

# The Value of Taking a Professional Pause

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By George Hofheimer

You know, I think anyone in the professional world is, at certain points in their career, just have moments of reflection of, "Hey, is this what I want to do for the rest of my life?" or, "I'm really burnt out," or, "I've got new interests that I need to explore, which are really difficult to, to do."

When you're, when you're in an executive position in an organization, you know, you're, you're managing up, you're managing down, you're managing sideways, and then you just have a lot of responsibility. So just taking a pause, whether it's, you know, for some people, all that can happen is, you know, a little bit of an extended vacation. For others, like myself, I felt very fortunate that I was able to engineer a multi-month pause and do some things that I've always wanted to do.

I think it's always in the back of someone's mind to do something different. You know, I mean, unless you're, you're in a position that is just absolutely fulfilling day in and day out. And I think that those types of experiences are pretty rare.

So I would, I would say to people that are considering a pause in their professional lives to really listen to that inner voice that's going on in your brain, and really listen to it and and think about like, "Okay, what is it? What is it trying to say to me in terms of the kind of pause or break that I need?"

And for most people that are listening to this, they're, they're in the business world, they're in the financial services world. So, we tend to be kind of project planners. So, you know, taking taking those those little thoughts that you have in your brain and really putting pen to paper around the length of time that you think you can, you can take a break what you actually want to do, what are the outcomes that you hope to get out of it, you know, and, you know, recognizing that that's not going to be the final answer. But just putting some meat on the bones of an idea is a really important thing to actually make it a reality.

And what I found was, once I decided generally what I wanted to do during during my break, because I just started telling people, so that I know, I couldn't back out of it. And my plans were not, were not set in stone, but I, you know, had this concept of wanting to go on a really long bike ride across the United States. And I hadn't even started training for it. But then I just started telling people that I was this is what I was going to do in the spring of 2021. And it was kind of like a self-reinforcing mechanism.

I would say, don't consider yourself indispensable. Every one of us is replaceable, we all have unique qualities and capabilities that our organizations value. But at the same time, you know, letting go of the the ego needs that we all have about being a trusted, essential part of a team and being able to say, "Okay, I can step away," which, by the way, provides opportunities for the organization to grow and people within the organization to grow. And, and also allows you to grow as an individual leader.

So I think that's a key part of the equation is just to be able to kind of let go of your perceptions about your indispensability within the organization.