

Purpose does not arrive on command. It emerges, usually after some honest inventory and a handful of real experiments. Career coaching can provide the structure and accountability for that process, but the engine is your values. When your daily tasks echo what you care about, energy follows. When they do not, even prestige work feels heavy. I have seen both sides in clients over the years, from high performers whose calendars glitter with accomplishments yet feel hollow, to mid career professionals whose roles look ordinary on paper but light them up because their values sit at the center.

This piece unpacks how to connect values with work choices through practical coaching methods. It weaves in psychological tools that help with clarity and resilience, because purpose discovery intersects with mental health more than most job descriptions admit.

What values look like in practice

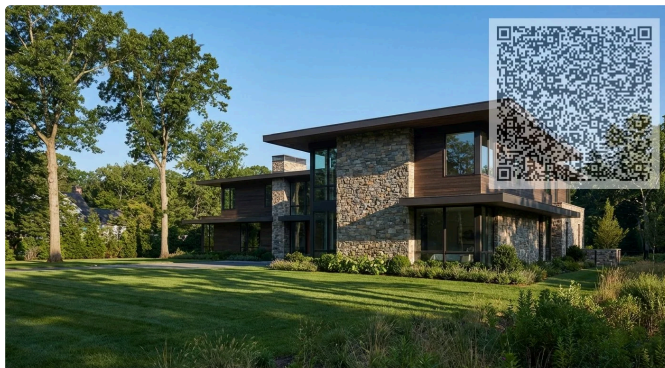
Values often sound abstract until they translate into trade-offs. Consider a product manager I coached, mid 30s, who said she valued growth and impact. In sessions she described a craving to learn new domains and to see real users benefit. On paper she had both, but her week was 80 percent stakeholder wrangling and 20 percent product thinking. She felt drained, not because she lacked grit, but because her calendar contradicted her values. We mapped tasks to values and found a mismatch by nearly a 4 to 1 ratio. After negotiating for one experimental project per quarter and delegating two recurring meetings, her ratio shifted to roughly 60 to 40. Her mood lifted, her performance improved, and the vague burnout cloud receded.

Values do not dictate a single career path. They act more like a compass than a blueprint. Two people who both value service might choose medicine or public interest law, or they might build accessible software or run community meal programs. The common thread is the felt sense that their effort matters in the way they define mattering.

Sorting values without turning them into slogans

I start with specifics, not big nouns. Instead of writing down "integrity," we hunt for moments when the client felt deeply aligned. A senior engineer once told me he felt most alive while mentoring interns. He assumed this meant he should move into management. We slowed down. In stories of those sessions, what actually mattered was witnessing someone finally understand a concept because of a concrete example he offered. The value was teaching with clarity, not headcount leadership. That distinction redirected him toward a tech lead role with a formal mentoring component, which fit his strengths and preferences better than people management.

Values show up in friction too. If a task repeatedly annoys you, look for the violated value beneath it. A nonprofit director bristled at last minute donor requests that derailed team schedules. She said she valued generosity, so her own reaction [Psychotherapist](#) confused her. In our debrief, we found the violated value was reliability. She kept promises to her team, [Mental health service](#) and the ad hoc asks endangered those promises. Naming reliability gave her license to create donor guidelines that protected work plans. Her generosity returned because [Jon Abelack, Psychotherapist Mental health service](#) reliability had a seat at the table.



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The coaching arc: from inventory to experiments

Purpose discovery rarely arrives in one breakthrough. It looks more like loops of reflection and action. A workable arc has three layers that repeat: clarify values, design experiments, then integrate what you learn into decisions. Each loop adds resolution.

During the first two or three sessions, we build an inventory through structured conversation and short exercises. I ask about peak moments, proud moments, and the projects you could not stop talking about after hours. We build a calendar autopsy for the previous month, color coding tasks by energy gain or drain. We interview your personal board, usually two colleagues and a friend who know your quirks and strengths. These inputs become hypotheses like, "I value autonomy, craft excellence, and social impact." Then we review constraints, including financial obligations, caregiving, visa status, and health. Purpose that ignores constraints is fantasy. Purpose that includes them is sustainable.

The next stage is experimentation. Short, reversible bets reduce the pressure of finding the one true calling. A designer who thought she craved social impact took on a 60 day pro bono project for a local clinic. Another client arranged two shadow days in community mental health administration, which he suspected would fit his systems mindset better than front line counseling. Experiments produce data that no personality inventory can match. They expose the texture of the work, the parts that energize, and the friction that drains.

Finally, we integrate. You decide which experiments to extend, which to discard, and what to negotiate in your current role. Sometimes integration means a lateral move, sometimes a small pivot, occasionally a full career change. More often it means job crafting, reshaping the mix of tasks to better express your values.

