

MANAGING JOB LOSS GRIEF

“Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending.”

Loss: The fact of losing something or someone.

Grief: This emotional response to the experience of loss. Suffering caused loss.

Losing job is one of life’s most stressful experiences. Our jobs are much more than just the way we make a living. They influence how we see ourselves, as well as the way others see us. They give us a structure, purpose and meaning. That is why job loss and unemployment can be stressful.

Beyond the loss of income, losing a job also comes with major losses. Some of which may be even more difficult to face.

- a) Loss of your professional identity
- b) Loss of self - esteem and self - confidence
- c) Loss of your daily routine
- d) Loss of purposeful activity
- e) Loss of your sense of security.
- f) Loss of intimate relationship
- g) Loss of social support

(Honestly do a personal reflection and identify all losses experienced in your life due to job loss)

STAGES OF JOB LOSS GRIEF

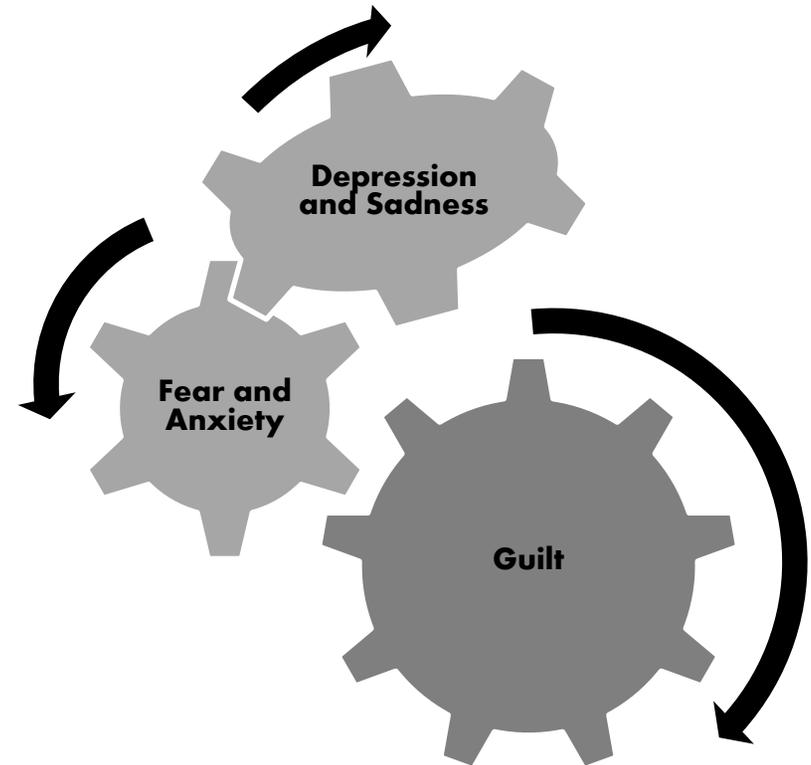


Suffering the loss of a job can be an emotionally wrenching experience regardless of the reason for the job loss. This is usually difficult to understand. The diagram above demonstrate consistent pattern exhibited by job losers. By recognizing the different stages one move through them quickly

- a) You want to believe it cannot happen to me. It is not true.

- b) I cannot believe it. They have made a mistake.
- c) I feel bitter / angry toward my boss, others suspected to be involved. Anger sometimes can be directed toward family members and friends.
- d) What did I do wrong? How did I fail? “I must not be any good” (This is when self – worth and self – confidence begin to wane. This the time one reaches the onset of the stage five (withdrawal)
- e) All of a sudden you find excuse to avoid contacts with the external world. One experiences periods of depression. One stops usual social activities. The physical activities decline. The inner strength and support systems are highly important at this stage. One should make efforts to move out of this stage quickly.
- f) Reflection: Being depressed is no fun. It is time to do something about it. Take a stock of personal abilities and ask self “what should I do now?” “Where do my talents best fit?” “How do I conduct me job search?” This the moment to focus ahead and a void focusing energy on the past.
- g) Acceptance: It not my fault, I did a mistake but can change positively. I am a great person with exceptional talent, so when I land my new job, my employer is going to get one dynamic, motivated employee. This is a great opportunity for new experiences, new friends and a whole new positive outlook on life.

NEGATIVE FEELINGS ASSOCIATED WITH JOB LOSS



(Honestly do a personal evaluation on the progression through the job loss grief stages.)

