

Conquering the stress of change

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Changing jobs and moving house can be the most stressful events in anybody's life. A Pharma business development specialist shared with me that the decision to change jobs and relocate was indeed one of the most stressful times of his life. The Kobe man was interested in a new Tokyo based job, and had interviews organized with senior management. He was forced to take a few half-day holidays, and felt this may have caused suspicion in the office, especially from one of the company leaders who was renowned for his tireless work effort. This guy never took a day off. The business development executive had to compare the opportunities, and analyze his career without being able to directly speak to his superiors. He feared that once it was known he was looking elsewhere; his loyalty would be questioned forever. His wife too had strong feelings about this career change because the couple had recently bought a house and their children were settled in Junior High School. The benefits of the extra money, stock options and being able to work with a company with one of the strongest pipelines of products was appealing. But would his family move to Tokyo? Would he only return home on the weekend? Would his company let him resign? Would he even be offered the job? What was the risk? What were the benefits of staying? The sleepless nights continued while the demands of his current job remained the same. The upcoming business trip to the USA was also not helping matters. The pressure was overwhelming.

Even though Pharma managers make daily decisions that can make or cost companies millions of yen, personal decisions are always more stressful. When anything has a direct impact on our families, wallets and lifestyle it will certainly press our stress buttons.

At times of stress we need to slow down, take time out for reflection. I advise candidates to exercise and meditate and try to take an objective view of the decision at hand. They need to ask themselves, "what advice would I give a friend or colleague?" By removing ourselves physically and mentally from the decisions, emotion is removed and we can see more clearly.

What are you really fearful of? Write down your fears. Do your fears have any basis? Often our fears are illogical and are based on false information. Get the facts; some say the lowest form of knowledge is rumor opinion and hearsay. A person who changes positions for a better deal, is smart, not disloyal. The new job can provide better work satisfaction, and more importantly provide better for the family. Is providing a better life for your family disloyal?

The Kobe man was able to work through all of his issues. He admitted to a few sleepless nights however he won the position of director of business development at the new company. His salary increased by 1.5m jpy plus he was offered stock options. However, there was a monthly decrease in his salary that had to be carefully explained to his wife who runs the families finances. He also decided to spend the first six months living in Tokyo alone while returning on the weekends. His family is now considering moving to Tokyo.

The Kobe man was able to trust his talents and abilities. He worked out the best possible result. He planned to be successful.

It's a good idea to choose a mentor. Someone who is not in your company and has no benefit from your decision. Someone who can listen and be objective. Often we know what the answer is, the very act of sharing and hearing the reasons for moving forward or the fears that hold us back is enough the reason to become apparent. In summary we have to:

1. Be objective. Make a business decision
2. Identify our fears.
3. Trust yourself
4. Share your feelings with a successful mentor.

Changing companies is a significant event in our lives, for many it only happens a few times. Through the act of acceptance and looking within we can find the answer to those stressful times during a job change. As Leo Tolstoy explains, "Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself".