

It's Time To Gracefully Exit The Spaceship by Davida Goldberg

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WITHIN THE PAST TWELVE HOURS it has become painfully obvious to me that I am out of touch with the state of the economy and the job market in this country.

I was mistakenly operating from the assumption that even if a person could not find permanent work it was still possible to find placement with a temporary agency. Obviously I was wrong. First off, I was surprised when an agent from an Atlanta based temporary job search firm informed me that I would need to submit my resume for her review before I would be permitted to register with the agency.

In previous years when I used a different staffing agency, like in 1995, I simply had to call to make an appointment to schedule a time to take their typing and word processing tests.

So, although I was initially confused by the agent's request, I immediately sent her my resume. After pressing my netbook's send button, I sat back with cup of chai in one hand and raspberry scone in the other, and eagerly awaited hearing back from her as to when I could come in for an interview so that the agency could begin sending me on assignments. How hard could it be? I have a BA in sociology and a MS in professional counseling, and although I haven't worked full-time in over a year, I have a pretty attractive resume.

Twenty-four hours later I received a response from the agent. I couldn't wait to open the e-mail heralding that it was once again time for me to go back to work.

Wrong.

This was the agent's response, "based on our clients' needs we typically do not seek employees with your type of experience."

Come again? They don't seek employees that have helped homeless people obtain housing, assisted AIDS patients to receive free meds, testified in court to protect children and teens from being sent back into the custody of their abusive and drug addicted parents.

Yes, I can see where it might look bad for the agency to send someone with my qualifications to answer phones, send faxes, and run errands for their clients. You never know I might corrupt the office environment by listening too attentively to a co-worker's concerns. And there is the potential handicap that I may demonstrate too much efficiency at completing moderate to simple tasks.

There is also the heightened risk that I might possess sufficient intelligence to figure out how to use the scanner on the first try, making the plans for my first day of training obsolete, leaving me an entire day to sit at my desk reading People and noshing on Sun Chips. I am not knocking secretaries or receptionists, I have worked as both and I was damned good at it.

So it seems to me that if I had the consistency and determination to complete undergraduate and graduate degrees, and have experience working with a wide variety of people,

from children to the elderly, isn't it feasible that I might have the competence and intelligence to figure out how to use the copy machine and how to put a call on hold? And I think that I could probably muster a believable if not superlative, "Good Morning, and thank you for calling Hart to Hart. How may I direct your call?"



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