



**STARS
SHATTERED
AND DREAMS
SHUTTEREDSM**

BY KAREN SANDS, MCC

*Be careful what you wish for,
'Cause you just might get it all.
You just might get it all,
And then some you don't want.
Be careful what you wish for,
'Cause you just might get it all.
You just might get it all, yeah.*
~Chris Daughtry, "Home," from debut album *Daughtry*.

Oh my Gawd! This is terrible! Part of me is devastated. Part of me is jumping for joy, saying "Oh good!" But how do I deal with suddenly being out of work after 31 years in one place?

Reality is forcing many of us to give up our cherished plans. Most of us over 45, 50, or 60+ have to keep on keeping on so we can afford our longer lives in the style we've grown accustomed to ... or learn how to downshift.

It's no surprise we never thought it would happen to us. But times are a changin'. We are all being forced to go back to the drawing board, asking all over again, who am I, where do I fit in, and will anyone hire me?

It's not easy in mid- or later career, much less in full retirement, to circle back. Even if you already "retired retirement," you may be reconsidering staying on the sidelines.

No matter what your age or stage, career change will raise your anxiety in direct proportion to the stakes. Don't be surprised if you find yourself dealing with a whole lot of upheaval on every front.

I just read these survey findings by Adecco USA, a staffing agency:

One in five U.S. workers say the recession is affecting their emotional health as they battle anxiety and fear over the potential loss of their jobs.

Let's add in the same for all of us who face sleepless nights, wondering how to keep our doors open or lead our firm in these times.

Retiring Retirement: You've Got to Be Kidding!

Our dreams of "doing it my way" or retiring early to pursue another career with greater meaning and freedom is fading in the minds and hearts of many of us.

Unlike our rebound after the stock-market bust of 2000 and the last recession in 2001, we may not recover fast enough to regain our remembered bull-market highs. For some of us it may not come soon enough to re-secure our financial footing. A very small percentage of us are still “sure” we’ll be fine financially when it’s time to call it quits. No one can afford to go unconscious.

Recent headlines support our worst fears: **Among those out of work, those over 45 are taking longer to find a new position than those under 45.**

Facts are facts. But incessant talk of the bad economy is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Like a viral worm, these negative thought packets devour our sense of the future and screw up our perspective. Surrounded by all this negativity, we can’t help but be affected. It doesn’t stop with just us—it’s just as true for our customers and co-workers, whose conditioned reflex will be to hunker down, cut back, and not take risks.

Wailing “mea culpa” or responding like a deer in headlights is not acceptable. Please don’t get caught up in the gloom and doom and give up. We can transform gold from the dross of this recession.

Not to Worry ...The Gray Ceiling Is Now in Vogue!

One of the ways we can thrive in a down market is to learn how to be Everyday FuturistsSM.

What is an Everyday Futurist? It’s a term I coined that refers to a person who learns to read the future—not by reading tea leaves, but by studying trends and crafting possible scenarios and responses to them.

I believe learning to be an Everyday Futurist is the “X” factor that creates sustainable success. Without honing the futurist skill set, it is impossible to make sense of what is happening around us, much less come up with strategies that respond to the changing marketplace, whether you are seeking to change companies or industries or switch careers. In fact, it is what will make the difference between going nowhere and capturing more market share ... whether it’s in the resume email overload in HR inboxes or about developing yourself as a trustworthy advisor or visionary leader.

*We believe it’s essential to plot societal shifts in order to develop big brand ideas, ...
Trendspotting allows us to tune into the zeitgeist, discover how seemingly disconnected details
are connected and figure out how the mood of the moment is affecting people’s lives.
Without this bigger picture, we run the risk of creating irrelevant and ineffective communications.*

Ann Mack

Director of trendspotting/JWalter Thompson

You can start by paying attention to key trends and preparing yourself for what’s ahead.

The Hottest Topic Worrying Leaders Today: Graying of Business

Top talent shortage. Brain drain. Leadership needed. Succession planning non-existent or insufficient.

43% of current workers will become eligible for retirement within 10 years. ~ Human Resource Institute, 2003. Countdown: 8 down only 2 years left to go. But Boomers today are in no hurry to leave.

