

IN CRISIS MODE

If you are at a career crossroads, here is advice on how to move forward

OFTEN get calls from clients who have lost or are about to lose their jobs.

It doesn't matter that some didn't even like their job; it was a role they thought they could count on for a livelihood.

Now at a career crossroads, they are not sure what to do next.

Some are in the denial stage while others are experiencing anger and depression. Some feel they have lost their corporate identity and self-worth.

Are you facing a crisis in your career or professional life?

Here are some suggestions on how to get yourself out of it:

Acknowledge the crisis

Losing a job can create as much emotional turmoil as losing a loved one. You may go through the different stages of loss — starting with denial, followed by anger and depression, and, finally, acceptance.

I know a 45-year-old man who lost his high-paying job of 15 years. Initially, he refused to accept that he was now facing a professional crisis.

He dismissed the whole situation as "just a bad patch" that he was going through, blamed it all on an "incompetent boss" and was confident that the ex-boss would soon be begging him to rejoin the company.

"Right now," he said, "all I want is to take a long holiday and worry about it later."

Two months later, when it finally dawned on him that his ex-boss was not going to call him back, he became consumed with anger and hurt.

He started bad-mouthing his former employer and told everyone he had resigned because of unethical practices.

When he first came to me, he was already in deep depression. He could not understand why he, of all the staff in the organisation, was let go. Was it because he was too frank and not adept at politicking? Was it some inadequacy on his part?

I told him that the first step towards moving forward was to acknowledge that he was indeed facing a crisis in his life.

He was now 45 and in need of a job. He was also aware that many potential employers preferred younger candidates for many of their job openings.

Once he acknowledged that he was facing a professional crisis, he could choose how to respond to it.

2 Explore the options

I have always loved the way the Chinese express the word "crisis".

The Chinese character for "crisis" actually comprises two characters — one means "danger" and the other "opportunity".

Whichever way you choose to look at it, one unifying theme defines it: A crisis serves as a



If time and money were not a problem, what would you be doing on a daily basis? - EPApic

wake-up call to alert you to both danger (and turmoil) as well as opportunities that can lead to greater things in life.

The outcome depends on the choices and decisions you make.

So use your career crisis as an opportunity to step back and take a fresh look at what you really want in life.

Then make the move forward to achieve the life you deserve.

3 Redefine your purpose and passion

How many people really take the time to push the pause button in their lives to explore what their true passion and purpose are?

Very few, I believe.

People just tend to drift along the path of least resistance — from school to college to job after

job, with very little thought given to what they really want to achieve in their lives until it is probably too late for them to do very much.

So count your blessings now that you have received this wake-up call to pause the auto-drive mode you are in to explore your purpose and passion.

Reflect on the following questions:

● Do you feel good about yourself, your life and where you are going?

● If time and money were not a problem, what would you be doing on a daily basis?

● What do you really want for your life? What don't you want? What have you settled for?

● Do you feel fulfilled and satisfied with your life choices so

far? If not, what would you change if you could?

Whether you are experiencing a professional crisis right now or not, let this article be a reminder for you to step back and reassess where life is leading you.

If you discover that you have been sacrificing meaning, fulfillment, balance and happiness in life for the outward trappings of "career success", it is time to regain control and get the life you really want. — Source: ST/ANN

■ **ARTICLE** by Jessica See, a certified professional coach and trainer with Image Coach International.

■ **FOR** more on jobs, please refer to category 515 in *Metro Classifieds*.