

Five Steps for Discovering Your Personal Place

By Dean DeGroot

Are you living out someone else's idea of what you should be doing? Perhaps you're stuck in a career you worked hard at but that no longer makes you happy. Or maybe there's something you'd really like to do with your life, but the way you currently spend your days has no relation to that goal.

Finding your personal place is about living up to your potential. Below are five steps to get you moving in that direction. By helping you see new possibilities and, in some cases, moving you outside your comfort zone, these steps move you closer to your personal place:

- **Start with a career assessment.** Trapped in a job that's wrong for you? If so, you may not know your real strengths. By providing you with an objective overview of your aptitudes, personality, interests, and motivations, a career assessment helps you see yourself in a positive new light.
- **Tap into the wisdom of others.** In their book *Success Teams*, Barbara Sher and Annie Gottlieb suggest forming a group of peers to give each other feedback on career and other issues. Success teams can help by challenging your beliefs, broadening your perspectives, and sharing invaluable resources.
- **Test-drive a possible career.** Is there something you've always wanted to do? Give it a try! In *Working Identities: Unconventional Strategies for Reinventing your Career*, Herminia Ibarra argues that you can't just *think* your way to a new career, you need to take action.
- **Get a reality check.** It's easy to spend our days in a fog, thinking we're getting somewhere but really just spinning our wheels. A reality team—your success team or other objective advisors—can help you determine if what you're doing now will get you to where you want to be.
- **Consider your calling(s).** As Greg Levoy explains in *Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life*, callings are those intuitive messages that come to us in dreams, longings, and random thoughts. If we listen closely, they can tell us important things about our place.

As you can see, the ideas above—assessing your strengths, reaching out to others, trying new things, listening to your intuition—all involve increasing your awareness in some way. If you combine that new awareness with concrete goals and purposeful action, you're sure to arrive at the place you're meant to be.

Dean R. DeGroot is a licensed psychologist career consultant and owner of Innerview Consulting. His efforts have allowed others to gain new tools and insights and explore new possibilities for social and career connection. Dean possesses a master's degree in Behavior Analysis & Therapy from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. He has been involved in post-graduate work at the Carlson School of Management located at the University of Minnesota. Dean has published journal articles in the UK on career practices. He is also Past President of the Minnesota Career Development Association (MCDA).