



4 Ways to Keep Your Career On Track During Turbulent Times

Whatever your plans were for 2020 back in January, they've likely been upended by COVID 19. The pandemic has impacted every aspect of our lives, and being in constant damage-control mode can be overwhelming. You may find yourself looking at the best laid career plans and thinking....what now? In this episode Gloria offers concrete action steps (plus, a free download!) to turn the chaos into

opportunity, keep your eyes on your goals, and begin moving forward one step at a time.

Gloria Feldt: Like I always say, quoting my grandmother, “Man plans, and God laughs.” Well, of course, I would say woman, and not be quite so irreverent. Hello, and welcome to Power to You. I’m Gloria Feldt, here with secrets and tools to prepare and propel you with training and coaching to harness your incredible power to in your professional lives. I cofounded Take the Lead because I figured out how to crack the code that has been holding women back from equal leadership and pay. My mission is for women and men to hold equal power, pay, and leadership positions by 2025. At the end of each podcast, I’ll share specific tips that will help you lead and succeed.

What had you planned to do in 2020? Personally, I could hardly wait for 2020. It was going to be an epic year. The 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution that gave women the right to vote, for one thing. My calendar was full with all the events and celebrations coming up around that. 2020 was also going to be the year when Take the Lead would finally be poised to scale up with our strategy to achieve gender parity and leadership by 2025, with our 50 Women Can Change the World programs building a movement of movements of women across many sectors.

I had so many plans for you, 2020. You were going to be special. Well, we found out rather quickly just how special. For me, 2020 started out inauspiciously when I fell while hiking and broke my wrist. Now, that should have been a clue that all was not going to be rainbows and unicorns in the new year. It set me back a couple of weeks when I needed to be giving full attention to the Power Up conference. I had insisted that Take the Lead host a big conference at the end of February. February 28th and 29th, to be exact. I wanted to do that so we could claim Leap Day, one of the most feminine of days. My team had resisted. They

thought it was too short notice because we had only begun planning it a few months prior and we'd barely begun to raise the money we needed to do it right. But we went through with it and the conference turned out to get rave reviews from participants.

Well, it seems we were fortunate that my bullheadedness prevailed, because the very next week, all hell broke loose in the form of the coronavirus pandemic. And just like that, we stopped traveling. We stopped congregating in large groups or going to conferences. Events canceled. Businesses shut down. Schools closed and parents, especially mothers, added school teacher to their already full plates. We joked about going without haircuts and manicures and started baking bread out of sheer anxiety. Life changed profoundly for everyone in the world.

Many careers were disrupted. For the short term, we hoped at first. But in the U.S., due to lack of immediate action that was taken by other countries, that disruption has become a healthcare crisis of literally epidemic proportions, and it's likely to last at a minimum through the rest of this year. Healthcare facilities became strained to the breaking point. [It soon became obvious that women and people of color, who make up about 60% of the essential front line workers, were our heroes and heroines.](#) Our nurses and caregivers, our grocery store clerks, our first responders. Yet paradoxically, as the economy slid toward recession, women and people of color also quickly became the majority of those losing jobs, because, well, think about who are the service workers in every sector?

And beyond the service industry, as workers across the country are furloughed and laid off, livelihoods and careers are being disrupted in all economic sectors. If you find yourself in this situation, hang in there. You may be going through the stages of grief, from disbelief to depression. My guess is that relatively few of us have arrived at the final stage of acceptance just yet. The road may be long, but there is light at the end of the tunnel, and I'm getting to that.

Most of my speaking invitations these days, all of them virtual, are asking me to speak about [leadership power tool number five, Carpe the Chaos](#). Think of this power tool as an invitation to recalibrate the way you think about a disruption. After the chaos, there is always reordering. Sure, it might be painful and uncomfortable, but it will happen. Chaos is an opportunity. An opportunity to innovate, to think differently, and we can use its energy to propel us forward. The adage that the best way to predict the future is to create it has never been truer.

To help you, we created a free tip sheet, 10 Ways to Reframe Your Career Path Following Job Loss. You can download it using the link in the show notes, but I just want to share four of the key points with you here:

1. Number one, don't blame yourself. Don't waste time and energy berating yourself for missing signs or for being unprepared. No one saw this catastrophe coming. You were doing the best you knew how and now you know more. "Grieve, but also start looking for a way to move forward," [says Phyllis Brust](#), career counselor, writing in The Chronicle of Higher Education.

