

By Sandra Ford Walston

# Top 5 Signs that You're Stuck at Work

We often go through life in a mindless haze without taking the time or the effort to really see what's going on around us so we can make conscious choices about our lives and our careers. It's time to change that.

What does being “stuck” at work really mean? Is it that we feel we're in the wrong job and can't make a change/find a new one because of the current economy or because we don't have the necessary skill set? Is it that we feel we'll be in the same position forever without a chance for promotion? Or is it that we feel caught in situations that we don't have the power to change or that we keep facing the same obstacles and can't figure out how to change our behavior or way of thinking to overcome them? Being stuck can mean several things, but we all have the power to get “unstuck.” Let's take a look at the top five signs that we're getting stuck and what we can do to free ourselves.

**1** Uncertainty is an obstacle that gnaws at us and manipulates us at work, many times without our realizing it. We question issues, we doubt ourselves, and we can't make decisions. This situation creates a spiral of unnecessary suffering—suffering that could have been prevented if there had been no expectations for an outcome but rather an appreciation for the present. Uncertainty



can traumatize us until we finally realize that every day is a day of uncertainty. Only the ego mistakenly believes that we have a schedule set in stone when we walk out

the door to go to work. Why is it that way? The ego strives for certainty. The courageous action that enables us to move out of uncertainty is to hold ourselves accountable. Holding ourselves accountable requires taking personal responsibility for our life experiences. In other words, accountability isn't just for someone else.

**Obstacle:** Uncertainty

**Action:** Hold yourself 100% accountable

**2** Do you confess your shortcomings and missteps? For example, if you lack knowledge about a topic, do you say so, or do you respond in a deceptive manner that keeps your ego intact? The honest response would be to admit that you don't know the answer. Yes, that can leave you feeling vulnerable, but such “confessing” is good for the spirit when done in a timely manner and with positive intent.

The process helps us face the truth so we can take responsibility for what's happening with ourselves, address those missteps that collect unhealthy energy, and purge any manipulative behaviors. Also, we need to demonstrate our vulnerability with a calm dignity.

Vulnerability comes in many forms, such as acknowledging our unhappiness, learning to move on through disastrous events, and learning not to manipulate or hide failures or mistakes. As David Hawkins said in *Truth or Falsehood: How to Tell the Difference*, “When we admit our downside, others cannot attack us there. As a consequence, we feel emotionally less vulnerable, and more safe and secure.”

**Obstacle:** Manipulation

**Action:** Reveal your vulnerability

**3** Most people are reluctant to give themselves permission to act differently because their lives will change. 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. But 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.

**Obstacle:** Intimidation

**Action:** Take on the tough project

**4** You know you’re stuck when paralyzing self-doubt creeps into your psyche. In this case, the crucial manifestation of your courage to act 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 don’t establish personal standards for ourselves, we simply can’t break away from the self-doubt that undermines our efforts to mani-

fest that potential. The obstacle of self-doubt can keep us stuck for a lifetime if we fail to respond to opportunities to grow. For example, do you keep asking questions until you’re able to assess the situation, apply the necessary courage, and establish higher standards?

**Obstacle:** Self-doubt

**Action:** Establish higher standards

**5** Do you seek out what’s good for you? Or do you suffer in the desire for something outside the scope of yourself? “Suffering is due to dragging one’s spiritual feet and the ego’s insistence on having its own way,” notes David Hawkins

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in *Transcending the Levels of Consciousness: The Stairway to Enlightenment*. We all have emotional, spiritual, or physical limitations, but what matters is choosing to make a change, to escape the self-deception of denial. The journey out of denial requires you to stretch yourself—to challenge yourself. For example, take some time to sit quietly and just let your mind wander. This simple reflective process reveals “scripts” you write in your head that prevent you from acting and enables you to rewrite those scripts and recreate your identity so you can take

action. Created by the ego, these B-movie scripts define your beliefs about yourself, others, and the world. Many of them keep you trapped in your current thinking.

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 can pinpoint how they affect yourself and others. In moving from denial to consciousness, you learn how 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, and you learn how to focus on unknown possibilities in the present instead of projecting your happiness into some future longing.

**Obstacle:** Denial

**Action:** Exit bad situations quickly

Once you see how these five obstacles relate to you, you can determine how to overcome them and then start your new journey to success. **SF**

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