

Reinventing Yourself

5 Keys to Success

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Reinventing Yourself: 5 Keys to Success

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Author's Note

We've all heard that necessity is the mother of invention. Necessity drives human beings to exploration and discovery. I believe that necessity also motivates *reinvention*. Reinvention is usually motivated by the need or desire to improve upon something.



As a professional business consultant and executive coach, over the years I've witnessed powerful transformations when individuals have set their minds to reinventing themselves. I have no doubt that reinvention is absolutely possible at any stage of life, at any age and in nearly all circumstances. Not only have I witnessed the process and power of reinvention in others, but I've experienced it for myself. And the results never cease to amaze me.

Do you have unrealized dreams? Do you feel that something is missing in your professional or personal life? Does the path you're following no longer feel "right" to you? Do you sense that more is possible, but are unsure as to how to create a new way of being in your own life? I invite you to visit my hub on the web, www.dianedunton.com, where you can read about my journey and get ideas and support for your own transformation. In the meantime, I hope you find inspiration on the pages that follow.

Happy reading! Diane Dunton

Check out my new book, *Living, Learning, Healing*, on [Amazon](#)

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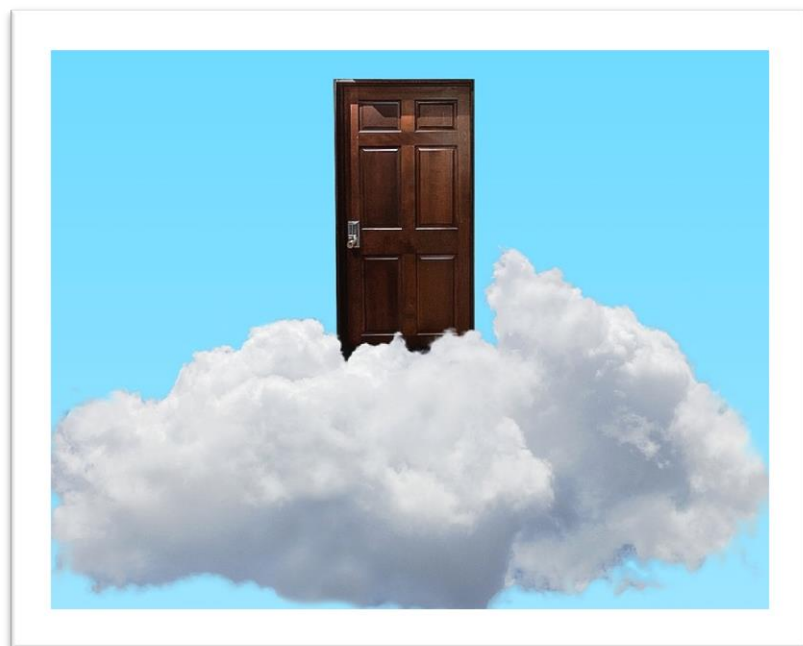
Reinvention Defined

Recently, I received an email from someone I had not spoken to nor heard from in quite some time. John had seen my name somewhere online and wondered if it was truly me and not some other Diane Dunton. In a return email I confirmed that, yes, “it’s me wearing a different hat,” and inquired if he was still involved with what I remembered him doing professionally. John’s quick email reply indicated “no, no, no,” as he had changed jobs and industries twice since I had last heard from him. Happy in his new life, John had reinvented himself and was thriving!

What does it mean to “reinvent” oneself? Reinvention is defined as, “The action or process through which something is changed so much that it appears to be entirely new.” Whoa! Changing so much as to be entirely new? Put this way, reinvention sounds like a whole lot of work and a bit unsettling. We all know human beings are creatures of habit. Merely thinking about the effort involved in becoming entirely new could be enough to discourage some from attempting any change. This can be true even for individuals who are not necessarily happy or satisfied with their current situation. Why? Because living with what is familiar—no matter how dissatisfying—can be less anxiety provoking than embracing the unknown. And taking on the challenge of reinvention really is embarking on a journey into the unknown. Think about it. When you schedule a trip, you may have the goal of getting to a particular place, but can you be certain of all that awaits you upon arrival?

Here’s the thing: The process of reinvention is a process of self-discovery. Through it, we learn more about what we want to connect to, what we are capable of and what is actually possible. Reinvention flings open the door of possibility. Reinvention can be the route to unimagined success however you define it.

There's no denying change can be difficult to navigate. Personally, I have a tendency to resist change at first. I have to acclimate myself to the idea of it before I dive in and take the actions that create change. Whether you are someone who avoids, tolerates, seeks, or embraces it, there's no one "right" way to deal with change. There is, however, in my experience a better way to look at it. Nothing is permanent. Change is inevitable. Change will come whether we're bracing ourselves against the door to keep it out or swinging the door open to invite it in. The only difference is that when we invite change (or at least accept it), we will be more inclined to look at it as friend rather than foe; as something exciting and full of potential rather than scary and potentially dangerous.



