

How to GET and KEEP Your Dream Job!

by Mark Matteson

In a recent keynote at a university athletics banquet, I talked about something every graduate wants to know: How to Get and Keep Your Dream Job! Here is what I told the students and coaches. Feel free to pass it on to your children, grandchildren, and nieces and nephews. I wish someone had handed it to me at 18 or 22 years of age.

***Do What You Love**

***Soar With Your Strengths**

***Choose to Have a Great Attitude**

***Smile**

***Show Up Early & Stay Late**

***Volunteer and Stretch Your Comfort Zones**

***Update Your Goals On Your Birthday**

***Commit to Becoming a Lifelong Learner**

***Ask Open Ended Questions and Dominate the Listening**

***It's Not About You!**

Do What You Love

Follow your bliss. Twenty years ago I found mine. I was 32 years old before I determined what was truly my bliss: speaking, writing, and helping others achieve their goals. After reading over 1,000 books, certain questions began to emerge:

1. If every job paid a dollar, which job would you do?
2. What did you LOVE to do at age seven? (Ask your mom.)
3. What specific activity do you engage in that causes time to stand still because you are lost in the joy of it?
4. If a Doctor told you that you had six months to live, how would you spend your time?
5. If you suddenly inherited \$10,000,000 what would you do differently?

Once you answer these questions honestly and thoroughly, simply ask yourself, “What are the common denominators? What is the common thread?” The answer to THAT question is your bliss.

Shakespeare wrote in *Hamlet*, “To thine own self be true.” Most people live their whole life and never surrender to that simple truth.

Soar With Your Strengths

My bliss, my strengths, fall into two categories, writing and speaking. Everything else is a misuse of my time and energy. I outsource and delegate almost everything else. There is an old maxim, “If you try to teach a pig to sing, you waste your time and money.” You also have an angry pig on your hands. My favorite professional question is, “What is the best and highest use of my time?” If you took the time to answer the five Bliss questions, you probably know what your bliss is. Surrender to it. Embrace it. Set goals around it. Study it. Master it.

Choose to Have a Great Attitude

Optimists live longer than pessimists. Guess what? They also have a better time along the way. Ironic, isn't it? Hang around positive people. Make a list of the people with whom you spend most of your time. Write down as many people as you can think of: parents, friends, teammates, acquaintances, teachers, coaches, etc. Now put a (+) or a (-) next to their names. The plus (+) people are SPEEDBOATS. They pull you forward. The negative (-) people are ANCHORS. They drag you down to the bottom with them. Calculate how much time you give each person every week. What percentage of your day or week do you give them? Invest more time with the SPEEDBOATS and less time with the ANCHORS! *You will be the same person in five years but for two things, the PEOPLE with whom you choose to associate and the BOOKS you read.* Read classic self-help literature, inspirational books: *Acres of Diamonds* by Russell Conwell, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie, *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill, *The Richest Man in Babylon* by George Clason, and of course, *Freedom from Fear* by yours truly. Books and people, people and books, and in five years' time...

Smile

It takes 13 facial muscles to smile and 47 to frown. Evidently, some people don't mind the extra work! If you smile long enough, you'll come up with a reason for it. Is a bird happy because he sings or does he sing because he is happy? Act and the feelings will follow. The late Harvard professor and father of American psychology, William James, explained: *Action seems to follow feeling, but really action and feeling go together, and by regulating the action, which is under the more direct control of the will, we can indirectly regulate the feeling, which is not.* In short, develop the habit of smiling four times an hour...just because.

Show Up Early, Stay Late

An airplane goes full throttle until it reaches 30,000 feet, and then the pilot backs off. If he didn't, he would burn up the engines or use up his allotment of fuel. When starting out your career, go full throttle. The late, great business philosopher Jim Rohn said, *A young person brand new to sales can make up in numbers what she lacks in skill.* During my first year in sales, I worked 70 to 80 hours a week. I went full throttle. While my close ratio was only 25 percent, I proposed five agreements a week, twice as many as my peers. I ended the year at 150 percent of sales plan. My sales manager was delighted. The next year, I really began to study the art and science of selling. I asked 20 successful sales professionals in my industry 20 questions. Working about 50 hours a week, I applied their answers and changed my close ratio to 50 percent. I kept studying sales books, attending seminars, and listening to audio programs while I drove and worked out. By my third year, while working about 35 hours a week, my close ratio jumped to 75 percent and I was 300 percent of plan. You get the idea. In any new endeavor, go full throttle until you reach 30,000 feet.

