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FACING REDUNDANCY?

10 Tips for a
Calmer Transition

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Facing redundancy: Ten Tips for a calmer transition

Advice to help you regain control and secure your next role

However you look at it, a redundancy notice is a life-changing shock. The shock waves are also complicated because they have emotional, psychological and practical fallout attached.

Redundancy also hurts. As though the coronavirus disruption hasn't already turned your world upside down, losing your job requires an urgent response.

Sadly, there isn't a quick fix or an easy solution when your job disappears. But there are many ways you can approach this setback, rebuild your life – and perhaps even create something better than before.

These Ten Career Tips are a starting point for a calmer transition. By refusing to panic and calmly creating a workable and systematic strategy, you will be giving yourself the best chance of making a rewarding transition to a new role.

If you need a helping hand in exploring a new career and developing a transition strategy, just drop me a message: becky@freestyle-careers.com

1. Don't ignore the emotional impact

The first instinct for many people facing sudden redundancy is to get into action and do something (anything) - often at top speed. However tempting this is, it's also vital to notice and process the emotions that accompany this change.

You might face feelings of rejection, failure, panic, or loss.

It's common to experience the different stages of grief: shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, before reaching acceptance and finding meaning from this situation. Try to remember that this could be the beginning of a new and successful chapter of your working life – even though that feels a million miles from how you're feeling now.

This is an emotional time. It's important to notice your feelings, give yourself space and time, asking for help as much as you can.

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Remember that this isn't personal and that you DO have many skills and experience to offer a new employer. (More of that in Tip #6)

2. Taking action gives back a sense of control

This is an important part of rebuilding after sudden job loss. Feeling you have control over what happens next contributes to self worth and purpose.

But try not to fly off in a hundred directions at once. Sit down calmly and create a strategy, considering what you need to do first, who can help and what that will enable you to achieve.

When you have an outline strategy, which might include some of the points below, you can then consider which tactics you need for each step and again, who can help you.

Strategic considerations:

- Take stock of your current reality, including finances and timeline (We'll look at money in #3)
- Map your skills, strengths, experience (More in #6)
- Consider related career options to transfer into
- Explore alternative paths that use your skills in a new context
- Think about any interests or passions worth exploring
- List sectors that are growing and therefore hiring
- Is it time to think more broadly about a career change? How and what options do you have? How can you consider this properly? (#8)
- Who can help? Think about career professionals as well as family, close support network and your wider professional network
- Think about any offers you have had recently that might now be relevant; gather your professional champions and ask for their advice
- People – your next role could well emerge from a conversation rather than an advertised role. Develop a strategy for exploring your future options through connections (More in #9)

By taking time to systematically build a plan, you'll save yourself time, confusion, a sense of helplessness, and acting from panic.

Instead, adopt a cool head, explore your options and preferences **before** adapting your CV and LinkedIn profile. You could otherwise be heading off without a full consideration of all your options.

3. The Money: don't bury your head in the sand

Fears around money are incredibly strong when our regular income disappears. This is understandable, but it's important to know that there is a difference between a fear and a fact.

A fear is a sensation, usually associated with a catastrophe or danger. We might picture ourselves homeless, friendless and helpless - but these aren't facts. They are stories associated with the fear and projections of the worst-case scenario.

In order to act wisely in response to a sudden change, don't allow your fears to drive your response. To build an effective strategy, you need the facts, so use these ideas to gain clarity around the financial facts of the matter:

- Review your finances, including savings, premium bonds, or other money that you can access if you need to
- Audit your monthly (or weekly) outgoings. List all your regular spending, standing orders, direct debits, food, bills and necessary spending. Do the same for your inessential spending – just doing this shows you have room for action. What can you cut immediately without any consequences? Do it. Limiting your outgoings gives you room to manoeuvre
- Brainstorm temporary income based on your skills, expertise and who's hiring. Bear in mind that this is short-term and that it can buy you time. But be aware that the more temp work you do, the less time you have for your career change or job hunt
- Seek professional advice. Consult a financial advisor, debt agencies or charities that can help. If you have debts already, it's important to understand how they can be managed. Explore how you can negotiate repayments on loans or your mortgage - contact your lenders as soon as you can.

There are many specialists who can help you:

Stepchange: <https://www.stepchange.org>

Martin Lewis: <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/loans/debt-help-plan/>

Citizens Advice: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/>

4. Keep the gremlins at bay

Beware of assumptions you may be making. Common sabotaging beliefs include:

- you're too old to be re-employed
- there are no jobs out there
- you can't learn anything new
- you can't do anything except your previous job

These assumptions can bring you down if you're not armed with the knowledge that they are fears – and not facts.

