



Teachers Make the Grade as Financial Professionals

When teachers seek a new career, where do they turn?

Joan Grable wanted to change careers. After teaching high school English and French and special education the Austin, Texas-based Grable knew what she wanted — a career where she could be better compensated, enjoy greater flexibility — and continue to teach ... but outside of a school environment.

She didn't know where to look. She found the answer as an agent for New York Life Insurance Company, counseling people about their financial future and providing services and products such as life insurance, annuities, and long-term care insurance.

"I was amazed at how well my teaching skills translated into helping people understand the importance of financial security and how to achieve it. Everything that made me a good teacher I use as an agent," Grable says, listing good listening, simplifying difficult concepts and presentation skills as among the most important skills.

An agent's role is to listen to people's financial desires/goals, educate them about their needs, and then recommend strategies and products that help them meet their goals.

"I'm still a teacher." notes Grable.

Today, more and more teachers and coaches who are seeking a new career find becoming a financial professional a very good fit. The similar traits required for success in both professions has not been lost on recruiters. Greg Jensen, the managing partner in New York Life's South Florida office and a former teacher says, "There's not a better background for becoming an agent than teaching." Jensen. As an agent, you get to see people react to and learn from your teaching, only the age of the students is different."

"What teachers find attractive about this career," echoes Vera Jo Springer, who runs New York Life's Richmond office, and a former teacher, "is they are influencing people in a positive way, teaching people how to take care of their future financial well being. If an agent decides he/she would like a career in management, it's like becoming a master teacher."



Here's a brief list of traits the two careers have in common:

- ✓ **Good listening skills:** Agents must be able to listen for the needs and financial goals a prospect wants to achieve. “When I’m listening to clients, I’m always trying to assess their learning style,” says Grable. “If I understand how they learn best, I know how to impart the information.”
- ✓ **Good presentation skills:** Agents are always presenting information, either one on one or in a seminar situation much like a classroom. “Teachers can speak in public at the drop of a hat. Plus as teachers, we know how to organize and present,” says Grable, who frequently uses New York Life’s “Taking Control” workshop to develop her market among women.
- ✓ **Making complicated topics simple:** Just as teachers explain conjugating the subjunctive, agents help clients appreciate the differences between annuities. Knowing how to break down information into bite-sized pieces, making it easy to understand and move forward is an important part of being an agent.
- ✓ **A love of learning:** Teachers are life long learners, and as an agent they are always challenged to learn new concepts, new products and new solutions for clients. New York Life especially is renown for its initial training program and for career-long training opportunities.
- ✓ **Developing relationships:** Like teachers, agents are experts at fielding questions and developing relationships that are based on trust, sometimes creating a connection that has a lifetime impact.



Joan Grable



Greg Jensen

“Each time I’m in an interview with a prospect or client, class is in session,” says Grable, who along with other former teachers says they don’t feel pressure to sell. “I want to educate people and show them the positive impact striving for financial security can have on their lives,” notes Grable. “As long as I’m educating people about their needs, the sales will take care of themselves.”

More Than Skills — The Emotional Connection

It's not just skills that make it easy to transition from a teacher to a financial professional. Many teachers find their new career provides the same feelings of satisfaction they got from the classroom, by helping people reach a better place in their lives.

Agents see the impact their work has on their clients' lives. They know the overwhelming feeling to be the person to walk in the door with a check when a family needs it most. They also feel the deep sense of satisfaction of knowing the long-term care policy they recommended can help relieve the pressures of caring for an ailing parent. Sometimes it's just the warm glow they get every time they pass by a retired client's house knowing the Lifetime Income Annuity they sold is helping to provide a secure retirement and a lifetime income for someone who worked hard all his/her life.

Differences: Flexibility and Compensation

The biggest differences between the two careers are the compensation and the flexibility. A career as an agent can offer more of both. "As a financial professional you are paid in direct proportion to the creativity and energy you expend," notes Springer.

A career as an insurance agent has unlimited earning potential. Agents are compensated based strictly on their



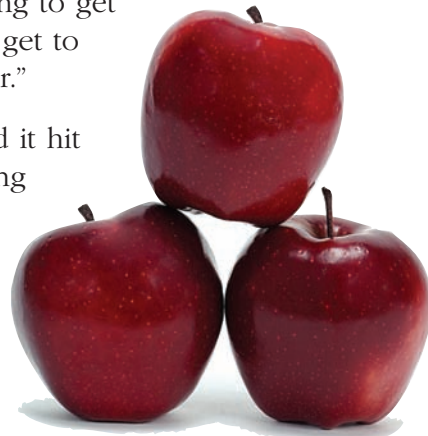
Vera Jo Springer

efforts and the results they achieve. "The scariest thing I ever did was to switch to a career that is commission based," says Grable, "but I'm glad I did it."

Agents also have the freedom and flexibility to set their own schedules. "I could never go back to the 9-5 routine," says Grable, who has the flexibility to work around her children's school schedules. And as Jensen notes, teachers also possess the discipline to enjoy the freedom the career offers. "Teachers have the discipline to get things done in a timely manner," he notes.

Grable knew she had made the right career choice when she heard a speaker at a New York Life training session say "We are born with a gift and that gift is dying to get out. If we're lucky we get to use that gift as a career."


"I was sitting there and it hit me," she said. "I'm using my gift to be a New York Life agent. Once a teacher always a teacher."



If you are interested in discussing about a career
as a New York Life agent, contact



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