

# the Center for Career and Business Development

PO Box 156 N. Eastham, MA 02651 508.240.3532 info@career-retreats.com

## PROTECTIVE STRATEGIES by Beverly Ryle

In response to growing concerns about financial survival, the news media is full of information about ways to save money, conserve energy, etc. But very little is being said about people's biggest worry—secure employment!

Work, either through job-employment or self-employment, is the levee that protects us from the storm of uncertainty, and as long as it holds, we can weather it. But what if the traditional approaches to finding and sustaining work can't stand up to the current surge of events?

To be safe, you will need to know your worth, demonstrate it on a daily basis, and be prepared to articulate why you are valuable to the organization you work for—which, incidentally, is the backbone of effective career management even when there isn't a financial crisis going on. Now, when the stakes are high, is the time to up the ante and take responsibility for raising your professional well-being to new level.

### FIVE STRATEGIES

1. *Change your attitude.* There are always things we don't like, and it is natural to complain about them. But Dilbertian negativity in the workplace has become so pervasive that we have lost our capacity to see the effect it has on the way we are perceived by our peers and supervisors. Now is not the time to speak disparagingly. Saying, "I'm happy to do it," with a tone of voice which expresses sincere willingness, to anything that's thrown your way as a result of cutbacks, restructuring etc. will go a long way toward keeping you on the "save" list.
2. *Work through your fears away from the job.* Yes, the times are scary, and yes, you need to talk through these feelings, but not with your co-workers. Just because they are buzzing with one rumor or another doesn't make participating in their discussions a good decision. Not only does it drag you down when being productive is important to your security, it also risks making visible in subtle ways—a worried look, an offhand remark expressing personal vulnerability, a put-down of a colleague to make yourself look good—a lack of self-confidence.
3. *Know what you're good at and make it known.* If ever there were a time not to assume people know what you bring to the table and to speak up about your contribution, it is now. This is not conceit—it's survival.

# the Center for Career and Business Development

PO Box 156 N. Eastham, MA 02651 508.240.3532 info@career-retreats.com

4. *Stay visible.* There's no greater tendency when under attack than to want to hunker down. But duck-and-cover is just as ineffective a safety measure in the workplace as it was during the Cold War. Your way of being visible could be as simple as offering to help a colleague who is understaffed meet a deadline. The point is to look for gaps that the economic crisis has created and use them as an opportunity to shine.
5. *Hope for the best.* There's nothing more attractive than someone who manages, despite very real problems, to manifest genuine optimism. People who can find a way to get past their own fears are an asset to any organization.

I am not suggesting this is easy, only pointing out the importance of trying to get yourself to a better space about the future. To do this, it helps to be selective about what you listen to and read, and deliberate in choosing to associate with people who help you gain perspective rather than feed your sense of gloom and doom.



As a career counselor and business consultant, **Beverly Ryle**, CLI class of 2003, has been helping corporate professionals, business owners, and people-in-transition achieve their full potential for over 25 years. She is the Director of the Center for Career and Business Development in North Eastham and the author of *Ground of Your Own Choosing: Winning Strategies for Finding & Creating Work* ([www.GroundOfYourOwnChoosing.com](http://www.GroundOfYourOwnChoosing.com)).