

Job market requires reinventing yourself

By Darlene Quinn

Brushes with poverty, extended periods of joblessness and a reliance on welfare is part of the “new normal” for the average American worker, according to data reported from the Associated Press.

Economic security isn't what it used to be before the economic crash of 2008; survey data points to the loss of manufacturing jobs, the globalized economy and a widening gap between rich and poor as reasons for why four in five workers in the United States will experience economic hardship in their lifetime.

I certainly don't envy what the average worker will likely endure throughout his or her career, but as an ambitious woman coming up through the ranks of corporate culture – the boy's club – many decades ago, I know the hardship of sustaining the career of your dreams.

Change is natural; change is life, and you don't have to be afraid of it.

Here is some career advice to struggling professionals:

- Parlay your strengths; experience and education isn't everything. Unfortunately, many workers are finding this out. Nowadays, even advanced college degrees are no guarantee of job security. It's not uncommon to find holders of master's degrees working in low-paying jobs. While a degree is still needed to get your foot in the door of most professional job openings, consider that which you most excel. As a professional, you may not be perfect in every aspect of your career, but there are activities in a job that you probably do regardless of work. Perhaps that's managing groups of people,

writing or designing websites. What is your strength, and how does that translate to a more promising field?

- Shoot for the top. Of course, you don't have to be in a state of economic hardship to consider switching fields. The Internet is allowing us to be more connected than ever and permanently altering the employment landscape. Perhaps you see an opportunity in online education and, as an administrator on a college campus you know the weaknesses of today's traditional university system. If you take well to new software, are available beyond the usual 9-to-5 hours and have a stable work history, then why not make more than a lateral move?

- Is it time to trade in that necktie or pantsuit for your passion? After having accomplished so much in the corporate world, I decided it was time for a new direction, so I pursued my passion for writing and have done very well, winning multiple awards. Perhaps it's time to take what you already love doing so well at home and apply it to a career. If you love cooking, for example, and others love what you create, you may want to consider a new career.

Darlene Quinn is an author and journalist from Long Beach, whose novels about deceit, intrigue and glamour in the retail fashion industry were inspired by her years with Bullocks Wilshire specialty department stores and are now in development for a major TV series.