



July, 2016 Volume 8, Issue 2

Number 74

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a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

Stuck in the Past?

Lunch @ The Millworks, Harrisburg

I'll never forget the day I submitted my resignation to my boss at a public school in a neighboring county. For a couple of years I'd been functioning as a reading specialist in that district, working for embarrassingly low pay and literally no benefits. Only twenty-four and wet behind the ears, I'd decided to leave to take a retail sales job that I had no idea I could handle. This was a big risk. Desperation, however, can be a mighty motivator to step outside one's comfort zone. Burdened by an overflowing bag full of student loans, I knew I couldn't stay and do nothing.

The Assistant Superintendent read my brief letter twice, then bored his eyes into mine as he said: "Sylvia, I could be your father. I care about you and your professional future. If you walk out of here, you are about to make the worst mistake of your life. You trained to be a teacher, not a

salesperson." Wow! Talk about somebody sticking a pin in your plans—and



confidence.

Well, I did walk out the door. I never missed the work, the people, or the simmering disrespect there. On the surface I had left a dead end job. But deep inside? I carried part of it with me as I remembered my boss's parting words—every time I lost a sale. Over and over I thought maybe he'd been right. Until the man who became my first husband a little while later set me straight. Don advised me to close the door on the past. Eleven years older than I, he told me to learn from it but to move beyond it. He cautioned me about allowing the past to control my present and future. How wise.

Today in my business I talk to so many people who are stuck in the shadows of the past. It makes me sad. Believe me, those shadows represent quite a variety of crippling stories. I empathize. While empathy has emotional and psychological value to all who receive it, it's not enough to move folks forward in the practical world. My primary purpose for building Launching Lives was to help YOU get unstuck. How is something in your professional past holding you hostage? I highlight several examples in my feature article below.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

Imprisoned by the Past? There's A Price

Stuckness is a kind of prison. It holds you back from being the best version of yourself. It prevents you from doing what you are meant to do. It stands between you and happiness, fulfillment, and peace. Further, staying stuck takes energy. So does the anger, frustration, and resentment usually associated with the state of *stuck*. Recently I told a private client that human energy is finite and that every day we need to choose the people and situations into which we will invest our limited energy. "Really?" she said, utterly impressed and amazed, as if she'd never considered it.

What is keeping you stuck? This article highlights seven common examples. Where do you see yourself?

Your ideal boss moved on.

All of us yearn for the perfect boss. Few of us get her. If we do, we hope she never leaves. Or at least not before we do. When she goes, we may feel grief because of that loss. It's a fact that throughout your career you're likely to

have many bosses. Focusing on the person who left slams the door on your ability to build a necessary and positive relationship with whoever came next.

Your big project failed.

At one time or other all professionals know the pain of project failure: a new product or service that doesn't sell; a technology innovation that colleagues abhor; a needs assessment that yields minimal useful information; a departmental restructuring that flops. If you haven't been there yet, get ready. It's bound to happen. Blending into the woodwork isn't the answer. Failures offer opportunities to learn.

You were told you couldn't achieve something.

Naysayers in general crush the human spirit. Naysayers in supervisory roles do even more damage by smashing spirits and careers by telling employees they'll never accomplish X, Y, or Z. This treacherous messaging, directly stated or subtly implied, holds too many people back from greatness. Trust that, as long as you have the knowledge, skills, and personal drive, you can do anything.

You discovered you're not well matched to your job or career.

Investing time and money in a particular educational focus, completing demanding practicums, earning certain credentials, and then wading through the often tedious job search process only to find out you're on the wrong track unnerves and depresses the best of us. But to ignore the mistake and pretend it doesn't matter just to maintain the status quo leads to long term misery.

You were passed over for a promotion.

Not being chosen as a life partner, a sports team member, the leader of a community cause, or the recipient of more professional responsibility at work can hurt to the core. Not being chosen wounds the ego. We walk away assuming we are not smart enough, good enough, important enough to deserve what we sought. Feeling small, we play small. Folks who continue to play small are never chosen.

You were fired from a previous job.

Even when our own poor performance or inappropriate behavior led to a termination, most people crawl into the pit of depression and hide. Embarrassment is typically part of the picture. Not to mention fear. It's okay to lick your wounds, but not for years. Face your role in the firing, make the changes you need to make, and jump back in the ring. If you can't do it by yourself, ask for help. There's more to life than one job.

You left a company for greener pastures that weren't so green.

Most of us have jumped ship to chase more money, better benefits, a

healthier culture, more supportive colleagues, or a virtuous boss. Once we arrive at the new place and experience what really goes on there, we may have become disillusioned and sad. Firsthand we see that all that glitters is not gold. We're stuck. While there's no going back, there are other fish in the sea. Give it six months to be fair, then leave.

