

# Career Advancement – Audio

Hi, welcome to this month's VIP lesson, our topic... Career Advancement.

This is a big topic for many, many people. Anyone who has a job or wants a job and especially anyone who wants a better job, a better position needs to know how to advance, how to improve in their career.

Let's talk about the difference between a job and a career.

A **job** is just one particular position that you have now, whatever you're doing. But a **career** is a series of jobs over your lifetime and most of us who are working, hope that over our lifetime that our jobs, our positions will get better and better and better.

What does better mean? Well, everyone has a different idea of what a better job is. Most of us agree that more money is nice, so most of us hope that we will make more and more and more money through our life. But another way to think of a better job is a job that's more enjoyable, that has more freedom, that has more interesting responsibilities, that has more status, for some people. So it's really up to you to decide in your life what kinds of jobs do you want now and in the future.

Of course, the truth is that in the moment right now, sometimes we take jobs that we don't like, that we don't enjoy or maybe we even enjoy the job but we don't want to be in the same job forever. We have to eat. We have to pay our bills, so that's necessary. But for our career longterm we need to plan, to think ahead and too many people get stuck in jobs they don't like, because they don't think ahead. They're not thinking of, what's the next step? What's the next step that I want? Or, they want something better, they can imagine it but they don't know how to get it.

This month I'm going to teach you how to do that.

Many years ago when I first was in graduate school studying social work, this is before I was an English teacher. My first career was as a social worker. I went to school to get my Master's degree in social work. While I was in school I got an internship, which was unpaid, no money. So for five months, one semester I worked for free at a youth shelter. This was a place that helped young people who were having problems, maybe they ran away from home, ran away from their parents. Maybe their parents had abused them. Maybe they had drug problems, many different situations.

While I was in school I realized that I would graduate and that after graduation I wanted a job. I specifically wanted a job at this youth shelter, that's why I got the internship there, because I liked the organization. I liked the people who worked there. I liked the boss there and I knew that I wanted that position, a paid position with them. So I was thinking ahead. That's the first step, think ahead.

I showed up and I was there, it was me but there were several other interns also. This was a fairly large organization and they had three or four interns total, so it wasn't just me. Let me tell you what the other interns did first. What most interns do is they're passive, so the interns came to work and then they sat around and waited to be told what to do. So they sat around and waited for the director or one of the full-time staff, full-time counselors, social workers to tell them they needed help, to tell them what to do, to give them a task. So most of the time they were kind of sitting around waiting for something to happen.

Another thing I noticed about the other interns is that they frequently complained so they would not only sit around waiting to be told what to do, but they would often sit around and complain about different things. Maybe there were complaining about school and their classes or

complaining about something happening at their internship. They never seemed to offer any kind of solutions they just kind of complained and complained and sat around.

I did something very different. I realized that I wanted to work there. I wanted to get a job offer from that place. I liked the place, it was very flexible. I loved the people there, so I thought I gotta get a job here, this is my perfect place to work. But I also knew they probably would only have one position available and there were three other interns I was competing with, plus whoever else might apply for the job also. I knew I had to make myself stand out in a very positive way.

What I did is, I decided to just act like I already had the job. In other words, act like I was already a staff member, act like I was already being paid, act like I was already in the position that I wanted, already a full-time counselor.

1. The first thing I did was I watched the other full-time counselors.

I watched what they did. I watched how they dressed. I noticed how they dressed, what kind of clothes they wore. I noticed how they talked to each other. I noticed all the different jobs and tasks they did. I noticed in our staff meetings what they would talk about.

2. Step two, once I had a good feeling of what their job was like, I went up to each one of them and asked them if I could help them.

I said can I go with you? Maybe they were doing, for example, group counseling. They would go to the schools and meet with four or five kids who were having problems in the schools and talk to them and try to help the kids solve their problems. So I asked the counselors, can I come with you and watch you so I can learn more about your job? I can help you if you need help, I'll do anything. That's what I did, I started going along with all these different counselors going to their groups. I would help them with anything. I would make copies of papers for them or help them with paperwork, whatever they needed I would help them.

Here's what happened, after a few weeks I started learning their job very well and then I started to participate a little bit in the groups. They started to trust me. The counselors trusted me, I was being very helpful to them. I was learning everything I could so they let me join in with the group so I could try to help the kids a little bit too. I also tried to dress a little bit nicer than the interns. A lot of the interns were college kids, who were just wearing t-shirts and jeans or stuff like that, but I tried to dress like the counselors dressed. Counselors don't wear suits and things like that, but they do dress a little nicer, so I started doing that a little bit too. Again, so I would look just like them.

As the internship went forward after some more time, I started to become very comfortable. I started to understand their job very well and I was learning a lot of things. So eventually, I knew what problems they had. I knew what problems the organization had. Then I started to offer my ideas, to offer my solutions. For example, I knew they wanted to expand the programs in the schools, but they didn't have enough money, so I helped to write a proposal to get more money to pay for one more counselor, so they could expand their programs.

Nobody asked me to do this, I volunteered to do this. It was my idea to do it and then I did the work to do it. I started doing this more and more in the meetings with the individual counselors, with the director, offering my suggestions. Sometimes they didn't like my suggestions or my suggestions weren't so good, but sometimes they were and they appreciated my ideas.

