

CREATING YOUR *Perfect* WORK

How Ambitious Women Go From Bored, Burned Out and Unfulfilled to Highly Paid Doing Work They Love



FREE Masterclass Series hosted by **Renessa Boley Layne**

20 QUESTIONS THAT CONNECT THE DOTS TO THE CAREER, BUSINESS OR MISSION YOU WERE BORN TO LEAD!

1. WHAT ACTIVITIES GIVE YOU A UNIQUE SENSE OF PRIDE OR ENJOYMENT?

(E.g. Teaching someone a new skill? Providing for people? Helping an organization in some specific way? Entertaining them?)

Why is this question important?: Here, we're not focused on what you do "well". What you do well is not necessarily your passion. With this question, we're focusing on what lights you up. That's an important distinction when creating your Perfect Work.

2. WHAT ARE YOU KNOWN FOR BY YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND COLLEAGUES? WHAT DO YOU CONSISTENTLY TALK ABOUT WITH THEM?

(Are you the motivator? The fitness buff? The problem solver, relationship guru, political commentator? Are you always organizing things, people or processes? Do people ever say, "You'd make a great..."?)

Why is this question important?: Other people sometimes see us better than we see ourselves. Pay attention to what others say about you. Caveat: This only applies to healthy, non-toxic associations.

3. WHAT'S ONE ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT WOULD OVERWHELM YOU WITH PRIDE IF IT WERE EVEN POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO ACHIEVE IT?

Why is this question important?: This question often gives you a glimpse into your "Perfect Work". It kinda opens the door for you, and it's a question that you'll likely get a lot of internal resistance from. The first thought that comes to mind might be, "No way...". That's okay. Just lean in to the truth and be okay with the truth despite the doubt.

4. IF YOU WERE TO RECEIVE THE LEGENDARY MAN OR WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD AT THE END OF YOUR LIFE, WHAT WOULD IT BE FOR? What impact would you have had to the people or world around you? Would you have invented, produced or developed something? Protected something or someone? Nurtured or cared for someone? Spurred some kind of change? Improved a process in some way?

Why is this question important?: This question speaks to legacy. It goes beyond how much money can I make or how happy will I be doing this work. Money and happiness are important, but this question speaks to *purpose*. When you have a clear sense of purpose, it gives you fuel to get over the fear, and it builds your confidence because you know...that you know...that you know...that you know this is the mountain you were born to climb. *And...*it opens the door for you to think creativity about how you get there, which will be crucial down the road!

5. IF YOU COULD REDESIGN YOUR CAREER OR BUSINESS, WHAT INDUSTRY WOULD YOU BE IN? WHAT MARKET? WHAT SPECIFIC TYPE OF CUSTOMER AND CUSTOMER PROBLEMS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SOLVE?

Why is this question important?: This question could reveal a slight pivot vs a drastic u-turn. Sometimes “Perfect Work” isn’t this major shift. Sometimes it’s a change of environment, aim or focus...that makes all the difference in your fulfillment.

6. IF YOU COULD CREATE YOUR IDEAL ROLE WITHIN YOUR CURRENT COMPANY, WHAT WOULD THAT POSITION LOOK LIKE? WHAT WOULD YOUR JOB RESPONSIBILITIES BE?

Why is this question important?: There may be possibilities right where you *are*. Author Janet Attwood once said, “You can have anything you want, but you must first be clear on what that is.” Once you get clear, then you can start asking, “Who can help me make this happen?” or “Why is what I want good for the company?” or “How can I build a case for this?”

We can often go too far ahead, assuming that whatever we want is not possible, that we never truly define what we want. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve asked, “Hand on heart, what exactly do you want?”...and people can’t articulate it! Well, if you don’t know what you want, you certainly aren’t gonna get it.

7. IF YOU WERE TO GO BACK TO THE 18 OR 21-YEAR OLD VERSION OF YOURSELF AND COULD START ADULTHOOD ALL OVER AGAIN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY THAT YOU THINK IS TOO LATE TO DO NOW?

Why is this question important?: This question often reveals two things: (1) Our regrets – the woulda, coulda, shoulda, didn’ts. And on the flip side, it’s a gift, because it reveals the exact steps we need to take now – the mindset shift that needs to happen, the action that we need to take starting now, the stuff we need to let go of. The trick our mind plays on us, however, is this thought that “Well, I should have done that 10 or 15 years ago. It’s too late now.” That’s the lie. Similar to an airplane that is delayed at the gate, which it finally takes off, it “makes up time in the air” so that you still (usually) land at your destination on time. The same often holds true here. We can often “make up for lost time” when it comes to Perfect Work.

8. WHAT EFFECT DO YOU HAVE ON PEOPLE? WHAT DO PEOPLE OFTEN THANK YOU FOR? HOW IS SOMEONE’S LIFE BETTER WHEN THEY CROSS YOUR PATH?

Why is this question important?: We often underestimate our value to the people around us. Here, you get to perceive the value of your talents, skills, personality from other people’s perspectives - without the lens of insecurity that can skew the vision.

9. WHAT ARE YOU RIDICULOUSLY GOOD AT? WHAT DO YOU DO EFFORTLESSLY THAT YOU MAY NOT HAVE EVEN BEEN FORMALLY TRAINED FOR? WHAT SKILL DO PEOPLE SING YOUR PRAISES FOR?

