



A pink slip
is a gift

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“A Pink Slip is a Gift: How Losing a Job Could be the Best
Thing that Could Happen to You”

By

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About Julie Austin



Julie Austin doesn't just teach entrepreneurship, she's lived it from the ground up. She's an award-winning writer, inventor, and multiple business owner. Her patented product, swiggies, wrist water bottles, were a NASDAQ product of the year semi finalist, and are sold in 24 countries. She's appeared on ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX News, along with dozens of magazines, newspapers, and radio shows around the world.

Her new book "The Money Garden: How to Plant the Seeds for a Lifetime of Income" is currently available on Amazon.

Julie is dedicated to helping others be employed for life by using techniques that entrepreneurs have known about for years. Whether it's finding your dream job or creating your own dream job, Julie will give you the tools you need to succeed.

Julie's websites and blogs:

- **Job Security Seminar** www.jobsecurityseminar.com
- **Swiggies** www.swiggies.com
- **Infringer Blacklist** www.infringerblacklist.com
- **CreateForCash** www.createforcash.com
- **Fun Job Fairs** www.funjobfairs.com

A Pink Slip is a Gift

Webster's definition of a pink slip is "a notice that is given to a worker by an employer letting them know that the worker's job is ending". Whether an actual pink piece of paper exists, is up for debate. It's more of a softer metaphor for getting fired... canned... sacked... axed... laid off.

Even if you despise your job, getting fired hurts. It's a blow to the ego. And many people take it personally. Feel like a failure. Feel a loss of identity.

Years ago when I worked for a company that gave away free passes to movie screenings, I was fired for not showing up at work one day.

At the time I was an actor and had gotten a part in a phone commercial the day before. I didn't have time to call and let them know I wouldn't be there since I had to show up at about 6:00 in the morning.

In the actual commercial I had to make a phone call and decided to call my boss to let him know I wouldn't be in. That's when he told me not to bother coming back... "You're fired."

I tried to act like it didn't bother me and had to keep smiling throughout the commercial. But inside I was crushed. It didn't matter that I really hated the job and never made any money at it. I was fired!

The bottom line is that it was the best thing that ever happened to me. I ended up starting what would be one of several businesses and I never would have done that if I had been stuck in that dead-end job. I was forced to make a move.

With unemployment at record highs, many people are in the same position. And many feel the same sense of dread and hopelessness that comes with it. After all, it's a sense of loss.

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Even if you hate your job, your boss, all of your co-workers and your tiny cubicle, it's still a comfortable rut. And we tend to like our comfort zones.

It's normal to feel anger, denial, or shock at losing your job, whether it's your fault or not. It's normal to be upset. Throw yourself a pity party. Cry your eyes out. Have a pint of chocolate chip ice cream. Then get to work creating the rest of your life.

Whether you want to look for another job, change careers, or become your own boss, look at your pink slip as a second chance. It just might be the wakeup call you've needed.

What went wrong?

The Five Stages of Grief

The five stages of grief that Dr. Kubler-Ross is known for can also be applied to losing a job. When your identity and self-worth are wrapped up in your job, it's a loss no matter how you look at it. Having a job you enjoy gives you more than a sign on your office door. It gives you a purpose. And when that purpose is pulled out from under you, you can't help but feel a loss of identity.

- **Denial** – This is the stage when you reject something even when you know it's true because it's too uncomfortable otherwise. Your boss tells you he needs to discuss something with you in his office. You know what's coming, but tell yourself he must be wanting to talk about that new project your working on. Then the axe falls. "He can't be firing me. Surely he's giving me a raise for all the good work I've done." Denial is your defense mechanism.
- **Anger** – This is the getting even stage. You think about why you got canned and the guy who played office politics didn't. "How could they

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do that to me after all I've given to the company? I'll show them!" Resist the urge to scream and cause a scene. For one thing you'll need a good reference if you want to start job searching. Bite your tongue, punch a pillow and move on.

