LOST YOUR JOB?
Now might be a good time to refocus on what you're cut out for.

After the initial shock, many Canadians see layoffs as the kick they needed to go after what they really want and love to do. Let's face it; you likely lost your job because you were not viewed as a top performer. Perhaps you were in the wrong job based on your skills, behaviours, and passions – you were doomed from the start. If you had the right job, you would likely still be employed as employers need top performers during these tough times. Where you happy in your job anyway? Did it challenge and inspire you?

Now is a great time to really connect with what you are good at. With the unemployment rate at a high of 7.7%, there are more resumes on the desks of recruiters. How will you make it to the top of the pile? Unlike a year ago, employers now can be picky. Douglas Porter, deputy chief economist of BMO Capital markets was recently quoted in the Financial Post as saying "As the economy continues to deteriorate not only do we expect the pace of job losses to remain brisk, but we also expect the ranks of the unemployed to continue to grow as displaced workers find it increasingly difficult to find new jobs." If you are able to connect with your strengths, passions, and talents, you are more likely to find the right role for you, set your self apart from the rest, get the job, and not have to worry as much about future cut backs – you will be one of their top performers.

If you are confused about what you want or are good at, you are not alone. Invest some time in understanding you. The following steps can help you gain clarity on what you are good at and what you should stay away from. Start living your dream – stop imagining it. Whether you are starting your own venture, looking for a new career, going back to school, or you just graduated understanding what options align with you as a total person is crucial. The following steps can help you control your future:

1. What do you love doing? What stresses you out? Both are important to understand and making a list will help you gain some clarity on what you are ideally suited for.

2. Assess yourself. There are many tools available that will provide you an objective look at you. It's easy enough to decide that you want to open your own business, but if your personality needs someone gives you direction, motivation, and support, even if you are passionate about your idea, you may very well get frustrated and fail in the long run. By assessing your talents, you will get an objective understanding of your occupational interests, behaviours, and attributes – the facts about you.

3. Talk to people in your target industry from a place of knowing. What are the opportunities like? What are the challenges? What types of people succeed? There are also informational databases that outline job descriptions and what skills, abilities, and behaviours are required. Remember, you could have the desire to work in a job that requires a lot of social interaction, however, if your assessment tells you that you only like to spend a small amount of time with others, you will more than likely not succeed.

4. Accept you as you. No one is a failure – they just are doing the wrong thing. Some jobs require people to be more independent, less assertive, and high in energy. Knowing where you fit outside of the normal population will help you be confident in the person you are and the talents you possess.

5. Search. Whether through recruiters, online databases, or just calling companies, take action and leverage the tools and people available in finding the right job.

Understanding who you are and who your not, will help set you up for success. Knowing where you will be a top performer, will help you approach new opportunities with more confidence and energy. Don't stop there though – focus on your strengths and look at ways to further developing them. Don't bother with the weaknesses – just know they're there.

Businesses need top performers – what makes you one? Take control of your future.

Glen Sollors

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