

Talking Points and Questions for Leigh Henderson

Author, *Temping with Tycoons: Lessons from My Leadership Reinventions*

1. Why did you stay at Lazard for over five years?

The cultural geography of the Lazard environment fascinated me. I knew I could learn about leadership, organizational behavior, communications skills, and other workplace issues. Each assignment became another class to me in a business school I could afford.

2. How would you describe your working to win strategies?

Working to win is like playing to win in sports. A working to win strategy is based on:

1. Focus on what you can control
2. Stay fully present to take advantage of opportunities
3. Take needed risks that can take you out of your comfort zone
4. Expect the best from yourself and others
5. Accept that you'll make mistakes
6. Be open to unexpected outcomes

3. How did manage to stay engaged for so many years?

I remained at Lazard and stay engaged in learning about the world of finance that was swirling around me. Although I was always leaving, the challenges I set up for myself and the opportunities to work with brilliant people kept me there. In addition, I could manage my schedule to fit in more satisfying activities.

4. You were much older than most temporary secretaries. Did that bother you?

One person referred to me as the, “Queen of the Temps.” Another said to me, “You’re old enough to be a grandmother. Why are you still a temp?” Yes, it bothered me but not enough to leave a way of life that was working for me at that point in my life.

5. You have a master’s degree in early childhood education. Did that help at Lazard?

Teaching sixth graders was good preparation. I could put in perspective what bankers really needed from me and validate some very fragile egos. I leveraged my background in public relations with my degree to become an adjunct instructor in the Marketing Department at New York City Technical College which is part of the City University of New York. That was a great way to translate what I was learning at Lazard.

6. What can you tell others who might find themselves in a job they feel is below them?

Practice active patience. That is, stay engaged and open to new possibilities. Be able to articulate your dreams and specific goals. Then, be open to changing them when new opportunities arise. There is a need to be more fluid than ever in this economy—and in the new one that is emerging. Another important point is to stay connected with loved ones and dear friends. Don’t be afraid to ask for the support and love you need.