

Top 5 Signs that You're STUCK at Work

By Sandra Ford Walston, The Courage Expert

In tough economic times, it is easy to feel stuck—stuck in the wrong job, stuck in a failing company or stuck in the unemployment line. But a slow economy does not necessarily mean that you have to remain stuck. In fact, getting stuck at work usually has very little to do with the state of the economy, and many of us may be stuck without realizing it. Let's look at the five main reasons why people get stuck and what you can do to overcome these obstacles.

1. Uncertainty gnaws at us and manipulates us at work, many times without us realizing what is happening. We question issues, we doubt ourselves, and we stay stuck! Uncertainty creates a spiraling of unnecessary suffering. Uncertainty lives in unseen steps until we realize that every day is a day of uncertainty. Only the ego mistakenly believes that you have a schedule set in stone when you walk out the door to go to work. Why is it that way? The ego strives for certainty. Only by holding yourself accountable can you enable yourself to move out of uncertainty. Holding yourself accountable requires taking personal responsibility for your life experiences. In other words, accountability is not for someone else.

Obstacle: uncertainty

Courage-action: hold yourself 100% accountable

2. Do you confess your shortcomings and missteps? Or, for example, if you lack knowledge about a topic, do you respond in a deceptive manner that protects your image? The honest response would be to confess your vulnerability by admitting that you do not know the answer. Confessing is good for the spirit when done in a timely manner and with positive intent. The process helps us face the truth. We take responsibility for what is happening with our spirit and address those missteps that collect unhealthy energy. In other words, we put an end to our manipulative behaviors so that we can reveal our vulnerabilities with a calm dignity. Vulnerability comes in many forms—acknowledging your unhappiness, learning to move beyond past failures and refusing to manipulate others. “When we admit our downside, others cannot attack us there. As a consequence, we feel emotionally less vulnerable, and more safe and secure.”¹

Obstacle: manipulation

Courage-action: reveal your vulnerability

3. Change can be intimidating. Change takes us out of familiar territory, and the inertia that keeps us stuck in unfulfilling jobs feels safe by comparison. If intimidation is holding you back, look for a tough project to tackle. Before you jump in, stop to reflect. The commitment to reflection will provide a clearer picture of what you need to do to get where you need to be. This reflective opportunity provides discernment to the situation by weighing the advantages and disadvantages.

Obstacle: intimidation

Courage-action: take on the tough project

4. You know you're stuck when you begin to doubt yourself. In this case, the crucial manifestation of your courage is your ability to establish higher standards. Failing to

challenge ourselves to meet high standards keeps us stuck in a place of unrealized potential. In other words, we all have unrealized potential, and if we do not establish personal standards for ourselves, we simply cannot break away from the self-doubt that undermines our efforts to manifest that potential. The obstacle of self-doubt can keep us stuck for a lifetime if we fail to respond to these opportunities in courage.

Obstacle: self-doubt

Courage-action: establish higher standards

5. Do you seek out what is good for you? Or do you follow your desires to the point of suffering adverse consequences? “Suffering is due to dragging one’s spiritual feet and the ego’s insistence on having its own way.”² We all have desires shaped by emotional, spiritual or physical scarring. The key to breaking free of unhealthy desires is to recognize them for what they are instead of slipping into denial. The pilgrimage out of denial requires you to challenge yourself at the deepest levels by developing a meditative practice. The simple reflective process reveals the scripts that keep you stuck, thereby enabling you to rewrite your scripts. Created by the ego, these B-movie scripts define your beliefs about yourself, others and the world. Think of scripts as an undercurrent eroding the fertile soil of your true Self. Many B-movie scripts avoid courage in favor of denial.

Becoming an observer of your scripts requires effort. Slipping into a perpetual state of denial is easier than turning the spotlight on yourself and recognizing your automatic patterns. But by identifying these patterns, you “own” them, and you can pinpoint how they affect others. Moving from denial, you learn to identify how you created your stressful life and eventually learn how to break the patterns that created the stress. How do you start this? You learn how to exit bad situations quickly. Then, and you can focus on unknown possibilities in the present instead of projecting your happiness into some future longing. Are you disinclined to accept unhappiness?

Obstacle: denial

Courage-action: exit bad situations quickly

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¹ Hawkins, David, M.D., Ph.D., *Truth vs Falsehood: how to tell the difference* (Ontario, Canada: Axial Publishing Canada, 2005), 238.

² Hawkins, David, M.D., Ph.D., *Transcending the Levels of Consciousness: The Stairway to Enlightenment* (Sedona: Veritas Publication, 2006), 331.