

MAINTAINING PERSPECTIVE

THROUGH YOUR CAREER TRANSITION

ACT philosophy: a case study



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MAINTAINING PERSPECTIVE IN YOUR CAREER TRANSITION

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Meet the authors

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Edward is a professionally trained coach specialising in executive, leadership and careers coaching, as well as workplace coaching. He is also a business adviser and mentor. Edward's consulting services focus on leadership development, career transition, strategic thinking, team building, workplace engagement and work-life integration. He is a business skills mentor and coach for Queensland Government.

Edward has been coaching full time since 2000 and has over 3000 hours of personal, executive, careers and workplace coaching experience.

Edward is passionate about improving the purpose, performance and productivity of organisations through leadership development and people development, as well as team building and engagement, using an integrative work-life framework and 'getting everyone on the same page'. As evidence of his passion and ability, Edward has led his own coaching academy over the past ten years and has developed and implemented a number of highly acclaimed leadership and coaching products.

Edward is an experienced public speaker, having presented over fifty keynotes and guest-speaking addresses at conferences and meetings of professional associations. His highly developed interpersonal skills, his enthusiasm, substantial experience and knowledge have significantly contributed to personal and organisational transformation.

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Angela is a coach, trainer, researcher and writer with over 1500 hours experience in coaching and counselling.

Angela is passionate about the 'human factor' in partnering with organisations and individuals. She views each person in an organisation as having 'significance' and sees individual, group or organisational dysfunction as a symptom of meaninglessness and purposelessness. Her preferred career outplacement and coaching model – ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Training) is a model for optimal psychological functioning. It lends itself ideally to educating towards behavioural change in a non-condemnatory manner.

The prospect of helping people in their careers to find their way to what constitutes a full and meaningful life lived in alignment with their values, despite what life might present to them, is most attractive to Angela.

As evidence of her energy and interest, Angela has been involved in the running of the coaching programs since 2001 in a variety of roles. These include administration, research and writing, as well as being a sounding board, presenter and proofreader. Jointly, Edward and Angela have developed and implemented a number of highly acclaimed leadership and coaching products and services.

Foreword

In a competitive job market, you may take longer in your job search than you have mentally allowed for. While the urgency factor may lead to 'panic', maintaining perspective is an important coping strategy.

Very few of us are born with a silver spoon in our mouth and never have to face hardship.

The question of why 'bad' things happen to 'good people' dogs us all.

Whether we like it or not, loved ones fall ill and die, accidents happen, fires destroy homes, natural disasters destroy whole communities, economic crashes happen and people are made redundant or even lose their livelihoods.

Some of us handle these events better than others, and studies into this area of resilience are worth reading. If for some reason you do not gain your position of choice, and the things that go with it, are you a failure? Not if you choose to examine your values and live by them.

In this report we explore how an approach using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (also known as ACT) can be useful, showing you how to handle the negativity that could potentially surface if your job search were protracted.

You may have invested considerable resources in ensuring that your ability to gain the position of your choice is as good as it can be. You hope it will bring the desired outcome quickly.

But what if it doesn't happen *that* quickly?

If you are unemployed, will you spend every minute of every day tailoring your resumé before submitting it to various recruitment agencies or potential employers? What else can you do? If you experience constant rejections, how will you handle that? Will it cause you to lose confidence in yourself? Will you sink into depression? What *can* you do in a crisis?

These are some of the questions you will inevitably face. There are lots of resources available to help you through this, but here is some material to get you thinking and help you take strategic action.

Edward Gifford & Angela Gifford



Putting your job search in perspective

Let's assume you are still looking for your position of choice, have submitted a few resumés and have been called in for some interviews. You know your resumé and interviewing skills are excellent. It is overkill to spend more time honing them, but you are desperate for that job! Should you spend all your time searching obsessively?

It may sound trite, but some people have found that the more they pursue something, the more it eludes them.

For example, you might personally know of a couple who are desperate to have a child and try *everything* to conceive. Nothing works! Finally, after years of chasing their dream, they give up or adopt a child from overseas.

What happens? Suddenly the woman is pregnant!

Sometimes things seem to 'come out of the blue' when we least expect them, and it is worth keeping this in mind.

Does this mean you should stop trying to get that job and give up?

No, but it is no doubt unhealthy for it to consume your thoughts and time completely. Spend some time on it each day, then use the remaining time for relationship building.

In staying connected to others by going to lunch, phoning friends and ex-clients, walking the dog or filling a career gap with a new skill or qualification, you may see new opportunities and form new networks to help you to your ultimate objective.

