

Believe in yourself

REDISCOVER YOUR PERSPECTIVE AND PURPOSE IN LIFE

“Jim, I’m completely lost,” said an angry young man, raising his hand to interrupt my presentation. “As a vice president, I had an identity I believed in, and over the last several years, I’ve done everything that identity required, even sacrificing my relationships and my health. Now that it’s gone, what am I supposed to do?”

I was speaking to a group of executives who were searching for their next opportunity, having been laid off from their previous companies. Every seat in the room was filled, and in their faces, I could see a mixture of hope and fear, as well as anger and desperation.

“What advice do you have for someone who has nothing left to believe in?” asked the young man.

The murmur of agreement that echoed through the room following this question told me he was not alone. I prayed that the words I was about to speak would reignite his inner fire.

Believe that your life is bigger than your job.

Over the course of your career, it’s easy for your world to become very narrow. Thoughts about your job and the challenges you face start to consume you, no matter what you’re doing or whom you’re with. You slowly begin to value people and relationships based solely on how they can help you succeed, and you are unable to have a single conversation that isn’t punctuated by checking your BlackBerry for incoming messages.

And then, one day, the job is gone. Only then do you realize that you’ve lost the

perspective and the sense of purpose that originally drove your success.

Stop now and remember the dreams you once held, the vision of what you wanted to do with your life and, more importantly, why you wanted to do it. Remember, also, the people and relationships that bring real meaning to all that you do. Open your journal or laptop and begin to write the story of your life as you will want it told at the end when all your days are finished.

Don’t allow your life to be defined by your job. Instead, rediscover your true vision and you will see that your job is only one important aspect of the life you were born to live.

Believe in the talents you have been given.

When you’ve been rejected from an interview or a position, your first reaction is to conclude that you were not good enough or that you somehow lacked the ability or the intelligence to succeed. But what if, instead, your talents were simply not matched to the requirements of the position?

Do you remember watching Michael Jordan play major league baseball? If you had only seen him on the baseball field, you would have judged him to be average at best, never imagining his amazing abilities at basketball. Likewise, you may have been struggling to succeed at a job where your greatest skills were not utilized or valued.

Begin to reassess your true talents by listing your greatest achievements and the core abilities that drove them. Use outside tools and coaches to identify other talents that may be dormant or undeveloped. Then build a profile of your ideal job — one that focuses on the things you do best — and watch your confidence begin to grow as you begin to align your career direction with your strengths.

Believe in the support of people who believe in you.

The strangest paradox in life is that when you need help the most, you are least likely to ask for it. Embarrassment, pride and shame are the real obstacles in your way, not the absence of your next job.

Reach out to the people in your life, ask for help, and then be willing to accept it knowing that one day, you will do the same for them. The power of your personal network to help find your next opportunity exceeds all other resources combined. In the process, you will strengthen your connection to the people who matter most.

Whatever the challenges you face, remember there is always a reason to believe in your purpose, your talents and, ultimately, in yourself.

As I said goodbye to the young man who had spoken, he smiled and said, “Thank you for reminding me of all I have to believe in.” <<



JIM HULING is an executive consultant, a national keynote speaker and a professional coach. His leadership experience spans more than 30 years, including a decade as CEO of a company recognized four times as one of the “25 Best Companies to Work For in America.” Jim is also the author of “Choose Your Life! a powerful proven method for creating the life you want.” He can be reached at jim@jimhuling.com.