

# SmartBlog on Leadership

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## [Somebody, help, I'm stuck: Why you're not advancing](#)

By [Joel Garfinkle](#) on May 20th, 2013

There seems to be an innate drive to success that burns within us. If not, there are hundreds of images and announcements that extol the value of advancement. Videos and the Internet lure with the delights of riches.

People around us seem to slide into success. It looks so easy for them. But what do you do when you find yourself treading water? What is the mud sucking at your feet and keeping you mired in one place?

Check these four reasons and find solutions.

**1. You've lost your passion.** We need to know where our passions and strengths lie and then work to advance them. When we blindly follow the upward path because everyone is doing it, we fizzle.

When trying to **identify your passion**, the easiest place to begin is to ask yourself: "What interests me and what are interests? Interests are those things that grab your attention ever so gently without you even noticing. Think about those occasions when you find yourself speaking to friends for hours on end about subjects you find fascinating or times when performing a specific task was so enjoyable that it became effortless.

You have interests that if properly channeled can be the spark to ignite your inner passion to light the way to your **dream career**. In other words, what you find the most interesting can lead to personal enrichment and self-fulfillment in your life.

While not everyone can love everything about their job — moving up and away from what you enjoy will bring dissatisfaction and loss of motivation.

**2. You've gotten comfortable and quit trying.** Admit it. Sometimes we get to a very comfortable place. We know the job. We have a pattern to life. And moving forward feels risky. Overcome that fear with simple mini-steps. First decide to create a goal to move forward. Envision it. Take other steps. Seek a mentor. Step up your team player skills. Enlarge your network. Ask for feedback.

Then communicate your goal to progress with your manager and ask for help and guidance. "Share your aspirations with your manager or superiors in the company, so that management can help establish goals and benchmark for determining when is the right time to promote you," says Lisa Kojis, managing partner for staffing firm Princeton One.

**3. It isn't where you want to go.** You may look at what your boss is doing and think, I don't want to do that! Recognize moving into that spot is not the only career direction

available. There may be other careers paths available in the company. If not, look to choices in other companies or even other fields.

Also understand that while your boss might handle that job by working 70 hours a week or by running the team in a draconian manner– that doesn't mean you would need to lead that way.

Explore choices and find the options that ignite your drive to advance.

**4. You think the price is too high.** Sometimes it seems that high success costs marriages, health, time and the things you hold valuable in life. It's true that more workers feel **overstressed** and unable to unplug. But it doesn't have to be that way.

A mentor or coach can offer strategies and life-balance changes that allow you to succeed while keeping that which is most important to you.

*Joel Garfinkle is an executive coach and author of **“Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level.”** More than 10,000 people **subscribe to his Fulfillment@Work newsletter**. If you sign up, you'll receive the free e-book “41 Proven Strategies to Get Promoted Now!”*