

The CHOICE Connection

Positive strategies. Practical solutions.

constructive
CHOICE
Jean Strosinski, PhD, PCC,



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Quotable Quotes

"The secret to change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new." ~ Socrates

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving." ~ Albert Einstein

"The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving." ~ Oliver Wendell Holmes

"Think of retirement as the opposite but equally unhealthy extreme on the other side of being in a perpetual state of high stress and anxiety. Just as it's not healthy to overwork yourself, it's also not healthy to not work at all." ~ Linda Westwood

Dear Jean,

The focus for all of this year's newsletters has been on Performance Management - the activities within an organization that contribute to the healthy work life cycle of an individual you hire and nurture into an organization. This last article focuses on the end of an individual's life cycle - maybe more personal than organizational focused. The end (or in the words of Dr. William Bridges, the father of 'transition'), the new beginnings, may be as a

result of termination (forced or voluntary), a desire for a career change, an opportunity for a job change or moving away from work into a retirement.

Are you in any of the above categories - facing a change in your work life or moving away from your current work life? Are you choosing to exit Stage Left - moving into a new career or job ... OR ... choosing to exit Stage Right - moving toward retirement and a new phase of being and doing in a life not so closely tied to work? What do you see as your greatest challenges ... your greatest opportunities? There IS more to explore. And I am moving in this same space of transition as you.

With joy and excitement looking forward to another transition in my work life,
Jean

Exit Stage Left ... Exit Stage Right ...

I am one of the 76.4 million baby boomers in the U.S. today. In 2012, the boomers born in the first year (1947) of this era hit their 65th birthday, traditionally thought of as the 'retirement year.' Until 2029 - the year when the 1964 born boomers born hit age 65, U.S. organizations will experience a decline in workforce numbers along with the age and experience. Exit stage right ... the boomers heading into their retirement era. Exit stage left - the new generation of millennials who are typically moving in their careers and considering moves from organization to organization.



I am a baby boomer - born just 5 years after the boom began. The end of my work career might be closer than I am ready for and I read about this phenomenon for many boomers. This is a personal topic for me as I am months away from another phase of work transition. I am preparing for my exit to stage right. However, I am not thinking 'retirement' - not in the traditional sense.

In May of 2007 at the age of 55, I announced my first transition into what others call retirement. As I explained to others many times, this phase was never about not working. I very consciously began saying no to work I no longer had an interest in and YES to work that I could grow into and stretch. As a matter of fact, my workload has increased significantly since that time. I have taken on work that created more joy in my life. I was no longer working for the security of a dollar - I was working on projects that intrigued me and with others I loved to share my work with.

As I moved into my second retirement phase last spring, I very purposely referred to this phase as my 'REWIREMENT.' By the way, this isn't a made-up word - it appears a few times, surprisingly, in a google search. My rewirement has its own special meaning. This period of work is where I am changing the activities of my work, rewiring all the talents and skills developed and grown throughout my multiple careers. Again, my work projects and interests have continued to grow - I have a fulfilling life with more activity and change than I

ever dreamed. It is pulling an increased amount of energy into my work and more than I believed I had to give.

Is there another phase in my future? I believe so and I believe this one might even be termed the renewal phase - one where I will begin to redefine how much career related work I hold onto. This transition becomes a renewed balance of work for pay and work for love. I have witnessed others in this renewal phase seeking out opportunities to volunteer, reengaging with old interests and exploring new interests. Exploration, adjustments and discoveries - okay, I believe I'm ready.

Many of you reading this last newsletter of this year are not yet ready to begin that exit to stage right. You may be considering, instead, the exit to stage left - which may be forced or voluntary. In reality, rewirement can happen for anyone finding themselves in transition regarding their career or job. Remember, every transition for an individual often moves at a different pace and requires unique preparations, as different as the individual.

My hope for all of you is that you consider how you continue to rewire your talents and skills to fulfill your dreams and your desired changes. You, each and every one of you, have the power and the ability to manage the transition you choose for yourself. For some of you it requires you give yourself permission to change your ideals, time to prepare for new results, time to explore, compassion to adjust as you grow, and the time to celebrate the joys of the new and renewed.

Really, where are you in your transition - are you ready to exit to the right ... or ... exit to the left? What are you waiting for? No one can choose the next step except you? Prepare, get your support systems in place. Stand on stage ... look to your left ... look to your right ... take that first step. Maybe you will surprise yourself with the direction you step into.

