



REFINE YOUR LINES WHEN YOU RESIGN

People frequently make the mistake of thinking “business is just business” at the most convenient times---when they resign, quit, ask or demand more money. Yet other times—when there is a family emergency, or a personal crisis, they expect to be treated like family.

Well, guess what? At break-up time, when you resign—it’s personal! It’s a break-up, no ifs and or buts about it! The only thing you get to choose is whether you will be nasty or classy. (nasty would be so much more fun, but non-productive!)

No one likes getting dumped. Do you? Remember what it felt like to be 16 years old sitting in the back seat of a car, trying to make out with a girl, and she won’t let you? Well that’s how this guy feels right now!

He (generic use of term) may feel betrayed and it’s natural! You cheated on him.

He may think your actions are “treachery” by interviewing with another organization and accepting an offer of employment. He brought you into the organization, invested his time and energy in training you and watched you grow professionally. He may never admit it, but he has a certain amount of paternal feelings for his protégé.

Guess what? He is a tad upset right now.

On those rare occasions you will have a wonderful boss who is truly happy for you, these guys are far and few between (most live in Neverland!).

Many bosses may take a defensive posture and feel that you have not given them the same level of commitment or opportunity that they have given to you

The employer may also experience a psychological and emotional devastation that may create a swirl of uncertainty that by leaving you are jeopardizing their business (in other words...what the he-- am I going to do now???).

However, he is NOT GOING TO communicate his personal concerns. Generally the manager will cover up his immediate concerns and ***persuade you into believing you have made a terrible mistake in your career.***

At the point of resignation, generally the manager is so caught up in the total disruption your departure will create, that they can not/will not be empathetic to your needs. (The only thing he cares about at this very moment is CYA. Can you blame him?)

The manager may not be generous in terms of thinking about you and what is best for your career.

It is best to not tell your boss, anyone you work with where you are going. The only person who should know your plans is your family. As Shakespeare said, "The common curse of mankind is folly and ignorance." I wouldn't recommend espousing Shakespeare either....it's just a thought.

A better quote may be, "discretion is the better part of valor." Learn by other's mistakes—pay attention to what history teaches us. Never assume that you know exactly how anyone will or will not behave. Prudence is a wiser path.

The manager will only be thinking about what is best for his business. Based on your relationship, tenure, level of success at the organization, the manager's focus will be how your departure will impact his business.

In another article I review counteroffers, why the manager may present a counter-offer, and how you can damage or destroy your career by giving the manager the opportunity to even present a counter offer.

The manager may feel that your resignation is a statement that communicates that you personally and/or professionally do not respect him. He may assume you have an issue with his management style or you are more talented than he is, etc.

There are many reasons to stay on good terms with a former employer. More importantly, it is in your best interest to try very hard to not burn bridges because you never know where your career will lead you.

The way the resignation is received depends almost entirely on the personality of your boss and on the policies of the company. I've seen the most gracious and polite people ushered right out the door, and I've seen companies ask the employee to stick around and train his replacement.

The best way to judge what's going to happen is to look at how the manager treated other employees who resigned. If he beat the crap out of former employees then you have a pretty good read on how he's going to handle your resignation!

1. DON'T MALIGN, DRAW THE LINE

It can be tempting to liberate pent-up hostilities and frustrations you may have built up over the years when you realize you are free from a job. But it's not wise to do so.

A few recommendations I suggest you follow: Making faces, pretending you're a chimp, or making everyone sit on the pretend fart balloon are not good ideas. Nor is finally succumbing to the know-it-all two doors away by filling his 911 Porsche with cow manure or letting all the air out of his tires.

Transitions are important. Your future career is affected not only by how professionally you tender your resignation but how you conduct yourself afterwards. There is a right way and a wrong way to resign.

