



# DEVIANT THINKING PODCAST

## Episode 15 - Career Planning- Being Ready for Anything

### Transcript

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Welcome back to The Deviant Thinking Podcast. I'm your host, Jennifer Thompson. And today and as always, we will explore career advice that breaks the rules.

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So today is all about career planning. And career planning sounds like this daunting task, but I want to stop you right there. Because as always, we're going to be looking at some role breaking advice. And most people say if you're happy in your career, and things are going well, you don't really need to put a lot of time into your career planning because you've got a great job, no need to worry about that. Well, I'm here to tell you that everyone needs to think about career planning, especially those folks who've got a great job who love getting up and going to work every day. Because often I find those is the folks who put their career planning on the back burner because

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Cuz it's not urgent, because they love getting up every day. And they are the ones who are caught flat footed when something happens. So today we're going to explore how do you look at your career and make sure you're heading in the direction that you want to head in. How to Make sure you're not caught flat footed, if something happens that



is unexpected, and how to make sure that you are constantly keeping your career on track and moving forward in any way that you want. Because that is the point of all this, you get to be in control of your career. And if you are not doing career planning, you are giving that power away to someone else. Because then you become someone who just kind of, you know, goes with the flow and what happens next happens next and you're just not in as much

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control as I'd like you to be. Now, that being said, I do also believe that good things happen and you need to be prepared to take them on and you can't always control everything. So I want you to be on that constant lookout for great opportunities. And again, if you're thinking about your career and you're planning, you will actually notice when those good opportunities come up to really help you grow your career in the direction you want.

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So why is it important to take the time to do some career planning? Well, things change and often I find that my clients, like I said, who loved their job, who are having a great time, are the ones who get caught flat footed. They don't expect things to change and find themselves looking for a new


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role, I will tell you, almost everyone switches companies at one point, or definitely switches jobs, or needs to learn a new skill set to stay modern, and stay up to date with the career that they love. So we need to be prepared for these changes. And these changes can really be a wide range of things. It can be something that's personal, you know, it may be in my case, my husband and I moved across the country because his mom, mom died, and we needed to come to another location. We needed to be prepared for a new career that we could launch when we moved. So it can be a personal reason. Other reasons are things that are completely out of your control as well. Sometimes your favorite manager, the one that you've been working for four years that you just adore leaves and



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goes to a new job. And you're left with a brand new manager that maybe you don't jive with as much. Also other things can happen. I worked in the textile industry for a



long time and I loved my job. I loved designing and manufacturing. I loved going into manufacturing facilities. And then the market changed and suddenly those facilities in the United States were being shut down. If I hadn't been planning my next career move, I would have totally been caught flat footed. So it can be things like market shifts that leave you looking for a new job. So all of these things can happen to any of us, even the very best employee, even the most engaged employee. If you're not constantly looking out for yourself, you could get caught flat footed. So I want to talk about that today because I want to make sure that you're prepared to have a great career and

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Never get caught out there without the professional move that makes sense for you. It breaks my heart when I have a client call me. And they tell me I've been at a company for 20 years, I've loved my job. I knew the last couple things weren't going. So well. We've got a new manager, we've got someone who's come in and invested a lot of money in the company, but I never thought they'd let me go. And today, they let me go. What do I do now?

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As I said, that breaks my heart. They put so much trust in this organization, and were so dedicated for so long, which is great, but they didn't take the time to continue to grow themselves, grow their network, and grow their influence so that when this day came, that they were ready for the next move. And again, that's what I want for all of you is to be

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Ready. It's not saying you need to be out there and jumping to something new, but bringing up that awareness for yourself so you can really be nimble if the situation presents itself.

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So the big question becomes, how do you get prepared? How do you stay nimble and make sure that you're ready to move on if you need to, or move up when the time comes, because you've done your homework and gotten everything in place that you need to do?

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Well, let's start with where you're at now. You need to take an inventory of where you are, what you're doing, and your own happiness there. If you love your role, and you can't wait to go to work every day. Congratulations. That's where I want everyone to be. And if you're in that boat, I do want you to notice though, what is

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It that makes your job fabulous. What's that criteria that makes you excited to get up every day? Is it the activities that you're doing? Is it the people that you're working with? really notice those things. I think many of us spend way too much time going through life, just kind of surfing along things and not noticing those details. What I know is that when you notice those things, one, you can work to enhance it even more. And you can make sure to not let go of those things that you love or know that maybe those things are those key indicators that you're not going to be happy going forward. So if something shifts, when you know what you love to do, you've kind of got a clear list of that. If it shifts and you're no longer getting to do those things. It's an early indicator of Hey, I better start preparing myself for something new. We've restructured in this organization. My

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Favorite task was doing social media. And now I'm no longer in charge of doing social media. I'm still doing media but I have to do male media. And I really don't like that I like the more intricate details and the the quick response of social media. Of course, I'm making all of this up. But I wanted to hear that because if those shifts happen, you know, right away, I can do this job for a little bit. But I want to start putting my feelers out there, because probably long term, not going to be so happy about what I'm doing here. So really knowing what you love up front, what you what you're doing, that you do well, and how you can keep enhancing and growing that it's a super important part of this process. Because those early indicators are vital to your career health. You need to be able to kick catch things quickly, so that you can be in control of your career, when things start to go on.

