

Attitude and Longitude

Exploring attitude and inspiration with Angela Loeb.

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"Uncertainty breeds creativity and success" - Helen Harkness, Ph.D

Helen Harkness, Ph.D. presented to a group of career development professionals in Austin on October 19. I was among the privileged 60 or so in the room for her workshop. She's been at the business of career consulting for about 30 years now, having founded Career Design Associates Inc. in 1978. She teaches, has authored several books, and is the living definition of dynamo.

"Uncertainty breeds creativity and success" is what she added to her autograph in my copy of her last book, [Capitalizing on Career Chaos: Bringing Creativity and Purpose to Your Work and Life](#). I love that! Talk about transforming circumstances through attitude... seeing uncertainty as an opportunity for creativity which can then lead to success. My kind of thinking!

Before diving into that book, however, I decided to read her earlier [Don't Stop the Career Clock: Rejecting the Myths of Aging for a New Way to Work in the 21st Century](#). So far, I'm jazzed. Considering how many job seekers I meet who worry about their age, I really look forward to referring this material... especially chapter eight, "Seven Steps for Resetting Your Career Clock". In this chapter, you can do exercises which are very affirming and provide much needed re-focusing no matter where you are in your career journey.

Anyway, you've gotta love a futurist like Dr. Harkness whose functional age, as she calls it, is far younger than her chronological age. While she quotes Alvin Toffler, refers to Daniel Pink and reminisces about her own career, she expounds with energy and enthusiasm on the page as well as in person. You'll find that she's well-researched in chaos theory, understands the business of business, draws from her vast knowledge of literature from when she was an academic dean and educator in that field, and delivers her insights with the down-to-earth sense of humor I've come to admire in strong, determined Texas women.

She seems to be all about finding out what you're built for and then finding a way to do it. For example, she suggests that you ask yourself these four critical questions:

- What is a need now or in the future?
- Do I have the skills or could I get them?
- Would I value and find meaning in doing this?
- Can I make the money I need?

I particularly love the concept she calls the "YOYO" model. The acronym means "You're On Your Own". She says that yesterday's work model, "Womb-To-Tomb", in which you worked for one employer for most of your career, is passé. In that old model, management helped you develop your career. Nowadays, you have to be ultra alert to your situation and aware of all possibilities... and manage your own career. She adds that "you have to know what you want inside of you and outside in the market" and advises: 1) know yourself, 2) know what's out there, 3) ask for it effectively, and 4) know that you deserve it. That last one, "know you deserve it" sounds a lot like an attitude stance, doesn't it? I would have to say that it's one which is absolutely vital to career success.

Go check out [Dr. Harkness' website](#), www.career-design.com and read her books. This is a woman who walks the talk, and you'll find her wisdom to be helpfully practical as well as inspirational.