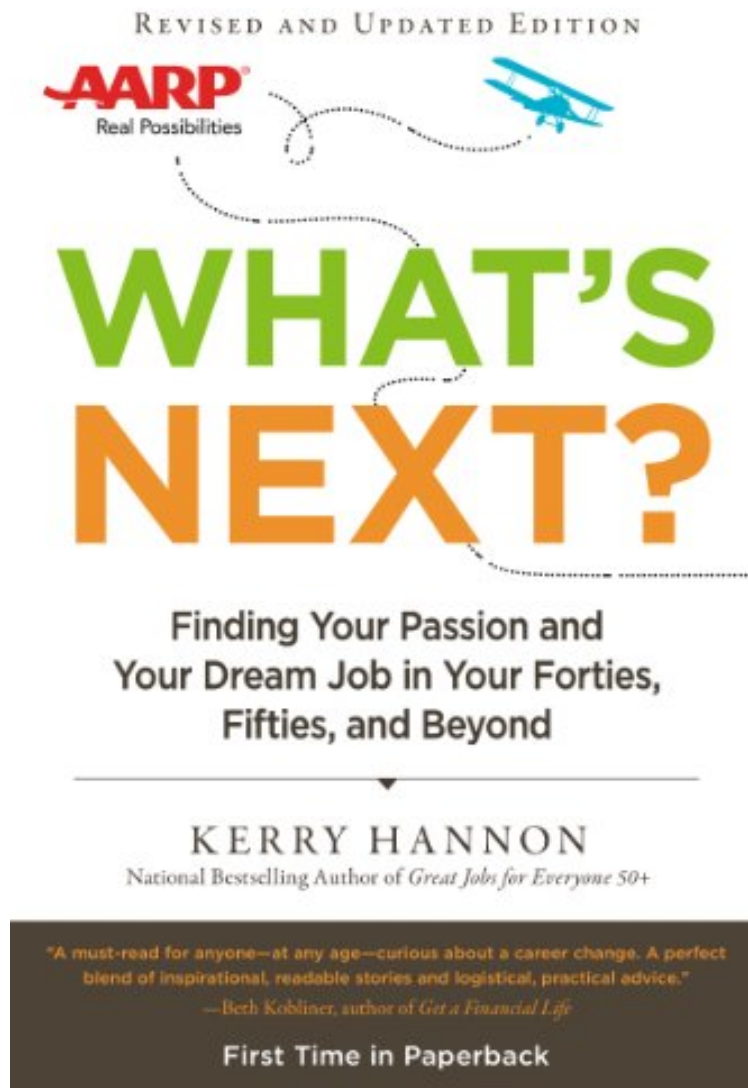


[Online library] What's Next? Updated: Finding Your Passion and Your Dream Job in Your Forties, Fifties and Beyond

# What's Next? Updated: Finding Your Passion and Your Dream Job in Your Forties, Fifties and Beyond

Kerry Hannon

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**Kerry Hannon : What's Next? Updated: Finding Your Passion and Your Dream Job in Your Forties, Fifties and Beyond** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What's Next? Updated: Finding Your Passion and Your Dream Job in Your Forties, Fifties and Beyond:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Informative and well written By Jersey Bookworm Fantastic book offering advice, resources and true stories of individuals who have chosen to move forward toward their dream job.

The writer offers guidance to the reader in identifying skills, interests and job experiences that can be transferable to a new career. The main ingredients to any change is planning and preparation, which this book offers great insight. The list of resources including books, organizations and websites is extremely helpful. The most enjoyable part of the book were the stories of individuals who for various reason chose to change their careers. These late life career changes improved their lives and those of their families. Well written, enjoyable book and a wonderful resource. I highly recommend it!

14 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Disappointing  
By Christine Rose  
I bought this book because I retired early and am looking for part-time work. This book seems to exclusively cover people who "start a business of their own" rather than find fulfilling work in their community to augment their retirement funds.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Dream Job  
By Samantha L. Fuller  
Informative. Great guidelines to next stage of job life.

Reinvent your own career or pursue a long-held dream. You may never have a better chance or reason to do so; to get excited about work again and feel passionate about making a difference in the world. Your new career could easily outlast your first one. Breaking into a new industry or pursuing a different career can be intimidating, especially when you've built up years of experience in your current field. But jobs expert Kerry Hannon believes that you can start your next act at any age. In *What's Next?* Hannon shows you how, with inspiring real-life profiles of people who have successfully changed careers midlife, as well as advice on:

- Determining how your next career will work with your spending habits and family situation
- Creating your transition network
- Finding a mentor to guide you along your new path
- Turning a hobby into a profit
- Finding capital to start your own business

Whether you're fantasizing about a new path or ready to pursue it, *What's Next?* provides the roadmap that will afford you long-term success.