The right way transforms a job change into a smart strategic career transition. The wrong way may negatively affect an otherwise promising career. Remember, in the highly competitive job market, a solid list of work references is often the deciding factor when landing the next job. **You don't want to be remembered as the *NIGHTMARE OF RESUME!***

2. GIVE LOTS OF NOTICE PRIOR TO THE FINISH LINE

Always give sufficient notice to your present employer. Two weeks is standard, although in circumstances, such as completing an important project that you're leading, a month's notice may be more appropriate.

For some of you, the desire to boot you out may be overwhelming. In those cases, I suggest wearing boots, so you can flip them off and hand them your boots making it a win-win day for all!

The more senior your position, the more notice may be required. In some instances, your firm may request one-six months notice. In other situations, your firm may usher you out the day you give notice. A new employer realizes that you have to give sufficient notice to your present employer.

Even if your present employer has a policy of asking job changers to leave immediately upon giving notice, you should still give two weeks. It's a professional obligation to give sufficient notice when you're making a change in employers.

3. YOUR LASTING IMPRESSION WILL DEFINE

Although those last few weeks on the job may not be the most pleasant, it is important that you continue to perform your job duties in a professional manner until the last minute. Those days will seem interminably long as you anticipate starting your new job, but it is important to leave a lasting good impression with your employer.

People always remember how someone made them feel. If you can make someone feel good in a tough situation, they will remember you forever.

If there is one secret to success in life it is the ability to understand the other person's perspective...to see things from their point of view.

Remember, its not how your start....its how you finish.

4. TRAIN YOUR REPLACEMENT AND YOU WILL SHINE

If your present employer wants you to train your replacement, be amenable to the idea. Make your replacement's transition as easy as you hope yours will be on the new job.

Avoid passing on company gossip to your replacement or "badmouthing" your boss and/or your co-workers. Why set someone up for a negative experience by instilling the prejudices you have acquired? It doesn't serve anyone.

Keep a professional attitude at all times, no matter how tense or difficult your last weeks prove to be. Your goal should be to leave with as much grace and dignity as possible. You want to be remembered as the consummate professional. (no matter how much of a jerk you are in real life)

5. STAY COOL AND REFINED

Outstanding employees are rare commodities. Your professional attitude and composure under arduous circumstances communicate volumes about your professionalism.

If you find yourself in an emotionally volatile situation to remove yourself physically. When you feel you are emotionally charged and compromised it is best to excuse yourself for a short period of time to cool down then re-enter with a refreshed perspective.

Who knows how many times in your life you will change jobs. A reputation is something that you must work hard to build and can take seconds to destroy. A former boss or co-worker can easily become a future boss.

Everyone has good and bad days. Practice being even tempered, do not react to emotionally charged situations. Never resign in a fit of anger.

No one care's if you punch your pillows, dress up in ladies underwear, or rub lipstick all over your face in a fit of anger---in the privacy of your own home.

6. REALIGN YOUR RESIGNATION LETTER TO A SHORT LINE

Never resign one job until you have a written offer from the new employer. Verbal offers can be withdrawn. It is critical the written offer is consistent with the verbal offer.

Your resignation letter should simply state the following:

TODAY'S DATE

"I, JOHN DOE, HEREBY RESIGN MY POSITION AS MANAGER OF ABC COMPANY EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2000"

SINCERELY,

JOHN DOE

Do not thank the company in your letter. Do not complain; do not recount your accomplishments. Keep your resignation letter short and sweet.

If you have anything else you want to say, such as, thank a mentor, or share with co-workers how much you enjoyed working with them, say it with your mouth, not with a pen.

7. DRAW THE LINE ON THE FIRING LINE

Do not tell your employer where you are going! A good rule of thumb is to never tell your employer or anyone else in the company any information about where you are going until you are at your new job.

Remember you never know what someone will or will not do. It's rare, but the old employer may try to hurt the person's new job or hurt their career in some manner. It's best not to leave anything to chance!

It's best said by Shakespeare, "we know what we are, but know not what we may be." Hamlet, Act IV.

With these few steps you will be forever enshrined. Like a good bottle of red wine that age with time, go forward and contribute to a new bottom line!

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