TRANSCRIPT DOWNLOAD

5 REASONS TO PRIORITIZE YOUR CAREER PLAN IN 2021

Disclaimer: Some of the content and information mentioned in this episode might no longer be applicable. This includes references to specific links, courses, or programs. As a result, all the links mentioned will now redirect you to our current website. There, you'll find up-to-date information, resources, and exciting new content to support your journey. We appreciate your understanding and unwavering support.

Hey there, everyone, Mel Savage here from The Career Reset podcast. Thank you so much for joining me today.

My focus is always on helping you achieve your career goals faster, with a lot less drama. And today's episode is right on the nose. I want to talk a little bit today about five reasons to prioritize your career plan in 2021. I know that's really not a very sexy title. I tried to find something sexier. But to me, it was exactly what I want to talk about today with a little bit of a twist because I know that a lot of people have a career plan.

So many people have to write one as part of what they have to do with the organization. However, most people don't actually use their career plans effectively. They write it, maybe they put it in their drawer, or they never actually print it out. They just sort of email it, but they don't often look at it. They don't follow it. They don't maybe even engage with it more than three or four times a year, which is such a missed opportunity. It's really the lowest of the low-hanging fruit. And I totally get it because I didn't always engage with my career plan as effectively as I could.

But looking back, honestly, it was a big missed opportunity. In fact, I would argue that making your career, you're going to love this, I will argue that you should make your career the number one thing that you spend your time and your money on, with maybe the exception of your health. But after your health, your career really should be the number one thing that you invest in. And I know a lot of you are going, *What? I'm not really sure that's the thing.* But just stick with me because I've got some good reasons just telling you that you should do that, or just telling you the reasons why it's worth your while.

Actually, I don't think it's really going to motivate you to do anything about it. Because as human beings, we just love not to do things that are good for us. It's like how we're wired. It is a total design flaw of our human brain. Instead, I think what might work better and what is more motivating is talking about what you're going to be missing when you don't prioritize your career. What does it mean? What does it take away from your life? What are you missing out on by not spending 15 or 20 minutes a day on your career plan? So that's what we're going to focus on.

© SAVAGE LIFE

In this episode, I'm going to give you the five big reasons to prioritize your career and 2021. And more importantly, what you're going to miss out on if you don't do it. And I promise you, when you see them all together, you're really going to see why it's a no-brainer to rethink how you spend your time in a day and to make your career plan a priority in your life.

Let's get back to the meat of this discussion, which is your career plan, why you should prioritize it, and what you're going to be missing if you do not prioritize it. One thing I want to just get out of the way right now is when I say prioritizing your career plan, a lot of people think, *Look, I'm already prioritizing my career. I spend all the time there. I'm there. I'm at work all the time is the biggest part of my day. So yeah, I got this. I'm already prioritizing it.*

But what I want to just highlight to you is you going to work every day, and spending eight or eight plus hours there is not prioritizing your career. That's just showing up for work. And that's being actually very passive with your career, versus really being proactive, and planning and optimizing and all the things that are available to you when you actually have a career plan.

If you are someone who goes, *Well, I'm going to work every day. That's my thing. I'm already prioritizing my job*. I would say that's like saying, *while I eat and sleep every day, I'm taking care of my health.* But there's a lot of education out there that tells us that's not the case. It takes a lot more than just eating and sleeping to take care of your health. How much sleep? What are you eating? What if you're not eating the right things? What if you're just eating everything in sight? And what about other factors like exercise, mental health, or all the other things that go into being a healthy person?

There are a lot of factors that we don't consider when it comes to optimizing our careers. And it goes well beyond just showing up for work. And I will say that doing this work actually pays huge dividends. It's just like if you work out every day, at first, it's hard, but over time it pays huge dividends. This is exactly the same thing. When it comes to your career, if you spent 15 minutes a day, if you could carve out, I'm not even talking about incremental time.

If you could carve out 15 minutes a day out of your existing working day, whether that 15 minutes is you spend on a BS wasted time on social media, gossiping, or whatever, I'm sure you could find 15 minutes of wasted time in your day that you could spend focused on your career. If you could do that, you are going to be set up for success and achieving your goals faster. I'm not going to throw that out to you as an opportunity.

Today, it's about the five reasons. The five reasons that you should really think about spending that 15 minutes a day on your career and if you don't, what you're missing out on. The way I always look at it is that your career is just a project like anything else, and you run projects on the job all the time. You have all these projects. You have all these things, teams that you lead or projects that you run, or you're playing a key role in a team. You have a role to play, you're always showing up just like anything else.

