

'CliffsNotes' Book Club Recap

DO YOU LOVE BOOKS ON LEADERSHIP, NEUROSCIENCE, AND BUSINESS, BUT NOT HAVE TIME TO READ ALL THE BOOKS?

Join the '**CliffsNotes' club**—where there's no pressure to pre-read the book, no membership required, no cost, and lots of discussion in just 90 minutes. Each month, you will hear a **summary of highlights** from a recently-published business book. This discussion summary is intended to provide a recap of the conversation at Book Club, rather than serve as a thorough book summary. We'll keep you "in the know" on the latest and greatest concepts and models. **Register here** for upcoming events.



September 2023

Switchers

By Dawn Graham

Discussion Highlights

Presented by Paula Brand

Switchers by Dr. Dawn Graham (Host of Career Talk on SiriusXM Business Radio Channel 132) offers a useful playbook for professionals who have decided they want to change their job by switching roles, industries, or both. This book guides you through the process of packaging and marketing yourself to land your next gig as quickly as possible. It covers strategies for job searching, branding, interviewing, and more. The most powerful messages are about how to think like a hiring manager and all the advice is focused specifically on making a career change.

As a global career coach, I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and agreed with the author's approach to guiding switchers to success. If you already know you want to make a switch but aren't sure how to go about it, this book is for you.

Book Content by Chapter

Preface

The Preface offers two diagrams that are useful while reading *Switchers*. The first gives you the Career Switch Road Map which lays out the big picture view of the book's five sections: Choose Your Switch, Clarify Your Plan A, Craft Your Brand Value Proposition, Create Ambassadors and Keep the Ball in Your Court.

The second diagram in the preface refers to the Four R's that effective switchers must possess: Responsibility, Reality, Risk, and Resilience. A switcher must employ all four of these qualities throughout the process. If you have three but are missing one, something will be off. For example, if you have responsibility, reality and resilience but don't take any risks, you will not get the same results.

Part I: Choose Your Switch

Chapter 1 Are You a Switcher? The “Magic” Equation for Seizing Career Success

The author shares a grid that explains the degrees of difficulty for a switcher.

- 1) The Least Challenging “Non-Switcher - Traditional Candidate” (top right)
- 2) Moderately Challenging “Single Switcher - Industry” (bottom right)
- 3) Very Challenging “Single Switcher - Function” (top left)
- 4) Extremely Challenging “Double Switcher – Function & Industry” (bottom left)

The author explains how we cling to what’s comfortable. Many people want to switch without the down sides. She acknowledges that switching is not necessarily easy and gives a 12-question assessment of your willingness to change. It includes questions such as “Are you willing to lose money or accept a pay decrease? How much?”, “Are you willing to live on savings for a time? How long?”, “Are you willing to proactively network? How many days per week?”

Chapter 2 The Psychology of the Job Search (and How to Use It to Your Advantage!)

Dr. Graham talks about habits and how they can limit our ability to change along with our attachment to identity. Switching means changing identities, which can be hard. She suggests there are five qualities it takes to be a successful switcher:

- 1) A growth mindset
- 2) Ability to not get stuck in comparison
- 3) Ability to live in the shades of grey
- 4) Understanding that life isn’t fair
- 5) Being agile

Part II: Clarify Your Plan A

Chapter 3 If You Don’t Invest, Why Should They? Figure Out Your Plan A

Dr. Dawn passionately believes that you must go all in when making a switch, thinking people with a Plan B don’t work as hard to achieve their goals. She also points to the challenge of trying to dual brand yourself. She doesn’t buy into the “follow your passion” advice and stresses the importance of values. You need to find your sweet spot because the intersection of your expertise, interests and the market is where it all happens! You must clearly define your target! Page 66 provides a list of 13 potential areas to zero in on a clear target including industry, title, culture, and compensation.

Chapter 4 Change Isn’t Linear: Mapping Your Path to a Career Switch

Dr. Graham shares different paths to get to your destination including steppingstones and taking the right path, not the easy path. She acknowledges there may be gaps to fill before you can make a successful switch which could include a side gig or earning new credentials. Further education may be needed but do your due diligence to make sure this is true before investing much time or money. She ends the chapter with advice for “absentee switchers.” If you have been out of the workforce for a while, you may want to avoid a double switch right away.

Part III: Craft Your Brand Value Proposition

Chapter 5 (Re) Brand or Be Branded

The author begins this chapter with discussion on what is a brand and why it matters. Next, the author emphasizes that you need to research what brand already exists for you. When building your brand, a few red flags to be avoided are gaps in employment, being let go, not having a college degree, job hopping or being overqualified. You don't need to be perfect, but you do need to build your "brand bank" (from Steve Jobs) – meaning to be consistently creating positive interactions (deposits) that contribute to a positive view of you and avoid negative actions (withdrawals) that detract from how other see you.

You can build your brand in five steps:

- Step 1: Know Your Goal and Your Audience's Pain Points
- Step 2: Know the Product (You!)
- Step 3: Know Your Differentiators
- Step 4: Identify Your Brand Value Proposition
- Step 5: Test and Evaluate

Chapter 6 Your Career Story

As a switcher, you need to build a story to share about yourself. Your Career Story must be attention getting, compelling, logical, and genuine. Ultimately, it should answer what the employer needs/wants to know:

- Your ability to do the work (The "What"),
- Your ability to fit in with the company/department (the "How"), and
- Your motivation to pursue this job ("Why" did you apply?).