In short, what happened is eventually my proposal that I wrote was approved. We went it off to a foundation and they approved it and gave this organization more money to expand their programs. So guess what happened at the end of the internship? I was offered a job and I indeed ended up working there for a few years. It was one of the best jobs of my life, certainly the best job I ever had as a social worker. It was a great experience. So I moved from intern to full-time staff at exactly the place I wanted. I got exactly the position I wanted.

Let's talk about some of the things I did, that you can do in your own career.

- Step one, the first thing I did was observe.

You have to think about what the next position is that you want. Too many of us focus only on the job we have right now and we're so worried about the problems in the job we have now, the things we don't like, maybe the things we do like. We never think about what's the next one or we don't think much about it. That's the one we should really be thinking about, where do we want to be next? Got to answer that question first.

What's the next position you want? Maybe it's at the company you're at now, maybe it's at a different company. If you're young and it's your first job or if you're changing careers, then it might be at a completely different field. But you have to decide first, what is the position you want and then observe, observe, observe other people in that same position. I was an intern so I observed the full-time counselors, because that's the job I wanted next.

You can do the same. If you already work around those people than it's easy, just watch them. If they're already in your office, look at the people working the job you want. Notice what they do. Even better, interview them. Take them to lunch, you pay and just ask them questions about their job. Don't ask them for a job. Don't try to get a job from them, that's obnoxious and people don't like that because it feels like pressure. Be clear, tell them, I'm actually interested in the job you do and the kind of work you do and I want to learn more about it, can I take you to lunch and just ask you some questions about what you do? Most people will be happy to do that.

When you go to lunch do exactly that, ask them about their job and what they do. What are their main responsibilities? What are the most important skills for this position? What are the biggest problems that you face in this position? Get as many details as you can about that position that you want.

- The next step is to volunteer and to help out.

That's where, like I did, you contact people in that position and you volunteer for no pay to help them out. If they're in your same company it's easier, you can just go to them and say look, I want to learn more about your position, so in my extra time, in my free time, I would like to help you any way I can, for no money, no pay, maybe I can go along and watch to see what you do. I'm happy to do any kind of job, even making copies or whatever. If you don't have someone like that at your current company, you might have to do it on the weekends. You might have to do it in your free time, but you need to do it. You need to be around those people that are in your next job and you need to actually see what they do and start helping them out.

- Step three, learn skills and solve problems.

Once you get a feeling for the position that you want, once you're around those people you know what's involved. You know what needs to happen and you know the problems there are.

The next thing is to start thinking of ways to be more helpful. Start thinking of ways to solve their problems for them, to help them solve their problems. Then tell them your ideas, or if you can just do it on your own, do it on your own and solve some of their problems, even if they're just tiny little problems, do that.

As I mentioned, for the counselors sometimes they needed to make copies of paperwork and they were very busy so I helped solve that problem, I would make copies for them. That was a big help to them, they liked it and it created a good relationship with them. As you learn more and more, as you volunteer more and more, you can solve bigger problems and make better suggestions. Also, as you're watching these people and volunteering you need to see what

skills you need, what new skills do you need, because you might need to make some improvements?

In that social work position I realized I needed to learn how to be a good counselor, how to talk to teenagers and help them solve their problems. I watched how the good counselors did it and I took lots of notes. Then I practiced doing it myself so that I got better and better, so that my counseling skills improved. You'll need to do this too. You'll need to develop certain new skills so that you can do that new job, get to that new position and perform well.

- Finally, number four, you want to talk, look, dress and act like the people in your new position.

So if in your current job you wear casual clothes, but in the job you want people wear suits, start wearing suits to your work. Start wearing suits. You want to look, not like your current job but look like the next job that you want.

I remember I worked at IBM one time, again just an intern, a college student working there. But I worked at IBM and I remember in the department there were a lot of people, a lot of people working in this video department, but there was one guy in the department that always wore a very nice suit. Everybody else dressed casually, because it was the video department, so everybody acted more casual like they were artists, they're doing videos, so they thought of themselves more of artists. They dressed quite casually, but one of the directors always dressed very nicely in a suit and tie.

Guess what? He's the one that got promoted into a management position and went higher. It wasn't an accident. He wanted to get to that next position. He wanted to go up into a management position so he dressed like a manager, not like all the other directors. So you have to decide that, it could even work the opposite I don't know. It's possible you could be in a position where right now you're wearing a suit, but in your next job you might dress a little more casually, more relaxed, more artistically, more creatively. You might need to start being more creative in your dress.

The point is, look like your next job. Look like the other people who are in the position that you want. Talk like them. Learn how they talk. Every position has its own vocabulary. We call it jargon, special vocabulary just for that job or position. Learn it. Use it so that all those people start to see you as one of them, that's the key thing and what will eventually make your career get better. That's how you'll get the next position. When everyone else that's there looks at you and thinks ah, you are like them. You are one of them.

That's what happened in the social work position, all the other counselors started to look at me as a counselor, not an intern. They started to treat me and see me as a counselor, another staff member, not just as a student. So when it was time and they got the new position open, I was the first choice. You can do that too.

By doing this you'll naturally become one of them and eventually they will ask you to join them and then, if you want to keep going higher in your position you just keep repeating this same process. Always looking to what the next position is that you want or, if you get that dream job stay there that's fine too.

Now, in the commentary I'll give you some more detailed tips and suggestions on how to advance your career.

See you there. Bye for now.

