

Transition

By: Ana Duarte

In my early 50's, as a single parent and homeowner, I found myself without a job. The company I was planning to retire from, Eastern Airlines, went bankrupt. I had enjoyed working for this company for 27 years. I was immediately "rescued" by one of my former Eastern Airlines bosses, who generously offered me a position in his own company.

However, a year and a half later, I faced the prospects of unemployment again. Providentially, another colleague was offered the opportunity to set up a marketing group at Iberia Airlines, where I worked for seven more years. Yet, short of three years to early retirement, due to the company's streamlining, I found myself closing the chapter in my airline work history. I then transitioned to the medical field where I am still employed by my oldest daughter, who heads the Dermatology Department of a local hospital.

Yes, the Lord provided employment, adding what was needed at the appointed time, through dear people that were willing to step up to the plate and take me off "the bench." May blessings be continually on their lives! He is faithful! You can trust Him.

During the uncertainty and insecurity of facing unemployment, I was able to experience not only the impact but also the "identity" crisis resulting from losing our jobs. But above all, experiencing the providence of God and getting to know Him as my provider were more than worth the experience.

The possibility of cessation of employment can come because of illness, down or right-sizing, relocation, retirement, and other reasons. All these challenges move us towards role changes. The same principles apply to any unexpected loss, be it relational or health related. That area or person on whom we have placed value, purpose, motivation and effort -- sometimes painstakingly -- is suddenly taken away from us. If we enjoy our profession, it is very easy to attach our identity to our job, and if we are lonely, we can attain a sense of community through our daily job interactions.



Ana with two of her 5 grandchildren plus 1 great-grandson. To the left, Camille, age 7, and to the right, Isabella, age 5.

Letting go of presuppositions and facing the worst requires strength beyond our own feebleness. The fruit we had anticipated has turned sour in our hands, the future seems uncertain. Anger, fear and their companions (i.e. anxiety, frustration, and despondency) knock at the doors of our minds constantly. Disappointment, insecurity, personal doubt, resentment, and lack of direction are the by-products of the unexpected and the undesired.

Having been through the ups and downs of life in the work place, I can share with the reader that facing the way out starts by moving from numbness and confusion to desiring resolution. Be cautious, however, and do not make “getting over” your goal. Realize you are going thru a process. Embrace the loss even when your dreams die. Dream again. As fragile as dreams are, they can be a forceful motivator for action.

Pray, praise, and seek comfort. It is good to find an understanding ear. Someone who will not get tired of listening to your story or who will judge you for “your apparent lack of faith.” Sometimes finding someone who is sharing your same experience is not that helpful as moping in shared pain can bring anyone down. It is best to find someone who has shared your experience and is actually over it.

Pray and be instructed. Recover what can be learned form the experience. Do not throw out the baby with the water. Examine everything, and retain what is good.

Pray and find forgiveness. Assume responsibility for your actions where applicable and forgive yourself.

Pray and lift up your face again. Regroup and ask God to restore your focus and vision restore the joy of your salvation in the midst of the trial. Make an inventory of your skills and accomplishments as you prepare to look for a replacement job. Learn to use your weaknesses as a plus for personal development. You are now employed in your own company called “Job Search.” You may be directed to another field where you can utilize your acquired knowledge. Learn to be flexible.

Take action and formulate a daily plan. The process of working toward a goal

becomes easier once we break through inertia and start building momentum.

Bounce back from setbacks. Learn how to avoid them in the future. Self-criticism increases stress and decreases your chances of achieving your goal.

Remember that the wilderness precedes the Promised Land. Do not despise a season in the wilderness, it will reveal your character (Deuteronomy 8:14). Wilderness is called for by God. It produces hunger, and He responds by showing His sustenance (Deuteronomy 8:3). This opportunity shows that man not only needs physical provision, but that the strength of His Word gives life. He can bring water out of a rock (Exodus 17:6). We go through wilderness experiences along life’s journey. In the wilderness, bones are bleached in the scorching sun of the desert (life structures are stripped down). Paul had a desert experience (Galatians 1:17). John introduces the Lamb in the wilderness (Matthew 3:1-12). It is a place of transition. And there’s the sure hope of the Promised Land; refreshment, nurturing, enjoyment, sweet fruits, ointments, Spirit filling, and invigorating realities (Exodus 15:27).

Crossing the Jordan takes us to a new way not transited before – a walk of faith (Isaiah 42:16). The promised land is based not on wishful thinking, or a cliché many use such as “no problem, we move on.” It is not doing life by your bootstraps. Rather, it is based on the covenants and promises of God (2 Peter 1:4).

We serve a Covenant Keeping God (Galatians 3:15,17; Hebrews 7:22, 10:16, 13:20). *Be of good cheer!*
