

Surviving @ Work

“Now I realize I was getting paid quite well to do something I enjoyed.”

That revelation dawned on my good friend and former editor a few months after he had quit his job. Greg was a talented journalist who taught me everything about trade publishing. For almost four years we enjoyed a great run, winning accolades from the owner and colleagues. But neither of us was too aware of our own hubris. We found it hard to get along with others in a highly competitive environment, and in the end my mentor left in frustration. I opted to stay for the pay and the opportunities.

Greg and I believed that we were the best in what we did. Period. On the plus side, this enabled us to focus and delivery great results. On the downside, we were stepping on too many toes. Following his resignation, I became increasingly arrogant and cynical, gradually turning into a lone wolf. I enjoyed my work, but not the people.

I’m sharing this for two reasons. Like Greg, some of us probably have had the experience of leaving a position in exasperation, or for greener pastures – only to find out that grazing on the other side was even harder. As for me, choosing to stay turned out to be a good move, in terms of gaining exposure in the industry. I even turned down offers from two international publications in the following months! I don’t regret that, but I do wish I had made better use of my time to rethink my purpose in life.

We can’t turn the clock back, but we do want to apply the lessons we learned. With the benefit of hindsight, here are some of my ideas for surviving a tough work environment.

1. Hit **RESET**: Put on new mental lenses as you survey your workplace.
 - Transformation of people is God’s work. It’s your responsibility to decide, “I want change!” (Romans 12:2)
 - For starters, identify **ONE** positive in your work. Be specific. Give thanks for this.
2. Learn a new related to your profession. Equip yourself!
3. Know your purpose in life. Find out where you want to go.
4. List your core values, priorities, unique contributions to your team, industry, and community.
5. Who are the people who share your values? Reach out and make them your allies.
6. Think you’re stuck in a toxic workplace? Respond, not react.
 - Resist kneejerk reactions.
7. Start your day in **PRAYER**.
 - Whether you’re working solo from home, or connected to a team of 50, add **ONE** to your team. Invite Jesus to be your **Partner @ Work**.

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10 NIV)

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.” (Colossians 3:23 NIV)