

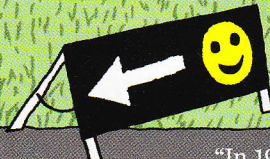
# The Art of the Detour

START

How to see possibility around every bend.

By Emma Haak

ANOTHER DETOUR



"I loved teaching cooking classes so much, I dreamed briefly of opening a tea house. I even scouted a location, but something gave me pause. I realized that the part I liked was cooking and interacting with customers, not the hours spent running a business behind the scenes."

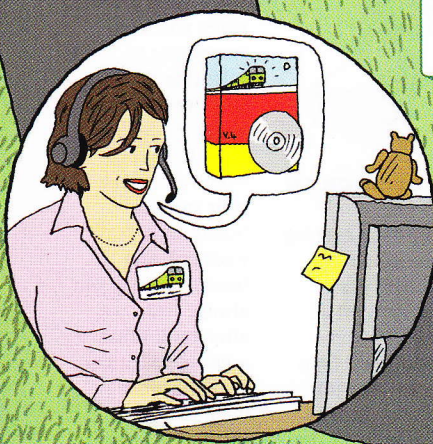


"In 1991 Eastern went bankrupt, and I found myself at home with two children and no career. I'd planned to be with this company until I retired, but suddenly the path I'd envisioned was gone. So I did something I'd never been able to do as a flight attendant: plug into my community. I became president of the PTO at my children's school, and I started teaching cooking classes."

**THE TAKEAWAY:** Unfamiliarity can make us say no to an experience simply because it's beyond our comfort zone. Build a bridge between your past and the opportunity ahead by identifying three ways that it's similar to things you've already done. —Ellen Langer, PhD, Harvard University psychology professor

**THE TAKEAWAY:** Susan could have wasted months agonizing over failed plans. Instead she got active and discovered new passions. To avoid ruminating, take up an activity that's physical, social, and immersive, like tennis with a friend or training with a group for a charity run. —Fredrickson

KEEP GOING

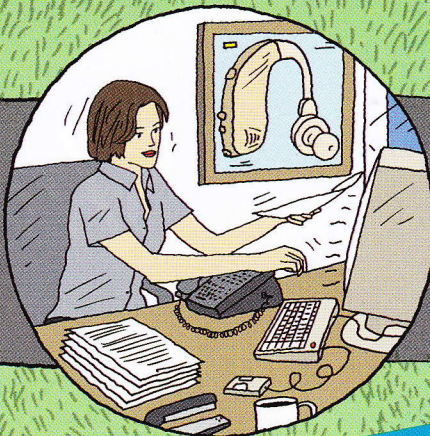


"A woman I met in the PTO asked me to help her cold-call executives to invite them to a luncheon. I was good at it—a real surprise—and she offered me a job doing a bit of sales work at a railroad software company. I wasn't sure what it would be like, but I felt open to change."

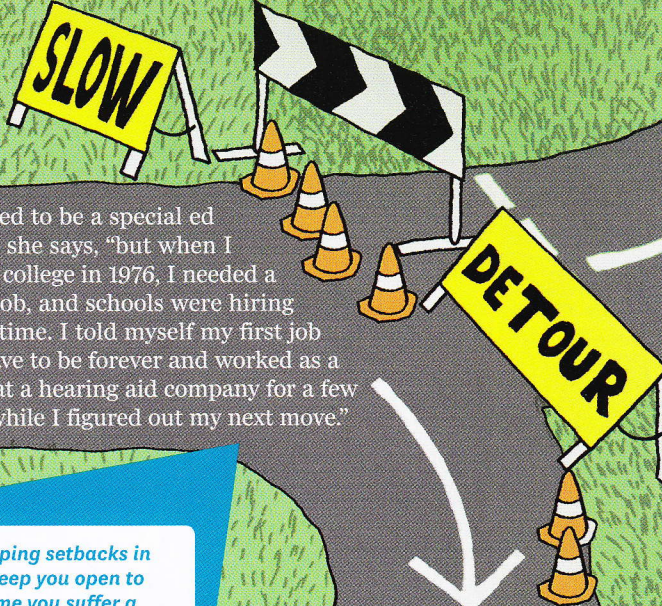
"After a few years, the initial excitement over my job began to wane. I'd never lost my desire to work in a school, so I reached out to a local private school and was hired in their administration office. I spent the next 17 years working my way up the fundraising and development ladder."



