

Room For The Future

At the age of forty—five, my usually well—ordered life became fraught with changes.

After twenty—two years of working for a major financial institution, a downsizing initiative and a major bank merger resulted in the elimination¹⁾ of over one hundred jobs, mine being one of them.

My once secure future became a fallacy²⁾. However, I was one of the lucky ones. I was not a single parent, nor dependent solely on my income, but just like the other ex—bankers, I had become a disposable³⁾ employee, and a statistician.

My mantra⁴⁾ has always been, “change is good, change is progress, ”but when it affected my livelihood, I had to revise it to, “accept change and make the most of it. ”From the beginning, I chose to look at this occurrence not as a misfortune, but as a welcome opportunity. I refused to become depressed or bitter; instead, I eagerly anticipated doing something new and different.

Having a positive attitude made all the difference in the way I perceived the future. First, I decided to return to college and graduate, several decades later than I should have. Doing this at my age took more than a little courage. Not being a graduate had never held me back in my career with the bank, but now it was a personal goal I longed to achieve. With a little trepidation⁵⁾ and a lot of determination, I registered for evening classes, and became an adult student.

Oral presentations were often required for one class. I remember thinking that if I had known this beforehand, I would have taken something else to achieve my required accreditation. By nature, I am a rather reticent⁶⁾ individual, and speaking in front of people terrified me. As I stood in front of the other adults with whom I shared a common goal, my knees were visibly knocking, and my heartbeat almost audible. Somehow, I found my voice and squeaked out my presentation. The next time it was easier, and soon, I was starting to enjoy it a little. Later in the year, I even voluntarily interviewed a local reporter for an English assignment, much to the amazement of my teacher. My confidence level soared. Suddenly I felt like I could accomplish anything.

During this time, I realized that no matter what life throws our way, personal growth never stops. It comes from within, and needs only to be challenged in order to surface. It is entirely possible to step out of one's comfort zone to learn something new. My experience of going back to school ended up being far more valuable than just acquiring a diploma.

The second thing I did to improve my inner self was to reevaluate⁷⁾ my life. It used to be filled with endless, and sometimes meaningless, events. Now, instead of working towards materialistic things and personal glorification, my heart and life are firmly entwined around people I care for.

Yes, having a fulfilling career is important, but it is no longer my reason for being. When I rejoin the “rat race⁸⁾”, it will be on my terms, as nurturing my soul is my first priority. Having simplified my life, I am enjoying living now, instead of just existing to make a living.

Is there life after banking? You bet there is.

The loss of my job was responsible for some positive changes in my life. Revisiting the past made room for the future. As I contemplate the meaning of my mantra, “change is good, change is progress”, I realize that I have accepted the change, and am making the most of it.

And, I have only just begun. The best is yet to come.

未来大有可为

在45岁时，我一向有条不紊的生活风云骤起，充满变数。

供职于一家重要的金融机构22年后，我突然失去了工作。原因是一次裁员和一次重大的银行并购导致100多名员工被裁，其中便有我。

一夜之间，我对未来曾抱有的安全感被证明是毫无根据的。然而，我还是幸运的。我不是单亲，工薪也不是我的惟一收入来源，但是正像其他前银行职员一样，我成了一名可有可无的雇员，一名统计人员。

我的祷文一向是，“变是好事，变是进步”，但当它真的影响到我的生活时，我不得不将之改为“接受变并善加利用”。我一开始就愿把这一生活变化视为一个很好的机会，而不是一种不幸。我拒绝抑郁、愤懑，而是热切地期望尝试新的、不同以往的事情。

这种积极的态度使我对未来的看法完全变了。首先，我决定重返大学，拿下毕业文凭，虽然已晚了几十年。这般年龄采取如此行动是需要拿出些勇气的。没有大学文凭并没有影响我在银行的职业生涯，但获得学位确是我的平生夙愿。我有些忐忑不安，但决心很大，我在夜校班报了名，成为一名成人学生。有一门课程常常要求学生进行口头陈述。记得我曾想过，如果我事先知道这一要求，我会选择别的课程来挣够学分。我天性少言寡语，在众人面前说话令我十分畏惧。当我站在其他和我有着共同目标的成人面前时，我的双膝直打颤，心都快跳到嗓子眼儿了。但我终于开了口，勉强把陈述做了下来。第二次就容易多了。不久，我开始有点喜欢上这种课堂活动了。那年，我竟主动为一项英语作业采访了一位当地记者，让我的老师惊叹不已。我的自信大增。忽然我感觉没有我做不成的事情。

在这期间，我意识到，不管我们在人生的旅途中有何种遭遇，个人的成长是永无止境的，它是内在的需要，只有迎接挑战，才能超越自我。跳出自己的“舒适圈”去学些新的东西是完全可能的。重返学校，我收获良多，远远超过一张学位证书。

我完善自我的第二件事是重新审视我的生活道路。我过去的生活尽是些没完没了的事情，有时毫无意义，总之是逃不脱名利二字。现在，我的身心与我所关心的人紧紧地连在一起。

是的，事业有成是重要的，但它已不再是我生活的目标。如果我重返“激烈的竞争”，那必须是按照我的条件，因为我把滋养灵魂视为第一重要。简化了生活之后，我是真正在享受生活，而不是为生计而生存。

银行生涯之后还有生活吗？当然有。

丢了工作促成了我生活中一些积极的改变。重访过去为未来打开了空间。当我细细琢磨我的祷文“变是好事，变是进步”时，我意识到我已接受了变，并在充分利用它。

新生活刚刚开始。精彩的还在后头。

NOTE 注释：

学英语，练听力，上听力课堂！

elimination [iˌlɪmiˈneɪʃən] n. 去掉，消除

fallacy [ˈfæləsi] n. 谬误，谬论

disposable [dɪsˈpəʊzəbl] adj. 可任意使用的

mantra [ˈmʌntɹə, ˈmæn-] 颂歌，祷文(尤指四吠陀经典内作为咒文或祷告唱念的)

trepidation [trepɪˈdeɪʃən] n. 颤抖

reticent [ˈretɪsənt] adj. 沉默寡言的

reevaluate [ˌriːɪˈvæljuːeɪt] v. 再评估，再评价

rat race n. 激烈的竞争，你死我活的竞争