

# VAULTING OVER CAREER SPEEDBUMPS

TRANSFORMING LOSS INTO OPPORTUNITY

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YOUR CAREER →



## About Your Speakers



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## Abstract

*"We all embrace change, as long as we are the ones controlling the change. It's the changes that are imposed on us that challenge us."*

Every career is beset with "Speedbumps" – the unasked-for and often unwanted changes we experience, such as reorganizations, manager changes, mergers, location changes and even layoffs.

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3

This presentation will help you:

- Define a strategy for dealing with these changes and losses in a positive, productive manner.
- Understand how to transform chaos into opportunity.
- Seize control back and make your career what you want it to be.
- Survive and thrive.

## What You Will Learn

- Reality
- Acceptance
- Transformation
- Q&A
- Summary



We'll talk about what is happening now, what you can do about it, and how you can make it even better by using the time you have in a new way. At the end of this talk, you will see that not only can you survive any career losses, you can actually come out on top.



# Reality

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5



Source: Despair.com

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6

Change is the new reality. And the changes that bug us are the ones we can't control. After all, think of all the changes we choose to experience: going away to college, getting married, getting a job, moving, etc. The thing to realize is that we will experience change in our careers and that is often change we don't control.

*“Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change.”*

*Mary Shelley, Frankenstein*



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7

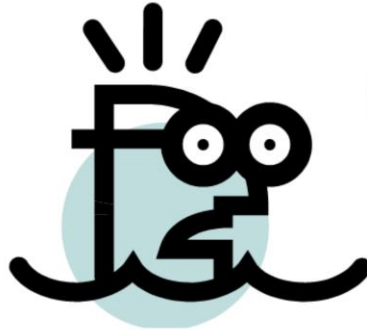
What people don't always realize is that changes we don't like cause us to experience a sense of loss. And loss must be grieved. Small losses may only take a little bit of effort, but when the losses are larger, then, it can take more time and require a more conscious effort.



There are various kinds of changes we experience in the workplace. Too often, we don't even acknowledge anything but the layoff as a real loss. But the various changes can all have impacts. For example, you may need to adjust to a new boss who has an entirely different style of management than your prior manager, who you admired. Or you may need to deal with survivor's guilt. We will describe each change and explain the loss involved.



## A Word about Survivor's Guilt



I still have a job, but I couldn't save the people on my team.

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9

Survivor's guilt is a normal reaction to cutbacks and it helps you heal. Talk about your concerns. Reach out to people who may have been laid off to see where you can help them. Your organization may have changed. Learn about the changes and see what you can do to help. Give yourself time to come to terms with the loss of people who have left. This is a loss for you, too, because you may miss them and their contributions to the organization. On a positive note, you're still with the company. You have time to assess the situation and look for ways make the best of it.

## The Impact of Loss



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When we experience loss due to a change, it can make us drop from a more comfortable and successful way of being than we were at before the change.

Abraham Maslow talked about the hierarchy of needs, shown above. When you have a loss, you often get pushed down to lower-level needs. A perfect example is a layoff – when experienced by someone who hasn't saved a lot of money and who also has a lot of expenses (non-working spouse, kids, mortgage, etc.) – that person can find himself pushed down to safety needs or even physiological needs. One friend described being afraid she would be homeless if she was laid off. The important thing to note is that how you feel may not align with reality – you may not be in danger of something that frightening. Or even if you have saved what might be considered to be adequate by some people, this loss still can still threaten your financial stability and lifestyle. What you feel needs to be dealt with so that you can move forward.