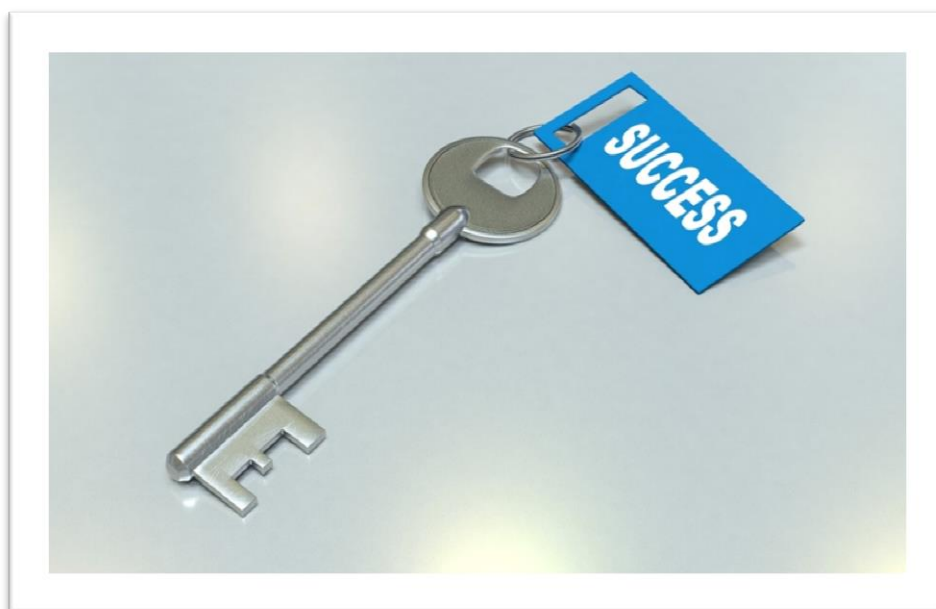
During my lifetime, I have reinvented aspects of myself numerous times and not every reinvention was welcome or invited. My own reinventions have been at times physical, at times personal and at times professional. Probably my first "reinvention" was the hardest, because to that point I had no prior experience in becoming entirely new! Some of my reinventions have been the result of changes I initiated (such as leaving corporate management to become an entrepreneur). Some of my reinventions were the result of changes Life initiated (as when I received a cancer diagnosis). Yet, by choice or not, I can honestly say (albeit in retrospect) that each reinvention gave rise to something incredibly wonderful and positive in me and my life.

Physically, I have made many changes. I grew up with asthma at a time when the best treatment was considered to be limiting physical activity. In my twenties, I realized that the more active I became the stronger my lungs were. I started running! I remember back to those first runs. My legs seemed to drag, my sneakers felt like weights after only a few minutes. My lungs ached and cried for

me to stop. I persisted though and now, when I am not able to be physically active, I feel something is missing. In spite of the asthma and being well past my college years, I hike, bike, swim and consider myself an active outdoorswoman.

Professionally, one of the biggest risks (and opportunities!) for reinventing myself was when I left the comfort of a corporate setting, paycheck and benefits to start my own business. Managing my own business had been a lifelong dream. But how scary! What if I couldn't find work? What if I could not provide for my daughters? I was a single mother and in a new relationship. What would be the impact on those close to me? I worked hard on developing my business plan and on June 19, 1996, I opened the doors to my business and have never looked back. Yes, there has been uncertainty at times, but there has also been great satisfaction in knowing that I am in charge of my destiny. I am the one who determines how much I work, how hard I want to work and what I will do for work. What originally began as taking one of the biggest risks of my life resulted in delivering even bigger opportunities.

Whenever I have not held true to who I am, the "reinvention" has not been sustained. In my work I support people who are facing job eliminations. Over the years, I have seen people reinvent themselves in some very significant ways. But the first question is always, "How do I get started?" I believe there are five key action steps critical for self-reinvention.