Why is this question important?: This is your secret sauce. This is what you do brilliantly. This is one-fourth of the “Sweet Spot” equation, and when you can get clear on that, you can begin to create your “Perfect Work”.

10. WHAT WOULD YOU DO FOR WORK IF FAILURE, MONEY, KIDS AND CIRCUMSTANCES WERE NOT AN ISSUE?

11. OFTEN, FROM OUR PAIN COMES ARE PASSION. Think back to painful situations you've overcome, frustrations or challenges from your past. Are you drawn to help other people overcome in similar ways? If so, what are possible ways you can do that? Through a job? A product or service?

Why is this question important?: This is your story. This is one-fourth of the "Sweet Spot" equation – the formula that reveals the ideal role in a career or business that will give you the most fulfillent and highest chance for success. Your "Perfect Work" is going to be somehow, some way, tied to your personal story.

12. WHAT DO YOU ENJOY HELPING PEOPLE WITH THE MOST? What's something you can't help but do for other people, even when you're tired, busy or inconvenienced?

Why is this question important?: BIG clue here. This is one-fourth of the "Sweet Spot" equation – the formula that reveals the ideal role in a career or business that will give you the most fulfillent and highest chance for success. Your "Perfect Work" is going to be somehow, some way, tied to activities you can't help but do.

13. WHAT DO YOU PAY ATTENTION TO? What are your favorite sections of the bookstore? What magazines are you drawn to most? What TV shows or blogs to you consistently follow? Do any of them scratch a passion itch for you?

Why is this question important?: These are signs to where you can be a thought leader – and thought leadership is what distinguishes people who may a little bit of money in a particularly role and those who make "a lot a bit of money"! This is where highly paid comes in.

So pay particular attention to the areas that elicit pangs of envy or jealousy. For instance, you might watch Ayesha Curry on the Food Network and think, "I could do that." Or you might read an article by a prominent diversity & inclusion leader and think, "I say that all the time!" ...or I would have written that instead."

Once you know these answer, the litmus test to evaluate if you truly want to do this...day in and day out...for other people. A friend once thought she wanted to be a professional closet organizer. She had thought of a name and started fantasizing about how big it could...until she took on the challenge of offering that service to friends and colleagues. She quickly realized she hated touching other people's shoes! It literally gave her the creeps! So, moving forward, that skill became...a hobby!

14. FOR CREATIVE FOLKS – IF YOU WERE ASSURED YOU COULD MAKE A LIVING THROUGH YOUR ART, HOW WOULD YOU LIVE?

Why is this question important?: If you own this answer honestly, then you can start asking the strategic questions to find the "path to the cash".

15. LOOKING BACK ON YOUR PAST JOBS, VOLUNTEER ROLES OR BUSINESSES, WHICH DID YOU ENJOY MOST AND WHY? Were there elements of jobs that excited you? What elements would you want to incorporate in the next role?

Why is this question important?: Simply put, your ultimate Perfect Work, will always be a combination of the good stuff from your path. Pay attention to the breadcrumbs this question provides.

16. IMAGINE YOU COULD WRITE A BOOK – A GUARANTEED BESTSELLER – TO HELP PEOPLE IN SOME WAY, WHAT WOULD YOU WRITE ABOUT? WHAT WOULD BE THE TITLE?

Why is this question important?: This is a clue as to what could be your “message”. Believe it or not, there is money in your message – be it in a career or business.

17. WHO DO YOU LOOK UP TO AND WHY? WHO ARE YOUR SECRET HEROES, AND IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU WANT TO BE LIKE THEM?

Why is this question important?: It gives you a sense of your “upper limit”, especially if we have a tendency to play small. Our heroes give us a glimpse of what’s possible. We may not believe it’s possible for us – and we’ll have to fix that mindset. But don’t worry about that right now.

18. IF YOU HAD AN HOUR OF FREE TIME TO SURF THE INTERNET, WHAT WOULD YOU EXPLORE?

Why is this question important?: The answers here will help you distinguish between purpose, mission and hobbies. You’ll notice the difference in how you engage with subjects of “hobby” vs how you engage with subjects or purpose or mission.

19. WHAT PROBLEMS, INJUSTICES OR INEQUALITIES UPSET YOU ALMOST INSTANTLY? What causes are you moved to fix or give money to (...even if you don’t always follow through)?

Why is this question important?: This question can give clues to your purpose. It’s important to realize, however, that there are many ways to fulfill your purpose. Just because you have a heart for kids does not mean you have to be a teacher (although teachers are the *best!*) People limit the possibilities for how they can fulfill their purpose all the time, and as a result, they abandon their dreams.

20. HOW COULD I FULFILL THE PURPOSE OR VISION I HAVE USING MY UNIQUE SET OF SKILLS?

Why is this question important?: This question can give clues to your mission. Mission is about *how* you fulfill your goal. It’s the vehicle. Using the example, there are lots of ways that one could have a positive impact on kids. You can teach them. You can ensure that educational institutions have the most advanced technology to support the development of kids. You can oversee philanthropic efforts that pour money into education beyond what the government supplies, you can fund your own leadership academy or invest in someone else’s. You can create mentoring programs that foster college and career readiness. The underlying *purpose* to elevate kids is the same. Each *mission*, however, is different.