You have these projects, you have these tasks that you're managing on a day-to-day basis. And when you have a project, you always know what you're trying to achieve with that project. You have a path to success with that project. Things go sideways, you figure out how to solve those problems. You have already done your situation analysis for that project. You know where the obstacles are, you know where the opportunities are, you know how to rally support if you need it, and you know what kind of resources you need to get the job done.

© SAVAGE LIFE

We do that every day on the job, for other things that we're hired to do. We actually even do that for things in our life. We do it for things like like personal stuff. So you know when you plan a vacation. How many hours do you put into planning a vacation and all the things you're going to do? How are you going to optimize your spending, and do you think about what everyone wants to achieve on a vacation like in your family? What are the objectives? What do you want to do? Why are we trying to do that? We do that. We're organizing parties or entertaining people. And we will be used to get to do that.

When we're buying a house, or when we're car shopping, we do all of the research. We have a strategy we follow through. We spend time on it. We do that for all these things. But when it comes to our careers, we just start to stop doing it. We don't actually treat our careers like a project. And that's what I'm suggesting we do. Treat your career like a project. And to me, it's the number one project that you should be spending your time and money on. With maybe the exception of your health, depends on what situation you're in.

But on a day-to-day basis, your career becomes an enabler for so many things. So I'm going to start with these five reasons. I want to talk about what you're missing, and then I'm going to talk about what it means to your life. And the number one thing, of course, that you're missing out on, if it's important to you, is more money. Money and your career pays for your life. And it also pays for the life of the people who count on you. And that can be your kids or your spouse, or for me, for instance, my mother lives with me as well.

We have these multi-generational households that we support. And money comes from our careers, if you want to put it in the base of it. And good or bad money is a thing in our society. I'm not suggesting that you have to live in a 3000 square foot house and drive a Tesla, and all those crazy things and have 20 pairs of shoes and all this stuff. Regardless of how much money you make, you need to make money. So our careers pay for our food, our shelter. If you're in the US, it pays for your health care.

So at a minimum, your career pays the bills that support your safety, your security, and the safety and the security of the people who count on you as well. So when you don't manage your career, prioritize your career, get proactive about your career, and make it a priority, you are putting your basic ability to take care of your family and make money in jeopardy.

I think if 2020 has taught us anything, and I have learned a shit ton of lessons this year, it's that you need to be set up for success. You need to have backup plans in your life, because so many people got caught out in a situation where they didn't have strong plans in place, and they didn't have backup plans in place. And they didn't have a sense of what they could do beyond the job that they have now. So more money, or you could call it money security, if you will. That is a reason to prioritize your career plan. And if you don't, you could be missing out on that money security.

Number two, when you don't have a career plan, you are putting your sense of belonging in jeopardy, as well. And let me tell you what I mean by that. Your career creates connections. You connect with yourself, who you are, and your identity when you have a career. And it helps you connect with others. People call it fulfillment. I want to feel fulfillment. And usually, it's that sense of purpose, it's that sense of meaning that is the connection to who we are, our values, our self-appreciation, our strengths.

We do what we love doing. And we know why we love doing it. You have this sense of connection to yourself, and to others who are like you and so you have this connection with other people who are like-minded. As human

© SAVAGE LIFE

beings, a big part of our sense of safety and security comes from belonging – belonging to something, belonging to the tribe. And when I say tribe, I do not mean anything bad to anyone. I hope I'm using this word in the most respectful sense but as a tribe of people who are like us. Tribal belonging is one of the basic needs of humanity.

One of the scariest things that would happen to people back in the day was being sent away from the tribe to survive on their own. It wasn't just scary because you were on your own, but in terms of who was going to help protect you, it was that sense of being alone and loneliness, and not knowing who you were without the tribe. So we don't think about it that way anymore because we don't live in the traditional type of tribal environment, but your career and what you do and who you do it with is kind of a tribe.

People ask all the time as they start with, *Hi, my name is Mel Savage. What do you do?* What do you do really means what do you belong to? What tribe do you belong to? That's what people are asking. And when you don't have one, or you don't know what it is, it's really scary when you don't have a connection. So your sense of belonging comes from your career to a large extent. For many people, it's not the only thing. But it is a big thing if we're being honest with ourselves.

When you don't have a career plan, and you're just showing up for work every day, you are risking your sense of safety and belonging, and the connection that you have with people. That's why we're so afraid to make a mistake at work. The sense of making a mistake or failure in our personal lives feels like less. We don't feel as big of a risk to make a mistake in our personal lives. But it feels like this huge thing when you make a mistake at work. Why? Because you are threatening your sense of belonging and safety.