Here are a number of strategies to help you maintain perspective through all of this.

Strategies to bring balance and perspective to your job search

- Brainstorm. Make a list of what you love doing and what you would like to try doing. Allow your thoughts to flow in an unconstrained way and don't judge them.
- Identify which of these activities you do on your own, (e.g. reading, meditating, exercising) and which ones involve other people (e.g. taking part in a Fun Run, umpiring a football game).
- Consider the ones you do on your own. Are there any that you could adjust so that they involve other people? For example, you could turn your reading into a more inclusive activity by joining a book club, attending events at bookstores, even helping out with reading groups at your child's school. If you meditate, is there a group you could connect with on a regular basis? If you exercise, could you join a gym, a kayaking group, a walking club or other group with the same objective?
- If you could, and if you are happy to turn the solo activity into one that is more relationship-based, keep it on the list. If you don't want to, cross it off the list. Join or form a group for those activities that appeal to you and involve others.
- Now you have identified a range of activities you enjoy or want to try and have found a group of people who also enjoy them. Take a proactive role in some of your favourite activities so that you maintain and develop your leadership skills. Job opportunities may present themselves through the people you meet and the activities you undertake, and at the same time, you are not only having fun but also keeping your life integrated and meaningful.
- If your passion is business, find a way of using that. For example, find some 'not for profit' organisations you are interested in. Join their boards, and volunteer some of your business knowledge and expertise to help them as if you were a consultant or employed by them. Other board members will see what you are doing and may hire you for their own business ventures or refer you to others.
- The bottom line is that people who are obsessed with job hunting or depressed about not getting jobs do not present attractively. People who are energised, passionate and excited about what they do are more likely to be hired. They are also more likely to find work in line with their purpose and passions if they are pursuing some of the things they love while they are 'hunting'. Your commitment, passion, skill and personality will be obvious to those around you, and they may hire you or recommend you to someone else as an ideal prospect.
- If you can have some fun and maintain or develop new skills in the course of finding your new position, what have you got to lose?



Building resilience

The American Psychological Society (APA) defines resilience as the ‘ability to adapt well and “bounce back” in adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, and from sources of stress such as work and financial pressures, health, family or relationship problems’.

Do people naturally have resilience? According to the National Institute of Mental Health, it is not a trait that people either *have* or *don’t have*. Rather, it involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed by anyone.

It seems from studies that having caring and supportive relationships inside and outside of the family is a primary factor in building resilience. Loving, trusting, encouraging and reassuring relationships increase resilience.

The APA has identified four factors that constitute resilience:

1. the capacity to make realistic plans and carry them out
2. a positive, optimistic self-view, and confidence in one’s strengths and abilities
3. skills in communication and problem solving
4. the capacity to manage strong feeling, emotions and impulses.

Strategies to build resilience

There is no one proven way. What works for one person might not for another. People react differently to stressful, traumatic and tragic life events. Below are some ways that people have found helpful when the *storms of life* have struck.

Take care of yourself

Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in enjoyable and relaxing activities. Exercise regularly even if you do not feel like it. Taking care of yourself helps keep your mind and body primed to deal with situations that require resilience.

Establish and maintain connections

Recognise the value of good relationships with close family, friends and others. Accept help and support from those who care about you and will listen to you. It strengthens resilience. Being active in community, church or other local groups provides social support and can help you to reclaim hope.

Monitor your exposure to media coverage, negativity and violence

Be informed about current events but avoid exposure to the same horrific story over and over again, or to constant dire predictions. Take a break from the media.

Avoid viewing problems as insurmountable

Highly stressful events will occur, and we cannot change that. However, we can change how we interpret and respond to these things. Looking ahead beyond the present situation and envisaging better future circumstances may help. Observing any improvements to how you are feeling once you have started to tackle an issue is also useful.

Accept change as an inevitable part of life

Certain goals may no longer be attainable as a result of adverse situations. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can alter.

Progress towards your goal

Develop some realistic goals based on what is really important to you. Do some small thing which enables you to move toward your goals. Focus on tasks that are achievable. Ask yourself a question such as: 'What's one thing I know I can do today that would help me move in the direction I want to go?'

Take clear actions

As often as you can, act on adverse situations decisively rather than putting your head in the sand and hoping they vanish.

Maintain a hopeful outlook

Optimism can be learned and nurtured over time. Being optimistic enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life. Visualise what you want.

