



the WorkLife Lab

Where your work life sparks your life's work

## Interview with Monica Schultz

Creator and Founder



The WorkLife Lab helps individuals become leaders in their own work lives and supports organizations to create structures that empower employees to do their best work during times of uncertainty and rapid change.

Monica Schultz created the WorkLife Lab when, while working in the medical device and health science industry, one client commented, *"If we're working in an industry that promotes health and extends life, why are we killing ourselves doing it?"*

Monica's particular interest is how meaningful and engaged work affects health, energy and well-being, not only of individuals, but also of organizations. Monica has a Master's of Science degree in Health Services Research and Policy from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Disorders from the University of Wisconsin.

### *How did you come to work in the areas of career development and work fulfillment?*

I've worked within a variety of organizations, including non-profit, publicly, and privately held companies. I've experienced both enormous growth cycles as well as downsizing. During that time, I've done a lot of performance reviews, coaching, and organizational planning.

I became interested in how to re-engage people with their work, how people transition to other types of work, and how that affects their overall health and well-being. And, of course, how different types of work transition affect the organization itself.



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### *Who are your clients?*

My clients tend to be driven, goal-oriented people. They've already experienced conventional success. They usually come to me when their work – or the style in which they find themselves working – is no longer congruent with who they are, who they would like to be, or how they want to spend their time. My clients have a deep desire to infuse passion and purpose into their work, while exerting a positive influence into their work culture as a whole.

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### *How are you different from other career development specialists?*

I prefer to use a structured program versus a conversation-only style of coaching. I do this for three reasons: (1) I can convey more information in a shorter time; (2) clients have a “menu” of resources from which to choose and work from, and (3) a cohort of individuals committed to change provides an ideal support environment to support your own change.

### *With what kind of personality do you work best?*

I work best with individuals who are willing to do the work and become clear about what they *really* want versus what they've been told they *should* want.

It may be my research background, but I enjoy working with questioning, critical-thinkers. I encourage people not to take what I say at face value. That's what the WorkLife Lab is all about – experimenting to find out what works for you.

### *With what kind of personality or client do you NOT work well?*

I don't work well with people who expect it to be easy and who believe that by simply investing money, something should magically happen. It won't happen unless you do the work, which means facing the stuff that irritates, angers, and scares you.



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*How do you work? What can I expect?*

Each candidate receives a short application. I talk to each applicant so we can determine if the program is a good fit – it's really a mutual interview.

Online programs are typically five weeks long. Individuals also have an option of additional, one-on-one focused coaching with me.

*Can I just sign up for one session with you?*

I don't conduct single sessions, but I encourage individuals to contact me to see if the program is a good fit for their needs and what they want. I'll have questions, and candidates can ask me anything they want, too.

*Why do I need you? Can't I just do this on my own?*

Although this work is not rocket science, it's difficult. It's less about KNOWING and more about DOING. This kind of work evokes fear, which tends to stop people in their tracks.

Though related to your job, this work is much different than your job. If you're fearful regarding one of your corporate objectives – you're gonna get it done one way or another. But if you're fearful about an action – or more commonly a *series* of actions – which you're doing just for yourself – well, those actions tend to drop. Yet those are the precise actions that can dramatically affect both your current work performance and your future work life.

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*I'm really busy and overwhelmed. How much time is involved before I get results?*

In terms of changing your mental state, most people experience mindset changes to more energy, hopefulness, and constructive action within the first week. Allowing yourself to focus and invest in work and career fulfillment has immediate payoff. In terms of job performance and/or job transition, it's highly dependent on the individual's situation.

I focus on giving you the tools to use over and over again in your career. The reading materials themselves do not take much time, but I expect that you carry the concepts and exercises over to your current work life.

*How can I get the very best results fast?*

It's paradoxical, but you often need to slow down to speed up. Before you move forward you need to move deeper.

I encourage my clients to be less in "escape" mode and more in "exploration" mode. Define what you need and how you want to change before you make any major moves. But becoming clear often means taking small action steps and risks.

Ironically, a lot of my clients are surprised at how fast they move forward.

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*Will I see a return on my investment?*

To paraphrase a credit card commercial, being happy and fulfilled in your work is priceless. For the cost of a computer and accessories you can acquire insight and skills that you carry for a lifetime, affecting not only you, but also those whom you mentor.



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*If I'm not quite ready to get started, is there a way to sample your work?*

You can download *Work Renaissance: 8 Practices to Reinvent Your Career* on the WorkLife Lab website: [www.worklifelab.net](http://www.worklifelab.net). You'll get a good idea of the philosophy behind the WorkLife Lab.

I'm also happy to discuss your particular situation and answer any questions. Just email me at [monica@worklifelab.net](mailto:monica@worklifelab.net) and we can set up an appointment.

*Anything else I should know?*

I survived several management challenges and distinct career transitions, some gracefully executed and some, well . . . not so graceful. I know what it's like to take a risk and not know what's on the other side.

But there's a reason it's called *The WorkLife Lab*. Your background is one-of-a-kind, and your job is to apply the materials based on your own unique experience and personal goals.

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