



Cathy Alfandre's E-Letter

Create greater joy and fulfillment in your working life.

November 2007

Greetings!

"He has half the deed done, who has made a beginning."

--Horace

Building a Bridge from Here to There

Sometimes in career transition we get stuck because we can't figure out how to get from where we are now to where we ultimately want to be. We get stymied, asking ourselves: How can I possibly get from here to all the way over *there*? It's especially paralyzing when the destination out there is somewhat unclear.

What I've found helpful in these situations is to refocus the journey--to literally take the lens off the distant goal and focus instead on building a bridge right in front of where you are.

Let's take the example of Mary, who wants to move from corporate human resources into a development role in a not-for-profit organization. It feels like an intimidating effort to try to make this leap without connections, experience, time to invest, and so on. But with the ultimate destination (development role, not-for-profit) in the back of her mind, Mary could focus on a bridge instead. And she could choose the length of her bridge. For example:

Long Bridge

Mary could ask herself: What possible interim jobs could I pursue to get much closer to my destination? Mary could pursue a sales role in her current company or an HR role in a not-for-profit, for example. Either of these steps would position her to take a future bridge into a development role.

Some long bridges to consider if you're in transition:

- Taking a new job with your current employer--a job that has more in common with your career goal.
- Expanding your current role to include more work that is similar to your destination--e.g. taking on a project.
- Moving to a different organization in your current role but choosing an organization that has greater potential for you to expand.

Mid-Length Bridge

Mary could ask herself: What steps, short of a job change, could I take to help me inch toward my destination? In her case, a mid-length bridge might be to volunteer in the development department of a local not-for-profit, or work on a community or school fundraising project.

Some mid-length bridges to consider:

- Volunteering.
- Taking a course.
- Informational interviewing.

- Joining a professional or trade association.
- Working on your resume.

Short Bridge

Mary could ask herself: Even though I don't have time to invest in the career transition process right now, what could I start doing that would be more in the *spirit* of what I want? In Mary's case, a short bridge could be to start a journal to capture why she wants to work in development, what her transferable skills may be, what her hopes and dreams are, etc....

Some short bridges include:

- Journaling.
- Taking a day off (just to get some space to *think*).
- Searching job boards to learn more about the requirements for potential new jobs.
- Reading relevant books and professional journals.
- Talking with friends to share what you're thinking about doing in the future.

The best thing about a bridge (no matter what the length) is that it helps you leave your current shore. You are moving. You may be on the bridge for a while, but eventually you will make it to the other side.

Best wishes to you for the holidays and the New Year -

Cathy

What Does Your Workweek Look Like?

Over the last year, there has been some notable press about two kinds of workweeks. At one end of the spectrum: the "**extreme job**." First discussed at length in a Harvard Business Review article last December, this kind of job is characterized by 60-plus hours a week, 24/7 client demands, unpredictable work, broad scope of responsibility, and lots of travel. The research on this phenomenon and its potentially negative effects (detailed in the article) shows that, of those who hold extreme jobs, more than half work 70+ hours, and nearly 10% work 100 hours or more (not including commute time)!

Contrast this notion with another that's gotten a lot of buzz in recent weeks: the "**4-hour workweek**." In his new book of the same title, Timothy Ferriss outlines his idea, which includes ruthlessly restricting email and instant messaging and otherwise "pulling the plug"--especially on "e-clutter." With these and other steps (including outsourcing where possible), Ferriss suggests that it's possible to work much less and gain more time for other things in life. This provocative idea has particularly caught the attention of those in the high-tech world.

For most of us, the real workweek is somewhere in between these two extremes. But the research and ideas serve a very useful purpose: inspiring us to contemplate and define what kind of working life we want and how we can get it.

This bi-monthly e-letter is intended to offer ideas, tips, resources, and questions to ponder on careers, fulfilling work, and career-life decisions. I welcome your reactions and your suggestions for future topics.

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