# Career Advancement – Movie Lesson A

Hello and welcome to this month's movie technique lesson. This is a video it's not a movie. It's actually a motivational speech from a man named Les Brown, who is a fantastic speaker, very positive, very inspirational, very motivational. In this lesson I'm going to play his speech, I'll pause after each phrase or sentence and then explain the meaning. I'll go little by little, piece by piece through his whole speech. Let's begin. \*\*\*\*\*

## **You want to begin to get all the toxic people out of your life.**

What does toxic mean? Toxic means poisonous and unhealthy. So toxic people essentially, are people who are very negative, people who make you feel bad, people who are unhealthy for you, who will not help your success, who will not help your happiness. He's saying you need to get rid of them and get them out of your life.

## **Hello...**

This is a little slang. If you're talking to people and you said something important, you want them to react. You want to be sure they understand. You can say hello and then they'll say something back, you know they're listening.

## **Energy drainers, get them out of your life.**

To drain, it's like eliminating, taking away. So an energy drainer is a person who takes away your energy. So he's saying energy drainers, get them out of your life. So anybody in your life, any people in your life that you are around, if they suck your energy, take away your energy get them out, they're energy drainers.

## **See ladies and gentleman it takes a lot of energy to reach your goals.**

To get success, to get, to get a better job or career, to be a better parent, to get healthier, to do any big important change, have any big important success it takes a lot of energy. It requires a lot of energy.

## **It takes a lot of emotional, mental and spiritual energy to reach your goals.**

He's saying it takes all these different kinds of energy to reach, to attain your goals... mental, emotional, spiritual which isn't quite religious but the meaning is that it comes from the spirit or the soul. It's the part of us that's bigger than just our bodies, just our brains. It's connecting to the universe. So he's saying you need energy from all these sources, all these different kinds of energy for power to keep going to reach your goals.

## **And you can run faster with a 100 who want to go than with one around your neck.**

What he's saying, he's using this as an example, a metaphor running, meaning moving to success, moving towards success. He's saying it's easier to run with 100 people if they also want to run with you, if they want to run, to go forward. It's easy to join a group like that and then all of you run forward together, that's easy. He's saying that's easier than trying to run with one person around your neck. You can imagine a person with their arms wrapped around your neck, so they're holding onto your neck while you try to run. They're pulling you back, pulling you down.

This is a phrase in English, kind of an idiom if you say I feel like I'm carrying someone around my neck or I feel like they're around my neck. It means they're being negative, pulling you down, stopping you from succeeding or holding you back. It's another idiom, to hold someone back, to prevent their success. So he's saying it's easier to run with 100 positive people, 100 people who want success, who want to move forward than to try to run with one negative person, one person who's pulling you down.

## **There are two kinds of relationships...**

Friendships, marriages or whatever...

### **... nourishing relationships and toxic relationships**

These are the two types of relationships.

Nourishing means to give nutrition. It means to feed. So if we say, for example, nourishing food that is healthy food, it gives you a lot of vitamins and minerals. It gives you healthy nutrients, healthy chemicals. So when we talk about a nourishing relationship it means it's a relationship that gives food, gives nourishment, it helps your mind, your emotions, your success and your happiness. It's a relationship that feeds, that gives to your happiness. That's a nourishing relationship.

A toxic relationship is a poisonous relationship. It means it's a relationship that makes you weaker and weaker and maybe even kills you eventually.

### **Nourishing relationships are the relationships that inspire you**

So a nourishing relationship, the positive ones are relationships that inspire you. To be inspired means to be motivated, to be excited about something positive, to do something positive.

### **They motivate you. They bring the best out of you.**

So nourishing relationships motivate you and give you energy, the desire to succeed, to keep fighting. They bring the best out of you. To bring something out of you means that the positive relationship, you've got something good inside of you, maybe you're not using it but that relationship can bring it out and get you to act on your best parts, your best ideas, your best dreams. It brings it out of you, brings out the best. Maybe it's inside of you as an idea, but the nourishing relationship will bring it out into action.

### **Toxic relationships are relationships with people that always criticize you.**

If someone is criticizing you all the time, constantly telling you all the bad things you're doing, it's eventually going to make you weaker and weaker and weaker.

### **All they can do is find fault.**

A fault is an error, a mistake, a bad point. So to find fault means they're looking and they find your mistakes. They look and they find your bad points. To find fault means to criticize.

### **All they can do is exploit your weaknesses. All they can do is remind you of the mistakes that you've made in the past.**

These are toxic people. To exploit a weakness... to exploit means to take advantage of, to use. So toxic people, negative people, they will use your weakness to make themselves stronger, to make you weaker. They will use your weaknesses, they exploit your weaknesses. They see your weakness and they exploit it, they use it to get something for themselves. They remind you of your past mistakes. Maybe you don't need to think about all your mistakes from the past you need to let them go so you can go into the future, go forward. But toxic people will constantly remind you of all the bad stuff in the past and it pulls you down.

### **These people are bad for your health.**

Toxic people are bad for your physical health.

**Toxic people can run your blood pressure up.**

That means cause your blood pressure to go up. A toxic person makes you feel more stressed which can make your blood pressure go higher.

**One apple can spoil a whole barrel.**

This is a nice idiom, one apple can spoil a whole barrel. A barrel is like a big container, a big jar or big box that's round and very large and you can put apples in it. So you can imagine you fill this large container, this large barrel with apples and they're all healthy, good apples, but then you put one spoiled one, one that's really old and has worms and disease and stuff on it. You put that one bad one in there and then the worms and disease will spread to all the other apples, so it will cause all the good apples to become bad. That's the meaning of this idiom.

