

7 Powerful Steps to Take When You Hate Your Job but You Can't Quit



Glenn Carstens-Peters



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About Me

I'm Shannon Post and I'm a career coach—but not your conventional blue-suit-and-tie career coach. **I believe loving your work is a rebellion that will change the world.**

What I know is, if you hate your job right now, it isn't your fault. You simply were raised in a culture that didn't teach you how to find the work you love. The good news is you have the power to change that.

This is a skill you can learn.



I can also tell you that **you're not alone**. I scoured the earth for well over a decade trying to find the work I was meant to do. I've had what on paper were “dream jobs.” I was a professional classical singer performing on the most famous stages in New York City. I was a dog musher for a prominent Iditarod racer in Alaska. And I was a top senior IT executive leading technology and geospatial divisions.

In each case, I had “made it.” **I'd succeeded in society's eyes but none of the jobs felt like me.** I wasn't fulfilled, I wasn't fully using my natural talents (mostly because I didn't understand what they were), and I wasn't making the kind of impact I wanted to make in the world.

I'd failed to find the perfect career so many times that I thought something was seriously wrong with me. Like **maybe I wasn't allowed to have a career I loved and felt passionate about.** Or maybe having a career I was naturally good at was just a pipe dream.

If you can relate, **you need to know that it's not you. It's the box you're trying to fit yourself into.** That box, the traditional career path, doesn't work for everyone—and that's okay. There is fulfilling work out there that fits you and your personality like a glove. And it's my goal to help you find it.



You are Not Alone.

My work is informed by my experience building careers in vastly different industries as well as my studies at the University of Montana, the University of Virginia, and Stanford University.

But the thing I'm most proud of is that, **against all odds, the life I have now is the dream I had long ago.** Alaska. Based in Talkeetna under the shadow of Denali, Sultana, and the Alaska Range. **The ability to make a tangible impact in people's daily lives and improve the world around me.** Alaska is breathtaking, and I am indebted to the Dena'ina Etnena [dənə'ɪnə] and their traditional territory where I now get to live and work.

I'm certified by Kathy Kolbe, a leading authority on human instinct, and Dr. Martha Beck, a Harvard-educated sociologist specializing in human behavior.

I'm an INFP and my Kolbe index is 3-2-10-4. So **I'm an introverted, empathic, innovative disruptor.** I had a boss who said he never quite knew what I was up to, but the results always broke the barriers of what he thought was possible and changed the world. He wasn't wrong.

Now I want to break the barriers of what you think is possible and help you change your world and the world of everyone around you.



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You Will Make It Through This

First, I want you to take a deep breath and hear me.

You will not have to stay in this crappy job forever. I know it's hard right now—really hard—but, no matter how bad or hopeless it seems, **this is temporary.** And I'm here to help you find a way out.

This is Temporary

I understand how miserable, infuriating, exhausting, and downright abusive workplaces can be. I also know from experience just how scary and paralyzing it can feel to have no cash and no new job in sight.

I've wanted to slam the door and walk out of a job many times. But I knew that if I did, I would jeopardize my ability to meet my basic needs. I've never had a trust fund or family to fall back on. I know the pressure of having to provide everything on your own. **You don't always have the luxury of just walking away even if it's something you hate. But you don't have to stay forever either.**

Right now, slamming the door feels great and like you're escaping pain. But if you do it now, the relief will be temporary. You aren't wrong for feeling this way. It's part of our hard-wired programming as humans. We are driven toward pleasure and away from pain on purpose. And that's a good thing. It's an inborn survival mechanism that saves us and keeps us alive.

But if you are willing, you can **harness that energy** and produce a more powerful result that propels you beyond surviving into thriving.

My goal with you here is to help you move toward long-term, sustainable pleasure.

The kind of pleasure that comes from fulfillment, contribution and alignment. Eradicating this kind of daily pain from your career forever. **I can help you make a graceful exit from your current job in a way that sets you up for more fulfilling and more aligned work in the next chapter of your career.**



Give Yourself a Promotion

Here is the hard truth I don't want to tell you. **If there's any way for you to stay in your job and not lose your health or your mind, I recommend that you stay** (temporarily) in your crappy job.

I know this isn't what you want to hear. It doesn't express how you feel right now.

It's not the spice of an eloquent clap back delivered as you gracefully toss your crisp resignation on to your bosses desk or the vibration of that solid industrial wood door slamming shut as you walk out.