How mental health intersects with career clarity

Career coaching often bumps into anxiety, low mood, or relationship strain. Ignoring that intersection makes bad advice. I collaborate with therapists when needed, and I use coaching tools that borrow wisely from therapy without pretending to replace it.

Anxiety therapy helps when decision loops spiral. People stuck in career paralysis usually fear loss more than they desire gain. We steal a page from CBT therapy by testing catastrophic thoughts. If you take a three month sabbatical, what is the worst likely outcome, and what evidence supports that? We rate predictions on probability, then design buffers. This is not empty reassurance. It is disciplined risk evaluation, which anxiety tends to distort.

Depression therapy becomes relevant when energy and hope are low. Values work can feel muted for clients who cannot picture a future self. Here I invite small, reliable wins. Activity scheduling, another CBT therapy staple, can rebuild momentum. We tie actions to values, even if the action is a walk with a friend who listens well because you value connection. A week with three small value aligned actions beats a week of grand plans that never launch.

Emotionally Focused Therapy, or EFT therapy, shows up when shame or fear binds a client to a script that no longer fits. A mid career attorney knew he wanted to move into policy, but a family narrative about stability kept him in private practice. Naming the emotional signal, then crafting corrective experiences, helped. He arranged a temporary secondment to a policy task force, kept his income steady for that season, and disproved the story that any move toward purpose would wreck stability.

Couples therapy and Relational Life Therapy sometimes play a central role too. Career shifts ripple through households. I have coached couples who negotiated new budgets and childcare plans so one partner could retrain. It was not only logistics. It was intimacy work. They practiced how to bring influence without control, how to praise each other's courage, and how to revisit the plan monthly. When the home team agrees on values and constraints, career experiments happen faster and with less friction.



These approaches do not turn coaching into therapy. They make coaching more humane. They also protect against the trap of chasing purpose while your nervous system is overwhelmed. If panic attacks keep derailing interviews, or if sleep and appetite have collapsed, therapy sits first in line. Coaching can pause or proceed in parallel with clear roles.

The myth of the single calling

I hear clients worry that they missed their calling. That phrase does more harm than good. For most people, purpose feels more like a portfolio than a monolith. Across a career you might rotate among roles that each honor overlapping values. Teaching may live in your weekday mentoring, your weekend volunteer workshop, and your writing habit that grows slowly. The throughline is you, not one job title forever.

I once worked with a physician who loved clinical reasoning and community education. She created a hybrid: three days in urgent care, one day running a neighborhood health class, and one day contributing to a public health grant. It looked messy on a resume but elegant in her life. She met her values without forcing them into a single box.

Trade-offs that deserve daylight

Purpose, like any design, demands constraints and choices. Name the trade-offs early. A mission heavy nonprofit may pay less and exige more nights. A fast growth startup may give you autonomy at the price of stability. Academia may offer deep focus, but grant cycles and committee work test patience. None of these are mistakes if they align with what you care about. The mistake is pretending a job can be all upside.

I ask clients to define their hard lines. One engineer cared for an aging parent and would not travel more than one night per month. That constraint closed some roles, opened others, and prevented two rounds of false starts. Another client valued craft time in the morning. She stopped scheduling meetings before 11 a.m., then negotiated that boundary in a new role by tying it to her output metrics. Her team got better code. She kept her mornings. Everyone won because she named the trade-off instead of apologizing for it.

A practical path to clarifying values

The core of values work is simple reflection done consistently. Here is a focused sequence that has helped many clients who felt scattered.

- Write down three peak work moments from the last two years. For each, note what you did, who benefited, and what felt meaningful.
- Track your energy for two weeks. Give each task a plus, minus, or neutral right after you finish it.
- Ask three people who know your work for stories, not adjectives, about when you were at your best.
- From these notes, extract three to five value words, then define each with a sentence and a verb, for example, "I value clarity, expressed by making complex topics understandable."
- Rank these values in order of importance for your next 18 months, not for life.

Two weeks of consistent notes outperforms a one hour introspection session every time. You see patterns you could not invent, like how you come alive when you present to small groups, or how a day of deep solo work under a tight deadline brings both stress and pride.

Turning values into job experiments

Once values are named with living language, they need a field test. I work with clients to build experiments that are small, time bound, and informative. The point is not to be right on the first try, it is to learn faster than fear.

A marketing analyst who believed she valued advocacy and craft excellence volunteered to run a campaign for a local conservation group. She gave herself 90 days and a clear outcome: raise signups for a weekend cleanup by 30 percent. That target forced her to practice, not just ponder. She realized she loved the data craft but felt lukewarm about advocacy as a daily theme. That discovery steered her toward roles where she could sharpen craft in service of many causes, not just one.

Another client tested the teaching value by building a five lesson micro course he delivered to five peers over lunch. He recorded feedback, noticed where he lit up, and found that he loved drafting the materials more than the live delivery. He sought a documentation heavy role as a result, which fit like a tailored suit.