Maintain perspective and avoid 'catastrophising'

Keep a long-term perspective on the event or situation that is painful. Try to see the bigger picture or *context* as opposed to dwelling on the *content* or the pain.

Keep the event/issue in proportion. Clinging to a dogmatic, negative prediction of the future, arrived at without considering other more likely results or outcomes, is called

catastrophising. It is the tendency to blow things out of all proportion – for example, thinking: ‘Because I did not get that position, my future is ruined, and I will never be able to hold up my head in my family again!’

Nurture a positive view of yourself

Develop confidence in your ability to problem-solve, and trust your instincts. Treat yourself with compassion.

Engage in opportunities of self-discovery

Many people find that they have developed their character as a result of their struggle with loss or adversity. Those who have experienced tragedies and hardships have often reported stronger relationships, a greater sense of personal strength (even while feeling vulnerable), an increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality and a heightened appreciation for life.

Maintaining flexibility and *balance* in life whilst handling stressful circumstances and traumatic events is crucial as far as resilience is concerned. It is important to realise that it is OK to allow yourself to experience strong emotions, as it is to recognise the times when detachment from them might serve you better (e.g. for reasons of survival). While taking steps to deal with problems in daily life is necessary, so is the need to rest and regroup. The support and encouragement of friends and family is highly valuable, as is the preparedness to ask for help if it is needed.

Accepting, connecting and taking action

What follows is based on ACT. ‘ACT’ stands for Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. Using this approach, a person learns to accept their thoughts and feelings (as opposed to wanting to get rid of them), connect with their values and take effective action in the situations and circumstances that arise.

Dr Russ Harris, an English GP now living in Australia and conducting workshops around the country, has written a bestselling book called *The Happiness Trap*. In it he dissects the ideas of success and happiness we sometimes accept unquestioningly in our society. He suggests a different paradigm for dealing with life’s issues, one that involves reducing stress and worry, rising above fear, doubt and insecurity, handling painful thoughts and feelings effectively, breaking habits, improving work performance and increasing fulfilment, building more satisfying relationships – and thereby creating what we could call a rich and meaningful life.

Why is this important in the context of seeking a new career position?

In our western society, success is generally defined in terms of achieving fame, wealth, status, respect, a big house, a prestigious salary and an important, well-regarded job.

Those who meet these criteria are considered *successful*, and many admire them and aspire to emulate them. This is not intrinsically wrong, and no judgment or criticism is implied of people with this world view.



However, if we use the above criteria for success and apply them to people like Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela or Mother Theresa, they would not be considered successful because they never made the grade! Nevertheless, they are universally admired. The reason is that they all lived by their values. Hence, another definition of success is possible. A person could be considered *successful* if they live a life informed by values.

According to the first definition of success, if someone were to lose their fame, wealth, status and so on, they would become *unsuccessful* and be most likely described as a loser or a failure.

According to the second definition, if they were living by their values, they would still be successful, irrespective of their material status and circumstances. Goals are still important, but they do not drive the process – values do, and values can be acted upon in a small way in any situation or circumstance and can eventually lead to a goal.

So if for some reason you do *not* gain your position of choice and the things that go with it, are you a failure?

The following notes have been written by Russ Harris. They explore how you can deal with a crisis using this approach.

What to do in a crisis

A crisis can present in many different forms, from the death of a loved one to the loss of a job, the collapse of a marriage or financial disaster. When you are hit by a crisis, an emotional storm is likely to whip through your mind and body, tossing painful thoughts and feelings in all directions. Here's what you can do to survive and thrive: **S.T.O.P.**

Slow your breathing

Take a few deep breaths and mindfully observe the breath flowing in and flowing out. This will help to anchor you in the present.

Take note

Take note of your experience in this moment. Notice what you are thinking. Notice what you are feeling. Notice what you are doing. Notice how your thoughts and feelings are swirling around and can easily carry you away if you allow them.

Open up

Open up around your feelings. Breathe into them and make room for them. Open up to your thoughts too: take a step back and give them some room to move, without holding onto them or trying to push them away. See them for what they are and give them space, rather than fusing with them.

Pursue your values

Once you've done the above three steps, you will be in a mental state of mindfulness. The next step is to respond to the crisis by pursuing a valued course of action. Connect with your values. Ask yourself:

- What do I want to be about, in the face of this crisis?
- What do I want to stand for?
- How would I like to act, so that I can look back years from now and feel proud of my response?

