

CAREER

REINVENTION

BOOTCAMP

Module 7:
Identifying Your
Reinvention Skill Set

Audio + Transcript

Pamela: Hello, and welcome. I am Pamela Mitchell, founder and CEO of The Reinvention Institute. I want to welcome you all here this evening for the fifth in our free teleclass series about *The 10 Laws of Career Reinvention*. This evening, we are going to be talking about Law 5. You have the tools in your toolbox. I'm very excited to have everyone here this evening.

We're going to go very deeply into the topics brought up in the book. We're going to cover all kinds of subjects and talk about the issue of identity and how you shift from the old to the new.

We're also going to talk about your reinvention story, some tips and tactics for crafting that, identifying skills and some strategies for doing that, and how you build your legitimacy. All of these things are related as you begin to launch your reinvention.

Let's get started. We're diving right into this. I want to follow along with what's in the book so that we can talk about it topic by topic. Then I can give you some more information and pointers about each of the things that are covered in here.

It starts off in Law 5 talking about how there's a myth that everything that we've done in the past is a waste. That's important to begin with because many people come to The Reinvention Institute and think, "I have to start completely over."

What this law is about is understanding that no, you don't have to start completely over, even if you are moving to a new industry. Sometimes we're reinventing ourselves within the same industry and just taking on a different role. Even if you're doing something completely different, you are not starting 100% from scratch.

Why do I say that? I say that because when you are drawing upon your background to reinvent yourself, what you have to understand is that it's not just about job experience.

That's when we stay within the same industry and are looking to climb the ladder in our current field. We rely upon our job experience to present ourselves to hiring managers. We're not really taught to do anything other than say, "I did this job and this job." Everybody within the same industry understands that as shorthand.

When you move to something different, you can no longer rely on just your job as a sort of shorthand. Of course, it may or may not exist where you're targeting, or if you're reinventing in the same industry, the job is going to be different.

When you make that move, you're going to rely on your skills and talents. That's a really important distinction to understand. Your skills and talents are what you use to perform your job function. You want to have the distinction between a job function and the skill or talent that you use to actually perform that function. We'll get into that in a little bit.

It's those skills and talents that can be used to perform a multitude of job functions. That is what will actually allow you to transfer yourself to a different industry.

Once you take yourself outside of that framework of job function and move into the framework of skills and talents, you then understand that now you have a resource that you can draw upon to do different job functions, no matter the industry.

That's how you're not starting again from scratch completely. You're taking those skills and talents that you've already developed and honed in a particular industry and reapplying them in a new industry.

That's the essence, really, of the reinvention process. A lot of the topics that we're going to be talking about tonight, like your identity, story, legitimacy and all of those things, are about building that case for that switch that you're making.

You're saying, "Yes, these skills and talents that I've developed in this industry will translate and allow me to be successful in the new role or industry that I'm targeting." Keep that in mind as your base.

The first thing that has to happen when you're looking at this is you need to take a look at your identity. This is something that is kind of subtle. You think, "I'm going to be moving to this new industry, so I'm already doing something different."

The idea that identity is an important first step in this is not something that generally comes to mind, but it's critical. The reason it's critical is that a shift has to happen within your identity. As long as you continue to identify yourself with your old industry, it will be very difficult to make that transition into a new industry.

It keeps you limited in a number of ways. It keeps you thinking about how your skills and talents were used in the old way. You're seeing yourself in an old way. You're presenting yourself in the world within the old framework. It's very difficult to move if you don't think, up front, how your identity has to shift.

This is something that you want to spend some time actually working on right at the beginning, before you even dive into the skills and talents and all the stuff that we'll be talking about tonight. You want to think about, "How do I shift my identity?"

It's going to start with your story. That's the reinvention story that not only do you tell yourself, the internal story, but the story that you tell to the world. It's essential that this reinvention identity shift happens so that the story that you're telling yourself and putting out in the world both are congruent with where you want to head, not your past.

One of the things that I talk about in the book around letting go of your old identity is that it's really critical to actually take tangible steps to shift that identity.

What are some things that you can do? One is to start immersing yourself in your target role or job so that you begin to start thinking of yourself in a new environment. While you're there, start to look at skills and talents that people are using and how your skills and talent can be applied in there. This will begin an organic shift in how your mind begins to think about it.

A lot of times, the reason that we think about ourselves in our old identity and hang onto it so tightly is that we don't really see ourselves in a new role. This is a really important point, so I want to restate this. One of the biggest reasons that it's hard to let go of our old identity is that we don't really see what we can do in something new. We don't see how our skills and talent apply.

