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"THE PROSPERITY BLUEPRINT: BALANCING FINANCIAL WISDOM AND MINDFUL CHOICES"

Newsletter Editor: Denise Bitler

"Success isn't about how much money you make; it's about the difference you make in people's lives."
– Michelle Obama



In today's rapidly evolving workplace, prosperity requires more than just financial acumen — it demands a holistic approach that balances economic wisdom with intentional life choices. This month's newsletter explores the intricate relationship between career development and financial well-being, offering practical insights for navigating both effectively.

From transforming career gaps into valuable upskilling opportunities to developing healthier money mindsets, our experts provide strategies for dealing with immediate challenges while building long-term resilience. In addition to sharing the final installment of our job interview success series, we address the emotional journey of job loss through the Deems Job Loss Reaction Cycle™ framework.

As we honor both National Stress Awareness Month and National Volunteer Month, we examine how mindful career choices can reduce financial anxiety while creating space for meaningful community contributions. Join us in exploring how confidence becomes the true currency of career growth, empowering you to make decisions aligned with your financial goals and personal values.

For more career-focused information, insights, and inspiration, visit the Career Experts Group website at www.careerexpertsgroup.com.

We've got you covered wherever you are in your career journey.

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VOLUME 37 NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

Career Industry News/Trends

FINDING VALUE IN THE UNEXPECTED:
NAVIGATING A CAREER GAP
THROUGH UPSKILLING

Job Finding Strategies

STRATEGIES FOR FINDING
INTERMEDIATE WORK

Career Advice

MONEY MINDSET: HOW YOUR
RELATIONSHIP WITH MONEY
SHAPES YOUR CAREER

Building Your Brand

CONFIDENCE: THE CURRENCY OF
CAREER GROWTH

Special Features

THE ULTIMATE JOB INTERVIEW
SUCCESS BLUEPRINT:
PART 3

Ask the Experts

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Holiday Highlights

NATIONAL STRESS
AWARENESS MONTH
AND
NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH

Learning Tools

CEG YOUTUBE CHANNEL
CEG RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

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FINDING VALUE IN THE UNEXPECTED: NAVIGATING A CAREER GAP THROUGH UPSKILLING

Many of us have experienced employment gaps at some point in our careers, but it's how we deal with them that matters. One challenge of a career break is the perceptions (often negative) of recruiters and hiring managers. Research shows that resumes with employment gaps tend to receive fewer callbacks than those without, and the impact on compensation can be substantial [1].

However, employment gaps aren't career-enders — they're just chapters in your professional story. I know this personally. After 30 years in HR, I took five years off to care for my daughter during her illness. To take a break from caregiving, I volunteered at a career center and earned three career management certifications. This strategic upskilling helped me launch a fulfilling 10-year second career, despite the long gap in my resume.

I learned that developing new skills during an employment break — while maintaining a growth mindset — is an investment that truly pays off. The goal of upskilling is to become a more effective worker while staying relevant and competitive in your industry.

THE TOP 3 UPSKILLING TRENDS FOR 2025

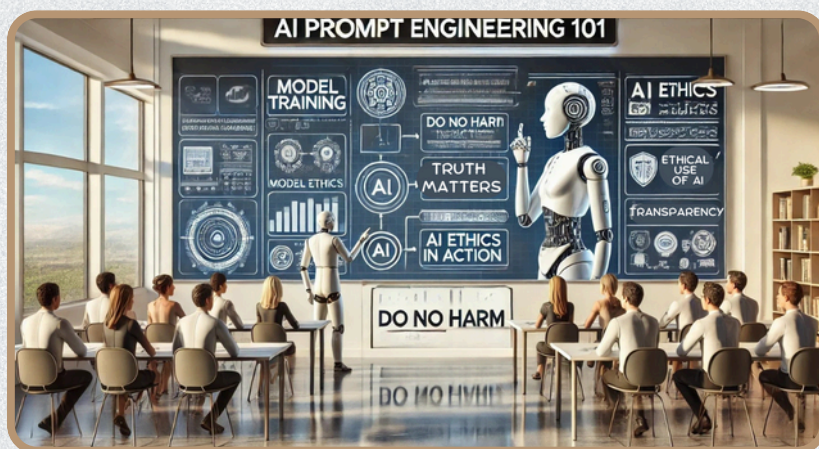
If you're facing an employment gap or considering a career pivot, upskilling in these high-demand areas will be extremely valuable for helping you to land a new role or advance your career.

1. *Artificial Intelligence Literacy*

According to the World Economic Forum's *Future of Jobs Report*, AI skills are projected to see a 40% growth in demand through 2025 [2]. You don't need to become a developer to benefit from AI upskilling.

