

From the Heart...

... Life Skills for Today

By Sharon L. Benedict MS, ACC



My Job & Technology—merger made in!

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Have you ever wondered what your job and career would be like without your cell or smart phone, blackberry, tablet, laptop, your desktop computer? And don't forget all the accessories we take for granted now, such as the handy flash drive, memory cards, you name it.

Life without these wonder gadgets does go on. Yet, it would be a very different life indeed. Think about how everything we do each day is directly connected to those expanding data files with every use. What if they all instantly disappear from the screen, your smart phone, tablet or notebook? How do you communicate with your co-workers, family, friends, do research online, learn about someone else's business, and, of course, win over your next client? No more LinkedIn, Face Book, My Space, Twitter! How about checking your bank balance, buying airline tickets, mapping directions to a prospective client's address? Where do you find your colleague's Outlook email address, directions, recipes? And then all the Pdf, Word, and multi-formatted images you have acquired over the years? All gone! The list of losses goes on and on.

Today, we really can't conduct business without these gadgets if we want to be connected to the 21st century humanity out there. We can't live without them, and we

can't live with them. What a paradox of the 21st century! Well, are you wondering why I am covering this as the month's first article on Career/Money Management? Here's the answer. Yours truly has just experienced what life without the computer feels like! Last year I bought a Dell desktop with 12 GB RAM memory. I thought I had the works that would allow me to interface with all kinds of software I use for my business as a lifeskills consultant and coach. Yet, within a month the power started to routinely crash.

The tech support calls began. Each tech person said, "Hardware is fine. It's a software problem." Then they said, "It's not a software problem; it's a hardware problem." I got juggled back and forth for months. All saying at some point at the end of them working on it, that It was fixed. Shortly thereafter something else went wrong, again and again.

With a countless number of Dell's India "Pankaj" tech support people, I ended up with a computer that was worse off than ever before. Power crashing came back, all my multiple software programs went into "not responding" mode frequently each day, and then Norton and Windows started fighting each other. The final straw was when Windows Security Center Service was magically turned off and could not be started again. For whatever reason, the final tech person from India then wiped all my data files and several Windows operating system files.

I will be shortly calling Dell again to speak to a supervisor with authority to get me a new computer or refund my money. Although I am sure there are probably several "Pankaj" tech people that are adept at what they do, I will undoubtedly never use one again. I will require someone on my home shores or right here at home in Texas to be my tech help from now on. It's amazing that Dell being located right here in Texas, we

can't get help locally. I've purchased Dell computers for the past 25 years and was always satisfied with their tech support, until recent years.

But life does go on. And there is some good news. Just two days prior to all coming to a halt, I backed up on My Book all my data files, including Outlook, financials, business and personal documents and images. And I was able to work on my laptop (which wasn't working also since tech support did something in the past month). Yet, my wonderful husband and gifted brain-child figured it out so I could plug in My Book, use my laptop to write this article, and send the draft to my editor via webmail online; and on time too!

I'm going to also buy another My Book to have a backup of my backup to put into my safe deposit box. I've been rotating out for a number of years with backups to my safe deposit box. Yet, my files number in the 100s of GB now. So, off to buy a terabit or two to get all the data files on three computers safely tucked away...just in case. I've become so tech-shy now. Several things will need to happen to raise my trust level again to an acceptable level.

I bet some of my readers have taken this journey as well. If so, I definitely now empathize with you. And if anyone out there knows of a local computer whiz/tech person you trust, send their name my way. And as my newspaper editor coached this coach today, "Chill out and go for a walk at the Cibolo Nature Center or someplace where nature will soothe your soul and body." And that is exactly what I am going to do first before I call Dell.

My editor also strongly encouraged me to "be firm; be firm; be firm" with customer service supervisor . . . Respectful but Firm. For now, I look forward to writing

the next article when my computer and techy world will be again fully up and running well. See how optimistic I am already!

Sharon L. Benedict, MS, ACC, is a certified life wellness coach-consultant, specializing in life skills, wellness, and creative arts development for individuals, businesses and organizations (www.harvestenterprises-sra.com). She welcomes your questions and comments and can be contacted at seekreachachieve@gvtc.com.

From the Heart. . .