- **Bargaining** – At this point you might be willing to take a cut in pay, work more hours for less money or anything else you can just to hang on to your current job. It might work, but at a huge personal sacrifice.
- **Depression** – This is an overwhelming feeling of doom and gloom that you'll never find another job again. This is compounded by the seriousness of the current job market and is a completely normal reaction, though one you don't want to stay stuck in for any length of time.
- **Acceptance** – This is when you begin to face the reality that you need to pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and get ready to begin a new chapter in your life.

These days, corporations will probably walk you out of the building with a security escort like a common criminal. Don't be freaked out by this. Prepare for it and stay calm.

When you get the news that you'll be getting a pink slip, don't react negatively. Just listen patiently and don't overreact. You might need a reference from them in the future and you might want to consult for them part-time.

Once you've had time to cool off and collect your thoughts you'll want to start the bargaining process to get as much money and benefits as you can.

Here's the good news...you are in complete control of your destiny!

This is the time to think of your life as the fork in the road. You can go back to the same type of job you had before or you can completely reinvent yourself.

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Since the title of this book is "A Pink Slip is a Gift", I'm going to focus on the positives of losing your job.

I'm going to focus on the benefits of being forced to change. It's often a crisis that forces us to wake up and ask the bigger questions.

There's nothing like the crisis of losing your job to make you start asking yourself who you are and where you're really going in life.

Whether you decide to go back to the same type of job or take a totally different path, you need to reinvent yourself in some way.

Think of it as version 2.0.

Who Am I?

You're at a dinner party and you get asked the dreaded question, "So, what do you do?" You fumble for an answer while visualizing a big L on your forehead. "Well, I used to be an executive marketing manager for Promark Corporation." Long silence. "Oh".

You feel the air being sucked out of the room and you want to crawl under the table and disappear. It doesn't seem right, but like it or not, we're defined by what we do for a living.

So, at least for now, create your own title. It can be whatever you want it to be. It's your title. Head Fun Master...CEO of Happiness...Chief Sales Ninja... In other words, "fake it 'til you make it".

In order to be reborn you need to come to terms with the past. You're not just a title on a plaque glued to a cubicle wall. You're the sum of everything you've done, everywhere you've been and everyone you've known.

Take all of the bad stuff, all of the regrets, disappointments and failures, and light a sacrificial bonfire in your mind. Sift through what's left and press the reset button. It's time to create a new beginning.

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It's easy to lose your sense of self-confidence after a pink slip. And the longer you're out of work, the worse it can get.

Now is a time to add up your achievements. What have you done in your life that you're proud of? Remember all the way back to your childhood.

- Did you get good grades?
- Win some awards?
- Did you get a big promotion at work?
- Are you a great parent or spouse?

Pull out some of your awards, report cards, trophies, or family albums and rest on your laurels for a minute. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done. You deserve it.

Figure out how to use your successes to create more. If you find a process that works for one project, repeat it or use it for other projects. Analyze what made it work.

It sounds great to think we could be perfect all the time, but if that were the case we would never learn anything. We're far more likely to learn from our failures, as painful as they are.

Babe Ruth struck out 1,330 times before hitting 714 home runs. Edison tried thousands of ways before he made the final version of the light bulb. He failed many times, but so did a lot of other inventors in the late 1870s who tried the same thing.

The only difference is that he didn't give up. The number of successful people who failed time and time again before succeeding is legend.

Writer Stephen J. Cannell flunked two grades in school because of dyslexia. He graduated from the University of Oregon with a 2.1 grade average, but by then had discovered writing.

After years of rejection letters, he went on to create or co-create more than 38 TV shows and best-selling novels, and has become one of the most prolific and successful writers around. In his opinion, "Rejection is simply someone else's opinion, not everyone else's."

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Nobody knows about failure more than a salesperson. Any good salesperson will tell you that if you aren't hearing any "nos" you aren't trying hard enough.

You simply have to go through the failures to get to the successes. You might as well get them out of the way because they are inevitable. And then the same thing happens all over again the next day.

What makes the difference is the way you handle failure. Resilience is just a matter of being able to recover from mistakes and failures and learn from them.

