



Frying Pans and Fire

I don't know about you, but growing up I heard my grandmother frequently say: *"Don't jump from the frying pan into the fire."*

Honestly, as a kid, I didn't get it. After all, I really didn't want to find myself in *either* situation. Both were hot!

Looking back, though, I understand her meaning. Despite the heat that might have been felt in that frying pan, her warning was that making a less-than-strategic exit from it could land me in an even warmer situation...and actually longing for my cast-off skillet.

As the Great Resignation swirls around us sparked or aided by the pandemic, my mind has traveled back to frying pans and fire a lot lately. So, in the next two issues of **EA Insights**, let's invest some time on employment-related decision making. First, we'll cover thoughts for the job-seeker; next month, our focus will be the employer's perspective. My hope is that, on whichever side you find yourself, this material will help you keep from getting burned.

All the best,

June

June Melvin Mickens
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The Great Resignation: Making Smart Job-Hunting Decisions

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Tune in to the news, or watch what's happening all across the labor market, and it's clear. People are leaving their jobs in record numbers. Indeed, the pandemic has ushered in a wave of employment changes that has taken many by surprise.

From my seat as one who regularly supports folks with career transitions, there's a concern though. I wonder about the extent of the thinking behind many of the "leave" decisions we're seeing. After all, it takes courage both to broach the hard questions that are part-and-parcel of strategic decision making and to resist the urge simply to ride the wave because of the glut of available jobs.

So, if you have quit already or if you're leaning in that direction, let me pose five questions to help you make your current...or next...role a meaningful one.

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Quotes

"All I wanted to do was come into my own and find out my career path and what I wanted to do with my life[.]"
~Jovan Adepo

"Challenge yourself, grow, blossom, and become who you were meant to be. Don't ever stay at a job solely out of convenience or comfort. Aim higher, even if that means pursuing another job that's just one step closer to your ultimate goal."
~Carolyn Aronson

"We feel free when we escape - even if it be but from the frying pan to the fire."
~Eric Hoffer

"It's not called quitting if you quit while you're ahead. It's about being aware and being strategic enough to know that you got to get out the pool at some point."
~Nipsey Hussle

"[E]very job I had was a steppingstone to my next job, and I never quit my job until I had my next job."
~Ashton Kutcher

"I quit my ... job, as a writer at a magazine, when I was twenty-one. That was the moment when I ... started to get found, to discover who I had been born to be, instead of the impossibly small package, all tied up tightly in myself, that I had agreed to be."
~Anne Lamott

"I realised as a teenager that I was destined for a

Question 1: Why are you leaving (or why did you leave)...really?

A shrug of the shoulders, or a simple "I've just gotta go", won't do. It's pinpointing time. What's the *real* departure reason?

Is it boredom? Why?
Is it anger? Why?
Is it hitting a ceiling? Why?
Is it something else? What, and why?

Until you can articulate (for yourself, if for no one else) the *real* reason for moving on, then you're likely to be stymied in your efforts to find a good fit for the future.

Question 2: What, specifically, do you want to experience in your next role that isn't/wasn't in your current or last one?

No, this is not a repeat of Question 1. You see, often we're able to identify a problem, but we're not as able to describe how a fix might look. And, that's the goal here.

Once the reasoning behind the "go" decision is understood, it's equally important to try visualizing a workplace *without* the target challenge(s). This is what goes on your non-negotiable list. This is what you become keen to during the job search and the interviewing steps. However, without taking time to process what you *do* want from an organization and from a position, and *why* this all is important, you won't know what you're seeking in your next role.

Question 3: What is your career plan?

A great location with great people still may not satisfy if it's misaligned with your personal direction. That's why pausing to reassess your career plan makes sense as well. What do you want to accomplish in the next 1, 3, 5, or 10 years? How did the last role help to move you along in that direction? How could you use experiences in the next role to advance your plan even further? Having a plan, even a rough one, will help you to make more informed choices in evaluating the opportunities that are presented.

Question 4: Honestly, in what areas do YOU need to grow in order to be successful in your next role?

As you picture that new role, in what areas will you need to do some learning in order to perform successfully? If a lateral move is what seems right at this point, then after you settle in, what areas will be ripe for ongoing development in order to prepare you for the future? Or perhaps, what behavioral or interpersonal skills should you hone so that you don't replay your part in the situation you just left? Planning for growth prevents stagnation as well as repeating cycles that proved unsuccessful or undesirable in the past.

Question 5: What is your strategy for identifying a role that will be a good fit?

Knowing why you're leaving, and even having a good handle on a desired next type of role, is all for naught without a job-search strategy. What are the best resources to discover the right type of next role? Who are the go-to people in this area, and how do you connect with them? Mapping out an approach to discover opportunities that align with your career plan typically will result in a higher yield of results than simply winging it.

There you have it. Five simple questions, yes, but not necessarily easy ones. If having an unbiased sounding board would help your decision making about leaving your current role and/or about finding a good fit in a new one, why not reach out to us at **Executive Advantage**? Let us walk with you as you build an informed career strategy. [Contact us today](#).

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creative life and found that fashion design was something I enjoyed and was a potentially successful career path."

~Jenny Packham

"I think for anybody, regardless of what industry you work in, when you get a new job, and it's progressive in terms of your career, that is one of the best feelings in the world."

~Will Poulter

*"You have to prepare to quit, and this is what I did. ***[S]o on the day that came when I had to walk away..., I walked away and didn't look back."*

~Gale Sayers

"Passion is what gives meaning to our lives. It's what allows us to achieve success beyond our wildest imagination. Try to find a career path that you have a passion for."

~Henry Samuelli

"Out of the frying pan, into the fire."

~Tertullian

"Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life."

~Unknown

"My main aim is getting set up so that when I do quit, I can step away and re-evaluate what I want to do in life."

~Boo Weekley

"You have to be strategic with your career path and set a goal for yourself so you're not wandering aimlessly."

~Jordyn Woods

"If there is a job that you feel passionate about, do what you can to pursue that job; if there is a purpose about which you are passionate, dedicate yourself to that purpose."

~Janet Yellen

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