

# DEALING WITH REDUNDANCY.

## Checklist 218

### » INTRODUCTION

Most people face redundancy at some point in their working lives. This checklist aims to help you if your job is being made redundant. It looks at how to manage your feelings and reactions and take a fresh look at the types of activities you enjoy most and the career options which are open to you. To cope with redundancy successfully, you need to remember that you are not alone and be ready to seek help and support when you need it.

It is also important to remember that it is the job that is being made redundant, not you personally; you still have skills and abilities that are valuable, both within and outside the workplace. These are the key to your future success, if your job is made redundant. Take advantage of outplacement counselling if it is offered, and make the most of all possible sources of support, during and after your notice period: talk to your boss or HR manager, and to other who may be able to help including: family members, friends, colleagues, recruitment agencies, legal advisers, professional organisations, trade unions, and business and financial advisers. Aim to celebrate your successes, and move on.

### » DEFINITION

Under the UK Employment Rights Act 1996, redundancy arises when employees are dismissed because:

- › the employer has ceased, or intends to cease, to carry on the business for the purposes of which the employee was so employed; or
- › the employer has ceased, or intends to cease, to carry on the business in the place where the employee was so employed; or
- › the requirements of the business for employees to carry out work of a particular kind has ceased or diminished or are expected to cease or diminish; or
- › the requirements of the business for the employees to carry out work of a particular kind, in the place where they were so employed, has ceased or diminished or are expected to cease or diminish.

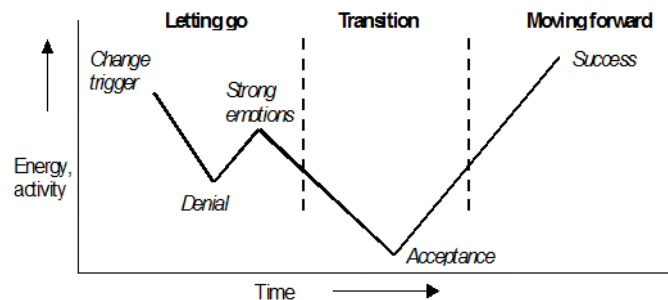
### » ACTION CHECKLIST

#### 1. Understand the stages of change

Typically, people faced with major changes experience a common pattern of emotions and reactions. This frequently starts with disbelief and denial, followed by strong negative emotions. Expressing such feelings rather than repressing or hiding them can be a first step towards dealing with them and starting to feel better and more energised. However, these emotions often lead into a period of apathy, depression, or even despair, before you

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reach a position where you are able to accept the situation and find ways to move forward. Day-to-day progress through these stages is rarely smooth or predictable, and people may often see-saw backwards and forwards between them. An awareness that what you are going through is quite normal and commonly experienced by others in similar situations can be helpful in coming to terms with your circumstances and starting to rebuild your future.



The graph above is based on the model developed by Swiss psychiatrist, Elizabeth Kubler Ross to illustrate this pattern of emotional responses to big changes in life, especially when loss rather than positive experiences and opportunities are involved. (See Change transition curve model in Additional Resources below.)

To help you progress through these varying stages, you need to:

- › **let go:** accept that your employment is ending or has already ended, say goodbye and try to see the situation objectively, with both its positive and negative aspects
- › **make a transition:** sort out the practicalities – your legal entitlements, your finances, get yourself organised, establish a new routine, build your confidence by focusing on your skills and achievements
- › **move forward:** take stock of who you are, your values, goals and priorities, your likes and dislikes, your knowledge, skills and experience, your strengths and weaknesses as well as constraints and limitations. Start to consider the options open to you - job hunting, starting your own business, studying, travelling, taking a new direction or a career break, and considering retirement. Many doors may open, and you may now have the opportunity to break out of your current career, if you wish. To keep your morale high and enthusiasm strong, you may find it helpful to: seek out a friend or mentor to help you; join a job seekers' support group, if there is one locally or form one yourself if you can't find an existing one; or consult a career consultant to help you to develop your career and find the job you want.

