



JIM HARSHAW, JR.

Clarity of Action. Peace of Mind.

Success for the Athletic-Minded Man Podcast

Action Plan Episode #475

Bill Burnett (republish)

Ever heard someone tell you to “follow your passion” when it comes to your career?

Well, Bill Burnett believes that advice might not be as helpful as you think.

He reveals why most of us are trapped in dysfunctional beliefs that hold us back from truly enjoying our careers.

Bill isn't just any expert— he's the Executive Director of the Life Design Lab at Stanford. With both a Bachelor's and Master's in Product Design from Stanford, Bill has worked in start-ups and Fortune 100 companies, including seven years at Apple, where he designed award-winning laptops. He also spent years in the toy industry designing Star Wars action figures.

In this “Success for the Athletic-Minded Man” episode, we dive deep into why 68% of people are disengaged from their jobs and, more importantly, how you can break free from that statistic.

Bill explains his 3-step framework for career transformation, rooted in design thinking principles. He'll share how small, actionable steps can lead to big changes, and why “prototyping” your career might be the most powerful tool you're not using.

We also explore the idea of money vs. meaning, the importance of creative confidence, and how to build a life where your work aligns with your purpose.

Ready to find fulfillment and design a career you actually love? Tune in and take that first step!

Top Quotes From This Episode

"One of the bad pieces of advice that people often get is to follow your passion... So, you know, be careful what you're passionate about, do a little research. So this idea that you need to know in advance what you want. It just isn't true. It's not the way the world works."

"If you want to innovate, you have to fail."

"Curiosity is the antidote to pandemic boredom, exhaustion, and everything else."

"If you take action—a bias to action is our mindset—you'll be surprised at how much comes back to you in the form of energy information and just feeling connected with the world."

Show Notes

This episode touches on the following key topics and ideas:

- **Origins of Life and Work Design (2:05):** Bill shares his journey from being a design professor to writing best-selling books on life and work design.
- **Job Dissatisfaction Across Cultures (7:43):** Bill explains how companies try to improve employee engagement, which is linked to creativity and productivity, though it remains a challenge for most workplaces.
- **Dysfunctional Beliefs and Reframing (10:12):** Bill introduces the concept of "dysfunctional beliefs"— misconceptions that keep people stuck. He explains how reframing these beliefs helps individuals see more possibilities in their careers and lives.
- **The Money vs. Meaning Debate (11:40):** Bill introduces the concept of the "maker mix," where work can provide money, impact, and creative expression— each in different amounts depending on individual needs.
- **Setting Small, Achievable Goals (18:23):** By focusing on small, sustainable steps, individuals can gradually improve their lives and work situations without feeling overwhelmed by unrealistic goals.
- **Failure as a Learning Tool (23:53):** Bill highlights the importance of failure in both life and work design. Small failures from experimentation provide valuable insights, helping individuals refine their direction and avoid paths that don't serve their goals.
- **The Role of Radical Collaboration (28:19):** Bill introduces the idea of "radical collaboration," where success comes from co-creating with diverse groups of people. By working with others, especially those with different perspectives, we unlock creativity and discover solutions we wouldn't have found alone.

- **The Power of Reflection (32:00):** Bill explains the importance of understanding personal values through the Work View and Life View exercises. Writing down your beliefs about work and life can reveal misalignments and help create a coherent path that integrates personal and professional fulfillment.
- **What's an action item the listener can take in the next 24-48 hours? (37:59):** Bill advises listeners to "take curiosity for a walk." Exploring interests— whether professional or personal— reignites passion and can lead to new opportunities.

List of Resources Mentioned in the Episode

Bill Burnett and Dave Evans' books:

["Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-lived, Joyful Life"](#)

["Designing Your Work Life: How to Thrive and Change and Find Happiness at Work"](#)

["Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ"](#) by Daniel Goleman

["Tiny Habits"](#) by BJ Fogg

["Creative Confidence: Unleashing the Creative Potential Within Us All"](#) by David Kelley

Want to talk to a personal performance coach?

Want to consider executive life coaching? Claim a spot on Jim's calendar for your free one-time clarity call: [JimHarshawJr.com/APPLY](https://jimharshawjr.com/APPLY)

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Other Episodes Referenced

[#124 Dysfunctional Thinking and How to Be Happy: Using Design Thinking To Get Out Of Your Rut with Stanford Professor and Author Bill Burnett](#)

Guest Website and Social

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[Website](#) | [Twitter](#)