

Transitioning Your Career For Success



THE FEARLESS FACTOR@WORK

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“The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.” – John Schnarr

Change & Transition

Sometimes life throws us a curveball, some we see coming and some we do not. One of these curveballs might include learning that your job is being eliminated through downsizing, layoff, a merger, acquisition, or complete company closure. Regardless of what causes the job loss, this type of news can create feelings of confusion, uncertainty, insecurity, ambiguity, stress, mistrust, and result in organizational service deficiencies and ineffective communication with others.

Job transition and job loss are major life changes, often identified within the top ten most stressful life events. Do not underestimate this transition. The emotional impact goes beyond financial stress. For many people, work offers valued meaning and significant relationships. When a job is lost, regardless of the reason, anger, sorrow and even shame may come along with it.

Work plays a large role in our lives and is a part of our identity and sense of self. This is especially true if we were doing a job we loved, or it was a career we had built over many years.

During uncertain times, job losses that come with pandemics and recessions, for example, are likely to strike particularly hard at people's sense of identity. Some industries will never recover, while others will re-appear in a very different form. A global pandemic throws up many challenges such as hiring freezes, isolation, and the burden of additional caring responsibilities.

Even those in industries that remain intact face an uncertain future with no clear timelines. Recognizing your stress and emotions during this time is an important step towards putting this perceived negative experience behind you.

Managing and creating a meaningful future involves coming to terms with the disruption to our identities and starting to explore new opportunities. Transitions can be an opportunity to explore new interests, reconnect with previous interests, and renew a sense of purpose in your life and your work. You are the most important part of the transition. Being proactive, engaged, and making use of the support(s) around you can help you through the transition process.

Leaving a job or transitioning to a new one, for any reason, provides a chance to rethink what you want and who you are. Transitioning also provides the chance to start building a path towards a meaning future. By reflecting on your situation and taking action you can construct a narrative of your career and yourself that provides a springboard for your next steps.

The Seven Stages of Transitions

A 1976 study by Adam, Hayes and Hopson developed a seven-phase model of stages accompanying transitions based on Kubler Ross' Model of the *Five Stages of Grief*. They outline the ways we deal with sudden change.

1. **Immobilization:** the initial 'stuck,' shock and overwhelming feelings accompanying losing a job or navigating a difficult situation at work.

2. **Minimization/Denial:** Often the phase of being in denial offers a temporary fix as you begin to minimize the situation perhaps with statements like: "I was getting bored," "I didn't really like my job" or "I didn't choose this path; I fell into it."
3. **Self-doubt and depression:** Reality's settling in, and you feel anxious, powerless and begin to blame yourself.
4. **Letting go and Acceptance:** when you begin to act positively.
5. **Testing and understanding reality:** you begin to experiment, seek out job options, and think through things logically.
6. **Search for meaning:** you have the energy to reflect, and so you use the experience to help you learn, grow and pivot.
7. **Internalizing:** you have come to terms with the transition, and your thoughts and behavior have changed. You've accepted it.

