

# Creative Couching: Do less, accomplish more.

By Cathy Goodwin

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Cathy Goodwin  
cathy@movinglady.com

moving lady: coach for career freedom <http://www.movinglady.com>

Some years ago I was introduced to the idea of "accomplish more by doing less." I loved it. Some people achieve even greater heights, vowing to "accomplish everything by doing nothing." These mottos can be misinterpreted. I am not saying, "Don't bother to study if you have an exam," or, "Let that report write itself while you sleep." I am saying, "Don't run around being busy just to feel that you're doing something." In her book *Excuse Me Your Life is Waiting*, Lynn Grabhorn calls this futile activity "heigh-ho silvering." If you're out of work, you're tempted to send off a thousand resumes -- even though your resume may be awkward and you really want to move into a new field. If you're getting ready to move, you might be packing up and organizing, although you don't know what you'll need in the new city.

In the early stages of a transition, the process cannot be hurried. In her book, *Finding your own North Star*, Martha Beck talks about getting through Square One of a life transition. You bounce around from one idea to the next. You begin to wonder if you'll ever get this thing figured out. Nothing seems to be working.

If you wait quietly until you understand where you're going and why, your activity will be more purposeful, more enjoyable and more productive. Waiting is hard. Your friends and family want to know when you're going to get off your couch and go to work. Your finances seem precarious. You may decide to take a "day job" for awhile just to bring in some cash.

Speeding up the process will cost you time and money. It's like buying a plane ticket to the wrong destination. Take time to listen to the world around you. But be careful if you're listening to advisors, whether you're paying them or not. Family, friends and sometimes even career coaches get nervous if nothing seems to be happening. They may encourage you to hire a web designer, buy a new interview outfit, have a resume reworked professionally. Chances are you'll need a whole new website, your new job believes in business casual and your new resume expresses the writer's personality, not yours.

What to do? I encourage people to start self-discovery programs, such as *The Artist's Way*. Talk to lots of people, but get information, not advice. Listen to your environment ("the universe," if you're comfortable with that terminology). A friend might say, "You don't sound like you want that job in Phoenix. You really want to move to Boston. Why don't you just focus on moving to Boston?" Another friend might say, "You sound like you're through with that career."

Career counselors and coaches don't offer magic potions. They will listen more patiently than your friends, which is especially helpful if you're the kind of person who needs to talk through ideas to figure out what you want. If they're a good fit for your needs, they will be able to say things like, "I've seen other people go through this. You're right on schedule!" They will suggest self-discovery exercises, encourage you to tap into your own intuition and recognize your growing awareness.

Run, do not walk, from anyone who makes specific suggestions. I agree wholeheartedly with Martha Beck, who writes that true intuition does not result in advice for other people. In my opinion,

advice often reflects the buried wishes of the advisors. Here's an example.

After I gave up a tenured academic position, my academic colleagues had lots of advice for me. May was fast approaching with no job in sight for the following fall. I was advised to find a job at a small school in New England (they couldn't name any off-hand), teach on a military base in Guam and even become a nun "because you're single so you might as well." The first advisor wanted to spend more time at his summer home in New England; the second was trapped in a boring job and with four kids in a town he hated, and the third...well I think he wanted a lifestyle he fantasized that single people were living. If he couldn't have it, I shouldn't either.

Listen to yourself, not your advisors. Make a decision in your own time. And until you're ready, wait. When you're ready, your energy will be boundless.

Cathy Goodwin, PhD., helps clients make their move to career freedom faster and more easily than they believed possible.

For her free ezine, send a blank e-mail to <mailto:subscribe@movinglady.com>. Her website is <http://www.movinglady.com>.

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