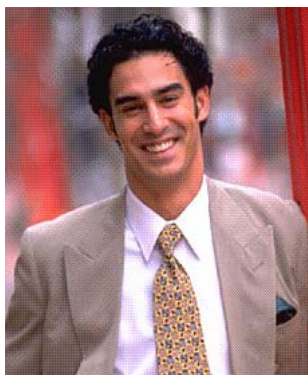


Turning Points

THE HIGHLANDS COMPANY NEWSLETTER

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The Story Of A 'Career Resilient' Businessman



In a workplace where there are few certainties and even fewer guarantees, learning to be a 'career resilient' worker may be the only sound strategy. Career resilience implies taking greater responsibility for present and future employability. *What is career resilience?* It means understanding what you are good at doing, what you want to do and then communicating your skills, abilities, values and goals to the companies you work for.

Two years ago, Mark Schwartz found himself in a dilemma familiar to many people in today's corporate work world. He was working for an international computer company. After 10 years with this company, he began to question whether his personal goals and the goals of the company were in sync.

"I thought I liked what I was doing, I liked my co-workers and clients, the company had been very good to me. I just felt this restlessness and uneasiness I couldn't put my finger on."

These feelings are pretty common for most people Mark's age. At 33, he was passing through what is called the Age 30 Assessment - one of the 6 Turning Points individuals regularly go through as part of natural growth and development in the adult life cycle. The priority at this time is to evaluate events up to this point and decide what kind of course to set for the next phase - usually the next 10 years.

Mark paid attention to the dissonance he was feeling and decided to be proactive. People confronted with one of life's critical Turning Points typically handle change in one of three ways:

- Group 1: Hold the road. Endure.
- Group 2: Change anything and everything. Now!
- Group 3: Take time for careful introspection, develop a long range plan, implement.

Mark Schwartz took the path of people in Group 3. He decided to enter The Highlands Program's *Personal Strategic Planning Seminar*. "Like a lot of people, I guess, I had never taken the time to sit down and focus on "me" - what I really care about doing, the skills I enjoy using, the pace, the setting, the kinds of people I like to be around."

"I came in with an open mind about outcomes. I did not want to force any agenda. I just wanted to see what came out at the end of all this work." What Mark discovered was that, "I was doing the right kind of work, but in the wrong environment for me. My innate abilities revolve around creative problem solving, strategic thinking, and written and verbal communications. I'm a big extrovert and I place a very high value on building long term, added-value relationships. I really like creative approaches to solving problems."

Mark is now with another high tech company in sales, but he feels the fit is much more in line with his vision of himself and his career goals. "We are a younger, entrepreneurial company. I am able to structure programs and solutions for my clients using my innate creative skills. My clients are happy, and I get to play from strengths and my love. It is truly a wonderful fit."

Our experience shows that people who approach life's Turning Points with a *blueprint* do measurably better. The blueprint should show what they are looking to attain and a plan on how to get there. In the critical areas of satisfaction, balance, and success, the people with a blueprint have a clear and marked advantage over those who either hunker down and gut it out, or those who throw their lives up in the air and attempt to change everything all at once.

Tom Clancy on Dreams:

Some years ago I found myself in a contemplative mood that probably comes to us all at least once a day. I asked myself a question that I had asked myself a thousand times before.

What do I want to be when I grow up?

That was the first time it hit me that I was over 30 and I had a home and a mortgage that goes along with it. I had two cars and two car payments. Two children and the responsibilities they bring. I was in a job that had good moments and bad and, whether I liked it or not, I knew I could not afford to leave.

Finally, the stunning and depressing realization struck me that I was grown up and I wasn't at all what I wanted to be.

I was in a middle-class trap that no one but me had created. I realized that for the rest of my life I would have to get along as best I could. Making my payments, fulfilling my responsibilities and worrying about the future as most of us learn to do.

