

## 10 Things I'd Tell You if We Had Coffee (for Career Changers)

By Karen Wright, Master Certified Coach ([www.karenwrightcoaching.com](http://www.karenwrightcoaching.com))



“Can I pick your brain?”

“I'd love to buy you a coffee and have a chat – I'm thinking about a major change in career direction and I'd love your input.”

“My friend says you've been great at helping them figure some stuff out – can I let you know what I'm up to and see what you think?”

Being a coach is rewarding and helpful and work that I truly love – and it's not always understood as a process, as opposed to advice or a one-off conversation. It's not as established as, say, the legal profession, so perhaps not as well appreciated as a paid service – after all, it usually looks pretty easy and technically a coach doesn't have to have a lot of degrees hanging on the wall. Whatever the reason, I frequently get inquiries from people wanting to tap my expertise for the price of a latte.

Authentically prospective clients don't make these requests. They usually are clear that they'd like to meet in order to determine whether they'll go ahead and hire me. The difficult inquiries typically come from a friend of a friend or a relative of a client or some connection who has been referred to me by someone I know. And then, sadly, there's the occasional presumptuous person who just doesn't seem to get it – this is my work, my profession, my career, and it's how I earn my living.

In any event, even if I'm good-natured about it – at the end of the day, there's only so much coffee a person can reasonably drink.

There are themes in the inquiries, though, so to save everyone (well, me) some time, I thought I'd offer up the ten things I'd tell you career-changers if you bought me that latte:

1. Not all work is 100% fun 100% of the time. If you're not enjoying yourself, you might be going through a rough patch. Give it a bit of time – things might work themselves out. And maybe you're in the midst of a learning opportunity – they're usually pretty uncomfortable...
2. If you were unhappy at your last job and you're unhappy at this one, do some self-reflection and examine your decision-making process (since it would seem like something's not working). And while you're at it, consider reading Jon Kabat-Zinn's wonderful book, “[Wherever you Go, There you Are.](#)”

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3. You have choices. You might not like them, but you have choices. No one is trapped. The most common source of angst I find is the sense of feeling like you don't have control. You do, however exercising that control might require some bigger decisions. Because – see next point....
4. You CAN have it all. You just can't have it all at once. A major change isn't going to come with the same kind of income as the job you've had for a number of years, particularly if different education or training is involved. Usually a significant change in career direction requires some compromises and sacrifices, at least in the short term.
5. You MUST take ownership of your career. [No one is going to come along and gift you with the ideal role.](#)
6. It is possible to shift from unhappy to happy without changing jobs. Your happiness or lack thereof is based on your own mindset and choices. Yes, really.
7. Amazing careers require hard work and lots of it. You DO have to pay your dues. Because – see next point...
8. You can't be perceived as ready for that next big job unless you've already proven you can do most of it. If you're frustrated because you haven't gotten that big promotion, be sure you're adding tons of value and going above and beyond in your current role.
9. I'm sorry to say it, but there ARE bad bosses out there. Thankfully I think those that are really bad – to the core kind of bad – are few and far between. More often there are stressed bosses and bosses with different communication styles and needs. If your dissatisfaction is based on your boss, take a good look and make sure you've done your share to make it work. If you have made a real effort but to no avail, try a chat with HR. And if that doesn't work, evaluate the situation – how long with that person be there, in that role? [Gallup](#) has proven that people don't usually leave bad jobs, they leave bad bosses – if yours really is one of the bad ones, a change might really be necessary.
10. Starting a business is almost never the answer to career frustration. Business start-up and ownership are NOT for everyone, and need to be considered in the spirit of what you're running TOWARDS, not what you're trying to escape.

Bottom line – advice (or coaching or any kind of support) is worth what you pay for it.

If you're looking for a great resource to fix, tweak or accelerate your career, check out "[Career Charisma](#)," my e-learning program (based on my [book](#) – the above post was based in part on Chapter 6, points #51 – #60).

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