

An Excerpt From

***Love It Don't Leave It:  
26 Ways to Get What You Want At Work***

by Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans  
Published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers

★  
LOVE IT

DON'T LEAVE IT

26 Ways to Get What You Want at Work



Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans

Authors of the **international bestseller** *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em*



**WE CANNOT  
DIRECT  
THE WIND—  
BUT WE CAN  
ADJUST  
OUR SAILS.**

## *Praise for Love It, Don't Leave It*

*“Love It, Don't Leave It is a must-read for all those who want to take control of their performance and their careers despite today's uncertainties. The employee is an active agent, charged with knowing him or herself well enough to find the right role, set the right expectations, build the right relationships, and so forge the right career. In their immensely practical book, Kaye and Jordan-Evans show how.”*

—**Marcus Buckingham**, coauthor of *First, Break All the Rules* and *Now, Discover Your Strengths*

---

*“Finally, a handbook for taking action that every employee needs and any employee can use to take ownership and accountability for their job, career and happiness. When you're tired of playing 'the blame game' and want to get results, pick up this book!”*

—**Bob Nelson**, Ph.D., author of *1001 Ways to Reward Employees* and *1001 Ways to Take Initiative at Work*

---

*“This book is a rich buffet of ideas for taking your work to the next level. I savored this wise and witty book from cover to cover. Every reader should dip in with gusto!”*

—**Dick Leider**, couthor of *Whistle While You Work*

---

*“This is not just another 'fix-me-because-I'm-broken' book, or worse, 'Take this job and shove it!' Instead, the authors succeed with sensitivity, wisdom and wit, in offering real solutions that put employees with workplace woes in the driver's seat. The reader is invited to make assertive choices from a menu chock full of practical know-how and is inspired to put those choices into action.”*

—**Stanlee Phelps**, master coach and author of *The Assertive Woman*

*“Kaye and Jordan-Evans have done it again—hard-hitting, practical advice on how to bloom where you are planted. Before you find a greener pasture, let them show you how to mow the grass.”*

—**John Izzo**, author of *Awakening Corporate Soul*

---

*“Bev and Sharon have the gift of serving both the interests of employee and the institution in the same breath. This book offers another important step in creating workplaces which contain both commitment and humanity.”*

—**Peter Block**, author of *Flawless Consulting*, *Stewardship* and *The Answer to How Is Yes*

---

*“This book is full of truth and wisdom. Many people who leave the place where they worked end up wishing they hadn’t. But they left because they couldn’t figure out how to get what they need there. Too bad they didn’t read Love It, Don’t Leave It! It would have showed them how to stay put AND find what they were looking for.”*

—**Bill Bridges**, author of *JobShift: How to Prosper in a Workplace Without Jobs* and *Creating You and Company: How to Think Like the CEO of Your Own Career*

---

*“For the millions of workers feeling trapped in cubicle-land, this book is a godsend. Chock full of real-world advice from real employees, every page has proven strategies that can make your life at work more pleasurable and infinitely more fulfilling. If you’re going to spend more time at work than at anything else you do, why not make it work for you? Read this book and find out how.”*

—**Charles Decker**, coauthor of *Beans: Four Principles for Running a Business in Good Times or Bad*

*This page intentionally left blank*



**LOVE IT**

---

**DON'T LEAVE IT**

*This page intentionally left blank*





# LOVE IT

---

# DON'T LEAVE IT

26 Ways to Get What You Want at Work

BEVERLY KAYE and SHARON JORDAN-EVANS



**BK**

BERRETT-KOEHLER PUBLISHERS, INC.  
San Francisco

## Love It, Don't Leave It

Copyright © 2003 by Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed "Attention: Permissions Coordinator," at the address below.



**Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.**

235 Montgomery Street, Suite 650

San Francisco, California 94104-2916

Tel: (415) 288-0260, Fax: (415) 362-2512

[www.bkconnection.com](http://www.bkconnection.com)

**BK**

### Ordering information for print editions

*Quantity sales.* Special discounts are available on quantity purchases by corporations, associations, and others. For details, contact the "Special Sales Department" at the Berrett-Koehler address above.

*Individual sales.* Berrett-Koehler publications are available through most bookstores. They can also be ordered directly from Berrett-Koehler: Tel: (800) 929-2929; Fax: (802) 864-7626; [www.bkconnection.com](http://www.bkconnection.com)

*Orders for college textbook/course adoption use.* Please contact Berrett-Koehler: Tel: (800) 929-2929; Fax: (802) 864-7626.

*Orders by U.S. trade bookstores and wholesalers.* Please contact Ingram Publisher Services, Tel: (800) 509-4887; Fax: (800) 838-1149; E-mail: [customer.service@ingrampublisherservices.com](mailto:customer.service@ingrampublisherservices.com); or visit [www.ingrampublisherservices.com/Ordering](http://www.ingrampublisherservices.com/Ordering) for details about electronic ordering.