A pink slip can be seen as a thing of doom or a chance to start all over again.

Where am I Going?

I'm constantly amazed at how many people really don't know what they want to do with their lives and don't have any plans about how to get there. But many people go from job to job without a real goal of where they're going, much less how to get there.

I do admit that I have a hard time reading maps and prefer to figure it out on my own. Unfortunately it ends up taking me much, much longer to get where I'm going.

The same is true in life. If you don't have a map it's going to take you much longer to get there, if you ever do. It seems like common sense, but you first need to figure out exactly where you want to be and work backwards.

Maybe your last job was where you wanted to be. Then focus on getting a similar job, only better.

If you still don't really know what it is you want to ultimately do with your life, start by figuring out what your real purpose is.

According to a new study at Rush University Medical Center, lower mortality rates have been found in the elderly when they have a purpose

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in life. People with a purposeful plan for their life also tend to experience much more joy.

People without a purpose complain about being in a rut or just going through the motions in life. These are the same people that just “go with the flow” and let others decide what they should do with their lives. They become reactive instead of proactive and relinquish control over the direction of their lives.

If you don't have a purpose or set goals, you won't have the determination or drive to accomplish them.

- What makes you wake up early in the morning, anxious to get started?
- What would you do for free even if you didn't get paid for it?
- What have you done that gives you a glowing sense of accomplishment?

I'm sure deep down you probably know what it is. Put it down on paper and keep it next to your computer. Commit to it.

Determination means having clear goals and dreams to go after. They provide you with a vision of what your future will look like and how close you are to getting what you want. They give you a challenge and something worthwhile to aim for.

You have to trust your intuition, or sixth sense, to figure out your purpose.

We all have the need to “be somebody” and make a difference. Integrating your purpose with your work will energize you rather than drain you. It will create success on all levels.

Spiritual and financial success can be achieved at the same time when you truly love what you do and feel that it matters. Since our work takes up the largest amount of our waking hours, it should be something we enjoy doing that also has a purpose.

Once you find your purpose, start working on your overall plan. It could be as simple as “I want to live in a cabin in the mountains” or “I want to own my own business”.

Then you need to start making a to-do list of how you will get there from where you are now. Take baby steps. Set a deadline for each. This will keep you on track and keep you from drifting or procrastinating. Hold yourself accountable.

Make sure you set goals that are attainable in the near future. That way you will stick with it and will be able to move on to the next goal. Make sure it's realistic and makes sense for you. Setting small goals and accomplishing them gives you the confidence to set bigger goals.

TIPS FOR SETTING GOALS:

✓ Make a decision to do something

The first thing you need to do is realize you need to accomplish the goal and stick with it until it's finished. This sounds simple, but most people don't even really know what their goals are.

✓ Figure out which goals are the most important

Start with the most urgent and pressing goals. What's going to make you the most money in the fastest way possible? After taking care of bills, which project should you tackle first?

✓ Keep daily to-do lists and check things off

Make a list and keep adding to it. Believe me, if you are like the typical entrepreneur, you will never run out of things to put on your list. Try to keep up with it and make sure you display the list in plain site, so you will be reminded of it all day long.

✓ Make sure you're held accountable

Let people know what you are doing. After you tell your friends and family members that you are working on a new product, they will constantly ask you when it's coming out. Eventually you'll be so embarrassed that it isn't finished that you'll force yourself to get it done.

Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes

You're going about your life and everything seems great, and suddenly... BAM... a monkey wrench is thrown in your path. You didn't expect it. You didn't plan for it. But there it is.

Changes like this have a way of tossing us into the darkness of the unknown. Your once predictable life is thrown into a state of chaos and unpredictability. Or so it seems.

Once we realize that there are no accidents and that everything happens for a reason, it makes it easier to understand.

Many people fall into doing the same thing every day. They wake up, have some coffee, get ready for work, drive the long commute to get there, do the same basic thing every day, with the same people, drive home and wake up the next morning and do it all over again. It could be a different version of the story, but still the same rut.

