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PLANNING FOR YOUR CAREER SUCCESS

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Hello and welcome back to the Career Reset podcast.

Today, we're talking about one of the biggest assets in your career management toolbox and something that is definitely a mainstay when you're taking back control of your career and that's building a kick but 360-degree career plan.

Most people don't have a career plan. You might think you have a career plan, but most people actually don't have one. I find that most people fall into one of two groups. The first group, I'm going to call *the Fingers Crossed group*, and the second is something I'm calling *My Plan is Your Plan group*.

I'm going to walk you through both of these groups in this podcast and then I'm going to share with you my proprietary approach to building a career plan that is strategically focused on helping you realize your career goals with the maximum return on your hustle. Return on hustle is so important to me, so we have to do this in the most effective way possible. This is a great episode for you if you're looking to start to get focused on how to bring your career goals to life.

Before I dive in, I want to remind you that this podcast episode is the third episode in a four-part series on how to take control of your career. I'm launching my podcast with this series because I really think it's foundational to what I do at the Career Reset and ultimately what this podcast is about. I think it's important to understand the foundations of this. It's really about empowering you, taking control of your career, and having a career that your life deserves.

As I've been saying in the last two episodes, taking back control of your career means you're making career decisions for yourself with purpose on purpose. In total, there are four stages of taking back control of your career. They're not consecutive stages, they're actually concurrent stages.

Once you get each stage up and running, you'll be working them all at the same time. But if you're just restarting this process, you've been stuck for a while, or you've let your career plan go, then it's really good to kickstart each stage of this process one at a time until you get some momentum. I don't want you to get overwhelmed. I don't want you to quit before you even get on a roll.

In the beginning, don't try to do everything at once. Take it one step at a time. And that advice goes to you. Even if you are a superstar overachiever, even if you've been there, done that, or you're a VP or you're a seasoned

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professional or you're sitting in a C suite somewhere, I still recommend not skipping over any of these stages. Really look at them at the beginning as each stage in isolation and start them up one stage at a time.

You might say, *'Look, I already know all of this. I already get all of this. Let's just skip to the end, lady.'* My challenge to you would be, if you already know all of this, then what's the problem? Why are you stuck? It's not going to hurt. If you take a small step back and just reground yourself in each stage of this process, take the time to do that. It won't take a lot of time in the grand scheme of what you're trying to do with your career. Give yourself the gift of really just regrounding yourself, understanding what you want, and setting yourself up for success.

Just to give you some perspective, if you haven't listened to the previous episodes in what we're talking about, back in episode three, we talked about really reconnecting and rediscovering who you are when you're operating as your best self because we lose sight of that when we've been stuck for a while or when we've been in a bad situation for too long,

This is really about deciding how you want to show up for yourself and reminding yourself what you're like when you're at your best, so you're really embarking on the entire take-back control process with the right mindset.

Last week on episode four, we talked about how to figure out what you want in your career and really get underneath who you are and understand what you love doing, what's important to you, and what all of that means for what you want in your career. If you haven't listened to those, just check them out before you listen to this one because it can really set a strong foundation for you.

For today, let's really start digging into the topic, which is planning for your career success and more specifically, how to put together a career plan. It really helps you reach your career goal and gives you that maximum return on your hustle.

Like I said at the beginning, most people don't have a career plan even if they think they have one. Not many people have taken the time to really put together a career plan for themselves. Instead, they tend to fall into one of two groups. The Fingers Crossed group and the My Plan is Your Plan group. So let's explain those.

I'll start with the first group, which is the Fingers Crossed group and this is the most common situation that's out there where people know what they want and they just go by the seat of their pants. They feel their way through their career. They have a job that they think might get them to where they want to go and they just show up every day and do their best, the best that they can do, and keep their fingers crossed that good things are going to happen for them.

Someone's going to notice how great they are and the contribution that they give to the organization. They believe that if they do good work, their boss is going to take care of them and they may even have that old school mentality that, '*If I just work hard and I keep my head down, I'm going to get ahead. Good things are going to happen for me.'*

That mentality just doesn't work anymore. I'm not really sure it ever worked. I think, honestly, it's just a line that managers feed you to keep you quiet so they don't have to deal with you. I've heard it before. I might've even said it before. Not might. I'm pretty sure I've said it before and I'm really not sure it's the best advice to give. I don't think Steve Jobs kept his head down. I don't think Oprah, J-Lo, Jeff Bezos, or any highly successful person got there by keeping their heads down and simply working hard.

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Hard work is definitely part of it, but there are a lot of other things that go into success than just hard work. If you're in the hard work, fingers crossed group, you don't have a career plan. Your whole plan is just showing up and doing a good job and that's not a plan. That's a disaster waiting to happen. I'm sorry, but that's what it is.