I know waiting is not what you want, but staying will help you achieve the promotion I'm about to give you. From this moment on, you are no longer waiting. **Waiting is a mindset.** A mindset you're going to ditch. Right now.



Riccardo Annandale

Today, I'm promoting you to CEO. Chief Exit Officer in charge of your exit plan.

You're going to start planning and strategizing an exit that launches you into a totally new way of working. This is a very different head space. It means being in control of the terms and conditions of your exit. Leaving when you're good and ready to leave, so you get all the benefits you deserve. (And if the title CEO makes your skin crawl give yourself a title that inspires you and puts you in the driver's seat of your career.)



And just so this doesn't sound overly dreamy, **I'll back up all this fairy dust with a personal example.**

I'd just had a deal breaker conversation at work. It was the usual sexist, condescending and abusive rhetoric I'd grown accustomed to as a woman in the male-dominated tech field. But today, I wasn't having it. I walked into the women's bathroom to gather my thoughts. **I was ready to light this 9-5 job on fire.** I took a deep breath (okay a lot of deep breaths) and decided to sleep on it and give it till Monday.

Over the weekend, and after a few calculations, I decided to stay. Not because it was a great job, but because, as much as I wanted to escape that hell, I also knew that, when I left, I wanted to work for myself. I'd interviewed all over the place and it was just the same shit, second verse. **I didn't want the same exhausting, thankless job with a different view.**

I was done with the golden handcuffs.

I wanted to call the shots. I was willing to do whatever it took. So I decided to stay for as long as it took me to get my ass in gear.

I didn't have the energy to do any more than I was already doing. But it was the only way out. So I dug deep into reserves I didn't even know I had and **I did what had to be done for my future self.**

Work didn't become less frustrating during this period. In fact, it felt infinitely more stupid. I had to find more ways to cope with a work environment that was becoming increasingly more toxic for me. So I did all the things I could to keep my head above water and **I made a plan.** I knew this would be a slog, but one that would pay off.

And I was right. It paid off in spades.

I know that where you are right now is hard. I know you don't have any more energy. And I know you'd be justified in storming out of the workplace right about now, but **I'm inviting you to dig deep and hang in there while we build your exit plan.**



Step 1 - Dial it Down

Dial down your inner overachiever, five-star seeker and perfectionist.

(Breathe. I know this might be confronting. Don't worry. I'm going to show you how.)

The concept of not doing five-star work every waking moment of my life shattered my entire work ethic the first time I heard it too. I get it. I'm a recovering five-star seeker. I have big dreams. I love the words best-in-class. But a perfectionist mindset is damaging your potential and your ability to create the career you really want.

We're going to take a page from yoga and **conserve your vital energy**.

Think of your energy like you think of money. If you spend all of your money on things that don't matter, you won't have it for the purchases that really make a difference. The same is true of your energy. You need to conserve your energy and spend it where it counts. **Right now what counts is planning your graceful exit.** That's where you should be spending most of your energy.

I know it's tempting to think that, if you just try harder, that you'll finally be noticed, promoted or liked. But that is just not likely. You know right now if you're appreciated or not. If you can get promoted without a ton of effort, great. It will look good on your resume, but don't do it in hopes of feeling validated. **When you're in the right job and the right culture, you don't have to beg to be noticed.**

Do not waste all of your five-star energy on people who don't appreciate what you have to offer today.

I know this goes against the grain of our culture, but for now, do only what you need to do to keep your job and get a good reference and recommendation letter when you leave and no more than that.

Conserve Your Vital Energy



Step 1 - Exercise

What can you stop doing?

Where are you spending more energy than necessary?

Where in your life are you doing gold-plated, five-star work, when no one would notice if you did regular four-star work?

Action step: As the CEO, your job is to ensure the right work is getting done.

So stop doing the things you've listed above asap. Even if you reduce your effort by 1%, that's 1% you have to focus on yourself and your exit.



Step 2 - Pencil it Out

Sit down and pencil out how much money you need to live on. Not your dream situation, just what you currently spend.

One caution: don't go into extreme restriction mode. If you have expenses you can easily cut like a subscription you don't use and don't care about, fine, but no extreme cutting. It will backfire.

Here's why. The human brain actively fights restriction or scarcity by hyperfocusing on whatever is deemed scarce or forbidden. This creates an unnecessary energy drain that goes against step one, conserve your vital energy. **We need your energy focused on your exit, not on a budget-cutting exercise.** So figure out what is sustainable for the long haul.

