

Be Laid Off Without Laying Down

Patricia Morgan © 2009

“You’re fired!” can shatter our sense of capability and value.

Being let go from a workplace can be a traumatic experience, an opportunity, or both. Women have written to me describing in hindsight what they learned after a layoff or firing. Here is a sample:

- “Be prepared with a second detour road.”
- “Life is unpredictable and you need to decide what is important that excites and sustains you.”
- “People are always dispensable. Know that and do your best under the circumstances.”
- “Things could be worse.’

If you are in the middle of a program closure, downsizing or merger, the following will help you avoid getting down on yourself. When there is talk of downsizing, start planning. If it happens, you will be ready and, if doesn’t happen, you will feel relieved. Here are some considerations:

- Update your resume. It will give you confidence should you have to job search. Describe your accomplishments in numbers where possible. “Effectively supervised a unit of 25 full-time staff for over three years.”
- Gather endorsement letters from managers and colleagues whenever possible. Don’t wait until you are laid off.
- Sock away some emergency funds now—three months living expenses is recommended.
- Decide what you want to do in the next ten years of your life. Make sure you know what you don’t want to do before deciding what you do want to do. Describe a perfect day of work.
- Apply for and go for job interviews while employed. Begin to sniff out exciting and available possibilities. Experiment with positions in which you have little interest. That way, if you are not short-listed, you won’t be upset and you will have gained valuable interview experience.

Once the announcement is made:

- File for employment insurance (EI) immediately. You can cancel later but at least you will have some interim income.

- Check your wardrobe and practice job interview skills. Get a book on effective interviewing.
- If you aren't clear about your choice of direction, choose temporary, contract or part-time positions.
- Consider free-lancing, consulting or entrepreneurship but look very carefully into the viability of this choice before investing substantial time and money.

Patricia Morgan is an author, speaker and workshop leader.
Woe to Wow—Solutions for Resilience
Contact her to help your people become stress hardy at 403-242-7796,
patricia@solutionsforresilience.com or www.solutionsforresilience.com