Berrett-Koehler and the BK logo are registered trademarks of Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

First Edition

Paperback print edition ISBN 978-1-57675-250-0

PDF e-book ISBN 978-1-57675-875-5

2008-1

Book production management by Michael Bass Associates. Cover design and illustrations by Tracy Rocca.

*To my parents, Mollie and Abe,  
who first taught me the meaning of love,  
and continue (at the proud ages of eighty-seven  
and eighty-nine) to teach its nuances.*

*—Bev*

*And, at the other end of the spectrum . . .*

*To my first granddaughter, Emma,  
who lights up my life with her smile  
and reminds me to believe in  
the fundamental goodness of people.*

*—Sharon*

*This page intentionally left blank*

# CONTENTS

---

*Use this as a road map for your reading. After “Ask” and “Buck,” read all the chapters that jump out at you, in any order. Then read “Zenith.” And if there’s even a remote chance you might leave, check our final chapter.*

Preface xi

Acknowledgments xv

Introduction 1



**A**SK: And You May Receive 7  
*Do they know what you want?*



**B**UCK: Don't Pass It 14  
*Satisfaction is your job.*



**C**AREER: Chart Your Course 18  
*Who owns yours?*



**D**IGNITY: Give It to Get It 26  
*It's about R-E-S-P-E-C-T.*



**E**

**NRICH: Energize Your Work** 31

*What's new?*



**F**

**AMILY: Seen Yours Lately?** 38

*Only you can put them first.*



**G**

**OALS: Up Is Not the Only Way** 44

*Keep your options open.*



**H**

**IRE: Are You on Board?** 52

*Resell yourself internally.*



**I**

**FORMATION: Plug Yourself In** 58

*Keep your ear to the ground.*



**J**

**ERK: Work with One?** 65

*Deal with it.*



**K**

**ICKS: Are We Having Fun Yet?** 72

*Make it happen.*



**L**

**INK: Build the Connection** 77

*Networks matter.*



**M**

**ENTOR: Make Your Own Match** 85

*Learning is everywhere.*



**N**

**UMBERS: Assess Your Worth** 92

*Are you computing everything?*



**O**

**PPORTUNITIES: They're Still Knocking** 99

*Open the door.*



**P**ASSION: It's Not Just a Fruit 106

*Do what you love.*



**Q**UESTION: Go Outside the Box 112

*Are the barriers real?*



**R**EWARD: Reap Your Own 117

*It's more than money.*



**S**PACE: Want Some? 124

*Don't fence me in.*



**T**RUTH: It Hurts . . . Or Does It? 131

*Get feedback—others know.*



**U**NDERSTAND: Are You Listening Enough? 138

*Tune in or lose out.*



**V**ALUES: What Matters Most? 143

*Invest in them.*



**W**ELLNESS: Time for a Checkup? 151

*Take care.*



**X**-ERS AND OTHER GENERATIONS:

**Bridge the Gap** 160

*Can we talk?*



**Y**IELD: Get Out of Your Own Way 167

*Give it up.*



**Z**ENITH: Are We There Yet? 172

*Never.*



**But If You Must Leave** 177

**Index** 183

**About the Authors** 189

**Working with the Authors** 191

**GOING DEEPER: Individual & Organizational  
Love It Resources** 193



## PREFACE

---

**To:** Anyone Who Works

**From:** Bev and Sharon

Do you ever think work would be great *if only*:

- ✓ you had more career choices?
- ✓ you had more time with your family?
- ✓ you were paid more?
- ✓ you didn't work with a jerk?
- ✓ you weren't so bored?
- ✓ you had unlimited access to chocolate?

Do you ever think the grass must be greener somewhere else? Well, you're not alone.

Too many people leave their jobs because something is wrong, or something is missing. They leave physically, by walking out the door. Or, they leave psychologically, by withdrawing their energy and commitment but staying put. And later, many regret their departures (of both kinds).

What if there were another option? What if it were possible to achieve or regain love for your work? (And we do mean love, not just like.) What if your work were something you looked forward to each day? What if it tapped your enthusiasm?

Used your creativity? Made you feel appreciated? (Are you thinking, “Fat chance?”) But, really, what if work could truly deliver the goods? We think it can.

Workplace satisfaction is a two-way street. Yes, it demands effort from your manager and from the leaders of your organization. (We wrote our previous books based on that premise.) But it also demands initiative and effort from you.

We believe, quite passionately, that positive change is not only possible but well worth your effort. We feel certain that with a few well-chosen steps, you can get more of what you want, right where you are.

We asked over fifteen thousand people why they stayed in their organizations. The top five stay factors across all industries were:

- exciting, challenging work;
- a chance to learn and grow;
- great people to work with;
- fair pay; and
- a great boss.