## Losing Your Way – Sarah's Story



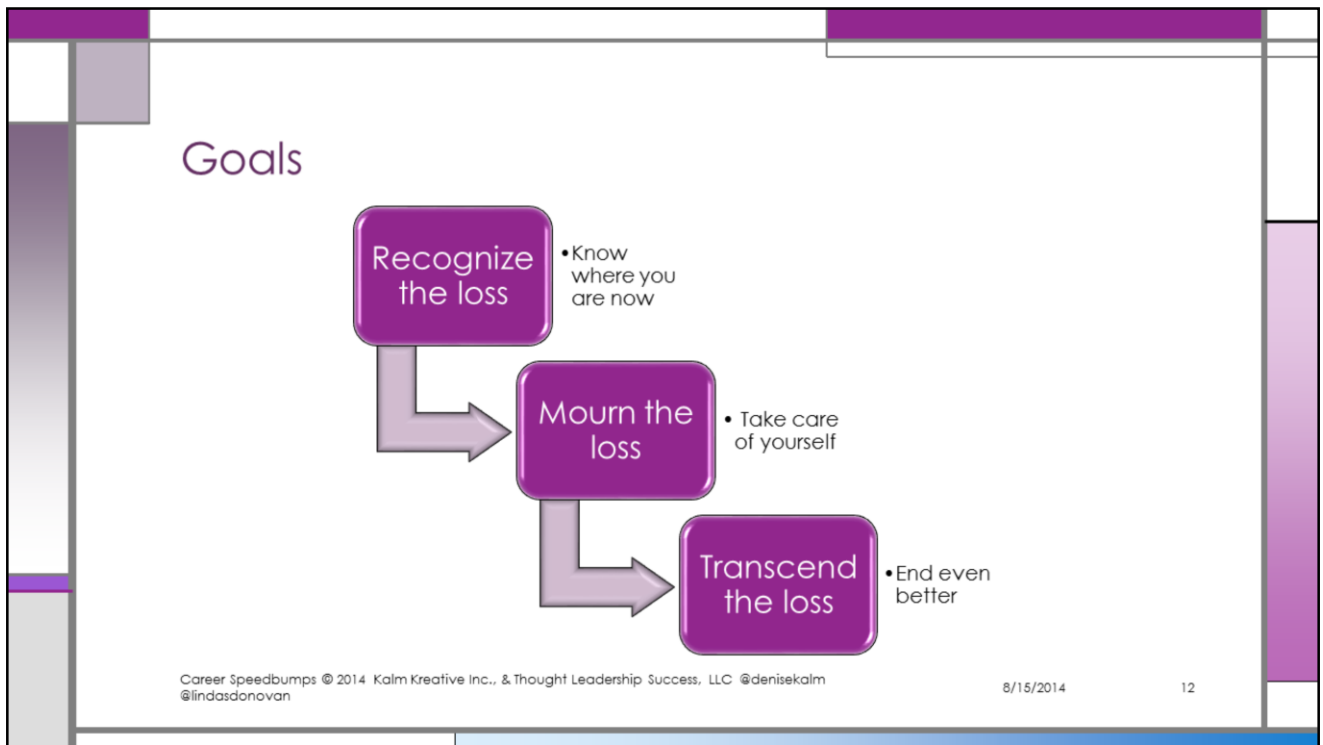
**Physiological**

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11

Sarah loved her job until a new boss came along. His style was micro-managing and demanding. This didn't work at all for her. She became very stressed and her work suffered. Because of that, Sarah began to worry about being able to keep her house and keep her kids fed if she lost her job. She went back to basic survival needs, even though nothing had happened yet. She was grieving a possible future.



Know the impact of how an unwanted change can push you down Maslow's hierarchy. You can work your way back up and even find something better with the right strategy. This is what we will tell you.