Stretch Your Comfort Zones and Volunteer

The worst advice I received at age 18 from someone older than me was, “Never volunteer for anything.” In my experience, we all need to do the exact opposite. The question I have asked and answered for the last 20 years is, *How can I increase the quality and quantity of my service to others?* I often write that question down in my journal. I sit and THINK on paper. Some days, I come up with twenty answers, while on other days, just a few. Most people are in a rut. A rut is a coffin with the ends kicked out. Say YES to requests, especially when you are new to a job. Go the extra mile with a smile. You will learn so much. Keep track of what you learn in a journal. Get FROM the day or the project, not just through it. Keep stretching yourself in lots of little ways: drive a different way home, eat left-handed, let someone else choose the movie, or read a different magazine. If you read novels, pick up a biography.

Update Your Goals On Your Birthday

“Why my birthday?” you ask. It’s easy to remember. If you don’t update your goals, you run the risk of flattening out, losing your drive and energy. In high school, my magnificent obsession was basketball. When someone asked me what I planned to do after graduation, I said with confidence and naiveté, “Play college basketball!” Guess what? I accomplished that goal, but after one year of junior college, I flattened out, lost all my drive and energy, and left. I joined the Air Force by default. When asked what happened at 19 years of age, I answered, “Beats me.” You see, I goal set TO and not THROUGH. I didn’t think past one year. Most people don’t.

In 1971, the Miami Dolphins lost to the Dallas Cowboys in the Superbowl. When a reporter asked All-Pro linebacker Nick Buoniconti why his Dolphins lost the Superbowl he replied, “I don’t know; we goal set all year long to GET to the Superbowl.” The reporter replied, “You mean you didn’t goal set to WIN it?” Stunned, the former Notre Dame grad said, “My gosh, no....” The next year, the Miami Dolphins went 17-0 and won the Superbowl. You see, if we don’t update our goals each year, we run the risk of flattening out. Update your goals on your birthday.

Become a Lifelong Learner

The word *commencement* is a Middle English word meaning *a beginning, a start*. Upon graduation, shortly after you toss your hat in the air and peel off your gown, celebrate by all means. The next day, get back to work studying, learning, and growing. College should have taught you HOW TO LEARN. It’s simply the beginning, a start. Become a lifelong learner. Read books, listen to audio programs on your iPod, keep a journal, read trade magazines in your chosen field, attend seminars, and find and develop relationships with mentors. Swen Nater chose legendary coach John Wooden over a dozen other coaches and backed up Bill Walton for three years at UCLA. They won back-to-back NCAA titles. He was drafted in the first round 1973 by the Milwaukee Bucks, yet never started a college game! He simply outworked everyone else. When Coach Wooden asked Swen to shoot 100 hook shots with each hand over the summer, Swen told me, “I shot 300 with each hand!” He was so teachable. He was, and still is, the consummate student. Become a sponge. Soak in as much as you can—for the rest of your life.

Ask Questions and Dominate the Listening

When I was young, I thought speaking up and offering my opinion was the way to go. I was anxious to make a favorable impression. One day, the best boss I ever worked for pulled me aside and said with compassion and tough love, “You’re a smart guy. You have a lot of energy. However, you are large, loud, and demanding. We are moving you into the air-conditioning department to work alone.” What I should have done was ask questions, shut my mouth, and listen. When I was a kid in England, my Auntie Laura bought me a bag of candy called “gobstoppers”, giant round balls of sugar. They barely fit in my mouth and lasted for hours. I thought she was being kind, but what she was really doing was teaching me to be quiet and listen. Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem to teach his 12-year-old son the wisdom of asking open-ended questions: *There are six honest serving men; they taught me all I knew; their names were WHAT and WHERE and WHEN and HOW and WHY and WHO!* I have learned the secret of success in getting along with others. Ask open-ended questions and dominate the listening. I never learn anything when I am talking.

It’s Not About You

I interviewed superstar salesman and co-author of the terrific book, *The Nordstrom Way*, Pat McCarthy in 1998. “Why do you think you are so successful in sales?” He paused and said simply, “I think it’s because I am OTHER-Centered.” You see, the opposite of that is SELF-Centered. It really is true, it’s not about you! Become of Go-Giver and find ways to serve others. Remember the Window and the Mirror: When it comes time to take the credit, look out the window and give it to your teammates. When it’s time to take the blame, look in the mirror.

This is counter-intuitive. Our ego says “NO!” because a dying of self is required. No worries, if you do it long enough, everyone will know. Eliminate I, Me, and Mine and shift your focus to We and Us, or, better still, You and Yours. People will want to spend more time with you, but they won’t know why!

Hey, Wait A Minute!

You haven’t told us HOW to get that first job! You’re right. Instead, I will tell you story from David Halberstam’s fine book, *The Education of a Coach*, a biography of Bill Belichick, the successful NFL coach. In 1976, Belichick asked the Baltimore Colts if he could VOLUNTEER. They said, “Certainly but we can’t pay you.” Belichick smiled and went to work. He put in 12 to 14 hours of the worst kind of drudgery, picking up dirty towels and studying film. He slept in the locker room most nights, grateful for the chance to be in the coaching game. After a month, the owners felt guilty and began paying him \$25 a week. He got bigger than his job each month. All these years later, he is perhaps the best coach in the NFL and earns over \$4,000,000 a year!

