

Do You Have A Velveteen Career?

Have you ever wondered if you're going through the motions of a career or is it "real"? Is the foundation of your career composed of stuffing and sawdust? Perhaps you're feeling a bit ragged, neglected, and not like the other rabbits in the race of life!

In the story, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, the young toy rabbit felt different from the other toys, less valued than the others. When the boy chose the Velveteen rabbit to be with, the rabbit felt loved and appreciated. Over time, however, it lost its luster, became tattered and torn, and was eventually discarded in the trash for a newer toy.

Many career surveys indicate that between one-fourth and one-half of the workforce is experiencing some level of dissatisfaction with their jobs and careers. Employees are under stress to over-perform, face constant change, and are asked to do more with less. Their concern: will they also become tattered and torn and placed in the trash for that newer employee?

Due to this stress, many employees have become myopic in their view of their career. It is difficult to look around, when you are just trying to survive! Try to remember, however, that choice is always part of your equation.

When the Velveteen rabbit was away from the boy, it was able to meet "real" rabbits. Having no hind legs of its own, it was initially embarrassed to realize the swiftness and jumping ability of the "real" rabbits. From that moment on, the Velveteen rabbit made the choice to become "real," so that it could also reach a fuller potential.

So what is your journey to becoming "real"? Three discoveries propelled the Velveteen rabbit to find the "real" self: First, the boy's love made it feel good and not alone; second, the discovery of "real" rabbits provided the models for its transformation; finally, the fairy brought the Velveteen rabbit to Rabbitland, where the final change occurred.

For your career to become "real", identifying interests and passions will allow you to find the internal fuel needed to navigate in the work world. Finding love in what you do at some level is essential.

Who do you want to work with? Discovering the excitement of other rabbits allowed the Velveteen Rabbit to realize who it wanted to be with. Often we can identify the clan we wish to be with through networking, especially by exploring professional organizations.

We may not have magical fairies to finalize our transformation, but we can assemble key advisors and supporters to make our launch into reality. The Skin Horse and Magical Fairy provided the Velveteen rabbit with advice, support, and momentum to go the last step. When it became "real," the Velveteen rabbit suddenly had hind legs and could run, jump, and dance just like the other rabbits!

For years, Barbara Sher has discussed the effectiveness of using “Success Teams” to propel people into new directions of development and growth, especially as related to people’s careers. Assemble your own “Success Team” or board of directors who can serve as advisors, sources of feedback, brainstormers, and fans, who will hold you accountable for your actions.

The Velveteen rabbit knew it did not wish to be alone and unloved. It wanted to belong to a group of other rabbits. That was its criteria for becoming “real”. What are your criteria or recipe? What will allow you to have hind legs? Here are some important questions to consider when forming a career recipe: **Does the career. . .**

- **Affirm your values?**
- **Provide you with various rewards?**
- **Put you in contact with the people you wish to be with?**
- **Allow for balance?**
- **Provide the pace and setting that fits you?**
- **Allow you to exert the kind of control/influence you wish to exert?**

Being “real” means having more options, connection rather than isolation, and mobility to new places. Realizing your passion, understanding what you are really made of, connecting with a supportive team and developing your own recipe will allow you to transform.

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