

SEVEN-STEP DREAM JOB PROCESS

People should think less about what they ought to do and more about what they ought to be. If only their living were good, their work would shine forth brightly.

– MEISTER ECKHART –

Michelangelo once claimed that he did not really create the figures he carved in marble. He simply chipped away the excess to reveal the masterpieces that were already in the stone.

That powerful image is the perfect metaphor for the journey upon which you are about to embark. The Seven-Step Dream Job Process helps individuals reach true career fulfillment. You'll be guided through a seven-step, action-oriented process that helps you define and land work that aligns with your natural gifts and passions. With specific exercises, tools, and methods, you'll gain clarity about fulfilled work and acquire the necessary tools to reveal the unique talents typically hidden under layers of doubts and self-imposed limitations. You'll become clear on what brings you fulfillment. And, once you have gained insight to your fulfillment, the process will reveal the dream job you've always wanted, just as the figures in the marble revealed themselves to Michelangelo.

This process is a foundation for changing work into something that taps into your passions. These seven important steps will allow you to end your search and find fulfillment from your work; you will have clarity about the job of your dreams.

This workbook will guide you to discovering standards of excellence, which you can apply in all aspects of your life. Even though the title includes the word *job*, the Seven-Step Dream Job Process is about pursuing a *life* of meaning. The message behind this process is that *it's more than a job; it's a way of life!* As you move into a job that reflects your innermost desires, values, and passions, your life will become aligned with your true self.

STEP 1: ESTABLISH A DREAM JOB MIND-SET

The first step in the Seven-Step Dream Job Process helps you create a strong personal foundation that allows you to come from a place of clarity and strength as you begin to define your dream job.

STEP 2: BREAK THROUGH BARRIERS

This second step shows you how to identify personal barriers that have kept you from achieving your dreams. You will learn how to formulate methods to overcome and put them in perspective. You will also gain clarity about what you want from life, and learn to shift from a place of *shoulds* to acting on your *wants* and doing what you love.

STEP 3: IMAGINE NEW POSSIBILITIES

In step three you'll use your imagination to conjure up images of what is truly possible. Imagination is a tool to go beyond your status quo and become clear on what you want. You will be amazed at how many dreams manifest themselves once you tap into what is possible.

STEP 3

IMAGINE NEW POSSIBILITIES

STEP 4: UNLEASH YOUR INNATE GIFTS

In step four you recall the times in your life when you have been fulfilled. Then you'll identify your innate gifts that directly lead to a place of satisfaction. This step is particularly helpful in defining what you love to do and applying those insights to creating your dream job.

STEP 5: DEFINE YOUR DREAM

In step five you'll create your personal dream job. A specific action-step process helps you gain clarity about the activities to which you are most drawn. You will identify your core values, clarify common themes in your life and bring all of these together to declare your dream job.

STEP 6: FORMULATE YOUR STRATEGY

In step six you'll formulate the strategy and schedule needed to reach your dreams. As you define your plan, you'll turn it into action steps. This step helps you become clear on the daily and weekly routine needed to bring your strategy into a realized dream.

STEP 7: LAND YOUR DREAM JOB

In step seven you'll declare your commitment, dedication and inspiration toward landing your dream job. Once this declaration is made, you'll be guided through a handful of activities that will move you toward and help you to land your dream job.

Even if you live to be 100, it's really a very short time. So why not spend it undergoing this process of evolution, of opening your mind and heart, connecting with your true nature.

– PEMA CHODRON –

Choosing this workbook means you've finally realized you're ready to take action toward creating the future you want and deserve. The job you've always wanted is waiting for you. Start by asking yourself these questions:

- Do you feel passionate about your job?
- Do you love your work?
- Do you feel inspired at the end of your workday?
- Do you get paid well for work you enjoy doing?
- Do you look forward to going to work each day, even Monday mornings?

If you respond "no" to any of the above questions, you are not alone – 72 percent of executives declare they are not in their “dream jobs (*BusinessWeek*, 2004) and 87 percent of business people “dislike their job” (*Forbes.com* 2005).