"Whether your motivation is a recent downsizing or a lifelong dream, Hannon's book is dotted with things to look at before you leap...useful advice for those who want to retool themselves after age 40...peppered with ideas... gives the basics on careers that best lend themselves to starting again." —USA Today

Hannon has crafted her research on career transition into an important new book. It's an indispensable guide to anyone hoping to pull off a midlife reinvention." —The Huffington Post

"Kerry is a top-rate personal finance journalist...smart, practical advice." —Diane Harris, executive editor, Money magazine

"More and more people have realized the importance of following their passions. But if you can't make money at it, it's your hobby. Follow Hannon's roadmap and make sure you're on the way to a passionate and prosperous career." —Jean Chatzky, bestselling author of *The Difference and Pay It Down*

"What's Next? walks you through the nuts and bolts of switching careers so you can follow your passion the smart way and set yourself up for long-term success. If I didn't love my career so much, this would be my bible." —Beth Kobliner, author of *Get a Financial Life: Personal Finance in Your Twenties and Thirties*

"A must-read for anyone at any age...curious about a career change. A perfect blend of inspirational, readable stories and logistical, practical advice." —Beth Kobliner, author of *Get a Financial Life*

"A fascinating and extremely helpful book for anyone planning to switch careers...from one of the nation's leading experts on the subject." —Richard Eisenberg, CBS MoneyWatch.com

About the Author  
Kerry Hannon is a nationally recognized authority on career transitions and retirement who writes the "Great Jobs" column for AARP. She is the bestselling author of *Great Jobs for Everyone 50+*, and her work has appeared in *Forbes*, *Money*, *U.S. News World Report*, and *USA Today*. Hannon lives in Washington, D.C.

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FOREWORD  
When I met the late John Gardner in 1995, he was in his eighties and going strong. Although hardly a household name today, Gardner had served with distinction as secretary of health, education, and welfare during Lyndon Johnson's administration. He created the prestigious White House Fellows program. He founded Common Cause, the first significant campaign finance reform organization, and Independent Sector, to provide a voice for the nonprofit world. A few years later he would help launch Civic Ventures and Experience Corps, to mobilize others in the second half of life to create a better world. There were many other ventures in between, along with a string of influential books on leadership, community, and self-renewal. What I did not realize at the time is that he achieved all this after the age of fifty. For Gardner, the gold watch turned out to be a launch pad; the beginning of a new chapter that comprised his most significant achievements. He is hardly the only person to claim such a trajectory. There are many other high-flyers who have gone from success to even greater significance. Former President Jimmy Carter created a more enduring legacy after his U.S. presidency. Al Gore's encore career earned him the Nobel Peace Prize. And when Bill Gates departed Microsoft he emphasized that he wasn't retiring. In his words, he was "reordering priorities," concentrating on the most important challenges he could imagine: ending poverty, curing disease, educating all. As examples of these vaunted second acts proliferate, Kerry Hannon's wonderful and enlightening book *What's Next?* offers hope and help to the rest of us. It is a compelling reminder that the chapters stretching beyond Act I are something to look forward to: a time of new meaning, immense contribution, and continued

income. By addressing the genuine challenges of what continues to be for many a do-it-yourself transition, this book proves that the midlife shift to new fulfillment is not only possible but deeply desirable. It offers a set of compelling, credible role models and distills their insights and experiences into a reliable road map for successfully planning this transition. What's more, as *What's Next?* shows us, these uplifting encore opportunities are hardly exclusive to ex-CEOs and commanders-in-chief. They are within reach for anyone. As you ponder what you will do for your encore, remember that you're in good company. Tens of millions of Americans are celebrating their fiftieth and sixtieth birthdays, making the shift from "what's next" to "what's next"; more than a question of personal fulfillment. What millions will do next is a matter of national importance. How will we, as a nation, make the most of this talent and experience? How will we make it easier for the largest, best-educated, healthiest, and longest-living generations to create a better world for the generations that follow? *What's Next?* starts the conversation by redefining success. I hope you start there, too. Then read this book for the encouragement, guidance, and tools to make your dreams—and the dreams of those you can help in your encore career—come true.