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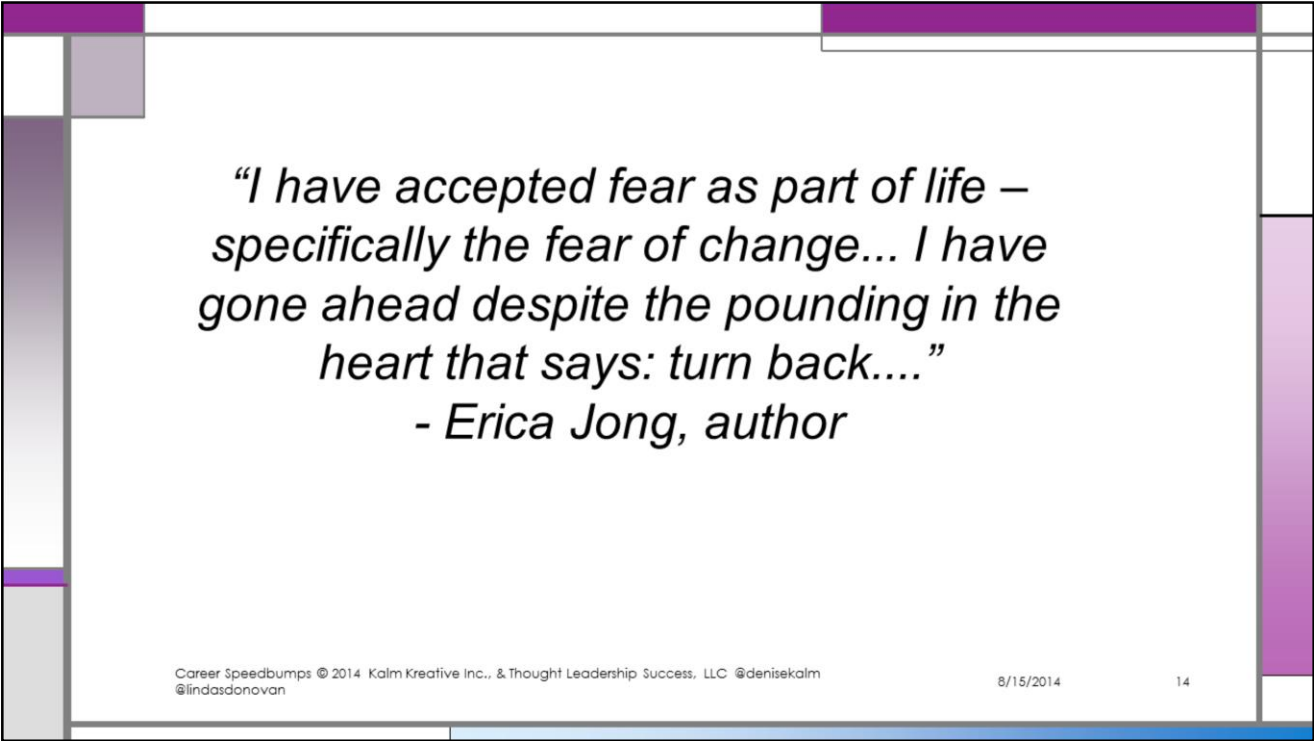
*In every crisis  
lies the seed  
of opportunity*

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13

Crisis is another word for change, because of the feeling it introduces in people. Some people believe that the Chinese characters for “crisis” include the characters for danger and opportunity. Most people align themselves with the danger – the risk aspect. What bad thing is going to happen to me because of this change? What is overlooked is the opportunity, which is what we will address.



*“I have accepted fear as part of life –  
specifically the fear of change... I have  
gone ahead despite the pounding in the  
heart that says: turn back....”*

*- Erica Jong, author*

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Wise words to consider – we will often have a physical reaction to change, but we need to transcend it – to move past it.

# Acceptance



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15

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And wisdom to know the difference.

- Reinhold Niebuhr



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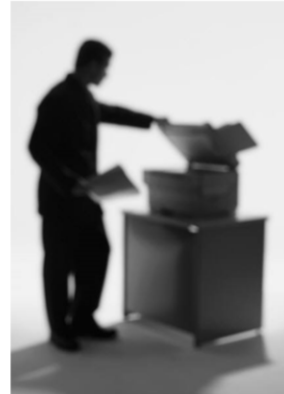
16

More commonly known as a prayer for AA, this quote provides profound wisdom for us all in the times of change. You can't change a layoff and you can't undo a reorg. So what can you change? What can you do that will work?



## Definition

How do you see your role?



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17

Who we are is how we define ourselves. It isn't your job title or your role per se. One friend called himself a "slave to the moneylenders." By this, he meant he worked at a job he didn't like for at a bank. But by defining his job in a negative way, he started off hating it. You may feel that your job is not a choice, but your definition of your role is. The man above might say he makes copies for a living. Or he could say that he ensures that everyone has the communications they need to share information and do their job. How do you look it?

