Making Job Change Easier: Insights on Leaving, Letting Go, and Keeping the Door Open

Description

The Great Resignation is still going on, and many individuals and business owners are dealing with job change. Whether one is thinking of leaving a job or is a leader dealing with the loss of a good employee, these are often complicated, emotional issues. It can be hard to know what to do.

This past week I experienced three situations that involved career decisions. While they were all different, they were also similar in some ways. The situations were common, and ones I also have faced. Today I want to share them as well as a few of my insights on handling job change.

In the first situation, a person wrote me about having been offered a position with an organization. It sounded great and offered a career advancement. The organization they are thinking of going to is well respected. The person wrote, â??I am very happy with my current employer. The grass may not be greener. What do you think?â?•

I responded that at times for career advancement it is necessary to leave oneâ??s place of work. It is better to be moving *to* a new job versus running *from* the current job. The fact that the person is happy where they are is actually advantageous in making such a decision. It gives them time to assess opportunities. I then provided a few suggestions.

One, let your current employer know what is going on. Often people wait until they have accepted a new job before letting the current place of work know they are interviewing. If one is afraid to let their employer know because theyâ??re afraid of retribution, they are in the wrong place. I know this is hard, and, sadly, some people just canâ??t get past their fear. In my companies, when we learn someone is interviewing, we are supportive. I have helped others prepare for the interview. At times, telling the employer can lead to a good, healthy conversation on career development. Especially when it is a small company, being transparent about your search gives the current employer time to prepare for the transition. It is the right thing to do. It will also make them more likely to take you back if you decide you want to return.

Another suggestion is, â??Donâ??t be bought.â?• At times a company will offer more dollars to get the employee to stay. If the only reason one is considering leaving is dollars, then that may work. But in my experience, those who stay only due to being offered more money regret the decision.

Some other advice I provided: Ask the question, â??If you offer me this role and I accept, a year from now what would have been accomplished?â?• This clarifies expectations. Were your potential coworkers part of the interview process? Itâ??s a good sign if peers are involved. Did they discuss the amount of development offered to you at the company? At times making a career move is the right decision. It is important not to let fear hold us back.

In the second scenario, a person wrote that her company is restructuring. The person has been with her current organization more than ten years. The restructuring will mean a demotion. The person is hurt and not happy with the company leadership. She is a single mom and has stayed there for the security of the role. While she feels defeated on one hand, part of her feels this could be a huge opportunity to find a place to feel joy of work again. Any advice?

I responded, â??If possible, pause.â?• Itâ??s not that the person should not leave; however, itâ??s best not to quit due to hurt feelings. It is better while looking for a new job to have one. Second, the pause allows things to settle down. Circumstances can quickly change. Years ago, a person I worked with got promoted. I did not want to work for this person so I quit. Right after I left, the person who had gotten promoted quit. I had overreacted. Also, in a restructure, the company may offer a severance. Be a bit patient.

I do agree that at times it is very helpful to have the decision to leave made for you. A president of a hospital called me and shared that he was being let go from his job. I had known this person for years. He never seemed happy with the healthcare system he was part of. He was being paid a very good salary with good benefits. I call that a golden handcuff. This person and I were close. I showed empathy. Then I said, â??This is good for you. You are not happy, yet due to the compensation, you would not quit. After some adjustments, you will end up in a better place.â?•

Today he teaches healthcare administration and is very happy. In summary, pause when a change is being made. While it is normal to be hurt when a change is made that leads to job loss, most of the time the person ends up in a better place beyond work. They have a better peace of mind.

Finally, I received a call from a business owner who was taken aback by the resignation of a very high performer. He felt the employee was making a mistake and that the move was not the best one for this person. Since I knew the business owner and the employee, he asked for my advice. We discussed compensation. Many times, a small company just cannot compete with a larger company. He also asked if I would speak to the person. I did. What I learned was, as the person had told the business owner, they loved the workplace and were happy. However, the large company will provide some learning opportunities that the smaller company just canâ??t. Much of the decision has to do with resources and technology.

The key here is for the business owner to be supportive of the person and keep the door open for a return. A very good company I am aware of has a policy that when someone quits they tell the person that the door is open to them always; however, in the first 90 days, they can come back with seniority and not start over. There are those times when a person quits and learns quickly the new place is not what they thought. If they have an option to go back, they will.

As you can see, each person and every situation is different, yet here are a few insights Iâ??ve gained over the years:

- Itâ??s better to leave a place where you are happy for a great opportunity than to take a job just to get out of a bad situation. Running *to* a job is better than running *from* a job.
- When thinking of taking a new job, ask key questions to clarify expectations.
- Let your current employer know the situation before you resign. There may be some opportunities available if you stay.
- Donâ??t stay just for the money. The factors that made the job unfulfilling will remain even if the salary changes.
- If unhappy, stay if you can till you find a better fit for you.
- Most of the time, what appears to be a bad thing, like being demoted or let go, will work out fine in the long run.
- If an employee is leaving whom you wish would stay, treat them great and let them know the door is open if the new job is not what they thought it would be.

Job change is rarely easy for either party, the person leaving or the company being left. There are many emotions on both sides. This is normal. Growth usually comes with discomfort, but it is worth it. When we have clarity on what we want, the courage to be honest with those around us, and a genuine desire to help people live up to their potential, things tend to work themselves out for the best.

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