Marc Freedman Founder of Encore.org

INTRODUCTION

A New York investment banker becomes a small-town chef. A college professor becomes a chocolatier. An entrenched corporate exec accepts an early-retirement package and converts to the ministry. Who doesn't fantasize about a second career? Perhaps you've worked in the same field for twenty-some years and have run out of fresh challenges. Maybe you feel you have talents that are going to waste. Or there's something you've always wanted to do that's calling louder and louder. Perhaps, like so many others, you're simply worn down by the corporate routine. Or you've lost a job or were downsized and the frustration of landing a new position is pushing you to start your own business. There must be something out there that's more meaningful and more rewarding, right?

Marc Freedman, founder of Encore.org, a nonprofit that is geared to helping people start second careers with social purpose and meaning says, "People are searching for work that is fulfilling and gets them out of bed in the morning." While these work transitions involve following a dream or a calling, you don't want to get caught up in the romance of it all. "There is a blitheness that all you have to do is embrace your passion and the rest happens magically," Freedman warns. "It's not that easy. You don't open the doors to your bed-and-breakfast and the cheering crowds arrive." Indeed, millions of Americans have already launched new careers midlife and every transition is different. In 2006, I developed U.S. News World Report's "Second Acts"; a regular column that looked at people who successfully navigated a complete career change midlife. I profiled people who had made such moves and featured their challenges and their motivations. Since then I've been fortunate to meet and counsel people from all walks of life, ranging in age from the early forties to seventy-plus, who have taken up a new course either full-time or part-time. Meanwhile, some have chosen to strike out on their own. Each one followed his or her own heart down a new path with single-mindedness, passion, humbleness, and an ability to live moderately. It's inspiring to sit down with people who are eager to start over in new ventures and find work that is more fulfilling. And why not try something new that excites you? The truth is, we're living longer, healthier lives, and that opens the door to all kinds of possibilities, and your next career could easily outlast your first one. There are things, however, that can hold you back. First, money really can be a stumbling block. You may need to earn a certain salary to make ends meet. Or perhaps you have a genuine fear of outliving your retirement savings or are afraid of losing employer-provided health insurance. Some people aren't sure what they are truly passionate about, even when they know they want to move in another direction. You may have a nagging feeling that when you start peeling away the layers to find your passion, you will come up empty-handed and discover that you don't have any exceptional skills and talents. Not so. Other wannabe career switchers I have met are afraid to fail or, oddly, afraid to succeed. Yep. There's a huge accountability to success. You can't let up, and that can be hard work. And admit it, sometimes the thought that it's going to be all work can be a deal breaker at this stage in life. We simply don't want to push ourselves to the limits after two or three decades in the working world, building a career, meeting goals, and facing other pressures. Then too success means change and the unknown. Enough said. Even once you realize what it is that you want to pursue next and then overcome any fears about finances or insecurities about failing, after age forty, it can be daunting to start a second act. The mere thought of going back to school, learning new skills, or beginning at the bottom of the ladder stops many people from trying something new. And in uncertain economic times, making a major move is more daunting than ever. Let me tell you, these are very real concerns, and I will help you work through any doubts to figure out whether you're ready to make a change. Career moves do not happen overnight. You might start working on a move today that you will make in a few years. Career change requires clear planning, market research, hard work, and a healthy dollop of confidence. It's a process. But dreams can come true. The best advice I can give you is this: If you're feeling the calling to do something new, to find work that energizes you, gives meaning to your day and more, do it. Consider the old cliché; that life is too short to be stuck in a dead-end job or dreading Monday mornings. Or if you've lost a job, have accepted an early-retirement package, or are a retiree or soon-to-be retiree worried about dipping into your retirement accounts and depleting them, don't feel defeated. This might be your opportunity to reinvent your career and redeploy your skills to find a job you love or to pursue a long-held dream. In the following chapters, you

will meet people who have made the big swing and love it. Each one tackled the new beginning with a singular approach. You too will own yours. You may not want to do what they do, but you will get ideas. I did. I also find tips and advice on how to identify potential next acts, financially and physically prepare yourself for your next career, overcome setbacks and obstacles, network and promote yourself, and achieve success in your new role. I'm certain you, like me, will be motivated by their stories to dig down and take the time to concentrate on your own goals and to tap into ways to shift your mind-set from thinking you can't to believing you can. I have in my career and continue to every day; you can, too. As the Winston Churchill quote emblazoned in decoupage on the glass tray that sits on my work desk boldly says: "These are great days." Let's get started.

