UNTIL A few years ago, I bought into the same idea that my parents and grandparents had about how a career should unfold: If you worked hard, you would be taken care of. You'd get to buy a house, a couple cars. You'd retire at 65-ish. The American dream. I had always been grateful to have a job—particularly the "dream job" I had throughout my 30s. I was loyal to it, and to my industry. And my job and my industry, I thought, were loyal to me.

And then I was laid off. I got another job pretty quickly, and then, after two years, I was laid off again. I was the sole earner in my family. I had two young kids and a mortgage.

Let me tell you: That will clear the mind.

We're being told that we're in this amazing economic moment, but most people I know are scared. They feel anything but stable, and for good reason. We're living through a seismic shift in American business. Connectivity has disrupted industries, as well as the lives of families and hardworking people who take pride in their work and just want work to do.

My reaction? Once I truly accepted a less stable reality, I stopped trying to walk down a "path." It was as much a mindshift as it was a career strategy. I began to feel younger and more nimble. But I got a lot of advice—from colleagues who'd moved on and from people who specialize in reinvention, like the ones I spoke with for this story. These three experts regularly work with the most reluctant reinventors—people far along on their professional journey—and help them navigate change. Here's how they think you should approach it.

MEET THE NEW RULE INTERPRETERS

Stacey Staaterman, a New York City–based career and leadership coach

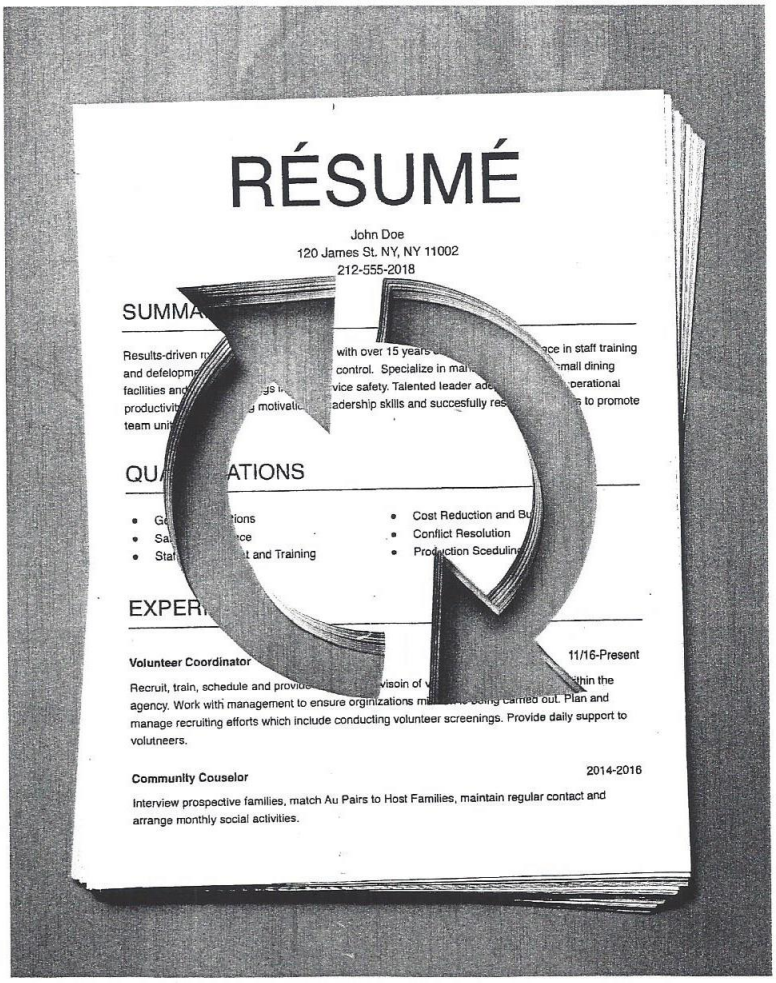
Dorie Clark, a marketing strategist and author of *Reinventing You*

Bill Burnett, an adjunct professor and executive director of the Design Program at Stanford and coauthor of *Design Your Life*

1 Admit That It Sucks, but the Time Has Come to Do Some Reinventing

▸ Of course it's scary
You expected that you would surf this wave all the way to the beach and jump off and have a great retirement. But the surf changed. Now you've got choppy, short waves and you're going to fall off the board. Your job now is to get back on the board and anticipate fall-offs. Today, being adaptive and flexible is critical. —**S.S.**

