

**Pg. 1 Emotional Survival Tactics**

<https://crn.lhh.com/#/site/page/emotions>

## **Emotional Survival Tactics**

Where do you start? These can be very tough times financially and emotionally. Be sure to focus on YOU first.

Knowing that you are not alone in being jobless, which is especially prevalent in these uncertain economic times, is little solace. You might still have to support family and find the confidence to throw yourself in the job market again.

During the first mind-numbing days of job loss, you might find yourself asking: “Why?” You were dedicated and always went the extra mile. But what if you had stayed late for that meeting? Or what if you had volunteered for that other project? The “what-ifs” will invade your brain.

This is where you must build a wall between you and these thoughts. This sort of thinking is unproductive and hurtful. You must get yourself to look forward instead of backward.

Here are three suggestions to get moving in the right direction:

1. **Do something that helps you start processing what happened.** Like taking a long walk. Or building something, cooking, cleaning or reorganizing your home office. These physical tasks are helpful as they allow you to put your energy into something concrete, and like exercise, may help lift your spirits. For many stunned by sudden job loss, these small actions help start the healing process.
2. **Get your support system in place.** Tell your spouse, partner or best friend what has happened and share how you’re feeling. Don’t start calling your network and telling everyone your news. You will be much more effective once you’re prepared.
3. **Take advantage of your LHH program.** Attend any scheduled meetings, read articles on the CRN, use CRN eLearning, read your transition eBook. It’s rare to have time to plan what you want to do next. For some, the combination of time, money (severance and unemployment) and an outplacement program is a huge opportunity. Take advantage of your LHH resources so that when you look back at this time, you’ll be pleased with the progress you made.

Just remember that this is not the end of your life - it’s just a new beginning. Better times – and quite possibly a better career – are sure to come. It’s not a question if you’ll find a job – but when.

## Your first week and beyond

Some people, despite being unhappy in a position, will stay in a job for security reasons or unwillingness to take a risk. Sometimes we all just need a little push. So now it's time to find out what's in store for the next chapter of your life.

Here are some tips to help ease your transition:

- **Maintain your schedule as closely as you can.** If you're used to getting up at 5 a.m. and going to the gym, continue to do it. Don't give into the voice that says, "What's the point?" The point is you have a critical task in front of you - finding your next opportunity - and it will help you if you maintain a predictable and productive schedule.
- **Understand that you have a job - finding your next opportunity.** It is going to take intelligence, perseverance and a plan. For many, it is more challenging than "regular work." It's better to tell others that you're in transition - it's more motivating to others than saying you're out of work or unemployed. You don't want people feeling sorry for you, but rather need to engage them in effective ways to be part of your job search.
- **Start reclaiming your value.** It's common, when stunned by job loss, to feel as if you're no longer a highly capable person. Remind yourself, several times a day, that your value hasn't changed - only your employment status. And you own your value - it should never be defined simply by your employment. While it's good to be a loyal employee, a good goal is to be "smart loyal" - meaning you work hard, do quality work, but also understand that you, not your company, are responsible for your career.
- **Always introduce yourself in the present tense.** Start with what you do, not where you worked. "I am a Process Engineer" is much more energizing than "I used to work for XYZ Company." It's ironic but more people will want to help you if you sound upbeat and motivated. So even if you feel a little uncertain, try to sound positive when you talk with others. And on a difficult day, do paperwork or other activities that give you time to collect yourself before you pick up the phone.
- **Don't talk badly about your former employer.** As much as you might sometimes want to tell the world what a rotten boss you had, keep it to yourself. It's counterproductive. A potential employer may even call your former boss. It's especially important to never talk badly about your former company during interviews - they may see your current behavior as a reflection of behavior to come. Your next boss certainly doesn't want to be talked about negatively

## Seek outside help if you get stuck

Through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) — found on your former company's website or through its human resources department — you may be entitled to several free sessions, which are completely confidential. Job loss is a huge life change, and having an advocate who is trained to help you through difficult feelings can be a smart strategy.

In addition, if the counselor you meet with thinks you could benefit from additional sessions, he or she will refer you to another professional. Make sure to tell this person that you're in transition as they may charge on a sliding scale.

