



If you find yourself unemployed, just follow these suggestions and get into action fast.

When you are between jobs you have the extra time you need to run a truly aggressive search.



19 How to handle being unemployed

You can turn unemployment to your personal advantage.

As a group, virtually everyone who is unemployed eventually becomes reemployed, but some do it quickly, while others struggle, give up or settle for poor positions. With the right effort many can win new jobs that are more attractive than what they had and in healthy industries.

Experience has shown that as time passes, the less capable you will be (both psychologically and emotionally) to do what must be done to win a new job. So, the key is to have a schedule of full activity: meetings, interviews, letter writing, phone calls, follow-ups, and negotiations.

For action oriented people, being unemployed simply means having the time to do a lot of the things that need to be done. In fact, the experience of talking to so many people can be exhilarating. On the other hand, many people, if they aren't active... quickly get discouraged. Here are some key observations.

1 Get support from your employer.

Many employers are concerned about their people and want to provide as much support as they can.

- With respect to severance, corporations will sometimes extend financial support or maintain benefits.

- Some firms will extend outplacement counseling, if you think it would help.
- You also want to make sure there is total agreement on the reason for your separation. Work out an explanation that puts you in the best possible light. Once you have arranged for the best possible support, be prepared to explain why you are unemployed. You can state that the termination was due to factors beyond anyone's control, such as a cutback, merger, or reorganization.
- You can point out that the company provided a generous severance to show their appreciation, and to give you time to deal from strength.
- Where it applies, make the point that the final separation was made at your initiative because you are a loyal person who gives 100%, and you did not want to look for a job while drawing a paycheck, or take a lesser position.
- Be ready to provide references who will speak enthusiastically, not only about your ability to perform, but your character and personality as well. Consider people you worked with, those who worked for you, customers, suppliers, or influential people in any part of the company.
- Don't make the mistake of implying threats. If you are in a position to harm your employer, they will know about it without your saying so, and they'll take it into account when they deal with you. It is to your advantage that your relationship remain positive.
- If you are terminated for performance, remind your previous employer that judgments about performance can be subjective, and point out that you could be seriously harmed by a negative reference.

2 Build your job hunting knowledge and get your resumes created.

You need to build your knowledge every day until you have a new job. This includes reviewing sections of this book a number of times and reasonably mastering the content. As outlined in this text, move quickly to create all your resumes and draft the letters you might require.

3 Get yourself a mentor and become "innovative."

It can be anyone you respect. You need to share your progress with that person throughout your campaign. Also set aside one hour each morning to make a list of leads, ideas, and potential people to contact. Look for breaking news about any industry or occupation in which you are interested. Make it a rule to select three new people or companies to contact each day.

4 Be active, proactive, positive and maintain a winning attitude.

Devote two hours a day to sending out letters or phone calling based on a specific plan of action, and work to arrange at least one interview or personal meeting.

Allow at least a half-hour each day for exercise. Positive thoughts come more easily to people who stay physically fit. If you will follow this simple approach, you will find that you can be way ahead of most others who go through this experience.

10 common pitfalls when you're unemployed

Turning down your first offer.

Even if it is not everything you hoped for, if it offers challenge and growth opportunities, it should be given careful consideration.

Not being skeptical.

This is the reverse of the last point. If a position is obviously not right for you, if it presents little challenge, allows limited personal growth, then say “no thank you.”

Being unwilling to relocate.

Sometimes it is better to go where new firms and industries are springing up. While it is difficult to leave good friends behind, most people can adjust far better than they realize, and quickly make new friends.

Not accepting introductions.

We've all heard it. “I'm not going to press myself on my friends.” The truth is, most people want to help friends. It makes people feel good to know they've done something, however small, to support your efforts.

Feeling sorry for yourself.

It is a normal reaction, but, who is being hurt by these emotions? The answer is that the person being hurt is you.

Holding out for unrealistic income.

Consider a two-step move. Get to work in a new environment and keep your resume in circulation.

Not considering a career change.

If your present occupation or industry is on the decline, get into an area where opportunities are growing, and build a successful career.

Allowing your health to slip.

Attitude and physical fitness go hand in hand. When you are able to plan your time freely, it's actually easier to devote more time to fitness.

Displaying a bad mood.

There are many outlets for stress, including physical fitness and exercise. Besides, a bad mood will alienate those trying to help you. Follow our plan, avoid the 10 common pitfalls, and use the time advantage you have.

Allowing financial pressure to cause inertia.

Financial pressures are often the toughest to withstand. Don't be afraid to borrow, or to take part-time or temporary work, rather than succumb to inertia.

Being unemployed means you have time to do it right!

“Clear your mind of can't.”

—Dr. Samuel Johnson

“Man is what he believes.” —Antone Chekhov

What some people say about unemployment

■ *“Unlike most people who get downsized as part of cutbacks, I was in a state of shock when my boss stopped by and said things were not working out. I had exceeded my numbers every year for the three years. In retrospect, my political instincts were not what they should have been.”*

“My advice to others would be that the key to handling this experience is to stay busy, be positive and feel good about yourself. I know it isn’t the main purpose, but your system builds confidence and self esteem. And, since your system covers all the bases, being busy and having the activity was the key for me.”

■ *“I have been unemployed three times in my career. Once I was in the wrong field. Next, I was merged out. Most recently, our firm could not secure its next stage of funding. As a result, I have become somewhat of an expert on this situation. Building an entirely new will to succeed is the truly essential ingredient.”*

■ *“If a person can build a will to succeed, then with your system... it is only a matter of time. On the other hand, even with what you suggest, things won’t go well if they dwell on their old situation, or continue to feel angry or hostile about what happened to them. Too many of these people stay in depression too long.”*

■ *“I was unemployed for some time. When I became familiar with your system, I realized I had just been drifting in the market. All I really needed was to get into action with a step-by-step plan to follow.”*

**These will be commonplace in your career.
When it happens, you need to be ready.**

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