It's critical that we actually go out and start putting ourselves in a new environment, looking for evidence that our skills and talents can be applied in those new areas. That will begin the internal shift to say, "Yes, I can move to this new field and begin to present myself in this new way. I can let go of my old identity."

I like to draw the analogy that it's like you're in a swimming pool. You're on one side of the pool and want to swim to the other side. What you're doing is hanging on with one hand to the rail on one side of the pool. You're kicking and have the other arm trying to swim over to the other side, but as long as your one hand is gripped to that rail, you will not make any progress.

The same is true with identity. As long as you have one hand gripped to your old identity, you can kick and try to swim as hard as you can, but you will not make it to the other shore, to the land of your new industry or career. You have to release that and let go.

Here are some other tips you can use to actually begin shifting your identity internally. One of the things that I like to recommend is that you actually get a business card that advertises your new career instead of your old one.

I had a client who wanted to be in the food business. She was in the nonprofit world. She created a card that was appealing to that particular industry. There are many people who are interested in writing. They create cards for writers.

Take a look at doing that so that when people ask you for your card, you're not handing out a card for your old industry or saying, "I don't have a card yet," which is, in effect, saying, "I don't really know what I'm doing." Make sure that you create something that moves you forward.

You might be sitting there saying, “I’m not sure exactly what I want to do yet. How do I know?” I recommend that you just keep it very general. If there are a couple of things that you’re exploring, you can even put a couple of bullet points on the back of the card with those areas.

The nice thing about this is when you hand these to people, they’ll actually remember. Part of this is helping others know how to help you. When you put this out to other people they start to think of you in your new field as opposed to your old field.

When you give them a card they look at it and think “graphic designer,” “chef,” “interior designer,” or whatever it is that you’re interested in. They think about you in that new role. All of a sudden their mind has shifted.

When the world’s mind shifts, it’s easier for your mind to shift. This is a really great tactic because once other people start seeing you in a new role it also helps you see yourself in a new role.

Another way to begin shifting your identity is to make sure that you start surrounding yourself with the people, subjects, reading, and energy of the new field or career. If you’ve been hanging out with your old friends or buddies, reading the old trades or looking for the gossip in the old things, try to put a stop to that for a little while.

I’m not recommending letting go of your friends or anything like that. What I am recommending is that you are conscious about moving forward. It’s very difficult when you’re spending all your time hanging with the people from your old industry, reading the old trades, and looking for gossip there to think about something new.

Your energy needs to be spent focusing on where you’re headed. Switch those trades out for trades in industries that you think you’re interested in.

Start networking with people in those target industries. Take a look at their skills and talents. Ask them about that so you can start to see and put yourself there. Make sure that the balance is very strong on the side of where you’re headed, not your past.

Another thing that you want to do around identity is ask your friends and family to make sure that they also shift. That’s a challenging one. You can put it out there. It may take them a little bit of time to shift. Ask them to help support you in where you’re headed.

If somebody asks them what you’re doing or thinking about, ask them to tell whoever it is that has been inquiring that you’re moving toward your new career, whatever that is. You’re enlisting the people who are close to you in support of shifting your identity.

The big question that everybody asks and the big barrier that happens is when someone comes to you and says, “What are you doing?” Our natural default is to go with what feels safe and comfortable, which usually is our old career. In this piece it’s very critical that you have prepared an answer to the question, “What are you doing, and what’s happening here?”

This is where your reinvention story comes in. You want to be ready. You’re going to start with whatever it is that you’re looking to target. You need to be prepared to go more deeply into the story of your reinvention.

You can say, “I’m an interior designer,” or, “I’m looking at the interior design field.” If somebody says, “That’s really interesting. Tell me more,” you need to have a reinvention story prepared.

The identity shift leads into the next step, which is your reinvention story. Once you’ve actually crafted your reinvention story, it becomes even easier to manage that shift both internally and within the world.

Let’s talk about what your reinvention story is and is not. It is not an explanation of what’s happening in your life. It is not a big, long, “Here’s what has been going on. Here’s how I feel.” It’s not that in the least.

A reinvention story is like a sales pitch. It’s designed to appeal to the hiring managers or your target customers in your target industry and to compel them to take action. This is critical.

As you begin to think about this reinvention story, you’re presenting your interest, skill sets, background, and previous experience within a context of telling a story that’s going to attract a new audience. That’s what you’re looking to do with your reinvention story.

There are three things around your reinvention story. First, your story must have a purpose. That’s why I said “blah blah blah” is banned. The purpose of your reinvention story is to make you attractive to your target market and to inspire that group to take action.

