How to Network When You Don’t Know What You Want to Do

Sponsored by the Hiatt Career Center at Brandeis University with Anna Graham Hunter
You’re here because

• You want to do something different but don’t know what
• You understand the need to network
What is a DREAM CAREER?
A Dream Career Means . . .

- Work that makes you feel both competent AND challenged
- A sense that you’ve found your people
- Enjoying the path you’re on and knowing that exciting possibilities are ahead
We’ll talk about how to . . .

• Answer the question: “What do you want to do?”
• Network effectively
• Build a community of people committed to your success
• Make sure opportunities keep coming your way
If . . .

- Work is an integral part of your life and means much more than a paycheck
- You have high standards for yourself
- Others would consider you a professional success
But you also . . .

- Have to drag yourself out of bed
- Get a sinking feeling when you head to the office
- Leave work drained & irritable

. . . then I’m glad you’re here
You want to do work that you **LOVE & ENJOY**

... but you’re **scared to make a change** or have **no idea where to start**
PROBLEM

Most Career Advice is WRONG
You think you should be . . .

- Defining your brand
- Hiring a resume writer
- Accepting all promotions
- Looking for open positions
- Following your passion
RESULT

You remain STUCK
You were supposed to have “figured it out” by now
If you stay on the wrong path, either . . .

1. You continue to “succeed” but die a little each day
2. You lose the ability to fake it and everything degenerates
My Mission

Build a career you love BEFORE things start to fall apart
SOLUTION

A Solid

FOUNDATION
OLD MODEL:
Find a job you love and HOPE nothing CHANGES
Career Happiness Model

• Do what you love
• Learn, grow, and CHANGE
• Call your own shots
Danger of INACTION
My Professional Transitions

- Battered women’s advocate
- Middle-school teacher
- Freelance journalist
- Legislative aide
- Campaign manager
- Lobbyist
- Operations manager
- Management consultant & executive coach
- Career Happiness Coach
Sampling of clients from the last few months

- Vice President of Strategic Partnerships (nonprofit)
- Marketing Manager (global food brand)
- Project Director (software)
- Audit Manager (global accounting)
- Lawyer
My Early Career
Landing Jobs ≠ Career Happiness
1. Prioritize Cultural Fit
Cultural Fit = Biggest Indicator of HAPPINESS
A career that looked great on paper . . .
... but was making me miserable
CULTURE =
The way we
do things around here
When the fit is wrong, you think YOU’RE the problem
Feeling

Interactions

Tasks
Why not just follow your PASSION?
If your career is not a FIT . . .

• Work becomes an act
• You think you can hide it
• Colleagues see that you’re faking it
• They lose trust
• You won’t advance
• Your confidence erodes
DISCOVERY
Discovery Questions

• When have you felt most alive at work?
• What were you doing?
• Which colleagues have brought out the best in you?
• In which environment have you been most productive?
Talk to friends, colleagues, and former colleagues
When have you seen me shine?
JOB LISTINGS
GOAL of Discovery:
To create a framework so you know what to look for
2. Explore your options
Knowing your FIT allows you to explore a world of possibilities.
What Do You Want to Do
Statement

“After several years of . . . [highlight what you’ve accomplished and learned]”

“I’m now exploring opportunities that will allow me to . . . [describe tasks, people, and environment that comprise your FIT]”
Kim’s What Do You Want to Do Statement

After spending three years in investment banking, followed by four years building out a project finance team within a solar energy company, I decided to pursue my interests in entrepreneurship within the food and hospitality industries. Now that I’ve spent a couple of years working in start-up environments building new businesses, I am exploring roles that will allow me to wear my financial, project management, and business development hats to contribute to the growth of an organization.
Exploratory Networking

Talk to friends and acquaintances to learn:

• Where they work
• What their friends are doing
• Who you should talk to next

... all based on the FIT you’re looking for
DON’T ask about open positions!
What does networking even mean?
Networking:

WORK-FOCUSED conversations with the intention to learn
GOAL of Exploration:

To assess a variety of possibilities according to your ideal FIT
3. Choose a direction rather than a final destination
There's no HOLY GRAIL of Career Happiness
Targeted Networking

Talk to friends, acquaintances, and strangers to learn what you need to do to get where you want to go.
DON’T ask about open positions!
I’m interested in learning more about . . .
Is it OK to at least apply for open positions?
80% of jobs are NEVER EVEN POSTED
Most listings DON’T REALLY EXIST
STOP pursuing positions
Become the one WHO IS PURSUED

Talk to organizations BEFORE THEY HIRE
Your Network ISN’T Limited
Conversations

Momentum

Mojo

Inside track
Secret Weapon: EFFECTIVE Conversations
Effective Conversations

1. Target the right people at the right stage
2. Set a clear intention
3. Send an email that will lead to a call
4. Know what you’re going to say
Who Do You Talk to When?

(General rule: avoid advice givers)

1. Good listeners and creative thinkers
2. People who are doing interesting work
3. People who know people who are doing interesting work
4. People who might be in a position to hire you
What’s Your Intention?

I’d like to . . .

• Bounce some ideas off you
• Learn more about your work
• Tell you what I’m up to and get your thoughts on other people in X industry I might reach out to
• Get your thoughts on how someone with my skills and experience might fit in your organization or industry.
What Do You Say in the Email?

1. Explain your intention
2. Ask for a 20-minute call
3. Include a short sentence about yourself
So-and-so suggested I reach out to you to see if you'd be willing to schedule a 20-minute phone call so I could learn more about your organization and what you do.

After many successful years in advertising, I'm currently exploring opportunities that will allow me to use my creative and relationship building skills to contribute to the growth and improvement of an organization.

Please let me know if you have time for a call in the next couple of weeks.

Thanks,
What Do You Say on the Phone?

1. Ask if it’s still a good time to talk
2. Thank them for taking the time
3. State your intention
4. Tell them What Do You Want to Do (use your statement)
5. Ask your first question
How important is your resume?
GOAL of Targeted Networking:
To land your dream job
4. Keep an eye on your next step
• The WORLD changes
• The ORGANIZATION changes
• YOU change
It’s not your organization’s JOB to take care of you
The trap of being INDISPENSIBLE
“No one else can do what YOU do!”
Dream jobs don’t stay dream jobs.
Where might this lead?

What do I need to do to make sure I have the freedom to continue doing what I love?
From the start, I was preparing to LEAVE
Luck = Preparation + Opportunity
“I’ll never have to look for another job ever again because they will keep coming to me.”
What is it costing you to stay where you are?
You…

• See your career as an opportunity for challenge and growth
• Are ready to take action and want help
• Believe you can make positive change for yourself
http://www.annagrahamhunter.com/freesession/
Next Steps

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• Register for our December webinar:
  
  **Beyond Academia: Strategies for Humanities & Social Science PhDs**
  Presenter: Joshua Cracraft, PhD’14
  Tuesday, December 8, 2015
  12:00 – 1:00 p.m. EST
  [https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4625125717847748866](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4625125717847748866)

• Join the *Brandeis University Career Connections* group on LinkedIn:
  – [https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1117347](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1117347)

• Brandeis undergraduate alumni:
  – Call **(781) 736-3618** to schedule a free **career advising appointment** (in-person, phone or Skype)
Contact the Hiatt Career Center

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