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RUNNING TO OR AWAY

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Quick Summary: It is easy to rationalize any new position if one is focused on running away from where they are.

Abstract:

One must carefully consider the difference between running away from a current position versus running to a new position. It is easy to fall into the trap of finding fault or negativity in one's current environment and assuming that none of the negative issues they are experiencing exist in the new position. The reality is that there is no perfect job; there are pros and cons to every position. One must think about them objectively.

When one starts the job search process, it is easy for this activity to become the center stage in all their thinking. Sleepless nights, playing the what-if game, are almost a certainty. This situation is especially true if the candidate is unemployed and relying on their severance or savings to pay the monthly bills, which does not stop when the paychecks do.

Although not as pressure-packed, a similar situation can occur when someone is in a position that most likely will be eliminated or working in a position, for whatever reason, that has become intolerable. All of these situations result in the person focusing on running away from their current situation. As time ticks away, the situation becomes more desperate, and the urgency to move forward in some direction increases.

In other situations, a person may be perfectly happy with their current situation, but perhaps prompted by others, thoughts of faster advancement or the exposure to new challenges may start the process. Once they start pursuing other opportunities, they may also begin to focus on running away from their current situation, which seems to be less fulfilling with every passing day.

Once this “running away” mindset takes over, rational thinking may fall by the wayside with any new opportunity appearing to be perfect. Essentially, this situation is a variation of the proverb of the grass is always greener on the other side. The reality is that there will be cons along with all of the imagined pros with any new position. Carrying the grass is greener thought a little farther; the grass may be greener but it may also contain numerous landmines that are not visible from a distance.

The human mind can rationalize almost anything. When pursuing a new opportunity, the individual needs to focus on what they will running to and eventually be living in instead of what they are running away from in their current position. This difference is easy to say, but hard to do. As one evaluates a new position, they must think about both the job's positive and potentially negative aspects. Start by simply

understanding why the position is open. If it is an existing position, subtly try to find out why the previous person left. If it is an entirely new position, ask why it is being filled now and why isn't it being filled with an internal candidate. If the job seems to be perfect, why is it vacant?

A commonly stated reason that individuals use when running away from a position is the catch-all phrase of "internal politics." In reality, "politics" are everywhere, including in our personal and professional lives. Politics is a label that is often used to describe interactions that are intended to influence others. Motives can vary but, invariably, different points of view will emerge. Often, lines are drawn, sides are taken, and the issue becomes an all-consuming activity with rationale thought left behind. Although an individual may be well aware of the current political environment, they are immersed in; they can be sure that similar situations are occurring in the new environment -- they just have not been exposed to controversial issues -- yet.

The motivation to run to versus running away requires careful, objective thought. It is not easy, but critical to finding the right position if leaving the current situation is the right thing to do.