The first step is to define what you would love to do. The second step is to find and land the dream job. Once you are clear on what fulfills you, it will pull you toward creating your true work. *Finding or landing* the position that meets your criteria is about taking what you have created and turning this strategy into what you truly desire. When you don't take time to work the plan you have created to land your dream job, someone else will plan for you.

STEP 3

IMAGINE NEW POSSIBILITIES

Let's talk about the specific steps you'll take to land your dream job. This workbook has been designed to take you through a process in which each phase builds on prior work and leads you closer to your ultimate destination.

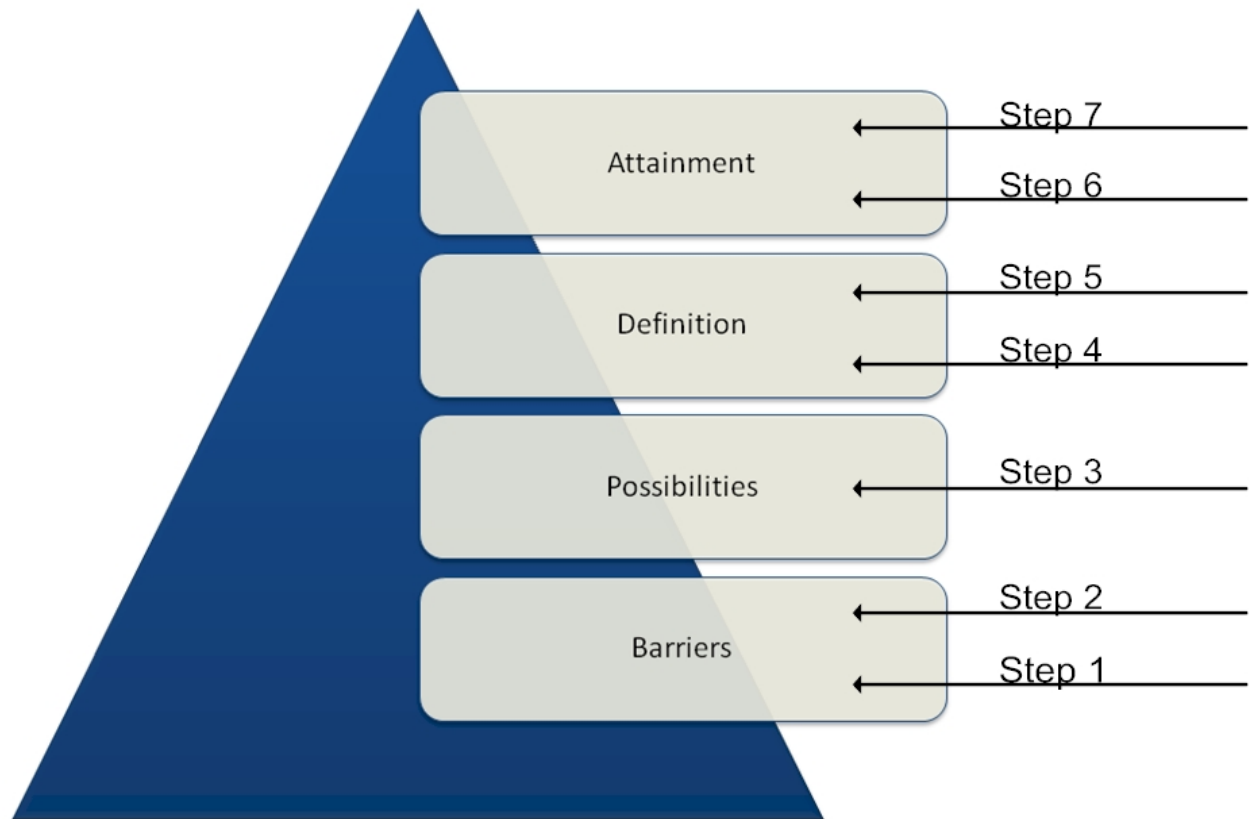
In step 1, you'll *Establish a Dream Job Mind-Set* by assessing your current situation, understand why you lose your spark, and then take action.

