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# KACIK CONSULTING SERVICES

Helping Leaders, Individuals and Teams  
Learn, Communicate & Connect



## Professional Growth Articles



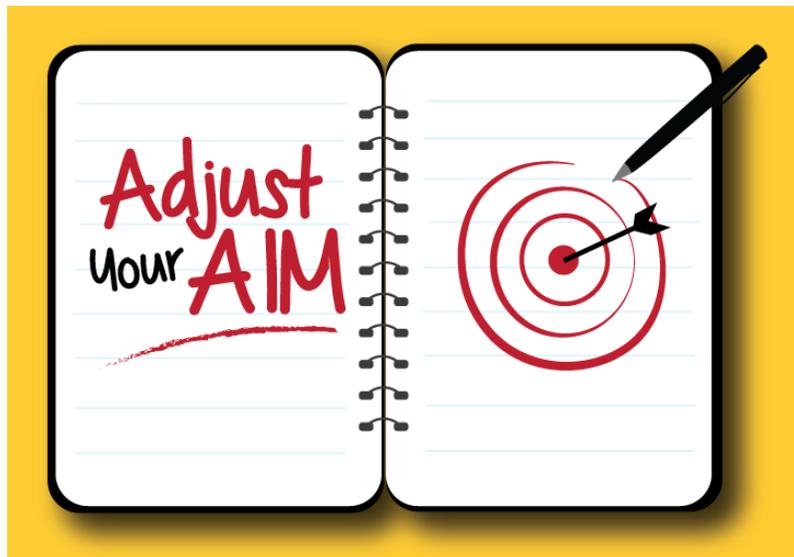
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## STEP BACK AND START FRESH

### Questions to Consider

August 2022

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Even though I'm no longer in school, the start  
of a new school year still feels  
like a new beginning.  
Maybe you feel the same way.

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## GIVE YOURSELF A FRESH START TOO - WHEREVER YOU ARE

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Here are some questions for various stages of your career to help you take a step back, reassess and restart. The questions are categorized as follows:

- **Early Career**
- **Mid-Career**
- **Manager or Leader with Direct-Reports**
- **Executive and C-Suite**

And a tip as you read through these questions – my husband tells me this is the most important thing he learned in his master’s program in organizational development – are you ready?

**When you don’t know what to do,  
you don’t have enough information!**

### **Early Career:**

1. **What do I want** for the future of my career?
2. **What is my next career step** on that path?
3. **With whom should I talk** (informational interviews) to learn from them about the steps to moving up, over or out – depending on my personal vision?
4. **What do I need** to pay attention to?
5. **What goals have been set** for my performance and am I on schedule to successfully meet the target on time? If not, what do I need to research or do I need help or information and to whom can I reach out for what I need?
6. **What is most important** for me to learn next?
7. **What feedback have I been given** and how can I get the most value from the feedback as I move forward?
8. **What are my strengths?**

Journal your successes and your “not so successes” to record what you did that worked. Do this to remember to keep doing it. Also make note what might work better in the future. Journaling helps you to solidify your learning, recognize your strengths and help you remember to employ strategies you’ve identified to try in the future. P.S. Remember to re-read your journal. :) )

### **Mid-Career:**

(All of the same questions from Early Career above still apply and here are a few more.)

1. **In what ways might I need to get my voice in the room** for recognition of my valuable thoughts and in what ways can I do more to promote myself to those above me?  
  
If you worry about sounding like you're bragging, remember, showing excitement and passion about something that worked well or that you just accomplished, spreads the excitement rather than being viewed as just pure bragging, provided you're not exhibiting an arrogant attitude. Remember to talk about your strengths and accomplishments in the context of the results they have brought to the organization rather than simply listing the "things you did". It's the results of what you did that will attract the attention of those above you.
2. **In what ways can I be a stronger team player?** Are there ways I can encourage others or provide help to a team member? (Be someone else's cheerleader!)
3. **Where do I see gaps between the current situation and the desired situation or result?** How can I, alone or with the help of others, identify innovations or improvements to fill those gaps and make a favorable impact for my organization?
4. **How can I better support my boss's goals or the goals of the whole organization?**

## Managers or Leaders with Direct-Reports:

1. **Are my direct-reports always clear on the "why"** of what they are being asked to do?
2. **How well is my team working together** and how can I further support their team development? (I always tell folks, team-building is a deliberate act!)
3. **What are the strengths of my individual direct-reports** and have I acknowledged those strengths to them and how can I help them further develop those strengths?
4. **Is anyone on my team struggling and why?** How can I see that they are supported?
5. **What is getting in the way of my team's success** and how can I remove obstacles that require the influence on my level – perhaps with peers or other departments?
6. **Is my team working on the right things to align with the goals** and strategies of the organization and our core values?
7. **What should I be watching for in the dashboards**, metrics and in what I can observe of the performance of my direct-reports?
8. **Do each of my team members have the knowledge**, skills and proper attitude to succeed and if not, what is my plan to help get them there?
9. **Am I being courageous in holding people accountable** and providing valuable feedback they need to grow or might I be shying away from difficult or uncomfortable conversations that could be hurting the ultimate results or the culture within the team?

10. **Am I adequately celebrating individual and team successes** and am I sharing specifics in showing both appreciation of and recognition to each direct-report?

## Executive and C-Suite Leaders:

1. **When can I schedule time blocks to go around and talk with and listen to my staff** asking what's working, what can work better and what would help?

Informal "managing by wandering around" is a technique recommended in the book, "The One-Minute Manager". I have recommended this to top level leaders and seen the value of them using this to get back in touch with the front-line workers – from whom you do need to hear thoughts, struggles, ideas, etc. It doesn't have to be formally scheduled – just go out and talk with people and listen carefully. They'll appreciate that you took the time and that you listened - it will make a difference.

2. **What is the most important thing my staff/organization needs to hear** or know and how can I best craft the message and deliver it?

3. **In what ways can I and my organization benefit from increasing my own self-awareness** and what different approaches might work more effectively? Is there a feedback I've maybe only heard once and didn't give credence to that might serve me well to reconsider?

In a study of 72 executives of organizations with \$50 million to \$5 billion in revenue, done by Green Peak Partners Leadership Consulting Company in partnership with Cornell University, their report stated "Interestingly, a high self-awareness score was the strongest predictor of overall success".

4. **What is the most important challenge/opportunity for the future of this organization** and what do I need to start NOW to create/capture the best possible outcome?

5. **What, if anything, needs my direct attention to assure success?** What might be in need of redirection, redesign or rethinking?

6. **How can I best support and celebrate the hard work of my staff?**

7. **In what ways can I strengthen my relationship with my board?** What do we need from each other to support the critical initiatives of the organization?

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**I hope you find important perspectives from taking a step back that will indeed give you a fresh start!**

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**If any of these questions leave you perplexed, I'm happy to help. All of these questions**

come from my years of experience building teams and leaders and as a team and leadership consultant and coach. Feel free to reach out to me for a complimentary call.



## Joy Conley Kacik

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As an Insights Discovery® licensed practitioner, Joy provides clients the added value of the Discovery® Portfolio of tools when working with individuals, teams, leaders and organizations to create inspiring visions for collaborative, cohesive teams to produce superior results.

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