And back to number one – money. When you make a mistake at work, it feels so much more stressful, like it feels so much more huge. When you make a mistake at work, it's because you are threatening these basic human needs of safety and belonging. And in a lot of cases, our social standing. Who we are in our personal lives is tied to our careers as well, how we connect, the class we're in, if you believe in that thing, your friends, and what you have in common, the TV shows you watch. All those things are tied to your career.

I remember when I left the corporate world, and I decided I was going to build a work-from-home, work-from-anywhere business. I wanted to be a coach and I wanted to talk about careers. I was learning this whole new skill set. I had some transferable skills and experience, obviously, from 20-plus years working in corporate, but how could I really help people with that, and really help them in a way that made sense for them?

The biggest challenge was not necessarily learning this whole new skill set, and optimizing how to do it, it was my identity. The shift in my identity from being an authority figure in a huge global corporate environment, where I had lots of people reporting to me, and everyone was looking to me for leadership and guidance to now being on my own. I didn't know who I was anymore. I didn't know how I fit in either going to say it took me a good two years to accept the change in who I was and that I have value now in what I do, equally to what I did before, regardless of how much authority I have, or how much money I'm making, or all the things.

It's so much tied. Your career can be so much tied into who you are. I was just talking to a client today, who is ongoing into retirement and is freaking out a bit about the idea that they're going to lose their identity because they don't know who they are when they're not at work. So I'm not saying that's exactly or 100% the case for you.

© SAVAGE LIFE

But what I want to just underline is that your career does create these connections. And when you don't have a career plan, you're risking those connections. You're your risk and I could go on and on.

The other thing that I get a lot from clients is *I don't know what I want to do*. And the reason people stay stuck in their jobs is because they feel that they're risking their sense of belonging and who they are. It's so huge, so huge. This piece of it. I cannot reinforce it enough. When you have a career plan, you're protecting that sense of belonging and safety because you're always driving the bus. You're not risking someone else making a career decision for you.

Even when COVID, you know who you are and what you want. And you've been nurturing it along the way. So it's easy for you to get resituated if you need to. That's number two. Number one is money. You're risking your money security. Number two is risking your belongings' security. And number three is you are missing out. When you don't have a career plan, you are missing out on your ability to feel good.

More often, Your career and how you show up in your career directly relates to your overall emotional and physical well-being. When you have a healthy career, you can feel good about yourself. You feel negative less often. You find the balance of your career in your life. It feeds your emotional and physical well-being. But when your career is off the rails, when you feel like you're out of control with your career, it's the other way, It sucks up your emotional and physical well-being. It has huge implications your stress levels go through the roof.

Normally, the way our adrenal glands work is when you are in danger, let's say you get this kind of shot of cortisol and adrenaline into your body so that you can react, you can really move quickly and get out of danger. It happens when you're unhappy at work. You're in a situation where you feel like you don't know what you want to do, you're not in great healthy positive situations, you know how to manage your mental health, or you don't like your boss. Whatever it is, that's creating this negative feeling for you at work. You're not getting ahead fast enough.

Instead of short bursts of cortisol and adrenaline to help us avoid danger, you're at this constant level of your adrenal glands feeding you cortisol and adrenaline. These high levels of stress, and it has huge implications for denigrating your health and your emotional health and well-being as well. So this ongoing chronic stress can really exacerbate many serious health problems like mental health, depression, anxiety, and personal personality disorders. It can go that far. Cardiovascular disease, heart disease, blood pressure, stroke, and all of the things stroke.

I remember, when I was really stressed out, there was a point in time when my job, in my career when I was so stressed out at work, I had an eye twitch. You could see it. My eye was twitching, my hair was falling out, I had all of the symptoms, and had problems with my stomach. I was on my way to an ulcer, essentially from the stress of the work.

So when you manage your career, you're in control, you know what you want, and you're managing your mindset along the way, you can really cut down on the impact, the stress impact. I'm not saying there are not going to be times when you have stress. Of course, there is. Sometimes some of the stress is actually good, like the short bursts are actually good. And as part of us getting the momentum, we need to start something to move. But the

© SAVAGE LIFE

constant stress levels, not so much. And we need to manage that. And we manage it by always keeping ourselves in good stead in our careers, in our minds based on how we manage and plan our careers.