By *breaking through the barriers* in step 2 and *imagining new possibilities* in step 3, you'll identify and deal with what's keeping you from your dream job. You'll begin focusing on exciting new opportunities you may never have considered.

With the world of possibility open to you, steps 4 and 5 will help you hone in on a more precise **definition** of your ideal job where you can *unleash your innate gifts* and *define your dream*.

Now you're ready to make it happen! *Formulate your strategy* in step 6 and *land your dream job* in step 7 as your efforts culminate in the **attainment** of the perfect work for you.

Although this process is largely sequential, you will benefit from going back to earlier steps to refine and strengthen your approach. For example, if you find yourself making slow progress, you may need to revisit whether old barriers are preventing you from moving toward what you really want.



WITHOUT LIMITATIONS AND BARRIERS

Many of us are afraid to follow our passions, to pursue what we want most because it means taking risks and even facing failure. But to pursue your passion with all your heart and soul is success in itself. The greatest failure is to have never really tried.

– ROBYN ALLAN –

Maybe you've thought that your dream job doesn't exist or that you could never possibly achieve it. Like many people, you may not have explored your opportunities because you're reluctant to commit to the required process. The numerous obstacles that limit your ability to define and land your dream job are too many and too limiting. In this section, we'll take a closer look at these obstacles.

This is one of the most important sections in this workbook because it will help you understand what stands in your way from being able to define and land your dream job. You will review the list of top obstacles and barriers that most hold people back so that you can reduce these fears to their simplest elements to overcome them.

I found that Jill and Roger each had a set of barriers that were standing in their way and preventing them from daring themselves towards their dream job. Jill told me *"I'm good at coming up with practical, realistic reasons why something won't work. And the barriers I see are very real to me and very scary."*

Barriers, even though they may be imaginary, seem very real when you experience them. What you must realize is that whenever you find yourself resisting anything during this dream job process, that it is fear talking. When you understand why you're having difficulty moving forward in the process, you can identify the fear and be ready to move on with confidence and embrace your greatness.

"So you're saying that it's really an unwillingness to confront the fear that's standing in my way?" questioned Jill.

"Exactly," I agreed enthusiastically. *"A barrier rises up and you begin to second guess yourself. Your subconscious whispers how much easier it would be to stay with the familiar and avoid taking a chance on the unknown. You listen to this inner voice and continue to struggle and let indecision overcome you. The solution is to take action and use the momentum you create to carry you toward the life you truly want and deserve."*

Fear is a self-defense mechanism designed to help us avoid harm. Normal fear protects us and allows us to harness our defenses and take preventive measures. Abnormal fear paralyzes us and builds a threat into far more than it really is. When you find fear beginning to twist the truth, face it with courage and faith in yourself. Reduce fear to its simplest elements and find out just how small it really is.

Let's define the fears and barriers that prevent you from being able to make finding your dream job a priority. Once they're identified, we can develop strategies to overcome them.

IMAGINE NEW POSSIBILITIES

Before we look at the list of barriers, I wanted to highlight two particular obstacles that far too often intimidate many of my clients. The first is, “**my careers have chosen me.**” What they mean is that their career path has involved safe choices or offered prestigious titles or reflected what their families wanted. Some ended up with jobs in companies where their friends were employed because their friends paved the way for them. But the most distressing way careers have chosen some of my clients is when they accepted employment with the first (or only) company that offered to hire them. They accepted the sure thing, even though it wasn’t what they wanted, because they feared that nothing better would come along.

Unless you get very lucky, letting your career choose you is a risky move. While settling for the job that lands in your lap may be much easier and less scary than doing what it takes to find your dream job, the day-to-day reality of working at a job you dislike can be very difficult to endure.

You have an opportunity, through the dream job process, to choose a career for yourself. You no longer have to settle. Instead, you can discover the best career for you at this point in your life and learn to find or create it. It’s not as difficult as you might think. In fact, the process can be both enjoyable and rewarding. The first step is being willing to learn more about yourself and what you find most fulfilling. Then follow the process, one step at a time, until you are living your dream.

