

ASK THE CAREER COACH: HOW DO I REINVENT MYSELF?

What's the best way to change your work life to fit with your current personal life?

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Dear Career Coach Lisa,

I am trying to reinvent myself so that I don't have to work the long hours and can spend more time with my family. My question is about how to really go about doing this—what are my options? What fields could I transition into? I really feel that I am having a mid-life crisis and could use direction but I am not so sure where to turn or which way to go. And I am sure that I am not alone in this and that there are many women returning to the work force with similar concerns to mine.

Thanks,

J.T., Millburn

Take time to reflect on your education, your work and life experience. How do these blend with your current interests? The key here is to leverage your past experiences with your future interests and passions. Evaluate your skills and abilities and think about what you do best. What do you enjoy doing? What do others tell you that you do well? This will give you a sense of your strengths to build on as you identify new possibilities.

Identify contacts within your network who can help introduce you to others in your target area of interest. Begin by networking within the industry you have identified.

Consider the following:

- Attend seminars, webinars, and other related events to build up your knowledge of the industry "speak." It will help you when speaking with hiring managers.
- Network at related professional association meetings.
- Join LinkedIn Groups and read the discussions to better understand what current trends, interests and priorities are in the new targeted industry.
- Volunteer to learn new skills and expand your network.
- Return to work through a staffing agency on a temporary basis. This will allow you to try a new work environment so you can determine the fit. As a company gets to know you, the better your chances are of negotiating a creative alternative work arrangement.

All of these options allow you to develop new relationships, learn and update your skills. To further evaluate your skills, you may consider working with a certified career coach to complete a formal skills assessment and help guide you in new career directions specific to your strengths.

A study about work-family issues conducted by the Pew Research Center and reported by Reuters, indicated “most people thought women should work, with 75 percent rejecting the idea that a woman's place is in the home. Although women account for nearly half of the U.S. workforce, many feel conflicted about the competing roles at work and at home, feeling guilt about how they are balancing work and children. But despite these pressures and conflicts, working moms, overall, are as likely as at-home moms and working dads to say they're happy with their lives,” the researchers said in a statement. They found “36 percent of working mothers were very happy with their lives—the same as at-home mothers.”

Success is individually defined based on your own value system and needs. Most working moms juggle their priorities and are constantly rebalancing to make it work!

"Ask the Career Coach" is a column dedicated to those who may be in transition or wrestling with a career dilemma by providing a forum for advice. We welcome your questions. Please send them to CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com.

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