So feeling good more often is something that you can have when you have a career plan. It can feed your emotional, and physical well-being. But when you don't have a career plan, and you're not managing your career proactively, it can actually suck the good feelings out of your life. On top of that, it creates real physical implications for your health and your mindset. So I think that's a pretty darn good reason to spend 15 minutes a day on a career plan. You do it for your health. We do it for exercise and food planning, but in your career, we don't always do it.

The fourth thing I want to talk about is when you don't manage your career, you get a really bad return on effort. I said before that I believe your job and your career are two different things. I really believe your career is higher order than your job. So think of it this way, your job is just one strategy of your career. It's like saying, what you eat is just one strategy towards physical health. The other strategies would be exercise, sleep, and mental health. I don't know, your career might be one of your strategies toward physical health, for instance.

When it comes to your career, it's higher order. Your job is one strategy. Your relationships are another strategy. Your mindset managing is another strategy, There are so many strategies. Your level of experience in your training is another strategy. Your authority in your industry is another strategy. There are so many strategies to really manage your career beyond your job. And when you don't know what your goal is, and you're treating it like your job is the only strategy, you're missing out because you're not getting a good return on effort.

If you know what you're trying to achieve day in and day out, what goal you're trying to achieve, and you think about it all the time, you're able to leverage all the things that you do on a day-to-day basis at work. So if you look at your agenda on a day-to-day basis and you think, *here are the things I'm doing*; and you have your career goal in mind, you can always be thinking about, *how can I leverage these things to get me to my career goal*?

Because your career goals aren't just like you have your big career goal, but you have like all these little micro goals within that and things that you're trying to get better at, or you're trying to establish, or relationships you're trying to build, or whatever within your overall career plan. And when you know what those things are, you can actually leverage them day-to-day in your day job. So when you don't have a career plan, you're getting a smaller return on effort. You could actually get a better return on what you're already doing without incremental effort just by spending that 15-20 minutes a day revisiting your career plan and really blowing it out. So you're missing out on that.

In that same vein as number five, I'm going to give you number five which is you're missing out on a happier life overall because you spend about a third of your adult life at work in your career. It is a huge part of your life. As I said in number four, you want to get a good return on effort for the time that you spend there. But if you roll up the other four things I just talked about, having the money security, having a sense of belonging, taking care of your health, and getting a good return on the time you spend at work; all those things together really maximize and get that 1/3 of your adult life that you spend at work working for you.

It drives a happier life overall because you have less emotional negativity. You have less stress on your body, you're not worried about being thrown out from the tribe, and you have the money to take care of yourself and

© SAVAGE LIFE

your health, and the health of the people that you care about. It feeds everything you have an overall happier life when you take care of it.

I'm actually going to give you a bonus reason here as well for doing this, is you have overall less worry because you're positioned for any eventuality. When you have a plan in place that you're activating on an ongoing basis, it's easier to manage that plan. It makes tweaks to that plan versus when you have no plan at all. So when things like COVID happen, or maybe your company structure changes or the economy goes in the toilet, or whatever it is, you're well positioned for any eventualities when you're managing your career plan on an ongoing basis.

So when you think about it that way, with all those things, doesn't it make sense? I mean, does it just make sense that you would want to put the time and effort into leading your career right into getting that good return on the effort, getting a good return on enjoyment, getting a good return on fulfillment, on growth, on belonging on safety, on your health? Doesn't it just make sense? Totally does. It totally does. Of course, it does. Absolutely.

If you're going to do anything for your career this year, make sure it's about putting a rock-solid career plan in place so that you are on top of every single frickin day. And I don't care if you do it with me, or you just use the plan that your company has assigned, or whatever it is, get help. Get a mentor, get a coach. This is so worth the investment. The return on this is better than any vacation that you could go to. I'm on my soapbox. I'm going to get off it now. I can't help it.

I've seen so much suffering in jobs with people when I was in corporate and subsequently as a coach. And I just want to say having a career plan minimizes so much of it and maximizes your life in such a bigger way.

Key headlines for you to take away from this: Your career is really the pivot point of your whole life. It feeds so much of your life. It's not some, *Oh, she's so career-focused. She has some of that money*. No. Your career feeds the health and well-being of so much of your life. It gives you the means to take care of yourself and your family. It gives us your sense of identity, your tribe, your self-esteem, and your emotional and physical well-being.

It's the place where you spend the most time in your adult life beyond bed, like sleeping. So it feels to me like it's worth spending 15-20 minutes less on your day job every day and investing that into your career. It totally is. It's not even a question. It is, it absolutely is. And I really want you to think about as hard as you think about 2021 and where you want to take your career. I will be talking to you soon. Bye for now.

mel savage
EXECUTIVE COACHING

© SAVAGE LIFE