Even in a recession, some areas of the economy will be growing. The key to managing these fears and anxieties is to find evidence to the contrary. The next three tips will give you some practical ways of doing this.

Another way to feel positive about what you have to offer is to **volunteer** or give your time to a cause you care about and that needs help now. This is also great way of demonstrating your adaptability, community spirit and enterprise.

5. Focus on your successes

Think about your career so far – what are you proudest of? What changes did you bring about and what was their impact?

Achievements can include things like creating new processes, designing campaigns, exceeding targets, developing a new market, building important relationships, leading a new team, or adapting to change.

Think across all your jobs and come up with 3-4 tangible achievements. Consider what the situation was before, what actions you took and how things were different afterwards. Who benefitted from your actions?

This list of achievements is great for re-building confidence and for including in your CV, LinkedIn or professional profile, and your applications. They can also form the basis of compelling examples at interview, so spend some time getting down to detail. Include tangible results where possible – numbers are compelling evidence of success but there are others measures too, like awards and the before/after perspective.

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Your achievements show others that you have a history of success and also help you to believe that you can take these abilities to your next role.

Make sure you foreground the achievements that are most relevant for the current situation and a target organisation's current needs. Select the most relevant examples for each application.

A more detailed article and worksheet can be accessed [here](#).

6. Know your strengths & how they can transfer

Strengths

What are you great at? Take a few minutes to jot down some of your strengths, which might include skills, knowledge, or personal attributes like resilience or innovation.

Some of us find this quite a difficult exercise, so if you get stuck, ask previous colleagues how they would sum up what you're known for. These strengths should always be demonstrated in your CV, LinkedIn profile and in your applications.

But they can also help you uncover new career paths. Where else could you use these strengths? Think about the impact they could make and especially which immediate problems they could solve.

Think about major problems we are all facing right now and how any of your strengths could ease a crisis. This will help you see where else you could use your strengths.

Further ideas in [this article](#).

Favourite Skills

It's useful to also know which skills you WANT to use. When you combine well-developed skills with the motivation to use them, your productivity and personal satisfaction will grow. This might also be the time to learn new work skills to strengthen your employability. Point 8 below outlines how you can explore new directions.

Transferring skills and strengths

How might these transfer to a sector or role that is actually growing at this time?

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For example, airline crew with medical training could explore medical response teams; hospitality staff with excellent customer service skills could transfer these to online sales environments.

Think about which sectors are growing and therefore hiring:

- Agriculture, food and supply chain; food delivery
- Online learning and entertainment
- Healthcare and social care
- Video production
- Online education

Think of 3 possible new paths that you have skills for - and if you get stuck, type in a search like 'jobs that require creativity', or 'jobs using people skills.'

When you have a few leads, start researching a new path in more detail, including where or how they hire, what's actually involved, how you can find out more from a connection in this industry, and what you'll need to demonstrate to them.

7. Making sense of your career

If you've had a pretty varied career, it can be a challenge to make a coherent career story out of your diverse experience.

The key to confidently telling your career story is to understand the link that was driving each move. When you understand the WHY behind each change, you're also likely to see a pattern emerging over time.

This enables you to craft a compelling answer to that interview ice-breaker: *Tell me about yourself.*

Also think about how your career offers a solution to your future employer's most pressing problems. When you do this kind of preparation, you'll feel more confident about applying and being a credible candidate.

Ask: *What's the crisis you can fix?*

If you'd like a copy of my free workbook 'Joining the Dots in your career transitions' just get in touch: becky@freestyle-careers.com
You can read more in [this article](#).

8. Time for something completely different?

It may not feel like it now, but when you look back at this period in ten years' time, you could well be saying, 'It was actually the best thing that could have happened to me!'

This could be the opportunity to do something completely different. Perhaps there's an idea you've been toying with, or some training you've been waiting to do so you can create a completely new career. This could be the time.

If you're ready to re-think your career, don't just consider what else you CAN DO, but dig deep into WHY. By exploring what matters most to you, what meaningful work would feel like and the difference this would make to the world around you, you have the beginnings of the personal motivation to make this change.

I work with career changers every day, and in most cases they have reached a turning point, unable to tolerate the lack of meaning, the frustration, stress, lack of work-life balance, or the deadly boredom of their current work. When they understand what kind of life they want and how work fits into that, they are ready to imagine and test out alternative options.

