

*(You are marching into big bosses office, jumping up on the desk, laughing like the Mad Hatter, and relieving yourself in the midst of a big sissy fit!! Oh the glorious drama. HA! HA! HA! ... BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!)*

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### **These Boots Were Made For Walking**

By Joshua Kreig

“I hate to wake up in the morning knowing I have to go to work.”

“I no longer feel challenged at my job.”

“I don’t even like this line of work.”

“I need more money.”

“My colleagues are getting on my nerves.”

Any of that sound familiar? Maybe it is time to think of a career change. More than likely it is a combination of factors causing your discomfort. It is important to maturely assess the situation, plan and then act. Barbara Woodward, a monster.com career guru, advises, “Career movements are challenging and require a certain amount of logistical preparation. Carefully consider the move you are about to make. Ensure that any move is part of how you have defined what it is you want to achieve.”

### **Assess**

Often we are unsatisfied with our jobs because we are no longer feeling challenged, both professionally and personally. A situation that started out exciting has begun to pale with the routine, hidden requirements and hoop leaping. Sometimes we enter jobs for the financial freedom they promise rather than the creative opportunities. Maybe we feel we are no longer financially compensated enough for the quality and quantity of work we are being asked to produce, especially when we look around and see others being treated better or reaping more rewards. Would more money make you happier? Many people work five hell-days to play the two they have off.

Maybe you are in a position to renegotiate the terms of your job to make it more fulfilling or less stressful: a transfer from one department to another, or a little more cash, or benefits. Sometimes a leave of absence or vacation is all that is necessary to recharge the batteries.

Are there personality conflicts that you feel you cannot overcome? Our colleagues greatly influence our happiness. Are there processes within the management structure to aid conflict resolution between staff? Have you tried to resolve these conflicts to no avail?

Sometimes negativity can be short-term. We often react to something that will work itself out over time. Is the situation something that could be changed with a little patience and effort on your part?

Psychology experts state we have one of two responses in the face of stress: "fight or flight". We dig in both our stiletto heels and fight the beast that burdens us or we avoid difficulties and run away. What is your style? Are you good at resolving situations or is this an area you need to work on? Until you speak up everyone around you will think everything is just dandy. It is important to know when you are the negative sign in the equation of life, because you will take all your habits (good and bad) out one door and in another.

Is it a fear of change keeping you in the situation? Mark Twain once said, "Courage is the mastery of fear, not the absence of fear." When with a company for a long time we begin to rely on it for the comfort, security and routine it provides. Removing all of those things at once can be a shock. In reality it is a little death. But hopefully it will bring with it a new birth.

These are all things we have to evaluate. Look at your situation squarely. Get feedback from trusted friends who can help you face the situation and discover if it is time to move on.

## Plan

Okay you want out!

When you are planning to leave a job the best-case scenario is to have another one to go to. If you are in a professional field a headhunter could do all the preliminary work. All you have to do is come up with the right arrangement of doctor's appointments for the week you are interviewing. "Uh... I have to go see my... uh... my proctologist today! Oh no I mean my dentist, yeah!" Be sure to tap into your network of friends and associates to help with your search. The Wall Street Journal has reported that 94% of new job seekers found networking the most beneficial way to find a new position.

If the problem is money, shopping around maybe a good negotiation tool with your current employer. If they see someone else wanting you, maybe they will counter offer. But if it is about people and situation no amount of carrots waved will make those go away.

The loss of money maybe the biggest factor barring the exits. Salaries and pay cheques are the arbiters of comfort. If a period of unemployment is on the horizon, financial stress can often keep us shackled where we are.

Save. If you know you are going to quit then start pinching your pennies. Stop the frivolous expenses. Do you really need the extra Donna Karen frock or Madonna CD? (Okay maybe the Madonna CD!) With a little cash or savings to shore up our courage, leaving will not be so traumatic.

### Act

I paraphrase Maya Angelou who once wrote referring to a relative, she looked behind her and did not like where she had come from, and looked at the road that lay ahead and did not like where she was going, so she got off the road and cut herself a new path.

How to cut the path? Do we resign with a nice official letter referencing greener pastures? Stay friendly with colleagues, hoping for a nice going away party anticipating trendy gifts? Or do we go all Whitney Houston – “pack your bags, up and leave”? Sylvia Ho also of monster.com says, “Don't burn your bridges with the company. You might need them for references, or you might want to come back later on.” So the “Take this job and shove it!” approach could be career detrimental and most execs have security on speed dial. Ah but that recurring dream at the top may be just the therapy needed to get it out of your system.

Often when we leave situations we go through a separation anxiety. Be prepared to face a little depression as well as the excitement of moving on. Talk to people. Get support

It is your life. You deserve to be happy in your work and career. Do what it takes to make your situation the one that you want it to be.

(A final thought on when quitting is not an option. Surround yourself with a good support system to help you vent your stresses. Make sure the time you are not at work is full of quality things and people that make the office bearable. Being physically and mentally fit with a full social life just maybe the trick. Then there is always retail therapy!)