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COLUMNIST

3 Common Events That Can Make Or Break Your Career Growth

The following three scenarios we inevitably run into at one point or another in our careers, sometimes multiple times. They're situations in which a coach can step in and help you make the choices that are right for you.



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IMAGE: Getty Images

We have many coaches in our lives. Teachers, sports coaches, mentors, and even our friends and families can become coaches to us in certain ways. In an [article](#) earlier this month I talked about the six signs to look out for that indicate that you could benefit from an executive coach, someone from outside of your organization who can guide you through career twists and turns.

But when is it time to pull the trigger? How do you know which twists or turns might become insurmountable and require outside help?

The following three scenarios are situations we inevitably run into at one point or another in our careers, sometimes multiple times. They're situations in which a coach can step in and help you make the choices that are right for you.

You have an aspiration. The question I like to ask people is, what opportunities are you excited to take advantage of over the next year? Some possibilities:

- **New responsibilities.** Is there a new project you'd like to take on, a team you'd like to lead, or an expanded role you'd like to take?
- **New business ventures.** Do you have a new product to create--or to launch? Do you have some new potential partners?
- **Higher revenue goals.** Is this the year you finally clear six figures? Or maybe seven? Does your team have the opportunity to be the best-in-class?

It's so exciting to be able to see the very real possibilities ahead of you. But don't let those ideas merely stir you creativity--make sure they light a fire under you so you actually get going and achieve the vision.

So many people don't. They lose track of their goals, lose steam, or give up in defeat. That's when to call a coach. Your coach will be sure the vision and goals stay first and foremost in your mind, so even when you're busy, stressed, overwhelmed, distracted, or not making progress, someone is there not only rooting for you but urging you to keep moving forward. A coach can help accelerate your advancement to get you over the finish line.

You're looking for a career change. Whether you're getting a promotion into a new role or looking to move companies altogether, coaching can help you shape your vision and get some clarity about what the next steps would be.

A client of mine was in a job at a company that went through a reorganization process, and the tasks he ended up being responsible for after the shift were tasks he wasn't happy with and didn't challenge him. As a coach I helped him by stepping in and providing clarity on what he does want and the steps he can take to get there, and we came up with action items that re-aligned him with his goals and interests. He was able to articulate a new plan for his career--one that had him developing a new niche in his old company. He found a renewed sense of purpose and meaning, and others saw him as confident, capable, and succeeding during a time of challenge and change.

You've reached a plateau and want feedback. If you can feel yourself starting to lose motivation, if you're frustrated with your boss and are losing respect for your company's leadership, or if you are feeling that the feedback you've gotten from your boss isn't aligned with you, then a coach can step in and provide the feedback you're looking for to help you progress and grow.

The most successful businessmen and women I know are voracious about getting feedback. They crave the truth; they want to know where they can improve. They want to know their strengths and weaknesses. Without that kind of feedback loop, it's hard for them to know how they're doing. The sense of "plateauing" can be demotivating, because you don't know how to move onward and upward. If your boss isn't helping you improve, or if he doesn't respect or agree with the feedback you do get, you can find yourself stuck in "park."

The good news about feedback is it's always available, and you can access it yourself with the help of your coach. Your coach can choose self-assessments that will get you good information about your personality, strengths, and tendencies. He or she can help design a 360 for you, so you can get lots of feedback from all around. Your coach can even help you process the feedback you do have, differently. Seen from another angle, there might be some real hidden gems--messages that you do need to hear, and may be able to view in a different light with the perspective of your coach to add new insight.

Because your coach is someone in your court--without ulterior motives- he or she can give you a clearer picture of the next steps you should make to achieve the goal or position you want.

[The Leadership Research Institute](#) released a statistic that said the number one predictor of leadership effectiveness is a commitment to self-improvement. What that means is that what makes people see you as a more effective leader, and what makes you a better leader, is being open to learning. If you find yourself in any of the above situations, then learning is one of the best things you can do for yourself and your professional growth.

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