## 2. Let go of the past

Redundancy is a form of bereavement: your former employment is lost and it is normal and reasonable to grieve. As with any bereavement, disbelief and denial are common initial reactions. For example, 'This can't be happening to me...', 'It's a nightmare and I'll wake up soon...' 'If I carry on as usual, perhaps the situation will resolve itself...'. But it has happened, you need to face up to the facts, let go of the past and move on to the future. There is truth in the old cliché that time is the best healer for grief. Rituals can be an important part of letting go:

- › list all the good times and the bad times that you recall from your time of employment - take your time over this and add to your lists whenever another memory comes into your mind
- › take your list of the good times and reflect on them – they are likely to centre on periods when you did things well or felt happy in your relationships with other people: in other words, they are linked to your personality and skills, and you will be able to recreate them elsewhere in the future
- › take the list of bad times; look through it briefly for any lessons you can learn from it; then, put those bad times behind you
- › look again at the good times: remember them, enjoy them and look forward to similar times in the future
- › then discard both lists - they are the past
- › consider developing a new list, based on things you want to develop in the future.

### 3. Learn to handle your emotions and behaviour set go of the past

Typical emotions include:

Anger	Disbelief
Anxiety	Embarrassment
Apathy	Guilt
Bitterness	Helplessness
Boredom	Lack of confidence
Confusion	Loneliness
Despair	Shame

Common reactions or behaviours can include:

- Avoiding people
- Crying
- Drinking
- Drug-taking
- Forgetfulness
- Headaches
- Heart palpitations
- Insomnia
- Irritability
- Lack of appetite
- Lack of sex drive
- Minor illnesses
- Mood swings
- Nausea
- Nightmares
- Over-eating
- Personal neglect
- Smoking
- Stomach cramps
- Tiredness
- Violence
- Vomiting

While extreme emotions are quite normal at times of loss, they can affect your behaviour and even have physical repercussions. Seek help from your doctor if you feel that your emotions, physical reactions or behaviour are out of control.

#### 4. Organise yourself

Looking for a new job can be just as much hard work as being employed! Help yourself by ensuring you have:

- › a dedicated place for your work activities - a separate room, if possible, but if not, at the very least, somewhere to keep your records and information
- › the tools you need - a laptop or home PC, access to the internet and newspapers. These should be available via your local library
- › a structure for your day - one of the most disconcerting aspects of being out of a job is that your day may cease to have any markers. Set regular working hours and a timetable of activities and consider taking up a voluntary activity.

List regular tasks such as: scanning job advertisements online or in newspapers and journals; applying for jobs; visiting or telephoning advisers; leveraging your personal networks; approaching companies directly; improving your skills or learning new ones. Some tasks need to be carried out daily, others weekly or even less frequently. Slot these into a weekly timetable. But do allow time for relaxation as well. Beware of filling your timetable to the extent that it becomes a depressing treadmill.

Try to disperse activities that you enjoy throughout the week, and try to do at least one every day. The advantage of being unemployed is that you have more flexibility about when you can perform various tasks. So take advantage of that – walk or swim in the middle of the day and send out job applications in the evening, if it suits you.

#### 5. Rebuild your confidence

One of the biggest casualties of redundancy is self-confidence. To rebuild it:

- › Write down your past work and personal achievements - things that went well for you or for others, or which you felt good about, whether big or small.
- › Identify common themes, such as your awareness of how others felt about you and the skills they say you possess - perceptiveness, for example, or sensitivity - then add your other skills to this list
- › give yourself the opportunity to use at least one of your skills every day
- › identify each day's achievements and share them with family or friends - celebrate and reward yourself for your successes, however small.

#### 6. Take stock

You will find it helpful to take stock of your life and career in various ways, and some important areas to consider are given below:

##### What do you enjoy most?

Enjoying work is not a pipe dream! Consider which of the following work aspects are important for you:

- › Using specialist expertise to work at highly skilled level
- › Varied tasks and functions – no two days the same.
- › Detailed work requiring great care and accuracy.
- › Presenting ideas to groups of people.
- › Seeing the 'big picture'.
- › Selling, persuading or negotiating.
- › Influencing or determining strategy and policy.
- › Delivering results.