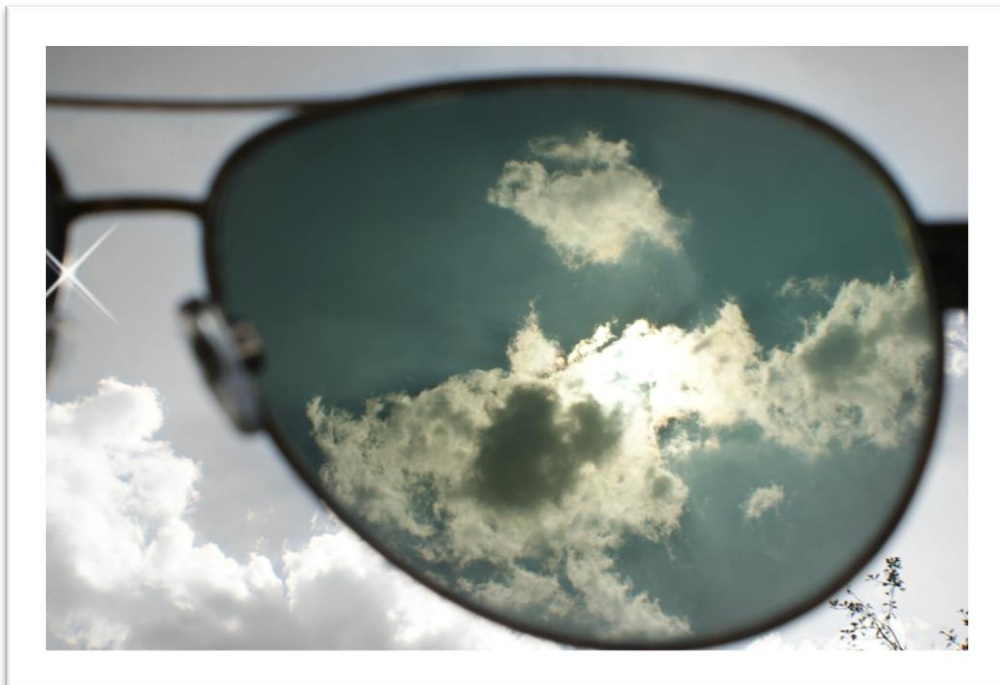


5 Keys to Success

1

Create a Vision

Who are you now? Who might you become? The first key to reinvention is creating a vision of your new self. Assemble a collage of words, images and activities that you imagine yourself doing in the future. You can do this by journaling, or meditating, using Pinterest or making an actual physical collage on paper. However you create your collage, as you fall asleep at night, hold the vision it represents in your mind. As you move through your day, make it a habit to take just a moment to picture your vision in your mind's eye. Unless we create a new image of ourselves and hold it front and center, we can (and likely will) get stuck in the old image. For example, suppose you want to start a new business. Your first step might include creating a vision of your new self, detailing what your office will look like, the work you will be doing, how you will be doing the work and with whom, and how achieving this vision might make you feel.



2 Develop a Support System

We all need people to support us; family, friends and colleagues who will listen to our ideas, fears and excitement and help ease the way of change. Years ago, I thought about continuing my education to earn a Master's Degree. At the time, I was a single mother and working many hours. Though I could not imagine where I would find the time to study, I told a close friend of my deep desire to earn an advanced degree. From that day forward, every time we spoke, my friend would ask me what action I was taking to move toward that goal. In spite of some uncertainty and fear, six years later I graduated with a Master's Degree in counseling. A joyous day! The sense of accomplishment and feeling of boundless possibility was worth every moment of juggling work, school and parenting. I've always remained grateful that I did not allow fear to keep me from swinging open the door and inviting change into my life.



3 Create a Plan

In working with clients to plan and facilitate change, I often use bridge imagery. Imagine you are standing on one side of a bridge. Your vision of your reinvented life is on the other side of the bridge. Above is blue sky, below is calm water. At times, the sky may turn stormy and the waters turbulent, but the bridge is sturdy and will hold you as you take steps toward the other side where your reinvented life awaits.



The plan becomes what you will need to do to get to the other side. What will you need to take with you? What barriers will you need to overcome? What fears might you face? What will make the crossing easier?

