



By Jennifer O'Brien, Albany N.Y. Times Union, reprinted with permission from www.JobSeekerWeekly.com

In today's volatile job market, many employees will find themselves in that position at one time or another. Losing one's job, whether expected or not, can throw any employee for a loop. The loss of a job can crush one's self-esteem and rob him or her of a sense of identity.

Here are some tips on what to do and what to avoid when suddenly faced with an unanticipated job search.

Make a Graceful Exit. Relationship expert April Masini of www.AskApril.com, suggests you suppress the urge to say something you might later regret. Thank everyone (at your former place of employment) for their time with you. Don't boast false bravado. Be sad if you feel sad. But continue to be professional even after the job ends.

Don't Panic. Luke Schmonsky, associate director of the Career Center at The College of Saint Rose, agrees that this is easy to say when you're not the one who just got a pink slip. However, Schmonsky advises job seekers to avoid making a knee-jerk reaction (like accepting the first job that comes along) that could potentially send a job seeker down the same career path as before, even if it's not the right path. One of the main things that people should do is reflect on why the position didn't work out. Some people become misplaced in the job market and end up with positions that don't necessarily fit their career goals.

Assess The Positive. When you're feeling down, listing all of your transferable skills can be a positive experience, explains Schmonsky. Transferable skills are skills that people obtain in various positions that can pertain to another position. Skills make you marketable and often people don't realize how many they have.

Step Outside Your Comfort Zone. Seven years ago, when the technical firm she was working for went under, literally overnight, Elizabeth Freedman of Elizabeth Freedman and Co., a Boston-based career-development firm, suddenly found herself out of a job.

After months of networking and job searching, she signed up for an acting class as a move that dramatically changed the path of her career. She wrote and starred in the one-woman show *Made Redundant* about her trials and tribulations in the workplace. From there, Freedman developed contacts and soon started her own business.

Make It Personal. Sure, you know it's important to network, but these days it seems so much easier (and safer) to just send e-mails while hiding behind your computer screen.

Freedman believes there is no replacement for picking up the phone be gently persistent, but breakthrough the tech tools. Along with making phone calls, Freedman urges job seekers to stay active within their fields by attending conferences or maintaining memberships in professional organizations.

Remember, It's Only Temporary. Yes, you lost your job and are devastated. Freedman recommends you keep it in perspective, though.

I have an MBA and worked at a gym for months, she says. You have to be OK with taking something less than perfect while you search for something better.

Put On Your Game Face. You can complain and stress to your friends and family all you want, but when it comes time to interview, a prospective employer doesn't want to hear your sob story. In today's job market, Freedman believes that most recruiters will understand a job loss. When discussing your previous position with prospective employers she says it's important to be positive, but make it clear you're moving on.

Plan Ahead. No, you can't peer into a crystal ball and predict the future. You can, however, develop interests and relationships outside of your immediate job that you could call on should your position change.

Visit Your Alma Mater. Whether you're across town or across the country from your alma mater, chances are its career center can help you.

Schmonskey notes that The Career Center at The College of Saint Rose offers everything from tips on resume writing, mock interviews, and assessment skill tests to a career-advising network comprised of alumni and community members. Many of their services and assessment tests can be accessed online.

Schmonskey also suggests taking advantage of the books about employment that are available. A book he recommends is *Suddenly Unemployed* by Helen Kooiman Hoosier, which offers a practical, step-by-step approach for people coping with job loss.

Live Your Life. Freedman reminds clients that their job search should not be the only thing going on in their lives. Along with staying in touch with friends and family, Freedman suggests staying active by working on projects and activities that showcase your skills. This could mean volunteering or doing pro bono work. This can give you something to show for how you spent your time while unemployed and can boost your confidence.