## Joan's Story



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18

Joan had been moved from a technical role to sales at her company. She didn't think she was any good at this and hated having to push the customer to buy. One day, she had a chance to talk to a successful saleswoman – Marie. Marie laughed when she described the job as “shilling.” “I couldn't do it if that was what it was,” Marie said. “I am in the business of solving problems for my customers. I spend a lot of time finding out what their challenges are and then I have the joy of offering them help so their business can succeed and their work life can be better.” Redefining her job this way made Joan begin to enjoy it. She could make a difference here.



“If you don't like something,  
change it. If you can't  
change it, change your  
attitude.”  
- Maya Angelou

This is a big strategy you can employ. While an immediate reaction to a change may be denial, depression, bargaining, anger, you have a choice. You don't have to feel like that. Remember how you felt with changes you chose. Excitement, happiness, anticipation – these were the feelings that you had then. Try to see the opportunity in the change.

## Javier's Story



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20

Javier had a boss who was a best friend. They played golf together most weekends and their families did a lot of activities together. He knew this wasn't typical, but loved the way it made coming to work a joy. Then, the reorg hit.

He now reported to a much younger woman, one with a non-technical background who didn't "get" him. He didn't see them golfing together, or even enjoying a lunch together.

A coach worked with him to look at his attitude. Javier had a gold standard for a boss – one who was a friend – but that hadn't always been his experience. The coach asked, "What could she be to you if not a friend?"

Javier realized that a non-technical boss could be a blessing – he would have more control and power since he had the technical solutions. He mapped his skills to the business goals, and decided he could fill a key role in the group and potentially earn the promotion his friend/boss hadn't offered. He decided to see the change as an opportunity and with a better attitude, he found he liked work more AND he also did a better job. Resentment wasn't interfering with his output.

## Patience



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21

You know this change is only one of many your company is going to make. At some companies, the practice is reorgs every 6 months. Waiting it out patiently can be a good strategy. Just make the best of it, knowing that whether you like your situation or you don't, it's likely to change soon. While you are doing this, you can be thinking of what you'd like better. Sometimes, while being quiet, you can figure out what you want more clearly than when you are in fight mode.

