

UNITED WISDOM

Losing status after a move: experience remains while recognition has to be sought again

Relationships and Intimacy

Andrey Zarinsh & Maria Evilkut

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@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

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Epigraph

> *I know better now.*

Abraham Cahan, *The Rise of David Levinsky*, Book I, Chapter I. The fictional narrator revises his former view of the recollections of middle-aged people. One short sentence. Text.

What this article is about

Consider Mikhail, an engineer with twenty years of experience who takes temporary work after moving abroad. People in his former workplace consulted him about difficult decisions; here his name tells those around him nothing. Asked about his profession, he answers at greater length than before and repeatedly feels he must prove that his present job does not describe his entire life. Mikhail and the other scenes in this article are invented. They provide a way to pose a question, rather than research evidence about emigrants.

How can someone face the loss of a recognized position without denying material losses or making former status the only permission to respect themselves? We will distinguish skills, formal recognition, a circle of trust, income, and human dignity. Our primary points of reference are Cahan's novel, a defined indicator in an OECD2023 report, and a selected passage of Epictetus's *Enchiridion* in Thomas W. Higginson's translation. These are literary, statistical, and philosophical contexts. The small check of information proposed here is an editorial exercise. It promises neither a restored career nor income or inner well-being, and cannot replace the rules of a particular profession.

I. A position became unrecognizable before experience was lost

Mikhail's name used to carry information familiar to a circle of people: the problems he had solved, whom he had helped, and how often he had met difficult deadlines. After his move, a listener knows only what is communicated now. This gap can feel like the complete disappearance of competence. In our scene, however, it primarily concerns recognizability. Experience has not automatically become intelligible to new people; it still has to be described, demonstrated, or checked. Whether every ability has been retained and fits local tasks remains a separate question.

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

This distinction does not require treating every former skill as usable without examination. Professional standards, technologies, and language can differ; some skills really do need updating. Conversely, an unfamiliar organization's name or an unclear job title does not empty twenty years of work of their substance. There is no need to choose between those extremes. I have certain experience, but do not yet know how it will be assessed here. That statement allows both real gaps and remaining possibilities. It is more accurate than either complete confidence in readiness or a verdict of total uselessness.

Mikhail might recall one particular problem he can explain independently of his old business card. This is not yet proof that he is entitled to do that work in his new country. It describes the content of experience: what he encountered, what solution he proposed, what he was responsible for, and what he did not do. If the description is too general, he can make it more precise. If it requires disclosing someone else's information, he can choose another example. Naming the substance of work can begin a conversation about competence without claiming recognition that has not yet been obtained.

The speed at which experience becomes recognizable is not entirely under a person's control. Others may need evidence, and institutions may have procedures. There can also be unfair barriers that good self-presentation cannot remove. The article therefore imposes no duty on Mikhail to become convincing immediately. He needs an intelligible question: what exactly does the listener not know, and what kind of check is permissible? An answer may point to information, training, a formal procedure, or a limit on what is possible today. Understanding that limit can be useful even when no advancement has occurred.

II. Status includes several losses, and they are not all the same

When someone says they have lost their position, they may mean several things. Their income has fallen. Permission to perform certain work has disappeared. Former colleagues are absent. Nobody recognizes their university's name. They cannot express a thought quickly. They are no longer invited to lead. All these things can happen at once, but they are not one loss. Regaining one element need not restore the others. Someone can find a job, remain without a circle of trust, and continue missing their former responsibility. One outward sign cannot assess the entire result.

In *Indicators of Immigrant Integration2023*, section3.12, the OECD defines overqualification through tertiary education and employment in low- or medium-skilled ISCO4–9 occupations. The report discusses difficulties in recognizing foreign qualifications. The indicator describes a particular relationship between education and occupation; it does not measure all experience, dignity, or a personal sense of status. Its comparisons refer to specified years, including2021, and do not establish an individual reader's situation today. We use the definition rather than a career forecast. Section.

This gives a more precise name to one part of the difficulty without describing Mikhail completely. More than the relationship between education and employment may matter to him. He misses making decisions, knowing people, and seeing work continue beyond his own contribution. Those elements should not be presented as the statistical indicator. They can be considered as part of his own history. Attending to one does not cancel the other: acknowledging work's personal meaning does not pay for housing, while new income does not guarantee a familiar place among colleagues.

