

Profiles in Coaching
The 2004 Handbook of Best Practices in Leadership
By Linkage Incorporated (featuring Joel Garfinkle)

Everyone is gifted with talents to reveal to the world. Everyone has something unique that is meant to be known. I help people reach the clarity they need to find their dream job, the work they are meant to be doing. I help people find work that fully utilizes their passions, taps into their innate gifts, and develops their potential.

On the surface, this may seem like a tall order, especially in a tough economy. But lean economic times is actually a perfect time to find a dream job. You can have it all. A difficult job market provides the perfect opening to reexamine what you do for a living, bringing not only financial gain, but also personal and professional satisfaction on all levels. Plenty of people are finding themselves without work, or have been shocked into reconsidering what work they want to do. When people enter this period of transition – where they are evaluating themselves and what they want to do with their lives – this searching is what draws them to me.

Many clients have been working in their current industry for ten+ years, read numerous job books, seen career counselors, switched companies, or tried different positions within the same company. Still, nothing has worked. No matter when a client finally picks up the phone and calls, I always believe the timing is perfect. This may be surprising when you're feeling uncertain and lost, but it's true. Your emotions – whether you're feeling anxious or hopeful – are the fuel you need to commit to a process that ultimately is transforming.

My process focuses on three areas: 1) recognizing your true passions, 2) developing an understanding of your innate gifts and talents, and 3) removing barriers that prevent you from knowing and acting on the first two discoveries (each of which can be difficult). All three areas are useful, but helping a client identify and remove their barriers is particularly impactful. There are always things that hold people back and create limiting perspectives. I teach people how to remove their layers of limitations and reach the essence of who they are.

As a dream job coach, I develop a holistic, encompassing understanding of each client. I don't do any standardized testing. I find that it's more valuable to ask tailored questions that are directly related to each individual client. Based on my work with thousands of other clients, I have a developed sense of what a client needs and why. Typically, my coaching services include three scheduled forty-minute telephone sessions per month, unlimited email correspondence Monday through Friday, and twenty-four hour response time. Ongoing and consistent contact provides my clients with the support they need and encourages them to discuss any concerns that might arise. They also have access to extensive tolls and resources. Each month, there is adequate time set aside for clients to assimilate and digest the information that they have learned.

Metaphorically speaking, I shake a person's tree from the trunk because we never know which falling leaf will provide the greatest insights. We review all aspects of a client's life, not just what happens at their desk. From that search, we uncover how their passions and innate talents can best be expressed in the work that they do.

A good career coach changes and adjusts to the needs of their clients. I have personally interviewed with more than 1,200 companies and worked with thousands of clients during the past seven years. As a result, everywhere a client has been or is looking toward, I've already personally explored. This fresh and contemporary professional awareness greatly benefits clients, especially those who already have explored traditional career-planning options.

Coaches must intimately know the work world, but they also must know themselves. Self-awareness allows a coach to step aside from his or her own needs and be fully focused on the client. It's important, too, for coaches to speak the truth to the level that clients are able to hear it. I must be passionate and gentle, but my clients pay me to speak the truth. I can't hold something back. I must deliver what needs to be delivered. A coach must also develop an intuitive ability to understand their clients. My process for gathering data allows me to reach the core of a person's passion or uncover a barrier that has been holding them back.

The best client is someone who possesses a willingness to know him or herself better. The more open they are, the quicker they reach greater depths, and transformation. Invariably, a week or two before people discover and land their dream job they experience a feeling of great resistance. Sometimes they want to stop their sessions, other times they simply go into denial or hide the truth from themselves. There's a level of fear that shows up, just before the future becomes clear. Because I've seen people experience this before and have explained that it would happen from the outset, it's easy for me to encourage clients to keep going.

Ultimately, I recognize success when my clients find fulfilling work, including feeling passionate about your job, loving your work, being inspired at the end of your workday, getting paid well for work you enjoy doing and looking forward to getting to work each day, even Monday mornings. I also measure my impact by how much a client personally gains: Are you more confident? Do you more easily “show up” and take a stand for yourself? Do you know yourself better?

My aim is for people to be actualized. I want them to be, if I can use the term, “actualized.” I want them to show up each day, moment-by-moment, through the work they do. I want people to have a clear purpose. When work is aligned with our true and authentic nature, we impact the lives of those around us on a daily basis. I want people to become more engaged in their lives than they’ve ever been before. When that happens, we’re more balanced and healthy. The talents and gifts we have show up in all areas of our lives, not just at work. That’s the possibility that is available to each and every one of us as human beings. To the extent that I help others become able to touch that potential, I am living my own dream job.