

Career Transition Step 1: Take a “Transition” job!

By Keri B. Coffman-Thiede, CPCC

Have you ever noticed how your job can be all consuming, even when you don't like your job, or perhaps I should say, *especially* when you don't like it. When this happens, a huge portion of your time, focus and energy is going toward something you don't even like! I found myself living in this nightmare a few years ago and I often caught myself saying things like, “This just doesn't make sense to be this unhappy and this stressed out over a job I don't even like!” It is really ridiculous to live this way when you understand that when your time, energy and focus is on work you don't like, there isn't much opportunity for work you do like to happen in your life. In other words, nothing is going to change until something changes.

Consider replacing your stressful, all consuming job with a “transition” job. A transition job is work that is easy, you CAN'T take it home with you, and your career aspirations are in no way tied to it. For example, I used to be a recruiter. I called myself “a recruiter”. I felt loyal to the organization and incredibly responsible for filling their / my open positions. My ego and sense of self was wrapped up in this work – work that stressed me out and I didn't find personally satisfying. Then, I took a customer service position in the same organization and life changed.

This “transition” job was a drop in status, responsibility, stress and pay AND allowed me the space for the work I DID want to come into my life. I literally could feel my muscles relax more and more as each month passed in this new, easy job. By about the fourth month, I had new energy and was interested in exploring what I would really like to do for work. Eight months into this transition job, the answer hit me as clearly as if it were written in the sky...I'm a coach! The great thing about this transition job is it also allowed me the time and energy to then pursue my dream job. I spent the next 2 years in this transition job while I got my training and certification in coaching and starting my own practice.

The importance of a transition job is not the work of the job itself but the abundance of time and energy it gives back to you to use toward what matters more to you. Imagine what may be possible if you freed your evenings, weekend and possibly some week days from work related stress. What if you had an extra 10-20 hours a week to put time, energy and focus toward listening to and responding to your heartfelt interests and passions? What would you be willing to change in order to allow yourself this opportunity?

Where to find transition jobs

Just about any job can be a transition job for someone as long as it meets three requirements:

- 1) You feel ease about the work itself. From the beginning, you're confident that you'll become proficient and competent in the job in a relatively short amount of time.

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- 2) You can't take this work home with you. In other words, when your shift is over, you go home and the undone work becomes someone else's to do list. The work becomes yours again, only when you return on your next shift.
- 3) The job is not something you view as a potential career aspiration. You don't see yourself wanting to strive and move up the ladder in this job. You want to keep it as a job that serves a higher purpose; it supports you in finding your true career aspiration.

The other key to a good transition job is that it helps you cover some or all of your financial needs. When you're making a transition it's a good idea to reduce frivolous spending, and consider using your savings to offset costs not covered by your job. Do the numbers and decide what combination of spending you are comfortable with then determine the amount of pay you want this transition job to provide you.

Healthcare is a great place to find transition jobs. While there are many healthcare jobs that require years of education and specialized training, there are also many support jobs that are willing to train as long as you have basic computer literacy and great customer service skills. Healthcare jobs offer a lot of flexibility with work hours. Hospitals staff around the clock and you receive extra pay for working evenings, nights and weekends. Also, hospitals offer opportunities to work as little as 2 shifts a month, as well as offer shifts that range from 4 hours – 40 hours per week. The best part is most hospitals provide full benefits for part-time (20 hours/ wk) employees! Finally, if you find that a specialized healthcare job (such as RN, ultrasonographer, etc) IS the career you truly want, often hospitals offer programs that help pay for part or all of the training.

Check out your local healthcare jobs online this week! Start imagining what might be possible for you!

Refocusing your extra time, energy and attention

It is one thing to have a goal and completely another to give yourself the support to attain it. Matter of fact, until you give yourself support to attain your goal, it remains just a wish and a hope. If you are going to take the step of taking a transition job, then you are making a real commitment to re-prioritizing your time and energy. It's essential that you put in place structures that help you attain what you want from having this extra time and energy.

Here are some suggested structures to put in place:

- 1) Hire a coach to help you get clear and consistently move toward attaining what you want out of allowing yourself this extra time and space. There will be a tendency at first to treat your transition job like you did your old stressful, all consuming job. Regular meetings with your coach will help support you to allow yourself to let go of the old work habits and allow yourself to start to refocus your attention on how you spend your time NOT working. If relaxation, time to explore interests, trying something new, or discovering your true career path are

- goals for you during this transition job, your coach can support you in creating and implementing a plan that allows you to achieve these things.
- 2) Take a class for fun. Community classes such as University mini courses and Community Ed classes offer everything from dancing and kayaking to writing a book and speaking a foreign language. This regular scheduled “playtime” is part of breaking the old habit of work, work, work, AND has the added benefit of allowing you to explore an interest that may be connected to a passionate career path for you.
 - 3) Join a career transition group. Find others who are also committed to transitioning to a career that is more in line with their whole life and are actively exploring their passion. Make sure this isn't a group that gets together to commiserate but rather is supportive and encouraging of each other's dreams and goals. I currently offer a group coaching program called “Finding and Following your Passion.” To learn more, visit my website, www.amazeyourself.net.

I encourage you to let go of the idea that somewhere between the stresses of your current job and running through the rat race of life, your passion will suddenly appear to you. It won't. Passion doesn't show up in the same hemisphere as stress, chaos and running frantic. You have to be willing to let go of those things to find your passion. A transition job can be a bridge that allows you to move from a job you know you don't like to the one you know you've been always been wanting but didn't realize it until you took the time to look and cross the bridge that led to it.

About the Author

Keri Coffman-Thiede is a Certified Professional Co-Active Coach who specializes in helping people find and follow their passion. She has worked as a recruiter and staffing manager before creating her own career coaching practice, Amaze Yourself Coaching. Her coaching certification has been received from the prestigious Coaches Training Institute. Keri works with clients who are ready to go beyond making a living and coaches them to make career choices that are personally meaningful and financially rewarding. Some of her clients include artists, entrepreneurs, healthcare professionals, teachers, college students, and business professionals wanting to align their work with their passion. Keri's services include individual coaching, group tele-classes and freelance writing. To learn more, visit her website, <http://www.amazeyourself.net>. To schedule a complementary coaching consultation, contact Keri at amazingu@merr.com.