Which of those factors matters most to you? Which would you like a little more of? We hope this book will make “getting it” a little easier.

We’ve based the hints, tips, and tools you’ll find throughout the book on our research and our interactions with thousands of working people worldwide. You’ll also find five key messages woven throughout the chapters:

*What you want could be found right where you are.* Perhaps all you need to do is get clear about what’s missing and go after it. Look inside before you jump outside. Master the art and science of asking for what you want.

*You're in charge.* You are ultimately responsible for your own workplace satisfaction. Don't expect your manager to be a mind reader or your organization to be solely responsible for your happiness. Others do have a role to play. But the bottom line is, you're in control, and it's up to you to fix what's wrong or find what's missing.

*There are (at least) twenty-six ways to take the initiative.* Of course, there are different strokes for different folks. That's why we've identified dozens of potential action steps. We've arranged them alphabetically, all for your consideration.

*Don't wait.* That "lovin' feeling" may not find you. You may have to find it! Instead of "settling" for work that doesn't work for you, take steps now to improve it. Don't wait for someone else to take the first step.

*Double-check those greener pastures.* Too often we leave for greener pastures elsewhere only to find Astroturf. The new workplace may have the same, or different (sometimes even worse), challenges, frustrations, and disappointments. Check it out before you decide to go.

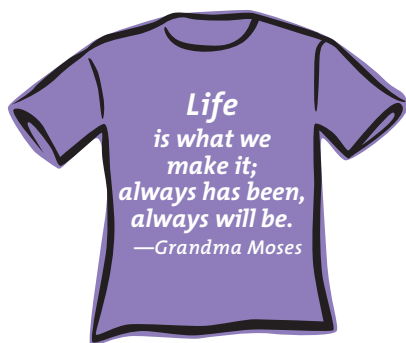
Here's what we'll deliver in return for your time and attention:

*Actions:* We've amassed tips, tools, and hints and organized them into easy-to-access chapters. We suggest you read the "Ask" and "Buck" chapters first. Then move to the others that capture your interest. And if you've read them all, have tried the ideas they suggest, and still feel you can't get what you want, reread the last chapter to ensure your next choice is the right choice.

*Stories:* Countless people we surveyed, worked with, talked with, or coached gave us these ideas. We heard success stories, "I messed this up" stories, and "I wish I had" stories.

Find the ones that might help solve your dilemma or provoke your own creative thinking.

*T-shirt truth:* Ever read the message on someone's T shirt and say to yourself, "Boy, ain't that the truth?" Well, we do this all the time, and we've collected some for this book. We searched closets, memories, airports, bars, beaches, and barbecues. We narrowed it down to twenty-six that make our points.



Seen on the Riverwalk in Spokane, WA.

Think of this book as a maintenance manual for working adults seeking to tune up a significant portion of their waking lives. We invite you to return to it again and again. Dog-ear the corners; highlight the ideas that hit home. We wrote it because we truly believe you can **get more of what you want right where you are.**



**P.S. And we'd love to hear how it turns out.  
Send your stories to [www.loveitdontleaveit.com](http://www.loveitdontleaveit.com).**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

Collaboration has taught us once again the power of many minds to enrich a book. We are particularly appreciative of the wisdom from Ray Halagera; the truth telling from Diana Koch, Shelby Earl, and Tara Mello; and the savvy advice from Katherine Reynolds, Marilyn Greist, Brad Walton and Barbara Blom. We also continually tested our ideas with Ann Jordan, Bev Olevin, Sandy LoSchiavo, Lorianne Speaks, and DeeDee Williams. They helped us get on track and *stay* on track.

Nancy Breuer and Allan Halcrow (WorkPositive) helped us with brilliant editing (even our English teachers would be pleased), and Lynne Kleeger (Lynne-Worx!) was a patient perfectionist with our manuscript. Tracy Mitchell did an amazing job with our artistic needs—we greatly admire her work. Our publicists Helen Bensimon, Patti Danos, Jane Wesman, and Lori Ames have been instrumental in coaching and connecting us. Thank you!

We are indeed fortunate to have the Career Systems organization behind us every step of the way. Huge thanks go to the staff at the Scranton headquarters for their enthusiastic support and to the international sales team for helping us truly bring this book to its rightful market place. We could not translate this message into action without the experienced (and well-traveled) consultant team that partners with our clients worldwide.

The Berrett-Koehler team was (as always) encouraging, patient, straight-talking, and responsive. We published our previous books with them and did not hesitate to go directly (and only) to them for this one. They treat their authors as VIPs and supported us through the journey of creating this book.

Steve Piersanti continues to set new standards in the publishing industry and lead his organization in the most ethical and innovative style. We were touched by his faith in us and his enthusiasm for our “overachieving ways.”

