



## WORDS ON WISE MANAGEMENT

### Career resilience in an ever-evolving world

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***Resilience** (noun): the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness; the ability to spring back into shape.*

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about the importance of career resilience and how every single working person will have to show it at some point in their lives. Two years ago this week, at the age of 50, I left a job of 17 years—a job that I loved . . . and didn't love. If I had assigned it a Facebook relationship status, it would have been: "It's complicated."

Both the organization and I knew it was time for me to move on. When I left, I went to work for a former vendor that had grown into a trusted adviser over the years. I knew my new boss was what I needed and wanted. My position is now an HR consulting role with a side of business development. (Yikes!) It challenges me in ways I wouldn't have imagined; in other ways, the work has been like a comfy sweater that feels just right. The good news is, I love it, and it was the best decision I could have made even though the circumstances weren't optimal.

Today, I don't work in an office all day or bring work home with me, and no one freaks out if an e-mail isn't answered in 10 minutes. My boss and my team are amazing, talented, funny, and supportive. I am fully present at home and able to spend more time with my loved ones. I would never have believed that there was such a great life on the other side of my old job.

Sometimes career resilience is chosen, and sometimes, unfortunately, it's thrust upon us. But the consistent result is that some mental shift occurs. There will be times in our careers when things don't go as smoothly as we'd like or a big account we were hoping to get didn't materialize. Whatever message you're playing in your head is likely to color your feelings and actions around your career resilience.

I like to think that when difficult things happen at work, or we make significant career changes, we receive opportunities that are "exciting scary" because

they're truly a combination of a great opportunity tinged with a bit of fear of the unknown. Think about it: Many things in life that were unknown to you have turned out to be your greatest joys. New jobs, kids, vacations to different places were all exciting scary in the unknown.

Here are a few lessons about resilience I've learned throughout my career:

- Keep your network alive and up to date so that when you need help, it isn't an awkward ask.
- Many people have experienced big, hard career changes. Most people are eager to help because they remember how they felt during that time.
- At some point in your life, you might unexpectedly lose your job. While your world may be rocked, many people who have been through a job loss report that their next position is immensely better, either because it comes with a higher salary or better work-life balance.
- As the workplace landscape changes with the advent of new technologies and younger people entering the workforce, you may feel as if leaving your job of 15 (or however many) years sounds unfathomable. Develop your skills, take some courses, and be confident that your longtime experience can be more valuable than anything that can be taught.
- Make sure you don't "overstay" at a job just because you're comfortable. Change can definitely be uncomfortable, but that's where your greatest growth occurs.

We often feel that big changes are good for everyone but us. How would the choices you make in your career be different if you didn't fear change and possible failure? Have you made decisions after a difficult period in your career that you would encourage others to learn from?



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