You’re going to be crafting your story so that it’s very appealing to your target, whether it is for a different job or industry or you’re looking to become an entrepreneur. You’re going to craft this story so that it’s really attractive to your customers and they’re compelled to take action, which is the next step.

The next thing about that story is it needs to actually contain some action. You want them to take action. That means that your story must contain action.

From a reinvention perspective, this means that you need to make sure that your story includes a call to action that compels your target to move forward to the next step in the process. There are different kinds of calls to action. We'll talk about that in a little bit.

The third thing about your reinvention story is it answers a very important question. That question is, "Why do we care?" It's the "so what?" question. Your story has to be relevant and interesting to your target market.

You're going to need to include some things that are appealing to them, like the results, accomplishments or some other tactics that you can use, whether it's a personal referral, mutual contact or that you've attended the same school.

It needs a hook no matter what. You've heard them talk about how a story needs a hook. They use that term in journalism and television. The same is true with your reinvention story. It needs to have a hook so it answers the question, "Why do we care?"

If you look in your world you see that everywhere. For example, take the reality TV trend that's happening these days. Why do we follow these shows? Usually there's some emotional hook that's going on, we're interested in the topic or we want to see what happens next.

Those same kinds of hooks are going to be crafted into your reinvention story so that the person that you're telling it to says, "I want to take the next step."

The next step is not getting a job. That's a big shocker. Everybody thinks, "Isn't this about getting a job? That's what I'm looking to do." Yes, ultimately the big goal is to make the switch, have them make the offer, you accept the job and everybody is happy.

That's not the next step in the reinvention story. The next step is to get either an interview or a deeper conversation to get in the door. It's important to remember that there are many steps on the way to landing an offer or having a client hire you.

What you want to focus on is that very next step. If you start to jump forward and think, "I have to craft my story so that somebody hires me," you've basically shot yourself in the foot. It's almost impossible to jump from that one step to the end goal. You have to follow the steps.

I like to draw the analogy that you're standing at the bottom of the stairs and you want to get to the top of the stairs. You can't jump up an entire flight of stairs all at once. You have to take the stairs. Sometimes you can skip one or two, but you can't just go straight from the bottom all the way to the top.

You want to keep your focus on the next step in front of you and craft each story so that it draws you to that next step. Once you get there, you can then focus on getting to the next step. That's how you'll ultimately end up at your reinvention goal.

Let's say a couple of other things about your reinvention story. The first thing is that it must translate to two different kinds of platforms. By platform I mean ways that you put them out in the world. There are two ways.

One is that your story must translate verbally. When somebody asks you the question, "What are you doing? Tell me about your transition," you have to have a verbal story ready. That shows up when you're interviewing or giving an elevator pitch to someone. This is your response to the question, "What do you do?" You're going to tell them this reinvention story.

The other way that you're putting it out in the world is in a written format. That includes your resumes, bio, cover letters, business cards, website or portfolio. The thing about your reinvention story is that it's both written and verbal.

It's not like you have to do a different thing on everything. Once you craft your core story you can look at, "How am I saying it verbally and in writing?" It will go through all of those different platforms. You take the time to do it once, and then you put it out everywhere. Your story is seamless and cohesive. That method then can draw you forward toward what you want.

Another thing that I want to say about your story is that it also has to be supported. This is an important thing. By that, I mean you can't just go out there and say, "This is what I'm doing."

Let's take the example of becoming an interior designer. You can't just say, "I'm an interior designer," or "I'm becoming an interior designer," if you want somebody to hire you. You have to support this story.

The story can be supported in a couple of different ways. There are two primary ways. One is by your accomplishments. Your accomplishments are the story you tell about yourself. That's where you say, "These are the things that I've done that support this story."

There are other ways if you don't have accomplishments that can move you forward. You can look to others. Your story can be supported by your contacts and referrals. One way is by your accomplishments. The second way is by your contacts and referrals.

You want to think about what story others are telling about you. This is important. You want to make sure that you're looking at your story not just by supporting it yourself, but

what are others saying about you? That goes back to asking others in your world to begin presenting you in a new way and supporting the story that you're putting out there.

There are some things that go into this story. If you think about the components of your reinvention story, most people want to start off with where they've been. That's the "I was a lawyer, but now I'm going into the shoe business" syndrome, as I like to call it. No. You don't start with where you've been in your reinvention story. That's a very important point. You want to start with where you're headed.

If you're not there yet, I know some people will feel uncomfortable saying, "I'm this." What you can then say, and here's the language, is "I am moving toward this field," or "I am exploring this field."

What those words, "moving toward" and "exploring," do is let people know that this is your interest and what you're looking to do, but you're still in an exploratory phase. This is important to use if you have not made a final decision that this is the industry or market you want.

