

25

TIPS

*TO OWNING YOUR PERSONAL
AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT*

KW

KRISTAL
WALKER



Copyright © 2019 by Kristal Walker. All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission in advance from the publisher.

Inquiries regarding permission for use of the material contained in this book should be addressed to:

3C's Training Group, LLC
c/o Kristal Walker, D.M., CPTM™
3868 W. Carson Street, Suite 315
Torrance, CA 90503
1.424.275.4068

Printed in the United States of America
ISBN: 980-0-578-46518-0

CREDITS

Collaborator and Editor

Laurel DiGangi
Los Angeles, CA

Photos

Alphaspirit
Chris Hughes
Hongqi Zhang
Lightkeeper
Rawpixel

Andres Rodriguez
Diego Vito Cervo
Gaudilab
Monkey Business Images
Sergey Khakimullin

Auremar
Flynt
Infoto
Nelson Ikheafe
Stephen Coburn

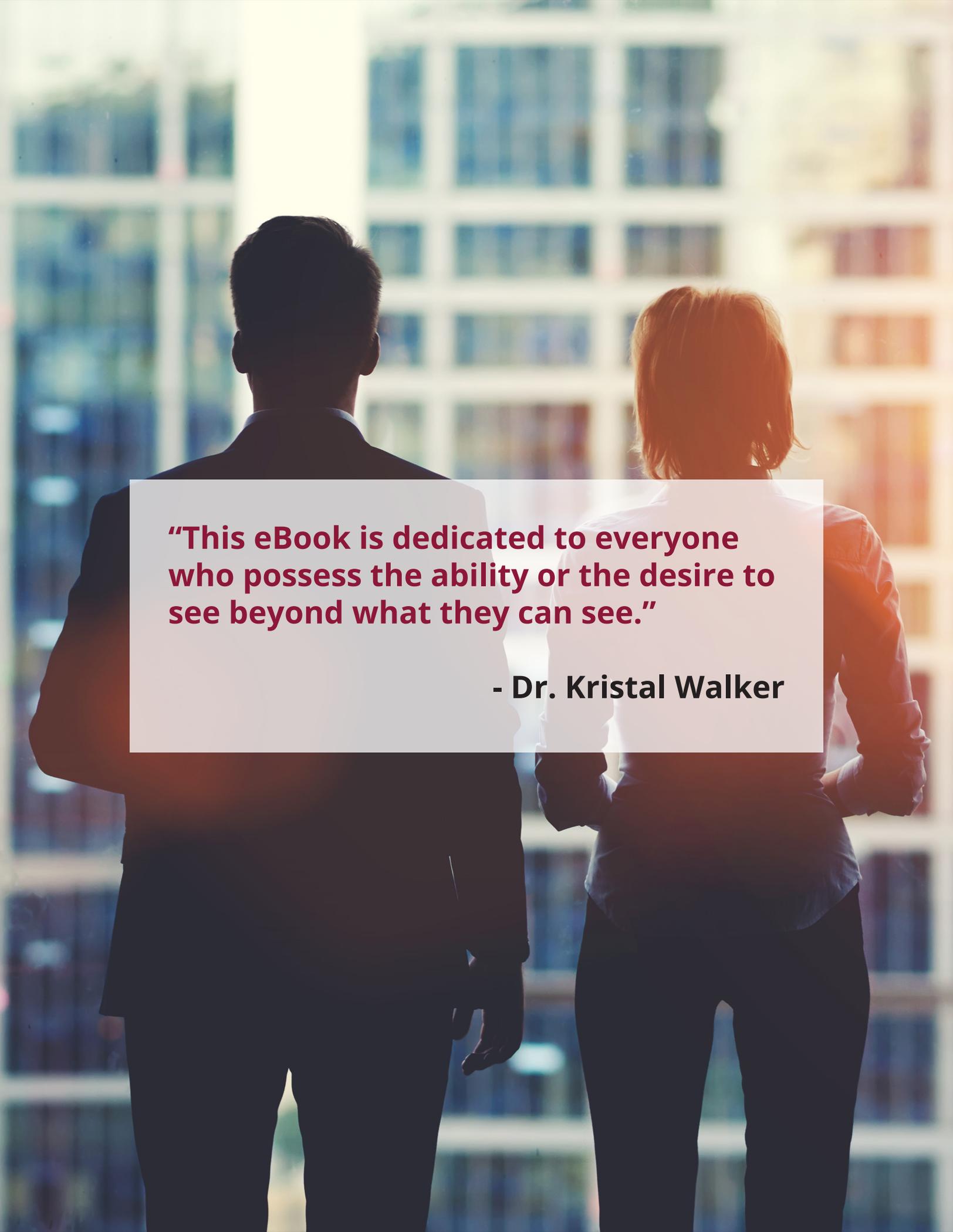
eBook Design

Cindy Wong - ccins design

25 TIPS

TO OWNING YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Written by Kristal Walker, D.M., CPTM™
Edited by Laurel DiGangi

A photograph showing the silhouettes of a man and a woman standing in a library, looking at bookshelves. The man is on the left, wearing a dark suit, and the woman is on the right, wearing a light-colored blouse and dark pants. The background is filled with rows of bookshelves, and the lighting is warm, suggesting a bright window or light source. A white text box is overlaid on the image, containing a quote and the author's name.

“This eBook is dedicated to everyone who possess the ability or the desire to see beyond what they can see.”

- Dr. Kristal Walker

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 – The Return on Investment (ROI) for personal and professional development is priceless	6
02 – “Mother may I” may not always grant you permission	7
03 – Take time to determine your unique value proposition—then sell it	7
04 – Save YOU first	8
05 – Build and nurture your personal brand	9
06 – If you want a new career opportunity, ask for it	10
07 – You are never too old to start anew	11
08 – Upskill for where you want to be	12
09 – Your next opportunity may be connected to your last conversation	14
10 – Integrity supersedes know-how	15
11 – Personal growth begins where the blame-game ends	16
12 – You are your competition	17
13 – Build a resource system	18
14 – Create a strategic plan for your life	19
15 – Turn your spare moments to dare moments	21
16 – First impressions matter—even on paper	22
17 – If there is no blueprint for where you want to go, create one	23
18 – Everyone can’t go where you’re going	24
19 – Ask a bunch of questions, then ask more	25
20 – Don’t settle for the status quo	26
21 – Learn the language and lingo of your land	27
22 – Mentors are great, but sponsors are better	29