We use it for people to. It means one bad person can spoil a whole team, a whole group of good people. We can see this in jobs and companies where maybe you have a team of 10 people and they're positive, but then the company hires a new person and they're toxic, very negative. They cause lots of problems, they're always criticizing, always arguing and fighting and that one person can destroy the whole team and make everybody else negative. That's one apple can spoil the whole barrel.

**One negative energy drainer can spoil your whole life.**

He's saying just one toxic person in your life, if they're close to you especially, can destroy your whole life, all of it.

**I know people whose lives have been ruined because somebody wasn't good for them.**

Ruined means destroyed. So he's saying he knows some people whose whole lives were destroyed, ruined, just because they had one bad person in their life.

**See there are some people that aren't good for you. Hello...**

This little hello phrase, when you say it this way is done when we say something obvious. He's emphasizing this obvious point, some people are not good for you. Hello... it means are you listening? Are you awake? Do you understand? It's a little way to emphasize what you just said, that it was important and obvious that it's a good point.

**They aren't good for you you've got to get them out of your life. See a lot of people put up with a lot of foolishness because they don't want to die by themselves.**

Put up with means to tolerate, to accept. They accept a lot of foolishness. They put up with a lot of foolishness. Here foolishness means stupid or bad behavior. He says people accept this bad behavior from other people, they put up with this bad behavior, this foolishness because they don't want to die alone. They're afraid of being alone.

**Here's what I believe. I believe in a one to a box theory.**

This is a joke he's telling here. What is one to a box? He's making a joke about when we die they put us in a box and bury us, so when you're dead your body goes into a box and he says, I believe in a one to a box theory, an idea. What he's saying is we all die alone. When we die we're all buried alone, one body in one box. They don't put your body with someone else's body. You don't share a box when you're dead. What he's trying to communicate is don't worry about when you die because we're all going to be buried alone anyway, so it's a bad reason to stay with a toxic person.

**Ask this question of yourself; make a list of who you communicate with most and ask yourself the question, what kind of person am I becoming because of this relationship?**

He's saying to look at the most important people in your life and ask yourself, because I am with this person, what kind of person am I becoming? How are they influencing you? Talking about friends, co-workers, family members, the people you're around. Look at each one and say, how are they influencing you? What kind of person are you becoming because of them?

**Is it helping me to grow mentally, emotionally and spiritually?**

The nourishing relationships, the good relationships will help you to grow, meaning to learn or become a better person, in one of these ways... mentally, spiritually or emotionally.

**Am I becoming a better person because of this relationship?**

Ask yourself this question for each person.

**Do they bring out the best in me? Do they inspire me? Do they encourage me to develop my greatness?**

Greatness being the very best inside of you. Do each of these people's in your life inspire you, motivate you to find your greatness inside.

**Do they make me stretch?**

Stretch in this instance means to try to reach further, try to get something more. In this situation he's saying, do they make me stretch, meaning do they make me try to grow, try to do more than I'm doing now.

**So you gotta look at the people in your life and find out what kind of person are you becoming, because of that relationship? My mama used to say birds of a feather flock together.**

This is another nice idiom... birds of a feather flock together. This idiom means people of the same kind come together in groups. So negative people are attracted to, are around other negative people and positive people tend to be attracted to and connect with positive people, successful people form groups so they flock together, meaning they come together.

Another meaning of this idiom is that if you are in a group of people you will become like them. So if you join a flock, a flock is a group of birds, so if you join a group of people who are all negative then you probably will become more and more and more negative, just by being around them a lot. If you join a group of super successful people then over time you probably will become super successful, just by being around them all the time, because they will influence you.

So that's the meaning of this idiom, that people of the same kind usually come together and form groups... birds of a feather flock together.

**You run around with losers you will end up a loser.**

This means you hang out with losers in the end you will become a loser.

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In the next section I will discuss and comment on this a little more. Be sure to review this again and again and again. Eventually you can go online and look for Les Brown. Some people are bad for your health. Do searches for Les Brown and you can watch his full speeches and get a little more practice.

Bye for now.

# Career Advancement – Movie Comment B

Hello this is A.J., welcome to the movie commentary lesson.

*Birds of a feather flock together.* This means the same kinds of people like to be around each other. Negative people tend to be around other negative people and to join with other negative people. Positive people tend to hang out with other positive people.

Les Brown, when he was talking was really focused on the toxic people, the negative people and getting them out of your life. He talked about the negative, terrible effects that toxic people can have on your life and indeed he is correct, *one bad apple can indeed spoil the whole barrel.* One negative person, one toxic person can indeed destroy your life or at least make you much less happy and much less successful. But the good news is that this effect also works in a positive way.

Back when I was just out of college, I'd graduated from undergraduate school, University of Georgia and I was working part-time for a non-profit. I was going door to door, knocking on doors and asking people to donate money. It was a very difficult job and paid very, very badly. So it was a hard time in my life. I had almost no money at all. I could just barely pay my rent. In fact, I had to use credit cards sometimes to pay for food or groceries or gasoline for my car.

There were lots of tough things happening in my life and I was feeling quite down, low energy, quite negative but a friend influenced me to sign up for a speaking course. I'd always wanted to be a public speaker and I realized that the ability to speak in public was a very powerful skill. It gives you a lot of influence. So I joined the Dale Carnegie Public Speaking Course. I remember walking into the room, looking around and immediately feeling uncomfortable, because at that time I was probably 23 years old. I didn't have a real job. I was working parttime, trying to raise money for a non-profit. I was dead broke, super poor.