A change, like losing your job, may seem like a huge blow, but can also be a time to learn new skills, learn more about yourself and others, reflect on what isn't working, or simply take time to stop and smell the roses.

Assume that this change is for a good reason. It might be meant to teach you a valuable lesson. What is it? Look for it, and look for solutions instead of just seeing problems. Commit to being a problem solver and keep searching until you find the right answer.

There are always at least two ways to look at a problem.

A poet once said, "Two men looked out from prison bars. One saw mud, the other saw stars."

It's time to look for the opportunities in change and grab them.

I think the difference in people that become extremely successful and those that don't is that very successful people always see opportunities that others just don't see.

The Comfort Zone

In the Lee Ann Womack song "I Hope You Dance" – she talks about life as a dance. You can either sit it out -- or make the choice to dance.

How many times have you sat it out? My guess is... most of them.

It's human nature to want to avoid anxiety and risk. Risk is scary, and venturing outside of your comfort zone usually involves taking a risk.

Yes, there are some adrenaline junkies who are hard-wired to take risks. The more the better. Most people choose to stay closer inside their limited range of risk-taking. But people who never risk will also never know their full potential.

Don't just sit it out... dance.

What can adrenaline junkies teach us about stepping outside our comfort zone? In my quest to answer this question I found that most adrenaline junkies are also highly successful in their careers, and many are entrepreneurs. For this small group of people the stress is worth the reward.

It was Christmas Day in New Zealand, the adventure capital of the world, and I was pacing up and down the street trying to talk myself into paragliding off a 4200-foot mountain. I had never done it before, but somehow the magical lure of the scenery was beckoning me to celebrate the holiday by viewing it from a parachute. I finally said, "Okay, if the wind dies down a little, I'll do it".

Before I even finished the sentence the wind suddenly abated. I had no choice. I stopped in one of the adventure shops and pulled out my credit card. Nervously, I handed it to the clerk. "Oh, you'll have the time of your life", she said. "You'll feel like you're flying like a bird". That was enough to convince me.

The whole way up I kept asking for the guy who had small children at home. I ended up with Umberto, the daredevil. "When I count to three I want you to run, and whatever you do, don't look back, and don't stop

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running until we are off the mountain". My feet didn't stop for the next minute and a half.

As I looked out over the water, a rainbow was forming. On Christmas morning. In New Zealand. Few things could top that excitement and adrenaline rush. And I never would have felt it if I didn't take the chance.

I have a friend who is an award-winning photojournalist. One look at his photos and you'll see why he has won so many awards. For him, taking pictures of weddings or still photography would never feed his soul. He has to be in the middle of the action. On the front line.

So what makes the risk worth it to adrenaline junkies? Why would the thought of bungee jumping make most people cringe, but makes this group salivate?

The short answer could be... dopamine, the chemical compound involved in the formation of adrenaline. In other words, it's a natural high. One of the things dopamine is known for is its involvement in motivation and reward.

But even though most people are uneasy about leaving their comfort zone, everyone is forced to now and then. Change is inevitable and forces us to look at the world in a different way.

When you're forced to leave the comfort of your parent's house and make it on your own you adjust to it, adapt, and figure out a way to support yourself.

Friends grow up and move away. Outdated and worn stuff is replaced by new stuff. Grandparents and beloved pets die.

Nothing remains the same, including your job. It's estimated that the average American worker will have five career changes in their lifetime.

For most people change of any kind is scary, even when it's good change. People who experience some of the biggest changes of all are lottery winners. Experts say that around 70% of them will squander their money within a few years, and many face marital and family problems.

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But winning the lottery by itself rarely makes one happier. The money changes their financial status, but rarely does their inner core change.

A sense of loss always comes with change. Something must die in order to be reborn anew.

Getting a pink slip could be the chance you've been waiting for, even if you don't realize it now. It could be the chance to change careers, start a business, or move to another city, state or country.

A pink slip could be your chance to jump off the mountain and not look back.