One of the simplest ways is to look at your last year's expenses and go from there. Try not to judge it, just calculate it.

This number is often less than you've imagined.

Our brains tell us we need millions of dollars in the bank in an attempt at keeping us safe. The fact is that this exit may be more possible than you think. So get out that spreadsheet and calculate the truth.

Pro tip: *Notice what your mind (or people around you) is telling you about how much money you need. As best you can, replace negative thoughts that arise about money with something like, "I can figure out how to replace this income." Notice, I didn't say you know how right now. I said, that you're resourceful and you can figure out how to do this. Whenever you notice self-doubt, remind yourself that you can find a way.*



Step 2 - Exercise

How much money per month do you need to live on?

How much did you spend last year? If you had an unusual one-time expense, you can subtract that from your total.

Is this less or more than you expected?

Does this seem more or less possible now that you have the calculation?

Action step: As the CEO, your job is to understand the financial landscape and position yourself to take advantage of opportunities. Do a financial review each month to keep track of your progress.



Step 3 - Pack Your Bags

List the items in your life you want wrapped up before you leave your current job.

At home, do you need to refinance your mortgage or get a new place to rent? This crappy job just might give you the work history and income statement you need to do that.

Do you need to buy a better car or pay off debt? Do you need to put away some savings? Do you need to get or finalize a divorce? This job may help you speed up that process.

At work, do you need to get a recommendation letter from your boss? Or get that title change and pay increase you've been promised before you go?

Do you need to complete a high visibility project so you don't lose the recognition for all the work you've put into it? Do you need to spruce up your resume and LinkedIn profile?

If you plan to go into business for yourself, do all the time consuming and expensive prep work while you have an income. Get your business license and domain name.

Get your legal contracts and entities figured out. Start it as a side hustle so you can experiment without the stress of spending down all of your life savings. Get that website started and anything else you can do on the side.

Wring everything you can out of this situation. **Give your job a job. Make this crappy job work for you while you're still in it.**

Give Your Job a Job



Step 3 - Exercise

At home, do you need to:

- Refinance your mortgage
- Find a new place to rent
- Buy a better car
- Pay off debt
- Put away savings
- File for a divorce
- Find a new roommate
- Other:

At work, do you need to:

- Get a recommendation letter from your boss
- Ask for a title change and/or pay increase
- Complete a high visibility project
- Update your resume or CV
- Update your LinkedIn profile (including recommendations)
- Other:

If you plan to go into business for yourself, do you need to:

- Get your business licenses
- Purchase your domain name
- Hire an attorney to write your legal contracts
- Incorporate
- Build a website
- Other:

Action Step: As the CEO, your job is to set the priorities for your exit. Now that you have the full list of what you want, prioritize what three actions will make the biggest impact. Map them out by month, put them in your calendar. Find snippets of time here and there to get them done. It will eventually add up, build your confidence and your momentum.



Step 4 - Build Your Team

Now that you've developed a clearer picture of your needs and priorities, **start building your support team**. Finding your ideal career can be a long road, and you're going to lose motivation at some point. **Willpower is a flimsy energy to rely on, so you need to supplement your reserves.**

Find people who support you—but preferably not people at work. You may think you're seeking support, but it can quickly devolve into complaining and gossip, which is destructive and can backfire. Don't complain to your work friends. Period. Find people outside of your office who are truly on your team.

It can be a therapist, coach, acupuncturist, massage therapist, friend group or sports team. Or it could be a professional networking group like [Ellevate](#). **It's not cheating if you pay for additional support during this time (or ever).** Accept support anywhere outside of your current job that you can find it as long as it truly works for you.

If you're on a budget, you can **saturate your mental and emotional environment**. Follow inspiring social media accounts. Get on email lists encouraging you to find better work. Listen to uplifting podcasts, read books, watch webinars and listen to lectures. Drown yourself in positive messages and content to keep you motivated.

I also recommend finding support outside of your family. If you're lucky and your family is rooting for you, that's awesome. But **it's important to build your own independent support team**. Realize your family is in this with you and it's not reasonable for them to be your only support.

Building a supportive team of people in your life will not only provide the support you need now. It will give you the benefits of social connection, networking, ideas and opportunities you'll need down the road.

Willpower is a Flimsy Energy



Step 4 - Exercise

What professionals are already supporting you?

Who do you need to hire for support?

Which friends can be there to support you?

What professional networks are you already a part of or can join?

