

Don't Be Caught Pearl Watching

By Kathleen Jennings

Pearl Watching! What on earth is she talking about? This is about job search tips, right?

(Flashback to an early TV commercial.) A beautifully manicured, bejeweled hand carefully plops a huge, lustrous pearl into a bottle of emerald green Prell shampoo. We sit transfixed, watching the pearl slowly zig and zag its way down the container. A voice tells us how rich, thick and luxurious this shampoo is. *(While this really has more to do with specific gravity, thick and rich sounds so much sexier.)*

So what does that have to do with job hunting? PLENTY!

How many times have you heard someone say, "Well, I have a couple of things going on, and I'm waiting to see what happens." Or, "I'm expecting them to make an offer any minute, and it would be the perfect job, so I'll wait." Or found yourself doing the same thing...slow down...wait...and wait...then try to restart when it doesn't happen.

That's pearl watching.

Job-hunting activities are hard work, often not fun. We all would like to get the process over and done. We get frustrated when our timing doesn't match the company's schedule for action. We choose to hope...and hope...and wait to see what will happen to the current active possibility *(the pearl)* that will end the search and start the new job.

I have been helping senior people in job searches for more than 15 years. Many have tried to pearl watch, and heard me yell at them about it. My clients have included CEO's and business leaders from finance and operations to marketing and business development. These are people who are accustomed to proactively move forward for their companies. I was amazed how differently they behaved when the issue was their personal career. I thought at first that they would know better.

The fact is that pearl watching is tempting but dangerous job hunting behavior. You would be amazed how many pearls blow up, float back to the top, or disappear altogether for no discernable reason. Momentum is lost...time is wasted...and chances to capture a good opportunity are passed by.

A winner knows that more pearls in the Prell bottle means a better chance of having one become the treasure. That means a constant process of dropping potential pearls into the container on a weekly basis.

A winner maintains a constant, steady rhythm. The "wait and hope for the best" contender will slow down...wait...stop...try to restart. A winner maintains an edge by adding new pearls each week, while keeping track of what is moving along.

Make a resolution to avoid Pearl Watching.