

## Developing Options and Segmentation

One of the debilitating effects of unwanted transition can be the sense of powerlessness that we experience. One way to counter that, and to increase our sense of personal agency, is to develop options.

When we have no options, then we feel really powerless; once we can see that we can start to make decisions about our future - because we have options to choose between - we start to regain our sense of power.

Also, if we only see one possibility ahead of us (*I must get a job just like the one I have left, in a similar organisation...*) and that possibility proves difficult or impossible to realise in the short term, we are indeed in a powerless situation.

For these reasons, it is important to generate several possibilities. For example, if you are keen to stay in HE, clearly there are many universities to consider; but there are also other possibilities. Many of the organisations that interact closely with universities recruit people with HE backgrounds for HE-related work - the Research Councils, the Civil Service and so on.

It is also helpful to segment the market, both to help us to focus appropriately (eg we may develop different CVs for different segments), but also to increase that sense of choice. Even amongst HEIs one can segment the market in various ways (eg Campus, non-campus; research intensive, teaching focused; by size and so on). It can be easy to assume that our future needs to be similar to our past, but often that is not the case; and having fresh options to explore is valuable.

That is particularly the case when we are arranging Information Meetings (qv). One of the ways to get the conversation going is to explain which segments we are interested in, and ask the opinion of the contact we are meeting about how well our skills and aspirations would fit in different contexts. People love to share their wisdom (and even opinions) and we may learn some interesting and surprising things.

If we are looking beyond HE, then the possibilities for segmentation maybe much greater. And if we are not sure where to look, we can use our Information Meetings to ask that question. (*I'm considering X and Y, but wonder if there are any other types of organisation that would value my skills: what do you think?*)