

6 Essential Steps to Career Breakthrough: Navigating Through Change Successfully

By Kathy Caprino, MA

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There are so many people today in dramatic career and life transition, and also thousands of coaches and consultants offering help.

I've discovered, however, that recommending simple, straightforward tactics and strategies *does not work* unless there has been a true *breakthrough* in the individual's thinking and behavior that allows them to become unstuck, and to embrace new possibilities where constraints and limitations were seen before.

What do you need to do to create your own breakthrough, and make your goals and visions in life and work a reality?

Here are 6 essential steps to breakthrough:

1. Understand what you truly want
2. Research and commit to doing what it takes
3. Stretch yourself
4. Power up
5. Develop a powerful money mindset
6. Manage to the constraints

1) Understand what you truly want - Essence vs. Form

Before you bring about change in your life, it's critical to understand what you're truly looking for, and to differentiate between the "essence" and the "form." The essence is the fundamental characteristic or energy of what you dream of. The form is how the dream is manifested – what it looks like.

If you think you want to start your own business, for instance, get to the heart of what that means to you. Why do you want it? Is it that you're longing for independence, self-respect, self-esteem, not being beaten up by your boss anymore? Do you want to get out of the crushing competition you're facing, and be more collaborative? If so, you may be able to achieve these shifts without changing the "form" of how you work. The biggest mistake people make is to go for the "form" of a dream (I want my own business, for instance) without realizing what that truly entails. The essence of your dream perhaps can be found through other avenues and directions that may be more suited to who you are and your preferences and style.

2) Research and commit to doing what it takes

Once you know exactly what you want to do and why, do research, research, research. Understand beyond a shadow of a doubt what it will take to get you there. Interview experts and those who have succeeded *as well as those who have failed at it*. What are they telling you? Don't fall into the trap of a "build it and they will come" mentality. Instead, gain clarity on precisely

what your dream will demand of you. Then if/when you're ready, commit yourself 3000% to making this a successful endeavor.

3) *Stretch yourself beyond where you are*

There's a distance (usually sizable) between the person you are today and the person you dream to be. But that's a great thing! It means your future vision of yourself is grand and expansive. Believe in yourself, but at the same time, admit that you need to grow to achieve the visions you have. Find out exactly how you need to stretch (get some advice on this from friends, a mentor, colleagues, family, a business or career coach, a financial advisor, etc.), and take action. Do you need new skills? Or a business plan with tactics that truly *work*? Do you need a better grasp at differentiating yourself and communicating that unique difference in the marketplace? Look at where you feel a bit jealous of what others are doing as a start. That's usually a very healthy indicator of where you want to be. Then take a step that stretches you to that new goal.

4) *Power up*

Let's face it – it's a hero's journey to pursue big career and life goals. It takes guts, commitment, risk, self-trust, patience, and faith. If you want a terrific life, it takes terrific risks. Now's the time to power up. Look at where you feel insecure, afraid, and "less than." These are the areas that are calling out to you to address, as soon as possible. The best first step in powering up is to figure out what where your boundaries are being consistently violated. Where do you feel, drained, defeated, overridden, and put down? Identify what have you been desperately been longing to say to someone (a family member, colleague, boss, etc.) and say it, today. Having a strong voice, solid self-esteem, and healthy boundaries will be immeasurably useful in achieving your goals.

5) *Develop a powerful money mindset*

So many entrepreneurs and other professionals pursue their dreams and fail. Why? One key reason is that they don't understand the role of money in life and career success. You can't have a fulfilling life if you're constantly feeling a victim of money (either not making enough or feeling like you've given up your soul for it).

Look at your money situation with very discerning eyes. Do you have a healthy relationship with money, and powerful one that excites you? If not, get help to revise your negative feelings and actions around money. This might take therapy, a great financial consultant, a small business advisor, assistance from a few great self-help books like [Breakdown, Breakthrough](#) and [The Energy of Money](#) – whatever form required so that you can develop tactics (like a rock-solid business plan, a new budget for your expenses, etc.) that will help you make the money you need, spend and manage it wisely, and *grow* it, for your benefit and the benefit of all around you.

6) *Manage to the constraints*

A brilliant colleague of mine, Steve Bennett, Founder of Authorbytes.com, explored with me recently the key concept of "managing to the constraints," from the book [The Goal](#) by Eliyahu Goldratt and Jeff Cox. Basically, we must manage our business endeavors and our lives based NOT on what "should be happening" (i.e. I'm a great coach so I should have lots of clients). Instead, we must look at what is constraining us from achieving financial or other success. What is *not* working? What is holding us back from having what we want? It's critical to challenge your assumptions, to look at what isn't working, and to change it, and change ourselves in the process (with integrity and purpose) to open new doors and opportunities for success.

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Each of these strategies requires some outside perspective to help you expand your vision. If you're stuck, please reach out to someone for help. As Einstein insightfully observed, "We cannot solve a problem on the level of consciousness that created it."

Breakthrough is just a step way – asking for empowered help is the best start.

Bio:

Kathy Caprino, MA, is a nationally-recognized women's work-life expert and author of *Breakdown, Breakthrough: The Professional Woman's Guide to Claiming a Life of Passion, Power, and Purpose* (Berrett-Koehler, 2008, www.breakdownbreakthrough.com). Founder and President of Ellia Communications, Inc. -- a women's career and work-life coaching and consulting company dedicated to helping women achieve *breakthrough* -- Caprino is a trained psychotherapist, seasoned career and executive coach, and sought-after writer and speaker on women's issues. She is a popular blogger on business, workplace, and career topics and trends, and as a top media source, she has appeared in more than 100 leading newspapers and magazines and on national television. Contact her on the Web at www.elliacommunications.com.