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John is a Global Career Development Facilitator and Professional Career Coach. He works with a broad range of clients seeking assistance with career exploration, career development and career transition. John has specialty training in the interpretation of personality and career assessments, such as the MBTI®, Strong® and WPI®. He also focuses on work-life balance, time and stress management, and examining life roles.

John offers customized services to identify what motivates each client and to clarify aspirations the client can pursue with passion. Coaching is about support, encouragement, and action to meet the client's needs and achieve meaningful results.

SERVICES OFFERED

- Career Coaching
- Executive Coaching
- Interview Coaching
- Outplacement Coaching
- Testing & Assessment
- Career Development
- Talent Development
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Contact John for a complimentary phone consultation.

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A NEWSLETTER OF PERSONAL
AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH
FROM JOHN E. LONG, MS, GCDF, CPCC



Leaps of Faith: Can We Afford Not to Take Them?

Some people go their whole life without taking a risk, without straying from the path they're on, no matter how unpleasant it is. Others leap from one adventure to the next, seemingly with no need for security or routine.

Most of us, though, fall somewhere in the middle. We choose our leaps of faith carefully, sometimes agonizing for years before taking one and sometimes regretting missed opportunities for years after the fact.

Where would we be today if people like Charles Darwin or Henry Ford hadn't taken the leap? Darwin withheld his theory of natural selection for years, knowing the impact it would have. And what if Henry Ford had listened to naysayers and never tried to mass-produce an affordable car?

What Leads Us to Leap?

Our blinding desire to see our dreams come true sometimes makes it painful to keep things the same. We feel stuck and blocked from realizing our full potential, and that can be unbearable. As Anais Nin wrote, "And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom."

For some, a leap of faith comes only after a long period of research and consultation, or after an assurance of success (or at least a minimal risk of failure). Others bypass those requirements and use the evidence from their past experiences of successful leaps. And others, like Darwin, are finally spurred by the threat of competition.

Choosing the Leaps Worth Taking

Every day offers forks in the road where we can either

take a risk or do what we've always done. Small things like leaping through your shyness to speak up at a meeting, or larger things like starting a business or publishing a book.

You may choose your leap based on intuitive hits or coincidences, such as people or things seeming to point you towards the leap you're considering. Or your choice may be logical: you've done the research and your leap is sound.

What to Pack in Your Parachute

While there's no way to guarantee the outcome of your leap, there are ways to cushion against disappointment.

- 1. Think it through.** What are the possible consequences of your leap? Write them down and prepare for them.
- 2. Assemble a support team.** Make sure there are people you can talk to every step of the way, people who appreciate what you're doing.
- 3. Build reserves.** Ensure that you have time, money and energy to see you through this period of uncertainty.
- 4. Adjust your attitude.** Strive for success, but if the results are less than what you had hoped, accept that the experience has helped you learn and grow.

While your success is not guaranteed, resisting the call to leap could be far worse than falling short. What would you rather look back on: a failed attempt that led to something even better or a missed attempt that led nowhere at all? ●

Top 10 Creative Decision-Making Techniques

Most of us have our own way of making decisions. We may carefully consider the pros and cons, consult with experts, ask our mothers. Here are 10 more unusual methods to try. Which ones could you employ?

- 1. Flip a coin.** Then notice your first reaction. If it lands on the "wrong" choice, you'll feel disappointment.
- 2. Role-play.** Let each person or thing represent a different aspect of the decision. What does each perspective have to say?
- 3. Meditate.** When you quiet your mind, the answer may bubble up easily.
- 4. Drawing or collage.** Consider each option pictorially. Your most attractive option may become obvious.
- 5. Use a dartboard.** Like with flipping a coin, notice

how you feel when the dart hits its mark.

- 6. Sleep on it.** Still one of the most effective ways to find clarity.
- 7. Dream incubation.** Write out the issue before going to bed. When you awake, consider any dream to be an answer to your query—or the question behind the question.
- 8. Dance each option.** Which feels better in your body? Which flows through you more fluidly?
- 9. Sing.** Make up a song about the decision. You may be surprised by what comes out of your mouth.
- 10. Try tarot cards or the i-ching.** Consider these as psychological tools for finding out how you really feel and think. ●


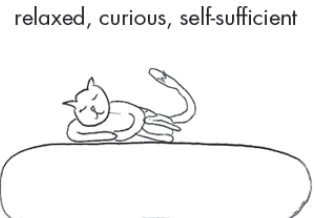


Self-Quiz How Honed Are Your Leadership Skills?