## Page 2: Personal Resiliency

<https://crn.lhh.com/#/site/page/retirement5resiliency>

### Personal Resiliency

Any significant life change - even those you plan and want to make - requires resiliency. Resilience is a requirement of living these days. It is a critical life skill, particularly when going through a major life transition. One definition of resilience is the capacity to remain both flexible and strong in the midst of ambiguity and change.

A resilient individual has the psychological and biological strengths required to master change successfully and bounce back when the going gets tough. It is the capability to recover quickly from the stresses of change - the ability to reach within you and find ways to work with change. People who are resilient gain their emotional balance quickly, adapt and actually gain strength from dealing with adversity.

#### Actions to help build resilience:

##### Self-Knowledge and sense of purpose

- Listen to your internal voice. What are you telling yourself about your abilities? Change your internal tape to start a more positive inner conversation.
- Identify a skill that will make you valuable in the future workplace. Take action to develop it.
- Evaluate all your accomplishments and achievements in the last 10 years (personal and professional). What did you do to get these results? What was satisfying about them?
- Write your personal mission statement, defining your life's purpose.
- Develop goals for your personal and professional life. Seek input from other people to help clarify these goals. Identify a first step in your plan, and do it within the next week.
- Write a paragraph about the quality of the life you'd like to have.
- Make a list of 20 things you would like to do in your life. Can you do one thing this month? This year?
- List your values and assess how they are and are not being met.
- Identify what you can do to realize these values more fully.

##### Attitude (optimism, receptivity, flexibility)

- Count your blessings. Write them down.

- Focus on any positive things that might unfold as a result of your current situation.
- Make a list of:
  - All of the things you have going for you
  - 10 problems others have that you do not share.
  - 10 things for which you feel grateful.
- List the various ways you could sabotage yourself during this transition. Avoid them all.
- Find three humorous things about your situation.
- Assure yourself that things will work out by identifying a time in your past that you handled a stressful situation. What helped you make it?
- List three people you know who seem to rebound from setbacks.
- Notice what they do. Ask them how they approach stressful situations.
- Pretend it is six months or a year in the future. Write a short paragraph about how you would like to look back and see yourself having come through this stressful time. What did you do? How did you act? Now, what might you have to do differently to achieve the outcome you would like?

### **Physical and Emotional Health**

- Set specific times aside for recreation during which you banish thoughts of work.
- Take time out for some replenishing activity such as a massage, a relaxing drive or an afternoon with an enjoyable book.
- Learn stress reduction techniques like deep breathing, meditation or relaxation methods.
- If your doctor thinks it is a good idea, start an aerobics class, take the stairs, park at the far end of the lot and walk into work. Or begin an exercise program simply by walking for 10 minutes twice a day. Increase it as you can.
- Watch caffeine, nicotine and alcohol consumption. They do not help.
- Review your diet; eliminate one unhealthy habit.
- Carefully consider your current situation. How bad is it really?
- Imagine the worst-case scenario. What could you do if the worst case happened?
- Spend more time with your family. Play with your children or pets.

- Do something to help others three times a week.
- Develop a new hobby or spend more time working at one you love.

For more tips on staying resilient during this transition time, [download this guide](#).

*(Job aid: Guide to Resiliency.docx)*

## **Managing Your Finances**

In financial areas of career transition, the experts often say, “hope for the best transition, work for the best possible outcome, and prepare for the worst case financial scenario, just in case.”

Got severance? With a well-planned search, you could land a job before your severance runs out. You could come out financially ahead! But even in a good job market, you should do your transitional financial planning based on the possibility of a long search.

### **Financial plan**

You might be lucky and find a great new job in a few weeks, but you should, of course, make your financial plans based on the worst case, not the best one. So think about how long the worst-case search might take, and use that in your financial planning. It depends in part on the difficulty of your search. While many factors influence difficulty, compensation is certainly important. If you’re looking for a high-comp, C-level job, think the higher end of the time range, just to be safe.

No matter what your expected compensation, you should know exactly how many months you can afford to live at your current level of expenditures – without having to dip into a 401K, liquidate investments at an inopportune time, or make other disadvantageous financial moves.

Don’t guess. Do the math. If your calculations show that it would be prudent to reduce your expenditures, there are a number of suggestions in this section.

