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Learning Confidence in Cubicle Land

January 10th, 2009 — nuts and bolts

A lot happens on the first day of a new job or assignment. As I made my way to my new position in corporate America, I had the overwhelming desire to pull the car over and go home. My only experience in a business environment was selling newspaper subscriptions to lonely housewives and writing for a talk-radio program.

I wasn't sure building security would even let me in as my only suit, reserved for funerals and interviews, screamed *inexperienced*. I smiled and made my way to the lobby. I must have checked my makeup a million times out in the parking lot as I tried to find a comfortable facial expression. I remember my Aunt Dot telling me years earlier to always look happy.

I watched people come from the cafeteria with their morning coffee. They seemed raring to go, but they were strangers to me. Funny... I knew that soon I would become one of them. Just then, a genuine smile appeared on my face.

It was so exciting. After completing orientation my new boss introduced me as part of the team. Prior to this moment, the only team I was familiar with was when I played volleyball in college. As we continued down the narrow hall, in pursuit of my cubicle, I thought about all the opportunities I had to look forward to.

You don't realize how much you learn on the first day; you think it's only about the meet and greet, getting settled and sitting around. There's more to it than that. This is your fresh start: a new beginning. You meet the people you will come to depend on for support, learn the ropes and define your future.

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At first, I was so intimidated. The table in the executive conference room was so overpowering. I felt as if I were slouching in my chair. I kept hearing my mother's voice telling me to sit up. I looked around as people came in and started to think, "Do I really belong here?" I still thought about my morning commute and how I should of turned the car around. I sat with my boss and team members while I tried to follow along.

All eyes were on me. So new in my career, I was unsure of what I was supposed to do. I thought my boss would bail me out, or at least introduce me and they would move on, but the presenter asked again. "What would you consider a company's biggest downfall?" I had no real experience in this area and obviously I had nothing to base my comments on. The presenter seemed really patient and kind. I could see from his expression that he was genuinely interested in what I had to say.

In my pursuit for a cubicle in corporate America, I lost sight of my inner qualities that landed me the job in the first place. Although this was the beginning of this journey, I had to remind myself that I have the "fighting spirit" and courage to overcome obstacles.

I never doubted myself again after that first day.

As I surfaced from the cafeteria with my morning coffee, I glanced at a woman in the lobby with her new suit and compact. Although she was a stranger to me, I knew shortly, she would become one of us. Just then, a smile appeared on my face. I'm thankful I didn't turn the car around.

To this day, I still think about that executive and use that boost of confidence as a reminder, that with courage and perseverance, any goal is attainable.



Rating: 5.0/5 (1 vote cast)
