

(on enlightenment) Scrub your assumption window to let in the light!



NO matter what your religion— Muslim, Agnostic, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Pagan, Hindu ... many religions' year-end celebrations refer to the imagery of light. This is no coincidence of course. Our primary source of light, the sun, also supports life, and thus we entice the sun's—light's— return with a variety of solstice celebrations.

Light has good connotations: **light at the end of the tunnel; I saw the light; in the right light; let there be light; the age of enlightenment.** Referring to light is to evoke insight, clarification, and truth.

Here is a modern "light" proverb, attributed to Alan Alda, and useful for the job hunter: **Begin challenging your own assumptions. Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in awhile, or the light won't come in.**

Assumptions

Our human brains are filled with assumptions, some which work, and others, which as Mr. Alda says, need to be scrubbed off every once in a while. Some assumptions grow out of nothing more than nonsense, if stated with authority!

Job Hunting Assumptions

I find that this is also true of job hunting. According to recent news stories, many unemployed in the U.S. have given up their job search. Admittedly it is tough today, but without a doubt not every unemployed person makes use of every resource, and so, those who resist accepting assumptions (for example, "It is useless, there are too many unemployed.") are the ones who land the jobs.

Recently, I had to scrub my own assumption window! A call came in from "Judy," with whom I'd not worked before, asking for interview coaching. At first I said no, as not having conducted an interview for her resume and cover, I **assumed** that I wouldn't be able to help. But Judy didn't want to hear "no" as she had landed an interview for her **dream job**, and so I agreed to conduct an interview strategy session (as opposed to coaching). Within days Judy called me to say that she received the job offer ... while driving home from the interview! It was a management position with a leading Toronto hospital and the interview team shared that her interview skills were outstanding. The clincher: Judy originally called me because she had been told that her interview skills were weak!

This led to my delivering the strategy session to another client, an HR Director in British Columbia. Doug, as we'll call him, emailed me about two weeks later to say that he was in the enviable position of having to choose between two offers.

Are you seeing the light? There are many strategies that effectively assist in each step of the job hunt. New grads can land entry level jobs in their fields—it takes strategy. Mature workers can land another job to take them through to retirement—but it takes strategy. There is a recession, but you can find a new job, or a job—it takes strategy.

So, the question begs to be asked: what assumptions must you scrub off to let the light in?

In this season of light and festivities, I wish you all the merriest of holidays, a quiet or frenetic New Year celebration (according to your preference!) with tasty fare and delightful company, and a decidedly splendid 2010!

All the best, *Stephanie*