## Make Your Own Change

Get training

Visit internal job boards

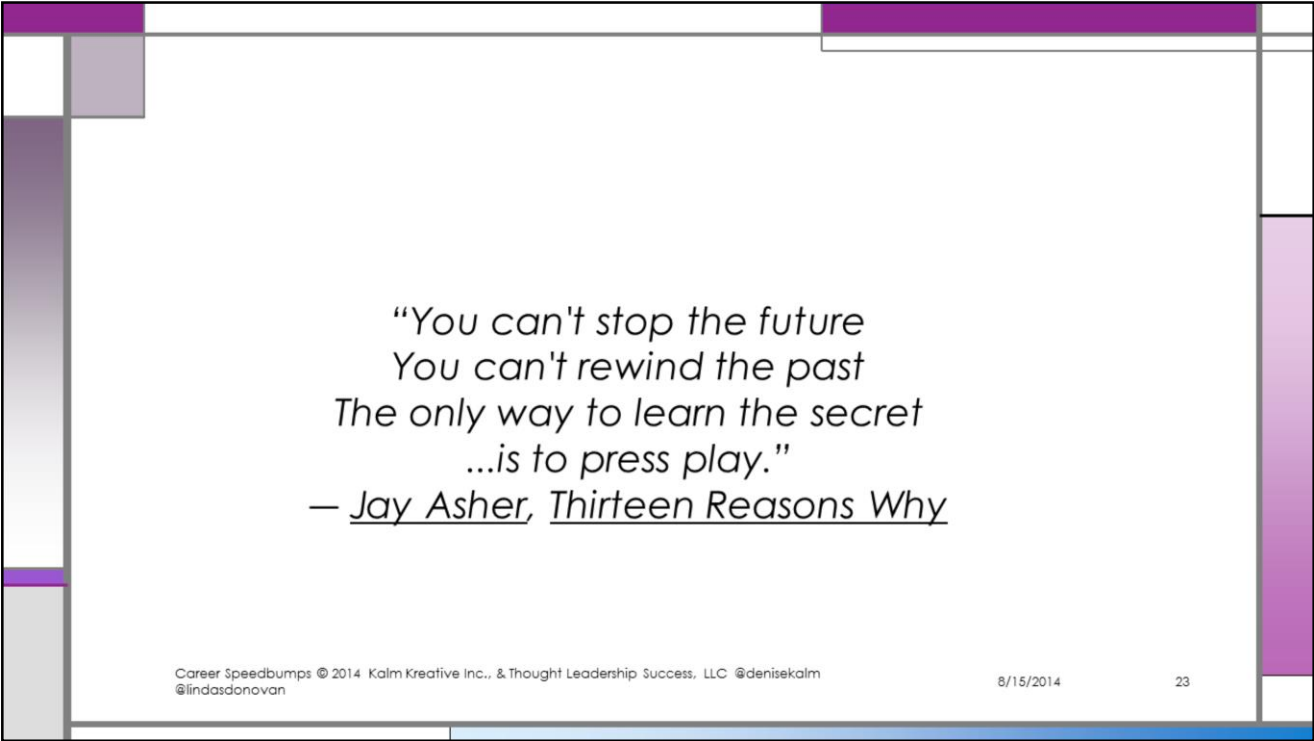
Redefine your job

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22

Depending on the change, you can opt for these ideas. Training can include formal training or just mentoring by someone. You can ask to shadow or job swap. These options can set you up for a better position down the road. It's always good to look at how green the grass is somewhere else. Often, during times of change, other positions become available. Check them out. Finally, you can try to redefine your job – more on this in the next section. Within the scope of what you do, you might find a way to make more of it interesting to you.



*"You can't stop the future  
You can't rewind the past  
The only way to learn the secret  
...is to press play."  
— Jay Asher, Thirteen Reasons Why*

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23

Go for it! You can make things happen when you are ready to press play!



# Transformation

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24



*“Stepping onto a brand-new path is difficult, but not more difficult than remaining in a situation, which is not nurturing to the whole woman.”*

— [Maya Angelou](#)



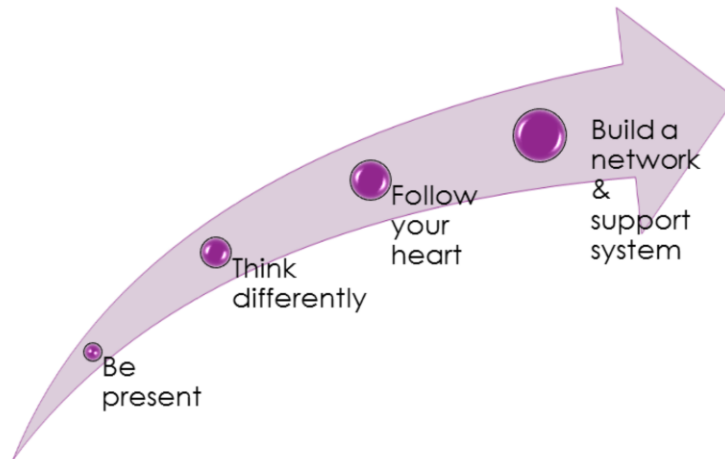
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25

Yes, it's scary to go in a new direction, but it is soul-destroying not to in many cases.

## Four Steps



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26

You need to actually stop your forward momentum for a time to look at your life and goals and understand what's working and what isn't. These 4 steps help you get there. You'll need the time, the ability to step outside your "rut," a willingness to believe in your heart (not just your head), and a support network to help you take that next step.

## Acceptance is not Enough

"Human beings have the awesome ability to take any experience of their lives and create a meaning that disempowers them or one that can literally save their lives."

