

# CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

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## Waiting

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By Douglas E. Welch

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As odd as it might sound, you will find times in your career, and your life, when waiting will be the best action you can take. Let me be clear, though. I am not talking about being inactive, just that you might find yourself waiting for the best combination of events and effort so that you can move to the next level. In many cases, waiting can end up being very productive.

### Not Procrastination

Waiting for opportunities to align is *not* procrastination. In fact, you should be working very hard while you are waiting, not putting off important steps you need to take. For example, you might need to wait for the best time to leave your current job for a new one. You need to get all your ducks into a row before you can simply quit. This is the waiting part. The active part can include many steps.

Perhaps you need to improve your skills in specific areas that can make you more attractive to new employers. Maybe you should work on reducing your debt level so that you can return to school or take a vacation between jobs. If you are thinking that you might relocate to find a better job, why not start clearing your house or apartment of unnecessary items and making packing plans?

Most importantly, you should not just sit around waiting for something to happen. You should be taking every opportunity to prepare yourself for any opportunities that might come your way.

### Good vs. Bad Waiting

If you look a little more closely, it should be easy to see the difference between good waiting and bad waiting. It is all a matter of activity. If you are waiting for someone to offer you a job out of the blue, you are being extremely unrealistic. It just doesn't happen. On the other hand, if you are simply waiting for responses to résumés and phone calls that you sent out last week, you are on the right track. Waiting for the big inheritance from your rich aunt—*bad*. Waiting for your investments to gain a long-term return—*good*. Waiting for your boss to fire you—*bad*. Waiting for responses to résumés and doing your job well until you quit—*good*.

You can be reasonably sure that you are not procrasti-

nating if you are taking some action to improve your career, even if it means you are waiting for something else to happen. As a writer, I have to make sure that I have new material being sent out all the time, whether it is a book proposal, magazine article or novel. If I don't, I will find that I am simply waiting for lightning to strike instead of taking an active role in my career. Of course, this means that I am also constantly waiting for an answer.

### Letting Go

Sometimes waiting can be difficult, especially if you are in a bad work situation. That said, it can be even more difficult if you spend too much time agonizing over your bad fortune. Once you have decided to take action and look for a new career, you need to let go of all the problems with your current job. Too many people continue to bewail their career problems long after they have convinced themselves to quit. Instead, you should see your job change as something that has already happened. You have already taken the first step. Let it go. This will make your waiting easier.

There is no longer a need to sit around complaining with your coworkers about this boss or this VP. Once you decide to leave, you don't have to invest your time in company problems. It doesn't matter that this person is a jerk, or another is nasty and controlling. You know that soon, you will not have to deal with them anymore. While you want to make sure that the quality of your work remains high, you will feel less stress from the day-to-day dramas of your job. You are less invested in the outcome of the company and, therefore, less inclined to take your work problems home with you.

Waiting need not have the bad connotations usually associated with it. If you are actively waiting for plans to come together, people to respond, money to save, then you are on the right track. Rather than jumping from one bad situation to another, plan, wait, and then execute your plan when the time is right and you are guaranteed the best result. Your career and your life are sure to benefit. □

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