

## PUT YOUR CAREER BACK ON FIRM FOOTING: REMOVE THE IMAGINED STAKES THAT BIND



When people go to the circus they are amazed to see huge elephants tethered to small iron stakes with chains that the powerful animals could snap with one jerk of their mighty legs. But what is it that keeps them from doing so. They have become attuned to the belief that they cannot break free and hence accept their condition, without being aware that they have it in their hands, or rather their legs, to break free from their shackled lives. Psychologists call such behavior a “conditioned response,” meaning that someone is so exposed to a belief that he starts believing it is the truth and cannot be changed. Unfortunately, such conditioning can play an impeding role in a person’s progress and growth. There are millions of employed Americans, both men and women, who latched on to the first available job, which they managed to get during, perhaps the hardest, most chaotic job market in US history. These no choice, grab-what-you-can-get jobs, were largely low paying ones, with fewer or no benefits, tough working schedules and above all not in keeping with their academic qualifications. It is but natural that they will be most frustrated and unhappy with their current workplaces. However, the “conditioned response,” that the sluggish economy attuned them to, makes them unable to take advantage of better career opportunities that come their way. Ever since they got their current jobs it is more than likely that they have been bombarded with counsel just how lucky they are that they have a job. They must have seen many of their colleagues and others at the workplace being laid off and offering a silent prayer that they are not among them. Moreover, in order to keep the workers under their control and command, employers are known to, unreservedly and unambiguously, continue to feed this fallacy to their workers that they are privileged and fortunate that they have a pay-packet to take home and that they are actually doing them a favor giving them employment. Workers should understand and realise that it is never “luck” or “good fortune” that lets them keep their jobs. You must be adding to the company’s worth and they must be having compelling business reasons for keeping you on their payrolls – the day you make yourself redundant and unneeded, you will be shown the exit door – so remove the “I am fortunate” stake from your mind. Don’t be deluded by the misinformation that there are no jobs available elsewhere. New jobs are being created each passing day. It is a fact that there are millions still looking for a job, but it is also equally true that there are millions of jobs that are still to be filled. That you have to continue to work under unbending rules made by the employer is another stake that needs to be removed. Understand your worth and if you feel you genuinely merit a raise ask for it. At the most he will refuse? No big deal. Tell him that you intend to leave – you got a job during the peak of the recession, these are slightly better times, you will surely get another one – don’t let the employer chain you to your fate. Evaluate your work place, your worth and what you are getting in return. Put tangible dollar terms to the extra work that you are doing and see if it still worth it. Removes all the imaginary stakes, they are only in your mind, they just don’t exist. Start searching for bonafide career opportunities that match your interests and qualifications and that will reignite your work-drive. You’ll be amazed to find that there is a lot more that you can do and there are other people who are willing to compensate you for your real worth and potential. You are a human being and not a circus elephant – there is no reason why you should behave like one.