. . . Life Skills for Today

By Sharon L. Benedict MS, ACC



Career Choice, your Core Values & your Money

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“Whatever career you may choose for yourself—doctor, lawyer, teacher—let me propose an avocation to be pursued along with it . . . Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for human rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country and a finer world to live in.” These words by Martin Luther King, Jr. offer us a clear mantle for living our core values. You will then be a better doctor, a better lawyer, a better teacher.

King also declared that “. . . It will enrich your spirit as nothing else possibly can. It will give you that rare sense of nobility that can only spring from love and selflessly helping your fellow man.” His words come from the heart borne of his parent’s passionate Christian faith, his own faith life journey, and passion for human justice.

When choosing a career, your core values and your finances are inseparable. Are your core values driving how you use your resources and assets toward choosing a career? What are your career goals? With your core values in the center, you will choose a career that fuels your life purpose, passion, and personality. Yet, the road getting there is not always a straight or level one—as we all know.

Stephen R. Covey, well-known author of the 10 million plus classic seller, *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, researched all literature from 1776 written about success in one's career and life. He noticed a startling pattern emerging from the mass of publications. Almost all literature of the first 150 years focused on what Covey defines as the *Character Ethic*—as the foundation for success.

The qualities most prevalent were **integrity, humility, fidelity, temperance, courage, justice, patience, industry, simplicity, modesty, and the Golden Rule.** This *Character Ethic* taught that there are basic principles of effective living, and that people can only experience true success and enduring happiness as they learn and integrate these principles into their basic character. How do you come close in the values you choose?

Since we all know the road in life will not always be straight or level, we need to gain a forward glimpse into some clues or guideposts that will help us navigate what's ahead. With your core values or key principles setting the foundation, consider these eight guideposts for integrating your career, finances, and core values:

1. **Lasting career rewards are not calculated in dollars.** Satisfaction comes from building a career or business without selling your soul.
2. **Loving your work by living your core values** at work and home.
3. **Being content** when the good times roll and when the bad times linger.
4. **Being a team player** that can lead *and* follow.
5. **Being genuinely benevolent** that requires no applause.

6. **Seeking as well as giving support and encouragement routinely**, not just in crisis.

7. **Being a life-long learner of truth and wisdom.**

8. **Integrating your faith as an essential part of your personal and career life.**

No matter the environment, it may not be easy, but is certainly possible.

These eight guideposts expand your capacity for living your core values. They bring you balance, consistency, contentment, collaboration, generosity, kindness, wisdom, and transcending meaning to your life. In the next article, Career skills for the 21st century will be covered. There are basically seventeen foundation skills needed no matter what career you may choose. See you then!

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From the Heart...

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By Sharon L. Benedict MS, ACC



Career Skills for the 21st Century

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“No man ever listened himself out of a job.” Calvin Coolidge, the 30th

President of the United States, was a quiet and practical man with rural New England farming roots. As President, he was admired for restoring public confidence in the White House after a number of scandals marred his predecessor's administration. He left office with considerable popularity, with the ability to understand the longings and express them on their behalf. Coolidge zeroed in on one of the most important skills not just for getting and holding a job, but a skill essential for life and all relationships.

Listening is one of 17 foundation basic skills needed no matter what career you may choose. Lawrence K. Jones, of Career Key, offers a detail summary sheet in his classic book *Job Skills for the 21st Century: A Guide for Students*.¹ It is also available at the Career Key™ website:

[Uhttp://www.careerkey.org/asp/career_development/foundation_skills.aspU](http://www.careerkey.org/asp/career_development/foundation_skills.asp).

¹ Lawrence K. Jones. *Job Skills for the 21st Century: A Guide for Students*. The Oryx Press, 1996. Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., Westport, CT.

Here is a glimpse into these 17 Foundation Skills required in 21st century high-performance workplaces. They are categorized into four areas: Basic Skills, Thinking Skills, People Skills, and Personal Qualities.

