



## TENACITY

### Finding the Inner Strength to Persevere During Tough Economic Times.

Written by Dr. Nanette Bowles (Odell)

Discover the Phoenix Region Magazine

December 2010

[www.adalifequest.com](http://www.adalifequest.com)

**What am I supposed to do now?**

**What's my purpose?**

**Where do I go?**

These were all questions that swirled through my mind as I sat in the car with tears streaming down my face. Twenty-four hours prior, I was just arriving to work and preparing for a busy day. Before this day was over the words "Your position has been eliminated" would change my life completely.

Feeling nauseous as I packed my things in boxes, I couldn't breathe. That night as I tucked my kids into bed, I reassured them that we wouldn't lose our house. I was also convincing myself things were going to be okay. I got online and started looking for a new job but quickly discovered a few sobering facts. 1) There are not a lot of jobs out there. 2) There are A LOT of people competing for these jobs. 3) The available jobs were not paying anywhere near what I needed to take care of my family.

Physically and mentally exhausted around midnight, I finally tried to fall asleep. I tossed and turned until about 4:30am. My brain suddenly woke me up with what seemed to be a shout in my head, "I'M UNEMPLOYED! How can I NOT have a job? I've worked all my life! That's what I do! That's who I am! How am I going to support my kids?"

The car was quiet as I drove the kids to school. I was supposed to go to work after dropping them off. That's what I always do, but EVERYTHING was different now! Tears streaming down my face, I simply didn't know where to go, what to do or where I belonged now.

Can you relate to this story? If not you personally, it's safe to say that at least someone you know has lost a job due to this economic crisis. Whether you are unemployed, under-employed or even still employed, you are experiencing these difficult economic times in a very real way.

So... How do we dig deep within ourselves and pull from our inner strength to persevere during such tough times? How do we audaciously rise from the ashes when we have been knocked down and feel like we've been buried alive? How do we find our Tenacity??

#### ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR WORTH.

You are NOT your title, status, salary grade, etc. Your value is intrinsic and goes so far beyond that! When you are literally stripped of these things, you may well find a more genuine, authentic and pure value in YOU...as a person! You have to intentionally look for this, but the journey is worth it.

## LET GO OF YOUR ANGER.

It's easy to be angry, question why you were chosen, wonder how they will get along without you, who will mess up what you started, etc. This anger can poison you and actually affect your ability to move on and succeed in a new job. Instead, list all of the ways you have grown from the job, all the new contacts, skills learned, connections made. Don't just think about these...actually write them down, then use them to help you move forward. Staying angry can eat you alive. It's just not worth it.

### 1. LET GO OF YOUR PRIDE.

It is okay to admit that you are scared, angry (though not holding onto it), feeling depressed, confused, etc. It's also okay to ask for help...from family, friends, a counselor, and other resources. Apply for unemployment as soon as possible and online, if you can. It's easier to do this in the comfort of your home, if possible. Find food banks and co-ops such as [www.bountifulbaskets.com](http://www.bountifulbaskets.com) or [www.coopdirectory.org/directory](http://www.coopdirectory.org/directory) in your area to learn more about how these might help. Talk to your creditors and see if they will work with you. Consider keeping one notebook where you keep track of all of this. There's a lot happening; this will help you stay organized, reduce potential frustration and help you follow up more effectively.

### 2. TAKE A DEEP BREATH.

Realize that you may very well experience grief and loss over this. This may cause mood swings that tilt towards the side of depression. If you start experiencing that, don't isolate yourself! Talk to others who can listen and encourage you. What you are experiencing is very "normal" so let it happen. Writing in a journal everyday can be helpful. Keep track of all your efforts towards finding a job, locating resources, etc. Also, write down five things you are thankful for each day. It can be really helpful to go back and read over these.

### 3. GET UP AND STAY BUSY.

It's natural to want to sleep in (because you can) but it's important to keep getting up. It gives a sense of purpose. If you've been meaning to lose weight or take better care of yourself, this is the time! It's easy to make excuses that you are too busy or too stressed. Actually, this is the best time to make yourself a priority! You will feel better physically, mentally and emotionally. You will handle this stress better, feel more confident, and be better prepared for that new job!

### 4. GET OUT!

There are a lot of employment network groups, job fairs, and resources out there. Go to as many as you can. Staying connected to others is critical! Keep in mind that some charge a fee to join but you can usually go the first few times for free. Pick and pay for the ones that you feel will be the most effective. Collect business cards and follow up immediately or it's a waste of time and money. Keep your receipts, as these may be tax deductible. Remember, finding a job is a full-time job!

### 5. ACCEPT HELP.

Collect letters of recommendation and/or appreciation. When you are first laid off, previous co-workers may kindly offer to help. Take them up on their offer and ask for letters of appreciation for the work you did, recommendations for future employers, etc. You might even offer to start the letter of recommendation to save them time. This is not uncommon and allows them to modify it accordingly. These can really help so don't be afraid to ask.

## 6. LOOK FOR SUPPORT.

We are not meant to go this alone. If you know of others who have also experienced this, talk to them. They may be able to offer you some insight, resources, support and encouragement. Family, friends, faith-based groups and support groups are great resources. Take advantage of all these to help you through this new journey.

It's also helpful to see beyond where you are right now and imagine your- self in the future. Truly envisioned yourself months or even a year later, talking about this experience and how much you grew from it. Imagine helping others who were going through the same thing and needed encouragement. Reach within yourself to find what matters most and dis- cover a whole new YOU: confident, secure, assertive, needed, respected, valued, appreciated...tenacious!

*You are not alone. You will get through this. Allow yourself to grow from this experience and don't forget to be good to yourself!*

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