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Little bit haywire, your little antenna need to be up there buzzing, saying Hmm, not sure that this is going to work out for me in the end, I'm going to start paying closer attention to what's going on here. Because I'm no longer getting to do the things I love every day. And I know that again, while I can tolerate it short term, I might not be happy long term and I want to make sure that I'm doing what's right for my family, and for myself so that



I can have a great career. The other important part about knowing what you love to do is you can choose to enhance and expand these skills, because that would set you up for promotion, or a new opportunity. It gives you an opportunity to say I really love this part of my job, and I want to learn everything I can about it so I can become the best at doing this.

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Part of my job. So that one naturally within the organization, I'd be chosen to work on projects like this because of course, I'm the best I've practiced the most I've gotten the learning. So of course, I would be the one chosen to do this, again, enhancing your value, but also enhancing your happiness because you get to do more of what you love. And the other part of it is, it allows you to grow skill set. So again, if something does happen, if something goes south, you're ready and you've got the expanded skills to move on to another opportunity.

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I find that that skill sharpening is something that too many people neglect. There are some great options to build skills out there. No one should have an excuse of not constantly building our skills, of the things that we love to do. The first thing you can do is

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Take advantage of your tuition reimbursement program.

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I see people go through their entire career and never get tuition reimbursement. What a missed opportunity. This is sold as a great benefit when you get hired. And it's something I really believe everyone should take advantage of. There's so many ways that you can use tuition reimbursement. And it's not just for a graduate program, or a new degree, you can often use tuition reimbursement to cover professional development. So say you've been wanting to take a new public speaking course. And you've asked your manager and they said, Oh, it's just not within my budget. Well, if you have tuition reimbursement at your organization, go look and see if that public speaking course can be covered under



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tuition reimbursement. I personally use tuition reimbursement to cover my coaching classes when I learned to become a professional coach. I've used it for professional speaking opportunities. I've used it for leadership development, and none of them were degree seeking. But I was able to maximize that benefit year over year and really get some great training, which eventually led to me having this career. Now, a couple notes about tuition reimbursement. One important thing is most companies require tuition reimbursement to be in an enhancement of your current role. So what that means is you can't take a course to tell someone, I want this course because I'll need it in the next role that I have. It has to apply to the role you have today. But a lot of times, that's just a matter of semantics. It's how you present the game.

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In my particular case of looking at coaching classes, I was a manager, it made me a better manager, I was going to use them to grow my management ability, and as long as I would write my request that way, it would get accepted. So there's some things you might need to learn to be able to massage and utilize the tuition reimbursement, but it's out there and a great benefit. And again, this allows you to make yourself marketable today and in the future. It makes you more valuable as a current employee, because you're growing and learning and staying current. And it makes you more valuable on the market if you find yourself needing to jump to a new job. So wishing reimbursement is a great way of really growing those skills. But there's a couple of other ways that are out there as well. One of my favorite authors, Todd Rose,


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gives a lot of examples. He's written a book called The End of Average. And he talks about our education system. And part of what he says in our education system is that in the future, we may no longer be degree seeking, we might actually look at our education in a different way. And it's more about credentials. And have we taken a course in a specific area versus an entire structure of courses like a degree. And there's all different places that one can pick up these credentials. If you want to be a project manager, you can take a project manager course, and a set of courses and get a credential or certificate fairly quickly. There's online opportunities, as well. Some of my favorites are Coursera, and edX. Both of them offer courses from major universities like Harvard, MIT, University of Pennsylvania. So I be



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league institutions that you can take courses from the same professors, as if you were there and paying for an Ivy League education. And they have courses in everything,



from data science to positive psychology to writing art history. Oh my goodness, the list is endless. I would believe there's not a profession out there that you couldn't take an online course from these top rated institutions, often for free, and learn and enhance your current career. So definitely check those out. I will be sure to link a few of my favorites in the show notes. So that's Coursera and edX, definitely check them out. I try to take courses each I say semester, in the spring and in the fall at least trying to get one in from one of those places.

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Just to keep growing my career and again, often they're free. If you want to pay for the certificate, it's often quite inexpensive, possibly a couple hundred dollars to be able to say that you've completed this course you can add it even to your LinkedIn profile. So again, great ways to grow your value and your worth, so that you're not caught flat footed if you move to new organization. So that learning what you love to do and really learning to enhance it. Very important part to growing that career and making sure that you're not caught flat footed if something happens. So that's the educational side of things. And it's important, but equally important, is getting out there and networking. That is another area that I find my clients regret, especially if they've loved their current company in their current role.


