

WORK IT RIGHT - #7
Improving Relationships On and Off the Job

by Gini Graham Scott

DON'T RESIGN YOURSELF – REDESIGN YOURSELF

In today's climate of outsourcing and high-tech layoffs, many people are running scared, afraid the next job axe may fall on them or the next business cutback will chop off their clients. And still other workplace changes are due to increasing cross-cultural diversity.

For some people, such developments are demoralizing, since they long for stability and feel their current skills may not be sufficient. But you don't have to resign yourself to becoming one more job casualty in the turbulent new economy. Instead, think how you can redesign yourself to create a new improved future for yourself. Like the chameleon, be ready to change your colors as the environment shifts around you.

That's what Jackie should have done, after she started a new job as a counselor in a social service agency dealing with primarily Hispanic families. While she had great credentials from previous jobs as a family counselor and a certificate in her field, she didn't speak Spanish, and she had replaced a counselor who spoke both Spanish and English. Even her supervisor spoke the two languages. At one time, the agency had mostly English-speaking clients, but the community had changed due to increased immigration.

The agency had hired Jackie, since the supervisor was impressed by her past work history and hadn't thought there would be any language barrier, since the new

immigrants were supposed to learn English. But apparently not fast enough, and so Jackie found it hard to learn her new job in an essentially foreign culture, making her increasingly upset and emotional on the job. And now she feared an upcoming meeting with her supervisor, since she was in a 6-month probation program. Did this mean the end of her job and what should she do?

Clearly, if she wanted to stay on the job, as a first step, she should learn Spanish to better communicate with the clients and other staffers. Plus, since she had to work directly with clients, she needed to repackage, recreate, remobilization, and remotivate herself to effectively do the job, such as by learning more about Spanish culture. (Yes, she had to apply all the “re” words – meaning do it differently and better).

Should you engage in such personal revamping yourself, let others know, particularly any supervisors, so they see you growing and changing and want to help. Additionally, find out specifically what you need to learn. For example, talk to your supervisor or someone else you feel is especially supportive of you to find out what you need to do the job well. Show that you really want to do this, and seek their help to put these efforts into action. This way you show your motivation to do a good job and learn, which in turn will help motivate your supervisor and others to continue to support you and help you succeed.

To learn what additional skills you need to learn, seek help from mentors, coaches, teachers, peers, or others who might help. Then, start learning. The sooner you take action, the better – because this way, you don’t have to resign yourself to losing out or falling behind – or get resigned (ie: terminated or laid off). Instead, with a personal redesign, you’re back in the game, like a whole new package. Just like

companies refresh their packages to reappeal to consumers when they are losing market share, refresh and repackage yourself to increase your own appeal. Find a way to redesign a NEW IMPROVED YOU!

Today's Take-Aways:

- Once you redesign yourself, you don't have to resign yourself.
- The change from "resign" to "redesign" is just two letters, but there's a world of difference when you add them together, like adding spice to a soup.
- Think of yourself as your own "redesign director" – you just need to combine the right skills and right team to make your redesign work.

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