If you can incorporate these things into your life, you won’t have to worry about FINDING or KEEPING a job. It will find you! You will quickly get bigger than your job. No one ever got promoted; they got bigger than their job and lifted up. Get to work—it’s COMMENCEMENT



It's Not WHERE You Start, It's HOW You Finish

by Mark Matteson

It was the summer of '67, the Summer of Love. I was ten years old, so I missed it. I did, however, LOVE to swim. I was a fish. Many times I said to myself, "One day, I will have a pool of my own!" Hey, I was ten.

We were in England for three weeks, and my father and I were at the Brighton Pool. It was an amazing place. It was the size of a football field and had three different diving boards. One of the three was a thirty-five-foot platform. It might as well been thirty-five hundred feet to my ten-year-old eyes. If only I could jump off THAT! It would be an act of courage and honor. It would something I could brag about to my friends. I could gloat all summer.

It took me over an hour to muster the courage to do it. I started small and worked my way up. I slowly ascended the steps like a condemned man climbing the gallows. Each step was deliberate and forced. I stood on the edge of that platform for what seemed like a week. No one was watching; my father was reading the paper on the chaise lounge. I took the bold leap of faith!

It was exhilarating. It was magical. It was the highlight of the summer. I ran over to tell my dad. He stared at me with indifference. I had interrupted his reading, but I didn't care. This was too important. "I'm gonna do it again, Dad, watch!" He nodded with the enthusiasm of a Benedictine monk.

This time I raced up the steps. I glanced over at my dad. He had put his paper down and was watching. I jumped and let out a howl. The only other person at the pool that morning, the pool guy, glanced up and then went back to checking the filter. I looked over at Dad. He had gone back to reading his paper. Then I hit the water.

Some things you never forget, even when you're ten years old. That moment in time stayed with me.

Self-worth is a gift we give to the young people in our care. Self-esteem is transferred from parent to child. When you are a kid, what your parents say to you matters. What they reward shapes your character. What they punish forms your values. What they don't do can mold and shape your self-concept. The implied message that day was, "The newspaper is more important than you. You are an interruption."

In 1993, Evan, our youngest son, was not quite three years old. He was fearless, he was passionate, and he craved my attention and praise. Our home, at 9100 Olympic View Drive, in Edmonds, Washington, had a kidney-shaped pool. At the deep end, it was maybe eight or nine feet deep. The diving board had all the spring of steel girder. Wearing his water wings, Evan stood on the diving board and called out, "Dad, watch!" He had never gone "off the board" like his older brother had done many times before.

I glanced up to see an expression on his face that I had seen many times. He wondered if I thought he had the courage to jump. Our eyes locked. "Go for it, Ev," I said, "I'm watching."

He jumped. He sprang up out of the water like a whale breaching. My eyes were fixed on his. He waited to hear what I was going to say. "Great job, son! Do it again!" He beamed. I cannot recall ever seeing him happier. He was proud and confident.

I spent the next hour watching him jump two hundred more times. It was a great day for father and son and a defining moment in each of our lives. It was the beginning of one success after another for Evan; it was an old wound finally healed for me. It's not WHERE you start, it's HOW you finish! Has life given you lemons? Make lemonade and sell it on the corner!

I have told my boys from the time they were old enough to understand, "Your future is so bright, it burns my eyes to look at it." Adding with sincerity, I predicted, "You will go so much farther than I ever did in school, sports, and business." Guess what? They have. They will continue to. Perhaps most importantly, they will pass that on to their children.

Did you know that ALL your employees, especially salespeople, are saying "Hey, Dad, watch!" As I wrote in my book, *Freedom from Fear*, "Everyone from eight to eighty-eight needs three things: appreciation, respect, and understanding."

What do you celebrate in your company? What do I get a high-five for? Does your acknowledgment program need revamping? Do you even have a formalized recognition program? Do you have an internal newsletter acknowledging birthdays, extra-mile achievements, and acts of courage and risk on the customer's behalf?

I can see it now: It is the summer of 2017 and I am at the pool, reading the *New York Times* on my Kindle, version 9.0. I hear a voice holler out, "Grandpa, watch! I'm going off the high dive!" Evan and I look up. We lock eyes with the intrepid young diver. My son and I say in unison, "Go for it!"

Enjoy the journey. The best is yet to come.

Robert D. Matteson - Fall of 1947 - Ravenna, Ohio - All-State Tight End



To sign up for my Free monthly e-newsletter, go to
www.mattesonavenue.com
and receive three e-books as gifts. Thank you for reading.

Mark Matteson can be reached by
Email - mark.enjoythejourney.matteson@gmail.com
Cell Phone - 206.697.0454