

Stay in the game

Written by Julie Desmond
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Job seekers hear a lot these days about the employment numbers going up and down. The problem with these statistics has always been the same: when discouraged people give up on looking for work, they are no longer in the employment pool. This lowers the unemployment rate, the number of people who are officially looking for work. However, it does not make discouraged people any more gainfully employed. If you're looking for work, write the name Latisha on a piece of paper and hang it on your refrigerator. Here's why. Latisha isn't a job seeker, but we can all learn from others, can't we? Latisha is a freshman in high school. Her talents are discus and shot put and her build is decidedly not that of a long distance runner. Says who? At the track meet last weekend, her school had an opportunity to plug someone in to run an 800. For nonrunners reading this, that's twice around a football field. For someone whose physique is designed to throw heavy metal balls, that's a million miles. The distance runners were already maxed out, so the coach put every team member's name in a hat. Every member. Even the throwers. And Latisha won.

She did win. She stood on that starting line shaking and pale, and when the gun went off, she went. Her dad in the stands shouted, "Don't you quit. Whatever you do, do not quit." She didn't. She came in dead last by about 3 minutes; the crowd cheered as she limped across the finish line at a slow and deliberate jog. But she did not quit. She was worn out, but she was a winner. And her dad was effusive,

"I'm so proud of that girl, I don't know what to do!"

Anyone looking for work for a while knows the mixed feelings of hope and discouragement. People tell me, "I'm used to working, not job hunting." They say, "I think I'm close to an offer and then it falls through." Imagine Latisha thinking, I trained for throwing, not running! Or, I thought I was almost there, and I still had to go around again!

You need work. You have bills to pay and you know you can't just sit around forever. But the old Career Builder routine isn't working, is it? If you are discouraged, I encourage you to try something completely different. Call someone you've never met; apply for temp jobs; update your FaceBook status to "available for work." Believe it or not, your friends might not realize you're still looking. Tell them. Let people help you. Trade in throwing for running for a week or so. Stick with it and you'll come out a winner, too.

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