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They find themselves so wrapped up in their day to day and what they're doing that they forget that there's a world out there and they forget that they need to be out networking with others. So it is never too early in your career, or you are never secure enough in your current role to not network. Another important part about networking is people have great networks also have greater value. Again, even if you're within your current company, and you're just looking to elevate your career and move to another role, or to keep your job where you are people who know people have value. Because if you come across a problem that you can't solve, but you know, Mike from another company, and you can call Mike and get some advice, and learn something new and again, share that experience, you're going to bring in more value. So don't forget

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Get to network. And that's easier said than done. But I do want to say most people think networking is going to, I don't know, bad Chamber of Commerce meetings and no offense to the Chamber of Commerce by all means. But most professionals, it's not a good use of your time to show up at one of those events. It is really shooting in the dark,






hoping maybe you find somebody there that would make sense to know and network. Unfortunately, again, that's what people think networking is, what networking really is, is helping others and connecting ideas and people so that everyone can excel. So networking, the best networking, I should say, begins long before you need to take from the network. It begins with helping others. And it can be really a simple process with LinkedIn nowadays. And I know I talked about LinkedIn on this podcast wait

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too much, but is just such an easy social network to connect people and get great networking in. So I really encourage people using it. So kind of back to what I was saying. So on LinkedIn, you can easily share ideas, you can easily connect people. I try to make it a practice to spend just 15 minutes a day going on LinkedIn, and networking people and ideas together. If I see something that's shared, that I know someone else would really benefit from, I might share it with them and tag them in that in the comments. So they know to to really look at it. I always like jobs that people post and repost them to my network, because that's helping people within my network to find new opportunities. I definitely share information as much as I can, so that again, other people can benefit from it. Because I know if I'm out there doing that, and suddenly I need something, it becomes a lot


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easier to say, Hey, folks, I need some help here, because they already feel like I've contributed. And this is a place where you know, karma really helps. If you put good energy out there, it's going to come back to you. So do reach out to help others, keep up your networking, no matter where you are in your career, and kind of where you are in your satisfaction of your job. Another great networking opportunity beyond something like LinkedIn is getting out there to conferences and other learning opportunities within your industry. Great opportunity to meet other like minded folks, other people who do jobs like you do, who may move up the ladder as well and might find a use for you and another company also helps you know, kind of where you are in the standings of things. One of the things that happens if we stay at a company a long time, we don't even really understand or worth or know if we're being paid fairly. All of those things



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So if you're out there networking with like minded individuals at conferences and educational opportunities, we can kind of learn that you can know your market value, make sure that you're being compensated correctly, know what's out there know what, what's happening in other companies so that you can learn and be relevant again going





forward.

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That sets you up as well to be an expert. And I really tell people it's worth again, taking the opportunity to share that information. If you go to a conference, you learn something new, you can combine it with something else taken, put a few minutes and put an article out on LinkedIn talking about or ask questions and get other people in your industry to comment and interact. And the more you do that, the more you're going to be seen as that expert in the role that you have. So as I talk about this, I do want to stress the point that many people

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People as they're working through all of this, it can get overwhelming to know what to do to sort through the potential ideas that you could have for your career to know which ones fits you the best. And that brings us to the third option of when you want to grow your career and make sure that you're ready. Don't try to do this by yourself. It gets pretty lonely and it's really hard to do self examination. And know when you're happy. Know what you're happy about. Often hiring a great coach, finding a great partner, it makes a big difference in your career, and really, again, sets you up for that long term growth. It makes sure that you're paying attention to yourself so that if the opportunity comes along, you're ready for it. Or if you suddenly find yourself needing to shift

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What you're doing, because something's happened at your organization that you weren't aware of, you are ready, you feel prepared to feel confident, and you can move on to the next opportunity.

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So all of this helps keep you ready for the next move. And it's vitally important to be working on this long before it's necessary. So do remember, get out there know what you love to do, and figure out ways to enhance that to do more of it to learn more about it. And get out there and network network network network. I cannot say that enough times. As I say it, I realize I'm almost making a tongue twister out of it, but I promise you get out there and network folks. If you're sitting in your cubicle or your office by yourself, you are limiting your opportunities. Get out there, connect with other people help



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Other people so that you can leverage them and they can leverage you to both be successful. Definitely networking, networking, networking. All right, you got that point down. And then last but not least, if this is daunting, if this is too much, if you don't feel like you've got the skill set that you need to sort through this in your own head, and keep yourself on track and give yourself a regular schedule to pay attention to what you need, as an employee, as a human being as someone who is on this journey of life, to make sure that you are getting out of it what you want, hire a coach, find a good partner, get into a mastermind group of the people who are helping to grow their careers, so that you are taking the time to plan for yourself and grow your career. Well folks, that

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wraps up today's episode of The Deviant Thinking Podcast. I hope you enjoyed today's episode, we offer definitely some career advice that I hope makes you think and i hope motivates you to get out there and own your career. If you love this podcast, I would love it if you would go over to iTunes and give us a quick review those reviews mean the world to us and really help other folks find our podcast so they can learn great things to grow their career. Thanks so much and I hope you all have a fabulous day. Until next time, be deviant