Intuition

“The only real valuable thing is intuition.” – Albert Einstein

Taking a risk means that you are doing something unproven with no guarantee of the outcome. What usually stops us from using our intuition is our logical mind, or our own self-doubt telling us that we don't have all of the facts yet.

You have to trust your intuition without knowing all of the facts. Don't let your inner critic sabotage you.

Inventors, artists and entrepreneurs use their intuition every day. Imagine all of the naysayers who will tell you it's too risky or dangerous to start your own business or follow through with an invention, or to pull up roots and move to a new city where you don't know anyone or have a job waiting for you.

Without intuition Christopher Columbus would never have set out on his journey for a new land. How much intuition did Ben Franklin have to have to trust that he could venture out in a lightning storm with a kite? Where would we be now if he had been stopped by his inner critic and given up without trying?

Deep down you probably already know what you should be doing in life. But something is stopping you. Your intuition is telling you to try something new, something a little risky and different. It tells you to go down a certain path. Real life stops you.

Your intuition knows better than your brain. Your brain will rationalize a situation to death. Intuition steers you in the right direction. But you have to trust it.

Trust that you were given a pink slip for a reason. Whatever the reason may be, just trust that it's the right one. It might mean that a better job or better career is just around the corner. It might mean that you were meant to do something completely different in a different city or in another state.

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Learn to go with your first gut instinct. Don't question it. It's usually the right answer and your intuition telling you what you need to be doing.

It's your subconscious mind sending signals to your conscious mind.

Opportunities are all around you every day.

If you pay attention and listen to your intuition you will be more open to them when they come along.

Keep an open mind when this happens. It just might be the break you've been looking for.

From **Pink Slip** to Business Owner



A pink slip might be the chance you've been waiting for. To guarantee that you'll never be unemployed again you can be your own boss.

Here are some business owners who went that route.

"Down Sized to Doggie Treats"

What did a middle-aged, female corporate IT Vice President do when her position was eliminated as a result of downsizing? First, she spent the next six months networking in search of a new job. After being told she was either overqualified or too expensive for what was available, which made her increasingly despondent, Ronnie Fliss began Fat Murray's Doggy Treats in 2003.

The idea was born over coffee with another out of work friend. She casually mentioned the dog treats she was baking for her allergy prone dog were a big hit with her dogs. So why not start a business.

Ronnie jumped on the idea, and did extensive research into the pet industry. She quickly realized that this segment of the market was growing, especially among baby boomers, who were lavishly spending on their animals. Ronnie loved to bake and loved her animals. Murray, her two-year old basset hound, who has a nose for both business and food, totally agreed with the plan.

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So, Ronnie began to do additional research and found several recipes on the Internet. She started experimenting (Murray, of course, was the company's taste tester) and within a few months several recipes were created.

Ronnie and Murray started by making the rounds to local pet stores in Northern New Jersey and nearby New York City. She began using a consignment business model in order to get her product line into stores. As she notes, " No one would refuse consignment".

The business began to take off and Ronnie and Murray had found their niche. Barney, Murray's little brother, soon joined the business, doubling her sales force. Ronnie with her two basset hounds hit the road, making sales calls and developing the business away from consignment. Storeowners found it increasingly difficult to refuse the persuasiveness nature of the two bassets.

From the beginning, Fat Murray's unique selling proposition was to produce 100% natural, freshly baked dog treats with no preservatives, no sugar or icing, no dyes or coloring, and made with human grade ingredients.

Ronnie had discovered that many of the so-called yogurt coatings that other bakers were using were actually a white chocolate, predominantly made with sugar. As an alternative ingredient to the yogurt coatings, she searched for something that was both healthy and decorative for her treats. "Vegan carob is made with malt barley and corn and doesn't have the high sugar content of regular carob", she says.

Another eye-pleasing element was the crazy characters, baked with beans to resemble eyes and buttons, which formed the basis for her line of products including pigs, frogs, crabs, horses, turtles, teddy bears, and of course, dogs.

The combination of all-natural, freshly baked, with no preservatives, and various shapes became fast sellers. But she didn't stop there. Much of her success was actually based on flexibility.