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Here's the truth: you cannot alter the past. What could be possible if you developed some mastery over the negative, unwanted happenings of your past? The only time you have is now. How would you rate the quality of your present situation?

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What Clients Say

By the time I hired Sylvia I was, once again, unemployed. Over the course of seven years I'd been terminated from multiple jobs. Once I was fired because the boss and I didn't get along. A couple of times I was let go due to my temper when things that I viewed as important weren't addressed by senior management. According to most people's standards, mine was a bleak picture, and my self confidence was shot. Despite having several advanced degrees in my field and a history of negotiating larger than average paychecks, I believed my career was severely damaged. Sylvia showed me that I could overcome EVEN THIS rocky past. During coaching sessions I learned that I needed to own my part in all of these scenarios before I could create a different future. I also found out that a better future was entirely possible. I'm not going to say it was easy, but after six months with Sylvia I applied for and landed a position that's appears to be a win for both me and the company. I was surprised that I can be reasonably happy at work.

- Bob, Licensed Professional, Harrisburg, PA

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Offers and Opportunities

Super Summer Sizzler!

If something in your professional past is holding you hostage and you REALLY want to get unstuck but honestly don't have the money to invest in coaching right now, send a private email to sylvia@launchinglives.biz requesting an application to be considered for **3 FREE** 30-minute individual

phone coaching sessions with Sylvia during July and August 2016. You must complete and submit the application (which essentially asks you to prove your need and your financial inability to pay for professional development services) no later than July 20, 2016. All submitted applications will be 100% confidential. If this offer resonates with you and you know deep inside that you can benefit from this “gift”, don’t delay. Only one person will be selected. This is a special summer offer that will not be repeated.

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RESOURCES

The Power of Your Past: A Self Assessment

Read each statement below and identify the ones that describe you at this point in your life and career:

- You keep comparing your current boss to a previous “best boss”.
- This kind of ongoing comparison is making you miserable.
- The comparison prevents you from having a positive or at least a civil relationship with your current boss.
- You have experienced major project failure sometime in your career.
- This failure continues to be top of mind when you begin new projects.
- You doubt your ability to be successful with current projects.
- A key person in your past told you that you can’t reach a certain level or a particular goal.
- You bought into that negative message and it holds you back.
- You realize you are in the wrong job or career for you.
- Although you know this, you haven’t taken steps to change it.
- You allow fear to keep you stuck where you are.
- You have a history of being passed over for job promotions.
- This history causes you to assume you are inadequate in some way.
- You have not explored the reasons behind these “rejections”.
- You were terminated from one or more jobs in the past.
- You live constantly with a simmering belief that you may get fired

again.

- At one point you changed jobs, only to be disappointed and disillusioned.
- You secretly (or openly) harbor/display a lot of anger about this situation.
- You have not done anything to alter this situation to date.
- You have a tendency to stay in situations that cause you to feel stuck.

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TIP

Identify what you're gaining by allowing circumstances of the past to dictate the quality of your present (and future) professional experience. Human beings are naturally wired to make decisions and take actions from which we benefit. We don't do anything unless we get something out of it. Even people with a history of serial job terminations obtain something they believe they need or value: Attention, pity, less responsibility, more free time. Dare to be brutally honest with yourself, and think about it.

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Where in the World is SYLVIA?

On June 14, 2016 Sylvia drove to York County, PA to present part of her very popular workshop entitled "The Magic of Influence" as a Lunch 'n Learn to professional staff at Providence Place Senior Living facility in Dover.

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Join Sylvia on these social networks!

About This Ezine

The purpose of this Ezine is to: 1) Provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to personal and professional growth as well as overall

career development; and 2) Invite readers to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

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About SYLVIA

Sylvia Hepler, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC, specializes in career development for both corporate and nonprofit executives and managers. Based in South Central PA, she specifically supports clients as they upgrade their current job performance, seek a promotion, or plan/navigate a career transition. What makes her services unique is that Sylvia helps people to cope with change, loss, and grief as they work on developing their careers. Her professional background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, nonprofit community health program start-up, program evaluation, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A certified executive coach through The Rescue Institute in Golden, Colorado and Quantum Endeavors in Chicago, Illinois (plus a participant in extensive continuing education opportunities with several coaches of national notoriety), Sylvia offers individual and group coaching, assessments, teleseminars, workshops, keynote speeches, and retreats. She also has created tangible and downloadable products that augment her coaching and speaking services.

For more information and to connect with Sylvia try:

[Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at **717-761-5457**

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Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives, LLC is a full service career development company for managers and executives located in South Central PA. Utilizing a holistic approach to service provision, Launching Lives focuses on supporting clients as they create the platinum level career they desire by upgrading their job performance, seeking a promotion, or planning/navigating a career transition

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: "What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching may be the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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