The second obstacle is, “**resist your calling.**” It’s so easy to resist your calling, especially when it’s placed right in front of you to choose, but you aren’t able to see it in the same wonderful light that others are seeing for you. Your resistance has prevented you from doing what you were put on this earth to do. One example of resisting your calling is Oprah Winfrey. She began her career at age 19 as a news anchor in Baltimore. She was offered a position hosting a talk show. But she resisted. The news director saw her potential and knew she would be terrific for this new assignment. Oprah started crying and said, “I’m a news anchor and I don’t want to do soft stories.” She resisted her calling, but as soon as she started the talk show, she realized, “I am home.”

When doing this process, most people are too attached to using and relying on their head for the answers. If you are going to do this 7-step dream job process right, you need to temper and limit the mind’s desire to know and figure it out. Instead, resist the temptation and listen to the silent pull of what your heart desires. What your soul yearns for. It’s being able to turn off the mind and open to the heart/soul truth that allows you to know what you are meant to do in this lifetime for work. As Phil Lane, a Native American teacher, says, “*The longest road you will ever walk is the sacred journey from your head to your heart.*”

Here are the top twenty obstacles and barriers to a dream job:

1. **Not being able to define your dream job**

You’re unsatisfied at your current job or are in between jobs. You long for a job that gives you more fulfillment and satisfaction, yet you can’t quite put your finger on what you REALLY want to do. You may have several ideas for possible jobs, but you can’t seem to narrow them down to the one job or career field that will truly satisfy you.

2. **Financial obligations**

Financial obligations such as mortgages, credit card bills or college savings for children can restrain us. If your survival depends on your income alone, this is a fear you may experience when facing dramatic changes in your life. Recognize that you have control over the changes you wish to bring about and can do so gradually while maintaining a secure income from a familiar source. Thus, you can ease into the life you want one step at a time and reduce the threat of financial difficulty.

IMAGINE NEW POSSIBILITIES**3. Comfort in your current position and lifestyle**

You want to maintain a certain level of lifestyle and ease of life. This can be a powerful motivating factor for maintaining the status quo. But there's a difference between being "comfortable" and being "fulfilled."

4. Fear of losing money/status

Society puts a high premium on having lots of money and holding a particular status. People who are happy in their jobs are often associated with having less money, and if you want to leave your job to find more satisfaction, you're often criticized and told to just "suck it up" because you will eventually reap monetary rewards. That job that you're unhappy with might have a great benefits package and profit sharing, and that makes it harder to leave.

5. Having your career choose you

Often, it's because it's the safe choice, it's prestigious, it's credible, it's what my family wants, it's where my friends are going to work and it's the only company that called. As said earlier, in many cases, it was the first job offer you received so you didn't consider other, potentially more satisfying options.

6. Fear of change

Many people enjoy the status quo and don't want to make a change. You may be unhappy and unsatisfied, but it is a familiar position and is comfortable and it's very easy to choose comfort over passion. The unknown is often feared. It takes courage and risk for most of us to take the leap and find a fulfilling job. It is so much easier to daydream about "someday" than it is to actually take the steps to make "someday" a reality and live it on a day-to-day basis. That requires work and commitment and many of us find it easier to live in the daydream of "what if" than to make it "what is".

7. *Shoulds* from family and society

Throughout our lives, we hear many messages about how we *should* act. We become conditioned and socialized to act in acceptable ways that may not always be in our best interests. We're told/taught "Don't rock the boat," "Fit in, be like everyone else", "This is how it's done" and more. Being like everyone else may not be where your greatness lies and you wind up not even knowing what you *want* in a dream job. You fear rejection so much that you often hold back just to fit in.

8. Time constraints

Your life is busy. Your current job may take up a considerable amount of energy and time or you may have a family, hobbies, interests, etc. Finding time to complete the dream job process may seem impossible. You may also fear that if you find your dream job, it may not be practical, and you may have to take time and effort to create a new job or career area. Society today moves at an incredible pace, and that makes it much harder to find time to really focus on what your dream job might be.