There were compensations: a wife and children I love, good friends and a reasonably comfortable life - but it was not a pleasant feeling to know that my options had effectively come to an end.

It was even less pleasant to realize that there was no one to blame but myself.

Thank God I was wrong.

Because there was a way out of the trap. It took me a few years to find it, but it had always been there, always waiting to be discovered.

It was built on a dream.

Something I had always wanted to do since I was a child, a treasured goal that had been betrayed by the decisions everyone makes and the responsibilities that go along with them.

But each one of us has a dream somewhere inside. Something you want to accomplish for no one else but yourself.

Nothing is as real. The world can change, but your dream will not.

Life may change, but your dream doesn't have to. Because the dream is within you and no one can take it away.

Nothing is more important than finding your dream. It is your most direct link to the person you really are and what you really should be doing.

Find your dream. Find out what it is and then go live it.



“Enough!”

Individuals fighting for balance in the world of work.

How often during the week does your stress level shoot through the roof? Do you ever pause during a typical day at work and think: “It’s not humanly possible to do all I have to do!” You and several million other folks.

Work has always been stressful. If you want to succeed you have to pay the price, any price, right? It’s tempting to feel that no satisfactory answer to this problem exists. Increasingly, however, people of all ages, at varying levels of roles and responsibility, in Fortune 500 companies and small, family owned businesses are saying: “ENOUGH!”

Our point is this: we are not living to work; we are working to live. Said another way, the rewards of our hard work should not be merely more hard work. Over the past 5 years we have consulted with thousands of clients: men and women; people from 21 to 71; high salaried, low salaried; professionals, business people, and company owners from all over the country. The one single prevailing question for each of them is this: Is it possible to have a career that offers meaning and self-expression AND have time to devote to family and other interests. In a word: is it possible to find BALANCE. Can I balance my work goals and my life/family goals?

Our direct experience is that the answer to this question is yes. Absolutely anyone can have a meaningful career and a meaningful personal life. You can achieve this balance at work and at home whether you are just starting out in your career or just closing it up. We have seen client after client accomplish this.

You do NOT have to:

- Be educated at Harvard, wealthy, or lucky
- Quit your job out of total frustration that the pressure will never cease
- Give up all hope of financial security
- Resign yourself to a graduate degree in library sciences in the belief it will give you peace and solitude

What we have found is this: As little as a 10% shift in your thinking about your roles and responsibilities, your travel schedule, your job assignments and a myriad of other factors can result in a 100% shift in how you feel about your work and your life, and in the kind of balance you experience. The problem is knowing which 10% to change.

Every one of us has the right, and the obligation to self, to discover who we are and to figure out how to build a life of purpose, meaning, connectedness and self-expression - both at work and at home.

Is Your Life & Career in Balance?

Circle the number below your answer.

- Do you ever feel exhausted at the end of the business day?

Never	rarely	sometimes	mostly	all the time
1	2	3	4	5
- Do you think about the work you have to do at the office, even when you are at home?

Never	rarely	sometimes	mostly	all the time
1	2	3	4	5
- How many hours do you work in a typical week?

<40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80
1	2	3	4	5
- How many times a month do you work on weekends?

0	1x	2x	3x	4x
1	2	3	4	5
- How many weekends a month can you describe as relaxing or enjoyable?

$\frac{4}{1}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{2}{3}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{0}{5}$
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- How many days a week do you take work home from the office?

$\frac{0}{1}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{2-3}{3}$	$\frac{4}{4}$	$\frac{5}{5}$
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How do you stack up?

Rate yourself on the following scale.

If you score:

- 25-30 You could be experience significant stress in your life.
- 20-24 You have a number of stress factors in your life.
- 12-19 You are clearly trying for balance, and are succeeding sometimes, sometimes not.
- 6-12 You are really working to keep stress in your life in check.
- <6 You are doing a good job of keeping stress in balance in your life.

To complete the Highlands Ability Battery
Contact denise@personalassessments.co.uk
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