Basic Skills:	Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Speaking, Listening
Thinking Skills	Creative thinking, Problem-solving skills, Decision-making skills, Visualization,
People Skills	Social, Negotiation, Leadership, Teamwork, Cultural diversity
Personal Qualities	Self-esteem, Self-management, Responsibility

During a quiet evening at home or on the weekend, review each of these skills in two arenas—work and family life. You may ask why family life? The reason, as we all know, is that family life and personal relationships directly impact how we behave and perform at work. So, which skills do you feel you excel at? What others do you see needing improvement? Then refer to Jones’ website to read in more detail each skill. How do you rate yourself now in each skill within each life arena?

Write them down in order of the score you give yourself (high 10, low 1). Then next to the skill scored the lowest, write down what you commit to do to improve your skill score. Ask a family member or close friend to help you stay on track with your commitment, related action, and timeline you set. Be SMART with your timeline (be specific, make is measurable, attainable, realistic, time-phased).

In three to six months, reflect on where you are with those skills. Share your thoughts with the person you chose to take the journey with you. Include your respond to these questions:

1. What impact have I experienced at work and home, not only with job performance but in key relationships?
2. Where do I want to go from here to advance other skills? (follow the same steps as with the first lowest skill you scored)

I encourage you to be kind to yourself and be in a job where you find joy. Johnny Carson left us with these valuable words of advice. *“Never continue in a job you don't enjoy. If you're happy in what you're doing, you'll like yourself, you'll have inner peace. And if you have that, along with physical health, you will have had more success than you could possibly have imagined.”* Here are few other quotes to ponder until our next time together when the focus will be on those options and tools available to you for choosing a career.

“Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.” Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC)

“You do your best work if you do a job that makes you happy.” Bob Ross (1942 - 1995), Best of Joy of Painting, Winter Elegance

“Do not hire a man who does your work for money, but him who does it for love of it.” Henry David Thoreau (1817 - 1862)

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From the Heart...

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By Sharon L. Benedict MS, ACC



Your Job, Your Career—Love it or Leave it?

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As you consider the 17 foundation job skills for the 21st century offered in the last article by Lawrence K. Jones, of Career Key, what options do you see for choosing the perfect career for yourself? Remember those *Basic Skills*: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Speaking, Listening; *Thinking Skills*: Creative thinking, Problem-solving skills, Decision-making skills, Visualization; *People Skills*: Social, Negotiation, Leadership, Teamwork, Cultural diversity; and *Personal Qualities*: Self-esteem, Self-management, Responsibility?

What are your own career options? What guideposts are you using to determine where you fit in this wide world of possibilities? One of the key tools for knowing your career options is your personality style. Have you ever taken a DISC Personality Report that offers you a practical and easy way to confirming what you probably already know about yourself? If you haven't, I encourage you to do so (you can access a low-cost report on my website either online to complete or have a hard copy mailed to you). Within the completed report, you have the option to add a Career Match Rider that will give you a "Best Career Match" and "Close Career Match."

Once you complete your DISC personality report and automatically add your career rider, get a piece of paper out. Create three columns. Write in the “Current Career Interests” column those careers you are currently pursuing or are of interest to you. From your DISC Personality Style Report rider, write down in the related columns those you believe are your top five Best Career Match and Close Career Match. Within each column just to the left, rate each column list separately (score 1-lowest, 5-highest) in order of preference at this time in your life.

How does your career interest column match up? ***What do you like to do so much you would almost feel guilty being paid for it?*** What about your current job? How does it fit what you see before you? Give yourself at least a half-day to quietly review what you see and write down your thoughts. Share them with your spouse, close friend, or a life coach.

When you think about your current job which phrase fits—Love it or Want to Leave It? If you love what you are doing, write down your main reasons why you love your current job. What one significant contribution has your job benefited your life? Be as specific as possible.

If you are not happy with your current job situation, write down the main reasons why you are dissatisfied. Then, list how you would like to see improvement or a change. How do you see your current job as a stepping stone toward your life career? Or do you? I know I've given you a lot of questions to consider here. You will definitely feel like you are experiencing a coaching conversation! Each question provides valuable focus on one of the most important decisions you will make in your life. So, take each

question and ask your spouse or close friend each one. Then offer your responses as well. See what surfaces between you.

Be ready for the next article on creating a career plan, as you focus on your top career preference. Here are a few hints on the steps you will need to take: Determine your appropriate and required skills and talents; Create a realistic short-term and long-term career path with a competitive edge; Create a first-class resume for the targeted industry/profession.

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