

Career ♥
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Your Guide to Landing and Loving Your Dream Job

Career Cupid



by

CHRISTINE FADER

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For Michael, my Happily Ever After at home

Contents

Introduction	9
I. Career Dating – <i>Why finding your dream job is like dating</i>	
1. Finding your dream job	13
2. Why great women choose bad work	17
3. First love with a side dish of platitudes	23
4. Wishing upon a star	27
5. Channelling your Hootchie Mama groove	31
6. Does this skirt make me look fat?	37
II. Diving into the Job Dating Pool – <i>On the way to your dream job</i>	
7. One-night stands, transition jobs and other “dating” decisions	49
8. Why can’t I meet any “nice” jobs?!	57
9. Ready, set . . . his parents!	61
10. Proposals, prenuptials and job offers	69
III. Landing your Dream Job – <i>And living happily ever after at work</i>	
11. When good women go baggy	77
12. Your cheatin’ heart	83
13. Sex isn’t everything but . . .	89
14. The seven-year itch	93
15. Heeding the call of Career Cupid	97
IV. Lipstick, Business Letters and Other Tools of the Trade – <i>Useful information for your journey to Happily Ever After</i>	
16. I need a vacation when . . .	105
17. Test your dress code savvy – Answers	107
18. Speed dating cheat sheet	111
Acknowledgments	113
About the Author	115

Introduction

How many times has the sentence, “Wow, I just didn’t get any sleep last night because that job search book I’m reading was so engrossing!” crossed your lips? Uh huh. I thought so.

Let’s face it, most of us are going to need a job at some point to survive and many of us are dreaming about finding and growing old with a job we’ll really love. Like romantic relationships, we often wish our career relationships would combine stability with excitement, romance with dependability and we would be thrilled if we could find a job that would keep the career romance alive over the long term. In other words, we want Happily Ever After at work. But how do we find it? Many people rely on parents or friends to help them figure out this stuff. Often, this guidance is well meaning but outdated or not helpful because the advice-giver may be a bit of a stranger to happily ever after at work too. Many people have, in fact, given up on the pursuit of this contented state.

Just because divorce seems to be running rampant through the Western world doesn’t mean you should give up on the idea of happily ever after – in relationships or your career. But let’s be honest here. There’s a bigger barrier. How exciting is it to learn about career and job search? In my work as a university career counsellor and college instructor over the past ten years, I have noticed that there are lots of career books on the market but they are not very fun to read.

So...let me “edu-tain” you. And hopefully, you’ll learn some things along the way without feeling as if you’re getting your legs waxed very slowly and badly. Whether you’re reading this book because you’re desperate to leave an unhappy place in your career or you’re just wondering if there’s something better out there for you, you’ll gain some ideas that will help you move forward. There’s nothing worse than feeling ho-hum about your career. Well, okay, there are some worse things like famine, war, disease, death and over-tweezed eyebrows. With all these atrocities going on, it’s even more important to grab the life victories we can, like finding career happiness. And frankly, I think women are inherently deserving of the possibility of happily ever after at work just on the basis of having to deal with PMS for a big chunk of their lives.

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As you may have guessed by now, this book is aimed at women, but if you're not a woman and you're reading this, there's useful stuff in here for you too. For example, you might know some women who would find this info helpful – and here's the great part – you could score serious points by giving them a book like this. Or, you might be getting in touch with your feminine side. I'm all for that and I'm happy to have you tag along. If the girlie cover offends you, just buy a handy dandy book cover in something more your style. May I suggest corduroy?

This book also makes a great gift for high school, college and university women and, in a pinch, can double as a handy seat, rain shelter or weapon against suspected household intruders, even though it's really just the furnace making that scary noise.

Christine Fader

Career Dating

Why finding your Dream Job is like Dating



Finding your Dream Job

My first job was working as a temporary secretary for two weeks in the maintenance department of a large local factory. I was 17 years old and happened to be employed during the factory's annual shut down, which meant that I and the 50 or so men in the maintenance department were pretty much the only people wandering the halls. While at first I kept a fairly steady eye on all available exits, I soon became one of the gang and spent the rest of my time there learning – mostly about what I liked in a job and what I didn't like.

Lesson 1 When you're really shy and have a phobia about using the telephone, it's probably best not to accept a job that requires you to staff a phone with eight incoming lines and 32 pagers. Luckily, I managed not to faint when they showed me the phone system. (Note to hopeful career changers in the audience: fainting doesn't make the best first impression.)

Lesson 2 People fall over themselves when they see (or hear) how quickly I type. Seriously – my typing speed is like some kind of freaky gift. (Note to self: find more work where I can get undying adulation!)

