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Brunsden



City

Woman

# Don't career off in the wrong direction



GUIDING LIGHT – Helen Slingsby can offer ways to reach self-actualisation

Pictures: STEVE TEMPLEMAN (Ref 61378)

With spring now in the air, it is very much a time of new beginnings. For those dissatisfied with their career paths, **KIM FRANCIS** says now is a good time to think about change

**T**HE Christmas holidays are long over and probably did little but crystallise concerns and problems over our working lives.

If January was too miserable a time to put the wheels of change in motion, the brighter weather is likely to bring a brighter mood and with that, the motivation to take steps to facilitate change.

If you are one of these people and don't know where to start, it might be a good idea to visit a career counsellor who can point you in the right direction and give you the confidence boost you need to make your new beginning.

*City Woman* spoke to Helen Slingsby of Career Breakthrough about what a career counsellor can do for anybody who has reached a career crossroads.

This time of year represents one of the busiest times for Helen.

She says, "Business increases 25 per cent at this time as people from a raft of career backgrounds – car mechanics, university lecturers, recruitment sales managers and children's nannies among others – weigh up why they don't feel stimulated or happy in their jobs."

"In my experience there are two types of people in this situation; those who are dissatisfied and at a complete loss as to what to do about it because they have little idea about the options open to them and those who are unhappy and at a loss because of other problems that are not necessarily connected to work that are making them sad and unable to function."

Helen is equipped to recognise which category a person may fall into and is able to offer guidance to varying degrees for both types.

She explains, "Those that fall into the first category need help re-establishing who they are, what they value, what they are interested in and what transferable skills they have to get a clearer picture of who they are and what they have to offer."

"In the second instance, a person could be affected by a bereavement or a dysfunctional relationship or may have some deep-seated assumptions about themselves that have been in place since childhood that seem difficult to overcome; things such as being the baby of the family and still expecting everything to be done for them or having parents that labelled them as the 'serious one' who therefore cannot give up everything to



FRUSTRATION – The face of...

become an artist."

Helen is honest about the extent to which her help can have an effect.

The first type of client probably benefits most from her guidance although a successful outcome largely depends on how hard the client is prepared to work for themselves.

This involves actively engaging in research and being open and honest with themselves.

With the second type of client, Helen will sensitively point out that there may be other issues that are bringing them down.

Helen explains, "These problems might then be dealt with by the client themselves or if they are very deep-rooted and significant, may need to be explored with the help of a professional counsellor which I can refer them on to."

For many of us, changing career sounds like a frighteningly big step

and part of Helen's job is to make change seem more realistic for the client, turning it into an achievable goal. Helen says that the key is baby steps.

She says, "I take clients through four stages, asking 'Who am I? What do I want? Where do I want to be and what's stopping me from getting there? With this increased level of self-awareness we are able to work together to look at the options, what makes that person tick and so on and then do the fourth stage and plan for the future."

"I always stress the need to take things slowly, dipping toes in ponds to see if the potentially new career really is the right one."

"If you want to switch to teaching, for example, then ring the local college and do some voluntary work to see if it's really for you."

In this way, the 'grass is always greener' scenario is avoided. By turning the process into easily-digestible bite-sized chunks, it stops the client from becoming overwhelmed and disheartened.

Helen's take on it is that even if you 'fail', it is better to have tried than to regret it later.

A philosophy much quoted perhaps but one that would certainly ring true for most of us. Helen urges us to remember: "Career time ticks away faster than you might think but it's never too late to reset the clock."

A session with Career Breakthrough typically costs £100 but there is a discount for block booking and special circumstances.

Helen assesses what her client is looking for and then proceeds with between one and five one-hour sessions, although she recommends



DON'T CAREER FROM JOB TO JOB – Helen uses your own opinions, desires and talents to help chart a course to success via 'baby steps'

four sessions for most people.

*City Woman* asked Helen if most of her clients experienced a satisfactory result from their sessions and she answered openly, "I can't promise the earth, nor should I. But I get good results."

"The best results come from the clients who work the hardest during the process. It also depends on how you define 'results'. It can be a wholesale change such as giving up corporate life to be a

full-time artist.

"However, it needn't be an earth-shattering, life-changing experience. Some people simply visit me to check they are on the right track and others to discuss work-life balance."

For more information on Career Breakthrough, visit [www.careerbreakthrough.co.uk](http://www.careerbreakthrough.co.uk) or contact Helen Slingsby on (0118) 984 4962 or by email: [helen@careerbreakthrough.co.uk](mailto:helen@careerbreakthrough.co.uk).