

Moving Beyond Anger and Fear

Introduction: Job loss can be one of life's most stressful events. Along with the sudden loss of work that identified and sustained you, you may be dealing with the negative emotions of anger and fear. Anger at what has happened to you, along with the fear that you will be unable to find meaningful work, may temporarily impede your ability to move forward and cause you to be ineffective in your job search.

Acknowledge your feelings and loss: You don't need to pretend that all is well, it isn't. Acknowledge what just happened; give yourself time to grieve your loss. If you don't allow yourself this time you will be unable to deal with it properly. You need to put it behind you to move forward positively. Seek out the company of people who appreciate you, people who will offer you encouragement and listen to you as you work through the loss.

Write it all down: Capture all your negative thoughts on paper. Those things you would have liked to have said to management but wisely didn't; the conversations you would have had with co-workers; the issues and fears you can't discuss with your family. Write it down in a private place, a journal or lockable diary. This is meant for your eyes only; deal with these negative and self-defeating emotions privately. Complete this exercise as many times as necessary to get over the hurt and anger. Then destroy the writings; these thoughts will only slow you down.

Accentuate the positive: This is an excellent way to feel better about yourself. Ask trusted former colleagues for letters of recommendation. These will boost your self confidence and also serve as very useful tools when it comes to actively searching for your next role. Did anything good come about as a result of your job loss? Finding value in the job loss takes you from feeling victimized to feeling in control, and ready to tackle the work needed to find your next job.

Develop other interests: Find meaningful activities that help reduce your stress and give you a sense of purpose and pleasure. This is particularly true if you held the type of position that consumed many of your waking hours, leaving little time to pursue outside interests. It will be difficult to occupy all those hours with job search activities. So, go for a walk with the dog, visit a family member, volunteer or learn a new language.

Seek out professional help: Seek professional help if you are finding it difficult to let the anger go. This inability may have a negative impact on your life and your interactions with those close to you. Help can be sought from a career coach, a psychologist, your family physician or a clergy member.

Conclusion: You must move beyond the anger or risk being consumed by it and alienating those around you. Do not lose sight of the fact that what you are experiencing with this job loss is natural and many before you have struggled with the same emotions. Before long the feelings of anger and fear will begin to be replaced with feelings of acceptance of your situation and you will start to move out among friends and colleagues again, seeking their help and advice in sourcing new career opportunities.