

Work Life... I lost my job

Situation:

I was recently laid off from my job. One day I'm glad. The next day I'm sad. In fact, when I talk to other people about what happened, I find my stomach churning and I feel angry. Is this normal? One of the things that really gets me is how the company did it. Thirty of us were called into a conference room and they told us our positions were eliminated. Just like that. And that we'd have to pack our stuff and leave that day.

Answer:

It's common to go through mixed emotions at a time like this. The sooner you take the right/wrong, good/bad out of it, the more calm you're going to feel. The lay-off is simply an event. An event. If you're thinking that it's the "worst" thing that ever happened to you - change your thought to: "It's just an event. Period." You can pour a lot of your energy into why the company did what they did, and how unfair you think it is. You can try to figure out why it happened to you and not someone else. Or, you can put the same amount of your precious energy into moving forward and getting on with your life.

Down-sizing, right-sizing, layoffs – whatever you want to call them – are a fact of life. Reductions in the workforce are common, they are average. It's just as average for you and anyone else in the same situation, to have various emotions as a result of the change. You're not alone in what you're thinking and feeling. Everyone, and I mean everyone, has some kind of response to a situation of this kind. It would be unusual, or let's say somewhat unnatural, not to have any reaction at all to it.

The next time you notice your stomach churning, stop and notice what you're thinking. You'll see that your physical sensations are a direct result of your fear and/or anger thoughts. The company or person is not wrong, they are average for the way they informed your group that they were being laid off. They could have called you in one at a time. Would that have been better? More comfortable? They could have let you work until the end of the week. Would that have been better? More comfortable? Easier on you? Probably not. Somebody or some committee chose to do a group announcement. There is no right, best or comfortable way to tell people that they no longer are employed. The fact is: you can't be comfortable in an uncomfortable situation. Remember, toss out the right and wrong, toss out the good and bad. Make the event exactly what it was – an event. The sooner you do, the sooner you'll start feeling better.

If you find your mind wandering and wondering whether you will ever get another job, or a position that was as good as your last one, or whether you're capable, anything that rocks your sense of security – say to yourself: "I am valuable." Remind yourself of that fact while you are working on your resume or filling out an application. When you're on your way to an interview say to yourself silently or aloud, "I am valuable."



Those three words will help give you the boost you need to overcome any anxiety you may be having. Get an index card and write on it, "I am valuable" in big bold letters. Set it on the driver's seat (face down if that makes you more comfortable). When you get back to your car after an interview, pick up your card and before you even start the ignition read the phrase at least five times, whether or not you think the interview went well. Each interview you have is practice – practice in doing something you might be uncomfortable about. And you are valuable whether or not you get this particular job.

The only way to combat your negative, insecure thoughts is to replace them with secure, positive ones. And when you do – you'll start feeling better physically too.



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