Be honest, were you unhappy with your work before redundancy and might this be the push you needed?

To create a new career, knowing why, what and how are all crucial. When career changers know more about themselves, their values, purpose, strengths, interests and motivations – as well as a clear picture of their ideal life – they are able to create a list of criteria to evaluate new options. It's then possible to make a confident choice, and start planning.

Many career changers build up their new career alongside work that uses their current skills, gradually gaining knowledge, pro bono experience and connections to assist the move.

If you're ready to think about a new career, take a look at my [Quickstep Career Change Programme](#). This will also be available as a self-study option for those with a smaller budget very soon, so keep in touch!

9. People hold the key

Believe it nor not, your next role is more likely to come through a contact than through a job advert. A huge number of jobs are never advertised because they are filled before reaching the public arena – you need to be part of the hidden jobs market.

How does this work? Quite simply, it's about people knowing your strengths and being able to link you with a need in another organization or sector. Your name comes up in connection with the required experience, expertise or skills. This is another reason why knowing – and advertising – your strengths and achievements is so important.

a) Know your area of expertise and make it visible to your network e.g. career change coach (instead of just coach) or sustainable supply chain (instead of supply chain). When you incorporate your specialism into your LinkedIn headline, it will pop up every time you comment or post on the platform.

b) Let your wider network know what you are looking for. Join LinkedIn groups, comment, give an opinion, post an article – all these will demonstrate your expertise.

You can also use LinkedIn to:

- Widen your network into new areas
- Join groups connected to your area of expertise
- Post an article
- Like and comment on other people's posts – building connection
- Share relevant information, articles or ideas
- Strengthen relationships by connecting people, providing testimonials
- Request short meetings to discover more about a new sector and build potential advocates
- Understand the current challenges sectors are facing and the solutions that are being discussed
- Exploring pro bono projects or volunteering
- If you're applying for a job, reach out to current employees through your LinkedIn network or speak to someone you know who works there. This kind of insider information helps you understand the reality of this option – and how you can help
- Follow local recruitment agents, especially those that specialize in your target sector
- Access LinkedIn training courses

If you want more guidance on building connections for your career change, request my 'Connections to fuel your Career Change' guide [here](#).

Please do reach out and connect with me on LinkedIn. You can find me [here](#). You'll then have access to my global network.

Career professionals

Don't forget to explore how local, national and international recruitment agencies, career consultants, career coaches and skills trainers can help you during your job search.

They can provide guidance about networking effectively (even during lockdown), creating an effective CV, writing a strong application and strengthening your interview skills. Just enter your topic in a search engine with your location and see who appears.

And don't forget that coaches can also help you via video call, so you don't even have to be in the same part of the world. I currently have career change clients in Italy, Stockholm, India, Gloucester, Cambridge, London and Exeter – so geography is not an obstacle.

10. Ask for Support

Don't think you're alone in this period of transition – there are many people you can turn to for support. If your previous employer is offering support services, jump at the opportunity. This is likely to build both your clarity and connect you with useful recruiters or agencies.

If not, seek out recruitment agencies, career consultants or career services in your area or online. If you're considering a career change, be sure you identify a career coach or consultant that understands this specialist area and who has testimonials to prove their record of success.

If you can, connect with others who are in the same boat and share experience, check in with each other, offer mutual support and information.

Ask your friends, family, partner or wider network for help – tell them about your situation and what you're looking for. Ask to be linked up with anyone who may be recruiting or who can provide valuable information about a new sector.

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Join LinkedIn or facebook groups that serve your specialist area or a new target career. You'll gather lots of useful intelligence and make valuable connections.

Offer help in the form of time or specialist pro bono projects to gain new experience and strengthen your connections. It will also give you a sense of purpose.

Build on your interests – these will help boost your mood and may even offer a new career direction.

And whenever you feel you've hit a brick wall, lost heart or run out of ideas, ask for help. Ask your friends, trusted colleagues, or a professional (like a coach) - but be sure your supporter is not pushing their own agenda at the expense of yours.

Finally, don't forget to look after your physical wellbeing. Get outside as often as you can, walk, run, cycle – or whatever gives your mood or energy a boost. This will be time well spent in the twists and turns of your transition.

I hope this guide has given you a sense that there are still some things you can control and choose to do, despite losing a job.

Good luck – and if I can help, please do give me a shout or visit my website for career articles, resources and career change services.

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