Seven steps to consider to stay on track

1. Do you need, or would you benefit from, assistance/support/advice? If so, what friends, neighbours or relatives can you contact? What professionals could you arrange to see? (If necessary, what Helpline numbers could you call?)
2. Have you experienced anything similar before? If so, in what ways did you respond that were useful and helpful in the long term? Is there anything you learned from the experience that you can usefully apply now?
3. Is there *anything* you can do to improve the situation in any way? Are there any *tiny* steps you could take immediately that could be helpful? What are the smallest,

simplest, easiest, tiniest steps you could take in the next few minutes ... hours ... days? (*Note: the first step might be to practise mindful breathing, or to find a pen and paper and write out some action steps.*)

4. If there is *nothing* you can do to *improve* the situation, are you willing to practise *acceptance*, using *expansion* and *defusion* skills, while engaging fully in the present moment?
5. Given that the situation is unchangeable, how can you spend your time and energy constructively, rather than worrying or blaming or dwelling on it? (*Again, reconnect with your values: what do you want to be about in response to this situation? What are some tiny, values-driven steps you can take?*)
6. You don't get to choose the deck of cards you are dealt in life; you only get to choose how you play with them. Here are a few useful questions to ask:
 - Given this is the hand I've been dealt, what's the best way to play it?
 - What personal strengths can I develop or strengthen as I go through this challenge?
 - How can I learn and grow from this experience? (*Note: any painful experience is an opportunity to develop your mindfulness skills.*)
7. Be compassionate with yourself. Ask yourself:
 - If someone I loved was going through this experience or was feeling what I am feeling, and if I wanted to be kind and caring towards them, how would I treat them?
 - How would I behave towards them?
 - What might I say or do?

Then try treating yourself the same way.

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CASE STUDY - Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Have you ever wished you were a fly on a wall in a room where an important meeting or interesting conversation was taking place? Well, imagine yourself to be the fly on the wall in the office of a coach working with Bill Sanderson using the ACT approach. The coach has just reviewed Bill's background notes, and Bill has arrived. Pleasantries have been exchanged, and it is down to business ...



Name: Bill Sanderson

Personal details: aged 42, married, 3 children (2 – 8 yrs)

Qualifications: B.Bus., MBA, real estate licence (never used)

Positions: with construction companies

In his first position with Smartex as a new B.Bus. graduate, Bill was mentored by a manager who could see his potential. He gained several promotions within Smartex relatively quickly, and after ten years there he was able to secure a position as a development manager with Centaur Holdings, another rapidly expanding construction company. Again, he was

promoted to the Senior DM position. During this period he began postgraduate studies on a part-time basis. Soon after his MBA graduation he was headhunted by another large multinational company called Multiprop, where he was made Senior Project Manager – Property Acquisition and Development.

Redundancy and reality

A takeover of his company meant Bill's position came under review and was axed. He was made redundant.

Not one to sit around, he began a job search immediately for another senior executive position, but with no success. Not one interview resulted.

Taking action

Bill realised that gaining a position commanding the salary he wanted was harder than he had anticipated in the existing climate. After some months, he decided to improve his chances by engaging the services of an organisation specialising in the career/recruitment area. Through research and asking around, he came across **Executive Career Move**, who offered what he required.

Over several weeks, he committed himself to the program wholeheartedly and was pleased with the outcomes. Above all, he knew that his resumé and interviewing skills were now good enough to make him look very attractive to a potential employer.

Rejection and dejection

Dear John ... rejection

Bill applied for several more jobs unsuccessfully. Although disappointed, he was able to tell himself that he really did not have his heart in them anyway.

Finally, a few months later, an appropriate position with a gold mining company attracted his attention. He contacted the recruiter, accessed all the information he could and submitted a first-class resumé along the lines he had been taught. The resumé was especially tailored to the specific requirements of the position, outlining his capabilities and achievements to date, and it clearly demonstrated how they could benefit the prospective new company. He practised his interview skills again with a friend who was skilled in interviewing, and he was sure this was the job for him at last.

The phone never rang. Attempts to contact the recruiter by phone were fruitless or unsatisfactory. Emails were not answered. Eventually he received notification thanking him for his interest but informing him the position had been filled.

Dejection

Bill was devastated! It was now nearly a year since his last position, and his financial resources were dwindling.

His partner was 'on his case' about his expectations being too high, and all the time and effort he had spent on improving his chances seemed to have come to nothing. He felt her criticism was unfair. He could not see that he was so focused on his career pursuit that it bordered on obsession. It was the only thing that seemed to matter in his life. His confidence had taken a battering with the last rejection in particular. He could see things were reaching a crisis point for him in more than just the career area. What could he do?

