

FEATURED ARTICLE

Discover the Three Secrets of Success

By Tina Jackson, Clarity Consulting

As professional women, you can experience more success and well-being in your career, finances, and personal life, by practicing the three secrets of success: Following Your Passion, Achieving Balance, and Identifying Your Dreams and Goals.

Following Your Passion

To be truly successful, you must devote your time to things you are passionate about and that leave you deeply satisfied. This applies to both your professional and personal lives.

I describe this process as living “on purpose,” that is, doing what you love and what brings greater meaning to your life.

Once you know your purpose, and begin to follow it, incredible things begin to happen. For example:

- Your energy increases
- You experience a greater sense of well-being and self-esteem
- You communicate with more authenticity
- You start to see ways you can be paid (and paid well) to do what you love
- You have a sense of contributing to something larger than yourself, and
- You find it easier to say “no” to activities that do not provide deep satisfaction

Achieving Balance

Living a balanced life means that you take the time to do things that energize and refuel you. As you do this, your productivity increases and you get more done in less time with less effort. Successful people get where they are by working smarter, not harder. Working smarter includes

knowing your own patterns: During what times of day do you naturally have the highest energy? What can you do to energize yourself when you need a boost?

If you would like to increase your energy, experiment with the following exercise. You can do this alone or with others.

Exercise: Make a list of things, big and small, that energize you. Include physical activities (swimming, walking, getting a massage), mental activities (reading, taking

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Contact Michelle at mtui@ca.rr.com

JUNE 2009 WORKSHOP

Leadership Success: Communicating with Authenticity & Presence

By Amy Wittig

Authentic presence is communication involving speaking 'from the heart' and 'generous listening.' This simplified definition barely scratches the surface of what Tina Jackson, President of Clarity Consulting, provided to members and friends of WHA on a Saturday in early June. The networking event and workshop brought nearly 40 professional women together.

Authenticity involves admitting mistakes, sharing from the heart, speaking with integrity, and showing vulnerability. Presence is conveyed through eye contact, active listening, blocking out distractions and showing interest and concern. Combining these actions, authentic presence results in people feeling like they are a priority, resulting in better engagement and true connection. In an hour's time, Tina provided the group with concrete skills to take into both the workplace and relationships. After discussing individuals who demonstrate 'authentic presence,' she provided the chance for those present to practice and engage with other women in the group.

She stressed that just like athletes honing their athletic skills, these communication skills need to be practiced. To start, everyone needs to be introspective. In order to be present with others, one needs to be present to herself first. Deep breathing, meditating, taking breaks during the day, doing something you love are good ways to become grounded. The best indicator of this is doing some-



Workshop speaker Tina Jackson leading discussion on authentic communication.

thing that makes one feel energized. Second, Tina explained that body language provides the most leverage for trusted and believable communication.

To convey authenticity when communicating in person, it is helpful to mirror the mood, actions, and facial expressions, to build rapport and set the tone for deeper and meaningful discussions. These days, much of the communication that takes place in a work environment is executed through emails and phone calls, so powerful moments with people with whom one rarely comes in contact can set the tone for successful future conversations and productive business relationships.

Finally, successfully being present to oneself as well as others results in authentic sharing. Facial and vocal expressions convey true emotions and this vulnerability builds trust. Working through these steps and eliminating barriers to them will lead to lasting and effective professional and personal relationships.

Not only did Tina provide take-home skills from her session, but she offered to help workshop attendees through a complementary coaching session. Her authentic presence was contagious and genuine and provided a great building block for the participants' future development as leaders with authentic presence. ✦



FEATURE ARTICLE (CONT'D FROM FRONT PAGE)**... Discover the Three Secrets of Success**

classes), emotional activities (fun time with your family or pets, having a leisurely chat with a close friend), and spiritual (meditation, spending time in nature). Some activities may take a few minutes; others may take much longer.

Then assess how often you are engaged in activities that energize you. Is it daily? Weekly? Monthly? Pick one area (physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual) that you would like to invest more time in during the next month. Start today: do one thing, however small, to energize that part your life. Then figure out how you can carve out time to do similar activities more regularly.

Hint: Keep the list where you most often need a “pick-me-up” (at work, in your car, on your refrigerator). When you need a boost, select one energizer you could do right now and do it!

