

MOVE TO YOUR NEW LIFE

JOB LOSS SURVIVAL GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

As a person who experienced sudden job loss and triumphed, I put this book together to help many rise from the ashes by first changing their perspective. This is a guide to help you recover from the shock of sudden job loss, discover your purpose and find a way out of a seemingly hopeless situation. I want you to know that losing your job is not peculiar and should not mean the end of your life. It can be a blessing in disguise and a breakthrough for yourself and the lives that will be impacted when you find your purpose. Many inventions and innovations were born from unpleasant circumstances such as the inventors suddenly finding themselves without a steady source of income yet having financial obligations to meet.

With the current economic situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations and companies across the world will be faced with redundancy. Employee layoff is one sure consequence of this. If you are wondering how to navigate the process of rising again, this book will answer your questions.

Welcome to the next amazing phase of your life.

ACCEPTANCE

Job loss is an unpleasant situation that most often catches people unaware. It is hardly ever planned for and brings great disappointment and shock. This is very different from leaving a job after duly handing in a resignation letter. I am talking about being told that your employer suddenly has no need for or can no longer afford your services. Redundancy is just one of the many possible causes of this. When this happens, your employer may have no control over the termination or continuance of your contract. Whatever the cause, do not become bitter or take your termination as a personal failure.

On 31st August 2016, I was handed my redundancy letter. To be honest, when that month began, I had no inkling of what the next few weeks held. Neither did I have any plans or arrangements for the impending loss of income. Upon receipt of the letter, I immediately felt dizzy and could hardly stand upright. Walking back to my office was a Herculean task. Each step felt like my shoes were made of lead weights and the world around me had suddenly ceased to exist. I was no longer sure whether I was awake or asleep. I was in a state of shock.

That night, I barely slept. I was half expecting my phone to ring and to hear a voice requesting me back at work in the morning. I must have fallen asleep at some point because I opened my eyes on the first of September and I was still without a job. Reality kicked in—I was part of 200 people that were laid off.

The surreal feeling lasted for a while. I kept hoping to wake up and find that my job was mine again. The next day, I was still at home. And the day after that. And the day after that day. Still no miraculous call. After a week of waking up half-hoping and waiting for a call to go back to work, I slowly realized I had to accept the new reality of being without a job.

The first thing I did on my journey to acceptance and ultimately recovery, was to talk. The more you talk about it, the faster your subconscious begins to accept the new reality. I did not talk to just anyone who cared to listen or sympathize with me. When I came out of the meeting that day, I called my husband immediately and then called my Pastor, who is my counselor. The week after the incident happened, I increased the number of people I spoke to about the situation. I carefully picked these people because I knew that the words I heard at that stage were critical to my mental and emotional well-being. I did not need judgmental words or pessimistic reactions that would deepen my sorrow and sense of loss.

Do not speak with people who would seize the opportunity to remind you that there are colleagues who were not laid off. Others would use this painful time to point out what they perceive to be your shortcomings and use them as an explanation for your job loss. Avoid such people.

Interestingly, it is not always people who would say these things to you—sometimes, it will be your own mind! You would put yourself under intense scrutiny and begin to find both existent and non-existent faults with your personality or work ethic in an attempt to justify being laid off. I experienced all these.

My mind decided to gloss over my being a star performer at work, but rather torment me with various scenarios of things I could have done better or differently. I felt disappointed in myself. It seemed to me that I had let myself down and all who believed in me. Nevertheless, after a while, I realized I had to take control over my mind and emotions.

You will go through the stage of disappointment and may feel the same way I did. For the first 4 weeks, you may even struggle with intense flashbacks and memories but you need to do all you can to forget about your old job. You should suppress thoughts like, “I would have been on my way to work by this time” or “I would have been having lunch at my desk by this time”, which cause you to ponder unnecessarily on what your work day would have looked like. You may even need to pack up your work clothes to get rid of the hurtful reminder and take control of your mind.