You're not getting a good return on the hustle that you're putting in every day. It's going to take you way longer to get to where you want to go if you ever even get there because you're not really steering the ship. You're like a passenger and you're letting someone else steer the ship. That's a really, really passive way of managing your career. It's barely managing your career and it's certainly not taking control of your career. But that's the fingers crossed group.

Now the second group actually thinks they have a plan. I have been in this group a lot of the time in my life. I call this group the My Plan is Your Plan group, which is a stupid name. But it's all I could think of so I'm going with it for now. I am taking imperfect action. If you have a better name, leave it in the comments, I am all yours.

These people have a career plan, but it's the career plan that they build at the company that they work for. It's a plan that they write to be successful in their current organization. It's focused on the career path your company believes that you can have. It revolves around the people you work with right now and your ability to activate that plan relies on a big part on your boss and the powers that be where you work. It also relies on you driving that plan for sure.

But you don't have 100% control of this plan. You are not totally driving this bus. You are co-steering this plan, which sucks because no one else should have control of your career plan, but you. That's why I call it my plan is your plan because it's as much your company's plan as it is your plan. And the scope of this plan is extremely narrow because it's just about where you work right now.

So if you're in a company, the company you work for has a career planning structure and I worked for many that did. That's really where I cut my teeth. It's an excellent resource. It's a nice benefit that companies provide. But keep in mind that these planning structures are a retention strategy designed for the company to keep its best people. It's not about you really, it's about them.

So if you are not considered a high-potential performer or someone they really want to invest in, you may not even get access to all the resources and all the opportunities on your career plan. You might not even get access to the opportunities and resources that other people in your organization have access to. And those could be things like training or mentorship or special task forces or projects that could really be great achievements for you. You're not going to get access to those because it's not your decision and it's out of your hands. And if you're not considered a high potential, they're out of your reach.

So your options become more and more limited if your only career plan is the one you have with the company you work with. Having this plan is also a really big risk for you because if something goes sideways with the company that you're working for right now, maybe they shut their doors. Maybe all of a sudden you find yourself out of a job for whatever reason. You don't have a career plan anymore. You're lost because your whole career plan was about working for that company.

All of a sudden you don't know what's next for you because you've never planned your career outside of your current job so you're starting from scratch. You're jobless and you're starting from scratch, which I'm not going to lie is a hard place to start.

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Don't wait for that situation to start. If you are in that situation, don't worry, you can still turn this ship around and this podcast is a great way to start helping you do that. Those are the two groups. The My Plan is Your Plan group and the Fingers Crossed group. Most people fall into one of those two categories, and none of the people in those two categories actually have a career plan.

We've talked a lot about what a career plan is not, let's start talking about what a career plan is. A career plan is a roadmap that you control and that is 100% focused on achieving your career goals and reaching your potential, the maximum return on the hustle. A career plan is something that you 100% control that's going to get you where you want to go in the fastest way possible. Since you control it, you get to decide how fast you want to go.

When you own and nurture your own career plan, it's always going to be there for you. You'll never have to feel lost or trapped again because you're going to have an active plan that you can leverage whenever you need to. If you're prepared to spend an hour or two a week getting your plan up and running and really planting the seeds, in a few months, you're going to have an asset that you just need to nurture two or three times a week.

When it comes to your career, this is honestly the best investment of your time because not only is it a functional plan to follow that's going to help you reach your goals, but having this plan is going to give you the self-confidence and the power to take calculated risks in your career because you're not going to feel like you have all your eggs in one basket. You're going to feel like you're in control and you're empowered and that's going to give you self-confidence to move forward.

There is so much that I want to tell you about career planning, but I'm going to stay focused on the plan itself today. Later on in this podcast, in future episodes, I will do more episodes about building the plan itself, but today let's just focus on what's in the plan. Here's the way that I structure plans with my clients and the career plan that I want to take you through is actually in three pillars. Pillar one is your growth plan. Pillar two is your personal brand plan. And pillar three is your strategic support network.

I'm going to give you an overview of each pillar now and as we go forward in the podcast, in future episodes, I will deep dive into each of these pillars in different segments of these pillars. Absolutely subscribe to this podcast if you're someone who thinks this knowledge is going to be valuable to you and in your career.

Let's talk about the first pillar, which is your growth plan. The purpose of the growth plan is to develop the skills and strengths that you want to optimize in order to reach your goals. Very simple. In last week's episode, we talked about the concept that your real strengths are the things that you love doing and the things that make you feel strong, whether you're good at them or not. Isn't that the true definition of strength? Doesn't strength mean being strong?