### ***Do you have a budget?***

In normal times, most of us don’t do careful personal budgeting. But searching for a job while unemployed does not reflect normal times. It calls for more careful spending. This might be a good time to put a budget on paper — or to start using personal budgeting software, if you’re not already doing that.

What can you cut back? What expenditures can you defer? Don’t be too severe. Job-hunting can be a stressful activity, and you’ll need some recreation. But it’s certainly not a time for extravagant spending.

If you have severance benefits, don’t wait until they run out to reduce your expenditures. Cutting back a bit now will extend the time you can be financially comfortable. If you have children, consider involving them in expenditure reduction. This can be a family project.

And remember: if you’re lucky enough to have unconditional severance and you manage your finances well, it’s possible to actually make a profit on your transition.

If you want a basic form to help get you started on your budget, check out the [Family Monthly Budget Schedule](#), or go to <http://www.kiplinger.com/tools/budget/>. You can also purchase personal finance programs such as Quicken or Microsoft Money with built-in budget-making tools.

### **College-age dependents**

Talk to the financial aid office immediately to see if they are willing to make adjustments in your dependents' tuition and costs. Your income has changed, so your eligibility for financial aid also may have changed.

Some colleges will not make adjustments in financial aid while you are receiving severance. Some will want to wait and see how long you are unemployed. Some will base any consideration on what your total annual income turns out to be. But it's usually worth a phone call to open the conversation.

If you have a tuition payment coming up soon, it's also worth asking whether it can be partially or wholly deferred. And if so, ask about the terms.

### **Managing debts**

If you have debt, it is better to contact creditors sooner rather than later.

Creditors are sometimes willing to make accommodations for people who have lost their jobs. Your mortgage holder, for example, may be willing to accept *interest only* payments until you are working again. And you may be able to renegotiate the payment terms on any debt.

Talking to creditors early is a good idea. When they see you're operating in good faith and want to make arrangements to avoid any possibility of missing payments, they are often willing to discuss alternatives.

If you are in a position where your debts could become a serious problem while you're unemployed, you should seek professional debt counseling immediately. But beware of unsolicited offers of assistance in debt management – there are numerous scams in this area, some aimed particularly at the unemployed.

### **Generating income**

For many job hunters, there are opportunities on the revenue side of things as well as the cost management side.

Many professionals, managers and executives are able to operate consulting practices while in job search. The obvious advantage is some added income. But it also can be an alternate way to meet the right people and build professional relationships. And, if your search runs long, it provides a new top line for the résumé, so that you are not presenting yourself as unemployed.

Some job hunters who use this strategy find that they are successful enough in consulting that they can discontinue job hunting and pursue a consulting career. Beyond consulting, are there others ways you might bring in some income and still have sufficient time and energy for job hunting? Do you have a spouse or partner

who might bring in more income while you're in transition? What other options do you have?

Even small amounts of extra income can extend your comfort zone while unemployed, so this area is well worth considering.

The sooner you address these issues with your personal life, the sooner you will be emotionally ready to focus on your job search.

*(Job aids: Family Monthly Budget Schedule.xlsx)*

## **Health**

Good health is a precious resource that we usually appreciate more with maturity. With good health, any life plan is easier and more fun. Without good health, life plans can change dramatically. Maintaining and improving your health is an essential part of any planning for the next phase of life.

Studies completed by the National Bureau of Economic Research, which examined the relationship between health and retirement, have found that changes in conventional retirement expectations are driven to a much greater degree by changes in health than by changes in income or wealth.

Where we choose to put our attention now can make a significant contribution to how long and how well we live. "The question is not whether we will die, but how we will live," says Joan Borysenko, psychologist, motivational speaker and author of *Minding the Body, Mending the Mind*.

Look for a health practitioner who can become a partner with you in your own wellness. If you are in committed relationships of any kind, look for peers you can support and who will support you in caring for your health.

## **Relationships**

Close relationships can be an enormous resource in any life endeavor. At the same time, conflicts can arise in those relationships, especially in times of change.

Radical changes in work life, home life, goals and time allocations can disrupt even the strongest relationships. There are numerous opportunities for divergence of opinion on issues both large and small. All of these need to be examined, and all viewpoints must be considered. The challenge is to help everyone involved feel fulfilled and become strong supporters of any plan. There needs to be a balance so that no one feels deserted, compromised, or trapped.