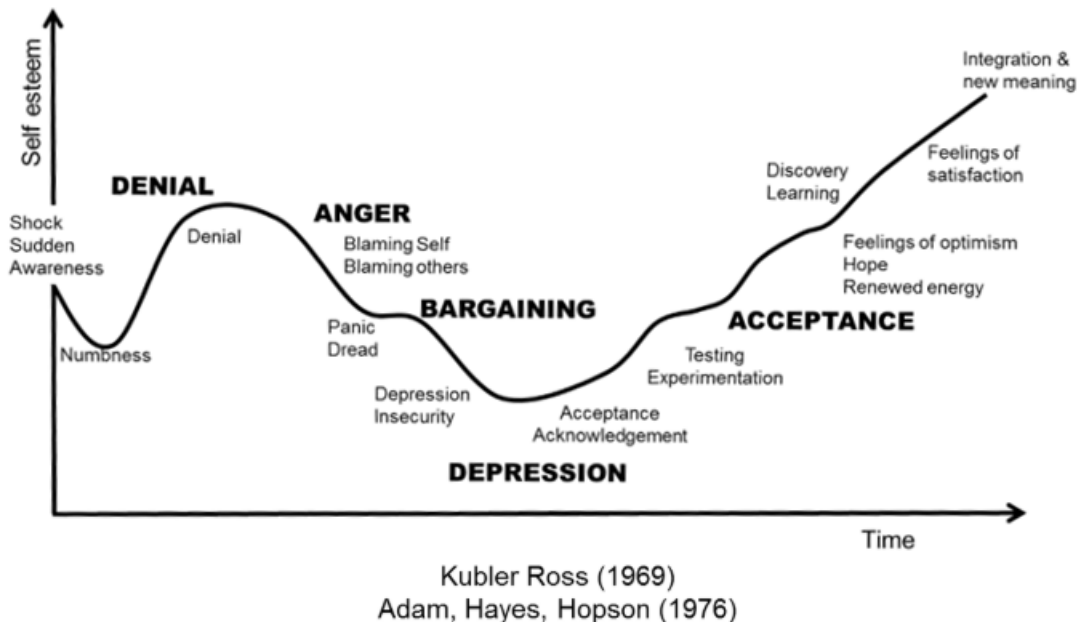


Figure 1: Transitions Curve - demonstrates how individuals' journey through the transition curve.

Techniques to Navigating Change

Your past experiences and whether you consider changes to be positive or negative will influence the transition process. We look at three techniques that help you navigate the changes needed to take charge.

1. Taking Control – Personal Power

Even when the transition is one you have chosen, you are likely to feel out of control at times. One decision or action has set other changes in motion. If your transition is involuntary, you can feel like you have lost control over a large part of your life; a decision has been made about your future without your involvement. The timing may not be of your choosing. You are likely to feel a whole range of emotions such as helplessness, rejection, and anger. You may even feel relief, for example, if you had heard rumors about lay-offs or suspected something was going to happen. Losses you may experience include income, routine, status, confidence, responsibility, friends and colleagues, and/or a sense of future.

It is completely normal to feel a range of emotions including sadness, depression, anxiety, betrayal, mistrust, disengagement, fear, happiness, and hope.

To help you understand this transition you need to take a deeper dive into what you are feeling and how you are coping with these changes.

<p>What emotions are you currently experiencing through this transition?</p>
<p>What coping mechanisms are you using?</p>
<p>Do these coping mechanisms help or hinder your progress?</p>

How Much Control Do You Have?

When you think of a current transition you are going through, use the worksheet below to define how much control you believe you have. In the first column write down some things about the transition that you cannot control. For example, you cannot control the fact that you got laid off or that the company office is moving to another state.

There are times when you may have some control but not complete control. In the second column write down some things about the transition where you have some control.

In the third column, write down some of the things about the transition that you know you can control. For example, you have control of your attitude, your job search efforts, your networking, etc.

Cannot Control	Can Control Somewhat	Can Control

Part of ending or letting go during this time of transition is identifying the things that you have no control over. There is little point in spending time and energy wishing that something else could have happened. Focus your energies on the things that you can control, such as your attitude, beliefs, and skills and work on making them strong and positive. Learn what you can about why this happened, take ownership of those aspects in your control, and then close that chapter.

2. Overcoming Fears

We live in a VUCA world: Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous. Many companies struggle with unpredictability—a sense of not knowing what’s going to happen next. With the rise of new technologies and global pandemics threatening the stability of the world, the complexity of our world has only increased. These complexities may result in employees struggling with disengagement, lack of trust, and confusion over roles and regulations.

“Nothing in life is to be feared – it is only to be understood,” - Madame Curie

One major obstacle to change is fear. For many people, fear is the background noise of their lives. Fear is a constant din that keeps you hypervigilant, always on the lookout for trouble, dealing with limitations that define your life. For the average person, fear is mostly imagination based. Unless there is something physically threatening or you have empirical evidence, fear is a feeling, an emotional response to uncertainty.

Fear is insidious. It warps your mind, perverts your actions, and leads you down a path that may be fictitious. Our fears also originate from the stories we tell ourselves about not having enough to live on, not having the right level of success, not having the right relationship, not having _____ (fill in the blank), and so much more...forever, ever, and ever! What stories do you tell yourself that hinder your growth or stop you from taking the actions you know will lead you forward?

When going through a transition you are likely to feel several kinds of fear, such as:

- Fear of failure
- Fear of success
- Fear of the unknown
- Fear of embarrassment
- Fear of looking bad / disapproval
- Fear of rejection
- Fear of trying
- Fear of taking risks

These fears can be real or based in imagination. You will probably experience them all at some time in your life. They may lead to hurt, disappointment, or change. They may make you uncomfortable and force you to make serious adjustments. Remember, there are always solutions, even if you don't like them.

