

Feeling Stuck? How to Cope.

By Kristin Paulson, Career Consultant

You know the feeling—you have been working in your job for several years, you feel that you have stopped learning, there does not appear to be any room for advancement at the moment, and frankly, you're just bored! With the downturn of the economy over the past couple years and the resulting reductions in workforce, the number of growth opportunities have been greatly reduced. Your plans of moving into a manager role in x number of years, director in y number of year may now appear to be nothing but a pipedream. However, you still want to hold on to the security of your current job rather than jumping ship. So—how do you cope?

Get involved in special projects.

There are always opportunities and new challenges you can take on. Most companies have cross-functional task forces where you can represent your department. This gives you exposure to new people and the new responsibilities are a departure from the hum-drum of your normal job. You will also learn more about your company and the value that your role provides.

Learn about people who are successful.

Get inspired by reading about those who are successful in your line of work. Study their achievements, their career path, and their values. Look at successful professionals in other lines of work, athletes, people who have overcome adversity, and learn about how they handled their career and life roadblocks.

Get a mentor.

Select someone you admire that is at least 2 levels higher than you. It does not have to be someone in your chosen field, though a person in your field will have the wisdom of experience in your line of work. Set up recurring meetings to talk with them about what they are working on, what you would like to do, and ask their advice on how to get there. The mentor/mentee role is an extremely valuable one that can have long-lasting career benefits.

Take professional development courses.

If your company has a learning and development center, stimulate your mind by taking some courses to better your business and technical skills. If your company does not have this resource, check out the extended learning opportunities at your local universities.

Develop more outside interests.

It is always healthy to have a good work/life balance. But you may be placing so much energy into the frustrations of your current position that you have abandoned the activities that make you happy. Fill your life up with hobbies, exercise, time with family and friends—just take time to enjoy life! Remember the common expression: “Work to live, not live to work.”

Talk with a career counselor.

There may be a deeper issue behind the boredom or lack of advancement. It is worth considering that you might be in a job that is not a good fit for you. Talking with a career counselor will enable you to examine your skills and interests, and help you determine whether a career change is needed.

Look for the positive.

Consider the benefits of the job that you have. Perhaps your company has a good medical and retirement plan. You may work on a great team, or have developed some significant friendships with your co-workers. Your office hours may be flexible. Consider the security that you have that many other professionals don't. Anything you can think of—just try to stay positive!

While feeling stuck is certainly frustrating—know that every professional has experienced this at some point in their life, and it is a temporary situation. Remember—it is YOUR career. Only you can breathe life back into it!

Kristin Paulson is a Career Consultant with The Ginac Group Inc. The Ginac Group, Inc. is a leader in the provision of career, leadership, and organizational development services. Our overarching objective in working with each client is to provide the highest quality service, tailored to meet your needs and deliver desired results. We offer a wealth of knowledge, resources, and experience, coupled with unparalleled commitment and dedication, to help you achieve your business, professional, and personal goals. For more information, visit www.ginacgroup.com.