When it comes to your growth plan, you're going to get a much better return on your hustle if you focus your development on the things that make you feel strong, which are the things you love doing. That's going to make you stronger and stronger. There are also going to be new skills that you want to learn that will help you become more and more qualified for your ultimate goal.

Of course, there are specific achievements that you want to pursue, like projects, awards, accolades, opportunities, task forces, volunteer positions, or whatever that you can use as proof of what you can do. And of course, we can't forget about our weaknesses. You might want to, but why? There's nothing wrong with not enjoying doing everything and not being good at everything.

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I'm not going to get too much into dealing with weaknesses today, but your growth plan also needs to include what I call your weakness neutralization strategies. You might say that sounds super jargon or super fancy. You're probably right. We will dig into weaknesses another time because there's a whole piece around that that I want to talk to you about, but essentially in your growth plan, what you want to do is find strategic ways to minimize the time that you spend.

The bottom line, your growth plan is all about where you want to focus your growth to get you to your goal, and it includes how to optimize your strengths, neutralize your weaknesses, identify new skills that you want to learn, and go after and building achievements as proof of what you can do. Those are the things that you want to focus on in your growth plan.

The next pillar of your career plan is planning your personal brand strategy. The purpose of this part of the plan is to really get purposeful about getting visibility with the people who need to know and value what you have to offer. It's like your own personal marketing plan. You'll define the targets, meaning, who needs to know how awesome you are. These might be people inside your organization or outside your organization. It could be people within the industry, potential clients, influencers, and lots of different kinds of people.

Don't isolate yourself from the people that you work with only and you will define how much awareness or engagement you want to have with each of these targets. Some will require more attention than others because some have more influence than others. And you'll develop your key messages like what you want people to know about you, what you want people to hear about you or see you doing or value about you.

You'll define what you want those things to be once you've decided that you can build a plan to consistently communicate your awesomeness across all the relevant touch points that make sense to you. And that could be anything from industry events, meetings, and one-to-one relationship-building connections. It could just be your LinkedIn profile or personal website. It could be a blog you write, a podcast that you do, or speaking engagements that you have.

Really, massive opportunities out there depending on what you do and who you want to know about it. You just need to decide which ones are the right ones for your target. You could even write a book these days. It's so easy. This might sound like a lot. Writing a book is a lot, but it doesn't have to be. You might just pick one person or one organization a quarter that you want to zero in on. You don't have to do it all. The idea here is just to set the foundation and then take consistent action. That's all.

Because if you pick a couple of people a quarter or one organization a quarter or one volunteer or industry event a quarter, a couple of years go by and you've really built something around yourself because these things are cumulative. It's not just one plus one equals two. It's one plus one equals four, equals five. You're starting to build things out and it gets stronger and stronger as you build the foundation of your personal brand plan.

Take the time to think about who you want to target, what message you want to send, and how you want those people to get that message from you. Those are the things that you really want to focus on in your personal brand plan.

And then the third pillar of your plan is your strategic support network. What makes a support network strategic is that it's connected to your career goals. It's not just a random bunch of people that you meet with on a random basis. It is strategic, focused, and purposeful. You are essentially identifying people who will help you get to your career goals faster.

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Because nearly no one, no successful person ever got there alone. It takes a village, which is yes, an overused term, but it is true in this case and in fact, if you try to go to it alone, you likely won't get to where you want to go and a really well-functioning strategic support network is going to be a combination of different types of support roles.

It's about how to consistently nurture that network, how to show up for that network and those people in your network, and keep revisiting how it's going in your network and assessing where you want to take it next. A strategic support network is an invaluable resource. And again, this is also not something that you build overnight. It's going to take time, which is okay because that's how you build an effective and powerful asset by consistently nurturing it over time.

That's an overview of the three pillars of your most powerful asset in your career toolbox. Your career plan is 100% focused on your success, driven by you, totally about you, for you, and controlled by you. And those three pillars are your growth plan, your personal brand plan, and your strategic support network. That my friends is the overview, the foundation of what stage three is all about, planning for your career success, and stage three of taking back control of your career.

Next week, you're going to go through the fourth stage, which is staying accountable and making it happen. That's a tricky stage because that's where, again, our mindset kicks back in, and when we start taking action, we start getting nervous, and we start sabotaging ourselves. This is a really key stage as well.

Thanks again for tuning in today. I know you have a lot of podcasts to choose from, so I really appreciate you being here. If you like what you're hearing, and if you're finding this information useful, please subscribe to the podcast by going to thecareerreset.com/podcast and choosing the app you want to subscribe with.

Thank you so much again for showing up and remember to come back next week for the fourth stage of taking back control of your career, staying accountable, and making it happen.

I'll see you then. Bye for now.

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