Taking action with ACT

Bill considered the different ways he could deal with this situation. Did he need anti-depressants? Did he need psychiatric help? Was Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) the way to go for him? Eventually he decided on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

It had been mentioned in a session during his previous encounter with **Executive Career Move**, but at the time he thought he would be back in employment quickly. From what he could remember of that conversation, ACT seemed to present a useful way of deconstructing the thoughts, feelings and emotions associated with a distressing event or crisis.

That sounded good to him, even though he could not remember some of what happened after that. It was worth making a start, and he could wait and see where it might lead him further down the track. He hoped it would not be too 'touchy-feely', but he realised it was probably hard to escape that, no matter what approach he took.

As before, his coach was friendly, accepting and approachable. Nevertheless, he sat a little further back in his chair, still a little unsure of what might happen in this type of coaching.

No problem.

His coach, Jane, seemed to sense his trepidation. She quickly put Bill at ease and listened to his story as it had unfolded since they had last met.

However, when Bill's first activity was introduced as using the acronym **STOP**, he wondered if he had made the right decision! Well I'm here now, he thought, so he abandoned any defensiveness and tried to learn what he could.

Read how the the coach responded to Bill's story (next page).



Introducing STOP

1. *Breathe slowly*

By the time he had told his story, Bill's stress levels were high. His voice became high-pitched; he picked at his nails and sighed constantly. By using techniques to get him to breathe deeply, and by helping him to consciously observe himself breathing in and out slowly, the coach watched him become calmer, more centred in the 'now'.

2. *Take note*

Jane asked Bill to focus on what he was experiencing at that very moment. What were his thoughts? What was he feeling? What was he doing? Was stuff racing around in his mind? Was one thought predominant?

Phrases came up such as: *I'm devastated, I feel useless, I'm a failure; I'm angry, frustrated, fed up, afraid, guilty, a bad provider, disappointed, helpless, on the scrap heap.* He said these thoughts and feelings were increasingly prevalent and that sometimes he became overwhelmed by them in spite of trying to ignore them or chase them away.

On being asked to pick one of these thoughts, he chose 'devastated'. *I feel devastated... I am devastated ...* Using just that word, he articulated his associated thoughts and feelings.

3. *Open up*

Next the coach asked Bill to put the phrase 'I am having the thought that ...' in front of the word 'devastation' before extending it further by saying 'I notice I am having the thought that ...' Was there any difference in the feelings and thoughts now?

'Yes!' Bill said. 'It's like I am *observing* what is happening, rather than *identifying* with it. How amazing!' Prompted by Jane, he explored the significance of that revelation. Bill was keen to learn other ways to achieve 'defusion' rather than 'fusion' or identification with the thoughts and emotions he was experiencing.

Jane told him another strategy: to sing the *thought* to the tune of something like Happy Birthday. He laughed as he sang: *I am devastated today, I am devastated today, I am devastated, yes devastated, I am devastated today!*

The coach helped Bill explore the way we take on thoughts so readily as reality, as truth, or as important, and how things change when we can see our thoughts for what they really are – just thoughts which may or may not be real, true or important .

Jane could see Bill was enjoying his discoveries. He said there was so much to learn, and he kept commenting on its immediate practicality and usefulness.

Once he had achieved a sense of mental mindfulness or awareness through **Slow** breathing, **Taking** note, and **Opening** up, it was time for Jane to introduce ‘**Pursuing values**’.

4. Pursue your values

Bill’s major presenting issue involved his career, so the coach asked him to talk about the values that were most meaningful to him in this area. He said he valued *providing financial support* for his family and did this through his career. He valued *success*, being *mentally challenged*, being *creative*, being *needed*, being *respected*, having *integrity* ... the list grew longer as he reflected. He wrote his ideas down, although he said he could not see where this was going as yet, and Jane left them for the moment.

A few questions revealed that he had sought and obtained help from one or two other professionals in the careers area, as well as friends. He was using his networking skills, especially with the help of LinkedIn, for hours a day. (Jane made a note: ‘Too much? Revisit later!’) It was thus evident he had accessed appropriate assistance and sources of advice.

The issue of concern to him in his career area was that his applications were still being rejected despite apparently being *state of the art*. On being asked if he had experienced many instances of rejection in his career to this point, he said, ‘Yes, but only recently in my job applications’.

He said his smooth career path in a stable or expanding economic market had been virtually assured.

