

Overcome Discouragement and Get Back to Work

It can take several months to land a job after searching for openings. During an economic downturn, finding a job becomes even more difficult and so discouragement is a common emotion. While the practical aspects of looking for a job present plenty of challenges, the emotional component cannot be ignored.

For some, the emotions of shock, grief, anger, anxiety, and depression that often accompany job loss can impair a solid action plan. Maybe you don't even have a plan of action. Or, you are diligently getting your resume out to the world without the results you desire. Everyone feels discouraged at times but you can't be effective in your job search if you launch into interviews with unchecked emotions popping up.

What can you do to transform discouragement into hope that you will land another job? First, don't panic. Engage in activities that will help you move through difficult emotions. Fear and hope make poor roommates because one dispels the other. You must fight discouragement. Avoid beginning and ending your day with negative television and radio news reports about the economy. News of this sort can only result in negative thinking and feelings.

If you are starting to give in to discouragement, it is time to tune in for self-care. If you are burned out, experiencing stress or other physical health symptoms, and feelings of discouragement, this situation absolutely requires that you give yourself permission to take an overdue restorative time-out. It's not a luxury; it's a necessity!

Many people work very hard while also attending to the needs of their family, but find it nearly impossible to be especially kind and tender to their selves. In an emergency, you have to put on your own oxygen mask first, and being out of work in an economic downturn qualifies as just such an emergency.

Address discouragement and other emotions by taking the time you need – not by doing what others think you should do. Talk to someone you trust who will help you to get rid of negative feelings. When you are ready, launch into the tangible, practical components of job search.

Take stock of your expectations. Unmet expectations can lead to disappointment and discouragement. You may be very good at the work you have done in the past but your future does not live in your past. Industry changes create opportunities for new job growth. Do you need to take what I refer to as the 'transitional bridge job' or two part time jobs to pay the bills while you think about seriously re-inventing yourself?

Are you at a fork in the road? Do you want to return to a former, similar, or new job title? Research professional association websites in the industry you want to explore. Perform information interviews to help expand or narrow options. New job growth is there. You will bring greater enthusiasm and success to your job hunting when you identify what you want to do. What does your heart desire for employment?

When you are ready, set a structured job search schedule, say between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm daily. No matter what, though, it's important to keep your work/life balance in the daily mix. Your future work is ahead of you and you must move forward to reach your goals.