



"Are *YOU* Managing Your Career on Your *OWN* Terms?"

By: Rita Balian Allen, Rita B. Allen Associates, January 2018

Executive Coach, Author, Trainer, Speaker, Leadership Development, Management Training and Career Development Consultant

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Only *YOU* can own and manage your career. It takes much initiative and focus to do so well and in a manner that effectively produces desired results. It begins with a lot of exploration of our needs, strengths, motivations, values, interests and aspirations. In order to identify the terms that will meet our needs, we must first reveal what they are and prioritize the importance of each. When we are able to have this kind of clarity, we will see rewards and enjoy a fulfilling career that allows us to maximize our potential, development and success. Know what you have to offer, what you want and how to ask for it!

While we cannot control or predict events, situations and/or environments that we are a part of throughout our career, we can, however, be prepared and equipped to manage how we deal with them as they arise. Knowing our value, our differentiators as well as knowing what we want, having a vision and plan for our career empowers us to be able to manage it, no matter what comes our way. This is foundationally vital for us to be and remain engaged, motivated and empowered. It's the difference between being in the driver's seat rather than in the back seat going along for the ride. *Who's terms have defined your career? Have you allowed yourself to search within to identify your true talents and follow through with a plan that allows you to engage those talents in your chosen work?*

The only constant we can all expect today is ... *change*, wherever you work or whatever your role. Whether you like change, dread it, thrive on it or are resistant to it, we all must accept that change is inevitable and welcome it. The key is to embrace it as a door to new possibilities and options. It can be uncomfortable and often uncertain, yet, it can also lead to innovation and progress.

There are many positive and unique aspects of the last decade's change within the workforce. People are changing jobs more frequently and pursuing new avenues as they uncover unexpected passions and goals. Traditional one-direction careers are no longer the only option. Our careers may change with our life phases, especially as people are living and working longer. We have four generations in the workplace today, each with different needs, interests, motivations and expectations. The newest generation will have a few different careers and pursue a variety of paths, and all of us are now

discovering new ways to reinvent ourselves at least once, if not more. This is quite exciting to have no limits to the possibilities we may envision! More than ever before, this requires each of us to take charge of our career and determine the terms that will make it most rewarding and fulfilling.

Manage your career... on your terms

- Explore all of the possibilities that are options for you
- Don't settle; do your due diligence to identify the best/ideal one for you
- Ask yourself difficult questions and be honest with your answers; know yourself very well
- Create your plan and stay true to it - both short-term and long-term
- Allow yourself to try new things - don't let fear get in your way
- Incorporate realities of financial constraints and set realistic expectations
- Exercise positive self-talk instead of rationalizing why you shouldn't be true to yourself, or talking yourself out of an option
- Conduct scenario planning; prepare yourself with contingency plans to anticipate and address potential challenges
- Get comfortable being uncomfortable and expect to make mistakes which will offer your greatest learnings
- Celebrate achievements and milestones along the way - believe in yourself!

Keep in mind you are the driver of your career and will determine what success looks like for you. Your vision is the ideal vision for you. Identify the path that aligns with your talents and will offer you the most satisfaction, personally and professionally. Establish, build and nurture long-lasting relationships along the way. Be sure to reach out to others for support in addition to offering yourself as a resource to your network. Practice good networking etiquette - give back of yourself, your talents and your resources. Be your authentic best self and stay true to it!

Rita Balian Allen is the president of Rita B. Allen Associates, a national career management firm specializing in executive coaching, leadership development, management training and career development. She is a lecturer at Boston-area universities, a sought-after speaker and presenter, the author of numerous articles, blogs and the book, "Personal Branding and Marketing Yourself: The Three Ps Marketing Technique as a Guide to Career Empowerment". She is a regular Huffington Post blogger and career management columnist for Leadership & Management Books. Rita was voted one of the top ten executive coaches by the Boston Women's Business Journal.