

# SUMMARY

## BEST JOB EVER

DR. C.K BRAY



# **Summary of “Best Job Ever” by Dr. C.K Bray**

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Best Job Ever (2016) is your guidebook for making the healthy career change you’ve always wished for.

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# Introduction

When people ask you what you do for a living, do you joyfully say, “I have the best job ever?” Probably not, right? In fact, that answer wouldn’t be true for most of us. Because the sad fact is that most of us don’t really like what we do. Whether it’s because we find our actual jobs boring, stressful, or generally dissatisfying, or because our co-workers make our lives a nightmare, many of us live for the moment when we’re set free from the office. And when you think about it, that’s pretty sad! What happened to those wide-eyed, optimistic kids we used to be, the ones who had exuberant answers to the question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Our younger selves would undoubtedly be horrified to discover the general dissatisfaction which often characterizes our adult lives.

But how did it happen? How did we come to this in the first place? One primary reason is that our society and education system have joined forces to funnel us into the workforce as though getting a job is the single most important goal in life. As a result, we rush straight into anything that will help us earn a living, often when it’s a very bad decision or when it doesn’t even fit our strengths. Sometimes we even jump into a position that doesn’t really utilize our qualifications just so we have work. And those dreams of what we want to be when we grow up-- along with any expectation of career satisfaction-- goes right out the window. And while it’s true that getting a job is very important, Bray argues that our focus ought to be on finding the right job rather than any job.

So, in this summary, we’re going to learn how you can identify your strengths, overcome what holds you back, and take a look at some practical steps you can use for making a career change. And we’ll also learn:

- Why winning the lottery is not a substitute for a job
- What switching your career has in common with landing on the moon and scoring a goal, and:
- How to “sample” job opportunities like you’re at a buffet

# Why Are You Dissatisfied With Your Job?

There are a million reasons people can be disappointed with their career trajectories. And many of them are absolutely valid! But many others are because you're holding out for a CEO position when you have zero experience or management expertise. The same is true of other reasons like being disappointed because your entry-level job doesn't provide you with a seven-figure salary or because your company doesn't fly you on a private jet for paid island retreats. Now, all of those are pretty unrealistic examples and they probably don't fit most of you reading this. But they provide a perfect illustration for our first point: many people are dissatisfied because they have unrealistic expectations.

Whether that's because they wish they had a more pampering career or because they'd rather do literally anything other than their actual job, a 2013 Gallup poll discovered that over 87% of people are dissatisfied with their jobs. That's even true for people who like the field in which they work, but wish they were with a different company or that their duties were a little different. However, that highlights an interesting distinction which characterizes employees' pervasive dissatisfaction: of that 87%, most people aren't unhappy about the work they actually do. For example, if one decided to become an accountant, it might not be the day-to-day number crunching that he dislikes. Instead, his problems might be elements specific to his workplace: things like his boss, his co-workers, or his salary.

And if that's something you can relate to, how can we fix it? How can you find work that brings you more genuine satisfaction? Well, in some cases, the answer might be to seek work in a different department within the company you already work for. Switching positions or working with a team might make you a little happier. However, if you feel the problem is a toxic company culture, you might be better off leaving that job and trying to find the same position at a different company. Similarly, if your dissatisfaction stems from something to do with your circumstances-- like traveling a lot

when you'd rather be spending more time with your kids-- changing your position or your company could significantly improve your life.

# Overcoming Your Fears

But even if there are a number of factors you'd like to change about your job, switching careers can still be scary. And that's why one of the most important next steps is overcoming your fears. Because you can't make any positive changes in your life if you're overwhelmed by doubts convincing you that you'll definitely fail or you'll never find another job. So, let's take a look at how to overcome those fears. A great starting place is to begin by listing the unknowns. Because our anxieties are most often characterized by fear of what we don't know, it can be helpful to list the potential fears which are causing us distress. For example, you might be afraid that you won't be able to find another job. You might be worried about settling into a new company or learning a new skill set.

All of these are valid worries and it's okay to be afraid. So, start by writing them down and adding a little detail about what makes them scary. You could say something like, "I'm afraid I won't find a new job quickly because that would mean a few months without income." And after you've identified the fear, add an action sentence that helps remind you how you can overcome it and begin with the word "despite." For example, you could say, "I'm afraid I won't find a new job quickly because that would mean a few months without income. Despite this financial risk, however, I can still switch jobs because I have savings to rely on." The process of writing out your worries and some action steps for handling them will not only help you to draft a practical plan for your future, it will help you separate legitimate fears from illegitimate ones.

