

Tips

FROM AN EXPERT

Insights from Carol Vecchio, author of *The Time Between Dreams: How to Navigate Uncertainty in Your Life and Work*.



Here are some guidelines I have used over the past 34 years working with people navigating career and/or life uncertainties. My clients have found them most useful and I hope these simple reminders may support you in continuing to inspire hope in your clients/students.

1. Reframe the Paradigm:

Instead of adhering to last century's "climb the ladder" mindset, convey the perspective that there is much more to the picture. Normalize the fact that there must also be times when we experience decline, loss, and confusion. It is during these periods that we are learning, growing, and preparing ourselves on the inside to be ready for the next phase of our external lives.

2. Accept the Reality:

Help your clients embrace what is happening and how they are feeling. Stay with the discomfort to gain more insights and clues about what they need to let go of in order to take the next small step. Stretching even further, how can we assist them to be grateful for the current situation?

3. Honor the Energy:

Energy is always available for the next appropriate step. Ask them to listen to what their heart needs right now and support them to do just that. No "shoulds" allowed! Mindfulness techniques come in handy here.

4. Avoid Avoidance:

If anxious, fearful, overwhelming, or confusing feelings arise, this is a major clue that folks are attempting to skip something. They are either jumping forward to avoid a difficult situation or sliding back into past, familiar habits. When this occurs – and it always does – then support them in attending to their existing energy. (Implement tip #3.)

5. Excavate Past Experiences:

Being human, we have all faced many transitions. Ask what has assisted them in those past times to mine for nuggets of activities, insights and personal wisdom about what might be useful in their current shifts.

6. Champion Support:

When uncertainty strikes, people feel more alone than ever. Getting help from career counselors and accepting encouragement from others who are also experiencing uncertainty normalizes the process. Underscore the strength it takes to ask for assistance in times of transition.

Carol Vecchio can be reached online at centerpointseattle.org, carolvecchio.com, or via email at carol.vecchio@cpinst.org.