



Between Jobs? Now What?

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I was speaking recently with a former colleague who is between jobs. He is an experienced and highly respected senior executive who is struggling to know what to do next. He shared that he wasn't particularly happy in his previous job, and that he wants his next opportunity to have purpose and meaning. He emphasized that it would have to be in keeping with his values.

This conversation brought to mind the agonizing between-job experience of one of my coaching clients who I will call Sandy. He explained that following the loss of his well-paid and prestigious corporate job, he had benefitted from some excellent career transition coaching provided by his employer. It prepared him well to find another good job. A year later, however, he found himself again between jobs. Thus, began a deeply frustrating, three-year-plus odyssey to find yet another, comparable position.

However, the longer he was out of work, the less particular Sandy became. He did all the 'right' things: extensive networking, volunteer work, strict budgeting to make his severance last as long as possible, branching out to do management consulting... He sought career transition coaching (once again) now at his own expense. It seemed that everything that had served him well in the past no longer did now. He felt as though he was hitting his head repeatedly against a brick wall; leaving him feeling bloodied and isolated, but no further ahead. With his finances rapidly depleting, his mounting frustration turned to depression.

Sandy felt that at that point, he was nearing the breaking point emotionally and financially. He was willing to do anything to reduce his pain. He decided this dark night had to end NOW! This was not some desperate cry for help or even worse. No; born out of the intensity of his pain, Sandy somehow found the inner strength to decisively start letting go of now-obsolete values and priorities that were blocking his new path forward. He no longer defined success solely by power, prestige and money. He was now seeking something more meaningful.

While profound change is rarely instantaneous, something major had undeniably shifted for Sandy. He began to feel a new, growing sense of purpose deep within himself. Over the next few months, he met some like-minded people and was recruited for two promising opportunities. This is when we started to work together. Sandy wanted to ensure that his new position would be a good fit with his evolving values and priorities. He didn't want to re-enter the dark night he was just leaving.

My coaching with Sandy focussed on helping him become more aware of his intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual needs - without encroaching on the domain of psychotherapy, of course. We worked on identifying and letting go of previously ineffective approaches. He discovered the values that are now important to him personally and professionally. He acquired the insights, skills, knowledge and decisiveness needed to urgently move forward.

The overarching lessons he learned from our deep coaching sessions were the following:

- To be successful, positive and happy, we have to have a goal and a purpose that are higher than ourselves and the organizations we work for;
- In transforming ourselves, we can transform our surroundings, as well.

Between Jobs? Now What? For many executives this is one of the most important questions they will ever have to answer. Their response will have far-reaching consequences on their lives. This profound cross-road is where I come in. I recognize that each one of my clients is unique with specific talents, challenges and needs. Through deep coaching I assist them to discover their genuine personal and professional values,

and to embrace their unique talents. (See my June 18th, 2017, post: [Deep Coaching: No One Size Fits All.](#)) This powerful and rewarding process enables them to acquire the self-knowledge and awareness to become both the person and the leader they aspire to be.