

HOMELESS IN TRANSITION

BY ROBERT M. GIGNAC

In the September 2008 issue of *Enterprise* in an article titled “In Transit”, I had outlined a number of decisions that I was facing that were affecting my “transition” from where I was at that time, to where I might eventually end up.

The transitions in question included potential relocation back to Canada, potential creation of our own Swiss company, a change in career for my wife from corporate marketing to executive/life coaching, as well as the creation of an American version of my book.

The great thing about this was the multiplicity of choice—which was also the hardest part. None of these options would have been “bad” choices, none of them would have been wrong. The hardest part in situations like these is simply making any choice in the face of so many and starting the transition.

Fast forward to today—which transitions were pursued? As I type this, I am sitting in the basement of a house in Etobicoke, Ontario that isn't mine and this makes me feel a bit homeless. After six years in Switzerland (which was supposed to be three...hey, life happens) I am now a resident of Canada once again and today is day number twenty-three in my temporary residence (thanks Jan!), living out of suitcases while my “stuff” is somewhere in a container on a boat bound for Canada.

Where do I stand? International move from Switzerland to Canada? Check. Creation of a US edition of my book to expand into the US market? Check. Wife creating new executive/life coaching business after 20+ years in the corporate world? Check. A personal transition from being part of a couple for 20+ years into being a “free agent” encouraged to pursue my own path at this point in my life? Check.

Is this stressful? The following items regularly show up in the list of “life's stressful events”—moving, changing jobs, marital separation/divorce—in fact, these three always show up in the top five. Ok, not only am I homeless, I'm pretty (insert strong adjective here) stressed and homeless. So, what does this all mean?

In the list above is also a transition that I am undergoing that was not my decision and that I didn't see coming. Oh, you thought you get to make all the decisions? Silly you. Insert ‘smile’ here. The reason we make plans in life is not that we get to execute them the way we want to, but to have something to

fall back upon when life decides you are a bit too comfortable or nonchalant and changes the rules for you.

The goal with any transition is to make the decision, start acting upon it, and then make it right. Notice that I didn't say, “make the right decision”. Why not? Very seldom do we ever make the right decision—we make a decision and then our actions are what make it right. Often we must make decisions with the best information we have on hand (which is often limited). But once we are engaged in the process, we must start taking the actions required to make the decisions right.

My action list at the moment includes determining where I will ultimately live (which region, province or town), how to market myself in the US (and continue to grow my Canadian business), how to deal with being suddenly single approaching 50 years of age, how best to provide support to my parents—who while aging gracefully may need support that they will be most certainly unwilling to ask me for. The processing has begun on all of these fronts—to varying degrees of success. No right decisions have been made, but decisions have been made that I am trying to “make right” and only time will tell.

What I am finding as I get older, is that the selection and execution of any of these decisions outweighs the “waiting for a better option”—which would have been my default when I was younger. Something new and different will always be there if the transition we choose to execute doesn't turn out to be what we thought it would. It doesn't matter what that transition is—retirement, career change, writing a book, sabbatical, job promotion, you name it—it is more important to make the decision and move toward something than to stand still.

My final thought: as much as I have the feeling that I am up to my butt in alligators at the moment, the swamp will get drained and they will move on. If you see me in your town in the next little while, offer to buy this homeless guy a coffee and I promise you an interesting chat about life's transitions. **E**

Robert Gignac is the owner of Taynac & Associates (currently homeless in Canada after six years in Switzerland), providing keynote presentations, seminars, and workshops on personal financial development and motivation. He is the co-author of the international best seller “Rich is a State of Mind” (7th Canadian printing, 2nd US printing). Sample chapters and reviews can be found at: www.richisastateofmind.com. To book Robert to speak at your next corporate event, please contact him at: rgignac@taynac.com or www.taynac.com