

engaging **EXPERTS**

Your Guide to the People and
Connections you Need
to Go from Ordinary
to Extraordinary



A Compilation by Cathy L. Davis

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DEB GAUT

Big, Bold, Audacious Change

I wish I could tell you what happened that fateful day. Unfortunately, my mind persists in protecting me...so there's still only darkness. Colleagues later shared bits and pieces. A worrying walk to lunch. A food tray left untouched. A sudden disappearance. A glimpse of a woman circling the parade ground. An ambulance ride to the hospital—all perplexing events.

What I recall *before* that day is the arrival of a new senior executive who slowly and painstakingly dismantled everything we had built. And a protracted war of words over a direct order I had been given requiring unethical behavior on my part. (I refused to play.) Month upon month, he was sadistic and abusive. He seemed to relish in bringing us to our knees—so much so that all I could tell the doctors that day was, “My boss broke my head. My boss broke my head. My boss broke my head,” whispered over and over like some sacred mantra. Laugh-out-loud sad, but true.

What I remember *after* returning to work is little more than a blur. I was experiencing lasting effects of *transient global amnesia*—my body's way of coping with extreme mental and emotional anguish. I cannot remember how long I stayed in that job: weeks? months? longer? Ultimately, I was able to secure another position for a few more months, but by then I was well and truly broken. Survival instinct kicked in. I summoned the courage to walk away from a six-figure income, an organization that I loved, and a mission to which I had sworn an oath. I knew I would never work for anyone again except myself and would devote the rest of my life to helping others through challenging transitions.

“Yeah, that happened. Now, move on.” – Mary Englebreit, Artist

With forty-plus years of experience working in the business, government, and academic worlds—and more than a few challenging personal and professional transitions—I have learned three universal truths about big, bold, audacious change. To survive and thrive, you must learn to:

- Master your mindset
- Energize the process
- Hold fast to your dreams

In fact, I so believe in the power of these truths that I spent eighteen months pursuing not one but three professional coaching certifications to help others accomplish these feats, then twelve months capturing them in a book called *Morph, Pivot, Launch: Navigating Your Job Search in Turbulent Times*. Following is a quick, crash course designed to introduce you to these three concepts.

Master Your Mindset

Mastering your mindset requires deep inner work—and learning to trust and believe in YOU. A good place to begin is by answering the question, *Who is the person I need to become to navigate this crisis and move boldly toward my dreams?* The bigger and bolder your dreams, the more courageous, committed, and determined you must be to becoming that person.

Resolving to become a “marathoner” is a perfect example. If you dream of running 26.2 miles and have only run short distances, you will need to become *someone who thinks, plans, trains, and acts like a marathoner*: fiercely committed; fanatical about building strength and endurance; keenly aware of the mental fortitude required to conquer long runs (and treat rest days as actual training days); and inordinately patient, knowing it takes time to build a proper foundation. For a runner, that means a year of running three to four times per week to create a solid base before launching into a marathon training program.

Take a moment and think about the person you need to become to follow your dreams. What thoughts do you need to think? What plans do you need to develop? What actions do you need to take to make your vision a reality?

Energize the Process

Being successful in any worthy endeavor requires knowing that our energy and engagement are a direct function of our thoughts, because *our thoughts drive our feelings and our feelings drive our actions*. Think about the incredible power of this simple statement. If you *think* you can do something awesome, then you will do everything in your power to actualize that goal or objective. If you think you cannot, then you “can’t” and “won’t” because you will devote little or no energy to making it happen. The more powerful and focused your thoughts, the more committed and enthusiastic you will be about a task at hand. The more excited you become about what you are doing, the more engaged you will be with the process. In short, as energy increases, engagement increases. The two are inextricably bound. Crazy, right? Remember how the process works: thoughts → feelings → actions.

