

If Not Now, When?

by Jeff Westover

The story has become legend.

Back in the glory days of baseball player Pete Rose, the Cincinnati Reds were on a chartered airplane that was flying in a thunderstorm. There was a great deal of turbulence and the passengers were scared.

It was at this moment that the all-time hits leader of baseball turned to a teammate and said: *"If this thing goes down, I go out with a .300 average. What about you?"*

What drives such intensity to perform? Pete Rose was a baseball player of questionable athletic ability. But he overcame those obstacles to earn the nickname "Charlie Hustle" because he was driven to succeed at something he simply loved to do.

For Rose, blood-and-guts desire was the difference between doing what he loved for a living or merely being a spectator to it. He just wanted it more than others with better talent who competed with him for a position. Everything else he needed to make it happen was only detail. He just decided he was going to do it -- and he did.

What about you? Do you have a job you love? If you don't, why not? And if not now, when?

~ Dodging Career Bullets ~

That is just what Steve Steinberg was asking himself.

Steve had just completed eight years of medical school. He was preparing for his first day of medical residency at a Salt Lake City hospital and could not find the heart to report to work. He did not want to be a doctor. His medical degree was a passing interest that just snowballed out of control.

About three years in to med school he discovered computers.

On this day of wearing the white coat and stethoscope for the first time, he swallowed a bitter pill and told his wife he was not going to be a doctor. He wanted a career in computers.

Mrs. Steinberg was furious. To hear her tell the story, Steve would have to be his own doctor after she got through with him. They did not have the money for medical care otherwise. And they certainly did not have the income to pay for his education in a field he had no intention of pursuing.

"But it wasn't a matter of all the time or money spent getting educated for it that bothered him." Angela Steinberg said. "It was the fact that for forty years he was going to have to get up in the morning to do a job that he hated."

Steve knew what he was in for. "I saw my Dad do that" Steve said. "He was a road foreman, working out on the highways and he hated every stinking minute of it. All that has gone through my head the last couple of years was the voice of my father telling me his life began the day he could retire from his job."

Steve is now studying for a two-year degree in computers. Angela reports that his feet hit the ground running everyday because he just can't wait to get there.

~ What Do You Want to be When You Grow Up? ~

The trap of falling in to the wrong job is one that many get caught in.

"Eighty percent of the workforce in the U.S. is misemployed." says Dr. Herbert Greenberg of the Marketing and Research Group. "People often stumble into jobs because of a newspaper advertisement, a previous summer job, because a friend tells them it is a lucrative field, or some other accident. Few overcome their beginning."

New workers in the workforce often settle for the first opportunity that strikes their fancy simply because they lack any better ideas.

Sometimes they do have a targeted job but get sidetracked off the path that leads to it by accepting positions "for the good of the company" or because of better money. Whatever the reason, good people many times work in jobs that just are not right for them.

The reasons for ending up in the wrong job are nowhere near as important to explore than the steps one must take to get out of it. That is where a new attitude about finding a job will make it easier to take the necessary steps.

~ Career Tragedies ~

What is true in physics is true in seeking a job you love: you can act or be acted upon. Either way, there are always consequences.

What this boils down to is the adoption of a different mindset when it comes to looking for a job. If you assume it cannot be done or if you think it can be done in the traditional ways that jobs are obtained then it probably will not happen.

The change in mindset is that you alone are responsible for it happening -- regardless of what anyone else might say or do about it.

That is an attitude that is lost on people who use conventional job searching techniques. They read an ad in the classifieds or a posting on an Internet job board and they send in a resume. Then they wait by the phone for someone to call.

When they do not call, well, it's not the jobseeker's fault. After all, they sent in the resume. The jobseeker tried to get the job. But the responsible party did not keep up their end of the bargain.

And that kind of thinking is where career tragedies are born.

Baseball fans would never have had the chance to see Pete Rose play if he approached getting his job that way. That would have been terrible.

But for the patients of Dr. Steve Steinberg, who hates every stinking minute of his job, it could have been tragic.

No matter how you look at it, there are always consequences.

~ Eye of the Tiger ~

So where does the determined jobseeker begin? By following a few of these unconventional laws of the job search:

You don't have to do what you are told. For example, you don't have to send in that resume. You could call and actually talk to someone about that job. Examine every behavior of your job search and question the value of it. You may just find a lot of wasted energy on little or no return.

The ball is always in your court. Don't be a victim. You alone are responsible for what happens.

If you don't act, you won't get it. Most people let the jobs find them. Failure to speak to people, to talk about your situation, to ask for contacts, to seek out advice is really a failure to be actively seeking a job.

The common thread in these thoughts is that none of them give a jobseeker a clear step to take. They are all attitude. Attitude is where everything good happens.