Instead of a general demand to restore status, one immediate question can be chosen. What are the conditions for entering this work? How can an ability be demonstrated? What is needed for current expenses? With whom can a professional subject be discussed? Answers may require different people and different amounts of time. This article establishes neither credential-recognition procedures nor employment conditions. Those require current checks in the relevant country and profession. Our purpose is to avoid replacing such answers with a call to think more positively. A precise account of losses may distinguish an available action from a task that now needs another scale of response.

III. Former respect cannot be transported like a document

The trust of old colleagues developed through repeated experience. They watched Mikhail check calculations, acknowledge mistakes, and finish work. A new colleague may have seen none of that. Demanding immediate treatment as his former senior role would suggest is therefore difficult to satisfy. This does not make earlier respect imaginary. It shows how that respect belonged to a history of relationships. Parts of the history can be presented through recommendations and results; another part may have to develop anew if an appropriate opportunity to work together appears.

Respect for human dignity should not wait for professional proof. A listener can be uncertain about the quality of someone's calculations while still speaking without humiliation. We need to distinguish two meanings of recognition. Adult human regard is not a reward for successful self-presentation. Trust in the performance of particular work may need verification. If those meanings are merged, any clarification can appear insulting, and any request for respect can appear to demand immediate recognition of qualifications. Separating them makes it possible to undergo a check without accepting devaluation.

Mikhail can say that he does not know the local procedure and ask what normally counts as suitable evidence of experience. This need not reject his past. The question should be real, rather than a ritual introduction to an argument about his own exceptional qualities. The answer may differ unpleasantly from his expectations. It should be checked with a competent source, particularly for regulated work. But a mismatch with expectations still does not

determine the value of an entire biography. It concerns a particular way of entering a particular field of work.

Sometimes a new environment values something different from what mattered before. Mikhail knows how to lead a large team, while the current organization seeks someone to perform a narrow task independently. That mismatch need not be underestimation; needs may differ. Actual underestimation is also possible, but cannot be declared in advance from one refusal. It helps to establish the subject: what is needed here, what am I offering, and where do they overlap? The past then becomes content for conversation rather than an argument that requires the other person immediately to abandon their requirements.

IV. Lost income cannot become a spiritual exercise at an author's wish

When resources fall alongside status, someone may need work before they can find suitable work. Consider Olga, who takes temporary shifts to cover necessary expenses. An outsider's advice to trust her own value more does not solve the immediate task. Money and documents have real consequences; inner self-respect does not make them unnecessary. A discussion of dignity must therefore retain the material scale of loss. Otherwise, a philosophical idea becomes an attractive way of failing to hear what someone is trying to communicate about their life.

Temporary employment need not become an assessment of everything Olga can do. She may choose it for an immediate purpose while understanding its limits. She may have no acceptable choice and find the situation painful. These situations differ, and the article does not tell her that she has received a valuable lesson in modesty. People's work should not be made the bottom rung of a moral ladder: dignity does not depend on occupational prestige. Acknowledging that does not cancel losses of opportunities, responsibility, or income that really matter to Olga.

Even simple advice to begin with something small needs clarification. A small step may cost a great deal in time, health, or commitments. A course, internship, voluntary contribution, and interview have different costs. We recommend none as a universal investment and do not promise a return. Someone needs a chance to assess actual conditions using reliable current information. For this editorial discussion, it is enough to ask what task a step addresses now and what cost remains acceptable, without making it a mandatory sacrifice for future success.

If necessities are lacking, the situation may call for appropriate local assistance rather than exercises about self-esteem. This article does not determine what services are available to a reader or prescribe how to approach them. It names the limit of its own practice. Reflection is useful when there is room for it; it should not postpone needed information or help. Olga may

address an immediate material task without simultaneously having to formulate a new meaning for her entire profession. Today's employment can remain a difficult circumstance that has become neither a victory nor a story of transformation.

V. An old title can support memory and obstruct a meeting

When introduced, Mikhail lists his former positions in detail. Sometimes this helps a listener understand his experience. Sometimes it occupies the entire conversation and leaves aside what he seeks now. The past should not be designated needless baggage. An organization's name and a role may be useful information. Their function depends on the conversation, however. If someone wants a partner to discuss a task, a lengthy demonstration of former importance may not answer that need. They hear a biography but do not understand the present offer or what they are supposed to do with it.