If you were the only person laid off, it might be helpful to do some soul-searching or self-assessment but even then, there is no need to beat yourself up any further than circumstances already have. Feel free to express your pain in any legal way that makes you feel better. Cry, shout, binge-eat —the list is endless. In my case, 300 people were eventually laid off and I reminded myself daily that these people could not all have been bad at their jobs.

HEALING

“Often it’s the deepest pain which empowers you to grow into your highest self”.

—Karen Salmansohn.

After accepting the new situation you find yourself in, you need to heal from the shock and disappointment. How can you achieve this?

Firstly, you need to ask yourself a few thought-provoking questions:

1. Do I want to remain in my current state emotionally, financially and otherwise?
2. How long do I want to feel the disappointment and hurt I currently battle with?
3. Do I want the rest of my life to be a pity party with everyone feeling sorry for me and hearing my sad story many times over as an explanation for why I am at this point?
4. How do I want my life to turn out two years from now?
5. Do I want to be a victim of a job loss or an overcomer of a job loss?
6. Who will benefit from any decision I take right now?

Your answers to these questions will be an indicator of whether or not you are ready to heal. Begin to speak to yourself based on the answers. Tell yourself you cannot remain in this state. Healing properly is very essential to moving on and having a truly happy life, regardless of what the future holds or what occurred in the past. Acknowledge your thoughts and emotions. You cannot sweep your emotions under the carpet and expect to be alright. It is important to process how you feel properly because failure to do so will only extend your period of brokenness. You are allowed to feel how you do. It is alright to

cry, rant or do anything you can to feel better. However, it is not okay is to pretend that you are not hurting or give up and remain in this state forever.

Additionally, you cannot heal properly by immediately getting busy with various social activities, back to back, and pretending to have fun whilst dying inside. Some will go on forced vacations to impress ex-colleagues, to try and cover up the situation and give the impression that they have healed. This is also not a good idea. Moreover, do not turn to destructive things like drunkenness and unwholesome habits. When the euphoria and haze of these things wear off, the problem will remain unchanged and possibly even compounded.

It is possible to heal from the shock of losing your job but still not heal from the hurt of perceived betrayals that led to the loss. This is why it is important to heal wholly and completely.

My supervisor was like a sister to me, yet I decided not to be angry with or bitter towards her when I realized she added my name to the list for retrenchment. I concluded that she must have had her reasons or may have had no choice. Being bitter at your ex-bosses or supervisors will not be beneficial to you. Genuinely forgive the company, your supervisor and move on with your life. Remaining angry will only prolong your healing process.

Some people may choose to sue the company or embark on a smear campaign. If you have been wronged according to the law and need to seek redress, by all means do so, but do not go at it from a place of bitterness and hurt. You need to heal in your thoughts, attitude and character—wholly and completely.

I had to ask myself the same questions I listed at the beginning of this chapter. I asked myself if I wanted my life to stop at that sad, hurt, jobless stage. Although I loved my job and the role I played in the organization, answering no to these questions helped me find the strength to begin healing. I realized that losing that job was not the final destination for my life. I knew that was not all I was born for.

I would not be completely honest if I said the pain and hurt vanished the instant I came to this realization. The truth is, I was still hurt and sad but I fought back at the situation by consciously putting aside anything that reminded me of what I had lost. I was quick to cast down every wrong imagination or thought that did not align with the answers I gave to those questions. Being a Christian, I mainly found solace in prayer, reading my Bible and Godly counsel from my husband and pastor.

What about you? Are you ready to heal or do you want to remain at this point a little longer? I believe your answer is NO.

SELF-DISCOVERY

When you have truly healed from the emotional turmoil of losing a good job, the question "What next?" will follow: "What can I do?", "What is immediately available to me?"