23 – Discipline your way to freedom	30
24 – The whole you is worth paying attention to	31
25 – Relentlessness, consistency, and gratitude are the true vehicles to success	32
About the Author	34
Book Dr. Kristal Walker	35
Select Client List	35

1

The Return on Investment (ROI) for personal and professional development is priceless.

I polled a group of Facebook followers to ask how much they'd be willing to pay for a course designed to enhance their personal and professional development. While some people argued that the content, delivery method, and facilitator were all factors that would influence their decision, one particular response captured my attention: "I'd be willing to pay whatever price necessary to make me a better person."

People with this mindset navigate through life accomplishing some amazing and unimaginable goals. Not every development opportunity is worth pursuing; however, those that align perfectly with your purpose, passion, and responsibilities require a whole-hearted investment if you want to see the greatest return. If taking a course or two is necessary for your next step, trust that the financial resources will present themselves accordingly. Never be afraid to invest in YOU.



“Mother may I” may not always grant you permission.

2

Have you ever had a great idea that you knew would have produced a lucrative revenue? Ever shared that idea with people who weren't on your level and all of a sudden, the idea didn't seem so great anymore? Imagine having moved forward with that idea. Where would you be in your life right now? Now imagine a complete stranger coming up with your great idea, taking the required action and becoming a multi-millionaire. Just the thought of a missed opportunity at the hands of my own insecurities makes me cringe.

Too often, we look for others to validate our thoughts and actions and sell ourselves short, only to miss unbelievable possibilities. The next time you find yourself looking for others to validate an idea you believe could change the world for the better, share only what you need to share. Don't be afraid to take a leap of faith. You should also take note that not everyone deserves to know what's in your hand.

Take time to determine your Unique Value Proposition (UVP)-- then sell it.

3

We are all given special attributes. Some are duplicate talents shared among our inner circle. Others are unique to who we are and what we are purposed to do in our careers, communities, and relationships. Take a moment to understand your Unique Value Proposition—the personal assets that set you apart from the crowd. Once you identify those assets, find ways to increase their value and decide what you will give away and what you will preserve for profit.

4

Save YOU first.

