



Top 10 Things to Do If You're Laid Off

Being downsized, dismissed, let go, or laid off is never easy. No matter how much information you're privy to regarding your company or industry, it's always a shock when you're the casualty.

Here are 10 things to do should this happen to you.

1. Regroup.

Experience the shock, hurt, and anger that you're experiencing, but don't get stuck in the feelings. Instead, focus on the future and what it is you most want and need.

2. Mobilize.

Mobilize your resources. List every idea you have about what you think you'll need to do. Get the ideas out of your brain and onto paper. This will help you with brainstorming, with strategizing, and with mobilizing your resources. Immediate action is required; mobilization is the step preceding action.

3. Think about people.

List all the people you know. Make a plan about how you'll approach them and for what purpose. How will you explain your situation to people, and what is it that you'll be asking for? Get clear about this last point so your communication with them is productive.

4. Think about functions and transferable skills.

Think about the skills and talents you've tapped into in previous jobs. Creatively brainstorm what jobs would easily incorporate these transferable skills. Educators and social workers have successfully transferred their communication skills into corporate training positions, and financial planners have successfully entered other industries as analysts or educators. Successful salespeople frequently "job-hop" industries—their communication skills transcend the product or industry.

5. Presentation matters.

Immediately update and upgrade your resume. Have your resume clearly represent your personal best. Make sure that the reader has no doubt about how well you'd perform—have your resume express the best of who you are! This means that impeccability matters. Present

yourself professionally and in a style that both flatters and communicates who you are. Give people a reason to hire you. If you don't effectively represent or promote yourself, why should a potential employer think that you'd effectively represent or promote their product?

6. Maximize resource utilization.

Don't dismiss newspaper ads because you've heard that most people don't get jobs through the newspaper. Think creatively about what resources are available to you and utilize them. Besides networking and the newspaper classifieds, there are professional organizations, alumni services, and private or public employment offices. Look around your community for other available resources.

7. Focus on your strengths.

You're concerned about your future and worried about your income. While you might feel powerless and fearful or anxious about your lack of control, make a commitment to live from your strengths and not from fear. Identify your strengths and make a conscious decision to live from them—observe when you're not. The future will unfold in unforeseen ways when you apply and integrate this concept into your life. Work to maintain your self-confidence while being open to others' contributions. List on a piece of paper the qualities that make you unique and special—list your strengths, talents, and skills. Look at the list daily and add to it when new insights about your strengths emerge. If you don't believe in yourself, no one else will. Focus on your strengths!

8. Create a personal board of directors.

Consider creating your very own personal board of advisors. Apply Tom Peters' concept, "the brand called You," (Peters, 1997) to your life—run your life as you would a business. Create a personal board of advisors who will contribute to your success. Invite people you respect and who have complementary perspectives, approaches, and skills. Remember, you learn more from those who are different than from those who are similar. Differences of opinion create a more solid product. When others challenge you, know that they're actually helping to expand your vision. Let others contribute to you. Utilizing your very own personal board of directors will help you get beyond your blind spots.

9. Invest in yourself.

Investing time and resources into your personal and professional development is well worth the effort—regardless of your employment status. Structure personal and professional development into your schedule on an ongoing basis. Consider it a necessary ingredient for success. The benefits will far exceed the investment.

10. Visualize the future.

Don't let logistics or the fear that your dream is crazy or impossible stop you from visioning the future! There's always learning in the listening—so listen to your dreams. Identify the essence of what most excites you. Creatively brainstorm how you can live from that space more frequently; the more you do this, the more powerfully you'll generate the future you now only dream about.

The layoff may be a blessing in disguise. What is the universe trying to tell you? Is this a wake-up call of some kind? You might unknowingly be on a path of personal discovery—let the layoff be the catalyst for self-discovery and powerful actions! Perhaps it is time to move on to something more challenging and exciting.

Be open and listen. There may be a lesson and an opportunity in this for you.

Additional information is available from Encompass, CMU's employee assistance program (EAP) provider. To access the information, click [here](#) and type in "cmu" as the password.

Reference

Peters, T. (1997, August). The brand called you. [Electronic version]. *Fast Company*, Issue 10.

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