Sometimes this involves communicating our dreams. It means talking about what has changed and what needs to be achieved. It also means merging new goals with old goals and recognizing the ideas of everyone involved. This becomes a discussion of what will be separate and what will be combined activities. Hopefully, at the end of this discussion will come a new possibility for an integrated view of the relationship and the future.

The next phase of your life may last 10 years, 20 years or longer. If it takes some weeks or even months of investigation and discussion to create a life plan that everyone is happy with, that time is probably very well spent.

## Friendships

Friends and acquaintances are a great resource in times of change. Change sometimes also offers the opportunity to find new friends and acquaintances.

Whenever we make a significant transition in our lives, it can have an impact on our circle of friends. The ideal is having lifelong friends who provide stimulation, acceptance, emotional support and assistance. However, the reality of our lifestyles may mean that when we go through dramatic changes, our friends may change as well. In difficult times, it helps to have friends who have experienced challenges similar to ours. This is a role that both new and old friends can play in this next phase of life.

Creating friendships with all age groups is one of the strongest recommendations from people who have been successful in this stage of life. Look for commonality in the people you meet and seek opportunities to mentor people younger or with less experience than you.

Think of the role friendship plays in your life. Each of us has a circle of friends. Sometimes it is helpful to take a few minutes and think about your circle of friends. How large a circle do you have or want? Are most of your friends close, casual or both?

Can friends help us live better? A landmark UCLA study about friendship among women suggests that hanging out with our friends can actually counteract the effects of daily stress. In another study, researchers found that those who had the most friends over a nine-year period cut their risk of death by more than 60%. Other studies have suggested that social ties reduce our risk of disease by lowering blood pressure, heart rate and cholesterol.

[Here's a tip sheet](#) for staying healthy.

*(Job aids: wellnessTipSheet.docx)*

## Page 5: Mindfulness

<https://crn.lhh.com/#/site/page/mindfulness>

### Mindfulness

Are you:

- Unable to focus your attention on career transition activities?
- Preoccupied with ruminating on what happened in the past - or what might happen in the future?
- Distracted by constant 'mind chatter'?
- Giving yourself a hard time about what you should - or shouldn't - do next?
- Experiencing anxiety at interview, which negatively impacts your performance?

If you answered 'yes' to any of the above, you are not alone. You are simply experiencing the mind doing what it does best - being busy, wandering off, creating distractions and getting caught up with thoughts and emotions.

The good news is that mindfulness can help. Mindfulness enables you to focus your attention where YOU want it to be, leave the 'mind-chatter' behind, decrease stress and become grounded - so that you can be your best during career transition.

#### What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the ability to pay attention non-judgmentally to events that arise in our lives. It is an adaptation of Buddhist meditation that is supported by over 40 years of medical and psychological research across a number of sectors and applications.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> (<http://nowunlimited.co.uk/mindfulness-for-the-unemployed/>)

Mindfulness is a form of 'fitness training' for the mind. When the 'brain muscle' is worked out regularly, we can come into the present moment and focus our awareness where we would like it to be.

Mindfulness enables us to simply notice our thoughts and emotions and not to get caught up with them. We learn to create a 'pause,' which enables us to come off autopilot and choose to respond - not react - to difficult situations. We can then bring these qualities of increased focus, calm and clarity into our everyday lives.

#### Where to begin?

While there are many tools, courses, and "apps" available to help you reach mindfulness, sometimes a simple pause in the day for a walk can be very calming. It just means setting aside a little time every day for a brain break. Here is a simple approach you can try:

1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position and close your eyes.
2. Pay attention to your breath as it goes in and out. Experience the feeling of your incoming and outgoing breath. Breathe calmly from the diaphragm, letting the stomach rise and fall.
3. If your attention wanders from your breathing pattern, to thoughts or feelings that start to take over, don't worry. This happens to all of us. Simply note that change of attention, and gently bring the attention back to the breathing.
4. No matter how many times attention strays, bring it back to the breath. This act of continuity prepares your mind to cope with reactive feelings and thoughts in a calming way, resulting in a more stable state of mind.