If loyalty to others is your strong suit, holding back on including others in an advantageous opportunity might be a challenge. It's common to want better for yourself and those around you; however, you might find yourself wanting more for others than they want for themselves. The reality is you can't effectively help someone until you're in a position where you can help yourself. Pushing someone's vision—whether personally or professionally—at the expense of your physical, spiritual, or emotional health is never a rewarding experience. Before you can take someone to the next level, be sure you can provide sound wisdom because you've already paved the way.





Build and nurture your personal brand.

5

Personal branding is more than a trendy leadership topic; it's a way of life. It's the mirror that we should use to ensure our reflection is true to who we are and how others perceive us. Personal branding has everything to do with how you personally handle integrity. Your reputation always speaks more loudly than anything you whisper in silence or shout on a mountain top. Because your personal brand serves as somewhat of a moral compass, it's important that the brand you are known for is associated with a label you can live with now and in the future.

6

If you want a new career opportunity, ask for it.

I know you've heard this saying before: "A closed mouth will never get fed." This is especially true in a society where everything seems to change faster than you can keep up. The job market is no different. The most successful candidates strategize their way into a new role, whether within their existing organization or with a new company altogether. These individuals asked for the opportunity by applying the steps necessary to navigate their career.

The next time you want to shift gears in your career, be prepared to do the work necessary to become a "standout" candidate. This may require networking, upskilling to ensure you meet the minimum qualifications, or even performing some of the job functions for the desired position without the pay or title. Once you are confident in your abilities, ask for an opportunity to prove yourself. If your work ethic is anything like mine, you'll look for opportunities to exceed performance expectations and put to rest any preconceived notions from naysayers who originally questioned your ability.

You are never too old to start anew.

7

I was 24 years old when I was given my first opportunity to teach seasoned, professional adult learners within a higher education setting. The average age of my students was 47. I was 26 years old when I decided to pursue a doctorate degree alongside a peer group whose average age was 55. I'm sure you can imagine my levels of intimidation in both situations. But never mind me—my point here is to drive attention to the audiences looking to develop themselves in the later stages of their lives.

To witness these diverse individuals put forth the tenacity necessary to pursue higher education was not only amazing, but also worth modeling. They brought tons of experience and a wealth of knowledge to the classroom, always paving the way for great dialogue and a rich learning experience. They lived through some of the toughest challenges life could present so they valued education more than a traditional-aged college student.

Only by working with this population of students did I learn to embrace this hoary quote: "Age ain't nothing but a number."



8

Upskill for where you want to be.

Complacency is the cancer to growth, development, and the change necessary to operate successfully in any position. When we allow ourselves to become complacent—particularly in our careers—what we’re really saying is, “I don’t want better.” This “better” can take on many forms such as merit increases or new career opportunities, but it usually aligns perfectly with our intrinsic motivators.

A sure way to avoid becoming stale in your career is to keep yourself aware of the latest “best practices” associated with your expertise. For example, if you are a trainer, stay current on industry trends related to training, learning, and development. If you are a leader, take time to understand the newest issues associated with your industry’s leadership. Take a class. Access a free webinar every now and again. Become an active member of your peer community. Hire a coach to help you develop your soft skills. In any case, do what it takes to ensure you can stand confidently among your peers because you have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be exactly where you want to be.



OPPORTUNITY



9

Your next opportunity may be connected to your last conversation.

You've heard the phrase before, "It's not what you know, it's who you know." Well, there's definitely some truth to that. Building and nurturing relationships with like-minded professionals has never been more important than now, especially in an age when your reputation—good or bad—precedes you, whether you like it or not.

Technology—more specifically, social media—grants us access to more information and people than we can handle at once. If used wisely and within the constraints of protecting and promoting our brand, technology allows us to make meaningful connections with people of great influence. We can now follow, connect, or direct message those we may have once considered inaccessible. Given this access, it's up to us to be intentional about our "why" and "what" when making new connections. Well-thought out reasoning justifying why you want to connect with someone and what you hope to gain or give will help to maximize the opportunity. Having connections is good but knowing how to optimize those relationships to create mutual wins for both parties is even better.



Integrity supersedes know-how.

10

In my experience, a famous quote that has definitely been a truism is this: “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” This is especially true among leaders who carry great influence. Equally important to caring about those you influence is the integrity demonstrated in your words and actions.