▸ But not doing it is worse
You can kind of hunker down and hope against hope that the storm blows over, but it's not going to blow over. You really only have two choices. Accept the default reality: "Whatever happens, I'll just scramble." Do you want the default reality? Or the one you design? Because those are your only two options. —**B.B.**



2 Treat LinkedIn as the New Headhunter (Because It Is)

▸ You're only what your digital profile says about you
Our culture around job searching and career-management behaviors mirrors dating and courtship. Nobody has a blind date anymore. Nobody. Even if you have an introduction to another human being, all of the humans involved go to the Internet and scope each other out. If I had two hours to spend on doing something to help somebody's career and job search, I would invest that time on LinkedIn. Get your profile in good shape first. —**S.S.**

▸ Make your profile about what you *can* do, not just what you did
Peel back the layers of your résumé. Think about your transferable skills. I do a lot of work with transitioning members of the military, and some of them come in and have skills like they're a tank driver or they defuse bombs, and obviously that doesn't seem remotely transferable to civilian life. So how do you take someone like that and make their skills transferable? Understand that it's not about your literal job description. There are meta skills that you developed along the way, like understanding how to lead a team, or learning what makes for a great story and how to capture people's attention. Things like that could be applied to any number of different places. —**D.C.**

▸ Don't paywall your email address
Many people (including recruiters) use free accounts on LinkedIn, so they cannot access your information in the "Contact" section. Include it in the "Summary" section instead. —**S.S.**

▸ You have to jump in
LinkedIn is not a giant digital address book. It is a 24/7/365 networking event. Those who share, comment on, and publish content are rewarded with connections and visibility. Lack of participation negatively affects how your profile will rank in recruiter searches. —**S.S.**

NEW ADDICTION ALERT!

YOU'VE PROBABLY seen YouTube videos with impassioned speakers like entrepreneur Gary Vaynerchuk and half of all TED Talkers gassing on about working really hard (getting up early, never quitting, generally crushing it but never saying what "it" actually is). So, what is the... result of all this effort? For peddlers of "**hustle porn**," who revere and promote extreme effort as a virtue, the work is the result. Which is obviously weird! Kind of sick, actually! And, more important, counterproductive. Ignore those who say you should work harder than anyone else. (A) That's impossible, because Dwayne Johnson walks the earth. (B) You deserve (and need) a personal life. (C) One man's motivation can be another man's self-esteem killer. Hustling nonstop, as Reddit founder and hustle-porn hater Alexis Ohanian says, "has deleterious effects not just on your business but on your well-being." The only people seeing any benefits from this twisted philosophy are the people reaping YouTube ad dollars espousing it. —R. M.



3 Don't Wait Around to Get Noticed

▸ Today, everybody's in your network
As long as you're on the Internet, you can reach pretty much anyone who's worth connecting with. It's completely wide open. I've struck up a friendship with somebody who's been a leader in personal development for 40 years, all because I commented on some of his content. There is so much access to people at superhigh levels—there is no reason you couldn't create a relationship with a CEO if you wanted to.

Once you've built that network, you've got to keep up with it. People often don't do that. They ping folks once in a while or may have lunch, but that's not enough. They don't keep them up to speed and treat them like a board of directors. These people should be getting a twice-a-month update: "Here's how the search is going." Express how much you value their support, and ask for specific introductions to people. —**S.S.**

▸ Make yourself easy to know
If you blog or are sharing relevant content on social media, then people look at you as a thoughtful curator of ideas. That can matter. Even if you're in a company where there are constraints on what you can share publicly, you can share things in places like your company intranet. Or put in applications to speak at industry conferences. It takes extra effort, but these things ensure you're perceived as credible. —**D.C.**

▸ Authenticity wins
I had a client write an article about gratitude—gratitude after being laid off! The piece was vulnerable, personal, and unexpected. It raised his visibility and led to a ton of new conversations. He's found a job since then, and he's doing great. It actually turned up the heat on his search and pulled him out into the light. —**S.S.**

4 As Long as You're Inventing, Make Something Great

▸ Go for the big win
Get out of the false binary of "It's either work or life." It's just life and life. You're living life at home, you're living life on the commute, you're living life. Whenever you make things a dichotomy, you're going, "It's either A or B, and if I have more of A, I have less of B." There's no way to win that game. —**B.B.**

Delmaine Donson/Getty Images (man on computer, previous page); Kyoshino/Getty Images (paper); Mike Kemp/Getty Images (sign)