

LifeMapSM



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

October 17, 2006

This Week's Message:

Chutes and Ladders.

Resources

**Have Dr. Paul speak
at your next meeting
or conference.**

Chutes and Ladders.

Remember the children's board game "Chutes and Ladders"? For over 25 years I've watched as many highly skilled professionals successfully managed their careers upward and have also been amazed at how some otherwise very intelligent people manage to sabotage their career progress. It's a lot like "Chutes and Ladders" where landing on a ladder space moves you upward, toward winning and landing on a chute space moves you downward, toward losing.

The reality of today's flatter organizational structures means that there are no ready-made, safe paths upward to career

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success waiting for you. Employees from the loading dock to the executive suite must create and manage their own career paths usually through a series of organizations. The “what to do” section of LifeMap that usually follows the topical introduction is called “Paths Forward”. However, from my career observations it is sometimes as important to know what not to do, as it is to know what to do to move your career forward. So for this issue we will change things a bit and talk about what works and what doesn’t.

Chutes Downward.

- **Negativity:** Let every organizational setback, every lost sale, or minor personal conflict help you build a negative attitude. Share that attitude widely. Build your own gripe circle or rumor mill. After all misery not only loves company, it prefers miserable company.
- **Fly solo:** Avoid group projects or working with new groups of people. If forced to join a group, always put your name at the top of the list. Take as much personal credit as you can. In fact, try to take credit for what others may have done too.
- **Avoid the Classroom:** And the seminar room and the training workshop and, in fact, avoid all continuing education. You’ve spent enough time acquiring knowledge already. Let somebody else figure out the product updates, the emerging technologies, or new management techniques. If it’s important enough to worry about you will eventually see something about it in an airline magazine or the company newsletter.
- **Remember the Army Rule:** Never volunteer for anything. If you do they will think you don’t already have enough to do. Why take away work somebody else might want to do? Be sure to always look busy even if you’re not.
- **Keep Your Eyes on Your Feet:** Never look up, around or ahead. It’s best to focus on not making mistakes than taking reasonable risks and challenges. You may not win the race or build a so-so job into one you love but maybe, just maybe you’ll stay safe.

Ladders Upward.

- **Build Your Team Skills:** Another consequence of today’s flatter organizational structures is that many issues,

challenges, or projects are handled by cross-functional teams. If this is your strong suit, build on it. If it's not, don't avoid it (though it's natural to want to). Work on it, get some training, find some constructive criticism, push yourself.

- **Stay Positive:** Even in the best organization "stuff" happens. What matters most to your career is how you choose to deal with the predictable ups and downs of work life. The most difficult setbacks can be minimized or sometimes even turned around with energy, optimism and a can do attitude. And while you're at it, think of the reputation you will develop.

- **Keep a Hand on the Wheel:** Self-control is a very attractive trait especially in today's world where change and uncertainty are so prevalent. Reacting to events beyond your control with fear, anxiety, anger or panic is not only self-defeating but also has a contagious, negative effect on those around you. In difficult situations ask questions; look for solutions or at least a path forward. You might not always be able to steer completely away from trouble but you can minimize the downside by keeping your hands on the wheel.

- **Be a Fixer:** Nobody likes bad news – not me, not you and certainly not your boss. But sometimes you must be the bearer of bad news because it has implications beyond the scope of your job or it could somehow affect others. Plus, today's bad news that isn't dealt with effectively can become tomorrow's terrible news. But do not just stop by your boss's office and drop off the problem. Before having that discussion or sending that e-mail try to come up with one or two practical solutions. If the issue is within the scope of your job, ask for any additional suggestions your boss might have before getting the okay to address the problem. Problem solving is a career ladder; complaining is a career chute.

- **Look Out for Others:** One of the best ways to get ahead is to have others propel you forward. The time you invest supporting your colleagues, helping your subordinates progress and understanding the demands made on your boss is time well spent. Developing a reputation as a "go to" person for encouragement, optimism, support and assistance is one sure fire way to get ahead. It's perfectly appropriate to promote your own achievements but when others sing your praises it gets heard farther and wider than you ever

can imagine.

LifeMap is about sharing with you what others have shown me about successful careers so you can avoid some of the common “chutes” downward and more easily climb the “ladder” upwards to the success you deserve.

Resources

Someone you know job hunting or thinking about it yourself?

To order the best, concise, all-round job changing guide available. “Winning Job Interviews: Reduce Interview Anxiety, Outprepare the Other Candidates, Land the Job You Love” by Dr. Paul Powers, click the link below.

Stalled at work? Still struggling to find your true vocation?

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<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/booksarticles.html>

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Have an issue or question you’d like Dr. Paul to address in a future edition? Send an email to the email address list below.

To ensure that LifeMap is delivered to your inbox, please add drpaul@drpaulpowers.com to your address book or list of approved senders.

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Sincerely,

Dr. Paul

Email: **drpaul@drpaulpowers.com**
Phone: 781-237-0550
Fax: 781-237-5721
Web: **<http://www.drpaulpowers.com>**

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Dr. Paul Powers | 30 Ledyard Street | Wellesley Hills | MA | 02481