



Questioning the Career Path

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Art Waskey

Art Waskey is a speaker who truly delivers.

In addition to a 45 year career in sales and marketing, Art is the author of multiple books on selling and a monthly column *The Art of Sales*.

He shares these insights as an in demand event and conference speaker as well as leadership coach.

A man confided in me that he felt lost in his sales career. He was working for an international company and climbing the ladder of success. While only in his mid-thirties, he believed he was already burning out. He was working hard but felt unsatisfied and trapped by the trimmings of his accomplishments. A sense of emptiness haunted him. He was searching for greater meaning in his life.

During my long career in sales and executive leadership I have heard this refrain from numerous people. Many have approached me with concern about their career path and whether this was what they were meant to be.

We all have a deep seated desire to know what we are designed to become in life. In his book *“The 8th Habit”* (The 8th Habit), Stephen Covey called this seeking your voice. I’ve heard that longing described in a number of other ways, such as finding your signature strength, seeking your

passion, and discovering greatness.

Determining your sweet spot

How do we determine our sweet spot, that place where contentment resides? I find the search for your comfort zone starts with gradually changing habits. Consider the words of Abraham Lincoln, “The dogma of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present.” (abrahamlincolnonline.org)

To accept the past you must think in a new way. You need to develop a new mindset and rethink how you apply the skills you have acquired. This is difficult to do as it moves you out of your comfort zone. A new reality will eventually emerge, however, along with a new challenge. Both will be worth your effort.

Start the journey

The journey to find your comfort zone starts by asking some critical questions:

- What do you do better than the people around you?



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- What do you do without effort?
- What do you do without being asked?
- What do you do readily without getting paid?
- What do you do that highly energizes you?

When you have answered these questions you are ready to develop new habits. **Stephen Covey said that habits lie at the intersection of knowledge, attitude, and skill.** As we develop these three dimensions, we increasingly become equal to new challenges and gain possibilities.

Habits to develop

Reading for knowledge – From Robert F. Kennedy, “Some men see things as they are and say why. I dream of things that never were, and say why not.” To answer the “why not”, we must be life-long learners. Start with reading every day. Focus on subjects that motivate you. For me it’s leadership, sales, and theology. Reading a book on a subject that interests you feeds your inner longing and helps answer that “why not”.

Bettering your attitude

How do you feel when you get up in the morning? If you can’t wait to engage in your work, your world is in alignment. Heart-felt commitment energizes you. When I meet someone who isn’t

excited about his/her career, I ask them what they are passionate about. If you are out of alignment, you need to identify what you want to do and develop the habits to attain your goal. It may mean starting an avocation while you are still working in your current vocation. I became a public speaker while I was still very active in my sales career.

Developing skills

Work on developing the right set of habits that foster your unique talents and tap into what motivates you. This will make a difference. I recently met a man who was a construction supervisor for a client who greatly admired his skill-set. The client was forming a new division and, noting the man’s talents, offered him a job that would maximize those skills. Regardless of what you are doing now, practice the habit of sharpening the skill-set that gives you the greatest sense of accomplishment and reward.

Leave a legacy

Deep within each of us is an inner longing to live a life of greatness and contribution – to leave a legacy. Strive to develop the knowledge to recognize your path, the courage to take it, and the talents that enable you to be all that you can be.

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Search for greater meaning in your life
2. Your comfort zone starts with gradually changing habits
3. Ask critical questions
4. Continue to learn, search for the right path, and develop your talents
5. Leave a legacy of greatness and contribution