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Part III

The Job Search Adventure

by Stanley H. Davis

The idea of starting a job search does test the courage and resolve of usually calm and confident people. The commitment to enter the fray of the job search process, to deal with the uncertainty and potential rejection that goes along with any job search, is never easy. But there are certain strategies to employ and tips to keep in mind that can make the whole process, if not enjoyable, then certainly less unpleasant.

Above all, it's important to enter the job search fray with the right mindset. More than likely, you have some good experience – something to sell – and you can't forget that. Keep reminding yourself that you have the skills, knowledge, and track record (maybe more than your immediate memory or modesty recognize) that will be right for a great job.

Some solid strategies to keep in mind as you begin the hunt include:

- 1) Determine ahead of time what you're looking for in your next job, so that you can be focused on looking for the right kind of job and the right kind of organization.
- 2) Catalog all of your accomplishments – not just for your resume, but also to remind yourself how good you truly are and what you can bring to an organization. (Keeping your self-esteem up during this process is paramount.) In addition, interviewers will ask you to detail your experiences, and if you don't have them front of mind, you're more likely to forget to mention them.
- 3) Practice your storytelling skills. Nothing is better for making your interview memorable (in a positive way) than being able to tell a brief story about some of your accomplishments.
- 4) Write down the name of every single person you know (through personal and work connections), without being selective. Then let everyone know that you're looking for a new opportunity.
- 5) Prepare yourself to be able to turn down an offer that's not right. A much bigger problem than rejection is accepting the wrong job, then failing. (Don't be afraid to test and stretch your skills, within the realm of what's really possible.)

Once you've gone through the above strategies, you can take the next step – finding the job openings. Your objective at this point is to find jobs before they hit the job boards, and you can do this most effectively by completing strategy #4 above – let people know you're looking. The internet is a great place to find a job too, but the internet is open all night – during the day, make sure you're getting out and meeting and talking to people.

As you do this, remember your basic business courtesies. When anyone helps you, make sure you thank them, whether for a referral, feedback, or follow-up. Doing so helps to maintain positive relationships with people who may be able to help you in your job search more than you think. Remember also, don't take referrals lightly. When anyone does refer you to someone, you carry

that person's reputation with you. If you perform badly, that reflects poorly on them, as well as on you.

The job search is not an eight-hour-a-day/five-days-a-week proposition. It will take long hours every day, and in the process, you may well encounter people who are less than professional. In these circumstances again it's crucial to remind yourself of how good you are, and to be as generous and professional as you can be. By demonstrating good character, you'll be noticed and, as other positions become available, you will be remembered for how well you dealt with difficulty.

Again, you're probably better than you know. And in dealing with this imperfect process and some difficult people, as Randy Newman croons in his song, *Laugh and Be Happy* – "Don't let the bastards grind you down." Despite some obstacles, you will find that next right opportunity.

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