



You Can't Downplay Your Resume And Be An Effective Interviewer

Recently, I was asked if a person should downplay his resume given these hard times? I suppose the inference was that as a senior worker, he thought he had to do everything possible to get that next job. His question infers that no one wants you as who you are and that you should not show up as threatening. Times are tough, scary, and uncertain, so play it low, play it small, minimize yourself. Oh dear.

Needless to say, my answer was a "no." Actually, it was a big emotional "no" because the idea of down selling yourself is first and foremost, a comment on your self-esteem and I don't like it when people demean themselves. You mean to say that after you have worked all these years, learned and taught so much, made differences to the bottom line, or in others' lives, you now want to put that in a corner?

What that means to me is that for some reason, you think your talent, your wisdom, your expertise is not valuable. If you take that belief and hold it to be a truth, which it is not, then you will come across just as what you fear; not being valued.

Down-selling means that you are changing your story in hopes of being more acceptable. Whoever got a satisfying job that way? Let me tell you that if you change your story, you will have to change your interviewing. You will have to learn a whole new character, as in a play, and then learn new lines and a new outcome. And that means if you change your interviewing, you will have to show up as someone other than yourself. And that means that you are bending and twisting to "fit it" instead of standing up straight and be counted as someone who counts.

Interviewing with others is a chance to tell a story that has some impact and influence on the listener. If you are telling a watered-down version, it will not feel authentic to you and I can promise that the listener will pick up on the lack of congruence. If, for example, you were really pleased about turning a disgruntled client around which re-invigorated \$5mm in sales, why in the world would you not tell that story?

Frankly, in my opinion, down-selling a resume is the twin to lying on one. Puffing one up with falsehoods is always frowned on. Taking the air out of one is just as false. I recommend neither. If you want to be seen as yourself, and be hired as yourself, then you have to show up as yourself in your resume and then in the interview. And, for the record, a resume should be a projective job description, not just a history.

The question should be, how can you show up in a convincing and compelling way that connects with the interviewer's needs? Not show off. Show up. The best way to do that is show people what you can do, not tell them. The best way to do that? Learn how to tell a story! Do you know how to tell a good story?