

Planning at Midcareer

Beverly B. Moore

Editor's Note: This is the third in a series of articles on "Professional Survival." Beverly B. Moore is director of libraries at the University of Southern Colorado.

Midcareer is a time for people to stop and think about where they are and where they want to be. It is also a time to reflect on what success is. When considering this question of success, many people find that their ideas have changed since they departed from library school for their first job.

Here are some questions you may want to ask yourself at midcareer: (1) What do I consider success? (2) Do I *care* what others think? (3) What motivates me in my job and in my life? (4) Who controls my life and my career? (5) Have I advanced on my own or responded to the opportunities offered to me by other people? (6) What are my aspirations at this time in my life? Are they the same aspirations I had at the beginning of my career? (7) What is the climate of the organization where I work? (8) Can I feel comfortable with my definition of success even if it means turning down a promotion? These are questions only you can answer for yourself.¹

After deciding honestly what constitutes success for you and where your position is in the organization, you may begin to plan the second half of your career. Planning may include writing out an explicit statement of your personal objectives, searching for reliable information about career opportunities, and devising a step-by-step career plan.²

This is the time to be realistic about your career. You may have to change your original goals. If you decide that you will never be a library director, set your sights on a different goal—like becoming a superb head of technical services. You should consider what you truly like to do. Some people simply are not happy working as administrators and would be miserable away from public services or cataloging or whatever. It is not a sin to dislike administration. You should consider what you like to do and can do really well.

Ask yourself: Am I the best children's librarian in my area? Have I the best grasp of AACR 2 in my state? These skills are important, too—just as important as and probably more important than being the library's administrator. My son's first-grade teacher was one of the best first-grade

teachers I have ever seen—dedicated, loving, and able. She moved to college teaching because of the prestige, money, etc. But she was unhappy as a college teacher, and elementary education has lost someone who sparked young children to learn.

Perhaps people should be happy and satisfied doing what they do best and like best, even if it means reconsidering their definition of success. On the other hand, people should not underestimate their abilities. They need to be willing to try something new and not be concerned that they might not like doing it. When offered an opportunity in a different area, they should give it a chance.

Midcareer is a time for people to reflect honestly on where they are and where they want to be. You need not consider yourself a failure if your career has reached a plateau at a point where you believe you have succeeded. If you have goals that you think are realistic and honest, you should continue to pursue them. Be willing to take risks by changing directions, by changing locations, and by learning new skills. You have only to satisfy yourself with your midcareer paths and goals. ■■

REFERENCES

1. Thomas P. Terence, "The Career Plateau: Facing Up to Life at the Middle," *MBA* 11:21 (July/August 1977).
2. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

Research Inquiry

For an investigation of the life and work of Lindley Murray (author of the famous *Grammar*, first published in York, England, in 1795), I would be grateful for information about archival or personal holdings of letters from, to, or concerning Murray and his family, diary entries, records of Murray's commercial dealings before and after he left the United States in 1786, and for any other records of his personal life. Also, any similar items or information is sought about his friend and amanuensis Elizabeth Frank (c. 1774–1850), compiler and author of the *Memoirs of Murray's life* (York, 1826). Please contact David A. Reibel, Universität Tübingen, Wilhelmstrasse 50, 7400 Tübingen 1, Germany.

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