Identifying Your Dreams and Goals

You have choices: you can create the course you want your life to take, go where life takes you, or some combination of the two.

Ask yourself the following questions for each area of your life (career, financial, family, friends, health/appearance, home, fun, personal/spiritual development):

- 1) On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how satisfied am I with this area of my life right now?
- 2) On that same scale, where do I want to be?

If there is a discrepancy between the two numbers in any area of your life (e.g., in your career, you're a 6 right now, and you'd like to be a 9), you have just taken the first step towards creating a goal. Now make the description of your goal as rich as you can.

For example, with the career example above, you could ask yourself, what does a 9 look like? What does it feel like?

Put a timeframe on your goal. When will you achieve it?

Now plan your course of action: What's the next step you can take to move towards your goal? What additional steps might you take? Be as specific and concrete as possible. Keep adding to the list as you think of more potential action items.

Finally, create an action plan for yourself. An action plan is a list of sequential steps to move towards your larger goal. Set a deadline for the next step. Hint: don't bother mapping out a timeline for all of the steps; your timeline will probably vary from the original plan anyway. As you finish one step, just assign a deadline for the next step. Now, go for it!

In sum, if you want to experience more success in your life, use your passion (your purpose) as a guiding force in your life, nurture your health and well-being by leading a balanced life, and take time to visualize your dreams and create an action plan to make your goals a reality.

I wish you tremendous success on your journey. Enjoy!



Tina Jackson is President of Clarity Consulting, based in San Diego. Her passions include teaching people techniques to more easily and joyfully get the results they want in their work and personal lives, and to communicate with more authenticity, presence, and emotional intelligence. For information about her one-on-one coaching and leadership training, please call (619) 276-1707 or email tina@clarity-ctc.com.

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ARTICLE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

How To Write a Great Letter of Reference

By Marie Bouvier, WordSculpture

Writing letters of reference for departing employees can be a real challenge for managers. If you don't know how to start, you put off writing the letter, then end up scribbling a mediocre recommendation at the last minute. A poorly written recommendation letter won't help your employee's chances—and may even hurt them.

A strong letter of reference will help your staffers win new jobs and assist them in future job searches. There are a few keys to writing really good reference letters. Keep them in mind, and you'll be able to help your employees—even when they're no longer working for you.

1. Know your company's policies. Companies differ greatly on their policies for letters of reference. Some companies require that reference letters be approved through human resources. Some refuse to provide referrals in any form, citing potential slander and libel concerns.

While most companies will allow you to write referrals for your own staff, it is imperative that you know your company's policies before you write a letter of reference. If you're planning to use company letterhead for the letter, use it appropriately. It's not worth putting your own job on the line. If your company has strict guidelines, write a private letter of reference on your personal letterhead instead.

2. Do your research. You may not remember all of your employee's projects, so don't be afraid to track down additional information before you compose the letter. Take a look at old performance reviews. Request an updated copy of their resume. Ask if there are particular projects they would like for you to highlight. This will help you compose a stronger letter.

3. Consider your employee's best attributes and skills. Before you write the reference letter, make a list of the employee's attributes and skills. Which of these skills did you rely on most as a manager?

The National Association of Colleges and Employers created a list of attributes, skills, and qualities that employers look for in job candidates. Consider which of these skills you would want in a potential

employee; then compare your employee's skill list.

- Leadership
- Goal achievement
- Intelligence
- Direction
- Self-confidence
- Initiative
- Willingness to accept responsibility
- Imagination
- Flexibility
- Ability to communicate
- Appropriate vocational skills
- Energy level
- Ability to handle conflict
- Competitiveness
- Self-knowledge
- Interpersonal skills

4. If you can't say anything nice, say nothing at all. You're not required to write letters of reference for your employees; it's a professional courtesy. If you don't feel you can honestly refer an employee to other employers, politely decline to write the letter.

When you do decide to write a referral letter, keep it positive. It's not a time to rehash old issues or point out an employee's shortcomings. Focus on your employee's best assets and make them shine. Create a winning picture of why the employee would be an asset to the hiring company.

