

Excerpt from *Leaving Campus and Going to Work*

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Completing your first year of your first job in one piece is a big event, so do take the time to stop and give yourself a standing ovation whenever you near the end of Year One. You may want to do this in private or after hours, but hey, we are celebrating, so whatever floats your boat. By the end of your first year, you will have seen and experienced many different things. You will be able to look back at where you were on Day One and see that you have indeed accumulated some knowledge that you did not have before you started your job. If you kept a journal of your first year, you will not only see your progress but be reminded of some things you had forgotten about. You will see that most of your first year is spent climbing a very steep learning curve and you really have very little time to think. Just about everything you do is a new experience and thus you are spending more time LEARNING about things than really DOING anything...or it may seem that way, at least.

Even though you have done a tremendous job surviving your first year, you may decide that wherever you are or whatever you are doing is just not your deal, and you want to make a change. You may think you are in the right job but in the wrong company culture. Or in the right company culture, but you just hate what you do. Or you may just dislike everything and everyone and figure you can't do much worse throwing a dart at the help wanted section of your local paper. Obviously, you are keen enough to know when you are not doing your best or not getting what you had hoped out of a particular situation. I am not going to venture into such topics as "How to Find Your High Paying/ Low Stress Dream Job Without Owning the Company" or "Interviewing Skills for the Unemployed Recluse" because there are hundreds of well-written/well-intentioned books on these topics already out there. Instead, I simply want to point out a few things to consider as you contemplate making a change.

Ask yourself "Is this situation really not working or am I just having a bout of frustration?" It is completely normal to find yourself frustrated with your job from time-to-time during your first year of working full-time. Don't forget you are still going through a change from student to full-time professional, whatever you may be doing. Whenever you feel frustrated, wondering whether you are in the right line of work, right company, or right location, ask yourself, "Why exactly am I frustrated and was I this frustrated last week?" It could be that you are tired, hungry, sick, annoyed by family, annoyed by friends, angry over unexpected bills, etc. Any number of things could be piled up in your subconscious basket and this last little work crisis/event/problem could just have pushed you over the edge.