Bev sends appreciation to Barry and Lindsey, who brainstormed titles over the dinner table night after night and rarely lost their patience and belief that this would eventually come together. *Your support enables me to be all that I am.*

Sharon sends gratitude to her four kids—Matt, Kellie, Travis, and Shelby—for their support and enthusiasm, and especially to her husband Mike for reading every word and for providing wholehearted support. *Your creativity, work stories, and honest input helped build a book I'm proud of.*

We thank each other: Sharon to Bev for her insistence on checking with our review team “one more time”—just to be sure we're headed in the right direction; and Bev to Sharon for believing in this from the get-go and staying *on it* despite the occasional wet towel from her coauthor.

Finally, this book would never have come to fruition without all those who read *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em* and inspired us (and challenged us) to write a similar book for employees. Many read early versions of our manuscript and convinced us that we were on the right track. We want you all to find more of what you *really* want, *right where you are.*

# INTRODUCTION

---

## If it doesn't get better, I'm outta here!

.....

We've all felt that way at some point in our lives. The feeling could be about work, marriage, friendships, learning a new sport, or perfecting a new skill. Or, it may not feel that extreme. You might just have a subtle sense of dissatisfaction or a mild yearning for a change. Everything could be right with your work—except for just one thing.

In the workplace, these feelings can cause you to head for the door (leave physically) or cause you to stay put but shut down (leave psychologically—turn down your energy, your *oomph*.)

*I was present and accounted for, but not very productive. Now I realize how demoralizing it was for me, my colleagues, my friends, and even my family. Every work-week felt like a month, and my self-confidence sagged. I'll never do that again. I've learned to identify problems early and take some action to improve things. Life is too short to dread Mondays.*

Some of us give it a lot of time before we get to the point of departure (sometimes too much). Some of us give it too little time and move on too quickly.

*I left for greener grass and found it had its own set of problems. I came back a year later. This place isn't perfect, but I'm more willing now to work out problems rather than leave.*

Some of us take control of our own workplace satisfaction. We expect to enjoy our work, our colleagues, and our organizations and we're willing to go after those things that matter most to us.

And others just wait.

### *Are YOU Waiting?*

Waiting for your boss to go?

Or for the economy to not be so slow?

Waiting for someone to bring fun to your work?

Or for that colleague to stop being a jerk?

Waiting for HR to chart your career?

Or for a leader to calm that downsizing fear?

Waiting for an assignment that's exciting to do?

Or for your manager to make work better for you?

Waiting for your organization to really care?

Well, guess what?

Waiting simply will not get you there!

Are you willing to stop waiting? If so, you'll get some quick, effective alternatives from the chapters ahead. We hope you'll give them a try.

## **What's Love Got to Do with It?**

Tina Turner asked a good question. If "it" is "work," our answer is "everything." If work takes the better part of our waking lives, we'd better be in love with it or else be prepared to



lead a miserable—or at minimum, boring—life. When we love our work, we unleash energy, creativity, and commitment. We look forward to the day, our teammates, the environment, the boss—the whole package. We don't want to press the snooze button. We feel productive. We feel a sense of accomplishment. We learn. *And* we feel satisfied.

The longer we stay with a job, the more we build some unique forms of equity. Consider the equity you've built in your current job:

- *Skill equity*: The knowledge, the know-how that you've developed over time. The special capabilities and competencies that bring you respect for a job well done, and enable others to count on you.
- *Social equity*: The friends and colleagues you've gotten to know (they often feel like family) or the customers you enjoy interacting with.
- *Influence equity*: The ability to get your ideas heard, the connections you've learned to use, the resources that others make available to you so you can get your job done.
- *Financial equity*: The dollars you get for the job you do. And, on top of that, the retirement, investment, or bonus funds, insurance, memberships (even perks such as a parking space), all in return for your know-how and commitment.

## Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places

Sometimes we leave our workplace equity behind (too quickly) without considering how much it is, how long it will take to rebuild it, or how heavily discounted it may be somewhere else.

#### 4 ■ LOVE IT, DON'T LEAVE IT

*I get together with some of the old gang from where I used to work, at times just for the laughs I miss. They say that with the new leadership team, things are actually a lot better.*

✧

*I've got more freedom here, but I've got more stress, too. It's all a trade-off. Nothing is perfect.*

✧

*I got a raise and a new challenge with each of my four moves. That was great. But subsequent raises (and challenges) came very slowly and once I even went backward. Now my friends who hung in at the same place over the years are retiring with great packages. I'm wondering what I really gained.*

✧

*Yes, I look around every so often. But the truth is, I love having a sense of roots. This place is like a second family to me. I know the people and they know me. They've been with me through thick and thin.*

All too often we depend on others to keep us from leaving, or we simply give up too quickly.

