

Second Second Acts

Road Less Traveled

By ArLyne Diamond, Ph.D.

If you're anything like me, your career has changed more than once now that you fall into the category the younger folk are calling "adult supervision." As I look back on the many years I've been part of the workforce, I'm amazed at all the things I've done and learned.

Today, as a writer, educator and consultant, I find that the breadth and depth of my experience has somehow magically all come together in the service of my clients.

How about you? Have you chosen to change careers or has this horrible economy made the choice for you? What are you considering?

Some people I know are turning former hobbies into careers. Others are learning new skills and surprising themselves about the new competencies they are acquiring. Some are consciously taking "The Road Less Traveled."

Let me tell you the story of a woman who took that road. Dr. Naomi Brill was a professor of sociology when she was forced to retire. Long a nature lover, she started traveling back roads and writing about her observations.

She submitted some of her musings to the local newspaper



Dr. ArLyne Diamond

and they loved them and offered her a regular column. Soon thereafter, a syndicate noticed her writing, contacted her and syndicated her work. In the last years of her life (I'm sorry to say she is no longer among the living), Naomi purchased a

comfortable motor home and traveled around the country observing, enjoying and writing about the flora and fauna she discovered.

Her "road less traveled" gave her many years of pleasure, although the opportunity came about so unexpectedly.

My friend Carolyn Houston, a former IBM engineer, decided to learn how to do taxes after retirement and worked as a tax advisor during tax season. Other times of the year she was free to travel which she enjoys doing. This year she retired for good and is busily spending her time hiking, traveling and visiting relatives. Knowing her as I do, I'm sure she will soon find another part-time career.

Several people I know have chosen to purchase franchises and are now owning and working in retail establishments. Some are enjoying the interaction with people and others wish they hadn't taken that particular road.

In some cases, finding the right employees has freed the franchise owners to only drop in occasionally. That, however, seems to be the exception. Mostly, once you purchase a franchise, you find it necessary to be hands-on-owner-manager.

On the other hand, a friend of mine purchased over a dozen sites of the same franchise and has professional management at each site. He and his family enjoy the luxury of the high life and he oversees his various businesses mostly by phone and e-mail, only occasionally dropping in at one of the restaurants to make sure all is going as described to him by that management.

My neighbor recently opened his own professional tax office and another friend who had been downsized has created a bookkeeping service. When Bernie Silver and his wife retired, they moved to Sedona where she pursued her art career and his now managing an artists' studio. Bernie is finally writing the novel he always wanted to write.

I have close friends – from my high school days – who retired and moved to Boca Raton, Florida. For the first year of his retirement, Sandy chose to do absolutely nothing. He'd earned the rest. He'd worked so hard in the cutthroat New York business world for many years. During the year of nothing, he did occasionally play golf but not seriously. Now, he and his wife travel all over the world.

Why am I telling you all this? To share with you that life isn't over yet and even if "they've done it to you" as many people think, you have choices. You might not have found the right one for you yet but with a little searching and a lot of exploring, you too can find your "road less traveled."

Over 50 herself, Dr. ArLyne Diamond combines a background in business, psychology, education and law to bring her clients a multi-faceted approach to "getting the best out of themselves and others." She works with individuals, teams, executives, businesses, professional practices and government agencies. Visit: www.DiamondAssociates.net for more information.