### CHAPTER ONE

To be the toughest female cop alive, you have to run three miles uphill, climb three hundred stairs, put the shot, climb ropes, bench-press, run a hundred-meter sprint, swim one hundred meters, and complete an obstacle course three football fields in length—eight events in one day. Jill Angel has done that. And won. She captured the state of California's Toughest Cop Alive endurance competition for women and came in second in the worldwide event. Don't be fooled by her five-foot-three, 120-pound physique. She's tenacious—and strong. For twenty-two years, Angel was a California Highway Patrol (CHP) officer, rising through the ranks from sergeant to assistant chief in Los Angeles, overseeing more than a thousand officers. It was a job she prized, and for a while, she was unstoppable. She witnessed the aftermath of countless horrendous traffic fatalities and was severely beaten by a drug-addled suspect. Afterward, as head of the CHP's Critical Incident Response Team, she passed out at a shooting scene—partly from exhaustion. Then it all fell apart. Handling nothing but the worst stuff on the Critical Incident Response Team for five years had taken its toll. Physically, she was spent: she had high blood pressure, migraine headaches, depression, and an inability to sleep soundly. A single mom with two young daughters, aged ten and thirteen, Angel realized it was time to make a change. She handed in her badge and retired. But it was the power of music that really helped her turn the corner. And now she's in training to be the toughest music agent alive. Angel has dabbled in the music business for more than a decade. It began on a whim, trying to help a coworker get her music heard in Nashville, where Angel's younger cousin, Ilene, an aspiring songwriter, lived. While still on duty, she began making monthly trips to Nashville, landing meetings with the heads of record labels and top producers. "Being an assistant chief at the time, I was determined to get through to people at my level. They didn't know what to do with me," she recalls. But she scored her ten-minute face time, and it made a lasting impression. "People told me I would meet the worst people in the music business. 'They lie to you,' and so on, they cautioned," Angel says. "I said, 'Are you kidding?' I just spent twenty-two years as a police officer and was a commander in South Central L.A. The music people are some of the nicest people I've met." While her fellow staffer never did land a record deal, Angel fell in love with Nashville and her cousin's music. "The more I listened to Ilene's songs, the more I believed in her talent. They gave me hope, especially in the dark days after I retired." She began pitching her cousin's work with a vengeance. For Angel, it wasn't a big jump from serving as a CHP to pursuing the music business full time. "Both are making the world better somehow, though the two fields couldn't be more different in how they go about doing it," she says. And she can afford to be patient. Angel and her family can live on her CHP pension, which provides full health benefits. Since moving into her new gig managing singers and songwriters, Angel has worked with a half-dozen artists, but her biggest success to date is her cousin. Ilene Angel's song "I Don't Think About It," sung by Emily Osment, costar of the TV show *Hannah Montana*, hit the Radio Disney Top 10, where it stayed for over four months. It went to No. 1 for three straight weeks. Moreover, Nashville artists such as Dolly Parton, Tim McGraw, Reba McEntire, Wynonna Judd, LeAnn Rimes, and Kenny Rogers have put holds on several of Ilene's songs, expressing interest in recording them. Another protegee, Angel's nephew Matthew Angel, an L.A.-based actor and singer/songwriter, has finished his first album, and his acting career has taken off. Angel called her mentor, Dick Whitehouse, a former record label head who has advised her for four years, to tell him she and Ilene were number one on Disney with Ilene's song. His response: "Of course you are. You're Jill." And that's why she just might become the toughest agent in Nashville.

**Author's Note:** Jill is also now a certified fitness trainer working in person and virtually via online custom workouts offered through [inerTrain.com](http://inerTrain.com).

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I asked Jill to look back and share her thoughts on her transition to a career as a music agent. What did the transition mean to you personally? What drove me was wanting as many people as possible to heal from the music I was healing from at the time. My law-enforcement career had ended. Twenty-two years of law enforcement and I was really sick, completely stressed out. Multiple fatalities, line-of-duty deaths—after years of that I was depressed. At the time music was really therapeutic to me. I started listening to Ilene's songs. I threw myself into songs being written by her and a couple of her songwriting friends. I found myself healing from their music. Were you confident that you were doing the right thing? Any second-guessing? I was totally confident. I actually craved trying to make Ilene happen. Anything you would have done differently? I would have been more selective about how I invested the money. I spent everything I had on it and at the same time went through a divorce that finished me off financially. So here I am six years later and very selective about how I put money into this. You have to know where to spend the money and where not to. I