Integrity is one of those special attributes that tends to hold the most value when it’s compromised. We often see this in situations where people have fallen from grace. Whether fair or not, their one failing action will overshadow all of the good they’ve done. Unfortunately, it takes almost a lifetime to overcome the damage to their reputation caused by a lack of integrity.

Integrity is also one quality that, if maintained well, can help you gain favor with people in a way that money cannot. At the end of the day, you have to live with the choices you make. Let integrity guide those choices so that you always live in peace.

11

Personal growth begins where the blame-game ends.

No one wants to be the center of attention when they're responsible for things going wrong. It's human nature to defend ourselves or shift blame when we've been called out for behavior or decisions that lead to bad consequences. In my experience, our default defense mechanism has a tendency to set us back.

Personal growth requires personal accountability. While it's helpful to receive feedback from others when our walk doesn't align with our talk, people who own their professional development will intentionally repress their undesired behaviors before they occur. Only when we accept full responsibility for where we are in life as a result of the choices we've made, can we expect positive change in every area of our lives. You have choices. Choose to grow.



You are your competition.

12

So often we allow the success of others—and in some cases, the perceived success of others—to overshadow our own knowledge, skills, and abilities. We forget that we have unique talents that not only give us a personal sense of fulfillment but could also render a lucrative return if we converted these abilities to business opportunities.

I've chosen to align myself with winners—individuals who are so serious about pursuing their goals that they've eliminated a "Plan B" option because they see no alternative to accomplishing what they've set out to achieve. These individuals aren't threatened by what the next person has nor do they look for validation from others. Their confidence lies in their ability to get better each day, breaking through barriers that others believe they couldn't.

The next time you find yourself feeling intimidated by someone who has deemed him- or herself to be "living the best life," tap into your special talents that will enable you to live your best possible life.

13

Build a resource system.

History teaches us that we can do more together than we can ever do apart. Owning your personal and professional development requires you to understand what resources you have available, and to use those resources to your advantage. Resources might include anything from relationships, funding, or something as simple yet imperative as time.

As you embark upon your professional development journey, I challenge you to identify the resources you have available that will push your vision forward. Once identified, optimize those resources for as long as you continue to have access to them. Not everyone is as fortunate as you are, nor can they leverage resources the way that you can. Build your resource system, then share the value of this important process with someone who can benefit from your expertise.



Create a strategic plan for your life.

14

I was 24 years old when I graduated from Springfield College with my master's degree. This was a special occasion for me as life, up to this point, taught me the value of creating goals and pursuing a formal education. A year later, I envisioned where I wanted to be at age 30. I sorted my goals into 6 categories: personal, family, financial, educational, spiritual, and career. By the time I reached my 30th birthday, I had accomplished 90% of my goal list. I hadn't completed the other 10% because I didn't focus on these goals as much as I did the others. This process changed my life because it allowed me to truly understand that I could accomplish whatever I envisioned and worked toward.

Perhaps you're not a goal-driven person or you don't have a desire to formalize your life with such structure. I'd challenge you to step outside your comfort zone and try it—just once. The thrill you'll experience from physically engaging with something that was once an intangible concept is nothing short of amazing! I will warn you that these experiences can become addicting and before you know it, you'll be establishing and accomplishing goals on a regular basis. If you find yourself having trouble getting started, see yourself at the finish line and write down very practical approaches to getting there. It may take a while to see your vision manifest, but having a personal vision should motivate you to keep you focused and disciplined to achieve your desired goals.



Turn your spare moments to dare moments.

15

It's true. We get the same 24 hours per day that Oprah Winfrey and Bill Gates receive. What we do with those hours is what determines our complacency or success. When you intentionally own your personal and professional development, you learn quickly to take advantage of every minute of the day. You'll find yourself serving as the night owl or the early bird if the hours in the average business day are not enough.

One thing we know for sure is that time does not wait on any of us. If we're not careful, we'll watch our competition be raised up right before our eyes. It's imperative that we seize every opportunity given us. The next time you find yourself with a spare moment or two, see yourself in a new place in your life and work toward making that a reality. You'd be surprised with what you can accomplish by making an intentional effort to use just 30 minutes of your day to work on achieving your goals. Though just a benchmark to consider, a focused 30-minutes per day keeps the feeling of procrastination away.