Lesson 3 Never, ever, ever eat the food from the vending machine down a dark hallway beside the employee washrooms. Actually, in retrospect, the proximity to the washrooms was a wise plan. The "Salisbury steak", on the other hand, probably wasn't.

Armed with these few experiential lessons and some youthful enthusiasm, I puffed up my hair (it was the 1980s), put a shiny new penny in each of my pseudo-silver snakeskin penny loafers, and set about finding my next position. I had started career dating.



Like finding a great relationship, career dating can start with playing the field. See what options are out there. See what drives you crazy and what makes your heart beat faster with excitement. If you went straight from school to long-term work, perhaps you didn't get to sow your career wild oats. You might be thinking, "What if I settled? What if

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there's something better out there for me and I missed it?" Maybe you were sensible but you gave up trying to shoot for career bliss. You looked at your options (and your impending car payment) and thought, "I'd be stupid to turn down this job. So what if it's not 'the one'. It's a good job and I'd be an idiot (and even more debt-ridden) if I let it pass me by."

What you did was choose the rock-solid guy . . . but not the one who made you weak at the knees. And I'm not criticizing your decision – because I've done it myself. Your current job might be one of the relationships you had to go through before finding "the one". What if you could have both stability AND passion at work?

I believe that in the same way that many women yearn for a great romantic relationship (I know it's old-fashioned to state that out loud but I think it still holds true, no matter how "modern" the woman), they are also eager to find a great career romance. They crave authenticity at work, a place to feel connected and valued and kind of jelly-like from the sheer joy that comes from working at something you love. Many women seem to want help to make the right match in their work lives: a career love affair that will last a lifetime or at least a couple of decades! They are seeking work that is fulfilling and makes them feel as if they were put on this earth for a great reason. Sure, we get all that from other parts of our lives too – but wouldn't it be great if the time we spent at work (2000-plus hours every year for most of us!) was spent doing something that kept us awake some nights because we were so excited about it? What a change that would be from losing sleep worrying about the next personality altercation, or how to get 75 hours of work done in a 40-hour week, or gnashing our teeth about how mismanaged, abandoned and unappreciated we feel. And hey, more smiling means fewer of the I-hate-my-life wrinkles and more of the I've-got-a-great-secret-joy-that-comes-from-inside-of-me-and-makes-me-beautiful wrinkles. Let's face it, if we have to have wrinkles (and how not to have them is a whole other book), then I know you're probably agreeing with me about which type you'd rather have!



I use the analogy of careers and dating because, just like dating, career management is a process. It's a process that most human beings have to go through (except perhaps Paris Hilton and she has a whole bunch of other issues to contend with) and like relationships, sometimes it's fun, sometimes it's awful, but a lot of the time the whole thing is kind of a mystery that we just do our best to navigate. We haven't really been taught HOW to find great work – we just know that we NEED to find a job. So we blunder around and do the best we can. Some people strike

career gold but many people spend their prime earning years living for weekends and holidays. Despite the lack of a perfect fit at work, it's not necessarily all doom and gloom. Hopefully our hearts don't get trampled on too many times, hopefully we don't drain our bank accounts too often, but we still seem to search fruitlessly for that elusive prize: dream job = happiness.

Many people are spending their days on earth trying to find happiness. I certainly am! It takes different forms for different people, of course (I myself have been known to dance a goofy, happy dance just because I found a great pair of daisy-patterned rubber boots!) but given that many of us spend a lot of time working, we want to find at least some of our happiness in the career part of our lives. Providing the bills are getting paid, for many people, the goal is to find something they love to do. We've all heard about lottery winners who don't quit their jobs even though they no longer need a pay check. That's usually the sign of a person who has found her career passion. It doesn't take money to keep her coming in day after day. She does it for the sheer joy of being able to be involved in something that has meaning and gives her something back. How cool would that be? Okay, kinda supremely weird, but cool!

But how do we find a passion like that? That's what this book is about. The first step in the process, like finding a long-lasting relationship, is partaking in a little dating. Dating helps you find out what's "out there". Dating allows you to try without the buy. It also involves knowing something about yourself and what you're going after. We'll talk more about that later.

You may remember dating as something that was really fun or you may have a bit of nervousness about it. Both can be expected while career dating as well. Maybe you're not 17 years old like I was when I started career dating. Maybe you've been out of the career-dating game for a while. Perhaps you've been in a long-term relationship with a job that once felt exciting but lately has grown rather predictable and even annoying. Maybe you're even thinking about cheating! Dating your way to the career romance you've dreamed of might be a great strategy for you. But before you can start dating, we need to rehash some possibly painful old history in the next chapter: *Why Great Women Choose Bad Work*.

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