I looked around and this course, this class had about 30 people and everyone else in the class was wearing a suit. They were all older than me, over at least 30 years of age and there were some in their 40s, 50s and even older. These were professional people working in professional white collar jobs. *A white collar job is an office job.* So I immediately felt uncomfortable because I thought oh, all these are kind of serious people. They all have successful careers. Because the course was quite expensive so most of those people could afford to pay for it. I used my credit card to pay for the course, since I had no money. It was a big risk for me.

A lot of people thought I was crazy to do it. I was broke and completely poor and I used my credit card to pay for this public speaking class, because I'd hoped it could help me become more powerful, more positive and help me turn my life around. The other people in the class were obviously making good money, they paid for the course themselves they didn't need to use a credit card. So I was surrounded by all these successful people I felt quite nervous and of course the first day my first speech was terrible. I was super nervous, just a horrible public speaker.

I've talked about this many times. I talk about this in my book that my voice was tight, my hands were shaking and this wasn't actually just the first week but probably the first few weeks where I felt so terrified to go up and especially speaking in front of these older people, more professional people. I had all these negative ideas in my mind about that. It was very uncomfortable. But something interesting happened.

The power of that course, I think it wasn't really the techniques they taught us. They taught us a basic formula for giving a speech. They taught us a few techniques for giving speeches, which were useful, good and positive, but that wasn't really the true power of the course when I think about it now. Because, I made an amazing change. The course was 10 weeks long, and I just told you what I was like in the beginning with hands shaking, voice and neck tight,

feeling terrified, feeling like I didn't belong there, feeling like I couldn't really do this, I would never accomplish this. I'll never be a great public speaker.

At the end of the 10 week period I was super enthusiastic, super excited about speaking. I loved being up in front of the audience and I had tremendous energy. In fact, that was the famous thing about me in the class was that everybody gave me an award for being most enthusiastic in the class, for having so much energy, because I couldn't just stand there and give my speech I was always moving around and acting out my stories with tons of energy and excitement.

How did I make that massive change? What caused that huge change in my speaking skill, that incredible accomplishment, that huge change in my attitude? It wasn't the little techniques they taught us, it was the fact they created an incredibly positive environment, that all the people in that class were super positive, so that every week when I was around them they were saying all these positive things after every speech I gave, even the terrible bad ones, lots of them would come up to me and say hey, you did a good job and if I said no I don't think so. They'd say don't worry about it it's just your second speech. You did a great job. You had good energy. I enjoyed your story.

So I was constantly getting this positive input. The leaders and trainers were the most positive. They created an example. That's great leadership. They created this example of being incredibly positive and energetic and enthusiastic and caring. The people in the group, these other 29 people were also extremely positive, complimentary; meaning, they gave lots of compliments, said lots of nice things. I realized it was just being around those people that created most of my success that led to most of my success, that I almost absorbed their attitudes, their energy, their emotion by osmosis almost.

To absorb by osmosis, it's kind of an idiom that comes from science, but the meaning is that it means to absorb something or learn something unconsciously. You're not trying it just happens. It just comes into you without trying. So when you're around these positive people, super positive people, you're around them a lot they're attitude, their beliefs will come into your mind. They will come into you without you even trying. Naturally they will influence you. You will become more positive just by being around them, just by hearing them and seeing them again and again and again. This is what happened to me.

Here I was this young kid with no success in my life at all and no confidence and suddenly I was around all these other people who were more successful than me. They were older and more mature than me. They were super positive. They were very enthusiastic and even more so, because of the leaders, the Dale Carnegie trainers, so they made the whole group super positive. It's like they all pulled me up just by seeing and watching them. Watching them every week trying their best, doing their best for their speeches, because of course, many of the other people were also nervous about speaking. They were also afraid to speak, it wasn't just me.

When I saw them I could see they were afraid, but then I saw them get up and give a speech anyway and do their best. It inspired me to try harder and do better as well. This is the positive affect, the positive side of what Les Brown was talking about in his speech. He was focusing on the danger of toxic people and it's a good warning, you have to be careful of toxic people and absolutely, I agree with him, get them out of your life.

In your own career you want to do better in your career, in your job, whatever, even as a parent. Well, one of the worst possible things you could do would be to hang around people who are not successful. There's this image in American culture called the 'water cooler' people. Water cooler in an office, like in a business is like a jug, a container with water and people walk and fill up a cup and get a drink. There's nothing wrong with that, but there's this image or idea of people standing around the water cooler, standing around where the water is, so they use it as an excuse, I'm gonna go get some water.

But then they stand there and they talk, chat and gossip. It's kind of an idiom now to stand around the water cooler. It means you're standing around gossiping at work. Maybe you're not really near a water cooler, maybe you're in the cafeteria. Maybe in a break room or having coffee, but in a lot of jobs/companies, there are a group of negative people or people who are low performers who don't do well and in most jobs, in most places that you work or that people work, those people love to gossip. They love to complain, so they'll get together in someone's office. They'll get together in the cafeteria. They'll get together near the water cooler and they'll complain and gossip.

That is a very dangerous group to be around, because they will convince you the company is terrible. The bosses are terrible. It's impossible to succeed here and they will fill your mind with negative toxic ideas, beliefs and emotions. You don't want to be around those people. Even if you don't like your job, even if it's not a good job I understand, I worked so many terrible jobs, so I know there are lots of terrible jobs, lots of jobs that just suck.

