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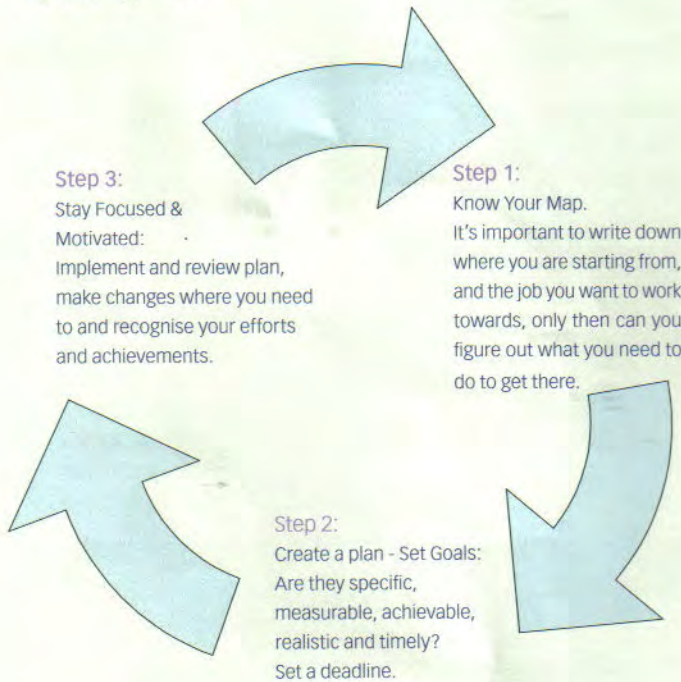
By Therese Ryan

Change for the Best - A Step by Step Approach

This edition of National Fitness News (NFN) is about reflecting on your skills and updating them so you are giving yourselves the best opportunity in the career environment. The main focus of this article will be on the options available for you to make personal and professional changes in as positive a manner as possible.

In the current economic climate words like responsibility, innovation, change, adaptation, restructuring, are circulating in the media like a constant whirlwind. These are the key words that should give you the confidence to make positive changes.

Making positive changing means change for the best. Try this Step by Step Approach:



Step 1: Know Your Map

- Take stock of where you are. If you don't know where you are, you're lost before you ever start out. Review your skills, your experience, what you enjoyed or didn't, what motivated you and what sapped your energy. List the positives and the negatives – and be honest with yourself.
- Ask yourself where you want to be in five years. Again, be realistic and be honest.

Step 2: Create a Plan - Set Goals

- Make a realistic plan for what you want to achieve, step by step. Think SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed.
- List out the financial factors you need to consider. What bills do you have to pay? What budget constraints do you have? Can you take a salary cut? What can you cut back on, and what's vital? Will you need another source of income at the start? Can you get any grants?
- Time management – how much time can you give this, and how much is taken up by other factors? Can you do a full-time course/programme, or is it part-time only?
- Look at what courses/programme are available that best fit your plan and work towards achieving your goals.
- Get information on all the course/programme options. If knowledge is power, information gives you control over what choices you can make. You don't want to find out too late that there was a better option available.
- Choose the course/programme. Do what you want to do, not what other people want you to do. If you're not making this sort of change for your own reasons, you won't follow it through.

Step 3: Stay Focused and Motivated:

- It's natural to feel nervous when making changes, this is neither good nor bad, it's how we react when we are challenging ourselves.
- Pace yourself. It's important to have a work-life balance. A good tool is to invest in a diary that will help you develop a study plan and a life routine so you can balance work and life demands.
- Remind yourself, that you're doing this for a reason. There will be good days and bad, but make sure you're doing something that makes you happy, not miserable.
- **Act within the Obama 'Yes we can' attitude.**
- If you feel that you need some guidance or motivation perhaps invest in a Life Coaching session to help you to achieve the results you want.

Therese Ryan, (Stress Management Consultant & Coach). MA., Bsc., RGN., Dip Stress Mgt., NCEF., Life Coach., NLP Practitioner, Mediator. Stress Management Expert to RTE Health Show - How Long Will you live? Director of Renewal Consultants.

Appointments: Limerick, Cork

Tel: 061-446046 • 021-4274981 • **Mob:** 086-3109976

Website: www.renewalconsultants.com

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