

Value Your Experience

Stay relevant in work and service.



by Captain Karen Kahn

MANY PEOPLE NOW PLAN to delay retirement due to the economy. Many find it difficult to pay the mortgage or rent, and contribute to their IRAs.

If this scenario hits close to home, you may discover that changing careers, re-entering the workforce, or serving others is a matter of *resolving your experience* and adjusting your viewpoint.

Starting over at any age is never easy. Here are seven tips to help you:

1. **Start with a realistic plan with goals, tactics, and timelines.** Developing such a plan requires that you complete necessary supplemental training or education, including certifications or apprenticeship programs. Don't set impossible goals for yourself. You didn't achieve your status overnight, so don't expect to transition to something else with minimal effort. Make a careful, considered transition with well-timed steps that reflect realistic plans.

2. **Cultivate a supportive network and mentor relationships** to help you work your plan, stay the course, and find opportunities. Learn what the new career entails. Network with friends, family and others to gain referrals that help you meet your goals. Cultivate relationships with people who can help you with future employment, making repeated contacts, if necessary to strengthen the networking bond.

3. **Focus on key assets that differentiate you**, such as maturity, which substantiates your *experience and credibility*. Younger people don't possess the same maturity. Highlight this bonus trait.

4. **Use your age as an advantage.** Being "too old" to work or serve is mostly a state of mind. See age as a *competitive advantage*. As a seasoned worker, you'll have more real-world wisdom and experience, making it easier for you to be an asset to individuals, teams or organizations. Your background can help you bring new or time-tested ideas and team-building skills to the table and unite different generations of workers. Seek to impress prospective employers with your maturity, good sense, attention to detail, and concern for providing high-quality service. An excellent performance will make them want to hire you. What's left unsaid can often unlock an elusive job opportunity.

5. **Show flexibility.** If you have trepidation over reporting to a younger person, you'll need to overcome this feeling. Show that you are there to learn from and work your team members—regardless of their age. Strive to work well with younger employees, displaying teamwork and cooperation.

6. **Stay current.** While experience and maturity give you an edge, you need to stay current with technology relevant to your career. Besides work experience, you need skills with online social networking (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and be familiar with current computer programs. Use current situations to show the value of your skills.

7. **Use your experience, knowledge**

and skills to help people who know less. Let them feel you are excited to share your knowledge and skills with them. Mentor students in how they can apply your knowledge to benefit their pursuits.

Don't forget to laugh at yourself; successes come with occasional disappointments, jealousies, and rumors, along with new experiences and rewards. Use your assertiveness, creativity, flexibility, perseverance, and courage to enjoy each step along the way. Assess your available resources and determine what you will sacrifice to realize your dream. **PE**

Captain Kahn is a career counselor, activist, a pioneering female pilot, and president of Aviation Career Counseling (www.aviationcareerconsulting.com), and author of Flight Guide for Success.

ACTION: Use your experience in service to others.

SERVICE · VOLUNTEERISM

Work Hard

Donate and serve.



by Patrick Lencioni

RECENTLY I RECEIVED A NOTE from a woman who asked me to explain why I believe that socialism is a bad idea, especially in light of our values to love our neighbors, care for the poor, and avoid selfish, materialist lifestyles. I confessed that as a youngster, I thought socialism sounded like the best ways to run a society because sharing and caring and compassion are the right ways to live.

As I matured, I began to understand how the reality of socialism radically differs from the theory, and that even the theory has fatal flaws. At the end of the day, there are two big reasons why socialism is a really bad idea.

First, **socialism just doesn't work—at least not for long.** Most people won't keep working hard for the *greater good* if they don't receive the fruits of that work. The *free-loader effect* is the tendency of people to do less work when they realize they won't see more in return.

Over time, socialist societies experience *decreasing productivity, risk-taking, and innovation*, along with *increasing tax rates, government programs, and expectations*. When the economy falters, those expectations can't be met.

Unfortunately, by the time people realize this, it is often too late for them to try a different approach, since there are more people who expect benefits from the government than there are

people who pay for them. And thus begins a descent to economic and motivational malaise. Ironically, the people who socialism is supposed to help—the poor—only grows because they are joined by more people who drop out of the shrinking middle class.

Second, **socialism diminishes the dignity of human beings.** In socialist societies, people grow more dependent on government for their well-being and less confident that they are capable and responsible for themselves. This is a recipe for *cynicism, fatalism and depression*. Government's larger role inevitably crowds out faith in God. That was the intent of men who invented *socialism, communism, and Marxism*. Socialist countries experience a drop in the faith of people, and ironically, a decline in charitable giving, volunteerism, and civic-mindedness. Socialism creeps in as we accede to higher taxes, more government programs, and the false lure of getting *something for nothing*.

What might you do if you want to act on your desire to do good and make a difference? I suggest: Work hard. Create jobs. Treat people with dignity and love. Give generously of your money and your time to good charities and directly to certain people in need. And demand that our government compassionately provide effective programs and services for those who are *truly incapable* of providing for themselves.

But never support a program, tax, or proposal that makes you feel good but ends up making the lives of the very people you seek to help more difficult and dependent. **PE**

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ACTION: Always give your best effort.