*It's up to my manager to make me happy.*

✧

*They won't give me the power to get what I want here.*

✧

*It's easier to leave than to work it out.*

✧

*I'm about to retire soon anyway. I'm past the point of needing to love my work.*

Comments like these can contain at least a grain of truth. Managers do have a role. The lack of power does get in the way. The problems may be so huge that leaving is easier. Sometimes leaving does make sense.

But often, it doesn't.

## Shift Happens

Work lives are constantly changing, just like our personal lives. Sometimes, just when you really love it, shift happens. Things change with your work, your leaders, your boss, your colleagues, your clients, your organization, the economy, the competitor, the world. And things change with you. The terrific boss moves on, the company is acquired, you get tired of the work you've been doing, or the direction of the organization shifts—right before your very eyes.

When that happens, instead of disengaging or jumping ship:

*Read “Ask” and “Buck.”*

*Then scan the table of contents*

*for the chapters that best fit your situation right now.*

Take an idea from a story, try a checklist, or answer some of our interview questions. What's one attitude adjustment that you're willing to try? What's one small step that makes sense? Now, read another chapter.



**You either get what you want or take what you get.  
We believe you can get what you want where you are.  
Do you?**

*This page intentionally left blank*



## And You May Receive

If you don't ask, you're less likely to get what you want. It seems so simple. Yet for some reason, people hold back. They expect their bosses to read their minds. Some just settle for less and bring half their hearts (or brains) to work. Others decide it's easier to leave than to ask. Most people eventually realize that no matter where or with whom they work, at times they will want a little more of something. And the best way to get that something is to ask.

*What you don't ask for stays the same.*

—Unknown

## They Want to Hear from You

If you are a solid performer, your managers want to know what will keep you engaged (satisfied, productive) and on the team. They don't want to lose you, physically or psychologically.

*I wish he had just asked. I would have said, "Let me see what I can do for you. Let's brainstorm how this might work—for you and for others." Instead of asking, he jumped ship. I am so disappointed. We needed him. He had a great future here.*

How ready are you to hold an honest, possibly courageous conversation with your boss, a colleague, a senior leader? How willing are you to ask for what you really want? Here's how someone did just that:

*I considered quitting my job rather than asking for time off to participate in an overseas service/study program. It just seemed like too big a request. I thought the answer would be no, especially since our department has been so stretched and stressed lately. But I love this job, and my boss is great. I didn't want to leave. I got some coaching from a friend, created a plan, and just went for it.*

*I told my boss I was a little nervous about a request I had. But I explained the opportunity in detail, told him what I thought I would gain from it and also what I believed he and my team might gain. For example, I believed I would return with new leadership skills and a more global perspective. In our line of work, both could be valuable assets.*

*I described seven barriers or downsides of my sabbatical and asked him to add to the list. Then I shared some potential solutions to many of those barriers. An example was finding and training an intern to cover much of my workload while I was gone. I also promised to brainstorm solutions to every other barrier with him and my team.*

*When I was done, he simply said, "Yes." I sat there in shock. He told me he was impressed with my thoughtful approach and my courage (he knew how nervous I was). I thanked him that day, and many times since. We worked on the details over the next two months. I took my trip and came back to work refreshed, energized, and more capable.*

*My boss and I are both glad that I asked, rather than leave that job. The way I thank him now is by doing my best at work.*

Who do you need to ask? And for what? How will you go about it? Try the following steps.

## Step 1: Get Crystal-Clear about What You Want

*I had this gnawing feeling of dissatisfaction. I would have talked to someone about what I wanted, but first I had to put my finger on it. I'm clear now. I want to feel recognized for what I do here—and I don't mean more money (although that would be nice). I want my boss to say "Thank you" more often. Not just thanks in general but specifically thanks after I've worked late or done a great job on a project. I need to know she values me and my work.*

So, what do you want? Get to the bottom of it. **Interview yourself:**

- What about my job makes me jump out of bed in the morning?
- What makes me hit the snooze button?
- If I were to win the lottery and resign, what would I miss the most?
- What would be the one change in my current role that would make me want to stay for a *long* time?
- If I had a magic wand, what would be the one thing I would change about my department or team?
- If I had to go back to a position in my past and stay for an extended period of time, which one would it be and why?

The answers to these questions will reveal what you want. Other chapters in this book will help you further clarify your “wish list.” **Reread “Ask” after reading them.**

## Step 2: Consider Who, When, and How You'll Ask

Who can deliver what you want? Consider these people:

- ✓ Those with information you need
- ✓ Good listeners and advice givers
- ✓ Decision makers (your boss?)

How and when will you approach them? Consider their preferences:

- ✓ Should you request the conversation by e-mail, voice mail, or face-to-face?
- ✓ Is it best to meet early in the morning or over lunch? Monday or later in the week?

How will you open the conversation? Consider these guidelines:

- ✓ Get to the point. Thank the person for his or her time and say you have a request to make.
- ✓ Lay it out and be specific. What do you need? Advice? Feedback? A new challenge?

