**THE HARDEST PART:**

**ASKING FOR HELP**

Believe it or not, often the hardest part of shifting careers or making changes within your career is asking for help.

I admit it – I am a guy. I do not like asking for help. I do not like asking for directions. There, I said it. Sometimes, we’re thrust into situations where our choices are to quit or ask for help. You know you have been there!

You can’t do this alone. No matter how many books, articles or blogs you read, you will have to talk to real people in the world you’re seeking to enter. The people in your industry or the company you are targeting are the ones who can tell you about the top players in the industry, the unspoken rules and the most-tested paths to success. They’re the ones who can introduce you to the right people, put in a good word for you or steer you away from the kinds of people who can sabotage your efforts.

**A LITTLE HUMBLE PIE WITH YOUR COFFEE?**

In these transactions, you’re the receiver, the seeker, the newbie — not the expert. The lunch you bought your source doesn’t adequately compensate him or her for the knowledge you’re getting. You’re not in the power position. That’s hard for people who have achieved success in their careers and a certain number of gray hairs on their heads.

For most of us guys, it can actually be a pretty miserable experience. I was a very experienced professional and used to succeeding. I had never really failed miserably at anything until I got the teaching gig. When I did fail miserably there, I wanted to just quit.

Because I didn’t believe I should quit, I sucked it up and asked for help. It was hard. But it was eye opening and I ended up being an almost religious supporter of the notion that people really only get where they’re going with the help of other people.

Here’s the shocker: Most people are happy to help you. For one thing, people generally like to be helpful.

For another, you are offering them the power position, and that feels good to everyone. Think of giving the other person that role as a gift. As long as you pay the tab for the coffee or the meal and send them a thank-you note afterward, both of you will benefit from your session.

When I went off to teach high school math, I had a great Algebra I mentor. I was totally lost teaching Algebra II. After a few weeks, I asked Ginny, a 27- year-old Algebra II teacher, if I could use her lesson plans. My plan was to stay two days behind her in the curriculum and follow her lead exactly. That way I could go down and watch her teach any lesson that I did not understand. I played little puppy dog the rest of the year. Everything she did, I did. I was old enough to be her father, but I followed her lead.

I sucked it up and asked for help.

And it gets easier. Not everyone will have insights that move you forward, but just practicing asking for help is an enormously powerful thing.

There are several areas where job seekers may need help:

**RESEARCHING POTENTIAL CAREERS**

* Asking someone on the inside what it’s really like to work in a specific field.
* Asking someone on the inside what it’s like to work for a specific company, and what it takes to get in and succeed.
* Asking for advice about what’s needed in a specific career.
* Asking for a recommendation or introduction to someone who can give you more advice.

**SEEKING SUPPORT**

* Asking for a recommendation on your resume or LinkedIn.
* Asking for someone to put in a good word for you.

**SOCIAL MEDIA HELP**

Nowadays, there are so many social networks that people are getting picky about which ones they want to mess with. You need to figure out where the people you need to talk to are.

LinkedIn is a given. When hiring, many companies now look at a LinkedIn profile in lieu of a resume. But there are also a lot of Facebook groups around finding jobs and networking, so it's useful to be active there, too.

The bottom line is you don’t have to know all the tools, apps and social media sites, but you do have to have enough familiarity with them to be ready to learn a new one fast when someone asks you to use it to set up an appointment, apply for a job or complete some other task. Try Googling "top job-seeking applications and software" to see what’s hot right now.

**ALL IS NOT LOST**

Probably, the skills and experience you’ve amassed over your career will find a place in your new career and help you be even better at your new job than you would have been without them.

But right now, clinging to the security of competency you’ve demonstrated at your old job will just get in the way of finding a new career you can enjoy for the next several decades.

Depending on the magnitude of the pivot you intend to make, you will have to suck it up and be humble. You are no longer the expert. I have a friend who is making a major change into green energy. He is working as an apprentice electrician. He is learning to be humble.

When he’s done, he’ll have new knowledge that— coupled with everything he’s learned about working hard, meeting customers’ expectations and marketing himself—will take him into a future he wants.

He will have made the pivot. After all, that’s the goal.

***ACTION STEPS:***

* Find people who can help you reach those goals and connect with them via LinkedIn, email or phone call.
* Take these people out for coffee, lunch or a walk. Remember to be humble. This time, you’re not the expert!

For additional resources, check out:

Repurpose Your Career Resource Center <https://careerpivot.com/RYC-Resources/>