

Sue Thompson's

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BeExceptional

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You're More Than All That

I happened to catch a long scene from the 1947 movie “Green Dolphin Street” on Turner Classic Movies a few weeks ago. In the scene, Donna Reed is despondent over the death of her parents and walks on the New Zealand seashore in a daze. Becoming trapped by the tide, she’s forced into a small cave and, looking up, sees a ladder-like climb to a light far above. She laboriously makes her way up this massive tower of rock, stumbling out to see a convent perched atop. She collapses at the convent door, wet, hands bleeding, exhausted. She is revived and tells her story to the Abbess, crying out hysterically that she has nothing to live for. Those who mattered to her are gone, and she is alone—she wants to die!

The old nun shakes her head and says, “Child, you’re not experiencing anything unusual. Millions of others have faced loss and moved on; so will you.”

If you’re looking for work because your setback this year was losing your job, there’s no doubt that right now, just getting an interview can be a monumental challenge. You can have a killer résumé and it can still be set aside for reasons known only to the person reading it. Jobs in your area may be scarce and you’re faced with painfully pulling up roots and moving to a new place to find work. You can begin to internalize the feeling that no one wants you and you have nothing to offer.

This is when it’s time to do a vigorous wet-dog shake and remind yourself it’s not the end of the world. Hey, we may have to dip into the IRA, sell the house, or move into a relative’s spare room for a while, but it isn’t like it’s never been done before, and it hasn’t killed anyone. We do what we have to do until things get better and we snag an interview that can change everything.

All it takes is **one person** who looks at your job application and decides you’re worth a

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face-to-face. Yeee haaaa! Get yourself together and go in prepared to impress, no matter how small the job. This is your chance to make a connection. But always keep in mind this important truth: you're more than this moment in time.

1. You're more than your résumé. All that you are and all that you have become really can't be captured in one or two pages on 24-pound white linen stock. A really good résumé simply indicates you have something the company can use and you know how to spell and put a sentence together. So make it look as great as possible. Get professional help if you know it could be more. But don't think there's something wrong with **you** if it's not snapped up like a first draft pick of the NFL.

2. You're more than what human resources says you are. Let's be really clear about this: there are no standards in the "human resource" industry that ensure ethical, thoughtful, trustworthy, "human" behavior. In fact, no industry claiming to have such standards has any effective mechanism for enforcing them anyway, not even government institutions, so let's get over our illusions. Actually, human resource professionals need to get over the illusion that they are unbiased and professional just because they have created silly "blind" application processes that end frequently disallowing a manager to find a worker with **real talent and initiative** for the job, even if they have to be trained. Human resources has become a thick, bureaucratic layer that often stands between you and a job. So remember you are more than what they know about you and seek whatever means necessary to find the person who can actually **make a decision** about who gets hired for the job you want. Unfortunately, in many cases that person will have been instructed to tell you that you must work through human resources. Keep plugging away. It's quite possible the person who can help you may be in HR, so go through every door. Speak with everyone to whom you can gain access, even if it's just to ask, "How can I stand out?" Make yourself memorable just by making personal contact.

3. You're more than what got you hired ten years ago. Make yourself worth a second look in every way. Don't walk into an interview looking like you haven't changed your hairstyle in thirty years, or wearing anything less than a suit that fits excellently and highlights your best features. That means it

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should be the right color, with the right accessories. This goes for men, too—the wrong color can wash you out and make you look like Mel Gibson after an arrest. Most of you who have heard me speak know I am fond of saying, “There’s help for that”—so if you really *aren’t* aware that something too big makes you look bigger, and something too small makes you look ridiculous, and something that fits perfectly (get it altered!) makes you look like you have it together, find an image consultant and get some instruction. **Maximize your encounter!** This means you smile, you shine, you’re confident in talking about yourself in superlatives: “I’m an expert in . . . I’m world-class in . . . I’m gold-standard in . . .” whatever the strength may be. YOU know your character and your personality and how to turn them on. If you don’t, contact me, please. There’s help for that.

4. You’re more than your interviewer’s assessments. No matter what happens, remember you’re dealing with people. And here’s the thing: people will like you or dislike you—or simply not think about you at all—for all kinds of reasons. They may have already decided they’ll hire that candidate who went to the school they attended. The boss may be putting pressure on them to hire the president’s nephew. You don’t know. **They may not even be aware of their own thought processes and biases.** You do your very best to present yourself beautifully in every way—in appearance, in behavior, in manners, in language, in talent, and in integrity. Do not allow yourself to present in any way less. Then smile, shake hands, say thank you, and move on.

You aren’t going through anything that isn’t common to man, that hasn’t been experienced by millions of others, many of whom are this very minute negotiating the same rough waters—some with hope and some with despair. So do what it takes to be a hopeful negotiator! Keep going no matter how cold and miserable you feel, because you’re more than right now, my friend. You’re in a season, and this season will pass. Keep working the best of what’s inside of you. It may take longer to see results than it used to, but you have more in you than you know. Dig deep, smile, decide brighter days are just ahead no matter what others say—and look up, and climb. *

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You take away from the world when you're not yourself. Whatever is unique and special about you was designed by God. And when you try to be someone else, we don't get you. Who knows what you would have contributed to the world had you just been yourself, if you just celebrated who you are and just walked boldly?

Queen Latifah

YOUR CHARACTER IS SHOWING

Join me for my monthly teleseminar in which I interview interesting people about their character strengths!

On **January 10th**, I'll be speaking with Pete Davisson, the founding principal of Jackson Cross Partners and a commercial real estate professional of nearly 40 years. Pete has strengths that may be helpful for YOU as you consider what drives your career decisions! Click [here](#) to sign-up. It's free.

About Sue

Sue Thompson is a personality expert, etiquette trainer, and an instructor in life lessons. Her work on recognizing and developing talent, identifying personalities and working effectively with the people who possess them, responding appropriately to difficult experiences, treating others with respect, and behaving like a professional have caused companies and business organizations throughout the country to value her consulting skills. She trains those entering the workforce how to present themselves with style and authority; new employees in the importance of respecting one's work and the workplace; managers in the value of understanding employees' talent and temperament; and everyone in the timeless rules of behavior that will always bespeak excellence.

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