Published on *Fast Company* (<http://www.fastcompany.com>)

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**"What Do I Want To Do When I Grow Up?" Is The Wrong**

**Question To Ask**

**By Amber Rae [1]**

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**September 28, 2012**

**Feel stuck in your career and like you're sailing without a rudder? Could be because you're asking yourself the wrong questions.**

And so my chapter on "What do I want to do when I grow up?" comes to a close.

This is a process that started in the first grade when I was programmed to begin thinking about the singular career path that I would take for the rest of my life. The assignment from my teacher was "simple": Write down what you want to do and draw a picture of it.

But it wasn't simple for me. I watched all the other boys and girls write down "teacher" and

"firefighter" and "doctor." I watched them draw firetrucks and sailboats and planes.

But my page stayed blank.

I pondered whether to be an entrepreneur like my mom, a computer programmer like my babysitter's dad, or a doctor who saved people's lives. I sat and sat and sat, unable to decide. I never finished that assignment that day. In fact, it took me over 20 years to complete it.

When I graduated from college, I set out on a journey to figure out what I wanted to do with my life.

My unconventional career path took me to five major national and international cities. I stayed at jobs for as long as 18 months and as short as one month. I sold all of my belongings and moved cross-country because my intuition told me to. I worked with more than 15 different startups in one year of living in New York City. I started a blog to

document my journey--both the learning and the mistakes. I started a website to document the stories of people boldly pursuing their life's work. I messed up two startups. I accidentally turned insomnia into a global movement. I met with tarot card readers, talked strategy with multimillion-dollar entrepreneurs, and helped a best-selling author launch a publishing company, all to see if I could answer the question I'd been wondering about since I was 5: What do I want to do when I grow up?

This journey was equally painful and empowering. It was messy and it was full of insight. I was criticized for being too whimsical and praised for taking bold risks. I had emotional breakdowns and experienced complete nirvana.

Most of all, I developed a new theory on work: I realized it's not about what I want to do with my life; it's about who I want to be.

When I look back on my experiences over the years, every single opportunity gave me exactly the lesson I needed to learn at the time. With every experience (and I had a lot of them in a short period of time!), I changed. I evolved. I was pushed way outside my comfort zone. I was forced to face deep fears and insecurities.

As I evolved, something magical happened: I stopped focusing on the end goal--the perfect job, the one thing I wanted to do. I instead began focusing on taking care of myself and identifying the daily behaviors that make me feel healthy, fulfilled, and at my best. I discovered what it means to truly live and to enjoy living.

Slowly, the question "What do I want to do with my life?" shifted to "Who am I?," "How do I

want to live my life?," and "What do I have to give?"

And, guess what happened? I finally discovered my life's work.

Through this shift, I learned that what moves me and resonates deeply is enabling others to overcome the fears and obstacles that hold them back from leading the life they're meant to lead. I discovered that everything inside of me lights up when I can help someone navigate a challenge so they make progress toward an inspired life. I learned that by openly sharing the truth of my journey--both the ups and the downs--I'm helping others take baby steps and bold leaps, too.

And so the chapter "What do I want to do?" comes to a close. And now, the chapter "Who

I am" begins.

Amber Rae is Founder & CEO of The Bold Academy [2], a life accelerator designed to help you lead the life you were meant to lead. Applications for Bold Academy San Francisco are now open [3]. For more on Amber, check out her blog [4] or follow her on Twitter [5].

1. **WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE PHILOSOPHY IN THIS ARTICLE?**
2. **DO YOU THINK IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO ASK “WHAT DO I WANT TO DO?” OR “WHO AM I?” WHY?**
3. **OK, NOW ASK YOURSELF AND ANSWER THOSE QUESTIONS –**
   1. **WHO ARE YOU?**
   2. **HOW DO YOU WANT TO LIVE YOUR LIFE?**
   3. **WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO GIVE?**