

## **Career Rx**

By Lisa Chenofsky Singer

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### **Layaway Plan for Your Career**

One sign of the times is that several retailers have brought back the layaway plan. This plan enables customers to put down a deposit to hold merchandise until the full amount can be paid. Wouldn't this be nice for those seeking a new job? Just think how great it would be if you could tell an employer, "I want that job and I will complete my education or recertification so let's put the position on layaway for me. How long is your layaway plan? I am ready, willing and able to take the job now as I have several of the qualifications - not 100%, but the potential is within me!"

If you ever wanted to say the potential is within me, just think about your career plan and who owns your development plan. In the past, your grandparents, maybe even parents would enter a company and remain for the majority of their work life. Today, most of us will change companies, either due to a restructuring or by choice to venture into new career options. Most of us will change five to seven times during our working life. How many of our career changes are based on our own choices? Planned by us? Do we have a master plan or vision for where we want to be in 5, 10, 15...20 years from now?

Carol A. Turner of International Coach Institute wrote a blog titled Emotional Intelligence - What is Your Story? As I reflected on her words, I decide to elaborate and further explore many of her thoughts through this article.

Dr. Martin Seligman's Positive Psychology teaches us that we can choose to be depressed or to find the silver lining in our circumstances with a positive outlook for the future. The truth is we have a choice in life each day. How we respond is our choice. We can respond negatively or positively - depending on which lens we choose to see life through. Human beings have access to hope, gratitude, appreciation, hope, love, and joy. For example, if we practice gratitude and show our appreciation, we can lower our stress levels.

When faced with a challenging situation, it takes courage to step outside the "groupthink" perspective. Groupthink refers to members of a group that avoid promoting viewpoints outside the comfort zone of their [consensus](#) thinking. Motives for this style of thinking may include a desire to avoid being seen as foolish, or avoid embarrassing or angering other members of the group. Groupthink may cause groups to make hasty, irrational decisions, where individual doubts are set aside, for fear of upsetting the group's balance. Confident individuals are able to take a risk and step out of the "groupthink" to make a difference. For some, this is a risky move. How courageous are they? What will be their safety net if there is a reaction? Is safer and easier to fall in with the crowd? This is where many stay - in their safe zone. During uncertain times, it takes courage to step forward and take the lead. Some individuals do this naturally and others need encouragement. Once they step into the newness of leading, typically there is a new feeling of awareness when they are able to understand their strength within themselves. This is a powerful coaching moment with a client. As a trained Coach, there may be times when the client takes the lead and may not succeed. This too is a powerful time to reflect on the courage it took and what lesson the client can take forward. We learn more about ourselves when we conquer our fears than when we remain in a comfortable state without trying something new. Think about the lessons learned from this experience for the next time.

Our collective experiences and emotions are shared through the stories we tell. "Newly hired or promoted managers have a window of opportunity to make a difference by telling new stories, setting new expectations and winning the hearts and minds of the people they lead," according to Carol. When they chose to accept what is and not influence the culture, they become absorbed in the way it is. Influencing change with a vision for the future, keeping in mind that "we are responsible to the communities in which we live and work and to the world community as well" (J&J's Credo).

As we live, work and play in our communities, think about the culture we have created for one another. The stories we have been told and continue to tell. The stories change when people are treated with respect and appreciation. If we argue culture is really the unconscious emotions of the collective, how do we influence that collective? We talk about a culture of fear, of avoidance, of productivity, or even resilience. Often these are not talked about openly and yet, they are very present in the culture. This is the key to evolving and growing. Conquer your fears and build resiliency. Open dialogue on these subjects by posing a question and engaging in a healthy "what if" exercise with family, friends, and colleagues - you may be surprised at what you receive.

During this holiday season, think about reaching out and sharing your hope, your understanding, your time, and your resources. Even those who have little right now feel good when helping others. Isn't life really about feeling good about ourselves through helping others? What else is there? Money doesn't bring happiness; you bring happiness - to yourself and others through your sharing. Happy Thanksgiving!

*This column provides thought provoking strategies for getting unstuck along your career journey. A certified Executive and Career Coach can be instrumental in guiding you in your efforts to gain a new perspective. I invite you to contact me @ [Lisa@ChenofskySinger.com](mailto:Lisa@ChenofskySinger.com)*

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