

Have that Awkward Conversation

It's easy to fall into a pattern of disparaging your company or role as a means of feeling better about that tugging in your heart for a change. *What I joined must be declining, or insufficient, or in some way less than it once was... or why would I want to leave it?*

Whether it's a job move or a career transition, going from a strong/healthy/fulfilling scenario—to a different strong/healthy/fulfilling scenario—is entirely possible and common. Moving on doesn't mean leaving something bad; it might simply be time for a change.

As humans, we are lifelong learners—seeking to experience, grow, improve, and have increasing influence as we know and do more. Sometimes things that used to be interesting and fun begin to feel boring or monotonous. Often, we dream about a bigger platform in which to use our well-honed muscles. That doesn't mean we aren't happy where we are. It just means we are

ready for something different.

Sometimes it's our personal circumstances or primary relationships in life that have changed, prompting us to alter our scenario or dimension of work.

Often you can accomplish a change without leaving the organization you are with. Rather than staying in an operating role, perhaps you pursue a move to the company's Foundation to lead your company's efforts in the community or world on issues of strategic import. Or instead of staying in Sales, you pursue a move into Customer Service or Supply Chain where you bring that deep understanding of the customer into parts of your organization that may need it more. Maybe you investigate leaving your regional team to join international, taking what you have mastered to a bigger platform. Or you go from a full-time job to a part-time role, consulting on issues the company needs your help with—while spending the balance of

your time working on causes you care deeply about.

You have a lot more control over what you do day to day—even within your current organization—than you may imagine. For top performers, companies are motivated to work to find something that feeds individuals' appetites for growth or change, as well as retaining them in the organization. Many top performers are on a succession slate for bigger roles that just haven't opened up yet—and the company will do what it can to bridge them to a role that both the person and the company are excited about.

Most high-performing leaders are just one awkward conversation away from unlocking incredible possibilities within their current workplace. The key is to ask, listen, and recognize that you may not know all you need to about the alternate possibilities that exist where you are today. The worst thing you can do is to leave without voicing your interest in other options.

Talk with a trusted leader more senior than you. Or with HR. Or both.

Whether you are at the beginning of your career or on the back nine, when you are an important contributor, your voice will be listened to. Just initiate that awkward conversation. You'll be glad you did.



LESLIE W. BRAKSICK, Ph.D.
Co-Founder & Senior Partner, leslie.braksick@mynextseason.com
My Next Season helps companies and individuals with important career transitions, from early career to "retirement," and ensures they happen well.
Find Dr. Braksick's book, *Your Next Season: Advice for Executives on Transitioning from Intense Careers to Fulfilling Next Seasons*, on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).