

A BEND
IN THE ROAD

A GUIDE TO CAREER TRANSITION

DEREK MENGEL & ROSS MENGEL

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Acknowledgements

Established as a recruitment company in 1980, the DMA Group has evolved to offer a comprehensive selection of HR-related solutions to clients. Over the years, many individuals have benefited from the sourcing, retention and outplacement services offered by our organisation.

We have entitled this publication *A Bend in the Road* to emphasise our firm conviction that retrenchment is not the “end” of the road but, indeed, a “bend” in the road, an opportunity for exciting new beginnings and the realisation of a fulfilling career. Individuals who systematically apply the concepts outlined in this step-by-step approach will be guided from the first phase of “Separation”, through “Preparation” to “Communication”, finally arriving at “Negotiation” and the acceptance of a new and satisfying challenge.

Based on our experience, the average job seeker doesn’t have the time or inclination to become embroiled in exhaustive dissertations on job search. We have therefore attempted to provide the reader with a summary of what we see as the most pertinent concepts collected over the

years, comfortable in the knowledge that in this, “The Age of Knowledge”, we have access to countless books and websites. In particular, we would like to direct you to the following:

- www.1stopresume.com
- www.bradleycv.com
- www.careerlab.com
- www.ehow.com
- www.hiretowin.com
- www.monster.com
- www.office.microsoft.com
- www.rockportinstitute.com

Finally, we look forward to travelling with you on this journey of discovery and accomplishment.

CHAPTER ONE

SEPARATION – A Bend in the Road

“When one door of happiness closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one that has been opened up for us.”

- Helen Keller -

Understanding job security

A stark reality of business today is that the concept of a “job for life” no longer exists, and that the quest for corporate efficiency – even survival – in the modern competitive environment in which we find ourselves has overcome the time-honoured traditions of devotion, allegiance and shared loyalty between employers and staff.

Essentially, we as workers are self-employed, marketing our skills, knowledge and abilities to an organisation for as long as they are required. No longer is it anticipated that one should devote one’s entire working life to a company who, in return, will offer the safety and security of

permanent refuge.

On the contrary, for personal growth and self-development it is important that we are exposed to a variety of work experiences, which will avoid the danger of stagnation in a single role for an extended period. To this end, retrenchment can and should be viewed in a more positive light as an opportunity to grow and extend our marketability.

Taking responsibility for our own career growth is an empowering concept, and whilst our personal work ethic demands dedication and commitment to the role with which we are tasked, our personal growth and career progress is equally important. It is essential that we are geared for and adaptable to mergers, takeovers, restructures, financial downturns and career growth opportunities.

Security can often promote lethargy whilst the challenge of insecurity will force us to improve, grow and develop the skills we need to market ourselves and ensure our own career progression.

Support systems

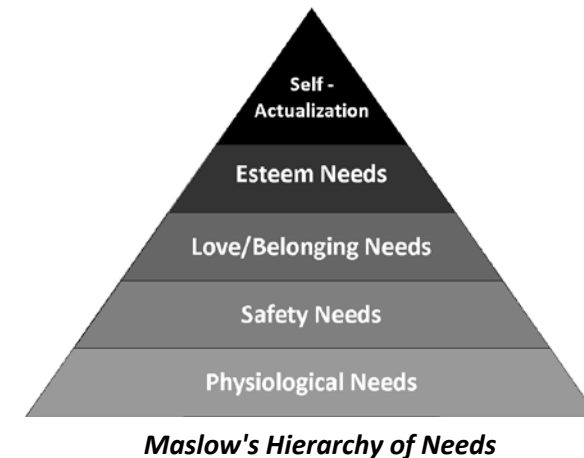
"Our chief want in life is somebody who will make us do what we can"

- Ralph Waldo Emerson -

Since early man and our hunter-gatherer forefathers, it has been our nature to continually strive for the enhance-

ment of our living standards and therefore look for anything that might provide the potential for improving our way of living. A look at Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* will confirm this.

In 1943, Abraham Maslow, who is widely regarded as the "Father of Modern Management and Leadership", developed what has been referred to as the *Theory of Human Motivation*. The basis of this theory is the concept that human beings are motivated by unsatisfied needs, which he recorded in a hierarchical order of physiological essentials which must be fulfilled before an individual is able to address higher needs. Doing this culminates in self-actualisation, or the full realisation of one's potential.



In order to live and plan progressively to address these needs it is imperative that we learn to thrive as we deal with the challenges of our career growth. Where neces-

sary, we should seek support and advice on everything from effective goal-setting skills to facing up to our emotional turmoil.

In order to do this, consider the following:

- **Spouse and family**

Loved ones around us can provide immeasurable assistance and support as we address the challenges of career transition.

- **Friends**

A true friend is one who will listen, constructively encourage and advise.

