

# Why Your Best Friend Is Not Your Career Coach!

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So your career has hit the pause button. You either have suddenly found yourself out of work, or you just aren't enjoying your job anymore. You may be someone looking for a work direction, or finding that you need a career challenge. You either feel a bit lost and helpless, or even alone and confused. Not only about the state of your future, but the state of your confidence, independence and professional image.

The loss of a career can hit us hard and greatly affect our self esteem. So, we search for comfort, to soften the initial blows of hard hitting rejection. We tend to turn to the people closest to us for some clear cut advice. Advice that we can trust, count on and rely on. That fills us with positivity and self belief in a scary state of bleakness. So, to recapture our hopes and dreams, and even to regain some confidence in our skills and abilities, who do we turn to for advice? Our best- friends. But after hours of pouring out our feelings to them, and after weeks of repetitive banter of complaining, more often than not, we still walk away from our best- friends, remaining lost in the wilderness, or like a magnet, being pulled down further by our career doubts.

We are at a loss of who to turn to.

So let's hit the play button, take a step back, and look at the top 7 reasons why your best friend is not your career coach!

## **1. Best Friends are there to listen, share, and advise you in the present.**

A conversation with your well- meaning best-friend may be a free advisory service for your emotional issues, but are they really qualified to ask you the right powerful, open ended questions that can truly push you towards actioning your steps to career success? Friends can listen and make you feel like you are heard, but in reality, may not have the broad knowledge on careers or job advancement. Friends can relate to our pain, but are not experienced on how to move us forward, when we truly feel

stuck. Guiding someone on their career path is a specific skill, and the person chosen for leading you in this particular direction may have to be a career coach or career counsellor, not your best- friend - even if your friend is in HR or in Recruitment!

## **2. Best Friends have different drivers to you.**

Friends like to advise us through their own filtered value system, based on their own personal experiences and perceptions of what ambition means to them. For instance, they may suggest for you not to quit your job, because they themselves don't have something to go to or perhaps they are satisfied in their job. But this doesn't mean YOU shouldn't. Their judgement of your decisions may indicate that their appetite for risk may be low, or their fear of rejection may be high. The decisions they've made for themselves might be right for them but wrong for you. One's personal outlook can't always dictate someone else's choices in life.

## **3. Best Friends tell us what we want to hear.**

They have a personal, vested interest in us, so they don't want to upset us and lose the friendship by saying something that is tough for us to hear. Friends generally need each other to vent and unload. They do want the best for us, but cannot give us advice that is independent or profoundly objective. They often don't have a good appreciation or understanding of how you are in the work place, and how you need to be challenged. They simply see you in a social context, and deeply value your friendship and values, but do not have the skills or knowledge to move you past an internal career struggle.

## **4. Best Friends get bored listening to you complain.**

If you are finding that you are spending much of your lunches and coffee dates talking about yourself, and how unhappy and frustrated you are in your job, then your friends may in turn, become bored with your company. Perhaps you need some professional guidance. It is the job of a career coach to give you individualised attention, non-judgmental communication, to validate your feelings and pull you forward out of your career rut.

## **5. Best Friends can sometimes be quite competitive and judgmental**

Unbeknownst to you, friends or acquaintances may confuse you, by questioning your career move, as they may not understand why you'd be giving up on what they think is such a good job. Or, you could receive a competitive reaction, as your friend may actually LIKE the fact that you are taking a job that is beneath your skill set, as opposed to advancing your professional standing. Be aware that they may feel jealousy and envy towards you for having ambition. So whatever ideas you have for yourself, either as an employee or entrepreneur, it is best to see a professional who will have your professional interests at heart.

## **6. Best Friends may lack professional confidentiality.**

Whether it be your feelings of low self-esteem, or some great entrepreneurial plans, do your friends really have an understanding of keeping things confidential? What if you had unveiled feelings of great shame or embarrassment, and your best friend innocently relayed this information to someone else because they were worried about you? Sometimes it is best to save your feelings for a career counsellor who can safely keep your feelings for you, and give you some practical solutions to propel you to great heights.

## **7. And if the internet is your Best Friend for advice...**

Just be mindful that on the internet, there is a lot of unqualified, unhelpful resources out there, and many are geared towards the American job market. So some things just don't translate into your local market!

The truth of the matter is this, that no matter how much you confide in your friends for emotional support, your career success really lies in yourself, and the actions you take to achieving your goals. To clarify and alter your thinking patterns, and find a direction to where you want to head in, invest in a career coach or career counsellor today. It really is the most productive way of pulling you forward, with great knowledge and guidance towards career fulfillment.

## About the author

Kerina Alter is the founder, director and principle career coach of Altered Career, a career coaching, career management and job search advisory consultancy. She is an experienced and qualified career advisor and corporate trainer. Her passion lies in supporting and guiding you every step to your career path, so you can grow your future with optimism and confidence. Kerina is a professional member of Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA), which is Australia's peak body for career counselling.