

Introduction

Parting company fearlessly is just as important as joining a new employer confidently.

If you don't part company on your own terms, you can get hurt.

Parting company is a trying right of passage. Resigning a job can be a stressful experience. Getting fired is far worse. But, on top of either, who wants to be coerced into an interrogation – an exit interview – on the way out the door? (Did you know it can be risky, too?)

Suddenly, otherwise-confident people get clobbered by unnerving demands and choices. *If you don't part company on your own terms, you can get hurt.*

As I organized my best advice about how to leave your job (whether you're quitting or getting fired), I realized there are many daunting challenges and choices you probably don't realize you'll face during this awkward time.

- Do you know how to resign? (p. 40)
- Should you consent to an exit interview? (p. 53)
- Did getting fired shatter your self-confidence? (p. 12)
- Should you accept a "package" to quit your job voluntarily? (p. 26)
- What's the truth about counter-offers? Should you accept one? (p. 50)
- How can you prepare for the shock of a downsizing? (p. 20)
- Is outplacement a big, costly mistake? (p. 28)
- How do you explain to a new employer why you left your old one? (p. 58)

Parting Company fearlessly is just as important as joining a new employer confidently. For this *Answer Kit*, I selected the toughest questions posed by Ask The Headhunter subscribers. Their stories are unique, but at the heart of each is a key problem someone faces every day. I enhanced and expanded the most popular content from the website, blog and newsletter – to help you deal with all these challenges. I hope *Parting Company* helps you make your next move successfully – and on your own terms.

Nick Corcodilos
Ask The Headhunter

“Shut up and deal”

How do people get ahead? Maybe it's more important to ask why they don't. Sometimes, parting company starts with a hand you're dealt—but to win, you must play it. Opportunities appear all the time. What do you do about them?

“Life is tough. Three out of three people die, so shut up and deal.”

Ring Lardner

Parting company with your employer may be your choice, or it may be forced on you unexpectedly. Sometimes life is tough, and we're left to make choices and pick up the pieces. At some point, we wonder about the choices we *didn't* make. We ask, *Where did it all go?* Let me show you.

- You just got fired. Last evening you met someone at a party who works in a business you'd do anything to work in. The next day you recall the encounter, shake your head, and get back to searching the job listings and filling out online application forms.
- An idea has been simmering in the back of your mind about an article you'd like to write for a professional publication. It would get you noticed in professional circles. But there's no time to do the research it would require, so you go to lunch.
- A client compliments you on the work you've done for her, suggests you'd make a great addition to her team, smiles and walks off. You proudly tell your friends and explain how influential your client is, then you order another beer and kick back.
- The department down the hall is short of help while completing work on an important new product line for your company. If you had time to help them out, it could pave the way to a promotion, but your phone rings and you stop dreaming.

Put a few years of wishful thinking between each of the opportunities in the life described above, and you'll understand “where it all went.”

Every opportunity starts or ends with a choice. Whether it's in fifty years, or twenty, or five – as Ring Lardner wisely warns, we'll all be dead. *So, what choices did you make today?* Whether you were fired or quit your job, did you deal, did you play the hand you were dealt, or did you pass?