## Step 3: Identify the Barriers—Then Bulldoze Them

Barriers to asking come in all shapes and sizes. Here are some of the most common:

- ✓ **Fear.** Is *fear* in the way of asking? Fear of what? The answer? The person? Something else?

*I remembered reading somewhere that I should 'face the fear and do it anyway.' I think the author meant if it's not*



*life threatening. So, after a few sleepless nights and several rounds of practice with my friend, I just went for it. It wasn't nearly as frightening as I thought it would be. I got out of there with my life, and I'm optimistic about getting what I want.*

It's simple. To get more of what you really want at work, face your fear, plan your approach, and go for it.

*Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.*

—Mark Twain

- ✓ **Your boss's (or other decision makers') mind-sets, constraints, or concerns.** Those you ask are often bound by rules, policies, guidelines, and cultural norms. And they're concerned about fairness.

*I knew he'd be worried about my teammates and their reactions if he said yes to my request. I listed three ways I thought we could handle that concern. He came up with another. Together we dealt with the team in such a positive way that they were actually happy for me. They are also happy to have a boss whom they know will listen to them when they want something!*

Anticipate the problems and potential barriers to your request and present ideas for solving them. Seek solutions that work for you, them, and the team.

- ✓ **Lack of WIIFT (what's in it for them?).** Before you go to your request granter, stop and identify the WIIFT. Ask yourself, "What's in it for that person to grant my request? How will she benefit? Is my request a 'piece of cake' or really difficult to grant?" WIIFT in hand, now you're ready to ask.

*I wanted to learn from her. I knew it was probably the last thing she'd want to do, meet with another grad student. She was so busy and rarely in the office. So, I offered three hours of research time in exchange for one hour of her time with me. She paused a minute and then said, "Yes, what a great idea."*

Find the WIIFT and you'll increase the odds of getting a yes.

## And If the Answer Is No?

Despite your careful planning and strategic thinking, you'll no doubt encounter a no now and then. Listen to the reasons for the no. Then:

ask again (in a different way or at a different time)

—or—

ask how *you* can help make it work (brainstorm possibilities)

—or—

ask someone else (can someone else help with your request?)

—or—

ask what's possible, if not this

—or—

ask when it might be possible, if not now

—or—

ask what you can do to improve the way you're asking.

Don't give up.

*The best advice I ever got was from a salesman. He said every no he received got him closer to the inevitable yes.*

And when they say yes, *thank them*—with words and in continued great performance.



People tell us that in hindsight, they wish they had asked for what they wanted. Or they wish they'd asked in a more effective way, so a decision maker could have worked with them to make it happen. Asking is key to every chapter and central to the philosophy of this book.

Don't expect others to take the first step. Don't make them guess, because most often, they'll guess wrong.

Be clear. Be prepared. Be collaborative, and then *ask for what you want.*

**If you don't ask for what you want,  
you'll simply have to take what you get.**



Seen at the Rose Bowl Flea Market in Pasadena, CA.



BUCK

Don't Pass It

Some people are tempted to hold others accountable for their work satisfaction. Most find over time that those others can't—or won't—deliver what's wanted and needed. Ultimately you choose your career, your boss, your team, your organization. You decide how long to stay, and you have the power and influence to improve your work. Accept that responsibility, complete with its challenges, and you'll get more of what you want from your work and your workplace.

## If It's to Be, It's Up to Me

You may have heard that quote before. And you may even have found it annoying. Annoying, but true.

*I pushed the snooze button again. It was Monday morning, and the last thing I wanted to do was get up and go to work. I drank another cup of coffee, dropped off the dry cleaning, and actually felt relieved about the traffic jam that delayed my arrival even more.*

*After months of feeling this way, I decided no one was going to do a thing about it—but me. My boss isn't the type to have a conversation with me about my career, and no one was offering me an exciting new opportunity.*

*One night I took my wife to dinner and told her I had to do something about my work. I had to leave or make it better. We spent the next three hours writing down all of my options and talking about several strategies.*

*I started researching some of those options the following week. I talked with my boss about doing more of the work I love and less of the work I dislike. I also talked about options with several colleagues and even a manager in another department. In all of that exploration, I found a colleague who actually loves to do what I hate! With my boss's help, we've redesigned both my colleague's job and mine. I still work in the same company, even for the same boss, but my day-to-day work has changed by 80 percent. Get this. On a Sunday night, I actually felt excited about the workweek ahead. What a relief!*

How have you taken charge lately?