Now the situation was different, he said. The constancy of rejection was starting to wear him down, sapping his confidence, and his optimistic expectation that he would be able to find a desirable position was being severely tested. When he realised he was not good at handling rejection, he admitted he needed help. However, rather than work on that immediately, he wanted to try the STOP strategy for himself and then debrief in another session.

The coach helped Bill to move on to what small steps he could take (if any) that might improve his chances of at least getting to the interview stage the next time.

Picking up his pen again, he jotted down a few ideas. He realised his attitude to recruiters might have been a barrier. In the past, he had not really wanted to bother them because they were busy, and he certainly had not wanted to get them ‘offside’.

Now he realised they were ‘gatekeepers’ who made the initial decisions, and it was worth cultivating a relationship with them. One small step he thought of was to see if he could arrange a few meetings over coffee with some of them. He even considered flying interstate to Melbourne to see the recruiter involved in the job that he had set his heart on, so that if something came up, the recruiter would know who he was and how keen he was!

The next question really stopped him in his tracks, as it did most of Jane’s clients. **‘Given the current economic situation in your field and the resultant high unemployment figures worldwide, if it turns out that there is nothing else you can do to improve the situation of getting the job of your choice, are you willing to practise *acceptance* of that, using some of the skills you have discovered, including living the present moment?’**

Bill blinked, hesitated a little while he processed the question, and asked, ‘Are you asking me in a fancy way if I am prepared to just give up?’

‘No,’ Jane countered, ‘but look at it this way ... Can you accept that the current economic situation is unchangeable at the moment, and you cannot improve it?’

‘Yes.’

‘Can you accept that this may have implications for you in terms of your career that you cannot control and might not like?’

‘Yes – put like that, I don’t have much choice, really.’

‘So, let’s look at what you *do* have some choice about.

‘Here is another big question. **Within the context of the economic downturn and its consequences, which for you are currently career-related, how can you best spend your time and energy constructively (within that constraint) without worrying, blaming or obsessing about it? How can you know and maintain inner peace?’**

Bill said he didn’t know. ‘I seem to be going around in circles. I thought I was getting it, but now *I am confused*.’

Jane watched him jump as soon as he said that. ‘Oops!’ he said. ‘I realise what I just did. Let’s sing Happy Birthday again!’

Now ‘defused’ rather than ‘confused’, Bill was prompted to revisit the values he had written down earlier in the session. They were: *providing financial support for family, success, being mentally challenged, being creative, being needed, being respected, having integrity*. Bill realised that his values were about to be put to work with the next question.

‘So, given the current situation, Bill, how can you use the values that are important to *you* to respond to what is happening in terms of your career?’

- ‘What strengths do you have?’ (He had done the Strengths Finder.)
- ‘What is your personality style?’ (He had done Myers-Briggs.)
- ‘What is your Purpose?’ (He had explored this as an expression of his ‘personal DNA’, or as the energy of his spirit.)

- ‘What came out of your 360 assessment?’

‘I’m beginning to see where this is heading,’ he grinned. ‘You sure like asking questions, but keep going. I am being mentally challenged!’

‘Great! Now ask yourself these two questions,’ the coach continued.

‘How can I best use all these values, strengths and personality traits and still be in alignment with my purpose in this *storm of life* in which I find myself at the moment?’

‘What can I do despite my circumstances that would make my life meaningful and worthwhile?’

‘I get it! I can take the different values and explore the possibilities they throw up to answer those last two questions you asked me,’ Bill responded. ‘Let me ask a few questions to see if this will work when I try to build on it at home.’

Bill was in brainstorming mode. Here are some of the questions he came up with:

- What are some other ways of providing financial support for my family?
- What about other ways of providing support, not necessarily financial?
For example, perhaps I could free up my wife (a nurse) from home duties.
Employment is readily available for nurses, so she could work for a while!
- What is ‘success’ for me? Is it confined to my career?
- How else could I be successful?
- How could I be mentally challenged in the various areas of my life ...
 - financially
 - spiritually
 - vocationally
 - in terms of family
 - socially
 - in terms of my health
 - intellectually
 - in leisure?

It was time to finish. Bill had covered a lot, and there was still much to learn. Not all would be easy or plain sailing. There was a lot of homework to do just from this session, and the transformative process had only just begun. Bill left happy, knowing he had begun to develop an awareness of a positive, practical strategy which could help him, not only through his current career issues, but through others that commonly confront people in life.

Steps you could take

For further information on how we can assist you with your outplacement, career transition or career move, please contact us on +61 1300 629 344 or email edward@on-purposepartners.com .

Visit our website at www.executivecareermove.com.au for further resources.