When to bring therapy into the frame

Not every decision jam is a career problem. Sometimes it is an anxiety pattern or depressive dip that drains choice of color. Coaching can notice these patterns but should not pretend to treat them. Here are common signals that therapy deserves a seat next to coaching.

- Persistent sleep disruption, appetite changes, or loss of interest in activities you used to enjoy, lasting more than two weeks.
- Panic or dread that spikes around interviews, presentations, or networking, severe enough that you cancel repeatedly.

- Shame narratives that shut down options, such as, “If I were truly competent, I would not need help,” or, “People like me do not belong in that field.”

If any of these resonate, structured support like anxiety therapy or depression therapy can make career work possible again. CBT therapy helps defuse cognitive distortions that warp risk assessment. EFT therapy helps process emotional bonds and fears that keep you from taking thoughtful risks. When relationships feel strained by your career shifts, couples therapy or Relational Life Therapy can improve collaboration at home so your experiments do not become secret battles.

Clients often worry that seeing a therapist labels them as broken. That fear fades when they feel the relief of having both lanes staffed, therapy for the emotional terrain, coaching for the strategic map. Your brain and your calendar both matter.

Negotiating for a values aligned role without burning bridges

You do not always need to change companies to find fit. Sometimes a clear proposal inside your current organization unlocks better alignment. The best internal negotiations frame the change as a benefit to the team. Use data, not just desire.

One client in a sales operations role wanted more analysis and less firefighting. Over six weeks she tracked how long ad hoc requests took and how often they duplicated work. She then proposed a weekly request triage with a service level agreement that set response times. In exchange, she asked for a protected four hour analytics block twice a week. After a two month pilot, error rates dropped, stakeholders got faster answers for standard questions, and she shipped two analytics dashboards that saved the field team hours. Her manager expanded the model across the region. The value she cared about, building systems that improve quality, became central to her job because she linked it to team objectives.

Edge cases exist. Some cultures will not or cannot bend. A client at a legacy firm tried for a year to escape the expectation of constant email during dinner hours. He made a reasoned case with performance metrics, offered alternatives, and modeled results. Nothing moved. He left for a company that respected boundaries. His anxiety eased within a month. Not every departure is a failure of influence. Sometimes it is an honest acknowledgment of culture-values mismatch.

Money, status, and the quiet traps

Purpose talk can go stary eyed and ignore money. That is not responsible. Budgets and safety nets make experiments possible. I work with clients to calculate a runway for changes. Three to six months of living expenses lowers the temperature of decisions and turns a job search into a design process rather than a scramble. When a runway is not feasible, we stage experiments within your current role or through short projects that do not threaten income.

Status is another subtle trap. A client who left a global firm for a regional leader found her job satisfaction doubled even as her friends reacted with surprise. She said what she missed most was the easy shorthand of a famous brand on her resume. Naming that status hunger helped her design new markers of success, like mentoring two junior colleagues into lead roles and publishing a technical guide under her own name. Status can be used thoughtfully as a signal of craft [anxiety treatment](#) or impact, but when it becomes the primary fuel, it burns dirty and fast.

When purpose reveals a new direction late in the game

I have worked with clients who discovered a new calling after 20 years in one field. They often whisper their excitement, as if they are betraying a previous self. One aerospace engineer lit up when he talked about hospice volunteering. He feared the financial and identity cost of a switch to social work. We worked on a portfolio approach. He kept his engineering role at 80 percent for two years, pursued a part time degree, and joined a nonprofit board. The overlap let him test the waters, build a network, and decide with evidence. He eventually moved full time, took a pay cut, and built back income to near parity after four years by leading operations at a larger nonprofit. He told me the hardest part was not the money. It was telling friends at industry conferences why he was leaving. Practice conversations helped. So did a firm grip on his values of service, presence, and systems thinking.

Late pivots are not always dramatic. Some are refinements. A teacher moves into curriculum design. A journalist into communication strategy for science labs. The value throughline remains. What changes is the stage.

A compact action plan to start this month

- Block six hours over the next two weeks for values work, two sessions of 90 minutes and three of 60 minutes.
- Complete the five step values sequence above, then write one page describing a week that honors your top three values.
- Identify two experiments you can launch within 30 days that test those values. Give each a clear metric and a fixed duration, ideally 30 to 90 days.
- Share the plan with one trusted colleague or friend and schedule three check-ins on your calendar now.
- If anxiety spikes or mood dips stall action, book a consult with a therapist skilled in CBT therapy or EFT therapy, and consider couples therapy or Relational Life Therapy if home dynamics are central to your

decision.

Small, consistent action beats big, delayed plans. People overestimate what an epiphany can do and underestimate what a 60 day experiment can teach.