Two forms of account can be retained. One is for people close to him who need to understand the place he has lost. The other is for a particular professional meeting that calls for clarity about abilities and a question. This is not a proposal to hide part of life or construct a convenient image. It is a decision about conversational content. A detailed history of loss deserves a listener, but not every business contact can provide one. Conversely, a concise description of an ability need not contain every sadness to be honest. Choosing a form cancels neither experience nor emotions.

Sometimes a title protects against an unfamiliar situation: as long as I can explain who I used to be, present uncertainty seems smaller. That protection is understandable, but can exhaust the person themselves. Mikhail need not prove his biography at every dinner. He can name today's work, add something important from the past, or decline to discuss work. None of those choices establishes a final identity. Respecting the past includes giving it a place and also refraining from presenting it constantly as a pass to elementary consideration.

When someone listens with interest, former experience can become the real subject of a meeting. The listener should not thereby be required to reproduce the earlier form of recognition. They may value the account without treating Mikhail as the director of their own life or having work to offer him. Human attention and a professional offer again differ. Merging them creates an unclear debt: because you understand how much I could do, you must restore my position. Distinguishing them leaves closeness possible without a false promise. It does not replace a career, but that limit does not make it useless.

VI. Success does not always answer the question for which it is sought

At the opening of *The Rise of David Levinsky*, the narrator sets his immense material advancement beside a sense of inner continuity. His position and power do not supply the significance he expects when viewed this way. These are a fictional character's words about himself, neither Cahan's biography nor a law that success is useless. We compare only the gap between an external indicator and the question someone asks it to answer. The novel also contains historical generalizations about groups, which are not adopted here as explanations of people. Selected opening.

Mikhail may seek a new position for several purposes: income, a professional task, acquaintances' respect, or restored former confidence. A position can help with one without answering another. If purposes remain indistinct, even a good offer may produce unexpected disappointment. It supplies work but does not bring back former people. That mismatch need not imply ingratitude or a mistaken choice. Perhaps the job addresses exactly the task it can address, while another loss still needs its own place and attention.

Naming purposes before attaining them can help, as far as possible. What do I expect from the next position? Which conditions concern the work itself, and which concern how people will see me? An expectation cannot always be checked beforehand and may change. But these questions can help avoid assigning one job the duty of restoring an entire life. A wish for recognition need not be shamed. It can be important and understandable. Its realization simply depends on relationships and time as well as the title in a new contract.

Someone can accept suitable work and still miss a former workplace without declaring the offer inadequate. They can reject unsuitable work without treating every refusal as evidence of pride. Their conditions and purposes need consideration. This article prescribes no correct attitude towards career success. It preserves the right to distinguish what happened after achieving it from what remains unresolved. That honesty guards against two equally hasty conclusions: that new status must repair everything, and that it can have no significance from the outset.

VII. A philosophy of roles does not release institutions from responsibility

In *Enchiridion* XVII, Epictetus compares one's position in life to a role in a drama, distinguishing the assignment of a role from its performance. This is a Stoic moral framework in which some circumstances are not chosen by the person. We take up the question of action within a situation without accepting social hierarchy as just or recommending endurance of humiliation. Philosophical counsel cannot verify modern professional recognition or make material loss imaginary. Thomas W. Higginson's translation.

Mikhail's question might be: while the situation is as it is, what action remains mine? The answer need not be heroic. He can clarify information, do work conscientiously, acknowledge exhaustion, or avoid an unavailable commitment. Available action is not the same as total responsibility for the situation. An institution answers for its procedures, an employer for their conduct, and someone who humiliates another for the humiliation. That responsibility cannot be transferred to an emigrant by requiring the correct attitude to a new role. Inner work does not replace external fairness.

There is also a danger of making adaptation another indicator of dignity. Whoever adjusts quickly is called mature; whoever grieves for a long time is allegedly attached to their ego. Such a conclusion does not follow from our sources and poorly attends to differing circumstances. Timelines depend on possibilities, limitations, and a person's history. A reader need not accept a Stoic view to choose a small action. They may use the question, reject the metaphor, or prefer another language. Comparing traditions offers a distinction rather than prescribing one philosophy as mandatory guidance for lost status.

Acting today does not require agreement that everything is arranged fairly. Mikhail can learn a local rule while considering a barrier unjust; seek help while doing current work; acknowledge an ability he retains while needing training. These combinations are not contradictions. They distinguish levels of the task. A philosophical point of reference is useful only insofar as it helps someone see available action and limits while retaining the right to assess circumstances. If it makes them deny a real loss or forbids objection, our limited comparison has lost its purpose.