<p>What are some fears you are experiencing around this transition? Why?</p>
<p>If these fears were real... What would happen and how would you feel?</p>
<p>What about this fear(s) really matters to you?</p>
<p>What would you do differently if you had no fear?</p>

What resources, strategies or techniques can you use to overcome your fears? (for example, getting more information, taking a small step first, consulting other people, visualizing, self-talk, etc.)

3. Reframing: From Self-Defeating to Powerful Thoughts

Re-framing means putting a different frame around a thought or statement. Reframing your picture of yourself can change your attitude. When we put ourselves down, it is called negative self-talk or self-defeating comments. These comments can lead to feelings of worthlessness, discouragement, depression, guilt, anger, and worry. You don't like it when others put you down, so why let yourself get away with it? Powerful, positive thoughts and statements lead to action and hope.

Part 1: Reframing

Identify one of your self-limiting beliefs and identify possible ways to reframe this belief. See the example below for inspiration.

If I do A, B, and C, then D is likely to happen. (Take small steps to get a good outcome.)

Example for someone who can't trust:

"If I give my employees clear goals, the resources they need, and a bit of oversight, they are more likely to get the job done."

Creative reframing. (It is not about X it is about Y.)

Example for someone who wants to be liked:

"It is not about being liked. It is about being respected."

Metaphor. (Success in a different role or from a different life.)

Example for a marathon runner with writer's block:

"If I take one step at a time like when I run, I can get my book finished. It's a marathon not a sprint."

Self-limiting Belief:

Reframe your limiting belief with a new belief that is not the opposite and is something that you can make a habit.

Part 2: Get Grounded in the Benefits of the Reframed Belief

When answering, consider the benefits in the following areas:

- Personal Time
- Family
- Sleep
- Eating
- Tension in Body
- Posture
- Vitality
- Other Health Issues
- Feelings of Self-Worth

What benefits will you start to see?

Step 1: Taking Stock

Where am I now? Take a hard look at where you are now and what you have that you may be able to offer.

Personal Characteristics

One of the things you have that may take you places is the ‘real you’ or: that set of features that defines your character. Think of how your friends might describe you to a stranger. Begin your list of personal characteristics below.

If you get stuck, ask a few friends, colleagues, etc. What recognition or compliments have you received? Who gave them to you? What nice things do people say about you or the things you do? These comments can help you identify your personal characteristics.

Most people want to work at something that allows them to express themselves and avoid work that hides or buries their personal characteristics. The characteristics you include here will help you make choices about the work you want to do.

Experiences

You have probably done a lot of things over the years. You have undergone a variety of experiences to get to where you are now, and these experiences will help you move forward as well. The information you include in this section will help you better understand the range of your abilities, which will then help you identify what you have to offer in the future.

In the following spaces, record the position(s) you have had, the employer(s), location, dates, main duties, and highlight your accomplishments. Be sure to include all the different jobs you may have held with any employer. Start with your most recent position and work backwards. Use the template below for each separate position

Note: If you have recently updated your resume you may have a handy source for much of this information. If you do not have a recent resume, this activity will be very helpful in updating your previous/old resume.

Position:	
Employer:	
Location:	Dates:
Main Duties:	
Highlight of Accomplishments: (Use qualifying facts and numbers where applicable)	

Activities & Skills

As you listed all your experiences you likely remembered a host of activities, whether through work, volunteer, personal, and educational activities that you do well. For example, leading a team, preparing reports, completing annual taxes, conducting first aid, or planning trips. Pull out the activities that you did well from each of these four experience areas: work, volunteer, personal, and educational.

In the worksheet below, list these activities in the left-hand column and break these activities/duties into specific activities listed in the right-hand column. For example, If the main activity was ‘managing the office,’ you can break this down into ‘developing a filing system,’ ‘hiring staff,’ ‘knowledge of basic computer operations,’ ‘writing reports,’ etc.

Work Activities	Skills
Volunteer Activities	Skills
Personal Activities	Skills
Educational/Training Activities	Skills

What do you need from work?

Facing a transition in your career gives you an opportunity to look closely at what you need to be successful at work. Use this exercise to sort out what you must have in a work situation, what you would like to have, and what you don’t really need.