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Ronnie listened to her customers. Each one had different needs and methods for displaying her products. Many simply needed bulk product to display in their bakery cases or in baskets. Others requested packaging for their shelves.

She also learned that four basic flavors were the most requested—cheese, peanut butter, applesauce, and a wheat and corn-free product made with fresh carrots for dogs with allergies.

During the first two years in operation, Ronnie soon realized that her dog treats were seasonal. Acting upon customer requests, she created several holiday lines.

As Christmas and Halloween approached, new characters were created such as witches and ghosts, snowmen, reindeer, Christmas trees, and even Hanukkah dreidels.

For Valentine's Day she offered hearts, and bunnies for Easter. For the summer months, Fat Murray lovers could feast upon lobsters, crabs, seahorses or surfboards. These were especially popular in beach resort areas.

In 2006 she expanded her business model to include a line of personalized items for pet-friendly hotels, pet sitters, groomers, and dog walkers.

Fat Murray's believes in giving pets a nutritious, healthy, fresh-baked treat made with human grade ingredients, which is both delicious and rewarding.

www.fatmurrays.com

“The Corporate World to the Kids World”

Mark Smith spent twenty-five years in the corporate world until the company he was working for reorganized and he found himself out of a job.

After years of racking up an average of 140,000 frequent flyers miles each year he became more “grounded” and entered the world of kid’s education, something he was very passionate about already.

He began to look for ways that traditional, portable creative activities he used with his son could be adapted for kids born since the introduction of the iPod, or the “i” generation kids.

It all came together during a coffee discussion with an elementary teacher friend. She commented that gaming devices did not leave anything to the imagination, such as coloring, drawing, etc.

Then serendipity kicked in. A mom was using items in her “mommy survival bag” (an oversized bag containing children’s picture books, coloring books, crayons, drawing pads and markers) for her young daughter while she was having coffee with a friend.

On the drive home the pieces fell in place, and iKids Play, creative play for “i” generation kids was born.

He says that the most exciting thing is getting to watch kids play with the products, which have been a big hit with all different age groups.

Mark is also spending his time consulting and volunteering. He advises local government on strategy and coaches kids at the local middle school and in a community league.

Even though the going has been tough, he says he doesn’t miss the corporate world at all.

www.ikidsplay.com

“Paramedic to Passionate Speaker”

Danielle Cortes Devito began her career in emergency medicine in 1994 after graduating from Loyola University Medical Center in pre-hospital medicine.

She joined the Chicago fire department in 2004 and was the recipient of their Outstanding Candidate Award. She also received the Community Commitment Award for outstanding work in preventative health.

But when an injury prevented her from lifting more than a hundred pounds she found herself sidelined.

Many of her injured co-workers were put in office jobs, but at the time there weren't any office jobs left to be filled.

“I couldn't believe it”, she says, “I've given my all for fifteen years in this business and now it's over. I've been doing this since I was eighteen. Now what?”

She realized her health was the most important thing and tried to understand the message behind this setback.

The day she received her pink slip she was asked to speak for a national doctor's association and has been speaking ever since.

She's now getting paid to tell her story and help people with their health before they need to call 911.

She turned her passion for helping people as a paramedic into a passion for helping people as a public speaker.

She began speaking to corporations about the importance of workplace wellness and safety and consulting for Fortune 500 companies.

With her pink slip days behind her she has been given a “Woman of Inspiration” award by Bank of America and the Chicago Sky women's basketball team.

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She has also served as an Ambassador for the “Power to End Stroke Campaign”, an initiative of the American Heart Association, and she is a volunteer spokesperson for the “Go Red for Women” effort.

Not just known for her inner beauty, she’s also been recognized for her outer beauty as well, winning the title of Mrs. Chicago in 2009.

The road hasn’t been easy, but when life handed her a bunch of rocks, she made a beautiful rock garden.

She believes everyone should live a purposeful and healthy life.

She’s available for speaking at www.espeakers.com.