Frankly, I actually recommend using that anyway. You never want to be locked in. You never know what you're going to discover as you're going along. To say that you're exploring or moving toward this field lets people know that you're in transition, but it doesn't automatically drop you into your old framework. It puts you into your new framework.

You're dropping your old industry completely right up front and leading with your new industry. That's the first step of your reinvention story. You want to lead with your new industry.

The second thing that is going to be part of your reinvention story is the legitimacy piece. This is something that is really an interesting point. Most people, when they come to reinvention, come to it from their own perspective of interest, saying, "I am interested in this." What that is about is usually to satisfy their own needs.

In order to have a successful reinvention, you have to focus on satisfying your target market's needs. That's a very important point. You need to find out their needs, not yours, and that must be reflected in your story.

The second point is that you want to start by showing your legitimacy, and that means focusing on their needs and what they want and not what you want.

That's a very subtle shift. So many people say, "This is what I want." That's great, but it's not going to compel a hiring manager to take action to bring you in because that hiring

manager wants to know, “Are you thinking about what I want? That’s great that it’s what you’re interested in, but how are you going to help me?”

Everybody is interested in me, so you have to answer that. You do that by looking at your legitimacy point.

We’re going to talk about legitimacy points because that’s a critical way to capture their interest to then move it forward through the call of action.

One thing I want to say about legitimacy up front is that there are actually two kinds of legitimacy. There’s the legitimacy that happens internally. That means that you feel worthy enough to do what you’re trying to do. You feel worthy and comfortable stating, “This is where I’m headed and the skill set.”

What I want to say about that is that you have to deal with the internal legitimacy before you move to the external legitimacy. That’s the second kind of legitimacy. It’s proving to the hiring manager or potential client that you’re going to be able to do what they want you to do and have success in their field. You’re going to be able to answer their needs.

First, before you try to make that pitch to them, make sure that inside, you feel that you’re worthy enough to do it. This is so important. If you’re not solid, strong and feeling worthy inside, it’s going to leak out.

This is one of these roadblocks that people often hit in their reinvention. It’s something that I actually hit when I was looking, early on. It wasn’t even after my reinvention. It was when I was looking for a job after my Ivy League education. I just didn’t feel worthy inside.

I had a very difficult last semester. I wrote about this in the book. It was a very trying time for me because I’d had a situation where I had been pulled in front of academic probation and had to take a year off. I could finish my studies but had to wait for a year to receive my degree. When I left, I was not feeling worthy.

What happened is that when I went out and interviewed, that part of me that didn’t feel worthy enough and legitimate leaked through. I could get in the door. My written materials supported it. I could get an interview, but I never moved beyond that because internally, I hadn’t dealt with that feeling of legitimacy, thinking, “Yes, I am worth this.”

When I say that to you, it’s very much as a cautionary tale. If you’re not feeling that inside, do some things to build that internal legitimacy.

One way you can do that is to keep a success list, both historical, the successes that you've had in the past, and successes you're currently having, so that you know, "I'm a person who has had successes. Here is my track record."

There's a way that when you're trying to think about it, you lose them, so make sure that you write these down so that you can see in black and white, "Here are my successes."

Also write down some ideas for an idea book so that you don't feel that you're completely lost. These are things that will help you build internal legitimacy.

Another way to build this internal and external legitimacy is a very useful tactic that I always recommend. It's volunteering. The reason I say that is that volunteering is such a great strategy. By the way, volunteering can look like an internship and all that kind of stuff.

It's such a great strategy on a number of levels. One is that by volunteering, you get to use skill sets and see that people value your contribution. That helps strengthen your internal legitimacy.

Second, by volunteering, you also get to build a body of accomplishments. You can point to those accomplishments. It doesn't matter whether it was in a volunteer capacity or a formal job capacity.

People often ask me, "Can I put this on my resume?" Absolutely! If you run a marketing campaign for a nonprofit that increases subscriptions, put it on there. You can use those experiences as ways to build legitimacy. They are just as valid.

You get to build your internal legitimacy by saying, "I can apply my skills, and there are people who value them," and then you also get to build your external legitimacy by adding to your list of accomplishments.

You can volunteer not just for nonprofit organizations, but for small businesses and up-and-coming, fast-growing businesses in your area. Offer to do a pro bono project or two.

I was having dinner with someone just last week who was talking to me about how her husband wanted to get into the sports field. He left his job. I believe he was a lawyer. He became an intern at ESPN because that's what he wanted to do. He was the oldest intern that they'd ever had. He was 36. Now he's been there seven years. He loves it.