Mark each of the following work needs with an:

M = ‘must have’

L = ‘something that you would like to have but isn’t absolutely necessary’

X = ‘not very important to you’

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> economic security | <input type="checkbox"/> recognition by supervisors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> knowledge/learning | <input type="checkbox"/> recognition by public |
| <input type="checkbox"/> recognition by friends | <input type="checkbox"/> variety in the work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pleasant location | <input type="checkbox"/> maximum use of abilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> growth opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> time for self/family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> independence | <input type="checkbox"/> way to contribute to society |
| <input type="checkbox"/> achievement | <input type="checkbox"/> influence on policy/decisions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> supervise others | <input type="checkbox"/> travel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> safe, friendly workplace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> association with fellow workers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prestige | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> stimulating environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

For those you marked 'M', choose your top three needs and list them here. Remember these as you consider your options.

Top Three Needs

1.

2.

3.

anchors & Relationships

We all have roots/supports/anchors around us. Those who are truly resilient accept that they need an anchor through a transition such as job loss and they make use of the supports around them. Anchors and relationships are unique for each person. They might include:

- Family members
- Friends
- Acquaintances & Contacts
- Religious/spiritual beliefs
- Interests & Passions

What is important to remember is that, regardless of your particular anchor (and it may be a combination of things), you recognize your anchor(s) and make use of them to support you through the chaotic and emotionally-challenging transition of job loss.

Your relationships will likely play an enormous role during times of transition. The people you know will provide you with information, assistance, and support as you move from where you are to where you want to be.

Every person has several relationships that range in ‘closeness’ or ‘connectedness.’ To help you identify and sort these relationships, complete the following worksheet that describes four relationship categories in the left-hand column. In the right-hand column begin to record your relationships.

<p>Supports – individuals who you are very close to. Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close friends • Spouse/partner • Family members 	<p>Relationships:</p>
<p>Active Allies – individuals who you are close to but do not quite fit into the inner circle of ‘supports.’ While active ally relationships may be close, they do not often have the expectation of endurance that a supporter relationship might have. Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends • Mentors • Fellow workers and supervisors with whom you are close 	<p>Relationships:</p>
<p>Acquaintances – individuals who you know and get along with but are not particularly close to. Acquaintances usually occur accidentally – you work with someone or live beside someone. Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-workers • Neighbours 	<p>Relationships:</p>

<p>Contacts – individuals who you know (or know of) who may or may not know you. Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff of government agencies • Human resource staff • Bankers • Friends of friends • Professionals (lawyers, doctors, etc.) 	<p>Relationships:</p>
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Step 2: Dare to Dream

Creating a Personal Vision

We envision the future by using our imaginations to create exciting and purposeful possibilities. We enlist others to share our aspirations by uniting behind a common vision. You have the power to create a future that brings fulfillment and satisfaction. Your imagination is the engine that drives it.

The first thing that you need to develop on the road to managing your own career is a dream for your future. Your dream, at first, should not be restricted by reality.

We are often so focused on our present problems that we cannot see beyond the barriers in our world. These barriers to living the lives we want might include mortgage payments, feeding your family, etc. Whatever your barriers (and we all have some!), they serve to block you from unleashing your potential. It is important not to ignore the barriers, however, as you will need to set them aside long enough to help you find a direction. Give yourself the permission to dream. It is this dream that will form the heart of future planning. The things that we aspire to, that we dream about, tell us a great deal about ourselves. It also provides a source of hope.

For a starting point, picture yourself in an ideal situation. Everything is perfect—your life is complete. If somehow, starting tomorrow, you could be living that life, what would it be like? If starting tomorrow, you could be doing exactly what you have always dreamed of, what would it be? Don't worry about your qualifications, experience, or any other things that might stop you from living that life; simply think about what an ideal situation for you would look like. Ask yourself:



“Vision is a picture of the future that produces passion,”
– Bill Hybels

What would you be doing, starting tomorrow, if you were given an opportunity to do what ever you feel passionate about? If you could do anything, what would it be?

You will know that you are on the right track when you begin to get a sense of excitement about your dreams. They may seem to be impossible or unrealistic, but you are getting somewhere when you develop a new or renewed sense of enthusiasm. It is this energy, this enthusiastic sense of excitement, that you will need to harness as you move into an exploration of work alternatives and/or different occupational goals.

Note: As you move forward, remember that your dreams are subject to change. You may even get more in touch with yourself and your dreams may change dramatically. Consider it a sign of growth when your dream changes.

