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So you want to be a Rock Star.

I recently had two fabulous deep and meaningful days with a dynamic group of career development professionals. We shared our experience, knowledge and passion around the best ways to assist clients into meaningful employment. Discussion included the "High Five of Career Development". These 5 (Canadian) principles have been incorporated into the Australian Blueprint of Career Development. These guidelines, recognised by Career Advisors nationally (and internationally) are:

- Change is constant
- Follow your heart
- Focus on the journey
- Learning is life-long
- Be an ally

One question that proved to be thought provoking was this: how does a Career Advisor support a client who wants to pursue a dream that may seem unrealistic? The glowingly positive guideline '*follow your heart*' still chills the heart of many 'influencers' including teachers, partners, parents and friends. Even a Career Advisor can feel a bit of a sinking feeling when they hear someone say they want to become a rock star, a games developer, an artist, actor, circus performer, DJ, author, professional athlete or hip hop dancer. We all pretty much know that those who dream of success in narrow fields are not going to find it easily. Realistically speaking, the margin into full time, regular work is small. Visions of unemployment and empty wallets abound. Negative responses are many and include statements such as: "Why not make it a hobby and find something more secure?" or "Look how many talented singers get ousted from Australian Idol". Or "Aren't you a bit old to think about being a rock star?"

Imagine the dismayed parents who have paid thousands of dollars for their child to have an expensive private education, only to hear their child say that they don't want to be a lawyer, but want to be a make up artist. I'm convinced there have been many heated conversations around those kinds of career confessions. It is painful for any person, regardless of age, to hear negative comments discouraging them from pursuing their dream. These letdowns can squash an otherwise healthy spirit, lead to sadness and even depression. But we know bills have to be paid. So, is it good to let one's heart drive one's career path?

As conversing professionals we came to the conclusion that dreaming is natural and should be encouraged. Yes there are unrealistic dreams but it is worse to regret that you never tried rather than took the risk in the first place. Life may impose

itself on people of its own accord. Accelerating this process may be of little benefit and may cause self esteem or relationship damage as a result.

For those who burn with passion to succeed in a challenging industry, here are some steps you may find helpful:

- If you are a passionate 'wannabe', get a realistic job profile so that you know what opportunities and challenges to expect
- Get an idea from other professionals about your level of talent and accept helpful critique (without necessarily tossing in the towel at any negatives)
- Develop a plan of action that allows you to achieve what is needed at the highest standard of industry
- Be aware of the costs involved (will you move states or are you prepared for numerous rejections from publishers?)
- Prepare to spend hours and hours developing your talent (this requires discipline)
- Find paid work in a field where you are still surrounded by your passion (games developer may want to work at a retail games store)
- Embark on formal training or tuition to build your skills
- Become a member of relevant associations (film makers can join the SA Film Corporation and the Media Resource Centre)
- Network, get out there and find successful people in the industry - talk to them and share your passion
- Get a mentor, if possible

Cath Moore is a successful script writer who is a good example of living her dream. I have been privileged to watch her achieve some significant wins. Her journey in script writing spans 12 years and includes an AFI, scholarships, and invitations from around the world, multiple commendations and awards. She works hard. When she is not sequestered away at her computer typing for hours, she is networking, continuing her learning, liaising with her agent and looking for any and all writing opportunities. But, she also works three days a week in an office, teaches script writing to aspiring writers and develops other talents including music. If I asked her if she has accomplished what she has set out for? Cath would laugh and say, "no way, lady, not yet." Ask her if she has a rich and balanced life? Her answer would be "you bet!"

Lastly, a word to the dreamers out there...be honest with yourself. Have you really got your dream for the right reason? Have you got the intense fire in your belly and the X-Factor talent that is required? Or is your motivation ten minutes of fame? Far be it from me to dissuade you to sacrifice your career goal, but are your reasons for success for the right ones? If you don't have the drive and ambition to dedicate your life to your dream, there are other ways to contribute your talent. There are many creative people working at a smaller scale where they are the star 'to several' and not the masses. Where would the world be without music and dance teachers? Most talent translates to other fields as well. The key is to find work that allows you to use your creative talents and that fulfils you.

And lastly, for the aspiring rock stars and others out there who are determined to go the road less travelled, I'm cheering you on. Don't underestimate the meaningfulness of the journey towards your vision. It's all a learning curve. Surround yourself with good and supportive people. Know you have infinite worth and value, wherever you end up.