



How to Dance Away Job Worries

By Dr. Kathleen Begley, Book Author and Professional Speaker

Note to Readers: *This free e-newsletter, sent only upon request, comes from Dr. Kathleen Begley, owner of Write Company Plus communications training. She writes weekly on topics connected to business and personal success. Dr. Begley also does a blog called "Meandering to a Different Drummer." Click onto the website address at the end of this article to read her musings on careers, finances, and how to decorate your bathroom.*

One of my good friends currently is helping her husband get through chemotherapy and radiation treatments for esophageal cancer. Another pal is licking her wounds after getting downsized from a job she held for two decades. A third chum is working to stay calm after learning that she may have a heart disorder. So what did I do? I sent each of them what I consider to be the oh-so-perfect card from Hallmark, which says on the cover:

"When things get iffy, and you're feeling stressed, when your calm and composure are put to the test, take a moment to breathe in a yoga-like trance, feel the peace, feel the love, and if all else fails. . . ." The kicker comes, of course, when the recipient opens the card. As the word "Dance" appears, so, too, does the music to the 1973 Motown tune "Dancing Machine." The opening lyrics are "Dance, dance, dance. . ."

As offbeat and upbeat as I am, I'm not crazy enough to think that moving your feet rhythmically on the floor can solve life-and-death problems. But it helps. Why else, I ask you, is the country in the middle of a dance resurgence during one of the bleakest times in national history? Consider, for example, that Dancing with the Stars – originally thought to be a stupid summer replacement television idea – will begin its 10th season Monday, March 22, on ABC? Personally, I can hardly wait to see uber buxom Pamela Anderson's partner try to get close enough to pull off a sultry Latin number.

Obviously, professional twinkle toes are creating entire careers with their talents. But I think everybody can use the psychological principles of dance to ward off the fears and worries inherent in today's work place. Here's how:

Act happy. Especially if you're not. Do you think professional dancers who look madly in lust with their partner actually feel that way, especially when the other individual has bad breath and an even worse temper? I think not.

Focus on the moment. Sure, you may find it difficult to concentrate on the company's quarterly report when rumor has it that more cutbacks are just around the corner. In the world of dance, worrying about the future means you'll trip over your own feet.

Look good. Even if you've only had a passing glance at televised dancing competitions, you've undoubtedly noticed the elaborate costuming and makeup par for the course. When push comes to choosing individuals to shove out the corporate door, I honestly think you'll fare better if you dress and groom yourself well. Unpressed pants and stained shirts rarely win a permanent spot in the executive suite.

Follow the beat. The job milieu has changed. And it will continue to do so. Survival of the fittest at work involves every bit as much flexibility as it does in dance. For heaven's sake, stop doing the twist if everyone else has moved onto hip hop.



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Display energy. In today's competitive environment, men and women who drag their heels when they should be on their toes are doomed. Throw yourself into your daily tasks, even the distasteful ones.

Curb the self-consciousness. If you continually fret about looking foolish, you're never going to learn anything new. What kind of rotten attitude is that in an era that demands that you continually update your technology and other skills? Self-consciousness during your first foray into tap dancing will never land you a part in an amateur production of Riverdance.

Keep work in perspective. Employers come and go, the love of family and friends remains forever. On the same day I found the Motown encouragement card for my friends, I also happened across one for my husband Joe. On the cover, it said: "Your love fills my heart with music." When he looked inside, the opening of John and Johanna Hall's song "Dance with Me" played loudly. The words written on the inside of the card were "Dance with me through all the days to come." That loving thought helps give me the balance both dancing instructors and career coaches talk about.

Dr. Kathleen Begley has written seven books and gives corporate seminars on topics such as writing persuasively, presenting confidently, and managing positively. You can call her at 610-429-1562 or e-mail her at KBegley@writecompanyplus.com. She responds to everybody.