[There are many apps](#) that can help develop Mindfulness and give you the tools and training to become more mindful.

*(Job aids: Wellness Apps.docx)*

## Page 6: Dealing with Common Myths & Obstacles

<https://crn.lhh.com/#/site/page/mythsintro>

### Dealing with Common Myths & Obstacles

You've probably heard the stories before. You may even have some of these stories deeply ingrained in your mind, which are keeping you from even starting your job search. Maybe you're thinking:

- "I can't get a job because I don't have a job" or...
- "I don't have time to look for work" or...
- "I'm too old (or young) to get a job" or...
- "I've only worked at one company - no one else will hire me."

Dispelling these myths is an important part of moving forward with your life. These self-defeating barriers will hinder your search and stifle your confidence. Learn the truth behind these myths. In much the same manner, other obstacles can hinder your productivity, making it take longer to land that next job.

#### Don't believe everything

Some people in job search might use myths as "crutches" or excuses for not putting their full effort into finding a new job. If you're serious about finding a job, you need to realize the truth about these tales. Don't believe everything you hear...

- **I can't get a job if I don't have one.** People don't give up on this one easily. It's simply not true that no one out of work can get hired because only people who are working get hired. LHH candidates dispel this belief all the time as they see those around them getting prospects and jobs – and then they confidently go forth and land the job.
- **I'm too old to get hired.** There are three components of age – chronological age, skill set and the impression you make. If your skill set is up to date in your field and you appear enthusiastic and young at heart, age won't matter.
- **I can't get hired at that company because they just downsized.** Companies need to adjust their staffing as business conditions change. Sometimes there is a need for new employees in one department, at the same time as changing conditions require a cutback in another department. If both departments use the same skill sets, people can be moved from one area to another. But if different skills are required, the company will hire in one area while doing a layoff in another.
- **I have no experience in that industry – I can't get hired there.** This is not always true. Sometimes less-qualified candidates get hired because of their "fit" with a company. In addition to your specific background, you're selling enthusiasm, intelligence, motivation and interest in them.
- **There are no jobs in the summer or over the holidays.** Schools may take a break during the summer, but employers certainly don't. Holiday periods where hiring slows down are always great opportunities to network and

position yourself for the jobs that open up after the holiday. So don't pay attention to those who say "There are no jobs out there – especially now" or "Everyone is away for the summer."

### **The internet trap**

The Internet is a wonderful tool - especially in a job search. You can connect to an entire network through LinkedIn. You can increase that network even more through Facebook and Twitter. You can find up-to-date information on prospective companies, you can research people and discover trends that will help you stay current in your field.

But within the power of all that technology is a trap that can suck you into its vortex. Lurking within are all those wonderfully enticing Internet job posting boards. While it's good to use them as part of your search, they often monopolize a person's time and then lead to intense frustration.

Our advice here is simple: Use the Internet but don't let it use you. Diversify your search so that the Internet is just one facet of your job hunt.

### **The time warp**

Why is Everything Moving So Slowly? When you were working, a week or two would whiz by, and you'd wonder where the time went. But now that you're in transition and are waiting for people to respond to your resume, answer your calls, or invite you in for an interview, time drags by so slowly that a day can seem like an eternity.

Don't worry. You aren't doing anything wrong. Your day to day has been disrupted, no question. A huge adjustment that many face in losing their jobs is the loss of structure. Without having to be anywhere or do anything, it's hard to be productive. And again time feels like an enemy as the day drags on.

Use what you've learned about Mindfulness to help add calmness and structure to your day.

## **Page 7: Unemployment Compensation**

<https://crn.lhh.com/#/site/page/stateoffices>

## **Unemployment Compensation**

### **Where to find help**

Even if you have severance benefits, there is a very good chance that you are eligible for state unemployment compensation. Check with your state immediately. Find out what the rules are in your state and register as soon as possible to begin collecting as soon as possible. This is a benefit you have paid for and one you should certainly take full advantage of. While it is dramatically less income than managers and professionals earn, collecting it will help extend the time you can be financially comfortable without dipping into savings.

Be sure to find out what you need to do to maintain your eligibility. Some states have reporting or other requirements.

Consult our list of state unemployment offices/websites:

(Long list)