The caliber of leadership in any team or organization plays a critical role in the levels of success and harmony that can be achieved. Take this Self-Quiz to determine whether your leadership skills are honed to a keen edge.

True False

- 1. I've become more comfortable delegating tasks and managing the performance of others than doing things myself.
- 2. Before committing to a decision, I ask myself if it will serve my purpose. I say "No" to requests for my time and attention that are not aligned with my purpose.
- 3. Coworkers and those who report directly to me trust me and my effectiveness as a leader.
- 4. I successfully enroll others in my vision and influence their behavior at work.
- 5. It's less what I say and more what I do that affects how others perceive my leadership ability, so I make sure to "walk my talk."
- 6. It can be daunting to confront the issues, obstacles and people that block success. But in doing so, I model courage, persistence and a can-do attitude.
- 7. I hold myself accountable for my actions and the actions of my team/department. I don't make excuses.
- 8. I will not be able to please everyone; leadership is not a popularity contest.
- 9. I view problems as opportunities to excel. In fact, I focus on the opportunities in every problem. A positive attitude can make a project or objective.
- 10. I seek opportunities for education and skills enhancement, as I want to continuously grow my abilities.
- 11. Everything in my organization/department/team, both good and bad, is a reflection of my leadership. If things need to change, I need to change first.
- 12. I don't avoid difficult conversations with those who are not performing to my standards.
- 13. I treat others how I want to be treated, with respect and dignity; this includes praising in public but expressing displeasure in private.
- 14. I am open to new suggestions and receptive to bad news.
- 15. I don't hog credit and kudos but attribute them freely to my team.
- 16. I regularly communicate mission and vision face-to-face to my team.

If you answered true to 10 or more statements, keep up the good work! If fewer, you may wish to hone your skills with a coach. Please don't hesitate to call. ●

<p>big picture awareness</p> 	<p>relaxed, curious, self-sufficient</p> 
<p>playful, loyal, energetic</p> 	<p>prepared, industrious</p> 

How would your challenges look from the perspective of an eagle? A cat? A squirrel? A dog?

Relevant Reading

- Unleashing the Power of Rubber Bands*, by Nancy Ortberg
- Turning Passions Into Profits: Three Steps to Wealth and Power*, by Christopher Howard
- Five Hidden Mistakes CEOs Make: How to Unlock the Secrets That Drive Growth and Profitability*, by Tom Northup
- The Career Chronicles: An Insider's Guide to What Jobs Are Really Like*, by Michael Gregory
- You Call the Shots: Succeed Your Way—and Live the Life You Want—With the 19 Essential Secrets of Entrepreneurship*, by Cameron Johnson
- Escape 101: The Four Secrets to Taking a Sabbatical or Career Break Without Losing Your Money or Your Mind*, by Dan Clements and Tara Gignac

“Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Do What You Do Best and Outsource the Rest

For most of us, our main goal at home is to maintain loving relationships in a warm, comfortable living space. But by spending time and energy working on the living space, we lose precious time to focus on the relationships.

If you calculated how much time you or your partner spent cleaning, or how much stress it cost to let the mess build up, you would probably hire a housekeeper the very next day.

That's why outsourcing makes so much sense—we get to do what we do best (and love to do the most), and outsource the rest.

And that's also why businesses of all sizes are recognizing the need to spend more time perfecting their area of specialization and building better relationships with their various stakeholders—and less time on administrative and business processes that are more generic.

Rationale for Outsourcing

Outsourcing can maximize the efficiency of all of your resources—people, time, money and energy—because you and your staff can focus on the primary purpose of your business and use your unique skill sets. In the meantime, other companies with different primary purposes and skill sets (e.g., accounting, human resources or information technology) can do what THEY do best. It's a win-win situation for everyone.

As well, the resulting ability to be laser-focused on your specialization enhances and increases your credibility, and you become more attractive to people who are looking for the precise solution that you or your company offer.



An Outsourcing Attitude

Outsourcing requires an attitude shift and a willingness to surrender some control. It can feel uncomfortable at first, and that's what leaves some people stuck at the same level year after year.

Examine your hesitation; what are your concerns about outsourcing? Here are some common objections:

Offshore concerns. A lot of outsourcing is done at the local or national level, but more and more is accomplished on foreign lands. Perhaps you're concerned about language barriers, health and safety standards, work quality or the impact on the U.S. economy.