learned all of that the hard way. It really does take firsthand experience and listening to other people. I didn't listen hard enough because I didn't trust most people in the business. I was so driven to make it happen myself. I was so confident. I actually thought I could make it in three months. You can spend a thousand dollars recording one song demo, and everything my clients wrote I was having demoed if I liked it. There were also the costs of traveling back and forth to Nashville from California. And if someone said they would listen to a song, I would overnight it. A month later I'd be in that producer's office, and I would see my envelope in the corner on the floor with all the other piles of stuff not even opened. I spent so much money. I didn't know once we had a number one song that it wouldn't bring in enough money to make my venture really take off. If I knew years ago what I know today, I would have a ton more money. Do I regret any of it? Absolutely not! I feel like I'm just beginning. How do you measure your success? There's so much soul-searching. How do we measure success? There has been a huge success with each person I have worked with, but the success and rewards have not been financial for me. Helping people make a living singing at gigs four nights a week, maybe not a record deal, but doing what they love and sharing their gift, that's an achievement. I did make some money off Ilene's number one song. Truthfully, at this point, I haven't made nearly what I have put into it. It has mostly been emotional rewards. I don't know how I can stop doing this, so I hope the money will follow. How big a role did financial rewards play in your decision to make a transition? None whatsoever. My goal was that I wanted my clients to have financial security. Very few artists get rewarded for their gifts. Not that I don't want to make money. I do. A fixed income at my age isn't really enough with young children. So I took a 20 percent cut for my kids' college tuition. But I was not driven by money. If I stay with my fixed income in retirement and pay attention to spending, I'll be OK. How did your preparation help you succeed? There were several things that helped get me started and keep me going. First, I found a mentor who can answer my questions, whom I can bounce ideas off of, and who can open doors for me sometimes. Second, I got my kids excited about it, so I have that support at home. They love it. I take them whenever I can. They love being in the studio. Now they are in performing arts schools. One takes voice lessons. One takes guitar lessons. All of this came out of my pursuing this endeavor. Neither one of them had any interest until I started doing this. Third, I was confident. I may have overdone it, at least initially. I just jumped. And I learned as I went. It has kind of been that way my whole life. In the past, doors have opened for me. I learned not to be afraid to run through them. I've always been able to make things happen for myself. I looked at this the same way. At the time, I was wrong because everything I didn't learn beforehand cost me financially. What I didn't know also helped me, though. I didn't know that things that were happening for me don't usually happen. I'm so glad I didn't know that. There are thirty thousand songwriters in Nashville and here I was taking Ilene's songs directly to heads of record labels. These were people I shouldn't have been able to get a meeting with, but I just called them, and they met with me. It has taken time, but those contacts are beginning to make things happen now and will continue to in the future. I'm convinced. What do you tell people who ask for your advice? You have to have dreams or passions. You have to be willing to take huge risks to make big things happen. You also have to be sure of yourself and open to unexpected opportunities. It's not easy to outlast the challenges of starting something new. I spent the last five or six years throwing myself into this thing, and it is a very tough, tough business. The business took off at first, then boom—I hit a wall. I almost gave up, and then this hot up-and-coming band came along called Tennessee Hollow. They wanted me to represent them. I heard their music, and I thought, I can't take on a band right now. I want to be done with being an agent. I have pretty much invested everything I have. I'm out of money! But I had faith. I agreed to spend two days in Nashville and connect them to everybody I know. Some of the producers were heads of record labels! They were the huge people who took me five years to reach—and everybody I called took a meeting. It was forty-eight hours of the most effortless work I've ever known in my life. One day we were even at the home of the head of Sugar Hill Records. I had sent him a link and told him I really wanted him to check out the band. It was an experience right out of a movie. By the end of it, I had three record labels interested and a showcase performing live. Two labels challenged me to book a hundred gigs and develop a fan base over the next year. I signed a one-year contract with Tennessee Hollow and booked them as the opening act for a major artist. What books or resources did you use or recommend others to use? A book will get you started but it won't tell you how to connect with people. You need to experience things. Producers would take a meeting with me, and we always had a great time. Martina McBride's producer and I spent forty-five minutes talking about motorcycles—Harleys versus BMWs. He wanted to know why CHPs rode BMWs. The thing I love the most in life is connecting with people—and they remember me. What are some of the surprises and unexpected rewards? One of the songs I recorded saved someone's life. It's called "Time to Fly," written by my cousin Ilene. A colleague from the California Highway Patrol was suicidal. She bought the CD and played it all the time—and eventually decided not to take her life. If you listen to the song and the words you will see why. I spent six years and every penny I had, throwing heart and soul into that album. If all of that was about one person hearing that one song that one time, it was all worth it.

