

FREE JLA 10 STEP CAREER PROGRAMME

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Step 1: Coping With Job Loss

Redundancy can be a painful and life-altering experience. It's worth being honest about that. Employers talk about the *role* being made redundant, however it is individuals who have to cope with the experience of redundancy.

The first thing many people experience is a sense of disbelief – is this really happening? Next, you may feel a sense of injustice – *why me?* At some stage in the process you will feel **anger** at what you have gone through or the way you have been treated. You will feel a sense of **loss**, particularly if you have been in the job a long time. Your **self-esteem** will be affected. You may feel a sense of **failure**.

These feelings are quite natural, and experienced by most people in career transition. We get a great deal out of work as well as income: routine, status, companionship, recognition, security, a sense of identity.

Why is it important to look at the psychology of job loss? Because it's a process of **managing change**. To manage this new situation you need to be aware of your reactions, honest about the way you feel. You need people around you who will listen, even if your feelings seem irrational. Watch out for the danger that your feelings may push you into **depression** or passivity – a feeling of defeat. Such feelings have far more to do with your state of mind than the state of the job market. Only when you have acknowledged the new reality can you begin to adjust to change.

Look at the people who successfully manage transition, and learn from them. They put their energy into managing change, and into moving on.

Job seekers put out a *message* to recruiters and employers. That message is composed of everything they do and say and write. If you have not yet come to terms with change, what your message will be about is betrayal, anger, and resentment. If you have moved on, your message will be about skills and achievements.

One concept that people find helpful is the idea of **energy**. We all have a finite amount of intellectual and physical energy. At first most, if not all, of that energy is directed towards discomfort – talking about the experience of redundancy, the downside of job change. This is natural, at first.

However some people keep directing that energy at resentment. They spend far too long fighting decisions that have been made. Taking your employer to court may be necessary, but it is better to harness whatever goodwill is available.

The first step is always to review what you have to offer and think carefully about your message to the marketplace before you throw yourself at contacts, recruiters or employers. Use the 10 Tips to review yourself and your progress.

For more tips on bouncing back in a tough market, see *Career Reboot*.

OTHER STEPS IN THE 10 STEP CAREER PROGRAMME

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