

*Take service-centered professionals from burning out to fired up!*

### **A Career and Life Changing Transition**

Starting out as an adult counselor and therapist, and then shifting my focus to working with families and young children, my career was always in the nonprofit arena. I found my purpose in working to prevent and treat child abuse and to support healthy early development. I spent almost 30 years immersed in that career, doing everything from direct service to training, consulting and senior program management. I worked for small and large local agencies and eventually for a national organization. I was passionately invested in building a better world. But, seven or eight years something started to shift within me. I had a great job in a terrific organization. Yet I found I was thinking, seriously, of changing my career and working for myself. This urge for this change was coming from within me.

At first, I didn't know what to do with the feelings of dissatisfaction, of needing a change. I couldn't see where it would lead, or sort out what I truly wanted. I spent quite a long time struggling with this. I considered options and experienced a lot of fear and hesitation. I had a few sessions with a life coach and concluded from those conversations that I wasn't yet ready to make this change. That experience sparked an idea though. Perhaps I could become a life coach. [Fall]

I started investigating this idea. Eventually I found a training program that seemed tailor made for my background and interests. [Late Winter –out of sequence!]

I still wasn't ready to resign. I was afraid, feeling stuck and completely unclear about what I ultimately wanted to do, but I knew I wanted to take this training. I went with my intuition that this would be a good next step. [Early Winter/Late Winter]

While taking this training, I started looking more seriously into what it would take for me to work as a coach and an early childhood consultant. I started creating a more concrete plan – what I would call my business, how I would find clients, what I might want to focus on in my work. I began setting aside some money to help fund this transition. And....I was still stuck, feeling caught between my desire to make this change, and feeling frightened and saying "I don't know" a lot. [caught between Winter Solstice and Late Winter]

My husband suggested that I get in contact with a career coach he had met in the past and whose work he had continued to follow. He as probably about as tired of my indecisiveness as I was! I went ahead and contacted her. She had the magic, and I was ready for it.

Over a period of a few months, she gave me some exercises to do and provided me feedback that helped me to identify what was keeping me stuck. She helped me to identify my strengths and the resources available to me. [Winter Solstice, shifting to Late Winter]

I realized I had what I needed to succeed, and with this recognition, shifted from uncertain and scared to feeling calm, clear and ready to proceed. I developed a

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couple of plans. One plan identified how and when to let my employer know that I would be resigning. The other was a detailed plan for transitioning to self-employment. [Late Winter]

I put my plan into action. That began with informing my supervisor of my decision, and developing a transition plan together with her. There were many steps to the plan, but that was the first and the biggest. I was surprisingly calm as I told her, and felt no pangs or second thoughts when she and later, others, expressed their wish that I would change my mind. That was a clear sign to me that I had made the right choice. [Spring]

When the first day came that I was set up in my home office, the new founder and principal of Keys to Change, LLC, I felt... terrific! I was energized, excited and ready to discover what I would find on the path ahead of me. There were still challenges – developing a new professional identity, finding new colleagues and alliances, and establishing an ongoing flow of work, to name a few. Still, I felt great about having worked through this big decision, about having found allies and supporters along the way, and pleased at having engaged some coaching and consulting clients as I was getting ready to launch my fledgling solopreneurship. It was time to savor and celebrate the new possibilities I'd created. [Summer]

That certainly was not the end of the story. There have been other changes since (one was getting trained as a Master Coach in the model I'm sharing with you today) and there will be more to come, but what I learned through that change process is something that has helped me so much in my working with others who are experiencing major changes in their lives and careers.

## References

Slides: Handling Change Starts with Leaders Themselves, 2017 prepared by Nancy L. Seibel for Early Childhood Investigations

Book: The Seasons of Change, Carol L. McLelland, Ph.D., 1998, Conari Press

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## Free Resource

Would you like to learn more about a change you're experiencing? Take the Seasons of Change Questionnaire by [clicking here](http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/704682/Seasons-of-Change-Questionnaire), or by copying and pasting this link in your browser: <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/704682/Seasons-of-Change-Questionnaire>

This questionnaire won't rate you or put you in a category. Rather, your responses provide clues to help us have a useful conversation about the change going on in your life.

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Directions:

1. Enter my name as your coach: Nancy L. Seibel
2. Enter this email address for me: [nancy@keystochange.net](mailto:nancy@keystochange.net)
3. Hold one change in mind as you answer the questions.
4. Don't linger over the questions – just respond as feels most right in the moment.

When I get your results, I'll email you to see if you'd like to set up time for a free, no-obligation conversation about your responses. These conversations are always very worthwhile. I look forward to hearing from you!