Consider these options:

- **Practical certifications:** Mastering AI basics through Google's AI Essentials or Microsoft's AI Fundamentals, which provide accessible entry points.
- **Free and low-cost AI courses:** Access beginner to intermediate AI learning courses through LinkedIn Learning, Udemy, Coursera, edX, and other learning platforms (see the Career Experts Group's Lifelong Learning Resource Guide link at the end of this article for a list of AI learning courses, broken down by industry).
- **AI prompt engineering:** Learning to communicate with AI tools effectively can increase productivity across virtually any role.
- **AI ethics:** Understanding responsible AI implementation is increasingly valued by employers prioritizing ethical technology use.



2. *Project Management Frameworks*

Project Management Institute research shows that organizations waste 11.4% of their investment due to poor project performance, creating significant demand for skilled project managers [3]. Useful skills to learn are:

- **Agile and hybrid methodologies:** Attaining certifications in Scrum or hybrid project approaches can demonstrate adaptability.
- **Digital project tools:** Gaining proficiency in platforms like Asana, Monday.com, or Jira signals immediate productivity.
- **Change management:** Learning how to guide teams through transitions has become essential in rapidly evolving workplaces.

Continued on page 3

FINDING VALUE IN THE UNEXPECTED, CONTINUED

3. Data Literacy and Analytics

According to Gartner Research, senior executives cite poor data literacy as the second most significant roadblock to success [4]. Valuable skill sets in data literacy include:

- **Data visualization:** Mastering tools like Tableau or Power BI allows non-technical professionals to derive insights from complex data.
- **Basic analytics:** Understanding data trends and making data-informed decisions is valuable across occupations.
- **Industry-specific data applications:** Focusing on how data drives decision-making in your field creates a compelling value proposition.

See the Resources section below for information guides and other tools for upskilling in these high-growth areas.

THE POWER OF STRATEGIC UPSKILLING

My journey taught me that employment gaps don't define your career trajectory — how you use that time does. By strategically developing in-demand skills, you can transform a career interruption into a powerful opportunity for reinvention.

As Harvard Business Publishing notes, "Lifelong learning is now roundly considered an economic imperative and the only substantial competitive advantage" [5]. By embracing a growth mindset during employment gaps, you precisely demonstrate the adaptability and resilience that today's employers value most.

REFERENCES

- [1] *Harvard Business Review*, [Job Gaps Still Matter](#), July 2024.
- [2] *World Economics Forum Jobs Report*, 2023
- [3] fine media, [Project Management Statistics 2024](#), March 2024
- [4] Gartner.com, [Data Literacy: Enhance the Value of Your Data Assets](#), 2023
- [5] Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning, [Strategies to Develop Agile Employees](#), 2021

CAREER EXPERTS GROUP RESOURCES

Resource Guides:

- [Lifelong Learning Resource Guide](#)

“Your Career > Your Future” Newsletter Articles:

- [More Employers are Embracing Skills Based Hiring](#), March 2024
- [Top Career Trends in 2024: Big Changes in Higher Education and Job Growth in the Green Economy](#), Jan. 2024
- [Learn, Earn, and Grow, Maximizing Workplace Education Benefits](#), August 2024
- [AI Literacy, The Essential Skill for the 21st Century](#), August 2024
- [Returnship Programs, Helping Individuals Reenter the Workforce After a Career Break](#), Jan. 2023
- [Step Away from The Checklist Mindset and Into Growth Mindset](#), Jan. 2023
- [Trends and Tips to Prepare for Skills-Based Hiring](#), Sept. 2023

STRATEGIES FOR FINDING INTERMEDIATE WORK

For most job seekers, landing a full-time job is the ultimate goal. However, the realities of a competitive job market and increases in employer layoffs and restructuring can make this process take longer than expected. Intermediate work can serve as a stop-gap measure to keep your income flowing and your skills fresh while you search for that next permanent opportunity.

TEMPING: Temporary employment through a placement or staffing agency is an option that provides flexibility. Short-term opportunities can range from a few hours a week to full-time for several months (such as filling in for a maternity leave). Some agencies also offer temp-to-hire positions, based on the worker's performance and the employer's needs.

There are national temp agencies, like Robert Half, Randstad, and Adecco, as well as local and regional companies. Additionally, industry-specific placement agencies target professional expertise ranging from accounting and social services to legal, healthcare, and construction.

GIG WORK: This category is comprised of freelance or contract-based jobs. Online platforms like Fiverr, TaskRabbit, and Upwork are among the resources for finding gig work within certain industries and areas of expertise. One of the benefits of gig work is that it offers flexibility and autonomy, allowing workers to choose projects according to their skills, interests, and availability.

However, because most gig work is considered self-employment, workers are responsible for paying estimated taxes and typically do not receive benefits like health insurance or paid time off. For more information on gig work, see the Resources section below.

RETURNSHIPS: Sometimes described as internships for adults, returnships are structured programs designed to help professionals re-enter the workforce after a break (usually to raise children or provide caregiving to a family member). These paid opportunities provide networking opportunities as well as upskilling and reskilling to stay relevant to industry trends. They also often offer pathways to full-time roles. For an in-depth guide on returnships, check out the Resources section below.

