

Frustrating, definitely. Maddening, without a doubt. Scary, of course. The end of the world, *not even close.*

I'm describing some of the emotions that superintendents go through when they lose their jobs at the most vulnerable time in their lives. Too many times lately I've received calls from friends in the industry who are in the latter part of their careers, telling me they've lost their jobs. They say they're looking to do something new. Granted, some of them still want to be superintendents. But many are tired of the grind and are ready for a change.

These can be very frightening times for superintendents, when careers are in jeopardy, retirement dreams are shattered and security is pulled right out from under them. The problem is, most of these life-altering changes are unexpected and totally out of their control.

In our parents' and grandparents' generations, one typically worked for 30 years and then left the workforce and tried to retire. In today's world, with longer life expectancies and improved health playing a huge role, most people in their 50s and 60s are still in good enough physical and mental condition to be valuable contributors on the job.

In some cases they need to continue working because of the economy. The sad part is, these are the people with the most experience and knowledge. And yet they are unceremoniously put out to pasture way too early.

I understand as well as anyone how drastically the tanking economy impacted our country. All businesses had to tighten their belts, and the golf course industry was no different. But even now, so many hard working, talented, experienced, educated and passionate individuals are losing their jobs and they're finding it difficult to replace them.

If I were an employer and described an employee as hard working, talented, experienced, educated and passionate, it would seem to me that this is exactly the description of an employee who I would like to have on my staff. Yet in many cases, businesses are letting go their best candidate, the incumbent.

Don't Let Them Wear You Down

BY MARK WOODWARD



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I understand that we have to mentor the younger generation to eventually take our places, but in many cases it's happening way too early and for the wrong reasons. And that's what's frustrating. It seems our industry is one that sometimes “eats its own.”

My father once owned a ready-mix/construction company. The motto printed on all of the company's trucks was “*legitmati non carbarundum*,” Latin for “Don't let them wear you down.” This is actually the politically correct translation. My point is, prepare yourself. It can happen to anyone, at any time.

But as I said at the beginning of this article, losing your job is far from being the end of the world. Sure, in such situations we are forced to get out of our comfort zones. But doing so gives us a unique opportunity to search our souls for what would truly make us happy and successful.

As difficult as looking inward is, embrace that opportunity. Look at it as a chance to do something different, something you've wanted to do for many years yet were too busy to pursue.

As you find yourself “at the turn” in your life, my best advice is, prepare yourself mentally, emotionally and financially for your future. I can tell you from experience that there is life after being a superintendent. Look at this opportunity as a challenge. Pursue your dreams. Ask yourself, what job would I like if I weren't a superintendent?

Who knows, maybe you've always wanted to open a bed and breakfast in Colorado. Go for it. Take a leap of faith. Pursue your dreams.

Do what makes you happy.

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