5. Compose a businesslike letter with strong content. Start by listing the employee's role and your role. Provide the length of employment or the length of time you have known the employee. Then offer a general statement of recommendation.

Follow this up with more detail. Explain why you believe this person is a good candidate. Be factual, referencing specific skills, projects, and training. And give a clear idea of the impact of the employee's work. Use strong, descriptive words throughout the letter to emphasize the employee's best qualities.

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ARTICLE (CONTINUED)

...A Great Letter of Reference

Summarize with a final statement of recommendation. Conclude by offering to provide additional information to the reader. Be sure to include your contact information.

- 6. Offer to provide a draft of the letter of reference to the employee.** Before you finalize the letter, give your employee a draft of the reference letter. You want to be open about the praise you provide, but you also want a double check to see if there are any key projects or skills that have been omitted inadvertently.

You may wish to maintain a copy of the letter for your files. If potential employers call you, particular-

ly years in the future, it will help to have a copy of the letter at hand.

Writing a great letter of reference is a skill that is easily learned, and one that will be appreciated by your staff members. Take the time to compose really strong recommendations for your employees, and you'll be recognizing them for a job well done. ☒

*Marie Bouvier is a professional business writer and editor with WordSculpture. She has extensive experience with resume writing and job searches. For more information, visit www.wordsculpture.com. **Mention WHA for a 25% discount off all services.***

Business Card Brunch Update

by Ling Kung & Nina Niu-Ok

WHA hosted Business Card Brunches in June and August. The June 14th brunch was held at Amaranta in Canoga Park, with 7 attendees, including the 2009 WHA Scholarship winner.

The August 8th Business Card Brunch at 26 Beach in Venice hosted 11 attendees ranging from researchers to hospital administrators to health plan managers and consultants. The conversation was very lively.

Both events provided great opportunities to get to know smart women from all over the healthcare industry in a relaxed environment. We hope you'll plan to attend a brunch in your area – or even volunteer to host one!



Attendees at August brunch in Venice.

NEXT BUSINESS CARD BRUNCH

Please join us for a WHA Board of Directors-sponsored Business Card Brunch! This intimate event will be open to 6 WHA members, each with 1 non-member guest. We will discuss healthcare, our careers, and how WHA fits into our professional strategies, all while enjoying a fabulous dim sum brunch! As space is limited, please RSVP to Michelle at mtui@socal.rr.com soon to secure your and your guest's spot.

Sat, October 3, 2009
10:30am

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**MEMBERS ON THE MOVE
& NEW MEMBERS****New Members**

Adrienne Arellano is a student at CSULB and Administration/Healthcare Public Relations & Marketing Association of So Cal.

Maria Demarcis is a student at Cal State Univ Long Beach and a Clinical Research Coordinator at Remek Research.

Carol Keller is a Systems Redesign Manager at VA Greater Los Angeles.

Diana LaMar is an Academic Advisor at Chapman University

Kim Leanna Le is a student at Cal State Univ. Long Beach.

Elyse Nagelberg is a Student at Jodi Nagelberg is a student at USC

Jodi Nagelberg is a student at USC

Berenice Nunez is Project Manager at Molina Healthcare, Inc. and an MPH Student at UCLA.

Vanna Pham is a student at Cal State Univ Long Beach.

Sarah Rainwater is a student at USC.

Patricia Rincon is a Senior Associate Consultant at Kaiser Permanente.

Mara Sanchez is a Student at CSU Long Beach.

Grace Tan is a Project Coordinator at NCADD-OC.

Jennifer Valentine is a student at USC.

Members on the Move

Ling Kung is now Business Consulting Lead – Medicare ROC at Kaiser Permanente.

April Vicchilli is now an Executive Assistant at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

Rita Zwern is now Manager, State & Special Programs Product Line Medicare & State Programs at Kaiser.

**Social Networking with WHA**

Be sure to join our groups to receive the latest events updates and to network with fellow members.

Directions to Join

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Executive Forum is published four times a year by Women In Health Administration of Southern California. We welcome your comments, suggestions and article submissions. Please contact:

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WHA would love to hear from you!

Please let us know of any important news in your lives, ideas for events and activities, book reviews, articles, etc. Better yet, get involved and lend your talent and ideas by joining one of the WHA committees!