

Career Coach Urges Out-of-Work Americans to 'Be Like Madonna'...and Reinvent Themselves



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Millions of Americans facing long-term joblessness may find greater success in finding a new career rather than trying to reclaim what was lost says Washington-based success coach Eva Jenkins. Jenkins, who is herself re-tooling due to the economic meltdown, suggests a path of self-reinvention modeled on the ultimate 'quick change artist'...Madonna.

As corporate economic belt-tightening makes the prospect of new positions in old places unlikely, Eva Jenkins urges the more than 15 million Americans who are looking for work to think like Madonna. "Madonna has remained a top pop icon for nearly three decades," observes the Washington-based career coach. "It's because she has consistently reinvented herself to fit changing times."

Jenkins believes that a Madonna-like willingness to let go of the past and see new possibilities in the future is "the best antidote to a toxic employment environment."

Leading by **Example**
Jenkins, herself, is a victim of the times. The founder of V.I.P. Innovations, one of Washington's premiere resources for managing 'human capital,' Jenkins spent 20+ years working within corporations to facilitate effective communication from top to bottom, inside and out. But as the corporate bean counters have slashed budgets and human resources programs, she has found herself with fewer and

fewer clients. "I knew I had to find a new way to 'spin' my skills," she explains.

She reassessed her strengths and nimbly made the transition from working with human resources departments to simply working with humans. She offers one-on-one career coaching to the newly and long-term unemployed. She calls herself a 'guide,' noting that she sought out this new role not by choice, but as a by-product of the current economy.

"My new role seems to be a true calling," she observes. "And in the process of helping others find out who they are, I have also been discovering my own path."

Jenkins strives to build positive business relationships with her clients. "The best way I know to inspire people as their coach is to 'walk the walk' not just 'talk the talk,'" she says. In this way, Jenkins serves as a role model for her clients. "I model the behaviors I want my clients to emulate such as the willingness to take risks, and a willingness to be vulnerable, authentic and open in their communication," she explains.

Eye on the Prize
Jenkins believes in setting a path for her clients and keeping them focused on meaningful results. "Far too many professionals in transition become so fixated on 'tasks' such as sending out resumes or making cold calls. In the process, they sometimes forget that the ultimate goal is a fulfilling life, not 'a job' per se." When clients are stuck, mired in complaints and negativity, Jenkins is able to create a sense of possibility.

Jenkins is sometimes a cheerleader, sometimes a motivator, and always a straight-talker. When she feels that clients are not living up to their promises, she does not hesitate to 'call them' on their behavior. "I'm a mentor and provide frameworks and tools for success, but I can't do the work for my clients," she says. "After providing advice, it is my job to stand back and let the client react, listen actively to their ideas, and develop a solution that works for them, not me."

The Right Tools for the Job
Jenkins understands that a lack of self-knowledge regarding talents, strengths, and passions can keep many people stuck in place. "If you're going to get anywhere, you need to know where you're headed and whether you've got the right 'vehicle' and 'gas' to get you there,"

she says. "I work with a set of powerful questions that my clients must answer in order to determine their talents, passion, values, and the intersection of these three things with the marketplace."

Jenkins 'toolkit' for clients also includes strategies for impressing potential employers. "I create action plans to make sure my clients do appropriate research and due diligence with their resume, cover letter, interview questions and answers, follow-up, business etiquette, and conversations."

Psychological tactics are another important part of coaching "to help clients deal with the transition when they are unemployed or laid off," Jenkins observes. Clients also receive networking and guerilla marketing strategies to find great positions before they are posted, as well as negotiation strategies to get the best terms once a job is offered.

To ensure that clients get and keep their hard-won positions, Jenkins provides executive coaching frameworks to help clients succeed on their first one hundred days.

Street Smarts and More
Jenkins is especially proud of the 'been there, done that' experience she brings to the table. Her long tenure working within corporate structures has given her a wealth of stories to share about success, failure, as well as creative and practical ways to improve results with limited resources.

"I help my clients be creative when it comes to making new contacts and finding new opportunities," she explains. "My goal is to first let my clients dreams soar...and then bring those dreams back to earth with practical, grounded strategies that will turn them into reality."

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