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- › Organising work.
- › Helping other people.
- › Working on tactical day-to-day tasks.
- › Working with people one-to-one.
- › Taking calculated risks.
- › Working with people in meetings.
- › Working according to standard processes.
- › Earning a lot of money.
- › Working with IT systems.
- › Being in a position of importance.
- › Working closely with other people.
- › Career progression.
- › Working autonomously.
- › Learning and developing skills.
- › Supervising other people.
- › Achieving work/life balance.
- › Training other people.
- › Job security.

### **What are your career options?**

Finding a similar job is just one of the options open to you. Look for opportunities which fit your likes and dislikes and consider options such as:

- › Temporary or interim positions in your current field and industry
- › Working for a consultancy
- › Setting up as an independent consultant
- › Retraining for a different career
- › Taking a career break or sabbatical, in order to study, travel or care for family at home
- › Starting your own business
- › Temporary, interim or permanent positions in another field or industry
- › Working from home
- › Voluntary work
- › Writing or lecturing
- › Retirement
- › Combining any of these options in a 'mix and match' portfolio.

### **What are my priorities and constraints?**

Talk to family or friends about the following possibilities, listing the advantages and disadvantages of each:

**Moving house** - consider the financial implications; the location, impact on children's schooling, partner's job or activities; closeness to relatives and friends, leisure interests.

**Investing in a business** – consider what sort of business; where the investment stake will come from; risk versus potential profit; timing of outlay and income; legal and contractual protection; impact on family relationships.

**Working from home** - consider legalities (such as your mortgage, insurance, and planning regulations) and practicalities (such as a designated workspace and a working routine).

**Reducing your income** - consider whether this could be temporary or permanent; opportunities for other family members to increase their income; reducing expenditure; and converting assets.



## POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Managers should avoid:

- › asking questions such as 'Why me?'
- › seeing themselves as victims
- › dwelling on the negatives - once goodbyes have been said, move on
- › becoming discouraged if the ideal opportunity does not come along immediately.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### BOOKS

**Facing redundancy: surviving and thriving**, Jenny Rogers

Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill, 2014

This book is also available as an [e-book](#).

**Winning through redundancy**, Steve Preston

Croydon: Balloonview, 2013

**Rebuilding your life after redundancy: the new life network handbook**, Janet Davies

Bury St Edmunds: Arima, 2009

**The essential redundancy recovery kit: a practical guide to relaunching your career and going on to greater success**

Stockport: Bakermedia, 2009

**How to get a job in a recession**, Henry Freedman

Oxford: Infinite Ideas, 2009

### JOURNAL ARTICLES

**Me, myself and I**, Alison Coleman

Director, vol 62 no 8, March 2009, pp 29-30

**Redundancy the time of your life**, Bijal Patel

Accountancy, vol 144 no 1392, August 2009, pp42-43

### RELATED CHECKLISTS

**217** Redundancy the legal rights

**057** Working out your redundancy package

### RELATED MODEL

Change transition curve

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**Redundancy Help** <http://www.redundancyhelp.co.uk>

Independent online advice resource – Where am I/What next?

**CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau)**

For online advice or to find your local CAB [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

**Reed How to: Deal with redundancy**

<http://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/blog/2012/september/how-to-deal-with-redundancy>

Practical advice on handling redundancy.

**National Careers Service**

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/Pages/redundancy.aspx>

Dealing with redundancy

## ORGANISATION

**Chartered Management Institute**, Management House, Cottingham Road, Corby, Northamptonshire, NN17 1TT

**Tel:** 01536 2207400 **Web:** [www.managers.org.uk](http://www.managers.org.uk)

Members have access to a range of services including a legal helpline and a free consultation with a redundancy specialist – see [www.managers.org.uk/redundancy](http://www.managers.org.uk/redundancy).



## MORE INFORMATION

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