16

First impressions matter—even on paper.

Résumés, curricula vitae, cover letters, thank you letters, and even formal letters of recommendation are all “first-impression” documents. Before a prospective employee can affirm your ability to perform job functions at any level, you have to demonstrate the noteworthy ability to get past the gatekeepers—recruiters and applicant tracking systems. This level of preparation requires you to ensure your résumé and application documents are accurate and represent you well.

While there are hundreds of career counselors to assist you with creating attractive application documents, it’s important that your documents speak to the job requirements. It’s equally important to remember that while you may possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to get the job, you are competing against other applicants who are equally qualified. At times, it may be necessary to reach out to someone working for the prospective employer who can provide more insight about what to expect during the interview and hiring process. Doing your homework to learn the company’s mission, vision, strategic initiatives, and other pertinent information should also be a priority. In any case, first impressions matter and they seem to matter most when we least expect them to. Prepare yourself accordingly for the role you want to ROCK!

If there is no blueprint for where you want to go, create one.

17

As advanced as society can be, you may want to create or achieve something unique. In that case, you may have no pattern or blueprint to follow. In fact, I'm willing to bet that the cemetery is filled with dreamers and innovators who never reached their full potential because they weren't willing to take the risks necessary to pioneer their visions, even if it meant they had to do it alone.

When it comes to building a successful career, it's important to align your career interest with your passion. You can always learn to perform new skills when you're the person responsible for creating them. Being passionate about your chosen career makes it easier to cope with your most challenging tasks. As a trendsetter, you will eventually become a leader to those who come up the ranks behind you.



18

Everyone can't go where you're going.

If you're passionate about helping others progress, you may not be able to take everyone with you on your journey to success. This can be a tough pill to swallow. Ask me how I know. You've guessed it. I'm one of those passionate educators who wants to empower others to be the best possible version of themselves, but unfortunately—and to my surprise—not everyone wants that.

I've concluded that some people are indeed arrested in their development. They cannot see themselves beyond their current situation and have subconsciously become a victim of circumstance. I've learned not to take it personally when they decline my support, but to make myself available if what I have to offer and what they need creates mutual value. This thought process coupled with my own experiences has taught me that as I own my personal and professional development, the road may be lonely, but I have everything I need to travel it alone if necessary.



Ask a bunch of questions, then ask more.

19

So often, we draw conclusions based on the “what” without seeking to understand the “why.” This is true even in our career choices. We may find ourselves stuck on a job that we’ve outgrown or we’ve fallen prey to the routine of completing the functions of our jobs without questioning opportunities for process improvement.

As you evolve your career, spend time thinking about what you are trying to achieve and why. How will “that” career choice align with your why? Most importantly, does it create the value you are looking for five or ten years down the road? In any case, ask the right questions upfront, even if the answers aren’t quite what you want to hear.



20

Don't settle for the status quo.

I firmly believe that true leaders are troublemakers. They don't start trouble for the sake of starting trouble, but they certainly aren't afraid to rock the boat to initiate change. These individuals understand that the current state of affairs may not always welcome the necessary innovations. In response, these leaders are willing to risk careers, opportunities, and in some cases their reputation to support a cause worthy of the fight.

As you make strides to own your personal and professional development, don't be afraid to be a disrupter for the right reasons. Your courage may be the missing ingredient to a movement that advances society in ways you never would have imagined.

Learn the language and lingo of your land.

21

As I develop and coach leaders, I've learned to become familiar with their "leadership language" pretty early on in our relationship. Their leadership language relates to subject areas that are important to them. For example, if the person is set on achieving business results, I incorporate a "business results-oriented" approach to any coaching recommendation. This small adjustment tends to make their experience more worthwhile and satisfying.

You, too, have a language. Learning this language will help you go where you want in your career. For example, physicians must understand the language of medicine. If training is your heart's desire, you should become familiar with training best practices and terminology. Learning the language of where you want to be is a vital part of owning your personal and professional development.





Mentors are great, but sponsors are better.

22

If you've ever had a personal mentor, you know firsthand the value of leveraging their expertise and experience to shape your personal and professional development. Mentors have the capacity to help you craft a career vision and offer insight on how you can create visibility. They can also help you build skills, qualities, and confidence that will lead to your career advancement.