- ✓ I've carefully evaluated and listed (in detail) what I love about work and what I don't. (yes/no)
- ✓ I've looked at my latest performance review and identified a step I could take to improve. (yes/no)
- ✓ I've chatted with a sympathetic (smart) partner about work and what I want from it. (yes/no)
- ✓ I've clearly evaluated my role in a workplace dilemma or dissatisfaction. (yes/no)
- ✓ I've explored and then listed *all* of my options. (yes/no)
- ✓ I've identified what is possible and what isn't, given this organization's culture, leadership, or rules. (yes/no)
- ✓ I've taken a risk and  
     *talked* to people who might be able to help me  
     (yes/no)

—or—

*tried* something new. (yes/no)

If you answered no to any of these, it's simple: *Do it.*

*Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.*

—Will Rogers

## Beware the Blame Game

.....  
**When you point a finger, remember that three  
other fingers are pointing back at you.**  
.....

It's so easy to blame. For most of us, the excuses and finger pointing are a knee-jerk reaction. It's a normal, human defense. But blaming seldom gets us what we really want and need.

*It's called the Blame Game. You know, when you point the finger and say, "He did it. She did it. They did it." I was into that game big-time until a friend suggested I stop whining and take some accountability for my unhappy work situation. (Yes, friends will tell you the truth!) I realized that I was bored and had basically retired on the job. It wasn't all my fault, but it wasn't really all theirs, either. I talked to my boss about doing something new. He had no idea how bored I was and has helped me find new, more challenging work. I'm learning again and happy with my job.*



This entire book is about taking responsibility for your own satisfaction. The “Buck” philosophy supports the messages in all other chapters.

If you don’t buy “B,” you’ll never get to “Z.”

Yes, others have roles to play in your work success and happiness. But none have roles that equal yours. Ultimately, it’s up to you to change what you don’t like and to find what you really want at work.



*front*



*back*

Seen at a Grateful Dead concert, late 1960s.



## Chart Your Course

Your career is your creation. So when was the last time you really gave serious thought and time to planning it? If you can't remember, is it because:

- You are too busy doing this job to think about the next?
- You don't know what you want to do next?
- You are waiting for your manager to make the first move?
- You think the future is too uncertain for career planning?

Too many people allow one or more of these thoughts to delay or even paralyze their actions. They wait. For certainty. For their bosses to provide career maps. For a revelation about the next step. For a "time-out" from the current work, to ponder the next. The truth is that only you can make the time and the decisions that put your career on the right course. The payoff? Greater work satisfaction.

*I had done a great job here for twelve years. I knew that I'd be promoted eventually. I waited for the promotion and when it didn't come, I finally asked my boss about it. He said, "Sorry, but in addition to your work experience, that*



*job now requires a special technical certificate.” I had watched some colleagues taking those classes, but just didn’t realize it was such a big deal. This past year I took the classes and earned the certificate. Recently I finally got that promotion. Now I’ve gone “public” with my career goals. I talk about them with my boss and am constantly looking for ways to attain them.*

## Whose Career Is It, Anyway?

You *own* your career. This attitude will help you get what you want from work. Take steps now to plan it, build it, and strengthen it. Here’s how:

- *Look at yourself*—Examine your interests, values, and work skills. Find out, too, if others see you the way you see yourself.
- *Look around*—Uncover trends (company/industry), learning pathways (ways to learn new skills), and multiple career options.
- *Look ahead*—Identify goals, alliances, support. Create your plan.

Talk with colleagues, friends, and bosses. Identify and collaborate with people interested in helping you. Think about how you, in turn, can help them. Use them as sounding boards to test your ideas, career options, and assumptions.

## Here’s Lookin’ at You

Assess. It’s the critical first step in successfully managing your career.

## ***Know Yourself***

What do you love to do? To create a meaningful career pathway, you need to be clear about your interests (the things you like doing—ideas and activities that give fulfillment and pleasure) and your values (ideals you cherish that guide your life at work). Determine those critical variables. **Interview yourself:**

- ✓ What accomplishments at work have made me feel particularly proud?
- ✓ What makes me feel unique in this organization?
- ✓ What kinds of things would I do if I could create my ideal workday?
- ✓ What types of work do I avoid?

The things you do well, value highly, and like doing give you a basic map for planning your career. Look for opportunities to do that *inside* your organization.

## ***Know Your Strengths***

What are your key skills (effective abilities and/or behaviors used to produce clear results)? How do you know? **Interview yourself and three others (teammates, boss, friends):**

- ✓ What are my towering strengths? (Very few people are as good as I am.)
- ✓ What are my moderate strengths? (I'm good—so are many others.)
- ✓ How would customers (internal or external) describe me?

Are you using your key skills? Most people we know are not unhappy because of the skills they are using—but because of the skills they are not using.

***Know which of your skills is irreplaceable!***

—Dick Bolles, author of *What Color Is Your Parachute?*

***Know What You Need to Learn***

Given your interests, what do you need/want to learn? Ask yourself. Also, gather information from three willing feedback providers:

- ✓ What are my overdone strengths? (too much of a good thing)

*I am bottom-line oriented. I get results. The problem is that in getting there, I sometimes run over people.*

- ✓ What are two skills I should strengthen? How would it help me, given what I want to do?