What social media platforms can you follow to saturate your feeds with positive messages?

Who inspires you? Can you follow them on social media?

What email lists, TV shows, podcasts, books or other content can keep you motivated?

Action step: As the CEO, your job is to build a team that will help you execute your exit strategy. No CEO does this alone; they always have a team. Write down the top 3 people you need to help you in this transition and start reaching out to them.



Step 5 - Find Your Strengths

Start a two-part journal practice. (I roll my eyes at journal practices, too, but hear me out on this one.) You want to leave this job, and you need this step for clarity *and* so you don't stuff down your feelings, blow up at the office and get yourself fired.

- First, **write down everything**—and I do mean everything—**that you DO like about this job.** I know it sucks, but there has to be something keeping you here. Do you like the coffee they provide? Do you like your desk chair, your coworkers, your paycheck, the benefits, the museum pass, the commute, the pens?

What parts of the work are you good at? What parts do you enjoy? Where do you excel? Bonus points if you go back and do this for all of your past jobs.

- Second, **list everything you DON'T like about this job.** Again, list everything. Do you hate the dress code, the culture, your actual work, just part of your work, all of the people, just certain people?

What parts of the work aren't you good at? Where do you struggle? This is a really good place to take out your frustrations, rage and deserved pettiness. It's 100% okay to be pissed here and list all the things you cannot stand about this job. Again, bonus points if you go back and do this for all of your past jobs.

As you plan your exit, think about what you want to do. Not what you should do, how much money you can (or should) make. But what do you like to do? What do you want to do? What are your strengths?

It's counter to what our culture teaches, but, to have a fulfilling career, your work must involve your innate strengths, your desires, your dreams and the impact you want to make in your world. And you're allowed to have the work you want.

Pro tip: *When you're at work, as best you can, focus on the aspects you DO like about your job. This isn't meant to invalidate what you don't like or convince you to stay. This is about learning to train your brain to focus on the things you want amid the noise of what you don't want. And it's not here as a metaphysical practice, the ability to prioritize and focus is a crucial CEO skill.*



Step 5 - Exercise

Write down everything you DO like about your current and past jobs.

Where do you shine in your work? What are you really good at?

List everything you DON'T like about your current and past jobs.

What work aren't you good at? Where do you struggle?

Action step: As the CEO, it's your job to know your strengths and know how you can best contribute to your goals now and in the future. From these lists what are the top 3 things you like about your job(s). What are your strengths? Navigate toward the things you like and are good at as you plan your next move.



Step 6 - Envision Your Future

Now that you've gone through the first five steps, you're in a better position to reflect on your future. **What does your ideal career and life look like?**

Do you want a desk job? Do you want to work for yourself? Do you want to pivot into an entirely new career or do you just want to find something in your industry that's a better fit?

Do you want to move to another country? Live in a city or in a small community?

What problem do you want to solve in the world? Do you want to be the first female CEO in your field, end hunger, improve access to clean water?

Take time out of your regular day to sit and dream.

Give yourself time to imagine what you really want. Even if it seems far-fetched or impossible, allow your mind to wander and explore the landscape of your desires.

You don't have to have a burning passion or global mission right now, but you do need to figure out what kind of job and life you want long-term.

And unfortunately, **no one can do this step for you.**

People like myself can help guide you to your truth. But you're the only one who knows what you want deep down.

What is Your Ideal Career?



Step 6 - Exercise

Schedule a few minutes alone. Go for a walk, lock yourself in the bathroom or just put your headphones on and tune everyone out on the subway. Let yourself daydream about what you really want. I know this is challenging if you have children, multiple jobs or too many plates to spin, so just do the best you can. Anything is enough.

What kind of job do you want?

Where do you want to live?

What's on your bucket list?

What kind of legacy do you want to leave when you're gone?

Action step: As the CEO, your job is to establish and hold the vision for your career. Daydreaming may not seem like action, but without a vision for the future you're unlikely to realize any of your dreams. Schedule time out once a month to check back into your future vision. Has it expanded? Are you still on course or do you need to make a change?



Step 7 - Plan Your Next Step

Decide if you can stay in this job for the next 6 to 12 to 24 months, or if this job is so unbearable that you need to find a transition job. A job that isn't your ideal but is better than where you are.

Either way works. Ideally, if your current job isn't completely sucking the life out of you, staying put takes the least amount of time and effort.