“From Pink Slip to Pink Frosting”

Carrie Middlemiss was an employee of Washington Mutual for almost eighteen years, but was given a pink slip as the result of the economic downturn and the purchase of Washington Mutual by Chase Bank.

She saw this as the perfect opportunity to follow her passion and join the cupcake community.

She did a ton of research and talked to cupcake lovers and shop owners to find out what was missing in the industry.

She decided upon the idea of creating a new product for them after seeing that the crinkly, translucent paper they were baked in need a makeover.

“Why should the frosting have all the limelight?” she asked herself, and starting coming up with a new, fashionable way to decorate the bottom portion of the cupcake.

Now, Bella Cupcake Couture offers posh and chic textile-inspired cupcake wrappers. The boutique-style designs add a touch of sophistication and elegance to any special occasion.

Carrie envisions the wrappers, which are printed with soy inks on recycled paper, at weddings, bridal and baby showers and as birthday gifts, housewarming gifts and a little treat for yourself.

Carrie was honored by Martha Stewart as a “Doer of the Week” and even featured in a movie.

Carrie hopes that Bella Cupcake Couture wrappers will bring a smile to your face and will create cherished memories with your friends and family.

www.bellacupcakecouture.com

“Autism as a Challenge and a Gift”

Jeff Deutsch has had more than his share of pink slips. Here is his story in his own words:

“I’m an Aspie -- that means I have Asperger Syndrome (AS), which is on the autism spectrum. We have certain strengths, such as attention to detail, focus, dedication, and honesty.

We also have certain challenges, like difficulty tuning into other’s feelings, and understanding things that aren’t spelled out in so many words.

We also tend to have trouble multitasking and otherwise dealing with multiple stimuli at once (ex. People talking in the background while we’re trying to work).

Many of us have heightened sensitivity: for example, some Aspies can’t stand to touch paper or metal, others are miserable when buzzers sound and dogs bark.

As a result, many Aspies have a hard time getting and keeping jobs, friends, relationships, and even places to live.

I struggled through public school, college, and grad school unaware that AS even existed, let alone how it affected me and those around me. My NT (neurotypical, meaning not on the Autism scale) girlfriend, now wife, told me about AS roughly six or seven years ago.

I’ve been fired multiple times, mainly due to interpersonal issues. At the time I had no idea why it was happening or even what was happening. As an Aspie I had great difficulty reading subtle social situations, though I’ve gotten better with practice and learning.

I basically felt like I was being treated unfairly, and that the boss hadn’t heard or even seemed to care about my side of the story.

I now coach Aspies on how to get along in the world, and also NTS on how to better understand the Aspies in their lives.

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I give presentations to groups of Aspies, employers, service providers and others on how to recognize and work well with Aspies. I now truly know what I can uniquely do for the world.

I think of my pink slips, and similar issues in my personal/social life, as gifts. They were not intended as such, but through them I'm now able to help others."

You can check out Jeff's blog at
<http://buildingcommonground.blogspot.com>.

“Big Corporation Employee to Small Business Boss”

Not long after September 11th, Phil Mann got the first pink slip of his career. He had just moved into a new Manhattan apartment with his wife, who was five months pregnant with their first child.

Here is his story in his own words:

“ I was laid off, rather than fired, and it’s hard to put the feelings I had into words. More than anything, I was stunned. But I was also very calm. I showed my surprise and disappointment, but I wasn’t emotional about it. I think my wheels started spinning the moment it happened.

I shouldn’t have been surprised, but I was. To some degree, I think the reality of bad news always surprises us on some level, even if we know it’s coming. The reason I shouldn’t have been surprised is that it was immediately post-9/11, the economy in general and the PR profession in particular were slumping, and several of my colleagues had already been let go. The reason I was surprised is that two weeks ago I had been pulled aside and told I was valued and my job was secure.

My life is different in a lot of ways, but to be fair, much of that is because I have two small children, compared to none when I was let go. I work primarily from home and have cultivated a strong sense of discipline about that. I’m now getting more “real work” done in eight hours as I was in four or five, due to fewer interruptions and meetings.

