

You Always Have a Job [Even if You Are Unemployed]

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You are smart, ambitious and successful. You don't know exactly how it happened, or perhaps you knew that it was coming but, in either case, you are no longer validated by a steady salary, a positive performance review and tracking towards a promotion. Instead, you feel uneasy, tired, tense have to wrap your head around the fact you are going to have to look forward to sending out a countless number of résumés, psych yourself up to audition for several opportunities through nerve-wracking interviews, and silently get accustomed to hearing and/or the words, *“Thank you for taking the time to give us the opportunity to meet with you, but we have decided to go with another candidate who better matches the needs of our organization. Please know that we appreciate the time, interest and effort you have shown and will certainly keep your information on file, should another opportunity with our organization present itself. Good luck in your future endeavours.”*

Now, as the smart, ambitious successful person you are, know that you will need to embrace this unnerving situation and find a way to change the way you think. Admittedly, you are between paying jobs, but nonetheless, you still have a job! Your new job is to find yourself another opportunity to become a value-contributing employee of another company who can truly appreciate your unique skills, experience and wonderful attributes.

Today, you are en route to the next phase in your career. Your next position will contribute to your total career contribution in the same manner that your last position contributed to your career history. The only real need you have, is to develop a strategy to help you become more successful sooner. In the meantime, you need to consider trying the following to get you back in the game:

1. Do not disrupt your regular routine but take advantage of your newly found free time e.g. the time you usually spend commuting, to take some time for yourself and expand your professional and/or personal development. Learn some of life's lessons by reading a biography or two and find out that you are not alone. There have been many before you who have found themselves in a similar situation. They not only survived, but flourished, to the point that they even wrote about their own personal challenges so that people like you could be inspired to work through the challenges you are now facing. They did it. You can too!
2. Take some time to write your own story. If you don't think that you can sit down and write an entire book, start with your obituary. For what would you like to be remembered in your death? What sorts of contributions have you made? Will you even remember that frustrating period in 2009 when you found yourself between jobs?
3. Pick a BHAG. In his book entitled, “Good to Great”, author Jim Collins talks about a “Big Hairy Audacious Goal”. He suggests that you pick a BHAG for yourself. Pick a goal that you have some control over. It can be as simple as having dinner with your entire family at least once a week to joining your local theatre group even though the

thought of speaking in public scares you. Collins suggests making it personal, making it big, making it happen and then savouring your success.

4. Find inspirational quotes to focus upon when you are feeling challenged. Take the time to treat these inspirational thoughts with honour. Type them out. Print them off. Post them on your walls. Here are two from Jim Collins, just to get you started:

Greatness is not a function of circumstance; greatness is largely a matter of conscience choice and discipline. - Jim Collins, author

Whether you prevail or fail depends more upon what you do to yourself than on what the world does to you. - Jim Collins, author

5. Create and/or perfect an elevator pitch about yourself. Imagine that you have 15 seconds to communicate your value as a potential employee. Remember that your message needs to be crisp, tailored, and presented in a factual, yet not pretentious manner. You will need practice to get it perfect. You need to be able to deliver it sitting down, standing up, while walking down the hallway, at your next networking event, at your next interview, etc. Speak at a pace that shows your confidence but remember that it is not only about your tone of voice; your body language also speaks volumes! Hint: Identifying the impact you have had on an organization is far more compelling than years of experience.