- Tony Robbins, author, speaker



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27

It's important to take the time to understand and grieve career losses so that you can move forward. You may go through a series of emotions during that process – denial, bargaining, anger, depression before you reach the acceptance phase. While most grief journeys talk about acceptance, we feel this is only a stop along the journey. When bad things happen in life, this can be a great time to take a chance and try something new.

## Loss to Success & Philanthropy



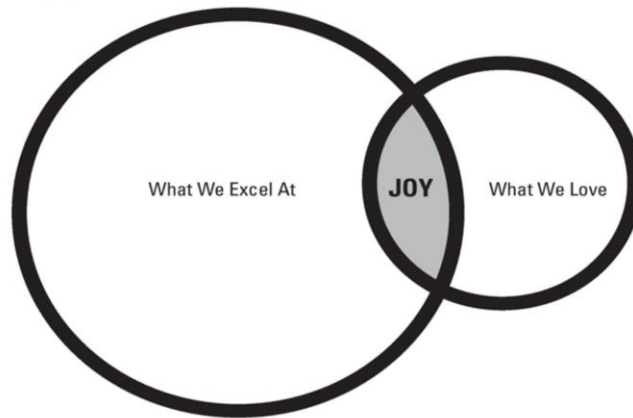
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28

This is a real-world example of a former tech worker who became a successful food stylist and philanthropist. She had an injury that made it difficult to work long hours at a computer and that motivated her to find a new career. She took cooking and pastry courses and is recognized for her accomplishments. Her expanded network helped her to raise funds to create an all-volunteer school in an impoverished village. Her journey shows that even in a very difficult career-loss scenario there is the potential to make lemonade out of lemons.

## The Happiness Intersection



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29

The trick to the next step on your journey is to understand what you love and what you are good at. We're all good at many things, but we don't love doing all of them. Take some time to list all the things you are great at. Then go back and circle only those you enjoy doing. That list will form a guide to what you should be doing. This is a powerful process – people often realize they have spent way too many hours doing something they dislike only to realize that there is a possibility of doing more of what you love once you realize what that is.

## Denise's Story



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30

Yeah, that's me. And when I hit a cross-roads – a time where layoffs were rife, reorgs too common and I woke up every day hating my job, I took time to do the happiness intersection process. I found that the main thing I wanted to do was write – (I wanted to be the next Stephen King, but that's another story). So, realizing this and understanding that most people in IT are terrible at writing, I began to volunteer to do more of it. Eventually, it became most of my job. I didn't have to quit, I didn't have to completely upturn my life. I just needed to know what I should be doing. The best part – I became more valuable and valued because I was doing something amazingly well.

*"The desire to do something because you find it deeply satisfying and personally challenging inspires the highest level of creativity, whether it's in the arts, sciences or business."  
- Teresa Amabile, Harvard professor*



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31

And what you probably don't remember is how great it feels when you are tapping into the creative vein.

## Reaching the Top

“What a man can be, he must be. This need we may call self-actualization.”

- Abraham Maslow



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32

Going back to Maslow – when you are operating in the sphere you belong, you can become self-actualized, which is the highest level of satisfaction.



## Renee's Story



“As you grow older , you discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, and the other for helping others.” -- Sam Levenson

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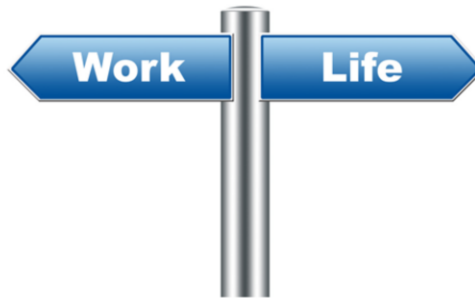
33

Another aspect is when things are going right in the workplace, you can actually go into a new realm, a new way of being. Renee finally found a good job. Better teamwork – no dog-eat-dog.

Feeling confident and liking the people she worked with, she went one step further to figure out what was going right this time so she could keep it going. Drawing on new-found patience and tolerance, she was able to reach out and give to others. She became a mentor and trainer, both of which deeply satisfied her. Renee also did volunteer work – something that had gone by the wayside when she was too focused on just keeping her job.



