you might like to work with or help create
8. Identify your life values
9. Identify your work values
10. Assess your adaptive/self-management skills – personal traits and qualities reflecting how you adapt to and survive in your environment as well as the style in which you use your other skills to accomplish what you set out to do
11. Bring together 3, 5, and 10
12. Decide what new skills you need/want to learn
13. Convert perceived negatives into positives
14. Plan for dealing with personal and professional limitations

As Harvard professor Herminia Ibarra's studies (2003) have shown, reinvention unfolds through phases. Understanding and anticipating these phases can help pave the rough path though there will always be bumps before you get on your way, along the way, and after you think you've "arrived." The four steps, as shown in [Appendix B](#) below are: exploring who you are and who you have the potential to be; testing your possible selves the older ones and the new ones; finding and building congruence between who we think we are and what we do; revising our priorities, assumptions, and self-conceptions as we learn from our experiences.

Conclusion: Tips for Successful Reinvention

This article on reinvention has not been about how to win friends and influence people at work by reinventing yourself so that you "belong" or fit in to every situation in which you find yourself or so that you can accommodate every single person you meet at the cost of your own identity — not to mention your mental, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical health. We are not talking about day to day interactions and group dynamics — though someone probably has and we could all benefit from reading about it!

What we have discussed here is the benefit of assuming a "poised to plunge" stance (Goldman, 2007; Harkness, 1997; Ibarra, 2003) in which you are constantly on the alert and ready to anticipate or react resourcefully. Being able to

reinvent yourself is key to realizing your full potential, which I hope is at least part of the reason why we work.

In terms of work, each of us has our own definition of success, our own standards by which we evaluate how well we're doing. Our measures of work success might be: the salary we make; the title we hold, the "perk package" that comes with the job; the status of the organization that employs us; the power we wield; the visibility and recognition we have; the sense of belonging or accomplishment or of being valued we experience on the job, or of making a difference in the world. When we're not achieving our definition of success, we begin to think about why, and what, if anything, we want to do about it. If we decide to take action, we usually end up, in one way or another, reinventing ourselves.

So, in closing, let me leave you with a few hard-earned and learned tips for successful reinvention:

Understand why you are reinventing yourself, because the reasons why people reinvent themselves are good predictors of how successful they will be in their new incarnations (Ibarra, 2005).

Transform a negative work-loss experience into a positive personal and professional growth opportunity. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, "No one can make me feel inferior without my permission." Being fired isn't the end of the world — and believe me, I know. Use or reframe the forced "down time" as an opportunity to take a long-overdue sabbatical and to develop a "slash" career.

Successful reinvention depends on how you see yourself. We can see ourselves as "victims" or "owners" (Chandler, 2005). This also means being able to see yourself clearly and candidly — no holds barred. So if you need to ask others to give you feedback, don't be shy. It's one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself.

Think of yourself as having multiple dynamic personalities and identities. As Chandler says

and others have confirmed through research, “We don’t have permanent personalities, we have shifting patterns of thought.” (Chandler, 2005; Harkness, 1997; Ibarra, 2003). If you see yourself as one particular personality type (e.g., shy) or as one kind of practitioner or job title, you associate specific attitudes and behaviors with that label, and that either paralyzes you or seriously restricts the range of reactions you can have in response to different situations. If, however, you are open to the idea that people have multiple personalities and can have multiple work identities, you have many more reaction choices.

It will be easier than you think because you’ve probably already done it a few times but just didn’t know it. The fact is, we reinvent ourselves every day sometimes many times in a single day. One minute you are providing sensitive guidance, coaching, and feedback to staff members; the next you are righteously, relentlessly, resolutely, and often rabidly arguing for increased government funding for a threatened public health project. It’s not a question of *can* you reinvent yourself you, every day. The question is, can we do it in terms of our work life and when should we?

Every reinvention is not going to be a great success, but it certainly will teach you something, if you’re paying attention. I used to consider needing to move on as failure, but I’ve

learned to see these experiences as positive lessons in what doesn’t work for me or what doesn’t contribute to my growth, development, and personal fulfillment.

Don’t reinvent yourself in anyone’s images but your own. Looking for a work change role model is fine. Look for similarities in motives and trajectories rather than work setting or magnitude of change. However, remember: people have different motivations, different degrees of clarity about where they want to go and the self or selves they want to be. Be *your selves*. (yes, that’s the right way to write what I mean.)

Read more about reinvention — This is a fascinating idea and much as been written. Start with the references here and see where that leads.

And finally, no matter when, where, why, and how and into what you reinvent yourself, *enjoy the exciting dimensions of who you are that are revealed in each reincarnation!*

I have learned these the hard way because career development was not a major professional preparation topic earlier in my careers. I hope this and future articles on career development will help make your paths, however crooked, somewhat smoother.

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Appendix A

Reinvention Transitions and Other Triggers

Appendix A-1 Positive Reinvention Motivators

Personal	Job Related	Organization-Related	Industry-Related
Return to work after hiatus	Job – Positive	Growth/expansion/new options	
Creative spurt	Job expanded	New management/new values	New research
Recognition of skills/abilities	Job enriched	Company values sabbaticals	New theories
Graduating/a new degree	You resigned	Early retirement packages	New practices
Self-awareness/therapy insight	Supervisor change	Reputation improves	New levels of certification
You're not growing any more	Management change	Positive policy changes	New/revised standards
Want/need more money			Accreditation of prep programs
Want/need different lifestyle			Technology changes
Financial windfall			
Changes in partner's life			
Someone challenges you			
New priorities/values			
Wake up call – traumatic event			
Need to rebel			
Sense that time is flying by			
New freedom/fewer ties			
An inspiration			
Need a change			
You move			
Completed training			
Need a challenge			
At top of salary range			
Need a break from usual work			
Feeling something's missing			
Entering a school program			
Seeing retirement as a chance to try something new			

Appendix A-2
Negative Reinvention Motivators

Personal	Job-Related	Organization -Related	Industry-Related
Pessimism	Job eliminated	Benefits decreased	Field has stopped growing
Frustration	Job tedious/boring	Fired with cause	Competing professions
Feel unappreciated	Job not challenging	Fired without cause	Fewer preparation programs
Depression	Work environment hazardous	Downsized	Fewer job opportunities
Want revenge	Hours unsatisfactory	Forced retirement	Technology changes
Sense of being a failure	Dress code annoying	Age: retirement time	Paraprofessionals used
Dissatisfaction	Unpleasant co-workers	Glass ceiling	Cuts due to societal trends
Anger	Unfair/restrictive supervisor	Organizational shake up	Accreditation of prep programs
Illness or disability	Skills not used on the job	Tired of working for others	
Recovery from illness/disability	Requires nothing you value	Employer relocates	
Limited by illness/disability	Salaries cut	Request for raise denied	
Feeling stagnant	Little job security	Request for promotion denied	
Boredom	Supervisor change	Opportunities are limited	
Feel unfulfilled	Management change	Corporate reorganization	
Life cycle transitions	Failed business venture	Limited learning opportunities	
Death anxiety	Can't tolerate bosses	Unappealing position options	
Overvalued self	Don't want to be retrained	Lateral move denied	
Think you could do it better	Tired of competing with others	Career blocked by coworker	
		No recognition of work	
		Forced retirement	
		"Fat" being trimmed	

Appendix B

Summary of the Transition Process and Practices That Promote Successful Reinvention
(adopted from Ibarra, 2003, p. 12)

