

## **Actively Manage Your Career**

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In a recent interview in the New York Times, Ford Motor Company President and CEO Alan Mulally was asked to provide his best career advice. He responded, "Don't manage your career."

Does your work match with your personal values? Consider the definition of career success as broadly as you can, with a focus on those internal measures of satisfaction that are personally important to you.

I do agree with Alan Mulally on the criticality of feedback. In order to successfully manage your career, you need to be in a continuous cycle of seeking, receiving, absorbing, and adjusting to constant feedback. Seek feedback from as many different sources as possible, not just from your boss. Find those one or two really valuable people who will unfailingly give you honest feedback on how you are doing. Listen carefully to what they say. Insist on specifics.

If you are told you lack good communication skills, ask for details. Do you need to work on written skills? Spoken skills? Ask for examples of when you have fallen short and suggestions on how to improve.

Make changes based on the feedback you receive. Demonstrate flexibility and a willingness to learn and grow. Put together a personal development plan with clear milestones and share it with your boss and other trusted advisors. Work that plan with seriousness of purpose. Adjust the plan when appropriate as your career moves forward.

Finally, don't think of leadership or advancement in your career as simply a matter of managing a checklist, like a Boy or Girl S