Don't look down on the volunteerism strategy. It's one that can really be effective in moving you forward. Sometimes people will take a chance on you in a volunteer capacity and then ultimately hire you.

The other thing about volunteering is that you also get to build connections in your new field. That's also very useful. When it comes time to make a transition, people in that new field know you.

Remember that I said your story must be supported by contacts and referrals. It's very powerful to have a contact or referral in the industry that you're targeting. Volunteering is a very effective way to do that so that people in that industry and field can actually speak to your experience.

These are the subtle ways that you begin crafting your story and legitimacy. That's where you go.

Let's talk about some more legitimacy points and how you actually design your appeal for your target market.

There are three ways that you're going to shape your background that you present in this story. I talk about this in the book. There are three levels.

One is through direct experience. That's the easiest of all. This is when you have something in your background or an accomplishment that matches what your target market is looking for.

They want somebody who has sold copiers, and you've sold copiers. Then it's really easy for your reinvention story. Say that you're moving from Xerox to selling copiers. Now you want to move to a startup or selling something in the digital space and you want to do digital printing.

You can say, "I sold these printers in this capacity. I'm sure I can sell in this capacity as well." It's very simple. They get it right off the bat because you've had direct experience, even though you're moving into something new.

That was actually one of the ways that I could use when I made my switch from Wall Street into the entertainment field. After I did my research and immersed myself in the target field, talked to people who were there and all of that, I realized the job I had been doing in Wall Street, which was negotiating and managing international partnerships, also existed in the entertainment field.

I could say, "I negotiated partnership deals overseas." That had some direct experience that was applicable in that new field. You want to look for those kinds of things whenever you can.

It's not always possible. Maybe you have one or two. Maybe you don't. If you don't have that, then you want to move to similar experience next. This is when you have an accomplishment that's comparable to what they seek, even if it's not precisely what they're describing.

Going back to the copier example, they want somebody who sold copiers, and you've sold personal computers. Equipment is different, but they're in the same category of office equipment, so they target the same customer.

Similar experience is also a very fruitful way to look at how you build your reinvention story. They may say, "We want somebody who has sold copiers."

You say, "I haven't sold copiers, but I've sold office computers. As you know, they're to the same mid to whole market, small office clientele. Copiers are often digital. I'm very familiar. They're often computerized these days. I've sold office computers, so I'm very familiar with how to work software."

You start drawing the correlations and similarities so that they get it. That's another way of building your legitimacy. You want to look for those as well.

If you don't have direct or similar experience, you want to then move to what I call causational skills. This is when you have neither a direct nor a similar accomplishment, but you can make the case that a skill set that you have would help you achieve their desired goal.

I'm going back to the copier example. They want someone who has sold copiers. You haven't, but you've successfully pitched to people who buy your services as a consultant. Here you would make the case that your selling skills would allow you to sell copiers as well?

That's the highest level, where you're looking at the skills and talents that you use to perform your job and saying, "That skill will translate into a new field." That is a very powerful way.

In fact, I personally believe the world is going to be moving to skill-based matching. The reason for that is because there are so many different industries that are coming up and then are gone 10 years later.

The idea of having direct experience is no longer going to be valid because it's going to be difficult to find somebody who has a depth of experience. What people will be starting to look for is skill-based matching. Does this person have these five skills that we can see would be successful in this position?

You want to start looking at your skills and talents and ask, “Do I have the ones that are required for success in this position?” That is something that I want to highlight. It’s not just the skills and talents you use. It’s the ones that are going to be successful in that position.

You’re crafting your story to highlight what they want to see. You need to think about what’s going to be successful in that position. What skills are they going to want? Do I have any direct experience, similar experience or causal skills where I can make a pitch and say, “I’ve sold, and you want selling. Therefore, I can sell for what you want”?

Those are the three ways that you will begin to support your story. Another way that is important in terms of supporting your story is to look at your accomplishments. That’s where you begin to back up the story.

It’s all well and fine to say, “I have sales skills.” That’s great, but you stating it is not good enough. You need to have some tangible proof or evidence so that potential client or hiring manager says, “Yes, this person has the skills, and I can prove independently that they do.” Therefore, they’re much more likely to take a chance on you.

In the book, I go through how to actually analyze your accomplishments. I recommend that you sit down and think about your accomplishments over the past five to 10 years in your career. Start by thinking of what you’re most proud of. Pick your two or three over your career.

Then start to analyze them using the PAR framework. P stands for problem, which is identifying the problem, opportunity or challenge you tackled. It may not always be something negative. Sometimes it’s that we have an opportunity to grow our market 20% or a challenge to streamline these processes. P just stands for that problem that you’re facing, whatever it is, that needs to be solved.