Worker skill shortage.

It's only getting worse. Experienced Boomers please apply.

The demographics are now shifting in our favor. Since the turn of the millennium, there have been increasing calls to prepare for the coming workforce shortage. One of the best treatments on this topic, *Workforce 2000*, and its sequel, *Workforce2020*, was produced by the well-regarded Hudson Institute, a Washington DC-based policy research center and think tank.

In the good times, very few of us paid attention. Others like me did what we could to prepare for the eventual roiling impact on our workforce and economy as the earliest Boomers confronted midlife malaise or sought more meaning in their life and work as they headed toward 60. And then, it all came tumbling down.

Reality Byte:

Only 15% of the executives surveyed by McKinsey & Co. said improving the talent pool was a top priority, even though 75% of those same executives said that "a chronic shortage of talent" was one of the constraints on their company's growth.

A truth I learned a long time ago is that our "emergence comes out of emergency." That's true of everyone and everything. Think about it: When have you grown the most? When has your career or business taken its greatest leaps forward?

There's a bit of lag time operative here.

In the 1970s, the glass ceiling defined my younger tour de force in the hallowed halls of corporate America ... Decades later it became the dreaded "gray ceiling." If you were over 40, you were over the hill. Your career was up for grabs—it was far cheaper to hire younger employees than pay for "knowledge workers." What has long infuriated and astonished me is that this has been the prevailing belief espoused from folks at the helm who are no longer 40. Until now ...

Approximately 90% of all our leaders are 40-plus.

There is a shift occurring: More and more of us are staying in the workplace, either because we love to work or, more recently, because we need to. But once we are on the other side of this severe downturn, more of us will find ourselves valued again.

A recent Ernst & Young survey discovered that nearly 40% of employers noted that their number one concern for the next five years will be a shortage of workers as a result of retirement and the shift in workforce demographics.

Dennis Hopper to the rescue! Ameriprise's TV ad campaign featured Dennis espousing the new Boomer mantra, that the new 60 is the old 30! In many ways he's right. Although my body aches when I wake up in the morning, I have more zest for life, and I'm more in the swing of what's happening than folks my age just a generation ago. What once was viewed as the peak of a mid-career—40—is now age 60!

We invented "cool" and "hip." I doubt we'll let them go.

Why Waste a Perfectly Useful Recession?

The time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.
~Ralph Waldo Emerson

Long ago alchemists and modern-day physicists alike appear to support the teachings of The Power of Positive Thought or Think and Grow Rich teachings. Those of us who convened for the Harmonic Convergence, learned to Ohm, and have seen the benefits of visioning, know that we can affect our reality by adjusting our inner thoughts and how we envision our world.

Everything is energy at its most fundamental level. Matter is energy moving at slower speeds. Our reality is malleable and made up of quantum wave-like particles of energy that respond to our very thoughts. So whether you are a staunch follower of Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich*, a fan of Belleruth Naparstek's pre-surgery visualizations or Carolyn Conger's guided imagery recordings for healing, or someone just beginning to explore the world of the unconscious and modern-day alchemy, these current in-between times can provide you with a laboratory to experiment with truly creating your future, image by image.

I've always believed that we have this power within to create our outer reality. Of course, in hard times, all of us tend to go back to our reptilian brain modes of behavior, and we forget the power we have within to alter our reality ... our future.

Over the years I've worked with many executives and professionals to envision to the point that their imagined reality becomes the real deal. This has worked for preparing for major presentations, auditioning for a major part, securing a desired position, signing contracts, and healing from within.

No matter how long I do this work or with whom, it always comes down the same thing: First and foremost you've got to know what you want. Then the fun begins.

For starters here's what you can do:

- SEE yourself in a future you want for yourself.
- KNOW that the tide is turning. ... Boomers *will* be in demand again.

Everything changes. How we work this change or flow with it will make the difference between a soft landing or a slide on the slippery slopes of midlife in the midst of a global restructuring.

*Time to Reinvent
Time to Rally
Time to Come back*

~ GM T.V. Spot

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