

How do you play the game?

Scenario: You are looking for or have gotten a new job within the last 2 years. If it has been more than two years, think about what you would do if you were looking for a new job.

Consider these examples before answering.

1. Did you consider all of your options? Yes No
You could go to work for yourself
Do you want to manage people?
Do you want to work on a team or be an individual contributor?
2. Did you plan ahead before the interview? Yes No
Did you visualize the different scenarios that can happen when interviewing for the job and the possible outcome of each?
Have you determined how much you expect to make?
Did you prepare the questions you want to ask?
Did you determine where you are going and how long it will take?
3. Did you do your research? Yes No
Did you research the company? Internet, annual report?
Did you seek the opinions of others who currently work for that company?
If it is a different position than you have had in the past, did you consult with other people who have that type of job?
4. When you arrived for the interview, how did you present yourself and how did you feel? Were you confident and relaxed? Yes No
5. While talking with interviewer, did you tell him or her what is important to you in this new job/career? Yes No
6. You have progressed enough in the interview that the subject of salary comes up. He/she tells you what the pay will be. Did you accept what they told you at face value? Are you willing to negotiate a better salary? Yes No
7. You have decided you want to negotiate. Have you determined when you are willing to walk away? What is the least you will accept? Yes No
8. The interviewer is offering you a salary below what you expected and know is available. Do you stand your ground despite the pressure? Yes No
9. Did you end up getting what you *really* wanted? Yes No
10. Did you end up feeling good about the deal? Yes No

How did you play the game?

Now let's take a look at the answers. If you answered yes to all of the above you are on the right track to be very successful because your answers have a direct correlation to how you play the game of life and career. Let's examine further details about each question.

1. Did you consider your options?

Life is not a straight line. It is more like a tree. You grow in different directions and branch out depending upon the choices you make. We all have options laid before us. Sometimes we are not paying attentions or we close our minds to different options available, but it's important to remember that the more options we have, the more flexibility we will have in the direction our lives and careers take.

2. Did you think – and plan – ahead?

When you are searching for a job, research the companies with which you land interviews. Almost every company has a Web site packed with information about its mission and culture. You have control over the interview. When you are going after a job, you should know the requirements of the job, and what questions you want answered. For example, you may want to know the salary range of the position and what benefits the company offers. You want to make sure that you are a good fit for this company. Always ask yourself, "Is this the right company for me?" Planning ahead also relates to your personal life. Do you know what you want out of life or in a mate? If you have no direction or plan than any path will do.

3. Did you talk with other people before you made your decision?

We do not live in a vacuum. Almost everything we want to accomplish requires support or help from others. Having mentors, whether formal or informal, who offer advice and counsel is a great way to do things easier and avoid mistakes.

4. How do you present yourself?

People make a decision about you and whether they want to do business with you or help you in seven seconds or less. What impression do you leave? Are you confident or do you come across as lacking confidence or not knowing what you are talking about? It is always a good idea to know the outcome you want to achieve in your communication. Remember, *you* are the message.

5. Do you tell others what is important to you?

Do you tell your spouse or significant other what you want or what you need? Often, we erroneously think people are mind readers and that they should "just know" what we are thinking. When we share with others what we want or expect, they have a much greater chance of fulfilling our needs and expectations. It is

only through letting others know what our goals are that they can support us in our efforts.

6. Are you willing to negotiate?

The fact is that we sell our ideas and ourselves every day. People, in general, do not like sales, but the reality is the better you get at selling yourself, the more you will achieve. The top skills required in business today are the abilities to negotiate, persuade and present our ideas in powerful and effective ways. These are key to success in business. An unwillingness to negotiate can leave you feeling that you've been taken advantage of, or that you've paid more than you should have. It's a choice each of us has to make about our willingness to step outside our comfort zones to get more of what we want from our lives.

7. When are you willing to walk away?

Sometimes people stay in jobs and relationships past a time when it is best for them, the other person or the company. For many, it is only when the pain becomes too much that they finally walk away. If we have a better understanding of ourselves and what is most important to us, then we are in a better position to know what is right for us and when. In negotiating, it is important to know your boundaries; what is the least you'll pay or accept? When you know these parameters, you will feel good if you do have to walk away from a deal.

8. Do you stand your ground under pressure?

During the negotiation process, most people feel under pressure, which is a major reason many try to avoid negotiating. Once you accept that as part of most deals, you can relax more. When you are presenting your ideas, do you buy into it when others tell you why it won't work? Are you willing to stand your ground to do what is right for you? Are you willing to take risks? Do retain or release your power? It takes courage to stand up for what you believe and to not let others bully you into seeing things their way or bend you to their ways of thinking. I am not advocating stubbornness or inflexibility, but when you know something is right, are you willing to stand your ground?

9. Did you end up with what you wanted?

Many times people will give in to what others want rather than going for what they really want. Are you willing to take some risk to get what you want or do you find it easier to settle for less? Sometimes it requires us to think outside the box or to consider more or other options to get what we want, when we want it.

10. Did you end up feeling good about the deal?

Did you use good people skills in your dealing? How did the other person interrelate with you? The ability to persuade others can determine how we feel at the end of a deal. Sometimes people give in to someone else and then regret or resent the decision that they made. We all have choices, which belong solely to each of us. We must take responsibility for our choices and actions. If you feel badly about something you have done or something that has happened to you, ask

yourself how you can change that next time. This exercise is will open your eyes to additional options in the future.

The only person in life you can control is yourself, which means you have the power – and the choices – when playing the game of *your* life. Tap into your capabilities, and grab the life of your dreams. Go for it!

A personal coach who helps people achieve their goals, Debra, along with Success UNleashed, delivers powerful, insightful programs that impact people's lives. If you are a highly motivated person who needs help realizing your life dreams, contact Debra at 888.SUN.3777 or 888.786.3777.