VIII. People close to us can acknowledge loss without promising restoration

A relative may try to support Mikhail by reminding him that he is still talented. Such attention may be precious without answering his question. He knows his abilities but not where they will be useful; or he doubts them and wants to discuss a specific problem. The content of his request should be distinguished. Does he need a listener, help finding information, a joint consideration of experience, or rest from discussing his profession? Support becomes more precise when it does not assume in advance that the entire loss lies in self-esteem alone.

A person close to him also has limits of their own. They cannot prove every evening that future success is inevitable or become a permanent professional adviser. They can offer a particular time, listen attentively, or help obtain one piece of information. A limit does not cancel involvement. An honest small offer is more useful than a guarantee that cannot be confirmed. Mikhail can also decline discussion and keep some of the move's cost private. Relationships need not become endless progress reports in which every quiet evening is permitted only after another career step.

When family members' positions change unequally, comparison calls for care. One receives recognition quickly; another still seeks a place. Their timelines do not form a fair competition. Different professions, documents, languages, and responsibilities provide different conditions. This is neither a claim about every family nor instructions for allocating expenses. It limits assessment by speed. One person's success can be acknowledged without becoming evidence of another's insufficient effort. Help can expand possibilities, but should not create mandatory submission to the helper's plan for restoration.

Sometimes a listener's best contribution is to refrain from correcting the account immediately. Mikhail can name a responsibility he has lost and have no solution today. Acknowledging loss does not fix him forever in the past. It allows that an entire system of relationships and familiar participation lay behind a change of job. Later, the conversation may turn to possibilities; now it may remain about what has changed. Support does not guarantee work. Its limited reach does not cancel the human significance of attentive, agreed presence beside someone.

IX. Being able to learn does not mean returning to childhood

After years of competence, asking simple questions again can be unpleasant. Mikhail does not know a local abbreviation and feels like a beginner in everything. Being a beginner in one condition, however, does not mean beginning in every respect. Someone can understand engineering without knowing a registration system, or understand a solution without being able to explain it in a new language. This unevenness is no trick for preserving pride. It describes different tasks. Learning can be more precise when the subject of unfamiliarity is named and former experience is treated as neither omnipotent nor cancelled.

Shame about a question sometimes prevents someone from obtaining information needed precisely by an experienced person. They assume an analogy with their old workplace while the local rule differs. Asking then represents professional caution. The article does not claim that every listener will respond kindly or that a question is always safe. Circumstances and available channels matter. A written source, competent person, or suitable consultation can be chosen. Lacking one convenient mentor does not make inner independence the only permissible means of learning something new.

Learning need not aim at the quickest possible return to a former title. A person may choose another subject and scale of participation. That choice should be distinguished from a forced abandonment renamed freedom to avoid discussing barriers. Olga may really want a new profession; she may seek one because the old one is unavailable; she may not yet know. Each position calls for different questions. Our text proposes no mandatory new career and does not assess a change of path as evidence of healing. The possibility of reconsidering a wish remains.

When new knowledge appears, its result should also be named narrowly. I understood a procedure; I can perform a certain task; I learned that further preparation is needed. This is not necessarily restored status, but neither is it nothing. A small result can serve a real function without vast symbolic significance. Mikhail need not decide after every clear instruction whether he has managed to become himself again. He can simply use the knowledge in the next action. Working with a new condition can then cease to be an endless trial of twenty years of former life.

X. Restoring participation without a duty to recover a former peak

In the opening scene, Mikhail felt that his present work spoke for him. That fact can now be allowed a smaller scale. It describes today's employment, rather than all experience, purposes, and dignity. A new listener still does not know part of his past; regulated work may have separate requirements; expenses need their own support. Those questions remain. They have simply ceased to be one verdict demanding an immediate return to a high position before the person once again has a right to respect.

Restoration can take different forms: a former profession, another type of task, narrower responsibility, a different circle of colleagues, or a period of searching. The article does not establish which is best. Someone needs to be able to assess an offer according to their own purposes and actual conditions, insofar as that is possible. Sometimes the former peak remains desirable. Sometimes its cost no longer fits. Reconsideration should not be imposed from outside as a lesson in humility, and retaining a wish should not become an obligation endlessly to prove that the move was successful.

