

FIRED! NOW WHAT?

Okay, it's the moment you feared. After days and even months of rumors about company lay-offs, you get the dreaded "pink slip." You have now joined thousands of others facing the reality of joblessness. You are in "transition." Now what?

At first, it will feel like a knockout punch. Your character will be bloodied and your self-esteem will hit the floor. You may lose your confidence and begin to have serious doubts about your self worth. You may even have feelings of desperation. You will probably berate yourself for some poor choices and bad decisions. You will highlight your mistakes, emphasize your shortcomings and agonize over all the unrecognized opportunities you let slip by. You will really beat yourself up. **DON'T PANIC!** We have all had our missed opportunities, our challenges and our successes and we will continue to experience them because that's what life is all about. Your feelings are perfectly normal. Now, what do you do?

Well, you really have several choices. You can look at your sudden freedom as a good time to have a pity party with yourself. You can decide to re-do your resume and search for another meaningful job opportunity or you can recognize that out of adversity comes opportunity and change the direction of your life. Pick your self-esteem up from the floor. This may be the perfect time to redesign **your** life...**your** way. Unfortunately, most people let their jobs and their titles define their lives. I'd like to suggest that you let your life define your career. There is a difference. It's your choice.

You have heard a lot about re-engineering the corporation. Maybe this a good time to re-wind the video of your life and explore your heart rather than your bank account. I believe that most of us never have a career but rather simply a job. We work hard fulfilling someone else's dream but never give much thought to pursuing our own dreams. So how do you reinvent yourself?

I began by asking myself some of life's most basic questions: What's life all about? What's really important to me and what do I care most about? Has my life or career really had an impact on anyone? The questions came a lot easier than the answers.

You must begin by asking yourself many of the same questions. It became obvious I had no defined career path but simply a hodge-podge of jobs spanning a lengthy period of my life. I was routinely showing up to collect a paycheck

You can make better choices but **first** you must make a decision. Define precisely what you want to do. If you decide to remain in Corporate America, that's okay. Just understand the game rules. You may decide to join the silent

revolution and begin a home-based business that you have dreamed about for years. The game rules for a home-based business are quite different than the rules of a company job. If you are one of those fortunate individuals who made good financial decisions over the years, you can take some time and travel the world. Whatever you decide to do, you must have a plan. You will never get where you are going if you don't know where you are.

I know what you're thinking. How will I support myself and my family? The answer is simple but the task is not easy.

First, ask for help from those who know you best; colleagues, friends and family. What they see as your strengths and weaknesses will begin to guide you on your path to self-discovery. Find a mentor. As your comfort level increases, the frustration of losing your job will lose its edge. Take responsibility for your career. Set goals and let your dreams put on work clothes. The compass of your life will begin to emerge, pointing you in the right direction.

Second, unless you've got a great severance package, you will probably have to find another job. I didn't say career, I said job. There is a difference. A job will provide the income necessary to take care of your immediate needs. A career should provide financial security, long-term growth and personal satisfaction

Third, I recommend you make a personal commitment to avail yourself of a variety of resources. such as business development centers, professional development seminars, and motivational books and tapes. They will open the door to new ideas as you focus your attention on your career options. Learning never ends.

Fill the cubicles of your mind with purpose, passion, commitment, enthusiasm, humor and last, but not least, hard work. Learn from your past experiences. Defining and finding a career is a full time job. This is a good time to take risks, welcome change, and open up the panoramic vista of your mind. Don't be a victim. Get off the pity pot. Remember your past but trust in your future. Give yourself permission to live your life your way. Let your "pink slip" be your magic carpet to prosperity.

I welcome your comments.
Phil

Phil Parker is a professional speaker and author of *Kiss Yourself Hello! From a Life of Business to the Business of Life* and *The Gift of Perspective ~ Let My Hindsight Be Your Foresight*. He is a member of the National Speakers Association and the Georgia Speakers Association. You can contact him at 888-489-9393 or at phil@philparker.com Visit his website @ www.philparker.com

Permission to reprint granted. Must include my contact material.