Creating an Intelligent Career in the Midst of Uncertainty and Change

Dr. Norman Amundson
University of British Columbia
amundson@interchange.ubc.ca
The Intelligent Career, (Arthur, Claman & De Fillippi, 1995)

Pursuing an Intelligent Career

Knowing WHY

Knowing HOW

Knowing WHOM
Knowing Why

- Finding meaning and purpose
- Making a difference
- Contributing
- Finding your passion
- Addressing significant values
Knowing How

• Skill Development
• Lifelong learning
• Formal and informal education
• Work Experience
• Volunteer Experience
Knowing Whom

• Relationships
  – Colleagues
  – Staff
  – Managers
  – Clients
  – Social
Expanding the Intelligent Career Model to Include Uncertainty and Change

An Expanded Horizon
The 3 M’s of Career Development,
(Amundson, 2008)
Breaking the Mold

- Rigidity
- Repetition
- Constancy
Flexibility

• Innovation/ Creativity
• Exploring New Possibilities
• Pioneering
• Risk Taking
• Resilience
• Accepting Uncertainty and Paradox
Avoiding Mould

- Passivity
- Low Self Esteem
- Pawn
Health

• Balanced Living
• Knowing When to Stop or Slow Down
• Managing the Workload
• Seeking the Optimal Level of Challenge
• Optimism
• Agency and Self-efficacy
Beyond Mole-d

- Poor vision
- Tunnel vision
- Random activity
Vision: Sight and Insight

- Expanding Perspective
- Acquiring Information
- Anticipating Change
- Awareness of how the Self and the Organization are Changing
- Spiritual Vision - finding one’s calling
Expanding Horizons

Knowing WHOM

Knowing WHY

Knowing HOW

MOLE-D

MOULD

VISION

FLEXIBILITY

MOULD

HEALTH

2008
Practical Application: Up, up and away!

- Imagine that you have a series of hot air balloons (Why, How, Whom, Vision, Flexibility, Health) to float over some of the life / career problems you are facing.
- Construct a drawing of the balloons you are currently holding. How much air is in each of them? You may also want to represent the balloons using different colors and/or shapes.
UP, UP, AND AWAY – Career Self Assessment

Knowing Why
Knowing Whom
Knowing How
Vision
Health
Flexibility
Creating versus Problem Solving
Problem Solving

• Take a moment and think about a difficult problem in your life and how you need to problem solve the solution.
• What are your thoughts and feelings when you focus on a problem in this way?
Creating

• Take a deep breath, and shift to something that you’d love to create – something that you would love to make happen, but haven’t yet had the opportunity to realize your dream.

• What thoughts and feelings are associated with this scenario?
Problem Solving

Many people feel -

• discouraged
• overwhelmed
• anxious
• dispirited
• hopeless
Creating

People often feel -

• energized
• hopeful
• excited about the possibilities
• ready to make it happen.
A Creating Focus

• To transcend problems and complexity, shift your focus from solving problems to creating what matters. When you get it right, your problems will shrink, even dissolve. With a creating focus, you’re more relaxed, better able to flow.

(Bruce Elkin, Simplicity and Success)
Problem Solving / Creating

• Problem solving more linear / less flexible
• More positive energy when creating
• Problem solving more focused on temporary solutions
• Creating is less win / lose oriented – focused on the journey as well as the end result
Questions to Ask

• What matters to you and what type of life would you like to create for yourself?
• What needs to be done in order to get there – to make this a reality?
• What is the first step that you need to take?
Walking the Problem

• Starting from the position of having successfully realized the goal
• Creating new patterns: Getting ‘unstuck’ - twisting and turning
Developmental Considerations
Moving In

• Is this the right field, organization, and / or job for me? Will it meet my needs?
• How can I best fit with this group? Will they accept me for who I am?
• I’m not sure I know everything. How can I get help when I need it?
Moving Through

- What’s the best way for me to further develop my skills?
- Is this still right for me? Do I need to move on to something else?
- How can I be strategic in getting ahead in this organization or field?
- How can I make sure that I won’t burn out? Or, how do I keep myself challenged with this work?
Moving Out

• When is the best time for me to go?
• How can I pass on some of my knowledge to others?
• How can I make sure that I am still learning and challenging myself?
• What do I need to do to prepare myself for leaving?
The Career Journey

Hope / Heroes / Opportunity
HOPE

• Anticipation, future oriented
• Dynamic interaction of thoughts, feelings and actions
• Meaningful to the Person
• Goal focused
With hope, no matter what problems we face today, there are new possibilities for a better tomorrow.
Impact of Hope

• Research on hope indicates that people with a high degree of hopefulness are more likely to be healthier, to be generally more happy in their lives, and to achieve greater success.
HEROES

- Willing to undertake a ‘heroic’ journey
- Courage, persistence and problem solving unexpected challenges
- Accept help from others
Engaging in the Heroic Journey

• Moment of Decision - committed to the task
• Preparation - skills, feedback
• Stepping forward, sideways and sometimes backwards
• Accept help
• Breaks – Rest, Regrouping (planning)
• Goal(s) Reached
Heroic Activities

• Finding and holding a vision
• Accept that there will be problems
• Moving ahead (positive uncertainty / Gelatt)
• Knowing when to shift (don’t wait for a crisis)
  – ‘S’ curve (Handy)
Taking Advantage of Opportunity

- challenges as potential opportunities and barriers
- patience
- engagement in purposeful action
- awareness
- take initiative
- flexibility, adaptability as keys forward
Finding Opportunities

• Planned Happenstance - Luck is No Accident (Mitchell, Krumboltz, Levin)
Supporting Planned Happenstance

1. Curiosity: exploring new learning opportunities
2. Persistence: exerting effort despite setbacks
3. Flexibility: changing attitudes and circumstances
4. Optimism: viewing new opportunities as possible and attainable
5. Risk Taking: taking action in the face of uncertain outcomes
Continuing the Conversation

Dr. Norman Amundson
– University of British Columbia, Canada
– amundson@interchange.ubc.ca

Materials
- www.ergoncommunications.com