A strong objection is that careful distinctions restore neither income nor recognition. That is true of the article's limits. We do not offer them as substitutes for practical means. They can only help name which question now calls for a factual answer and which needs a listener or time. Even that clarity is not guaranteed. If reflection increases the burden, it can be postponed. Someone may attend to necessities without having to turn this period into a meaningful story. The situation requires work, but not continuous inner commentary.

An immediate result may be modest: Mikhail described one ability, learned one limit, or stopped promising his family a definite date for his career's return. This is not overall success, but a particular change in the conditions of the next decision. Its significance should be assessed there. Dignity does not wait for that result; it is not awarded on completion of adaptation. Possibilities and recognition may remain limited while someone already has the right to think, learn, ask for help, and choose an available step. New status has not yet been found, and life already belongs to them.

What this means in practice

If you have the inclination and energy, choose one small professional uncertainty. Describe it without a general conclusion about yourself: I do not know the entry requirements, understand the position's name, know how to explain a result, or know whom to ask for information. Then distinguish retained experience from present formal recognition. There is no need to publish credentials, personal information, or a former employer's materials. The exercise does not demand proof of every ability and is not a programme for returning to a career.

Name one permissible source of an answer and check that particular question if doing so is manageable. Procedures, work authorization, and professional standards require current competent information; our general text does not establish them. You may also decide that necessary expenses, rest, or assistance matter more now. Stop the experiment under pressure or humiliation, or if someone else's information could be disclosed. The practice is voluntary. Declining it makes nobody less independent and does not devalue earlier work.

After the step, ask what actually changed: an answer appeared, uncertainty became clearer, another source was found, or a limitation became more intelligible. None guarantees a job, income, recognition, or well-being. This is an editorial way of narrowing one task, without demonstrated effectiveness. Pain over loss need not disappear immediately. Someone can continue valuing their previous work while learning to act in a place where that work is not yet known.

Key quotation

> *seem to be devoid of significance*

Abraham Cahan, *The Rise of David Levinsky*, Book I, Chapter I, the closing clause of the sentence about the narrator's position, power, and available worldly happiness. The fragment expresses a fictional character's view rather than the objective uselessness of success. Text.

Connections between traditions

Read point of reference	Connection with status	Limit of comparison
Cahan, the novel's opening	External advancement and an inner question can diverge	A fictional narrator represents neither all emigrants nor the uselessness of success
OECD2023,3.12	Education and occupational level are considered separately	The indicator measures neither all experience nor dignity and cannot forecast a reader's career
Epictetus, XVII	Action is distinguished from the assigned situation	A Stoic role justifies no inequality and replaces no modern professional procedure

Sources

1. Abraham Cahan. The Rise of David Levinsky; Gutenberg2803. Metadata and the selected opening of Book I, Chapter I were read. The electronic copy's print basis was not established. Quotations belong to a fictional narrator. Availability does not establish territorial permission to reuse the version.

2. OECD/European Commission. Indicators of Immigrant Integration2023, section3.12. The indicator's context, selected findings, and time-frame captions were read. A primary institutional statistical publication; individual countries' source tables were not recalculated here. We use a definition and the limit of its meaning without transferring historical values to a present individual.

3. Epictetus. The Enchiridion, XVII, translated by Thomas W. Higginson; Gutenberg45109. The selected XVI–XIX context and edition information for the Liberal Arts Press second edition1955 were read. The modern introduction supplies no historical facts in this article. Rights in this version are not generalized to every territory.

Tags

emigration, relocation, loss of status, recognition, professional experience, competence, qualification, temporary work, dignity, income, profession, credentials, entry requirements, circle of trust, new surroundings, self-description, learning, professional question, material limits, support from relatives, responsibility, uncertainty, choosing a task, former position, career expectations, Abraham Cahan, David Levinsky, OECD, Epictetus, Enchiridion, fictional scene, United Wisdom

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

About the authors

Andrey Zarinsh is the author and founder of United Wisdom. He explores inner transformation, the unity of traditions, intercultural dialogue, and contemporary spiritual discipline. Instagram: @andrey.zarinsh.

Maria Evilkut is a co-author of United Wisdom. Alongside research, she seeks to test these ideas in practice and observe how principles of unity and mutual understanding work in real life between people and cultures. Instagram: @ilkutki.