

*Entelechy's Newsletter for Trainers, Managers, HR Professionals and Others
Responsible for the Performance of Others*

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IN THIS ISSUE:

My Cousin Dan Gets Laid Off

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I'm departing from *The Key's* usual format and will return to it in the next issue.

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MY COUSIN DAN GETS LAID OFF

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A couple of days ago I received an email from my cousin Dan who is getting laid off from a company where he's worked for many years.

Now many of us change jobs as fast as we change our minds. Others – including my cousin Dan – who have not changed jobs often (or at all), will find the economy and job search unnervingly unresponsive and difficult.

Having worked with many companies on their hiring practices AND having worked for companies who have laid off workers, I have some advice that goes beyond just finding a job.

Here's what I wrote to Dan:

Dan,

Best of luck in the transition. I believe that change – as painful as it can be – is ALWAYS good. A couple of things from experiences that I've had in laying off, being laid off, and business slowdowns:

1. STOP SPENDING MONEY. Financially plan for the worst case scenario.

2. Clean up your debt now; refinance NOW while you have employment. Consolidate and shrink monthly outlay NOW. Seriously, don't wait until next month.
3. **START SAVING MONEY.** Put money away because you will need it.
4. Start networking now. It's a tough economy and the few jobs will go to those who know people. Most of these jobs will be filled before they're ever posted. A thousand people just like you will be responding to published job advertisements so the chances of you getting that job are slim. People hire people they know (or who they know through an acquaintance.)
5. Take advantage of your company's outplacement services. They're free and usually pretty good. At the same time, don't count on them to find a job for you.
6. Form a group of friends you like and work together to get jobs. When you run across something that doesn't seem like a fit for you, pass on the lead. They can do the same. That way, each person in the group benefits from the collective search. An added bonus is that a group of people can help you keep going. Sometimes going it alone gets wearing and discouraging; a group can help. Start the group NOW.
7. Don't burn ANY bridges. Regardless of how you feel about your bosses, the company, your peers, or subordinates, now's the time to strengthen your relationships. The person who "gets even" loses.
8. Consider job alternatives. Teach. Work as a consultant. However, be realistic. The get-rich-working-from-home schemes don't work. Writing the book that you've always wanted to write may be a good hobby but will not bring you money AND may lull you into a sense of eventual payoff. Anything new is a gamble and may be a blind alley. So, as you're considering alternatives, continue pursuing what you know best.
9. Talk to your employer about working as a contractor. Sometimes the employer needs to shrink payroll but has money for outside services. Even if there's nothing now, keep checking in since needs – and budgets – change.
10. Know your benefits. The fact is that you've been paying taxes for 20 years. Those taxes fund programs to provide assistance to those who need it. It's like a forced savings account – you draw from it when you need it. You may need it.

- Find out now when you can start drawing from those benefits and how much you are entitled to receive. (Note: As an employer who has laid off workers, I can tell you that I was tickled to death that some of my employees chose to collect unemployment benefits since for YEARS I've been paying a ton of money to the state/insurance company for this purpose.)
11. Make a plan and stick to it. Many people I know get eaten from the insides with worry and fret; and mostly it's because they worry that they're not doing enough or doing the right things. With a well thought out plan, you can measure your activity against your plan rather than relying on results – which WILL come.
 12. Talk to your wife. If you're like me, you'll have a tendency to want to figure this out on your own. If your wife's like mine, she'll think that you "need to talk about it" and "get it out." The fact is, SHE needs to talk about it and make sure that you're okay. So talk more and express your emotions more than you normally would. It will help HER – which WILL help YOU! Also, recognize her questions as signs of caring and love – not prying. When she asks what you did today, it's out of hope and concern, not out of nagging REGARDLESS of how you hear it. If you're like me, you get defensive and that's a bad place to be with those who care most for you.
 13. Don't fill time with new hobbies. Your job is to get a job. It's not to plant the garden you've always wanted, or to fix up the old beater in the garage or to paint the house. Spend your normal working day working – searching for that job.
 14. Don't fret about not getting an offer. These days, employers are responding to thousands of applicants for a single job posting. As wrong as it is, they have neither the time nor the energy to interview or even respond to all applicants. It's not about you personally so don't waste time and energy thinking it is.
 15. Put on your sales hat. Regardless of what you used to do, you're now in the job of sales and the product you're selling is you. What can your product offer your prospective employer? Why is your product superior to others? How can the prospective employer benefit from your product's features? Be objective.
 16. Treat the search and interview process as a game. What can you do to get them to respond? What can you do to stand out in a sea of applicants? Dare to be different. In this tough economy, you need to be different first and better second.



17. Remember your friends and drop us a line every once in a while to let us know how you're doing!

Terry

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MAILING AND PRIVACY INFORMATION

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