But still, it doesn't help you to sit around with a bunch of other negative people and complain about it all the time and focus on how bad it is. That will not help you succeed in your career in the long-term. If you're in a bad job then you want to get out of it. If you're stuck in a bad job, because you have to make money right now, you have to eat and pay your rent, it happens and sometimes it's necessary. You don't want to stay in that job forever, you want to rise up and get a better job in the same company or a better job in a different company.

Either way, to get a better job you have to become a better person. You have to become more positive, more influential. You have to become a better communicator. You have to become more confident. You have to learn more skills and become better at those skills. You have to connect with other successful people. So standing around the water cooler gossiping with the other negative people will pull you down and keep you stuck in a bad position. It will prevent you from going forward. You want to do the opposite in your career. You want to look around your company or even in other companies or maybe in groups like Toastmasters or Dale Carnegie's speaking courses, wherever.

You want to look for the successful people. You want to look for the positive people, the motivated people, the energetic people, the wildly enthusiastic people. Surround yourself with those people. You want to be a successful salesperson, hang out around other successful salespeople. Take them to lunch. Do stuff with them socially. Volunteer to help them out, whatever you can do to be around them, because you will learn so much and improve so much just by being around them and spending time around them. You'll automatically be influenced by them.

You'll learn specific skills, but more importantly, you'll learn their attitude, their way of thinking and it will change your way of thinking, your attitude and you will become automatically more successful just by being around successful people. By the way, this is also true for parenting. I see this.

My sister complains about this, for example. She has five children and she complains that when she goes to school around the other parents, she talks about how most of the other parents are super negative, they just complain about their own children all the time. My kid's always bad. My kids' won't behave and focusing on all the negative things about being a parent and then all the other parents join in and agree, that's right, and they're all negative. Indeed, my sister said, they're not very good parents.

They're not very strong with their kids. They don't provide the necessary discipline and leadership for their kids. They don't provide positive examples for their kids. So it's true as a parent too, if you want to be a fantastic parent then look around at the other parents that you know in your family, among your friends, at the school where your kids go and see who the great parents are that you see. I know there aren't many out there but there are a few. Who are the ones that just seem amazing, so positive, so energetic, who combine deep love and

care for their children with the necessary leadership and discipline and strength, who have both of those.

Those are the parents you want to hang around. Those are the parents you want to talk to. Those are the one's you'll learn from. They will make you a better parent. Of course, if you're positive and if you also have these great attitudes and you're committed to getting better than you'll help them as well. This is kind of a universal law in life, so in your career, as a parent, in anything in life. You want to be healthy. You want to be strong and have a good body. You want to be thin.

Let's say you're overweight, fat and you want to be thin, strong and healthy. Who should you hang around other fat people? Hell no What do fat people do? They get around and complain how hard it is to lose weight. It's so hard to be healthy. You're not going to learn anything from them. They aren't going to lift you up. Who do you want to hang out with? Hang out with the thin people. Hang out with the athletes. Hang out with the people who are strong and energetic, who have an amazing amount of energy, physically. Hang out with them they're nice, don't be afraid of them.

Most people who are healthy and strong and athletic, they're happy to talk to people who also want to be strong and healthy. Hang out with them and you'll learn so much. You'll be inspired by them. Their standards are so much higher and just by hanging around healthy people, fit and strong people, your attitudes and beliefs and eventually your behaviors will automatically change just by being around them again and again. Because they do think differently than unhealthy people.

So it's true in any part of life, no matter what it is you want to improve, no matter what part of life you want to be better or happier or more successful. Find the positive people. Find the successful people and hang around them and avoid the toxic people. Simple- powerful. See you next time. Bye for now.

# Career Advancement – Commentary

Hello this is A.J., welcome to the commentary for Career Advancement. Let's talk about how to advance your career. Meaning, how to get better and better and better jobs throughout your life.

The first thing you need to do right now is identify the next position you want, your target, whatever job you're in now, what do you want next? Too many people stay in their current job and don't really think about what the next step is, they're just focused on making money, paying the rent, all that. I understand they're busy in their current job. But if you want to have a better job, if you want to make more money or have a position that you enjoy more that's more fun, to work with more enjoyable, more positive people, to have more responsibility, to have a job that's more interesting, more creative, to have more influence in the world. Whatever your idea of a better job is, you need to identify your next target that you might have, your super dream job.

Maybe that's your next job, but maybe that will require many more years and you have several steps to get there. That's okay, but you have to think about the path ahead, know where you want to go. If you don't know where you want to go then you get stuck doing the same thing and you never go forward, you never improve. I understand this by the way, because for a long time in my life I was stuck working jobs I hated, for many, many years. For a while I didn't even know what a better job would be. I didn't have an idea what would be better.

I think they all suck, they're all terrible, and eventually I figured out that I enjoyed teaching and then I figured out what kind of teaching job I wanted, not so much more money for me, but I wanted more freedom. So I realized okay, at my current job I'm stuck, I have to use these textbooks. They're forcing me to use this method of teaching grammar and I'm not happy with this. I want a job where I have more freedom, where I can do anything I want in the classroom and teach my way.

So I had an image, a thought of what kind of position would be next, what's the next place I

wanted to be, what was my target position? You have to have that. You have to have an idea of what it is you want. It might be as simple as more money, but it might be something else. You need to identify that first. So identify your target position. It might be in your current company where you're working now. It might be at a different company whatever, just identify it.

