



Considering a Second Act?

How to Stop Making Plans and Start Making Things Happen

By Connie Dieken



Stop me if you know this one. If necessity is the mother of invention, where did *reinvention* come from? The good thing about this riddle is that you almost can't get it wrong. Would you guess "Curiosity"? "Boredom"? "Adventurousness"? Just look at recent headlines: you'll find all of the above and many more answers, because leaders reinventing themselves is becoming a trend so conspicuous and widespread that *Newsweek* magazine has dubbed it "Career 2.0."

The poster child for Career 2.0 is Microsoft founder Bill Gates. The richest man in America is set to change the world...again. Instead of *giving* his money to a foundation, Gates will be *running* one. This transition to a second act caught the business community by surprise, but when reporters clamored for a motive, Gates calmly explained, "I was feeling an increased desire to spend more time on foundation work." A simple explanation for what was surely a complicated decision, but there it is. Gates identified a second passion and is poised to pursue it.

I speak from experience when I say that personal reinvention happens when purpose meets passion. Six years ago, I changed careers when I left broadcasting behind and started onPoint, and I have never looked back. I believe that anyone, at any stage of life, can reinvigorate and refocus, but it takes determination to stop making plans and start making things happen.

The average person changes not just jobs, but *careers*, at least two or three. No position is ever permanent, and passions aren't pipe dreams. So are *you* hungry for a new challenge?

Here are a few tips on how to stop pondering and start producing:

- ***Prioritize and accept the trade-offs.*** Be flexible and don't be discouraged by setbacks or change. Set positive goals for yourself, but be prepared for some surprises. Manage your priorities, and once the cobwebs have cleared, be decisive and make peace with the inevitable compromises.
- ***Convey your goals clearly.*** Get your message out to your target audience. No one can read your mind. If you want people to support your ideas, you must

communicate them with clarity and self-confidence to trigger buy-in and positive responses from others.

- ***Rediscover yourself.*** What excites you? What energizes you? If the answers to these questions are missing from your life, perhaps it's time to make a change.
- ***Overcome the perfection trap.*** You have a vision. You've made your decision. Don't allow self-doubt to hold you back or let questionable opinions weaken your resolve. There's *never a perfect time* for anything, so when you're 80% ready, make a move.
- ***Get in the game.*** Take initiative. Be persistent. Get on the radar screen of your target audience any way you can. When I started my business, I offered a free test-drive to a potential client. As a result, they hired me and a business was born.
- ***Networking isn't just for events.*** Go out and connect with people everywhere—even the grocery store check-out counter. You never know who might offer you advice, a lead, or other useful information. There are a lot of opportunities out there, but you've got to find them, and the bigger your network, the more help you'll have.
- ***Take ownership of your ideas.*** Recognize the ideas and thoughts of others but listen to your gut. In order to stop planning and start producing, you must act on your instincts and have the confidence to see your ideas through.
- ***Convert decisions into actions.*** It's not what gets said that counts: it's what gets done. In order to stop planning and start producing, you must create opportunities to act on your ideas and then have the confidence to see them through.

The idea of making a living isn't what it used to be. When choosing a career, more and more people are placing personal satisfaction over paycheck on their list of priorities. Like so many others who are looking for stimulating and meaningful careers, Bill Gates wants to give back, and he is taking determined steps to accomplish his goal. So if you're ready to transition to a second act, remember two things: you've got some highly esteemed company and anything is possible when purpose meets passion.

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