

Take Back Control After Job Loss



7 Steps For Turning The Negative Experience Of Job Loss Around

Even when it is expected, job loss can have a profound impact on people's lives. Recently former Canadian technology giant, Blackberry, announced they were laying off approximately 5,000 people. 5,000 equates to half of their remaining workforce. The year before, Blackberry also laid off approximately 5,000 employees. Certainly those 5,000 people saw the writing on the wall for months, and yet for many of them, the news was staggering. Entire neighborhoods were built by Blackberry employees, and these neighborhoods are feeling the impact most. The entire community feels the loss.

Job loss, regardless of the cause, and even when people are laid off in the thousands, is a personal experience. One might feel fear, shame and hurt. Any number of these emotions harm one's feelings of self-worth and confidence. While some may jump back quickly, perhaps as a result of their natural resilience or available resources, others take much longer to recover. But almost no one is unaffected by the loss of a job. If not managed well, job loss has very real and lasting implications. It is important to take action quickly after a job loss to put yourself on the path to successful re-employment.

7 Steps that can help you manage the experience of job loss

1) **Stay Connected:** Job loss can isolate you. Even if you have lost your job among 1000's of co-workers, loneliness may still set in. Staying connected to colleagues who have not lost their jobs can be psychologically difficult, but it is important to stay connected to people who are active in your industry. If you cannot stay connected to your immediate co-workers, then reach out to colleagues in other departments or other organizations. Not only can these relationships keep you professionally informed, but they may also lead to new connections.

It is equally important to stay active and connected within your broader community. This involves actively participating in community events, your children's school or arts/sports groups, volunteering and more. Staying connected and being present in the community will keep you grounded.

2) **Surround Yourself with Positive Influencers:** Staying connected to colleagues who have also lost jobs can seem like a great way to share leads and support one another, but only if these former colleagues stay positive with you. Find videos, stories, places and people who make you feel positive about the future. Be thoughtful about the choices you make in books, movies and television shows. Watch out for those

who try to sell you false methods of finding success. Be positive. Also be shrewd.

3) **Communicate with Your Friends and Family:** When you have lost your job you may find yourself at home more often. When you are home a lot, family and friends tend to unintentionally take advantage of your availability. Elicit their help to stay focused on your job search. Be open with them about how you feel. Ask them to educate themselves about what it feels like to suffer a job loss. It may be a nice advantage for your family that you are home more often, but after awhile, you may feel undervalued and taken for granted.

4) **Learn About Yourself:** Understand yourself, understand what you are feeling and, equally importantly, what you want to do next. Find an opportunity to meet with a career coach and complete career or workplace assessments. Determine what you really like to do, be reminded of your strengths and your interests and use that information to fuel the next stage in your career.

5) **Take Care Of Yourself:** It is important to do the things that help you stay healthy and positive. This means taking time to do things you typically enjoy, even when you do not always feel like doing them. This does not mean acting reckless and spending money you do not have. Create a routine that includes physical activity each day. Begin your day with a walk or something you enjoy. Schedule regular times to eat and meet with friends. Finally, set aside time each day to focus on your future and your job search.

6) **Let it Go:** It is easy to get stuck in the past, mulling over what you could have done differently, feeling like a failure and even letting anger eat away at you. In all circumstances, the only way to move on is to let it go. In many cases, it is true that a person who lost a job did nothing wrong or was treated unfairly. You may have had to fight your employer during the process. Letting it go is not a one-time thing. Letting it go is an ongoing process that may require you to consciously remind yourself to let it go until you actually do.

7) **Embrace The Opportunity For Change:** Ultimately you have to make the choice to embrace the road ahead. Letting it go and embracing change work hand-in-hand to help you take back control and adapt to your changing circumstances. If you evaluate your past you may discover that you were doing a job you did not really love or using skills that were extra work or working with people you did not really like. Embracing the opportunity this change has offered may take some time but if you are focused on it as an opportunity to change you are more likely to navigate through the process and achieve your next career goals.