2. Number two, stay current and network actively every day. The good news is you don't have to buy new clothes. Stay up to date in your field and on regional news for your market. Even before the pandemic, it was important to know the latest news about the companies that you're interested in. Know what's going on with competitors in related fields, as well. Follow industry publications online and join associations and organizations connected to your line of work. If you're already a member, stay with it, because these will be your best networks for finding that next position. Social media is the new water cooler. Yes, it requires some discipline to avoid spending too much time looking at funny kitty cat pictures, but use social media strategically by posting substantive articles regularly and commenting, and I don't mean just liking, I mean commenting. Saying something meaningful on posts by people that you want to build or maintain relationships with. These are unprecedented times. There will be unprecedented opportunities. Maintaining fluid relationships in your field will help you find them. For specific tips, especially for you introverts out there, check out [our episode on how to network during a pandemic](#). You can find the link in the show notes.
3. Number three, revisit your short and long-term plans. In a way, this pandemic has shown us that anything can happen, so what if you were starting anew in your career? What would you do if you could do anything? Is this the time to reinvent yourself? Is this the time to learn new skills, so you can retool and refresh? There is so much free online training right now. Take advantage of it. It's a good time to set new three, five, and ten year career goals. Take stock of what your strengths, your points of power, are. Don't have a plan? Well, this is the perfect time to create one. Dream big, be decisive, and take steps to move forward. Go ahead and try something new. It might not be your forever career, but I've found that every reaction results in something positive that wouldn't have happened if I hadn't taken that risk.
4. Number four, I know it sounds trite, [but take care of yourself](#). For me, that means exercising at least an hour every day and getting enough sleep. In fact, this might be the time when you actually catch up on your sleep with all the time you're saving by not commuting. Eat nutritious food at regular times and stay away from sugar and junk food. Reward yourself for wins, large or small. My friend, actress Kathleen Turner, says that when she was waitressing while hoping for a break early in her career, she made a point of doing one special thing for herself every week. Buying herself a single flower or taking a taxi instead of the subway. Something that made her feel like she was special. Above all, do what helps you focus and stay intentional. For some people, that's meditation. For me, it's asking myself each day, "What is the single most important thing I need to do today to get one step closer to my goal?"

If there is one thing COVID is teaching us, it is how to pivot. Our grand plans for 2020 may have altered, but we can use this unprecedented change to help us focus in on our priorities. At Take the Lead, we've pivoted all our programs to the virtual space, even our formerly immersive in-person programs like 50 Women

Can Change the World. We've launched a new, improved version of our online Nine Leadership Power Tools to Advance Your Career course, and we've launched coaching services. We really don't want to recreate the past just because it was comfortable or easier. We want to take the good parts and recreate those while we create and generate better ways of doing and being. Because really, it's this very disruption that makes anything possible. All bets are off. All boundaries are broken or at least breached in some way that lets new ideas in. In a pandemic, anything becomes possible, because the old rules are gone. Who knows? With a little luck and positive intention, 2020 might turn out to be an epic year after all.

Let me know how it goes for you, and if any of these tips were helpful, share them with your friends and family, and be sure to get your free tip sheet, 10 Ways to Reframe Your Career Path Following Job Loss. Find it in the show notes.

Until next week, Power to You.

Power to You is produced by Lantigua Williams & Co. Cedric Wilson is our sound designer. For more about my work, please visit gloriafeldt.com, and follow me on social media @gloriafeldt. To learn about Take the Lead and our courses and coaching services, go to taketheleadwomen.com and follow Take the Lead on social media. You can also send me comments about the show and questions on leadership and power to powertoyou@taketheleadwomen.com. I might even use them on future episodes. Be sure to subscribe or follow Power to You on your favorite listening app, and you'd make me so happy if you would leave a review on Apple Podcasts, as those really help us get to know what you like about the show. Thanks.

CITATION:

Feldt, Gloria, host. "4 Ways To Keep Your Career On Track During Turbulent Times." *Power to You*, [Take the Lead Women](http://www.taketheleadwomen.com), July 12, 2020. <https://www.taketheleadwomen.com/podcast>

Produced by:

