

# THE TOP 10 COMMANDMENTS FOR COPING WITH JOB LOSS

## By Rosanne Beers, MS, Coach

*No one wants to think about it, but if you ever lose your job these guidelines will ease your transition.*

**1. Allow yourself time to grieve; feel your losses and then move on. Journaling will expedite your process.**

**2. Share your feelings with family, close friends, your coach, and in a support group but with no one else.**

Most people won't want to listen and it's important to your job search that you come across as confident and assured. Some people will be reluctant to help you if you share too much.

**3. Assess your financial situation and take proper steps immediately.**

Involve your family in developing a financial plan. They'll feel like they're helping and you'll get better support in cutting expenses. Assume you'll be out of work for one year to aid your planning process. You probably won't be, but if you make budget cuts up front with that in mind, it will be easier to cut the fat from your budget quickly and make your severance pay and savings go further. If you have some notice, consider the advantages of arranging for a home equity line of credit, which you do not have to tap unless you need it. If you're out of work several months and you need more savings that you have, it will be too late to qualify. Also, the interest on home equity loans may be deductible. Consult your CPA. Do budget for your job search. A career consultant or coach can usually save you more than their cost in their ability to aid you in shortening the time you are unemployed.

**4. Assess your values, interests, strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments, personal resources, and goals up front.**

Compare them with the needs of the organizations you interview with during your job search to find your best match.

**5. Set realistic personal, career and job search goals.**

Treat yourself the way you would treat a dear friend in the same circumstances. You will need to be patient and loving, and tough with yourself at times.

**6. Devise a job search plan. Define strategies, target companies, and make contacts. Map out a schedule showing how you plan to use your time each day.**

Devote 40 hours a week to your job search. No more, no less. You want to keep your life on an even keel and as normal as possible. Maintain your regular work hours. This will help reduce stress and you won't have to readjust to a vastly different schedule when you return to work, if you don't get into bad habits by staying up late and sleeping in.

**7. Work your plan.**

Use a day planner and block off time for networking, research, creating promotional materials, cold calling, interviews, and tracking your efforts. Consider the best times of day for each activity and stick to your schedule. If you work your plan consistently and treat it as a job, you will shorten your unemployment time dramatically.

**8. Maintain open communication with family members.**

Seek their ideas and support. Listen. They may have some good ideas. If they are touchy remember they are going through a stressful time too. Don't place or accept blame.

**9. Continually review your options and job search strategies; change course as necessary.**

Remember you always have options. If you can't see them, hook up with someone who can.

**10. Devise coping strategies to reduce stress and stay motivated.**

Think about other stressful times in your life and the things that worked best then. Here are things that other people have successfully used: soothing music, a hot shower or bubble bath, exercise, hot herbal tea, being with friends, solitude, reading, being in nature, going to a comedy show. Different things work for different people and at different times. Come up with a list that appeals to you and write them down. Keep your list handy. If you are stressed out, you may not be able to think clearly. Follow the same procedure for coming up with things to motivate you when the going gets rough. What generally motivates you when you are going through hard times? Some of the things that have worked for others are their point of view, i.e. viewing your situation as an adventure; a chance to rediscover yourself and what you really want to do; support groups; reviewing past accomplishments; having something to look forward to every day; looking for new possibilities.

Draw on the information you gleaned about yourself during your self assessment process to keep your motivation level high or to boost your morale when it slips. Make a short list of things you enjoy doing and take the time to do something on that list every day. Include things that you can do in as little as 10 minutes along with some things that take more time. The real point of this is to take extremely good care of yourself: enough rest, exercise, healthy food, love, and life's little pleasures coupled with your hard work will minimize your stress and go a long way toward keeping you motivated. By taking good care of yourself you will survive and flourish.