This will lead you to a point of self-discovery, where you remember abandoned passions and dreams and begin to see yourself through clean lenses of hope and positivity. You start to have an identity outside of your former job. You are no longer just a banker or an efficient secretary. You now see yourself as who you really are- more than just a title. You start to notice new skills or reawaken previously known skills and capabilities that were masked or underrated because you had a job that kept you occupied.

It was during this period I saw things about myself that I never previously noticed. I realized that I was not really cut out for a 9-5 job. I then had the confidence to promise myself not to look for that kind of job. That was my point of self-discovery! I got a number of leads to other banking jobs from senior colleagues who knew my capabilities, but I had already moved past that. I had gone through acceptance and healing and had come into self-discovery. I had lost the fear of being without a job and knew for sure that a 9-5 job was not what I would thrive best at. I had silenced the ugly voice that said, "Without a job I am nobody and cannot survive" and discovered that I could be successful in the buried desire I had for years to be an entrepreneur.

Dear Reader, sometimes a job is not what you need. Jumping quickly on to anything available may not always be the next best step to take. When I truly discovered myself, I never looked at my CV again. I knew my future did not lie in applying for even one more 9-5 job.

The way forward for you can be any of these:

- Deciding to upgrade yourself by going back to school
- Rewriting your CV and highlighting your strengths in ways that are unique
- Discovering talents that can earn you money
- Change of career
- A change of environment

As healing will give you a new pair of lenses through which to view your options, self-discovery brings the clarity you need to make the best decision for your future. This is the stage where people come up with new products or inventions. It is at this stage that the greatness within you will begin to be birthed.

OPENING YOUR MIND TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES

You need to have gone through the stages of healing, acceptance and recovery (mentioned earlier in this book) in order for your mind to open up to new opportunities.

Once you are ready for new beginnings, you will find that there are many opportunities to be had. You will discover new passions and may find that you have time to upgrade your skills to earn even more than you did previously. This is a time to ask questions like, “Who can I talk to? What can I do? Where should I look? How can I earn money? What opportunities are available to me?”

You will not find the answers to these questions on your bed or locked up in your room. You will get answers to these questions when you speak to people and listen to their responses with an open mind. Then, new thoughts and ideas will start coming to you. You will identify places that need your services and see clearly which organizations would not be beneficial for you to work with in the long run.

After I discovered I wanted to own a business, I started asking myself which business I could do and how I could begin the entrepreneurship journey. I began praying to God for business ideas. I spent all of my time, both online and offline, researching entrepreneurship ventures I could start. As I prayed and looked, opportunities started becoming more apparent to me. I also met people who showed me avenues to make money as an entrepreneur.

One of the first ventures I started was a baking business. I started advertising on social media and to friends and family. I got a number of customers but soon realized I was not enjoying it as much as I thought I would. I later met someone who introduced me to a

networking business to which I responded positively because I was already looking for it. Being open-minded was key to taking on this new venture.

If you are not cut out to be an entrepreneur, when you discover your hidden talents, you can edit your CV in ways that are more appealing and then apply to organizations that you may never have looked at previously. You can only do this when you have an open mind to opportunities. Your eyes will be open to even better jobs you can apply for and even in a different field from what you are used to.

These were the steps I took:

1. I discovered I have what it takes to go into business.
2. I asked myself what business I could do.
3. I researched and listened to as many people as I could.
4. I started a business and advertised it.
5. I was quick to change my business when I realized it was not what I enjoy.

What if I had a closed mind when I was introduced to the networking business? The 100% business growth I achieved within my first year would never have come about. Initially, my business did not look as lucrative as the job I lost. However, as time went on, I was starting to make my entire previous salary in just one week! The major factor that got me to this point was, once again, having an open mind to all opportunities.

CONCLUSION

When you go through the process of acceptance, healing and self-discovery, you will need to deliberately shed old ideas or preconceived notions you had about other jobs and legal ways of earning an income. Then you can freely try out and be successful at any of the options you choose to pursue. If what you choose does not work, choose something else. Keep at it until you succeed. I believe in you. You are born for great things and you will make it in life.