- Next, you need to research that position.

You have your target position, you know what you want, now you need to do more research and learn more about it. For example, what skills are necessary for your next position, not the one you have now, the next one you want? What are the most important skills? If you want to be the head computer programmer then you better learn how to program a computer better. Certain computer jobs require certain programming languages, a certain level of skill, so you need to find out what that is and develop that, develop those skills on your own.

There are also some general skills that are just valuable in almost any job. For example, communication skills, the ability to communicate clearly to people, to communicate effectively, to be persuasive when necessary.

Leadership skills... These are valuable in all jobs, in all positions, because your leadership skills are basically your influence skills. The more you can influence other people the more you can get done, the more effective you will be.

If you can only do things by yourself all the time you're limited in what you can do, but if you have the power to lead other people, to inspire other people, to persuade other people, you

become much more influential, much more productive, you can get much more done and in most companies, most positions they're looking for people like that. They're looking for people at the top or higher up that have good strong communication and leadership skills. So those are good skills for anyone to develop.

- Public speaking is another very valuable skill that can be useful in almost any job.

Again, because it increases your influence in your field. If you're a scientist for example, maybe you do good work, but if you can't communicate that to other people not many people will know about it. But, let's say you're a scientist who was a fantastic public speaker and you go to scientific conferences and give amazing presentations, and all the people who attend learn about you and your ideas and they are influenced by you. That is going to help your career tremendously.

So public speaking, communication, leadership, these are all powerful skills for any position. So identify the skills and start working on them, it's a never ending process, but find out what the skills are that you need for your next position, your dream position and work on them.

- The next thing you need to research and find out is if you have the necessary contacts.

Do you know the right people? For that next job you want, do you know the boss of the next job, the hiring manager? Do you know who they are? Do you even know their names? Perhaps you identify one company or maybe five or six companies and positions. It's not enough just to have a general idea of the position, you need to know exactly which company you would like to work at. You need to know exactly who the boss is of the exact position you want. Who will hire you? Who will interview you for that job?

You need to find out. Get on the phone or the Internet, do whatever you need to do to find the names of the people who do the hiring. You might also want to find the names of other people, maybe in your own company or in another, who do what you want to do. If you want to be a salesperson, then maybe you should find out who the best salespeople are in your company or in your industry and connect with them. Find a way to connect with them.

- Finally dress, which I mentioned before in the video.

How do people dress in your next position, the position you want, your dream job? How do the best, the high performers, the successful ones, how do they dress? What do they wear to work each day? You want to look like them, so however they dress imitate it. Obviously this will be different in different fields, in different industries and for different positions. A highly successful college professor is going to dress differently than a highly successful banker, who also will dress differently than a highly successful salesperson, who will also dress differently than a highly successful computer programmer. You have to do this research to find out and you want to look like, not your current position, you want to look like the next higher position, the one you want next.

Phase III, you need to connect, observe and interview. This is not job searching this is before job searching. This is pre-job searching. This is stuff you do before you're ready to go to the next level. In this phase, in this time, you are not, not, not, not applying for a job. You are not going to ask anyone for a job; very important. Instead, what you're going to do is connect with people and talk to them and learn from them. You're just learning and connecting in this third phase, at this point.

What do you do? For example, you want to be a great salesperson so you did your research, you know who the best salespeople are in your company so what do you do? You call them up one by one or send them an email. You do not ask for a job you just say, I'm interested in becoming a salesperson or I am a salesperson and I'm interested in becoming better. I would love to take you to lunch and just talk to you for 30 minutes about your advice on how I can

become a better salesperson, just to learn from them. That's all. You're not going to ask them for a job.

Some people might say no, but a lot of them will say yes. So then you just start going to these lunches. The same thing with the hiring managers, the hiring managers for the position you want, even if it's in another company just say, I'm interested in this kind of work. I'm interested in what you do. I'm not looking for a job right now, but I would like to talk to you about your team and about your company just to learn more. Can I take you to lunch? Again, some might say no, but many will say yes and when you go to lunch do not give them a resume. Do not mention a job at all, just ask them questions about the same things you already researched.

What kind of skills are necessary?

What do you look for?

What is necessary to be a great performer in this kind of work?

How did you become such a greater performer? What did you do?

Ask them those kinds of questions, interview them, try to learn about how they think, try to learn about the skills that are necessary, you're just getting information. You're just connecting with them and getting information.

In some situations you can even offer to volunteer. You could become an intern or apply to be an intern, or you could say yeah I'm willing to volunteer just so I can learn a little more. So that's possible, but I recommend doing that maybe after you meet them, like maybe the following week you could say hey, I'd love to volunteer. I'd love to just come by and observe for a day just to see what you do. Something like that where you're just watching, observing and learning, again, not getting paid or asking for a job.

The next step is work to learn.

This is where you're going again, from maybe into a volunteer position or maybe you're going to take a lower job that's connected to the one you want. Let me give you an example. I was out of school for a while with my journalism degree, undergraduate and I was making no money and working horrible, terrible jobs. I was quite upset. I realized that I wanted to do something different in my life. I wanted to help people. I wanted to counsel people. I had the idea of maybe becoming a social worker.

Now, that became my target, my target position that I wanted to become a social worker, and more specifically a counselor, working with people giving them advice and help so they can improve their lives. But I knew I had a journalism degree, I wasn't ready yet so I needed to do some steps. I did all the research to find out what was necessary. I found out that I had to go back to school and get a Master's degree. Then I realized I also needed to get some job experience. I needed to learn and make connections, because just to get into graduate school, just to go into the program, they wanted references. They wanted references that were connected to counseling or social work.

