

To Quit or to Get Fired: That is the Question

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“Your life is in your hands, to make of it what you choose”

It is normal to be worried about getting fired, and thinking about quitting to avoid a difficult situation. Employees often wonder if they should avoid the damaging perceptions associated with firing by quitting first. In some cases, it can make sense to resign before you are let go. In others, it does not.

In either case, you should be prepared to move on. If you are fired, you may not be given any advance notice. If you quit, you may be shown the door even if you give a two-week notice.

Take note: Having everything ready to clear out of your office and start a job search, or proactively leaving before you are fired, will make a difficult situation less stressful.

Are You Going to Be Fired?

How can you tell if you might be fired? Here are a few warning signs which could indicate that your job may be over.

1. **The company is not doing well** - Depending on your role at the organisation, you might have direct insight into the company's fortunes. If your employer is haemorrhaging clients or cash, getting a drubbing in the press, or suffering other reputation reversals in the industry, your job – and those of your colleagues – might not be long for this world.
2. **You do not have anything to do** - Your biggest project now belongs to someone else, while your lesser responsibilities have landed on an intern's plate. Your reports are reassigned to another manager, and your clients are gradually making their way to someone else's list. Meanwhile, you are trying to find ways to keep busy that do not involve wasting time on social media. Start using that free time to develop a strategy for finding another, better job.
3. **Your project deadlines have all moved up to around about the same time** - Maybe, however, it is not so much that you do not have anything to do, but that your boss seems to be in a much bigger hurry than usual to get your projects wrapped up. This does not necessarily point to imminent dismissal, but if a lot of your deadlines move up all at once, and to the same general time frame, you could be looking at your deadline for termination.
4. **Your boss does not seem to like you** - Maybe you used to get along with your boss, but now you can't seem to communicate about even the most basic issues. Or maybe your workday has turned into a blame game, and you're always "It." Whatever the reason, if the boss doesn't seem to be on your side, or if you have received a warning about your performance, it might be time to start polishing your resume.
5. **You feel out of place** - If you feel like an alien life-form at work, with totally different priorities, interests, and perspectives than everyone you're working with, it might be time to move on.

If some or all of them apply to you, it might be time to consider quitting.

The Advantages of Quitting

Quitting has some advantages worth considering. If you leave a job of your own accord, you will be able to frame your departure in a more positive way to future employers.

Take note: As part of your separation process, you may be able to negotiate a later end date, severance pay or a viable recommendation. Your employer will save on unemployment benefits and avoid the difficult task of firing you.

If you resign, be sure to emphasize your willingness to work hard up until the date of your departure. Also, mention that you will maintain a positive attitude for the duration of your tenure with the company.

You can find some tips on how to resign gracefully at <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/best-tips-to-resign-from-your-job-gracefully-2061667>

Turning the Situation Around

Frank admissions about performance issues at a meeting like this with management might also lead to discussions about ways that you could improve performance during a trial period. It might also provide an opportunity to discuss other jobs at the company which may be a better fit.

Employees may quit because they wrongly fear a firing. Sometimes conferring with management about your performance might allay some unwarranted fears and help you to avoid quitting or getting fired. It could help you get back on the right track with your current position.

Issues with Quitting

Quitting does have negative consequences concerning unemployment benefits. In most cases, employees who quit will not be eligible to collect unemployment. Workers who are fired will generally be eligible for unemployment benefits unless they are for a cause, for instance, unethical or illegal activities.

Another issue is income. If you do not have a job lined up before you quit, it may take a while to find another one. It is important to factor in finances when you are deciding whether to quit or not. Ask yourself, can you get by without a paycheck if it takes some time to find a new job?

Reasons to Stay on the Job

There are some good reasons to stay on the job if a firing is not immediately likely:

- It can be easier to get hired when you have a job than when you are out of work.

- You can start a job search while you are still working and avoid difficult explanations about quitting during job interviews.
- Most job seekers will network and interview more confidently and effectively while they are still employed.

What to Do to Prepare

Uncertainty is always stressful, but if you take the time to prepare it will be easier. Best case scenario, you will find a new job quickly and can give notice to your current employer. Worst case scenario, you will need to handle getting fired.

If you know you do not want to stay, ramp up your job search into high gear. There are ways you can streamline the process and get hired quickly.

Take note: Make sure you do not have any personal information on your work computer. If you have projects you are working on for your job, keep them current and be prepared to share information on where they stand with your supervisor if you turn in your notice.

Think about your finances. Can you afford to get by without a salary if you quit? How about medical aid and other employee benefits? Consider how you'll handle being jobless, and come up with at least a tentative plan for getting by. Try to plan for both scenarios: quitting and getting fired. Have at least a tentative plan in place will make your decision making easier.

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