



Raewyn Laurenson

I started my working life as a degree-qualified primary school teacher, which gave me the flexibility to work in both primary and secondary sectors. I worked in New Zealand teaching in intermediate schools, then went to Greece where I taught years 7 to 10 in an American international school for 3 years.



On my return to this part of the world I decided to change career direction, as people had told me that teaching was not the real world, business was! I thought I had better check this out and see how real the assertion actually was, and I got a job as a trainee recruitment consultant in Sydney in 1989. Gradually I moved more into management recruitment and then into senior executive search. Was this more real? I now understand that reality is a matter of perception. It's all real if you believe it is.

On my return to New Zealand in 1996 I began working with highly successful managers who became redundant, lost confidence and found it difficult to reinvent themselves. This interest, combined with the encouragement of my mentor and boss at the time led me to do a Master of Education at The University of Auckland majoring in Counselling. My focus was on the workplace.

In 2001 my family and I moved to Nelson and there I started my private practice in workplace counseling which gradually morphed into coaching, counseling and supervision of managers in the workplace.

Most recently, January 2012, I have taken on the role of Coordinator and Tutor on the Bachelor of Social Sciences Degree at Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology 4 days per week whilst running my private practice in my spare time.

My current role

My current role, in one sense, takes me back to my roots - that 'unreal' world of teaching. However, it also combines the skills and knowledge that I have acquired along the way. I am sure my teaching has improved with my reading, studying and professional development around both coaching and counseling. It is great to be able to take on a role that I have spent the past ten years, not to mention the previous years in careers and teaching, preparing for.

Apart from teaching, my role involves course development, project management, coordination, counseling, career development, research, building relationships, conflict management and negotiation and working in a proactive, high performing team. There is plenty of challenge and stimulation and every day is different.

I have a number of goals, challenges and opportunities in this new role which include being a part of implementing and developing a quality degree program in counseling. I would like to see well prepared and well trained counselors graduate from our program with broad career focus that includes counseling in a number of different workplaces ranging from schools to agencies and businesses. I would also like to see those graduates have the skills not only in counseling but in being able to find work, understand what a work environment entails and how to go about getting the job they want.

There are also challenges and opportunities within the environment of NMIT for me both professionally and personally. There are opportunities to become more involved in the workings of a large, continually changing organization with many people, managing in tough times. Personally, there are other opportunities for more research such as a PhD, should I go down that path. Since I am a compulsive student that might be likely!

My current project at NMIT involves building partnerships between business and education with regard to health and well-being in the community. In the social science area this has only been done in a very limited way in the past. This requires an ability to work with and understand business and see the links between the workplace and the education sector. As my background covers both areas this skill set is particularly useful in creating opportunities in an area that has been neglected in the past.

By retaining my private practice work, I believe I also retain my credibility as a coach and a counsellor. I am actually doing the work that I am teaching. I am also doing the same work as a Coordinating Tutor, but as I mentioned before, it is all about perception!