Step 3: Take Action

Build momentum towards your vision by taking action. A successful expedition requires a map. You may know your destination, but you also need to know how to get there. Visions and dreams provide sources of hope and direction but by themselves, they do not produce results. Getting somewhere is a function of doing, disciplining your mind, and finding ways to act.

Take control of one's future path is a matter of dreaming, acting on the dream, evaluating the results, and then taking multiple actions. The idea is to take **any** step that will move you towards your vision, regardless how small.



“Action without vision is only passing time, vision without action is merely daydreaming, but vision with action can change the world,”
– Nelson Mandela

Physics and Career Building

“An object at rest will remain at rest, and an object in motion will remain in motion, unless some force acts up it.” Principle of inertia.

Tise phrase basically says that an object will continue to do whatever it is doing unless something happens to cause a change. This principle can also be applied to human behavior. People tend to continue to do the same things until something forces them into change. This principle relates to your career building in three direct ways:

1. Once stopped, it is hard to get going again. You will need a strong ‘push’ to get going. Instead of that push coming from the outside, it is better if your push can come from ‘inside.” Therefore, focusing on dreams is so important.
2. It is important to create some momentum as a form of protection against external forces that you cannot control. To establish momentum, you need to take immediate and continued action on your dream or vision.
3. The direction you take is not as important as the act of beginning. Changes in direction take less energy than overcoming the inertia of being stopped. It is important to start from wherever you are now and use the momentum to provide gentle nudges that will bring you closer and closer to your desired path.

To build and keep momentum, it will help to summarize what you have learned about yourself and your options. Here’s a checklist to help you stay moving to success.

What stage are you at in the transition process? What do you have to do next?

What is your dream and vision in a paragraph?

Have you identified your relationships and started spreading the word that you are looking for work?
 Supports & Inner circle _____
 Active Allies & Friends _____
 Acquaintances _____
 Contacts _____

Are your marketing tools ready?

- Contact list and file of people to talk to, write to, or visit
- Flexible resume/ Curriculum Vitae
- Flexible cover letter template
- Business cards
- Personal brochure
- Social Media (ex. LinkedIn)
- Business Proposal(s)

- Pitch and/or 30 second intro
- Other _____
- Other _____

Highlight of Accomplishments: (Use qualifying facts and numbers where applicable)

Positive Affirmations

Successful career paths are based on healthy and realistic appraisals of what we can offer. Such appraisals result in positive self-images. It is this sense of confidence in our own abilities and characteristics that are key elements in making transition and adapting to new environments. Based on the list of skills, characteristics, experiences you outlined previously in this guidebook, write three statements about yourself. The statements should:

- Be positive
- Include either a skill or personal characteristic (or both)
- Be truthful

The statements you write could form the basis for your future exploration, as well as serve as motivators when the going gets a little rough.

Statement #1

Statement #2

Statement #3

What can I do today?

Start today by looking for an opportunity to express your passion (ex. one or more of you Top Ten List from previous section). Looking at your list, reflect and ask: What can I do today to act on my Top Ten?

There is no restriction on the kind of activity that you include on your list. Anything that gives you a chance to experience your ‘passion’ is okay. Don’t stop until you come up with at least three.

What I Can Do Today

1	
2	
3	

Perhaps there are some items on your list that you would like to do, but cannot get to today. Or, maybe there are some things you did not put on your list today, but that you could do soon. In the table below, make an action commitment for at least two other things that you will do this week that are related to your Top Ten list.

This week, I also commit to:

1	
2	
3	

As you begin your quest for opportunity, continue to set daily and weekly action statements that will keep you focused on having at least one experience each day that reflects your passion. Obtain feedback regularly by starting a person action log or asking your allies for feedback on your plans and insights.

Final Thoughts

Completing this workbook will not guarantee a final decision and direction for you, but hopefully it has nudged you towards getting the ball rolling so that you gradually grow into options that are 'right' for you. This is not a one-shot effort. In this rapidly complex and changing world, you will always be growing into options that are 'right' for you. The economy will change, people's needs will change, the competition will change, and you will change.

Ideally, this workbook will have helped you in preparing for these changes; you will know where your heart lies, you will know what gifts you offer to the world, you will know your supports, and you will have a number of options available to move you toward your vision.

Wishing you all the very best in life, and in your career.

Jacqueline

If you would like more information, please contact Jacqueline Wales at <https://thefearlessfactoratwork.com/>