Hold Fast to Your Dreams

When considering a major job, career, or life transition, we often begin with a singular goal in mind (e.g., escaping a terrible boss, finding more satisfying work, leaving a volatile relationship). Such a longing for change is completely understandable. However, in the process, we can easily limit our thinking to the immediate situation without considering our hopes and dreams for the future. The difference is enormous—like playing checkers instead of chess. Using “big-picture, blue-sky thinking,” we can widen the aperture and plan short-term and long-term steps more strategically.

Big-picture, blue-sky thinking essentially involves three tasks: (1) creating a “bucket list” of *wishes* (i.e., meaningful, exciting, rewarding things you want to do, experience, and accomplish); (2) developing a three-year *vision* that includes the high-level steps you will take to accomplish that vision; and (3) identifying the *memories* you want to make in the process. The latter will give you a sense of equilibrium and help you focus on a more “in the moment” approach to creating your immediate future.

Why include your bucket list of wishes in the mix? Because if you start with a well-defined list, you can easily identify the steps to get the ball rolling and create

a plan to make your wishes come true sooner. For example, if you have always wanted to be a foster parent for a dog or cat, why not learn about the process now?

A quick Google search nets the following six steps recommended by Petfinder.com: “(1) Find shelters and rescue groups near you; (2) Contact the organization about their foster needs and for a foster application; (3) Evaluate applications carefully (and ask good questions - e.g., Who is responsible for paying vet and food bills?); (4) Complete application process; (5) Bring home your foster dog (or cat); and (6) Smile and cry at the same time when he (or she) finds his (or her) forever home.”

Experiencing forward movement with a single wish can fire up your energy and engagement in other areas of your life and transition (i.e., a job search or career change). Start dreaming and start doing. Taking little steps count.

Similarly, crafting a clear three-year vision statement can make all the difference according to world-class executive coach, Rich Litvin. If you long to make a living while traveling the world, then write it down. If you yearn to make a difference for children in war-torn nations, then write it down. Let that dream serve as the foundation of your three-year vision, then work backwards in time from there. What would you need to be doing two years from now, one year from now, six months from now, three months from now, and one month from now to make your vision a reality? Write it down. This exercise isn't for the faint of heart. It's for dreamers and doers who are passionate about taking control of their destinies.

Finally, consider memories you want to create in the coming year. With no guarantees for the future, planning memories you want to make NOW for yourself (and with your family, friends, and loved ones) will keep you grounded and excited—whether that's skydiving, hiking the Appalachian Trail, or tucking your children into bed every night. Taking time to articulate your desired memories can help you stay present in the moment, especially when you're going through difficult times.

Mastering your mindset, energizing the process, and holding fast to your dreams are the truths I have discovered in my own life. If you want or need help with a big transition, reach out to a career | transition coach. We can help.



As a transformation and performance coach, Deb Gaut brings a passion and vitality to helping others reconnect with their dreams and energize their careers. Her personal journey tells the story of bold moves and successful transitions—from academia to business, government, and entrepreneurship.

After 9/11 and thirty-plus years as a university professor, trainer, and consultant, Deb joined the US Department of Defense for seven years. Throughout her career, she has enjoyed teaching and mentoring others in strategies, knowledge, and skills to effectively pursue their careers. “I’m devoted to helping people leverage the remarkable power of visualization, mindset, and core energy to do what they really love,” says Deb.

Today, in addition to her thriving coaching practice, she is a speaker, writer, and founding editor of *Boomalally Magazine*. Deb holds a PhD in communication and three professional coaching certifications. Her most recent book is titled *Morph, Pivot, Launch: Navigate Your Job Search in Turbulent Times*.

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Meet Our Experts

When you are considering making a change in your personal life or in your business, you quite often turn to an expert to help you make that happen. We have all been through quite a few changes during this past year (2020). More than likely, you have reached out to at least one expert to help you navigate your next best step in an ever-changing world.

The experts who stepped into this collection of essays are highly respected, highly regarded, and highly trained in their field of expertise. Check out their stories and reach out to connect. Get to know them, and see how they can help you go from ordinary to extraordinary!



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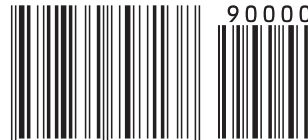


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