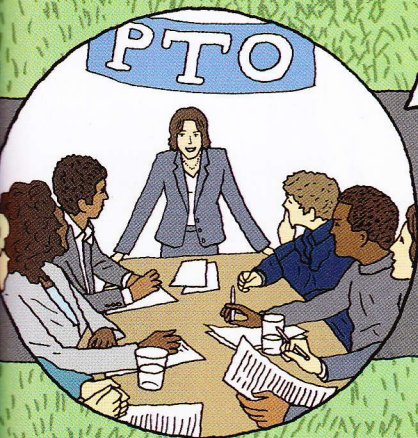
When Susan Richardson's dream career hit a roadblock, she didn't agonize over what could have been. Instead, the now-58-year-old from Andover, Massachusetts, forged ahead over new terrain....



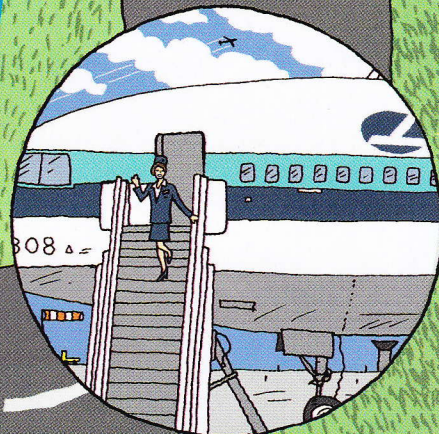
"I studied to be a special ed teacher," she says, "but when I graduated college in 1976, I needed a full-time job, and schools were hiring only part-time. I told myself my first job didn't have to be forever and worked as a secretary at a hearing aid company for a few months while I figured out my next move."



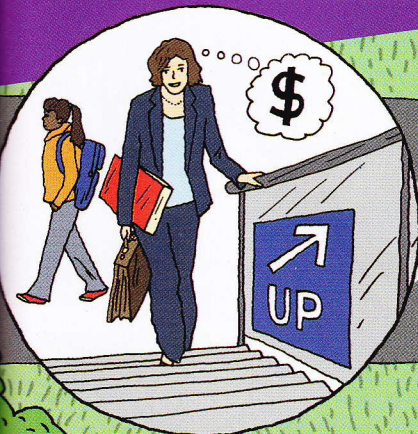
**THE TAKEAWAY:** Keeping setbacks in perspective helps keep you open to possibility. Next time you suffer a disappointment, write down the good things in your life. Pen and paper will do the trick, or try the Gratitude Journal app. —Barbara Fredrickson, PhD, University of North Carolina psychology professor



"My sister saw an ad in her local paper that Eastern Air Lines was hiring flight attendants. I'd flown only twice in my whole life, but she encouraged me to apply because I'm such a people person. It sounded like an exciting opportunity—so I went for it. And for the next 13 years, I felt like I was living a dream."



**THE TAKEAWAY:** Susan stepped back and saw that her job didn't connect to her values. That's tough to do, but try this: Imagine you're at your 100th birthday party. A friend toasts you by telling the story of your life. What traits and events would you want to take center stage? The highlights reflect what's most important to you. —Leslie Becker-Phelps, PhD, psychologist



"Most people would be happy where I landed, but I wanted to do bigger things. When I mentioned this to an acquaintance, he suggested an opening where he worked. I mustered my courage—and I'm now director of alumni programs and events at Boston University."