What did I do? I went and volunteered. I volunteered at a hospital in a psychiatric ward. I worked as a volunteer for no money. I just went and attended some of their therapy counseling sessions. I worked with a couple of the social workers at the hospital. I did anything they wanted. I would make copies. I would go to groups with them. I tried to help with the patients, playing games and talking to them if they needed someone to talk to. I learned a lot just by volunteering. I also made great connections, because the social workers at the hospital wrote reference letters for me. They helped my application. They helped me get into school, to get into graduate school.

So, I learned a lot and made a lot of great connections. I didn't make any money, but in the long-term it helped me a lot with my future career as a social worker. Of course later I changed careers, but that's another story.

Finally, when you are volunteering or in your own current job right now, even if you hate it, you have to learn to become proactive. So instead of complaining about your job right now, oh my job sucks. I don't like it. I want a different job. That doesn't help you at all. Instead, you have to focus on becoming more proactive on finding solutions to problems and improving things at your job. So at every job, no matter how low or high the job is, there are always problems. There's always difficulties. You can be valuable to your company by finding a way to solve some of the problems, even the little ones. So instead of being like everyone else and just complaining, look for solutions.

Make suggestions. Talk to your boss and say hey, I noticed we have this problem and I have an idea. What if we did this? If you have a good boss they'll listen to you. If you have a bad boss they might always say no, no, no, no, no, no, no. But even if they always say no, it will still help your career, because if you do it in a friendly way. If you do it in a positive helpful way, your boss will realize you're trying to help. You're being more positive. You're trying to make things better, you're not like everybody else who just complains. Believe me that will help, even with a fairly bad boss, they will see you in a more positive way.

More importantly, you're training yourself to be a problem solver and that will ultimately, in the end, help your career tremendously. Even if your current job sucks and is terrible, even if your current boss is horrible, by becoming a different person, a problem solver, you will be ready for a much better position, maybe at a different company, but still you'll be ready.

Of course again, dress the part. This is a phrase in English, dress the part. It means if you want a certain part, a certain job, a certain role, you need to look like you belong there. If you want to be a top salesperson selling luxury cars, selling Ferrari's, you're not going to wear jeans and a t-shirt to work. People who buy Ferrari's they expect the salesperson to be dressed very nice. You're going to wear very nice suits.

Let's say you're working at a car dealership, a store that sells cars but let's say you're just the janitor. You clean the toilets that's all you do. You clean the toilets, the floors but your dream is to be a great salesperson. Your dream is to not be a janitor anymore, but to instead become good at selling. You're gonna to do everything we mentioned. You're gonna have to get selling skills. You're gonna have to learn how to do it, but you also need to look the part. As a janitor cleaning the floor, maybe you can't wear a super expensive suit to work. Maybe that would be a little too much because you're cleaning toilets, but you can still look better than most janitors do.

Instead of wearing jeans wear some nice dark pants, nice black slacks that are not quite a suit but they still look a little nicer. Wear a nice clean shirt with a collar. Look like you're a step above the normal janitors. Stand out in a positive way. Look more like the position you want to be, the person you want to be. That will make a big difference. You could even do this. You could even wear a suit in that situation, in that example, wear a suit to work but bring a change of clothes in a bag, so that when you come to work everybody sees you in this nice suit. You say hello, you're very positive and then you go to the bathroom and change into your janitor work clothes, do your work and when you finish your work as a janitor you put the suit back on, say goodbye to everybody and go home.

You don't have to tell them why you're doing it, but they will start to think of you differently. Maybe they'll wonder why you have a suit on. Why is he doing this? Maybe he's going out to do something? If they ask you can tell them, I want to be a salesperson and I believe part of that is looking the part and being comfortable looking like a top salesperson, so I wear this suit in the mornings and evenings just to remind myself of what I want to become. And to get comfortable dressing like this, so when the time comes for me to be a salesperson I'll feel ready.

Believe me they will respect that. You will get great positive attention by that. You gotta be willing to do these kinds of things.

In career advancement there isn't an element of being bold, of being different. You don't become better. You don't rise to the top by being just like everyone else. You have to have the courage, boldness and strength to do things differently. Maybe to be seen as a little strange or weird, but in a positive way. It's those slightly crazy people who have amazing success. Steve Jobs was a little crazy. There were parts of his personality that were a little bit crazy, a little too much, but it made him great and it will make you great too.

So that's the thing I'm going to leave you with, is to be bold in your career, to take chances. Take chances to be better, to stand out, even if it's a little bit crazy. Sometimes it won't work, but most of the time it will. Then you will have the job and career of your dreams that makes you happy and that's important in life. Some people say it doesn't matter, but it matters. In life you spend a lot of hours at work. That's a lot of your life and if you hate it or if it's not that great then you're wasting a whole lot of your life. It's important that all that time you're spending be something that makes you feel great, that makes you feel happy, that makes you feel alive, something you love, something that inspires you; maybe not right now but you can get there.

Follow these steps I just told you. Good luck to you. Please share your success with me. Tell me your success stories. Get on Twitter, my Twitter is @AJHoge. Send me a message about your success or do it in the VIP forums or VIP Ning site. Tell me, tell us, all of us, share your success stories so we can create this very positive community so that we all get better, we all get happier, we all have more success.

See you next time. Bye for now.