9. Not knowing what you actually like or enjoy

Most people don't know what they want or what they enjoy doing most. They don't know what they value or believe in. They aren't sure where they are going and how to get there. This frustration freezes people from taking the risk and having the courage to find out what they really would love to do.

IMAGINE NEW POSSIBILITIES**10. Comparing and Despairing**

There will always be someone who is "better". Someone who has more, lives better, is more fulfilled, etc. Comparison is a losing game. It makes you run round in endless circles and provides excuses for not doing anything more - "I'll never be as good an actor as Tom Hanks so why should I even go on any auditions?", "I'll never be able to get a recording contract like Elton John so why should I work on my singing career?" The fact that acting is your passion or singing speaks to your soul gets lost somehow.

11. Self Doubt

You see yourself as less than who you really are and feel unworthy to receive all that you deserve. Self-doubt is one of the biggest obstacles to achieving your dreams. You often ignore yourself in favor of others. You value their opinions too highly and your own too little. The only real approval that matters is that which comes from inside yourself. You're the only person who knows what you truly need and want. You must shift from self-doubt to belief. If you tap into your true gifts and unleash your essence, you come from a place of strength. It is possible to be all you can be during the dream job process.

12. Not Making Time For You

You must take time for yourself, but it's difficult to commit time, especially when you are working a full-time job. You're taught to put others' needs and wants before your own and often wind up tired, overscheduled and with no energy for yourself.

13. Fear of failure

Fear of failure is the most common fear of them all. You fear making a fool out of yourself, losing your security, stepping backwards instead of forward, making the wrong decision, not being able to live up to standards (whether they are yours or society's) and you fear being labeled a failure or a loser. There can be so much fear that it is often paralyzing. You have no idea where to begin to deal with all the fears that you just simply stay where you are.

14. Resist your calling

Every individual has a vocation ("a calling") that he or she was meant to be doing. This calling comes from aligning your natural talents to who you truly are. Most people resist their calling because they don't know who they are and what they want. Thus, it makes it almost impossible to embrace something you don't believe is you. Another resistance is not believing in yourself and letting your internal doubt cause you to not see what your clearly defined passionate career path.

15. It will take too much time

If you know what your dream job is and know that it may be three years away, at least you do know what it is. This can be extremely relieving to finally figure out what your fulfilling work actually is. Even if it takes time to land your dream job, once you are actually living it, you'll reap the deep rewards of fulfillment.

16. Isolation and lack of support

Isolation is a dream job killer. You need support to land the job of our dreams. Daring yourself and moving forward are often facilitated when you have a great support system. When you find yourself trying to go it alone, it's more likely you'll have setbacks and just stay where you are.

IMAGINE NEW POSSIBILITIES**17. Feelings of inadequacy**

You may want to pursue a specific career or job area, but lack the skill for it and are feeling inadequate. You may have to go back to school or learn new tasks and ideas. You might feel that if something is your dream job you "should" already have the skills necessary to do that job.

18. Lack of resources

Many people feel held back by the lack of resources—not knowing what jobs are available, not knowing where to find them, not knowing enough people to begin networking, not knowing how to conduct interviews (informational and job). This can be very frustrating, especially when combined with fears about lacking skills and having to potentially go back for additional schooling.

19. Fear of making the wrong decision

Each decision you make will lead you down a unique path with challenges and opportunities of its own. You may have several options you would like to try and worry that only one will be the right one and spend endless time trying to decide which is best. Thinking a situation through in a thorough manner is a good thing. However, analyzing can be used to avoid action. You can make endless lists, but if items never get checked off, what good is it? It's easy to get lost in the details and never get around to doing anything because you're too busy planning for every possible contingency.

20. What if I invest time in job A and my dream job really is job B?

If you've spent years not listening to your intuition and following "shoulds," this is a common fear. For example, thinking that "I should be working at a responsible, well-paying job instead of running around pursuing my dreams" is a "should" that is holding you back. Your time is precious and you have already possibly spent years at unsatisfying jobs. You don't want to make any mistakes and you want to get it right on the first try.