The job search curve

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, a world-renowned psychiatrist, was born in Switzerland in 1926 and died in America in 2004. In her groundbreaking book entitled *On Death and Dying*, she first discussed what is now known as the Kübler-Ross curve in which she proposed the “five stages of grief” as a pattern of adjustment. These five stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance have been adapted to many situations and are also represented in the job search curve on page 11 to help individuals understand their emotions whilst going through the career transition process.

What you will notice in looking at the curve is that there are two sides – from the reactive phase of “letting go”



and dealing with a variety of negative emotions until, having made a choice, one will progress to a proactive phase, where one becomes more positive and focuses on establishing a “new beginning”.

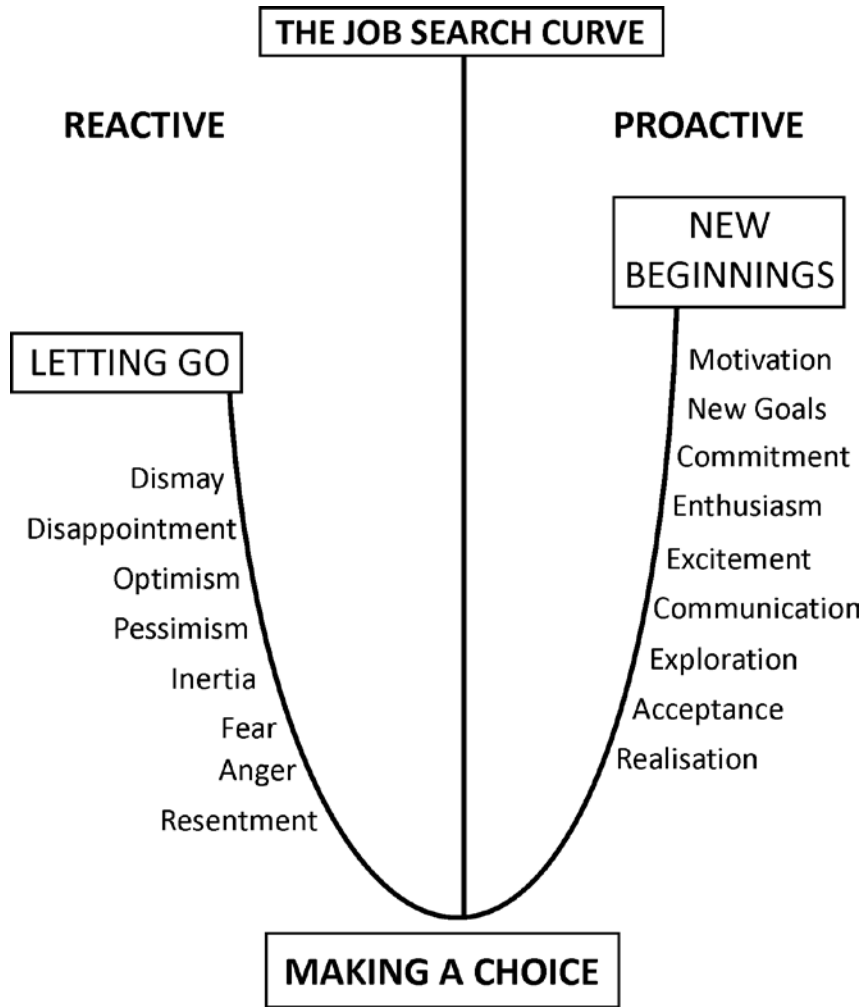
During the process it is expected that there will be fluctuations, and you may well bounce back and forth a few times

before arriving at your new beginning. What is important to notice is that the new beginning is on a higher level than “getting started”, an indication that you are likely to find yourself in a role more suited to your talents and abilities.

Progression strategies

“You can never cross the ocean unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore”

- Christopher Columbus -



The following exercise will enable you to define your current feelings and situation, help you to set objectives and enable you to devise a plan with which you will achieve the challenges that you have set yourself.

Record how you feel about your current situation:

Determine where you are now on the "Job Search Curve" by recording the spot on the diagram on the previous page and then describing how it feels to be there. (It is alright if you are not at "new beginnings". To get there, it is necessary to move through the other stages first. For some it is easy and happens quickly, whilst for others it is a far greater challenge):

Where would you like to get to on the "Job Search Curve"? Identify and discuss ways in which you might get there:



Consider:

- Improving your level of confidence.
- Doing a self-assessment or some form of psychometric test to realise your strengths and help you decide on career options.
- Developing additional skills.
- Plotting a way forward.
- Creating your marketing document – CV.
- Responding to advertisements.
- Dealing with recruitment agencies.
- Implementing your networking expertise.
- Practising your presentation abilities.
- Working with a trusted financial advisor.

Self-assessment, achievements and key attributes

"Today's preparation determines tomorrow's achievement"

- Anonymous -

Think of yourself as a product that is of interest to the consumer – in this case, a potential employer, financier, investor or business partner. What is it about "the product" that is attractive to "the purchaser"?

With this in mind, reflect on what value you have added in your current and previous positions and detail what ac-

Progression priorities

List what you feel your main priorities are at this time:
