

LifeMapSM



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

July 2012

This Month's Message:

**Pruning: Good for
your garden, good
for your career.**

Paths Forward

**· Need Career
Coaching?**

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**Pruning: Good for your garden, good for your
career.**

I'm doing something a bit different with this month's *LifeMap*. A colleague and friend of mine, Cliff Hakim, is a well-known author and career / executive coach. Below you will find a

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short article by Cliff entitled *Pruning* which I enjoyed very much and wanted to share with you. In it Cliff talks about how judicious pruning in nature encourages stronger growth and how that principle holds true for your career as well. If Cliff's approach appeals to you - as it does to me - I suggest you check out his books - which are listed below.

Paths Forward

The Nuances of Work

How Subtleties Drive Success

Work must have life in it-vitality. - Cliff Hakim

Pruning

In early spring, I prune most of the bushes in our yard. Always, I am amazed to see how cutting the branches back, gives way to stronger, often startling growth. My father-in-law gave us a holly bush that was knee high and in the past eight years it has weathered several Nor'easters to come back bigger and fuller. Now over ten feet tall, the bush has become a handsomely shaped tree. Because I regularly cut it back, I have managed to concentrate its energy and encourage it to take on a more pleasing shape.

Pruning in nature encourages a healthy bloom. I have found that the same principal holds true for your career--if you regularly prune the weak or unnecessary branches, you can improve your current job, take on a fresh direction, and feel more alive at work.

Here are some pruning guidelines that apply to both my gardening activities and my coaching practices:

1. Step back to assess the situation and see the fuller picture. The optimal time to snip and clip may vary from year to year.
2. After surveying the whole, prune one branch at a time and step back frequently to gauge what effect this has.
3. When you are satisfied with the trim, trust that nature will do its part and make way for new growth.

Janice, a vice president of finance, told me that she felt less enthusiasm for work and also for personal life. After stepping back to look at her situation, she chose to cut back on her office hours. First, she informed her staff and colleagues that she would no longer be available on weekends, unless it was a dire emergency. Pruning her availability restored her energy. She felt happier because she spent time with her family on Saturdays and Sundays and felt more energetic when she returned to work on Mondays.

Harold served as an account manager for an electronic publisher. He liked his job, but wanted to work for a company

where the culture was in better alignment with his values. I suggested he decide what dead wood he'd like to eliminate and replace it with new growth.

Harold began by making two short lists. The first he titled, Cultural Characteristics I Disdain. This included: A punitive boss, politically motivated teammates, endless meetings, sales pressure that only served to undermine customer relationships, and a general feeling, among the staff, of discomfort and distrust. Harold's second list, Cultural Characteristics for Growth, included an inclusive, collaborative boss; teammates who could give credit where credit was due; entrepreneurial management that rewarded good performance; and the freedom to explore new methods of generating business.

Harold's first list gave him a clear picture of what he needed to snip away and his "growth" list clarified qualities that invigorated his spirit. As a result, we were able to target mid-size businesses that would be a better fit for his talents and his values.

Angel, a director of a non-profit agency, defined herself through her work, often put in endless hours signaling her loyalty to her board. Yet one influential board member opposed her five-year plan and used his clout to have her terminated. Angel was in shock. As time passed, she realized that her zeal had blinded her--and kept her from seeing how other stakeholders viewed the agency's long-term development.

I asked Angel, What might you eliminate, or do differently, before taking on a new job?

Angel said, "I need to monitor my devotion to the organization and the cause, and save my patriotism for sports! Sure, I need to be enthusiastic about what I do, but I don't need to let the fire in my belly sabotage my job. I also used to rely on one or two staunch supporters. Now I see I have to build a wider support network. Nelson Mandela said, Keep your friends close and your rivals even closer."

"What else can you prune?"

"I need to let go of my negative emotions. After putting my trust in others, it's a challenge for me to stand up and put myself out there again. I'd like to learn how to listen to the subtext of people's statements and trust my gut."

To prune your present and reshape your future, ask yourself these questions:

- * Do I regularly look at all the things on my scape to figure out what I might prune? What can I cut back on to create more vigor in my current situation?
- * How might I develop more defined boundaries between my weekends and workweek so that both feel fuller? Can judicious pruning help me to be more present for each?
- * Who has been a trustworthy supporter of my development? Who might I ask to join my personal board and help me see what I need to trim away, in order to balance my life and continue to prosper?

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A Rethinking Work® Publication
MAY 2012

[We Are All Self-Employed: How to Take Control of Your Career](#) by Cliff Hakim
(Kindle & print)

[Life's Too Short to Drink Cheap Wine](#) by Cliff Hakim
(Kindle & print) (Kindle & print)

[Rethinking Work: Are You Ready to Take Charge?](#) by Cliff Hakim

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<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/speakingschedule.html>

Resources

· Are you or someone you know job hunting or thinking about it?

The best, concise, all-round job changing guide available.
Revised Edition [Winning Job Interviews](#) by Dr. Paul Powers.

In this easy-to-follow, step-by-step book, Dr. Paul Powers demystifies job interviewing, explains why the process actually favors the job hunter, and shows how you can dramatically improve your interview skills.

Packed with solid, practical information and laced with both humor and "kick in the pants" motivation, *Winning Job Interviews* is the book you wished you had before your last interview... and is mandatory preparation for your next one!

· Stalled at work? Still struggling to find your true vocation?

Or know someone who is? Order your copy of [Love Your Job!](#)
Loving the Job You Have, Finding A Job You Love by Dr. Paul.

<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/booksandarticles.html>

Have an issue or question you'd like Dr. Paul to address in a future edition? Send an email to the email address list below.

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