But if the work or your boss or coworkers are especially toxic and killing your self-confidence, **it might be worth looking for another "good-enough" job**. Something that gives you steady income, gives you some mental and emotional relief and frees up more energy you can put toward your dreams

Many of my clients find this stair-step approach into better and better jobs to be less stressful than completely jumping into the unknown. It also allows you to test out ideas of what you think you'd like while you keep up with the bills.

Pro tip: *This step is where your mind can wage an all-out war. It will throw everything it has at you in an effort to keep you stuck where you are. "The devil you know" is going to seem so, so enticing.*

Watch out for feelings of inadequacy, stories about how your situation is special so these suggestions won't work for you or just straight-up avoidance. This work is confronting. You may feel like you're facing a brick wall or an endless battalion of enemies like the zombie scenes in Game of Thrones.

Trust that resistance is not the truth. This is just a tactic our mind uses to try to keep us safe. Feel the resistance and take steps forward anyway.



Step 7 - Exercise

How long can you feasibly stay in this job and not lose your mental, emotional or physical health?

How long are you willing to stay? Be specific. How many months?

If you need to leave, what interim jobs come to mind? Brainstorm at least 10 right now.

If you decide to stay, what's your end goal? Are you working for a company or are you going to work for yourself? Are you going to stair-step into better jobs or take a massive leap?

Action step: As the CEO, your job is to assess and mitigate risks. Take time and be honest with yourself about how long you can stay and what kind of exit feels best. Put a reminder in your calendar to check in with yourself once a month to see where you are in the process.



Take Action

Now is the time to start taking action.

I know you don't feel like you have the energy, but there's no fairy godmother riding in on the train this week to save you.

I'm sorry, but it's true. **You're the only person on the planet who is qualified to execute this plan.**

You have to save yourself. You can get help, delegate tasks, but you have to be the driving force behind your exit.

An easy first step is to schedule a monthly CEO meeting with yourself.

Put it in your calendar. Many of the steps suggest checking in once a month on your progress. You can batch all those together or do them separately. Personally, I batch them together (yes, I still check in with myself). Do what works in your schedule, but make sure you do it.

This maintenance meeting is what ensures all of your initial hard work doesn't get lost in the chaos of life. I don't want this to be a one-and-done throw-away exercise.

I want this to help you leave your crappy job and have a better life.

You Have to Save Yourself



Small Steps

If you're feeling overwhelmed, just chip away at the steps one at a time.

Do the easiest ones first.

Here's a quick recap:

1. Stop all unnecessary five-star work and redirect that energy to your exit plan.
2. Figure out how much money you need per month to live.
3. Decide what you want to finish up while you're in your current job.
4. Build your support team.
5. Focus on what you like about your job.
6. Decide your future vision.
7. Plan your next step.

To get results, you must make a plan and take as much action as you can.

These 7 steps will start the ball rolling and give you the momentum you need to keep moving forward. **The more you do, the easier it gets.** And taking on the mindset of the Chief Exit Officer propels you out of a waiting mindset and into focused action.

Now you know what you're aiming for—a calculated, graceful exit on your terms.

Take Small Steps



Next Steps

What if you know you want to leave your job, but you don't know what you want to do next? And you don't want to end up in another soul-sucking job.

This is really common. Few people have a clear idea of what career they want and how to make it happen.

If you'd like support figuring out your next step, I can help. I've created an affordable, step-by-step framework to help you make a wise career decision. One that takes all the factors into consideration, your strengths, talents, desires, your lifestyle, your background, your social programming, and more.



Discover What You Were Born To Do[®]

is a 12-week course where I work with you to **help you find a career path that not only fits your financial needs but also celebrates your talents, lifestyle and desire to make an impact.**

Learn More



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What It's Like to Work With Me



Kayti Heller
Singer-Songwriter

"I think that, most likely, I would've given up on my dream career had it not been for the work we did."



Candice Blacknall, MD
Founder at GABA Inc.

"Your personality is so warm and supportive. It was the perfect environment for me to ask questions and express personal doubts. It was also the perfect way to turn my Kolbe results into actionable changes."



Megan Wildhood
Published Author, Editor & Writing Coach

"You're not a conventional coach/counselor/advisor and that's awesome because traditional, weirdly, has not worked for this erstwhile rule follower."

Whatever you do, **do not give up hope.**

It's difficult to describe how profoundly different your life will become once you find work you love. I promise it's worth the struggle and I know you have what it takes.

[Learn More](#)



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