What's missing from this ideal level of support is the sponsorship to bring that vision to light, and to fully manifest your skills, qualities and confidence. Sponsors are interested in creating protégés. Rather than explaining how to get from point A to point B, sponsors themselves will move you through the transition. Sponsors promote their protégés directly, using their networks and influence to connect them to high-impact assignments and other highly influential people who will offer additional support.

If you're ever fortunate enough to have a sponsor, cherish him or her like no other. It's not every day that someone will put his or her name and brand on the line for you. Return the favor by optimizing the opportunities while adding greater value to your sponsor's brand by exceeding everyone's expectations.



23

Discipline your way to freedom.

Discipline is a characteristic often overlooked by the average person. While challenging to initiate, discipline yields a level of stability and freedom in almost everything life offers. The person who wants to be wealthy has to have the discipline to save and budget appropriately. The same goes for the individual who desires to be physically fit. They must have the discipline to manage their eating habits and exercise regimens.

If you want to reap the benefits of a rewarding career, you have to commit to doing the work it takes to be successful. This may require you to change some habits or even the company you keep, but it's absolutely worth it. If you find yourself struggling, find an accountability partner or career coach who can help you align your everyday habits with future career aspirations. Sow the seeds of discipline necessary for you to reap a harvest of freedom that will afford you the opportunity to live your best life.



The whole you is worth paying attention to.

24

Personal ambition is a great tool to have in your development toolbox when navigating your career. Successful people assert a level of ambition to overcome some of the most difficult challenges throughout their journey. Contrarily, ambition can serve as a cancer if you have no balance.

I've personally witnessed people make themselves physically sick by working tirelessly to achieve their goals. This level of ambition can be quite dangerous and less fruitful, especially if you aren't around to truly enjoy the fruits of your labor.

As you climb your career ladder, be sure to pay close attention to your health. No amount of money or career success is worth risking your good health.

25

Relentlessness, consistency, and gratitude are the true vehicles to success.

A person's success is typically driven by the ability to maintain consistency in the face of adversity. What might appear simple to you may have taken that person years to perfect. It's also very rare to witness a person grow quickly in a society where everything is happening so fast.

I gain great satisfaction watching individuals execute their talents in supreme confidence on a public platform because I know the level of preparation required. These same individuals demonstrate a sense of appreciation that tends to sustain their seasons of success.

As you work to own your personal and professional development, make a commitment to do what it takes to see your dreams come true. In the words of a good friend who has served as my personal cheerleader, "Sometimes you have to do what you need to do until you have the luxury to do what you want to do." I'm delighted to share that same wisdom with you as you navigate your career.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Kristal Walker has over 15 years of experience helping clients engage people, apply processes, and implement technology to improve human and organizational performance. Her expertise includes developing strategy and executable tactics in the areas of leadership development, diversity & inclusion, performance management, succession planning, employee engagement, and global learning in an enterprise context.

A teacher by trade and a thought leader by temperament, Dr. Walker brings great value to the partnerships and relationships she's built over the course of her career. In 2006, she launched 3C's Training Group alongside her work as a University Professor to design and develop soft skills and compliance training for small and medium-size companies. During this time, her passion for personal and professional transformation in others grew to new heights, as well as her interest in creating content, courses, and learning programs.

Dr. Walker earned an undergraduate degree in human services, a graduate degree in management and organizational leadership, and a doctorate of management degree in organizational leadership. She is a Certified Professional in Training Management™ and prides herself on developing the next generation of leaders. When it's all said and done, she enjoys being the wife to her loving and supportive husband, the mother to her four amazing children and the step-mother to her six equally amazing bonus children.



BOOK DR. KRISTAL WALKER

Dr. Walker is available for training and speaking engagements. Her experience and expertise ranges from speaking on diverse public platforms to facilitating training in small intimate group settings. If you are interested in partnering with Dr. Walker for your next event, please contact:

3C's Training Group, LLC
c/o Kristal Walker, D.M., CPTM™
3868 W. Carson Street, Suite 315
Torrance, CA 90503
1.424.275.4068
1.310.980.8161
hello@kristal-walker.com

SELECT CLIENT LIST

- arc After School Program & Experiential Education
- Arcadia Association of Realtors
- Celerity Education Group
- Conservation Corp North Bay
- Georgia Public Service Library
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)



www.Kristal-Walker.com