To convince people you are right for the role, you must be confident in your delivery. Beyond branding yourself well and creating a compelling story, you should consider the following steps, too.

- Fill in any knowledge gaps.
- Use the language of your audience whether it's the employer or industry.
- Keep your brand consistent.
- Address the elephant in the room in your career story so the person understands why you have chosen to leave one role/industry and what you have to offer in this new role/industry.
- Share your past accomplishments that highlight the transferable skills you possess that will be valuable in the new role.
- Engage the "likability" effect by building trust and rapport and being a great listener before diving into your pitch.
- Try to show how you match the job qualifications before sharing your unique selling points.

As a career coach myself, I always say, remember that it's all about the employer and their needs (not you and your needs). Her advice mirrors this view. Communicate how you can help with their pain points by applying the skills you already possess to their challenges.

Chapter 7 What Got You're Here Won't Get You There

You need to take a proactive approach, which means not depending on the reactive strategy of looking through postings to find your next job. A proactive approach means doing a lot of networking to find opportunities that aren't yet posted. This means tapping into the Hidden Job Market. Also, create marketing (hardcopy and online presence) that easily showcases the skills needed to be successful in the types of jobs you seek. Headhunters are focused on candidates who match the job well, so they are not the best avenue for switchers.

Part IV: Create Ambassadors

Chapter 8 No Excuses - Your Network Really Is Your Net Worth

The author gives solid advice on your networking strategy. The four steps she shares are simple, but you need to be intentional to make them happen.

- Meet and establish the relationship.
- Build trust over time through repeated interactions.
- Exchange mutually beneficial information and resources.
- Ask for help with something this person is qualified to assist with and reciprocate when possible.

She addresses the common reasons that people avoid networking including, where to start, that it "feels dirty," thinking you're not good at it, and seeing introversion as a hinderance rather than the strength that it can be.

Chapter 9 The New Way to Network - Create Ambassadors

Dr. Graham describes the power of second-level contacts, how to warm up cold contacts and offers sample scripts for a variety of situations. Her strongest advice is to create ambassadors and she shares tips on how to turn contacts into these personal representatives. The chapter ends with some additional tips on quieting Imposter Phenomenon and successful networking.

She recommends using GLIDE questions when networking for information. A GLIDE question accomplishes the following:

- **G**ets you info not available otherwise.
- **L**eads to interesting conversation that build your relationship.
- **I**s about something they know about (which you know because of your homework).
- **D**emonstrates market/industry knowledge/your preparation.
- **E**xpresses a skill/expertise you possess that is relevant to the target.

Part V: Keep the Ball in Your Court

Chapter 10 How to Never Have a Bad Interview

Dr. Graham goes back to the points from Chapter 6, you must be prepared to address the What, the How and the Why of interview questions. Dawn offers a few potential answers for questions that may be tough for a switcher, explains that you must ask insightful questions and suggests what content to avoid. She stresses the importance of being prepared for the usual opening question of "Tell me about yourself?" and using the SOART (Situation, Obstacle, Action, Result and Takeaway) method to answer behavioral questions.

Chapter 11 It's Not Fair (It Really Isn't!)

The author revisits the idea of fairness from Chapter 2 and emphasizes the need to stop expecting it. She also covers other unpleasant aspects of job search such as recognizing that your pitch isn't clear enough, rejection and ghosting. Ultimately successful networking relies on follow up and she emphatically suggests that you always "keep the ball in your court," meaning stay on top of things and be persistent with your follow through.

Chapter 12 Always Sleep on It - Get Ready to Negotiate

This chapter focuses on why you should negotiate and offers many tips. The author doesn't waste much time going over the foundational basics. Instead, she shares why you should think beyond salary, look at setbacks as learning opportunities and how to choose between two solid offers.

Chapter 13 Never Look for a Job Again (Get Recruited!)

The final chapter of *Switchers* is a guide for career management, sharing advice for after you have made a successful switch. It covers topics commonly tied to career resilience such as continually stretching outside of your comfort zone and remembering how you have overcome challenges in the past. Dr. Graham revisits the idea of "brand deposits" and offers tips to strengthen your brand. She provides two powerful questions to help you stay focused.

- What is one thing I can *stop* doing today that will have a significant impact on my life?
- What is one thing I can *start* doing today that will have a significant impact on my life?

The chapter closes with a new concept of micro-networking. The idea is to find ways to take small steps that can add up. It may only take a few minutes to share someone's post or endorse someone skills on LinkedIn. If you make a habit of setting aside a short amount of time to take these actions daily, over time your networking will grow. Don't forget to perform acts of kindness for people who have helped you along the way.

Appendix – Includes advice on what to look for in a career coach.

Related Resources

- YouTube [video](#) of author Dr. Dawn Graham speaking about *Switchers*
- Jim Peacock's [Review](#) of *Switchers*
- [The Purple Parachute](#) by Paula Brand
- [What Color is Your Parachute?](#) by Richard N. Bolles
- [Pivot](#) by Jenny Blake

About the Book Club In this monthly club, a presenter shares highlights from a book related to leadership, business, neuroscience, or coaching. Membership is not required, and there's no obligation to pre-read the book. This discussion summary is intended to provide a recap of the conversation at Book Club, rather than serve as a thorough book summary. [Register here](#) for upcoming events. For the full set of discussion summaries, [click here](#).