### BUILDING A NETWORK AND PREPARING FOR SETBACKS

Shifting into a new career isn't always smooth sailing. Yours will have the inevitable obstacles and setbacks along the way. We all do. But as Jill Angel's story shows us, one key to staying

the course is having a supportive team behind you. Your cadre of supporters may include a mentor, a professional network of business pros, and a personal network of friends and family. Be open to their advice and suggestions. Ultimately, decisions are in your court, but gathering wisdom is always a good idea when it comes to navigating tricky times. The more input you can get when a problem arises, the more likely you will be able to find your way to steady footing. Here are some steps to ease your transition:

- Find a mentor. Who do you know who might be able to guide you along your new path? Is there a college buddy, former colleague, or a neighbor who made a successful leap into a second career? Delve into your network of friends, family, and business colleagues. Tap into LinkedIn and Facebook contacts.
- Broaden your mentor search. If you don't find a mentor through your own network, get involved in your local Rotary club and contact the Chamber of Commerce near you to see if there is a professional association that fits your interests and expertise that you might join.
- Seek out groups where you can meet new people such as networking events held by your alma mater. Consider joining a peer group associated with your profession. Join professional associations and go to conferences. Take the time to go to special speaker programs, or workshops. I belong to the Transition Network. It's based in New York, but lucky for me, the group has a great chapter in Washington, DC, where I live. The group often hosts author talks and holds member get-togethers, including volunteer opportunities, play outings, and museum tours.
- Explore volunteer work that will allow you to show what you can do and build working relationships with a whole new cast of potential mentors.
- Consider joining a SCORE chapter. SCORE ([score.org](http://score.org)) is a nonprofit association dedicated to educating entrepreneurs and to the formation, growth, and success of small business nationwide. Both working and retired executives and business owners donate time and expertise as business counselors, and these mentors will advise you for free, in person or online.
- Check out Senior Entrepreneurship Works. Senior Entrepreneurship Works ([seniorentrepreneurshipworks.org](http://seniorentrepreneurshipworks.org)) is a site dedicated to workers over fifty starting new ventures, which may be able to link you up with a potential mentor. It's also the American Small Business Development Center Network ([asbdc-us.org](http://asbdc-us.org)), a joint effort of the Small Business Administration, universities, colleges, and local governments, which provides no-cost consulting and low-cost training at about a thousand locations.
- Ask for help in stages. Don't be vague and simply ask someone to be your mentor. It's better to clearly ask for a small, easily delivered act of kindness, such as a virtual introduction to an expert who can help you. This may prompt him or her to continue to be interested in helping you again. Let the relationship evolve organically step by step.
- Regularly consult or meet with your mentor. Once you've found a mentor, take the time to meet and enlist his or her invaluable help behind the scenes in learning the ropes.
- Prime your sales pitch for a potential employer or investor. Your mentor can help you evaluate your skills and build your confidence and resolve. Then you can concentrate your efforts on what you do best—say, face-to-face meetings with someone in your network of contacts, who can then carry your passionate message forward for you. Or using your writing skills to develop a strong sales proposal.
- Be prepared for setbacks. Starting a new business in uncharted territory or transitioning into a new career takes time. It could take off like gangbusters, but in time, you will hit inevitable setbacks. This not only will require internal fortitude but also will force you to ask others who know the ropes for help and guidance. This is when a solid mentor by your side comes in handy.
- Seek and listen to advice from people who have been successful in the field. They can help you find leads when you're ready to get your foot in the door, but more important, they can give you a real sense of what their work is like on a day-to-day basis. Use their advice to get a sense of what has brought them success and what stumbling blocks to avoid as well what opportunities might be out there for someone with your background.
- Don't be defensive. When you ask for pointers, be prepared to listen carefully and put your emotional reactions aside. Remember that a critique is all about improvement.
- Tap into your personal network. You never know who can bring you clients or help you build your business. Reach out to potential contacts through alumni publications, websites, or regional associations, if there's a chapter near you.
- Say thanks. Write thank-you notes and look for other simple ways to express your appreciation when someone goes out of his or her way to support you. It works wonders in building relationships.

Meet Your Virtual Mentor