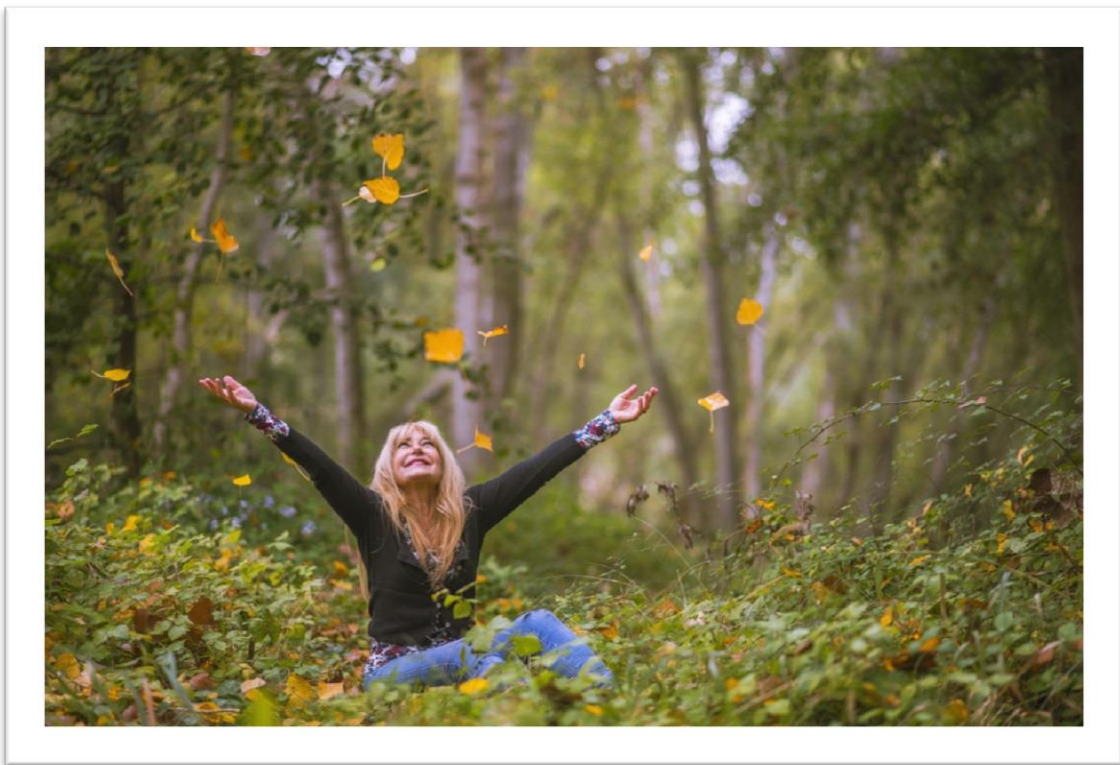
4 Find a Mentor

Mentors have played an important role in my life. I have been blessed by wonderfully wise and generous mentors who have guided and supported me through my walks over the bridge. One mentor, Marla, was critical in my success in starting my own business. She knew of my dream, encouraged me to believe in myself and helped me develop my plan to cross the bridge. She checked in with me often along the way, providing guidance and advice, as well as allowing me to share my frustrations, fears and hopes. Take the action to find a mentor who will teach, model, understand and assist you. This can be invaluable.



5 Be Willing to Let Go

Make the decision to loosen your grip and trust the universe. I worked with a woman who wanted to make a significant change in her life. She wanted the change to occur immediately. She would cry, share her frustrations and, on some days, resist what was actually happening. I acknowledged her frustration and shared that we have to place our intention and vision into the universe and then let the universe make space for our desires. Within a very short time, every aspect of the kind of job she had envisioned materialized. The universe responded and, today, she is actively living her vision.

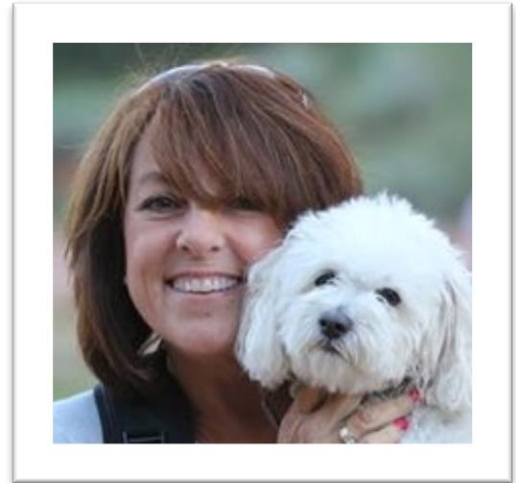


A Final Thought

What does your future self look like? Anyone, at any stage of life, can take the steps necessary to reinvent themselves. It requires effort and isn't always (or even often) easy, but for those who dare to create a vision, share it with others, get support, make a plan and take those first steps? Self-reinvention is a rebirth. When you're ready, Life will be calling.

About the Author

DIANE L. DUNTON discovered the healing power of the creative arts after the premature death of her husband and her own journey with breast cancer. An avid cyclist, writer, photographer and accomplished portrait and landscape artist, she is also a practicing Reiki Master and Trainer. Diane finds these talents enrich her professional life as founder of Potential Released Consulting Services, the company she started in 1996 to provide specialized human resource and business consulting and executive coaching to corporations and nonprofits. She is a skilled motivational public speaker, sharing her life experiences and assisting others in nurturing their own creative life energy to discover and pursue their passions. Diane lives on the water with her husband in the Lakes Region of Southern Maine.



Let's Connect!

Read my book. *Living, Learning, Healing: Inspirational Stories from the Heart* (Rainbow River Press, 2017). Available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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