Reputation. Business owners may worry what their customers, clients, staff and other stakeholders

will think about their decision to outsource. You may also be concerned that the outside specialist will make some error that will harm your reputation.

Security. Companies may not be sure how to protect their intellectual property and other key data from fraud, tampering and other damage.

With each of these concerns and any others you may have, spend a moment to answer the question, "What's the worst thing that could happen if we outsourced?" and then ask, "If that happened, then what?"

It can help to express catastrophic worries to see if they're valid. Many businesses have outsourced successfully and made mistakes that you can learn from. Do your research and put your concerns to rest.

How to Start Outsourcing

Look at where you are being diverted from the main focus of your business.

What's draining you or your staff? Is it administrative tasks, technical support, accounting, human resources, IT or something else?

Start small and grow from there. Test the outsourcing process before launching ahead. Keep in mind that someone still needs to manage the process for the outside specialists. The process may take some time and experimentation to perfect. Initially, it may seem that it's taking more time than you're saving. Learn from these early efforts and use them to craft

process maps to follow as you grow your outsourcing strategy.

Understand what your needs are and communicate them clearly to the outside specialist. Double-check that you understand each other, don't make any assumptions, and put everything in writing.

Are you ready to do what you do best and outsource the rest? The move to outsourcing takes an attitude shift, some preparation and a learning curve, but at the end of it all you will emerge with a stronger focus on the primary purpose of your business. And it might just be the answer to growing your business to the next level. ●

BEYOND the Box

The following questions are designed to broaden perspectives, to open vistas, to widen the lens. There is no one right way to approach them. You can journal about them, talk to friends, create art, ponder them while driving or working out, dance them—whatever helps you explore "outside the box."

1. What leaps of faith have you taken in your life? What leaps have you dreamt of and not taken?
2. What small leap of faith could you take tomorrow?
3. What is the worst thing that could happen if you take the leap you dream about?
4. At the end of your life, what leap would you regret not having taken?
5. What decisions are you facing, and how can you bring creativity to that process?
6. How do you make decisions? Does that method work for you?
7. What would delegating free you up to do?
8. How is your leadership style a reflection of you?
9. What tasks drain your energy?
10. How much time a day do you spend taking in information?
11. Could YOU spend two hours a week on email?

Overloaded? Try an Information Fast

Imagine the sweet freak abstaining from sugar, prohibited from even eating fruit until balance is restored in the body. Imagine the initial cravings, the edginess, withdrawal symptoms.

It could be just as difficult at first to take a break from ingesting information. As a culture, we've grown accustomed to consuming vast quantities of facts, figures and current events. An information fast could be just what you need to restore your own balance.

Just think of the sources of information we mainline every day: newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, books, blogs, websites, email, social media sites, podcasts, RSS feeds, discussion lists, reports, white papers, teleclasses, conferences, workshops, presentations. The list goes exhaustingly on.

We are stuffing our minds and, like the sugar hound, we think we like it. They're interesting, all these things we learn, the world events we follow.

But what do we miss when there is almost no time that we are quiet with our own thoughts and self-generated activities? How much better could we focus on our tasks at hand, working faster and more productively, and how would that add to our lives? What might we discover that is more important than the mountain of information we take in every day?

The steps below can help you create more balance around information. Begin with a full fast, and then add things back in a strategic way, taking care to add only what truly serves you.



For example, Tim Ferriss, author of *The 4-Hour Work Week*, now spends only two hours a week on email!

Make a list. Write down every source of information that comes to you automatically or that you voluntarily tune into. Refer to the partial list of info sources above to jog your awareness, and don't forget the cute email "forwards" that family members send you.

Turn it off. Turn off the morning talk show as you dress for work and NPR while you commute. Take a pass on the evening news or your favorite interview show. Switch the podcast from productivity programs to rock & roll music.

Unsubscribe. Be ruthless. If after a week or month you still miss emails from a particular person or organization, you can always re-subscribe. Get on no-call and no-direct-mail lists.

Make another list. This time, list all the things you love to do, especially those you say you never have time for. Keep this list visible. When you free up time and mental space, you'll be more able to pursue your interests and hobbies.

A complete information fast need only last a week or two, but the balance it restores will last a lot longer. To get through the initial "withdrawal" just keep focusing on what you want in the bigger picture of your life.

Tango anyone? ●

—Arthur Koestler, author

"The more original a discovery, the more obvious it seems afterwards."

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