A stands for action. Those are the actions that you took to solve that problem, take advantage of that opportunity, or navigate that challenge. It’s whatever actions you took to do that. It’s very specific.

We wanted to increase our market share by 10%, so I created a marketing campaign to do so. We wanted to release this software by X date, so I set up the project or coding to do that. Whatever your role is, you want to look at that specific action you took.

R is the result. You want to summarize that result by saying exactly what you accomplished in response to that problem, opportunity or challenge.

We wanted to increase our market share by 10%. It increased by 12%. We wanted to release that new software. We came in early on the release date, and now it's bringing in X dollars' worth of revenue and has X amount of reviews.

That's how you want to take a look at your accomplishments so you can begin to craft them so that they all become a part of your reinvention story.

If you want to go more in-depth, look at the book. There are some exercises in the back of the book. We also have our Reinvention Resume eKit that goes very much into depth in all of these tactics about accomplishments with all kinds of workshops and an audio download. You can check that out on our website. That'll help you as well.

All of these components are going into your reinvention story. When people ask you, "What are you doing?" you start by presenting your future career. Then you begin to back it up by your experience, skills and accomplishments.

Depending upon how you do this, sometimes it's verbally. You can say, "I'm looking to become an interior designer. I have X certification. I have designed this room at this nonprofit."

That's how you say it verbally. In your resume or cover letter you'll include these accomplishments, skills and talents. This is how all of this gets pulled into your reinvention story.

That's a lot of content that we have covered this evening. I want to make sure that we have plenty of time for questions. Who has a question this evening regarding your reinvention story, your own reinvention or reinvention in general?

Kate: I do have a question. I've been raising children for the past 20 years. I'm trying to switch into my old industry. I've been out of it for quite a while. I'm trying to make new inroads. I had a lot of success 20 years ago, which doesn't translate very well in today's market. How do I get them to see me as more than a mom?

Pamela: That's a great question. Can I ask you what your old industry was?

Kate: It was theater.

Pamela: You will have to lay out a strategy using these kinds of tactics. It's very difficult when we take a break for an extended period of time to on ramp just relying only on the old experience. What's going to have to happen is you'll have to build a more current body of work.

For you, I'm assuming that if you've been a mom for 20 years, your kids now are more independent. That means you can devote some time to starting to build a more current case. What will happen is that when you build some current accomplishments, you then will get the benefit of your previous experience. Does that make sense?

Kate: That's what I've been trying to do for the past three years. I'm working at a professional theater now. I just can't seem to get the breaks. Everybody else is younger than I am, and I just feel like I'm old news.

Pamela: Let me just ask, specifically, what are you looking to do that all the young people are doing and you're not doing?

Kate: I've been working part time because I'm in transition mode. I want to work full time and be the director of something. I'm working in group sales now. I'd like to expand. They've talked about giving me more education because I have been teaching theater during this break with my children. I'd like to get more into that. I find I'm hitting the wall somehow.

Pamela: Let me say just a couple of things in what I hear you say. You said, "They said that they're going to give me more education." What you want to do is be strategic about developing yourself.

When I'm listening to what you're saying, I hear a couple of different things, but I don't hear anything specific, like, "Here's my goal. I have looked at these three things. Here's the thing I want to do, and here's what I'm going to educate myself on so that I can make a case to them for it." It sounds like you just kind of want to move up, but you don't really know what you want to do.

Kate: That's pretty accurate.

Pamela: That's why you're not getting the opportunity. It's because they're not going to figure it out for you.

As I said during the call, you have to answer the question, "What can you do for us?" You have to answer it specifically. Pick an area and say, "This is what I want to do," and then make yourself the go-to person for that area.

You can't really say, "I just want to move up." Say, "Here's the thing I'm interested in," and then take the reins yourself. Look at how you can develop yourself. Volunteer for projects.

With whatever education you think you need, go back for it on your own. Once they see that you're motivated to do it on your own and are then bringing that back to help contribute to that area in the group, then they'll begin to give you the opportunities you seek. Then you'll have all of that along with your previous experience.

Kate: That's a good answer. You're right. Thank you.

Pamela: Thanks so much, Kate. I see Renee has a question.

Renee: I, too, am going through the process of reinvention. On one hand, it's quite exciting, and then quite often, it gets a little muddled along the way.

What I'm grappling with is after being a generalist for about 20 years and someone who is very credentialed, at times I'm focused on things that I believe a lot of people are doing now, like your work, coaching and wanting to basically move into the philanthropic world.

