

10 Tips & Tricks for Baby Boomers in Search of a New Career

by Karen Colligan

Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) are called the “sandwich generation” for a reason. We have been taking care of our children, and now some of us are beginning the “give back” to our parents and taking care of them. I don’t know about you, but when it comes to “sandwich”, I don’t want just the cream sandwiched inside the Oreo® cookie. I want to have the entire Oreo cookie!

Fellow Baby Boomers, it’s our turn! Here are 10 Tips & Tricks for getting the entire sandwich, daring to dream, and finding a new career.

1. Stop being afraid.

If not now...when?

2. Take a look at yourself.

Oh come on...it’s not that bad...who are you today? Do some digging around and find that good ‘ole self of yours.

a. Values

What are the must-haves for you? Make a list of 5 Values. For example: collaboration, freedom, influence, ability to teach others, trust/honesty.

b. Skills

What skills do you want to use? Make a list of 5 Skills. For example: coaching, facilitation, hiring and staffing, selling, technology.

c. Show Stoppers

What are 5 things that have stopped you in the past? For example: argumentative, fear of failure, fear of success, lack of assertiveness, uncertainty

3. What did you love as a kid?

What you loved then probably hasn’t changed much from then to now. If only we had paid closer attention to it! Make a list and then write the related skills next to them. What are the themes?

a. Loved to climb trees—adventure, tenacity, negotiation (which branch will give me the safest (or most fun) way up or down?)

b. Loved to play hide-and-seek—competitive, communication, creativity (where is the best place to hide that no one will find me?)

c. Loved to make mud pies—creativity, designing. I didn’t realize I started my love of cooking at the age of 5.

d. Loved to ride my royal blue, sting ray bike as fast as I could—adventure, options (where could I go—how far from home?)

e. Loved to chat...chat...chat with anyone and everyone—influencing, coaching, communication, collaboration, sales

4. Who were your heroes and why?

Here's my answer...

- a. In a nutshell—my Dad, my Mom and my Grandmother—Amazing role models, each for their own reason.
- b. Bruce Springsteen—He did what he loved with the people he loved and didn't care what anyone else said. Now look at him? He stayed true to his soul.

5. What are 3 regrets that you have had in your life?

Well...we can't be letting that happen. Let's get to them. Once we list them we can make a decision about whether we should just "let them go" and get on with our life. Here are some examples:

- a. Never lived in New York City
- b. Didn't graduate from a prestigious school.
- c. Turned down an offer for what would have turned out to be a great job.

6. What are your greatest accomplishments in life?

List 5. Here are my answers:

- a. I found my soul mate.
- b. I have amazing girlfriends.
- c. I live in a city that I love.
- d. I have built a business that I love.
- e. I have created a fabulous life.

7. What do you want from the process?

A new full-time career? A new part-time career? A new hobby?

8. Imagine the possibilities.

Take all the work from above and get it on one page of paper. What are the themes? What are potential options? Who do you want to share this with? Why not get some friends together and everyone complete it for themselves. You can then all help each other. Have an "It's Our Turn" Party. Brainstorm for each other. Make each other accountable. Help each other get into action.

9. Do one thing today to move the "It's Our Turn" idea into reality.

Just one thing today...and then one thing tomorrow...All of those "one things" will add up.

10. Take care of you.

It's your turn.

Karen Colligan, the founder and president of PeopleThink, Inc., specializes in developing high-performance individuals, teams and leaders. As a consultant, facilitator and coach, Karen's work is focused on inspiring people to discover and apply their natural talents, skills and interests to create the career they want. Karen's full-service career-planning program, *The Get Real Guide to Your Career*, is a proven system that directs individuals on the path to a career that will be more fulfilling, make better use of their skills and allow them to do what they love. For more information, visit www.TheGetRealGuide.com.