Once you've removed fear from your decision-making process, it's time to figure out what your ideal change looks like. This step is crucial because a lot of people make mistakes at this stage, like deciding they need a drastic change or an entirely new career when they might only need a few tweaks. To avoid making these mistakes, start by asking yourself what changes would truly lead to increased job satisfaction. Ask yourself questions like, "How much do you like the work you do every day?" and "How much do



you like your company culture and the people you work with?” Answering questions like these will help you to decide whether you should switch departments, companies, or choose a different career entirely.

## Lay Out Your Five Year Plan

Have you ever had a New Year's resolution you didn't keep? We're all constantly striving to improve something about ourselves-- whether it's giving up smoking or losing weight-- and yet we struggle to maintain consistent self-improvement. But that doesn't mean we're incapable of change; instead, it simply means that developing consistent healthy habits requires a combination of long and short-term thinking. So, now that you've determined the type of career improvement you want to make, your next step is to plan for both the near and distant future.

You can start by drawing three columns on a piece of paper and titling them, "One Year," "Three Years," and "Five Years" respectively. You can fill each column with your ideal employment status at that time and this will help you brainstorm your five-year plan. You can flesh out each column by adding details like your preferred salary or job title and fill in specifics about the type of skills or education required for that position. Once you have your five year plan on paper, you can then draft a timeline that will show you how to get from where you are to where you want to be.

# Use Your Network

If you had to think of the best and most effective resource you have at your disposal, what would you say it is? Here's a hint: it's not your current job or your salary or even your skill set. It's the people around you. The contacts in your network are an absolutely vital resource for building your connections and potential job opportunities and you're shooting yourself in the foot if you don't use them! However, many people strongly dislike networking and, because they believe it to be disingenuous or shallow, they often avoid it. But nothing could be further from the truth! In fact, networking is all about building relationships. And if you approach it with an attitude of genuine kindness and good will, the connections you make don't have to be shallow at all.

However, with that said, there are some best practices to keep in mind that will make your networking efforts more successful. For example, if you make a contact at a social or business event, make sure you get in touch with that person at least three times a year. Even if it's just a simple email checking in and asking how they're doing or saying that something reminded you of them, that little bit of contact will help keep you fresh in their mind. And as the two of you build a rapport, you'll later be able to ask for a favor when you need it, like introducing you to the CEO of a company you're dying to work for.

But because meeting new people can often be scary, it might be helpful to consider a few tips for preparing yourself beforehand. For example, generating a few questions you can ask almost anybody is a great, foolproof way to come up with conversation starters that feel organic. Some potential ice-breakers might include asking about their profession or if they've ever heard of your company. Once you've asked a question and the other person is answering, you can use the time that they're speaking to calm down and compose yourself and then you'll be collected enough to reply to their statement with something relevant about their topic or yourself. If it helps, you can keep in mind that the goal of this initial interaction isn't to make a

friend for life or ask them for a favor right away; it's simply about making a first impression on someone. Later on, you can follow up via phone call or email to solidify your connection by saying it was nice to meet them.

# Preparing for Your Career Change

You know how supermarkets have little sample stations that allow you to taste a product before you buy it? This can be really helpful because it allows you to decide whether you like something before purchasing and being stuck with it. Have you ever thought about how great it would be if you could do the same with careers? Well, it might sound impossible, but you actually can! In fact, there are a variety of ways you can “sample” a job before getting locked into it. For example, some companies will allow you to work one day a week-- or even a couple of weeks-- in your prospective role on a trial basis. This option is especially accessible if you’re switching jobs within your current company, so don’t forget to check it out before making a change!

In addition to these sampling options, it’s also important to arm yourself with other helpful tools to assist in making the right career change. One best practice is to begin by establishing a financial contingency plan. This will not only help you stay afloat if your job search becomes rockier than expected, it will also prevent you from worrying too much. So, before you make any new career changes, take some time to figure out how much money you’ll need to see you through and plan accordingly. Budgeting for a little more than you think you’ll need is also a great way to stay on top of your finances.

Mentally preparing yourself is also vital because a career change can come with more emotional complications than you expect. Just keep this in mind as you start out and remember that although changes are never easy at first, they do get easier with time and as you learn to adapt to a new routine. And no matter what new life journey you’re embarking on, making a solid plan-- and sticking to it-- will see you through.

## Final Summary

Whether your goal is to find a job that makes you happier, switch to a different department, or develop a new skill set, making a career change is often easier than you might think. All you have to do is develop your understanding of yourself and your career goals, set a five year plan, and consider sampling potential careers as part of your preparedness toolkit.



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