



Timely Information for Personal Success

The Wisdom in Seizing Opportunities

By Dr. Rhea Seddon

“**I**wish I had...”, “I should have...”, “If only I had...”. Comments like these stem from an individual’s inability to recognize opportunities when they appear or to act on them. It’s knowing how to see them and when to act on them that determines our future.

It Starts with a Plan

It’s been said that if you don’t know where you’re going, any plan will get you there. It is imperative that you have a clear objective and plan your journey with this end in mind. The plan must have a blueprint, a specific set of actions to complete.

Perhaps you think that you will be lucky and can achieve your goal without hard work, but luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity. Be sure you have prepared well and have the requisite skills when you learn about a great opportunity.

Having a Goal....and a Back-up Plan

Narrowing down your hopes and dreams to something concrete through planning and preparation is an important step. However, it is also vital to be realistic as you move forward. It is fine to aim big, but it is also important to be realistic as you assess your chances of success.

At some point it may become obvious or unlikely that your destination is not reachable. Don’t give up! There are alternative routes to get to the goal or somewhere near it. This requires you

to always be looking for a Plan B (or perhaps several alternative plans) that will allow you to achieve the goal by another path, lead you to another goal or at a different time.

The Appearance of an Open Door

Almost everyone who has achieved his or her dreams has learned from intelligent, ambitious

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people who are able to describe how they got to where they are. If you surround yourself with these people, they will often show you how to open the door to success.

Throughout your life, you must listen for opportunities, assess whether they are something you should pursue or study further. Remember, time will march on with or without you. Don't let a chance to succeed pass you by.

Pause, Plan, and Pivot

Rare is the life that follows one straight path. Whether by choice or by chance, most people will need to change careers, work locations, job positions or work environments. It can be particularly difficult if you are let go from a job or that job no longer exists.

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It can be especially difficult if you are older and find change difficult. Have you ever considered that you may find something better? Use this lull to pause, plan, and pivot. Assess what skills you have, what you have a passion for and want to do. It can seem daunting but remember, it is never too late to learn new things and start afresh.

The Value of a Solid Network

Don't forget that there are probably many people you have known for a while who would be happy to guide you along your career or life path. If you think about it, this network of people is the most likely to understand who you are and what you are good at.

Almost all successful people are happy to offer a hand up to others in their profession or refer you to someone in their network. There will be people you don't know but will meet. Never hesitate to speak to people in your field or in the field you'd like to enter. Ask your friends or colleagues for introductions to people who may be able to help you.

The Challenge of Overcoming the Fear of Moving On

We often get comfortable in our lives and in our jobs and quake at the idea of having to change directions or lifestyles. Fear can sabotage our ability to see what the future might hold. It can be frightening to jump into the unknown. Looking back at times when you made it through past upheavals can give you good ideas to get you through this one.

In times of uncertainty, it is good to have supportive friends and family members who can encourage you along this new path. Sometimes the only thing that one can do is put one foot in front of the other until a new world opens up. Have the confidence that you can move on!

Summary

Remember that it is never too late to start something new. You will always need to have a goal, a plan and be fearless. Ask for help from others and have a backup plan (or two!). You must always be listening for and assessing opportunities with curiosity and courage. In the end you will be able to rest assured that you will did not pass up the “chance of a lifetime”. ■

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