How a coach fits into this work

A good coach asks plain questions, notices patterns you have rehearsed into invisibility, and helps you convert values into behaviors. They also hold you to the plan you say you want. In my practice, we set a cadence that fits your timeline, often every two weeks for three months. Between sessions we track commitments in writing. You own the work. I own the container.

Coaching differs from therapy in focus and method. Coaching orients toward goals and behaviors in the near to mid term. Therapy explores and treats mental health concerns, patterns from the past, and emotional injuries that deserve clinical care. They can complement each other. When they do, change accelerates.

For some clients, the blend includes classic career coaching tools like narrative resumes that highlight value themes, not just roles, and structured networking that asks for stories rather than jobs. For others, it includes mock negotiations and decision audits. A decision audit looks at a past choice, extracts the data and heuristics you used, and tests them against your values. Over time, your decision making sharpens. You stop chasing roles that only look good from far away.

The quiet payoff

Purpose aligned work does not mean every day feels transcendent. It means your difficult days feel worthwhile. You recognize your effort in the mirror because it reflects your values. In practical terms, you set clearer boundaries, you choose projects more strategically, and your motivation recovers faster after setbacks. When a negotiation fails or a project flops, you diagnose the system instead of attacking your worth.

On a more human level, the people around you can tell. You show up with a steadier presence. You are less defensive because you do not need every task to prove your value. You can share credit without fear. You have room to mentor. Your work becomes part of how you live your values, not the entire proof of them.

Career coaching for purpose discovery is not a luxury for the already successful. It is a disciplined way to align what you do with what you believe. Add mental health tools when needed, treat values as verbs, keep experiments small and real, and involve the people who share your life. Your trajectory will not straighten like a ruler, but it will make sense, and it will be yours.

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Monday: 7:00 AM – 9:30 PM

Tuesday: 7:00 AM – 9:30 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 AM – 9:30 PM

Thursday: 7:00 AM – 9:30 PM

Friday: 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Saturday: Closed

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Jon Abelack Psychotherapist provides psychotherapy in New Canaan, Connecticut, with support for individuals and couples seeking practical, thoughtful care.

The practice highlights work and career stress, relationships, couples counseling, anxiety, depression, and peak performance coaching as key areas of focus.

Clients can meet in person in New Canaan, while virtual therapy is also available across Connecticut and New York.

This practice may be a good fit for adults who feel stretched thin by work pressure, relationship challenges, burnout, or major life decisions.

The office is located at 180 Bridle Path Lane in New Canaan, giving local clients a clear in-town option for counseling and psychotherapy services.

People searching for a psychotherapist in New Canaan may appreciate the blend of therapy and coaching-oriented support described on the website.

To get in touch, call 978.312.7718 or visit <https://www.jon-abelack-psychotherapist.com/> to schedule a free 15-minute consultation.

For map-based directions, a public Google Maps listing is also available for the New Canaan office location.

Popular Questions About Jon Abelack Psychotherapist

What does Jon Abelack Psychotherapist help with?

The practice focuses on psychotherapy related to work and career stress, couples counseling and relationships, anxiety, depression, and peak performance coaching.

Where is Jon Abelack Psychotherapist located?

The office is located at 180 Bridle Path Lane, New Canaan, CT 06840.

Does Jon Abelack offer in-person or online therapy?

Yes. The website says sessions are offered in person in New Canaan and virtually across Connecticut and New York.

Who does the practice work with?

The site describes work with both individuals and couples, especially people dealing with stress, communication issues, burnout, relationship concerns, and major life or career decisions.

What therapy approaches are mentioned on the website?

The site lists Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Emotionally Focused Therapy, Gestalt Therapy, and Solution-Focused Therapy.

Does Jon Abelack offer a consultation?

Yes. The website invites visitors to schedule a free 15-minute consultation.

What is the cancellation policy?

The FAQ says cancellations must be made within 24 hours of a scheduled appointment or the session must be paid in full, with exceptions for emergency situations.

How can I contact Jon Abelack Psychotherapist?

Call [978.312.7718](tel:978.312.7718), email jonwabelacklcsw@gmail.com, or visit <https://www.jon-abelack-psychotherapist.com/>.

Landmarks Near New Canaan, CT

Waveny Park – A major New Canaan park and event area that works well as a recognizable reference point for local coverage.

The Glass House – One of New Canaan’s best-known architectural destinations and a helpful landmark for visitors familiar with the town’s design history.

Grace Farms – A widely recognized New Canaan destination with architecture, nature, and community programming that many local residents know well.

New Canaan Nature Center – A practical local landmark for families and residents looking to orient themselves within town.

New Canaan Museum & Historical Society – A central cultural reference point near downtown New Canaan and useful for local page context.

New Canaan Train Station – A practical wayfinding landmark for clients traveling into town from surrounding Fairfield County communities.

If your page mentions New Canaan service coverage, landmarks like these can help visitors quickly place your office within the local area.