*My career goal is to move up in this organization. Two of my strengths are that I'm detail oriented and very independent. I've always figured I had to do it myself if I wanted it done right. Now I'm hearing that I need to learn to "manage through others"—not do it myself—if I hope to move into management positions. I need to develop some new strengths.*

Seek out your critics. Listen to them. Try to see yourself through their eyes. Get clear about your missing skills or those skills you overdo.

**Lookin' Around**

Once you've assessed what you need to learn, you can begin to look around your organization for trends, learning pathways, and career options. You may be surprised to find projects, task forces, and jobs that will support your goals.

## ***Trend Tracking***

What do you know about your organization, your industry, and your profession? If you don't know the answers to these questions, ask others:

- What are the major industry, economic, political, and social changes taking place that will affect this organization?
- What are the opportunities and problems ahead?
- How will my profession be different in two years? In five years?
- What counts for success here? How will that change in the future?

Read company newsletters and industry journals. Search for Web sites that discuss your industry. Bookmark them and check them regularly.

## ***Learning Pathways: The 70-20-10 Rule***

How do adults learn? One well-known answer (described by the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina) suggests the following:

- ✓ 70 percent of adult learning happens by doing. On-the-job challenges, risky situations, and stretch assignments all contribute to success at work.
- ✓ 20 percent of adult learning comes from others. Mentors, role models, feedback providers, and coaches help us develop and excel.
- ✓ 10 percent of adult learning happens in the classroom, from books, tapes, or on-line learning activities.

So, choose a learning pathway that works for you and will best develop the skill you're trying to learn. Try this:

- ✓ Offer to serve on a project team or task force that will help you develop a skill or make key connections.
- ✓ Agree to a tough assignment. Be sure to ask for support from those who've been there and/or done that.
- ✓ Find a mentor to teach you the specific skill you're hoping to learn.
- ✓ Take a class (ask about education reimbursement options), or read a couple of books on the topic of interest.

Ask yourself, “What do I want to learn next? How/where/ from whom can I learn it?”

### ***Options, Options, Options***

Not every step in a career has to be a step up. *Up* is one way to go, but there are other options (inside the organization) to consider, too. Talk to your boss or other valued advisors to learn about these possibilities:

- *Moving laterally*—a change in job, but not necessarily a change in level of responsibility
- *Exploring*—testing and researching changes without permanent commitment
- *Enriching*—seeding the current job with more chances to learn and grow
- *Realigning*—adjusting duties to reconcile them with other priorities and future possibilities

Try to imagine at least one move you could make in each of these directions. What would it look like? How might it match your skills, interests, and values?

## Now, Create the Plan

Use the information you now have about you, your company, and multiple options to develop your career goals. Those goals will become the cornerstone of an action plan, so take care to make them specific and achievable.

Answer these questions:

- What new skills, knowledge, or abilities do I need to achieve my goals?
- What are some short-term goals (three to six months) that I could start on right now?
- How can I gain the new skills that will help me with my goals while in my *current* job?
- What relevant experiences can I have through serving on committees and task forces?
- Who in my network can help?

A clear plan of action turns goals into realities if you take these steps:

- ✓ Write down your goals, exact steps, and deadlines. Revise along the way.
- ✓ Forge alliances with people who can help you reach your goals: managers, mentors, peers, supporters.
- ✓ Seek learning. Get training and experience to help you reach your goals.

*I read a book about career planning and decided to fill in the blanks and develop a plan, including specific action steps. Six months later, I had not taken a single action! It was like my New Year's resolution—so easy to disregard. Finally, a friend in another department told me some of*

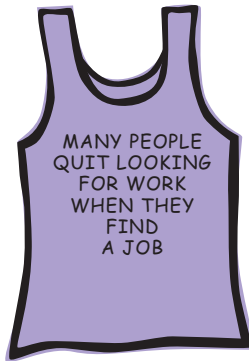
*her career goals, and I unearthed my action plan to show her. Right away she pointed out items that were simply unrealistic or didn't sound like me. With her feedback, I adjusted my plan and sought another approach that made more sense.*



**Charting your course can feel like an overwhelming task, somewhere between keeping New Year's resolutions and raising the *Titanic*. Yet, it's doable if you look at yourself, look around, and look ahead. What you learn goes into your plan. Obviously you'll need allies, relevant projects, and an organization that values what you do. But you're in charge of your career. You manage it within your company, within this economy, and with the capabilities and resources that you have.**

*If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.*

—Anonymous



Seen in a Jacksonville, FL bookstore.

This material has been excerpted from

***Love it Don't Leave It:  
26 Ways to Get What You Want at Work***

by Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans

Published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers

For more information, or to purchase the book,  
please visit our website

[www.bkconnection.com](http://www.bkconnection.com)