*“You cannot change what you are, only  
what you do.”  
- Philip Pullman, The Golden Compass*



Everything can be taken from a man, but one thing;  
the last of human freedoms – to choose one's  
attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose  
one's own way."  
Viktor Frankl

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35

It's your choice. Do you go on the way you are going now? If you woke up tomorrow and everything was as it should be, would it be the way you live now? It can be better.

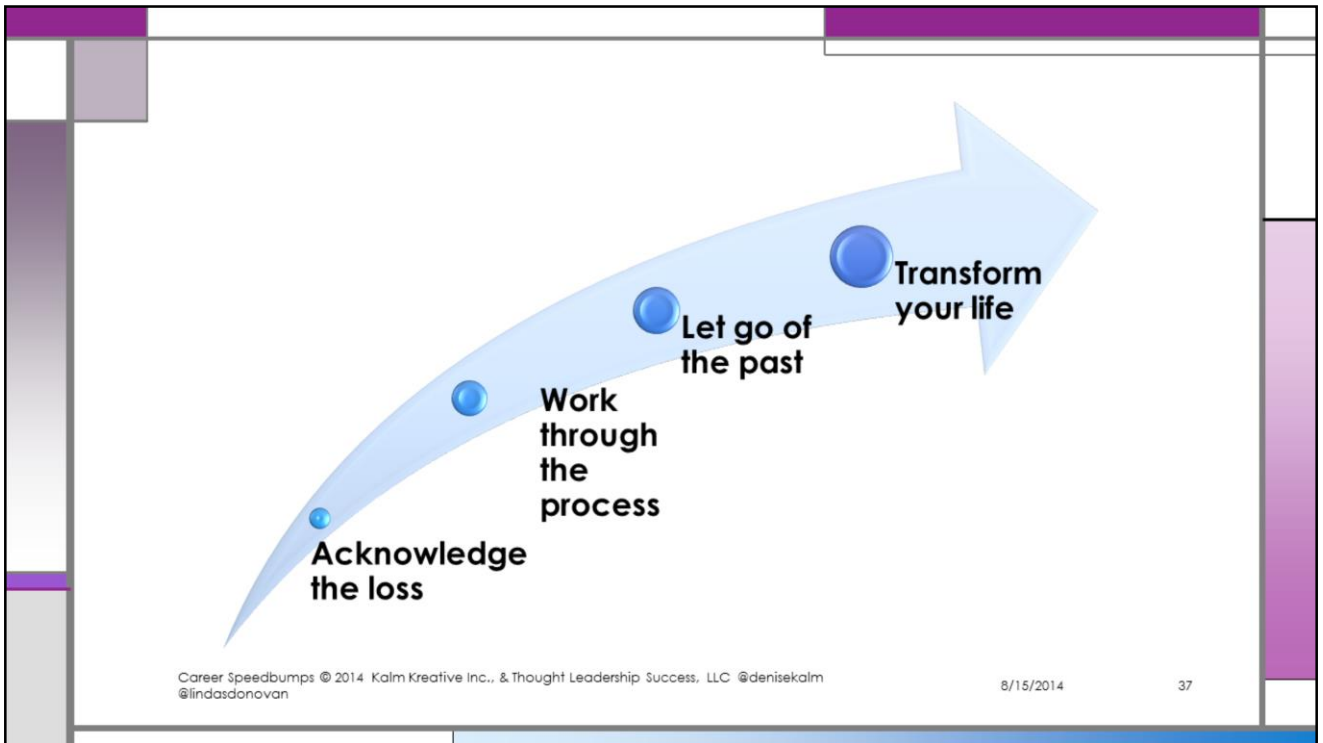
# Questions?



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36



No matter what hits us in our careers, we have a real opportunity to choose what we are doing and how we feel about it. We can wrest control back from a situation that feels like it was imposed on us. It's just a choice. What choice will you make?

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38