

*The following excerpts are from my conversation with “Gwen,” a Human Resources Advisor & Recruiter in the Oil & Gas industry. The interview was conducted in April 2012 and part of the series: Models of Living In the Current.*

### How It Happened

GINNY: Summarize your experience of the layoff as it was occurring. How did you feel about it?

GWEN: I was working for a company that was acquired by another company. The **culture change** resulted in a very policy/procedure oriented environment. I’d say there was a closed-door policy. I felt like I was under a microscope. Everything I did was scrutinized and I never felt it was good enough. They were very nitpicky. **The hardest part was feeling the way I felt every day... on edge.** It was hell every day. Before sending an email, I’d read it 50,000 times. You and I talked about **finding a place where I could be my natural self.** I realized I had to leave the company, but I wanted to stay around long enough to receive the financial bonus I had coming to me.

### Job Search

GINNY: How long did it take you to find a job?

GWEN: **Just 3-4 weeks. My old boss (who now works for a staffing firm) called me and said, “I have a job you’d be perfect for.”** I’d kept in touch with him over the years. I also interviewed for another job but took the one he had called me about.

GINNY: Did you stay in the same role, same industry?

GWEN: Yes, I took a recruiting position in the same industry. The company I’m working for is doing a joint venture with another local company. So it’s a start-up mode and I’m really able to contribute. We’re hiring great people and the company has terrific growth potential. It’s reminiscent of the prior culture I had thrived in.

GINNY: What was instrumental to your success in finding a new job so quickly?

GWEN: I knew I would get another job. I had the confidence in myself. **I’m a huge networker and I have remained in contact with everyone from everywhere I’ve ever been – all my prior jobs.** That made it much easier.

GINNY: Aside from What you did (all the action you took), Who did you have to be, meaning what inner characteristics did you call upon?

GWEN: I think it was realizing that it’s not just what you’re doing but who you’re working for and how you’re treated. **I had to know myself and the kind of environment I’d do well in.** I want to know that people care. It’s how people treat you and how they make you feel.

### New Perspectives

GINNY: What is your satisfaction level with your new job?

GWEN: The new job is great and I couldn’t be happier. I’ve been in the position about two months. **I love the people and I love the culture.** The president was in the office this week and he had jeans on, and just talked casually, no slide-show or PowerPoint. I’m working for a good company that has a good reputation; they’ve been around 80 years.

GINNY: What is the most significant thing you learned from the whole experience?

GWEN: You have to be not too friendly with your boss. Just because you think someone is your friend doesn't mean they are not going to turn around and stab you in the back... she's my boss at the end of the day. I don't mean I'm not going to make friends at work. What I think I'd do differently is keep it more professional vs. friendly. I got hurt emotionally.

GINNY: Is there anything you wish you knew when you were going through it?

GWEN: In retrospect, I wish I would have spoken my mind more when it was going on vs. being caught up in the fear of losing a bonus due to me.

### Advice for Career Changers

GINNY: What is your advice for someone who is going through a layoff?

GWEN: **Be proactive.** Update your resume. Talk to people, network. Use Linked In; I make great use out of Linked In. **Think about what really matters and is it going to matter years from now.** Also, you need a support system in your life: your friends, your family... lean on people.

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*For privacy reasons the pseudonym "Gwen" has been used for this client interview.  
For more on how Gwen owned her power to create a successful outcome,  
visit [inthecurrent.com](http://inthecurrent.com) and search the blog for: Life After Layoff.*