

So You Know What You Want... Now What?

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By Claudette Rowley

"When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hang on a minute longer, never give up then, for it is just the place and time that the tide will turn."
— Harriet Beecher Stowe

Most of my clients hire me because they want to answer the question "What's next?" They feel dissatisfied with their current job or life situation, but aren't sure what would satisfy them.

They make lots of wonderful and necessary internal changes - reshape their belief systems, overcome obstacles, gain clarity and craft a vision for the future. Then they hit "The Threshold" - that formidable mental canyon that appears once you've identified what you want and blocks you from taking those first steps toward making your dreams real.

Once you know what you want, you must cross The Threshold by taking action. For many people, this is an onerous stumbling block. A new host of fears rush in, making getting started about as easy as taking the first step onto a rickety swing bridge high above your mental canyon. It's common to experience:

- A fear of failure combined with such thoughts as "What if I try out this vision and it doesn't work?"
- A fear of success combined with such thoughts as "What if I bring this idea to fruition and my whole life changes?"
- An amorphous, yet fierce resistance to the task at hand. The kind of resistance that ignites more creative procrastination. (Having exhausted more common forms of procrastination, I've been known to trim my toenails and clean my computer keyboard in an attempt to avoid a task. In fact, I think I see a few specks on my keyboard right now...)

Here's a hint: Dreams and ideas come to fruition through pragmatic action. It's true. You can envision, manifest, pray and meditate on the state of your cuticles until the cows come home. In fact, feel free to do this, but don't expect your dream to come true.

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The Mechanics of Moving Forward

How do you take action in the face of fear and resistance? Here are some concrete steps to take you through the mechanics of moving forward.

A - Acknowledge fear and take action anyway. Action is one of the best antidotes for fear and anxiety. Many people decide that feeling fear indicates an incorrect course of action. Nope - not true. (Note: At the threshold, it's not uncommon for you to feel attached to a specific outcome. Take action and stay unattached to the outcome. We can't predict the results of our actions; results may be immediate or may not trickle down to you until two months or two years later.)

C - Create a community of support. Support is critical. If I counted every time I've told a client "nobody who's successful and accomplished has done it alone," I'd be a very rich woman. If you don't have a

supportive community, build one. Find online communities in your field or areas of interest, visit or join professional organizations, and take a look at your friends and family. Who could you reach out to and ask for support? I recall a time when I needed extra support as I crossed that precarious mental swing bridge between one career and the next. So I asked for it. I identified two people who had room in their lives to give me extra support and I called them and asked for it. They were my lifeline during the few months I needed an extra boost.

T - Take charge. Be a leader in your own life. Set goals. Make decisions. Get clear about what you're trying to accomplish. Can't stand bookkeeping? Hire someone else to do it. Plan. Organize your time. You are the only person who can get yourself where you want to go.

I - Interview and research. If you're at the threshold, chances are you have a thirst for more information whether it's about your career transition into marine biology or your move to Tijuana. Schedule informational interviews. Set aside time to research online and at the library. Read books and magazines in your area of interest. Gathering concrete information is the name of the game.

O - Over-reward yourself. This is hard work! You must reward and motivate yourself. The next time you identify a reward for yourself, I challenge you to double it. If you haven't rewarded yourself yet, you MUST do so immediately, if not sooner. Here's why: living with mentality of abundance is going to take you much farther than a mentality of scarcity ever will.

N - Network, network, network Each time you speak to someone about your dream or idea, make sure to utter the magic words, "Who else should I speak to?" or wording to that effect. To network is the act of building your physical connection to people. When you feel uncomfortable asking others for help, ask them how you can be helpful to them. In fact, no matter what, ask that anyway.

Standing at the edge of going after what you want can be the most challenging phase of transition. You're walking an unsteady swing bridge between where you are and where you want to be. The next time you find yourself on The Threshold between your idea and bringing it to fruition, take a deep breath and focus on this question, "What's my purpose right now?" The answer will take you where you need to go.

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Claudette Rowley is a professional coach, speaker and author who helps savvy professionals like you identify their true purpose and calling and mobilize the courage to pursue it. Sign up for her free monthly ezine "Insights for the Savvy" at

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