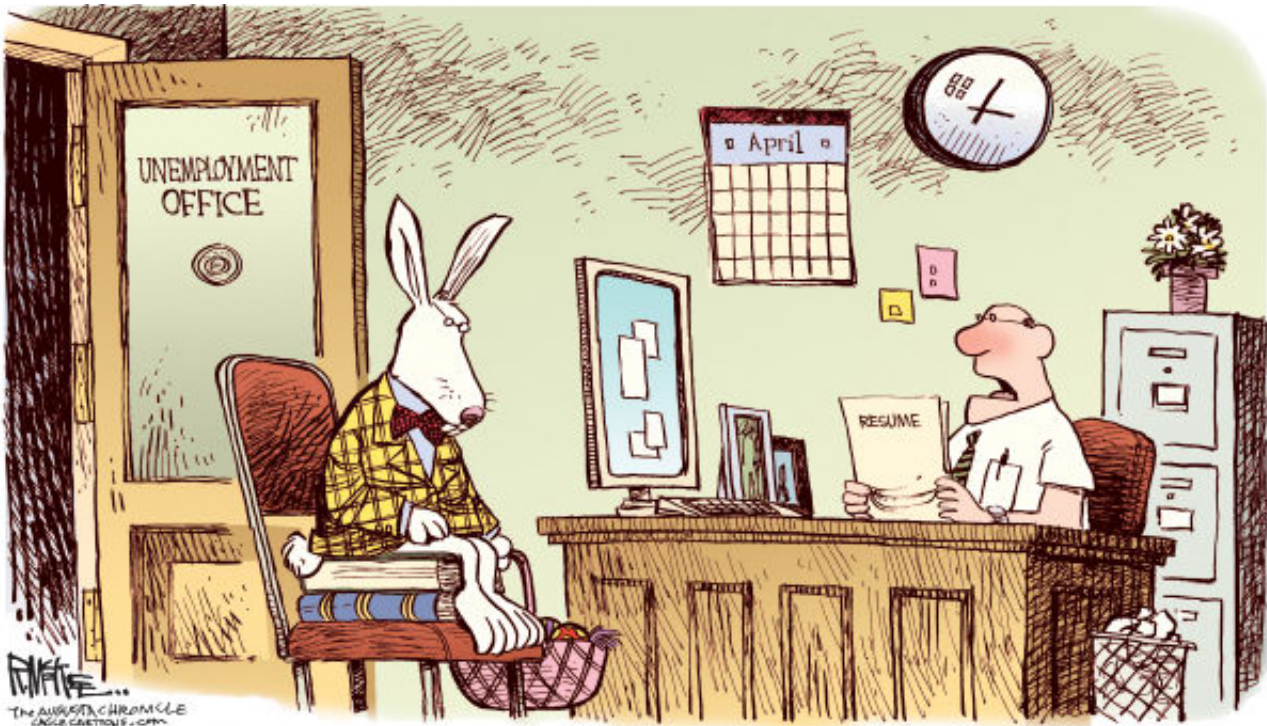


Stay flexible—“90% of the time we were off course”



"IN THIS JOB MARKET YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO BE FLEXIBLE AND OPEN TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES,,,, DON'T PUT ALL YOUR EGGS IN ONE BASKET."

I recently heard a lecture given by an engineer who worked on the Apollo 11 mission that put Neil Armstrong, Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin, and Michael Collins on the moon. He said that during the entire flight, “90% of the time we were off course.” The target stayed the same—land on the moon—but getting there required constant monitoring and adjustments. There was no cruise control function during the nine days it took to get there and back.

Our lives are also unpredictable and mutable. In life, you will never see the full path and it seldom plays out according to our plans and expectations. Early in my life I could not have predicted where I would be at age 65 and the challenges and opportunities I would be facing throughout life.

I’m not advocating an undisciplined, meandering approach to life. Have goals and destinations, but realize that the path to them fluctuates and that even your goals and destinations may change.

1. Constantly monitor where you are and where you’re going. We often get so focused on the moment that we lose track of larger issues. On a regular basis take time to evaluate your life and organization.
2. Be flexible. Stiff things break, flexible things bend. There’s constant tension between efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency argues for routine and order; effectiveness requires flexibility and change. Pursue both.
3. Demonstrate grit. A combination of courage and resolve, grit helps us persevere through failure and difficult times. It’s the positive side of stubbornness.

In life and leadership, constantly tweak your targets and recalibrate your trajectories because 90% of the time you’ll likely be off course.