

## The American Counseling Association's "Counseling Corner" Weekly Columns

### Finding Positive Ways To Handle The Loss Of A Job

from the American Counseling Association

While reports indicate the current economy is pretty good for most people, and that unemployment is at its lowest level in years, the good news doesn't hold true for everybody. Every day, people across the country learn that they are being let go.

And regardless the reason for being terminated, it is never a pleasant experience.

The financial burden of losing a job is its most noticeable effect, but there can also be significant mental and emotional stress.

Experts say reactions to a termination are often similar to what we experience upon the death of a loved one or the end of a relationship -- immediate reactions of shock and denial, and of finding it difficult to accept what has happened.

These reactions are often followed by anger. And while those who took away your job may be the direct, unfortunately the anger is usually taken out on those closest to you. You may find yourself tense and stressed, more easily upset and quicker to react harshly to family and friends.

Some people become preoccupied with trying to get that old job back, no matter how unrealistic or even undesirable that might be. A person may also experience sadness and depression along with questioning his or her worth and abilities.

Understanding that these are all normal reactions can help someone get through them quicker, accept the job loss and start creating a new work life.

Start to help yourself through the trauma of job loss by not adding extra stress to your life. It's not a time for major life changes, but rather to continue living normally. Eat healthy, exercise, get plenty of rest and keep socially involved, maintaining contact with friends and family.

It's also a good time to evaluate and set future goals. Is now a time for more education, to look to a new career field or to sharpen up your job skills? Have you evaluated what will make you feel rewarded and fulfilled in a new job? Are you using your network of family, friends and other contacts to help in your job search? Rather than dwelling on the lost job, focus on what's to come.

If you find job loss is overwhelming you, consider working with a professional counselor specializing in career guidance. He or she has the training, guidance and tools to help you to a more positive future.

*Counseling Corner" is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to [ACACorner@counseling.org](mailto:ACACorner@counseling.org) or visit the ACA website at [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org).*

###

words: 395