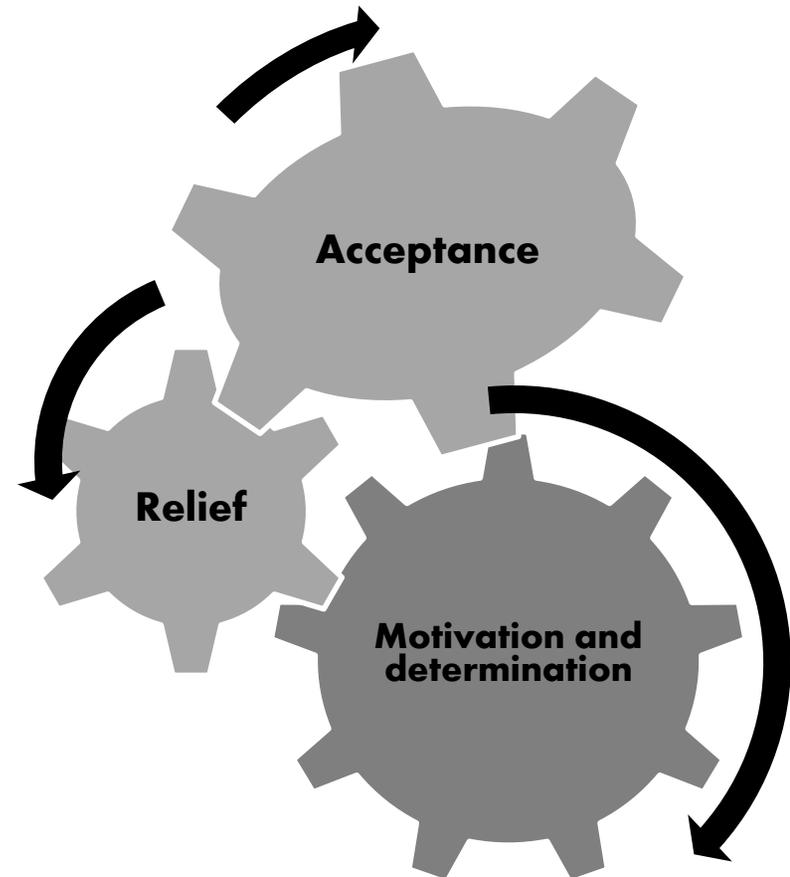
Leaving a job is like a break or divorce for many professionals. It is not uncommon for feelings of sadness, and even depression to set in after the decision to leave is finally made.

Leaving a job can bring feelings of guilt because one may feel as though he is leaving everyone behind. Never allow such feelings to damage you.

Focusing on self doubt causes undue stress and anxiety. This should be the time to look forward not focusing on past experiences.

(Help the client reflect and express the negative feeling experience due to job loss and their effects)

POSITIVE EMOTIONS ONE MAY EXPERIENCE



Help the client reflect on the emotional experience after job loss

After experiencing the emotional turmoil of negative feelings one begins to accept the loss and moves on with life. Positive self-appraisal is crucial. Relief comes after acceptance of the joblessness or job change. When relief is achieved feelings of guilt or sadness start disappearing and room for good feelings is created. The newfound feelings of elation and relief open the door for motivation and determination to move with job and seeking new opportunities of utilizing personal talents and experience.

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO COPE WITH LOSS OF JOB

- a) Try not to panic or get overwhelmed. Realize this is an opportunity and move on.
- b) Adjust life budget. Stop all unnecessary purchases to cope.
- c) Give yourself time to adjust: Grieving the loss of your job and adjusting to unemployment can take time. Try to accept your feelings and go easy on yourself.
- d) Think of your job loss as a temporary setback. Most successful people have experienced major setbacks in their careers but have turned things around by picking themselves up, learning from the experience and trying again. You can do the same.
- e) Start job search immediately. Contact employment agencies, search in the internet and other sources.
- f) Express your feelings in a creative way. Acknowledge your emotions, do not hide them. Allow yourself to experience natural feelings of denial anger and grief. Writing about your loss in a journal. This can help you to look realistically at your new situation and put things into perspective.
- g) Reach out to stay strong. Your natural reaction at this difficult time may be to withdraw from friends and family out of shame or embarrassment. However you should never underestimate the importance of other people when you are faced with the stress of job loss and unemployment. Nothing works better at calming your nervous system than talking face to face with a good listener.
- h) Build new relationships: Meet new people with common interests they can offer help.
- i) Open up to your family: Keep them informed about your job search and tell them how they can support you.
- j) Listen to the concern of the family members: Your family members may be worried about, as well as their own stability and future. Give them a chance to talk about their concerns and offer suggestions regarding your employment.
- k) Make time for family fun: Set aside regular family fun time where you can enjoy each other company, let off steam and forget about your unemployment troubles. This will help the whole family stay positive
- l) Keep an open dialogue with your children. Children have a way of imagining the worst when they write their own scripts, so the truth can actually be far less devastating than what they envision.

- m) Make sure your children know it is not anybody fault. Children may not understand about job loss and immediately think you did something wrong to cause it or they may feel that somehow they are responsible or financially burdensome. They need reassurance in these matters, regardless of their age. Children need to feel they are helping. They want to help and having them do something like taking a cut in allowance, deferring an after school job can make them feel as if they are part of the team.
- n) Stay positive to keep up your energy: create a job search plan. Avoid getting overwhelmed by breaking big goals into small, manageable steps. Instead of trying to do everything at once, set priorities. If you are not having luck in your job search, take some time to rethink your goals.
- o) List your positives: It is good to make a list of all the things you like about yourself, including skills, personality traits, accomplishments, and success. Write projects you are proud of, situations where you excelled and things you are good at. Revisit this list often to remind yourself of your strengths.
- p) Finding activities that give your life “meaning” For many people work gives them meaning and purpose. Following job loss. It is important to find other ways to nourish self. Think of hobbies, community events and other activities that can make life enriching and meaningful.

- q) Focus on the things you control. You cannot control how quickly a potential employer calls you back or whether or not they decide to hire you. Rather than wasting your precious energy on things that are out of your hands, turn your attention to things you can control during your unemployment, such as learning new skills, writing a great cover letter and resume, and setting up meetings with your networking contacts.

(Take time to honestly strategize on how to cope with the loss of job, write t down a practical plan for future follow up.