How do you coach people to move into the philanthropic world? I want to be a philanthropic advisor. I'm listening carefully to all of your advice, and it makes sense, but making those inroads and creating that new identity is where I'm stuck. I'm trying to get unstuck.

Pamela: What is the stuck about?

Renee: The stuck is not having the network that would allow me to have those inquiry and volunteering inroads. In the business that I'm looking at going into, it's not like there's necessarily a place, quite often, that you can volunteer.

If you want to deal with the entertainment and sports industries, as an example, it's trying to find where I could do this work and be a philanthropic advisor. I'm finding that a bit challenging.

Pamela: First of all, you want to take a step back in all of this. I'm hearing entertainment and sports and then philanthropic.

Renee: That's correct.

Pamela: Then I'm thinking Magic Johnson's philanthropic arm for his business or some other athlete's or entertainment company's philanthropy. Is that what you're talking about?

Renee: Yes.

Pamela: What you want to do is look at, first of all, what is happening in those markets? Secondly, what skill sets do they want? Where are they giving?

I can assure you that whatever those philanthropic arms are doing, other philanthropic organizations are also doing. However they're giving and whatever their missions are, there are going to be a lot of organizations that have a similar mission. Therefore, your goal is to become experienced in the skills and talents that they are seeking.

It's not so much about you having to be knowledgeable about sports or entertainment. It's more that you need to be knowledgeable about whatever philanthropic area they're looking to pursue. Your goal is to focus on the skills and what they want out of it as opposed to the topic.

I really recommend you pick that mission according to whatever your own personal mission is because when you have that passion, that will put you over the top. Don't just choose it by saying, "This looks hot," or whatever. No. Make it your mission.

Start with whatever your mission is and then go to that organization. Those people will know people, and they will know people. Whoever is working on that mission moves around. Whoever is at that particular philanthropic organization you're targeting can pick up a phone, call somebody in the same space and say, "What is Renee doing?" That's how that works.

It's a longer time period. I lay out these things, and of course, in an hour, I'm simplifying them for you. It really is a process that takes a year to build that kind of legitimacy and those new contacts and networks. It pays off because what you're doing is investing for a lifetime.

That's what you have to keep in mind. This is not a quick fix. These are skill sets and connections that you will take with you for a lifetime. You want to invest in them.

Renee: That makes sense.

Pamela: We have time for one more question. I see that Florence has a question.

Florence: I don't know if you can offer tips on how to manage two reinvention tasks.

I started out on a community development career path. Because I'm trying to keep my finances going, I'm freelancing. Writing has always been a passion of mine, so I'm actually trying to build that as well. How can I manage two without allowing one to distract me from the other? I want to pursue both.

Pamela: You're doing a job to earn money?

Florence: It's a filler, yes. It's freelance writing. Writing has always been a passion of mine. In different parts of my career throughout my life, I've had to use that skill on the job.

Now I'm doing it with a blog and other things that I'm doing on my own. It's just refueling that passion I've always had. I drafted a children's book project, partially motivated by my granddaughter. It's a legacy to leave with her.

The community development career path is my ultimate purpose and destiny in life, if that makes sense.

Pamela: Yes, that makes sense. Those are not necessarily mutually exclusive. One can certainly support the other, and I would invite you to look at how one can support the other. Can your writing support your community work, and how can your community development support your writing? That means topically. If it's your passion and mission, start writing about it.

That will do two things. One is that it will get you known, and it'll position you in the marketplace. If there are other kinds of writing that you are doing, you can see, in the types of organizations that you're looking for, what types of writing needs do they have?

It's perfectly possible to have that. What you're talking about is a portfolio career. This is a great question because I want to put this out to everybody. You don't just have to just have one career. You can do a portfolio career and say, "I want to do community development work, and I want to do writing." If you do both, you can show your accomplishments in both areas.

To get as much momentum as possible, I always recommend looking at how one can support the other. It's not that they have to 100% support each other, but if those organizations need some writing, why not do writing for those organizations and then use those examples to help pitch other writing projects that are maybe not within that field? Does that make sense?

Florence: Yes, it does. Thank you.

Pamela: Yes, so that's how you go.

I am going to extend our Q&A for about five minutes because I have been getting a bunch of emails that the participant dashboard is not working. I've been wondering why I've not been getting any through that. I am going to look at a couple of the emails that just came in and answer them.

One comes from Susanne, who is still searching for what her Plan B is. What's the process in exploring options?

Susanne, can I ask you to explain a little bit more about your question so I make sure I am answering it and am on point?

Susanne: Plan B, to me, is reinvention. I'm listening to some of the other people on the phone, and they seem to be very clear about what they want to do next or what they are looking to do.