*When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision,
it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.*

— AUDRE LORDE —

Jill and Roger both found that they identified with many of these obstacles. Jill had been having trouble defining her dream job and finding the courage to stop listening to her "shoulds." She said, *"I tend to impose constraints on myself while trying to envision a dream job because I think about the skills I don't have, the costs associated with pursuing a different skill set and the loss of prestige and income."* Roger observed, *"I find myself allowing my fears to control me more often than I'd like. I am afraid of rejection and I fear not succeeding at my dream job. But if I'm not even pursuing it, how will I know if I'll fail or succeed?"*

Jill resonated with the points about comparing and despairing and being too analytical. *"This really made me realize that I am so analytical I avoid action. I want the one perfect solution and I keep trying to find it before I take any steps forward at all. Comparing always puts me behind and is something I really want to overcome. I also focus on others and their approval, not realizing that it is my approval that matters most. I really am conditioned to listen to everyone else's shoulds instead of my wants."*

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She wondered, "So I can take a job in the interim that might be a few steps closer to my dream job and not have to stay at my boring job until the absolute perfect dream job comes around? I can deal with that. It's actually a bit exciting to think of all the possibilities out there that I can try. I've been caught up in the mindset of having to move from a job I've been at for ten years to another I'll be at for ten years. I forget that it's OK to have a job for a short period of time and move around until I find one that really satisfies me."

Roger smiled when he read the barrier about choosing the wrong dream job. He confessed to me, "This is one of my biggest fears. I really am afraid of wasting time at a job that might not be my dream job since I already feel I've wasted so much time going from job to job over the years. How do I overcome that?"

I replied, "Let me tell you an experience I had with another client, an accountant who thought she was clear on what she wanted to do and that it was event planning. She didn't realize that she was limiting her choices when a friend offered her an event planning job. She didn't allow herself to be completely open to many possibilities. She just figured it had to be her dream job because it paid a good salary and she could get started right away. But I could tell that event planning didn't seem to really resonate with her. We got to the truth by more digging and an honest internal assessment of her true desires. She told me that her dream job was being a writer. But she had no idea how to make it a viable career option and this is why she didn't choose it at first.

Both Roger and Jill began to recognize just how much the obstacles played such integral roles in limiting themselves. This was a key step. Because once they identify those obstacles, they can develop strategies to overcome them.

I know the price of success: dedication, hard work and an unrelenting devotion to the things you want to see happen.

– FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT –

Make a list of your barriers - choose the top three that limit you from your dream job. Write down ways and steps you'll take in order to overcome them. You can use the list mentioned above or think of some on your own. Examples:

1. _____

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2. _____

3. _____

So how do you overcome these barriers? First, realize that failure isn't something you can avoid. It's something you can learn from. Imagine a toddler taking her first step. She gets a step or two and then sits down in surprise. She thinks about it and tries again, eliminating what doesn't work and doing more of what did. We have to do that as well - review what you did, determine what worked and what didn't and then get back up and try again. Risk is a part of our daily life and failure is always a possible result of that. But failure is merely a tool, a way to tell us if we've achieved our goal. The proper way to respond to failure is to simply reassess your actions, regroup and try again.

You can be inspired by the stories of others who've experienced substantial failure and became successful – Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Edison, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Benjamin Franklin, Margaret Mead, Winston Churchill, Harriet Tubman, Theodore Roosevelt, Susan B. Anthony. They were all geniuses and all knew monumental failure. They learned from their mistakes and moved on to tremendous success.

Jill realized that money was a barrier. *"After so many years of working at a certain level of income, I have bills and a certain level of lifestyle to maintain. I just can't afford to give it all up to pursue some nebulous dream. I also feel that I don't have time because I'm busy working at my current job. I also look at my age - approaching 40 - and feel that I'm really too old and should've done it when I was younger."*

Money is a key issue for many people. Money can often entice us away from what we truly want and desire. If money is preventing you from knowing what you want to be doing, it's important to move beyond this limitation and beyond the narrow viewpoint it offers. Ask yourself these two questions: "How much is my happiness worth?" "What kind of pay cut would I be willing to take if it meant working at a job a truly loved?" You may find that money isn't as big an obstacle as you thought.