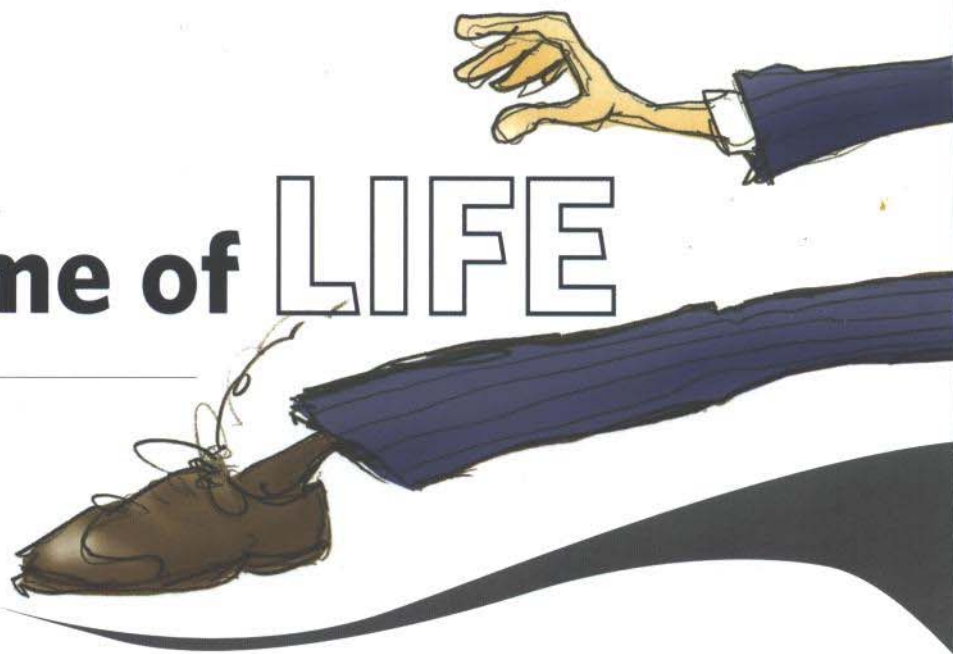


health

coaching for the Game of LIFE

story Dean Schermerhorn illustration Calder Chism



Baby boomers, arguably the most influential generation this country has ever witnessed, have fomented quite a lot of change throughout their lives. And now they're doing it again. Many in that generation, along with younger people in their 40s who are "on the cusp," are redefining the concepts of career and retirement, too. These folks seek a more healthy balance between their work and personal lives, and many are turning to professional coaches for guidance toward a more fulfilling and less stressful life. Often this means embarking upon a second, or even a third, career, or it may simply mean formulating new goals, overcoming difficult challenges or contributing to the community. And they want this work to be aligned with their purposes and values.

Fortunately, people in Northern Nevada have a variety of professional coaches nearby. While their specialties differ, the coaches profiled here (and their colleagues) accompany their clients on the journey toward constructive change in life, career, business or wellness.

Exploring and Conquering Careers
Katherine (Kit) Prendergast, certified career management coach and owner of Career Connections of Sierra Nevada, works with experienced professionals looking to move up,

move over in the same field or move on to new careers completely.

Now in her sixth year of coaching, Prendergast loves working with this demographic because of their years of professional experience, advanced degrees and extensive professional development training. These clients want to find work in which they can use their skills and exert more control over their time and the types of work that they do.

With extensive training in following the trends of the working world, Prendergast and other career coaches can help clients think creatively about work, take ownership of their careers and adopt an entrepreneurial attitude.

Prendergast's own career has a theme of partnering with people who are in transition and facing upheaval. Prendergast chose career coaching because, "if we are in work that we really enjoy, it has a huge effect on our lives."

Picturing and Achieving Business Success

Marti Benjamin, MBA, professional certified coach and president of Business Energetix-Success Coaching, works with leaders, from small business owners to department heads in large businesses.

Benjamin and her clients begin the coaching process by defining success. Then they review the innate talents the client brings to work and to life; evaluate what is most important at that moment; set goals based on that priority; and maintain focus and accountability. Her coaching offers a custom approach for each client.

She notes that leaders often say, "I do not want the business to own me." Through careful questioning and offering new perspectives, Benjamin helps clients restore balance in their lives.

Coaching Brings Clarity and Requires Commitment

John C. Smith, a Reno attorney with coaching experience, describes clients who have come to him when they felt their lives "slip slidin' away." Smith has helped many clients rediscover and gain clarity about the parts of their lives that they value most.

According to Meggin McIntosh, Ph.D., president of Emphasis on Excellence, Inc., coaching is for now, not for resolving problems from the past. Coaches ask, "Where are you trying to go?" rather than "Where have you been?" They help clients determine the structures that are most useful in reaching their specific destinations.



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McIntosh believes that a coach should make you “uncomfortable enough that you want to move.” Kit Prendergast emphasizes that a coach provides a structure and accountability and asks the right questions, to keep the client focused on achieving the change that has been chosen.

Seeking help from a coach does not mean that a person is flawed. “I am not trying to fix somebody or make somebody better or different,” says Smith. “I am just trying to help them get where they want to go.” He remarks that a coach is a catalyst. “Clients have their own best answers; they just need to find them.” A trained, professional coach accompanies the client, always working with the client to stay on the chosen path.

Finding a Qualified, Professional Coach

Marti Benjamin is the Northern Region Liaison for the Nevada Professional Coaches Association, part of the International Coach Federation. ICF members are committed to having coaching considered a credentialed profession.

To earn a credential, a member must provide proof of:

- Coaching hours delivered
- Competency in 12 defined skills
- Completion of a specific number of classroom hours.

Once credentialed, a coach must stay current in the field by completing continuing education. ICF members also are bound by an ethics pledge, which offers recourse for their clients.

To learn more about coaching and coaches in Nevada, visit the Nevada Professional Coaches Association at nevadacoaches.org, and the International Coach Federation at coachfederation.org/ICF/. [R]

Dean Schermerhorn made a career change to freelance writing for some of the reasons described in this article. As a baby boomer, he remembers the line, “Hope I die before I get old,” (from “My Generation,” by The Who), although he now views that expression figuratively and not literally.

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