

Q: I may be paranoid, but I'm afraid to take a vacation this year. I'm 57 and have a good job, but our company has had a lot of layoffs lately, and business is still slow. My fear is that while I'm gone, they'll find someone younger and cheaper to do my job. Maybe they'll kick me out because I'm eligible for early retirement. But with a big family, I can't possibly retire until I hit at least 62 and can qualify to get Social Security to add to my small pension. What should I do?



A: Go for it! You've worked hard and earned that vacation, and you shouldn't worry that you'll be canned. Anyhow, did it ever occur to you that if you cancelled your vacation and hung around like a stir-crazy prisoner, it could have the opposite effect. The idea could get to the bosses that you're so scared to leave your job, there must be something you're trying to hide.

Take that doggone vacation! Go on a cruise! Shoot the dice in Vegas! Ride a mule down a Grand Canyon trail! Snorkel in Hawaii! Climb El Capitan in Yosemite! Do some pub crawling in Dublin. Let those younger people know you're in great physical and emotional shape. Prove to them that you'll come back rarin' to show 'em how a seasoned expert can get the job done.