My experience is that I have 25 years in print media, and that whole industry, as you know, has collapsed. When I use the term "Plan B," how do I take all the skill sets that we've been talking about for the past hour and figure out what industry I am going to apply it in?

Pamela: That helps. In the reinvention world, I use the term "Plan B" as the backup job that provides funding as you are pursuing your reinvention.

I like this question for a particular reason. This piece, your reinvention, is really not a Plan B. It's really the next stage. That's what is really important to understand. This is not just a backup. It's how your life will have to run from now on, because it's the nature of what is going on for work.

You're not making a decision as a backup. You're making a decision for what you want to do for the next phase of your life, career wise. That's the first piece to understand. It's the next evolution. You are not looking for a backup, but you are looking for something that is going to be satisfying to the person you are today.

When you made your decision 25 years ago, you were a very different person.

Susanne: Right. That's a good point.

Pamela: You had different talents and different skills. Now you are at a different point in your life. You have a lot more skills and talents. You have a different interest. Who are you today? What do you want out of your career now that you have the opportunity to make a decision about it today? It's a whole different question. It's a more exciting question, actually.

Susanne: Right. Plan B has a negative connotation.

Pamela: Exactly. Tap into the excitement. Think, "Wow! I get to do something new now." Have you checked out the book at all, or are you just joining us here?

Susanne: No, not yet. This is my first time.

Pamela: Welcome. I'm glad you found us here.

Susanne: Thank you. It's good to be here.

Pamela: We talk about how all of the other laws leading up to this lay out the steps that you will take in order to begin coming up with this question of "What's the next phase?"

You don't want to think, "What are my skills and talents, and where else can they be applied?" but, "Who am I? What do I enjoy? What person am I today? What kind of lifestyle do I want? What skills or talents can I bring to bear that will help me build those things?"

You start in a different spot. When you are young and don't have any experience, that's when you have to say, "Here are my skills and here is how they are applied." Now that's not the question. You know you have a bunch of skills. The question is what do you want to do? Once you figure out what you want, what skills do you bring to the table for that?

Susanne: That's still a big question. I'm not sure what I want.

Pamela: What I'm going to say is that the book lays out a lot of exercises for that. I also have these reinvention modules that take people in depth through these steps.

There is one called Reinvention Brainstorming eKit. That is a 55-page downloadable ebook, plus an audio with worksheets that take you through step by step how to do exactly what I just said to you. It's a survey of your own interests, lifestyle, skills and talents. What kinds of things are you interested in, and how you can bring this all together to come up with a target?

The tools are out there. It is more detailed than I could ever possibly hope to go into on this kind of a call. Like I said, it's a 55-page ebook that goes only into brainstorming these kinds of ideas. It's out there. Take a look at the book and eKit, and you will see that it takes you through that process.

Susanne: Great. Thank you.

Pamela: Thank you. Let's see if there is one more question.

Anita: Thanks for taking my call. You are wonderful. You are such a smart woman, and I'm really glad I tuned in to this tonight. It's great.

Pamela: Thank you. Awesome. How can I help you?

Anita: I just wanted to check with you. You were just mentioning the ebook and the eKit that does the brainstorming for the reinvention process. Is the material in the eKit also outlined in your book, or are they different things?

Pamela: That's a very good question. The book has a few basic exercises that go into it, maybe three or four. The eKit is much more in depth.

In the book I'm covering 10 laws. It's very difficult to go in depth into any one particular topic, which is why I created the modules.

I would say that the eKit is like the advanced version of just that one question. You could cut to the chase and just go to the eKit, and you'll have all the things that you need. It even pulls an exercise or two from the book and says, "If you haven't done these in the book, do these here now." You can do it that way as well, but it's much more in depth.

Anita: If you are particularly stuck in a certain area, the eKit really homes in on that, then?

Pamela: Exactly. That's the point of the modules. The book is a general survey. There are enough exercises to give you a taste, but everybody has a little point where it's just really tough for them. That's what the module does. It helps you go more in depth and work through all of that.

Anita: Great. Thanks.

Pamela: You're welcome. I'll just throw in a little special since we've been talking about the eKits. There is a brainstorming eKit, a resume and reinvention materials eKit, and there is a strategy eKit that will be released in about a week and a half.

This is so on the spur of the moment that I don't have a specific code for this call, but I will give you a discount code to use to get 20% off of those eKits.

That code would be step20. If you use step20, you will get 20% off on any of the eKits. You can buy the brainstorming and resume one and download them right away, and/or you can preorder the strategy one. They will help you through each step in depth.

Thank you, everybody, for a fabulous call this evening. Join us next month for Law 6. Thanks, everybody.