



Use Our Whole Selves, by Carly Fiorina

I can see now that I started my professional journey on the day at age 4 when I declared to my parents and to the world, "Mom, Dad, I want to be a fireman". Now this was not some precocious instinct towards civic duty. No, it really wasn't terribly profound. In fact, it was simply that I loved the color red and I thought the black and white dogs with spots were really cool. But when I look back now I see a kid who was not afraid to commit to a different path through life, and I see parents who encouraged their child's ambition, whatever it was. I see now also that I began my path to become a CEO on the day I decided

to quit law school. After I realized that being a fireman was actually about more than the color red and the dogs, and I knew I couldn't paint like my artist mother, I automatically assumed that I would follow in my father's footsteps. You see, my father was a law professor and a judge, and his guidance and example have always meant

the world to me. And so, after studying medieval things at Stanford, I went on to law school. I followed the logical path that I, and others, had always presumed for me. I wanted my father to be proud of me. I wanted to follow in his footsteps. But it quickly became apparent to me in law school that I didn't like studying the law. For me, the emphasis on precedent felt confining. My father loved the law; he still loves the law, but while I was intellectually challenged, the rest of me was left cold. And so this presented for me a gut-wrenching dilemma. Do I risk letting my father down? Do I stick it out in law school? Or do I go do something else? Do I let go of this notion of the logical path for Carly? And while that decision tortured me at the time, I literally didn't sleep for three months, I made the decision and I didn't blink and I left law school. What seemed at the moment, especially to my father, a random, ill-advised move, was actually an important life lesson and a marker in my own journey. And I genuinely believe that life teaches lessons in strange ways. The lesson I learned at that life marker was love what you do, or don't do it. Don't make a choice of any kind, whether in career or in life, just because it pleases others or because it ranks high on someone else's scale of achievement or even because it seems to be, perhaps even for you at the time, simply the logical thing to do at that moment on your path. Make the choice to do something because it engages your heart as well as your mind. Make the choice because it engages all of you. Remember as a graduate of a world class university, as a graduate of this place, with your double-E or your degree in Physics or Computer Science or Architecture, the freedom to choose is now yours. And to make the most of that freedom, use your mind and your heart and your gut. Freedom to choose can sometimes feel like a terrible burden, but the burden is greatly lightened when we learn how to use our whole

selves, when we realize that we have everything we need for this journey of life. --Carly Fiorina, CEO of Hewlett Packard

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