

My Position Has Been Terminated

Now What?

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My History

- Over my 45 year career, I had 4 “jobs”:
 - MD Anderson
 - Gulf Coast Oncology, PA
 - GIII Physics, Inc.
 - Baylor College of Medicine

My History

- **TWO** of those “disappeared” w/o warning:
 - MD Anderson
 - Gulf Coast Oncology, PA ~12 months
 - GIII Physics, Inc.
 - Baylor College of Medicine ~24 years

So When I Think About It...

- I realize that I “catastrophically” lost my sole source of employment:
 - 25% of the way through my career.
 - At the end of my career.
- Since I had 50% of my jobs end abruptly, maybe I do have some “expert” experiences to share.

It Isn't Fun

“Of course, I would love to work late.”

It Isn't Fun

I knew a lot of physicists
who experienced this
misfortune

It Isn't Fun

It's important to realize
that it isn't unique to
Medical Physics

You Aren't Unique

*"Getting fired hurts a lot," Tannenbaum says.
"It was devastating, and I had the range of
emotions, including humility and self-doubt. I
questioned everything."*

*MMQB - Jenny Vrentas
6/15/15*

You Aren't Unique

Within 48 hours of Tannenbaum being fired after a 6-10 Jets season, Parcells called. His message, in typical fashion, was brief and to the point: *This is not going to be one of those pity conversations you're probably getting from everyone else. I just want you to know, what matters in life is what you do after you get knocked down. I'm here if you need anything. Goodbye.* The two are still in regular contact, sometimes talking as often as multiple times a week.

That's What I'll Discuss Today

*"This is not going to be
one of those pity
conversations you're
probably getting from
everyone else. I just
want you to know,
what matters in life is
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get knocked down."*

Tip #1

- All fights are about sex or money!
 - Make sure you know which one you are fighting about.

We Are Expensive

- Medical Physicists rank in the top 10% of **salaried** employees in America.
- We “want” expensive toys.
- We are poor businessmen because we don’t do what is necessary to demonstrate our value.

We Are Expensive

- **SO WHEN IT COMES TIME**
- **TO CUT COSTS, WE HAVE**
- **A BULLSEYE ON OUR**
- **BUTTS.**

So Realize This --

**You may not
be able to
stop it.**

Passage #1

- After a decade at MD Anderson, I left to join a Private Practice Physician Group.
- **MONEY!!!**
 - Doubled my salary.
 - *Matched 25% of my salary into Pension Plan.*
 - Car
 - I even negotiated 10 trips to Houston/year to see my children.

Passage #1

- The head physician was past-chair at NCI.
 - Checked around and all seemed OK.
- And he was trying to build an empire so it appeared to have promise professionally as well as economically.
- St. Petersburg, FL is a resort town.

Passage #1

- But about a year later, right after I get married and buy a house, the three man Physician Group dissolved.
- Why?
 - **MONEY!!**
 - In those days it took 18-20 patients/day for a physician to earn \$10⁶.

Passage #1

- What happens to me?
- Mickey says he can't afford me.
- The other docs say "We love you **BUT**..."
- The hospital offers me a job at my same salary.
— *I was too naïve at the time to understand what that meant.*
- I tell them, "No Thanks."

Serious Question

- How long can you (and your family) exist if you lose your job?

Passage #1

- The next evening I run into a sailing buddy who's also a urologist.
- He tells me how his "life" changed because of DRG's.
- He asks if I considered going into private practice.
- Told him the doctors might not want me.

Private Practice It Is.

- GIII Physics, Inc. is created.
- I realized I needed more than Physics Skills:
 1. Learn to Really Negotiate
 - Select your bank
 - Contracts with hospitals & physicians
 2. Business
 - Bookkeeping
 - "Grow your business"
 3. Be Efficient – "Time Is Money!"

Private Practice It Is.

- It was great.
 - I was my own boss.
 - I worked where I wanted to work.
 - **Still had my 25% pension plan.**
- Caveat
 - **It was a struggle to expand professionally.**
 - Coverage while on vacation
 - Meeting Costs

Passage #2

- I join Baylor College of Medicine
 - In addition to dealing with BCM, I also have to cover the three BCM Teaching Hospitals –
 - The Methodist Hospital
 - Ben Taub County Hospital
 - The VA Hospital
 - BUT ONLY TMH PAYS FOR ME!!!!

Tip #2

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

Passage #2

- What else **MIGHT** be important to survival?
 - There “might” be an “Expiration Date” if you are the expensive leader.
 - The Technology(?) Arms Race has accelerated greatly in the last 15 years.
 - So you “might” want to move on after 10(?) years.

OR

- You “might” want to keep a low profile and not be the expensive leader.

Passage #2

- How did this position end?
 - I was called over to Baylor where I was told that Methodist has terminated the contract and I can go back and get personal belongings.

Passage #2

- Here's my warning from this experience.
 - When I went back to my office, I was allowed to take personal pictures and plaques, but no books or electronics, including my iPad or computer.
 - It became clear over time that they really had no plan in place for me to get my property.

Passage #2

- But it raises serious questions:
 - Do you have all your tools and data stored independently of your employer?
 - Is your personal electronic safety compromised?

Passage #3

- Baylor has an excellent Emeritus program for age-challenged faculty that includes "inexpensive" health insurance.
- But not for my wife as she is not on Medicare yet.
- Turned out her retirement program would include me as I was Medicare B.

Summary of My Advice Today

- “Stuff Happens.” – Forrest Gump
- “The man with the most arrows in his quiver usually wins the battle.”
- “Whose Your Daddy?”
- “Don’t jump into cactus bushes...”
 - I believe the simplest way to look for **cheapness** is in staffing.
 - Safety Is No Accident
 - Abt Reports
 - Turnover Rate

Thanks For Listening



Questions?
