

A Second Chance

Changing careers could be the answer to finding your passion.

By Kevin Fritz

Working for a living is pretty much inevitable. From the ages of 18-55, the average worker will toil 91,250 hours, not including overtime or weekends. That's 22.4 percent of our lives. Only sleeping (30 percent) consumes more of our time. That's why embracing your job will serve you well. For some, that means changing career paths.

"These are big decisions," says **Kendra Davies** of Stellar Life Coaching based in Orlando. "And with any big decision, I always ask clients 'Are you engaged in life?' That's the most important question. If you're not balanced, changing careers is just a quick fix, a band-aid."

For those who are balanced, she recommends knowing and recognizing your character strengths as opposed to your skills — e.g., being empathetic vs. being proficient at QuickBooks — so you end up doing what comes natural to you.

A Calling to Help

When **James "Jay" Warner** of **MetroWest** graduated from college, he landed a job with Citigroup in Buffalo, New York. He then earned his MBA and worked his way up to senior financial analyst. Still, he felt restless. So, he left the financial world, moved to Tampa, and became a real estate broker. That, too, left him unsatisfied. After five years, he returned to Citigroup.



James Warner

One night while watching *Fight Club*, a scene in the movie changed his life. A clerk was being robbed at gunpoint and the gunman found out the man wanted to become a veterinarian. The gunman told the clerk he wouldn't kill him, but took his

driver's license and said he would track him down later to be sure he followed his dream.

"What would I do if someone put a gun to my head?" Warner remembers asking aloud. After some soul searching, he realized his real purpose was to help people. At 34, he quit his finance job again, moved to Orlando and enrolled in an accelerated 10-month program at the University of Central Florida (UCF) to become a registered nurse. Today, Warner happily works as a critical care nurse at Florida Hospital in Orlando.



Take Action

Kendra Davies of the Orlando-based Stellar Life Coaching, describes four actions people should take before making the decision to begin a second career.

Reflect: Before you make the decision to start over, make sure you've got you sorted out.

Write: When it is out of our heads and we can see it on paper, we can devise a plan based on reality, not just the dream.

Research: Conduct real life research. Gather real information from people in the field, industry or job you are considering.

Volunteer or Take a Class: This is a way to try the job or industry you are considering to see if it's right for you.

A Second Chance — Literally

Ravina Claussen of **Dr. Phillips** was enjoying a diverse career in marketing and strategic management for the likes of Walt Disney World, Symantec and Compass Knowledge Group. That all changed after the birth of her two children, both after which she went into heart failure.

Those near-death experiences were the catalyst to her second career as a financial consultant with AXA Advisors, LLC. "It was an eye opener," says Claussen, "and I wanted to spread the word how important it is to be prepared."



Ravina Claussen

At 40, Claussen, who is armed with an MBA from Notre Dame, is now able to help families attain peace of mind. And she has never been happier. Her cardiologist tells her she is much more alive and passionate since she changed careers.

"After you realize how lucky you are, it makes you appreciate being here," she says. "It is important to look outside of what you know, and to see where else you can make a difference. Life is too short."

A Natural Teacher

Growing up, **Chris Deatrck** of **Winter Park** knew what she yearned for — to teach. She attended UCF with that mindset and graduated in 1994 with a liberal studies degree. But during her undergraduate work, she fell in love with the sport of rowing.



Chris Deatrck

"I got offered a full-time position at UCF as assistant crew coach," she says. The next thing she knew, 10 years had elapsed,

and she was hired as head crew coach at Temple University in Philadelphia. Three years later, she was back in Florida, taking the head coaching job at Stetson University.

But after 15 years as a collegiate crew coach, she decided it was time for a change. "I needed to spend more time with my family," she says. "Coaching is 24/7, six days a week. You are out of the house at 4:40 a.m. and return at 7 p.m."

Six years later, a full circle has been formed. With a master's degree in nursing education, Deatruck is now teaching — just as she envisioned as an undergrad more than 20 years ago.

A Matter of Priorities

Peggy Jackson, founder of Thrive Development Partners, LLC, had worked at a large law firm and later at SunTrust in

human resources. In 2007, the **Hunter's Creek** resident realized her advancement opportunities were limited, and she yearned for the freedoms of creativity and flexibility. Her first leap was to Right Management, where she worked full time as a consultant. However, something was still not right. That final moment of clarity came when she realized her family had ended up at the bottom of her priority list.



Peggy Jackson

"I needed a work-life balance," she says. "In reality, I had more flexibility, but I was still

working a lot." She decided to step back to a part-time role with the consulting company. "I now had time with the kids," she says, "and it allowed me a launching pad to do consulting on my own, something I had always wanted to do since college."

When Jackson was still with SunTrust, she remembers attending a Women Unlimited workshop. "I kept saying to myself, 'I want to do what she is doing,'" she says about the instructor. Seven years later, Jackson is doing just that, managing leadership development programs for Women Unlimited, a client she now calls her own. **L**

For more info on changing careers, visit our website at CentralFloridaLifestyle.com.

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