Tools and Resources FROM THE BOOKSHELF

[*The Empty Desk Survival Guide: For Women on the Verge of Retirement or Encore Careers*](#) by Barbara Bannon and Arlene Chemers (2012) " ... a practical guide designed to assist "Baby Boomer" women navigate the difficult, often unexamined process of evaluating the possibility of an "encore career" or eventual retirement from a profession that once provided enormous fulfillment and satisfaction."

[*Groping Toward Whatever or How I Learned to Retire \(sort of\)*](#) by Susan Trausch (2010) "... she is off the clock and glad -- except when she blows a morning messing with dryer lint, except when the confidence evaporates and she forgets to laugh. This is a tale of transition, a journey from job to somewhere else. It's about confusion, aging, joy, and love. It's about disorienting change and the serenity found in what remains constant."

[*101 Fun Things to Do in Retirement: An Irreverent, Outrageous & Funny Guide to Life After Work*](#) by Stella Rheingold (2015) "**Highly recommended for any of us who take ourselves too seriously. "I nearly splurged my drink everywhere reading this. Stella has a hilarious take on the 'best' years of our lives....fearless and imaginative. I don't think I am going to try them all, but it is a shot in the arm for any of us who have greeted this time of our lives with a mild dread. Highly recommended for any of us who take ourselves too seriously; in fact, just highly recommended."

[Midlife Career Change In A 20-Something World: How To Find Happiness In A Career Transition After 40](#) by Sarah Guilliot (2014) ** "*How Inspiring! ...Written from a position of experience and empathy, the author challenges the reader to break through barriers to change. ...*"

[Working Identity: Unconventional Strategies for Reinventing Your Career](#) by Herminia Ibarra (2004)
"Whether as a daydream or a spoken desire, nearly all of us have entertained the notion of reinventing ourselves. Feeling unfulfilled, burned out, or just plain unhappy with what we're doing, we long to make that leap into the unknown. ..."

THE INTERNET CONNECTIONS

[AARP Retirement Calculator](#) - are you ready?

[45up - Looking Forward to Reworkment](#)

[The 9 Keys to Happy Retirement](#),
Forbes Magazine article (March 2015)

[Happy Retirement - Images and Best Wishes](#)

[Transition United States - Volunteer Opportunities](#)

[Tips for Surviving a Career Transition](#) (a slideshow) by Evan Taylor (2014)

Reflection

I began writing my newsletters sixteen years ago as a way to connect to others. I have been fortunate in all these years to hear from many of you sharing your thoughts and responses to the topics I have written about.

I have written about transition and change a few times over the years. And this time the transition takes on a bit of a different meaning and new choices. In preparation for the next stage to my right - reworkment to renewal, I will be discontinuing my monthly newsletters. I will begin to scale down the number of times my newsletter goes out in a year - think quarterly, no yearly theme and an exploration into what is current, new or different.

As I pause and consider my exit, I encourage and invite you to consider ...
what preparations you are ready to take on?
what is your timeline?
what support systems do you need in place?
what does your exit ... your transition ... your change mean to you?
what is your desired outcome - where you want to be and what do you want to be doing?

And then enjoy your new discoveries and your renewal.

Choose To ...

reflect ... determine your exit strategy ... discover what you need to prepare ... begin the preparations ... breathe ... and step left ... or step right.



December Joyful Observances

[Buckwheat Month](#)

[National Tie Month](#)

Safe Toys and Gifts Month

Youngsters on The Air Month

[Cookie Cutter Week](#) (December 1-7)

Recipe Greetings for the Holidays Week (December 4-10)

Human Rights Week (December 10-17)

It's About Time Week (December 25-31)

International Volunteer Day for Economic & Social Development (December 5)

[Special Kids Day](#) (December 7)

Answer the Telephone Like Buddy the Elf Day (December 18)

National Flashlight Day (December 21)

National Thank-you Note Day (December 26)

Administrivia

My Constructive Choices Audience...

- * Professionals wanting to be at choice in their career and daily work,
- * New managers (and aspiring leaders) transitioning to establish a leadership role in their communities,
- * Individuals wanting to sort through the choices, build a more fulfilling life, live their voices, and...
- * Coaches who choose to step out, show up, and say - YES, it IS all about YOU!

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