Breaking out of my comfort zones was one of my challenges. I’m security-driven and cautious by nature. But I’m now president of a networking group of thirty people and I’ve started giving speeches, which was never my favorite thing to do.

In many ways, in retrospect, I view my pink slip as a gift. Being my own boss has been a luxury with small children and a hard-working wife. My work is very full-time and I’m often working at night. But I also get to see my kids more and never miss a school play.”

www.MannCommunications.com

From **Pink Slip** to a True Passion



Many people don't follow their passion and end up just settling for a job that pays the bills. Ask a child what they want to do when they grow up and they'll probably shout out the loftiest goal possible, like astronaut or the President. But then they grow up and put the big dreams aside for a steady paycheck.

Here are some dreamers who got the pink slip and followed through on their dreams.

"Computers to Comedy"

Dan Nainan was born into a half-Indian, half-Japanese heritage. He went on to pursue a career with Intel, but economic uncertainty forced him to make a choice.

His true passion had always been to make people happy. So he packed his bags and started touring to learn the comedy business. Today he travels the world delighting audiences with his 100% clean comedy routine.

He's been featured in Reader's Digest and The New York Post. He's also been on Saturday Night Live and Last Comic Standing. His rich, diverse background drives his jokes and makes him a hit with audiences.

www.danielnainan.com

“Around the World as Cheaply as Possible”

Brian Peters was never a big world traveler. He was never really a fan of traveling at all. But then again, he spent most of his time at the office in the corporate world.

He always thought that traveling was for people who had lots of money or lots of free time. And he didn't have either.

But that all changed after getting a pink slip from his New York City banking job.

With plenty of free time on his hands he packed a bag and took off. He traveled around the world from Hong Kong to Marrakesh to the Vatican City having the time of his life because of losing his job.

He started writing down his experiences to inform and encourage others to do what he did.

He was able to find the cheapest and safest places to stay that were off the beaten path. They were also the most interesting because they weren't the typical tourist places, but places that embraced the flavor of the country and the locals.

Once he got home he decided not to pursue a regular job and continued writing.

He published an e-book about 'round the world travel, and started a blog that would help others plan their own adventures and fulfill their dreams.

www.nodebtworldtravel.net

From Pink Slip to Non-Profit



Some who have gotten pink slips have used their time to volunteer and give back to the community. Others have found the process so rewarding that they've switched careers and gone into the non-profit business.

" From 'Rags' to Rags to Riches"

One of those people is Kevin Roberts. After eleven years as an award-winning columnist for the Courier-Post of South Jersey, they gave him two things – his walking papers and a gift card for having won employee of the month.

After the newspaper industry collapsed on itself he decided to take a job at a non-profit human resources organization that works with developmentally disabled kids, the homeless, single moms in addiction recovery and a million other amazing things.

He wanted to do something good with his life, like feed the hungry, clothe the needy, and care for the sick. He had no idea how to do it and was scratching around in the dark for a while.

But somehow he blundered into a job at Resources for Human Development, a national human services non-profit headquartered in Philadelphia.

A pink slip is a gift

He took a pay cut and went to work in an office for the first time in his life. He left work that he really, really liked and people told him he was good at. He would have stayed there and gone down with the ship, but the ship tossed him overboard, so he didn't have a choice.

Now he can't imagine working anywhere else. He says it's without a doubt the coolest place he's ever worked. He looks around in wonder at the work that is done there and feels really lucky to be a part of it.

"Heck, I feel lucky to have a job at all these days", he says. "Do I miss the old gig?" Sure, all the time. But I still feel very lucky, and all things considered, I'm pretty happy with the way things worked out...even if it was really horrible for a while there."

www.rhd.org

Julie's websites and blogs:

- **Job Security Seminar** www.jobsecurityseminar.com
- **Swiggies** www.swiggies.com
- **Infringer Blacklist** www.infringerblacklist.com
- **CreateForCash** www.createforcash.com
- **Fun Job Fairs** www.funjobfairs.com