



I would probably love Donald Trump's **The Apprentice**, except that I think the show sucks. But it was on my mind yesterday when I was waiting on line at Starbuck's for a 600 calorie low-fat muffin, when I overheard two patrons at a nearby table.

"It sucks, just sucks. Unemployment sucks."

"You still got your health."

"Not really. Tumor's back."

I strained to listen as the couple continued their conversation, and learned that the 52-year-old man had recently been fired from his thirty-year engineering job. He was married and the father of three teenage girls, and what little savings he had was going toward laser toner.

As I walked home, humming an obscure jazz tune, it occurred to me that the man, while understandably glum, could obtain a much better life perspective if he had handled his job dismissal more effectively. For **the issue here is not lack of money or health concerns, but self-esteem**. If you think poorly of yourself, it will affect every aspect of your life. Don't sit back and let a monumental career setback bring you down. You need to think and act proactively, starting from the moment you're fired . . .

The Exit

Your boss has just fired you,

and it's time to clean out your desk and leave the building. What protocol should you follow? And what, if anything, should you say to your boss?

"Jerry, you're fired."

"Thank you for the opportunity to serve your company. I'll close the door on my way out."

This is a poor exit and is riddled with obvious self-esteem issues (remember, this is about YOU, not your boss). A better exit would proceed as follows:

"Jerry, you're fired."

"I fucked your fat wife."

This is a clever retort and leaves your boss wondering: Did you really fuck his wife? Do you think she's fat? Did you use a condom?

Other acceptable exit lines that would leave you with a similarly heightened sense of self-worth would be any of the following, depending on your country of origin:

"You're a contemptible lout and poor cricket player." (England)
"Je vous déteste." (France)
"Kiss me - I'm Irish." (Gaelic)

Your exit need not be relegated to a verbal jab. Many highly effective exits are punctuated by physical acts that turn potentially pathetic dismissals into ones resonating with grand theatrics. The following are all perfectly acceptable as you prepare to leave the workplace:

- In front of your coworkers, mock the way your boss walks and embellish his modestly nasal voice to one sounding like an extra-whiney Fran Drescher screaming "I hate you, Mr. Sheffield!" as security guards drag you into the parking lot.
 - Somersault across the office bullpen while singing a sexually explicit R. Kelly song.
 - Make a beeline to the cafeteria's salad bar and rub your penis against the cherry tomatoes.
- All of the above are acceptable and will make your drive-of-shame home much more palatable.

Breaking the news to family and friends

Most corporate firings are not motivated by financial cutbacks, but rather are a result of poor work performance. And while it's bad enough to hear your boss tell you that you're incompetent, it's even more humiliating when your family and friends realize it, too. There's no need to share with them your boss's parting admonishments, though. With a few gentle tweaks of the truth, you can easily modify a scenario from one where you're a pathetic loser, into another where you're seen as a principled warrior.

To a spouse

"Fired? Honey, what happened?"

"My boss was cheating on his wife, that's what happened. I told him that I thought it was disrespectful, and he fired me."

Coupled with mock tears, this exchange conveys a deep sensitivity to your wife that will secure her undying reverence, if not elicit a spontaneous blow job.

To friends

Personal white lies such as the above might not be persuasive with friends; you might need to try a somewhat different tack:

"Fired? Jer, I thought your ad campaign was a hit?"

"It was. But I refused to tuck in my crucifix. And no one's going to tell ME how to love Jesus Christ, Lord Almighty."

Who can argue with such a righteous alibi?

To young children

Dealing with young children is a special example, one that requires an intricate knowledge of child psychology. A response such as the following will earn your kids' eternal respect:

"Why were you fired, Daddy? Were you bad?"

"They had to fire Daddy, or else Mommy would die."

Vengeance

You've just suffered the most degrading and damaging

professional indignation imaginable;

in fact, nothing in your lifetime will ever exceed the magnitude of this failure. Your boss has essentially told you, "You are not useful. We do not need you. Your work output is shit."

And so on.

And if your boss tempered the dismissal with conciliatory phrases like "this is hard for me to do, but . . ."; "we really like you, but . . ."; or my favorite, "my hands are tied . . .", what he's really telling you is that while you may have made some positive contributions, that your screw-ups are far worse.

Your boss has now spoken, and all things considered, wouldn't it feel great to kill him? Wouldn't it be grand to just plunge a dagger into his heart and watch him writhe with agony, spitting up blood and begging for mercy as you twist the blade upwards, watching the last signs of life fade from his limp corpse? Imagine how great that would feel!

It's only one way to rid yourself of the harsh reminders of your crude firing, restoring your self-esteem to its highest levels, ensuring that your confidence remains elevated and undiminished.

Here are some other ways to bolster your self esteem:

Reaffirm your patriotism

If 9/11 taught us anything,

it's to know that we live in the best Nation on Earth. And if you're wallowing in self-pity from a firing that took place weeks or months ago, haven't you lost sight of that essential self-congratulatory truth?" And if you can't and won't stand and be counted as a proud American, then you truly are shameful and, I'm sorry to say, in your case the terrorists have won.

Don't be afraid to fly your flag. You're an American. Act like one.

Find Nicole Simpson's Killer

It's been ten years since O.J. was acquitted, and it seems like the L.A.P.D. has abandoned its search for the murderer.

You've got some extra time on your hands, why not do some criminal investigative work? You'll be performing a richly rewarding civic-minded function, while helping us all sleep a bit better at night, knowing that somebody still cares about justice.

No Oprah

'Nuff said.

By incorporating just a few of the above into his post-firing repertoire, the man from Starbuck's could be walking tall with his head held high, not thinking once about his shameful unemployment, while being left instead to dwell on his tumor.

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