VOLUNTEERING: While it's not a source of revenue, volunteering can be a valuable way to gain experience, build your professional network, and explore new career paths while contributing to a meaningful cause. (And yes, it should be added to your resume!) Many nonprofit organizations and community groups offer volunteer roles that develop leadership, project management, and technical skills. In some cases, volunteering may lead to paid employment or provide a stepping stone into a new industry. Additionally, donating your time shows your commitment to personal growth and contributing to society.

WHAT DO ALL OF THESE OPTIONS HAVE IN COMMON?

- They can enhance and diversify your talents and experience, as well as develop your transferable skills.
- They offer flexibility and often encourage creativity and outside-the-box thinking.
- They can help shorten or avoid employment gaps on your resume.
- They can help you increase your professional network.
- They can give you a sense of purpose – of being productive and using your time constructively.
- They can help demonstrate your relevance in your industry, and your adaptability and willingness to learn.
- They can help connect you to other workers and employers, helping to alleviate feelings of isolation.

When job seekers feel stuck, intermediate work can help improve their outlook financially, experientially, and socially.

CAREER EXPERTS GROUP RESOURCES

[Gig Work Resource Guide](#)

[Returnships Resource Guide](#)

MONEY MINDSET: HOW YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MONEY SHAPES YOUR CAREER

by Laura Johnson

Have you ever wondered why some people confidently ask for higher salaries while others accept the first offer that comes their way? Or why discussing money makes many of us uncomfortable? The answer lies in our money mindset — the collection of beliefs and attitudes we hold about money that significantly impact our career decisions and financial outcomes.

Our relationship with money begins forming long before we enter the workforce. What makes these beliefs particularly powerful is that most operate at a subconscious or even unconscious level. Like an invisible operating system running in the background, these deeply embedded attitudes influence our financial decisions often without our awareness.

PRIMARY SOURCES OF THESE OFTEN-HIDDEN MONEY BELIEFS

Family Influences

Our earliest and most powerful money lessons often come from our families. Think about the messages you heard growing up:

- "Money doesn't grow on trees."
- "We can't afford that."
- "Money is the root of all evil."
- "You have to work hard to make money."

These seemingly innocent phrases shape how we view money's role in our lives and can create lasting impressions about scarcity, worthiness, and what we "deserve" financially.

Cultural and Societal Factors

Broader cultural norms and societal expectations also influence our money mindset:

- Gender socialization that shapes different money attitudes in men and women
- Cultural taboos around discussing salary
- Community attitudes toward wealth and success
- Media portrayals of different professions and their perceived value

Personal Experiences

Our own experiences with money further cement our beliefs:

- Early financial struggles or comfort
- Witnessing parents' financial stress or success
- Previous salary negotiation attempts (successful or unsuccessful)
- Financial setbacks or windfalls

HOW MONEY MINDSET IMPACTS SALARY NEGOTIATIONS

Undervaluing Your Worth

If you believe that talking about money is inappropriate, or that you should be grateful for any opportunity, you're likely to accept less than you deserve. Signs you might be undervaluing yourself include:

- Accepting the first offer without negotiation
- Feeling guilty or apologetic when discussing compensation
- Focusing only on your weaknesses rather than your strengths
- Comparing yourself unfavorably to others

Fear of Rejection

Many professionals avoid asking for raises or negotiating offers because they fear rejection. This often stems from money beliefs connecting self-worth to financial value. Remember: a "no" to your salary request is not a rejection of you as a person.

The Impostor Syndrome Connection

Feeling like you don't deserve success can severely impact your ability to advocate for fair compensation. If you believe you've succeeded through luck rather than skill, you may feel unworthy of higher pay despite evidence to the contrary.

Continued on page 6

MONEY MINDSET, CONTINUED

TRANSFORMING YOUR MONEY MINDSET

Developing a healthier relationship with money requires bringing subconscious beliefs into conscious awareness. This can be challenging precisely because we may not realize what we don't know about our own money psychology. Like trying to see our own blind spots, we need specific techniques to illuminate these hidden patterns. These include:

1. Examine Your Beliefs:

- What messages did I receive about money growing up?
- How do I feel when discussions about money arise?
- What assumptions do I make about people with more or less money than me?
- What's my biggest fear around salary negotiations?

2. Research Your Value: Knowledge is power in salary discussions. Research industry standards, company compensation structures, and market rates for your skills. Having data turns subjective worth into objective value.

3. Practice Makes Progress: Like any skill, discussing money becomes easier with practice:

- Role-play negotiations with a trusted friend
- Script your responses to potential objections
- Practice articulating your value proposition clearly
- Start with smaller asks before attempting major negotiations

4. Separate Self-Worth from Monetary Value: Your value as a person is not determined by your salary. Recognizing this distinction allows you to approach negotiations as a business discussion rather than a personal validation.

SEVEN PRACTICAL STEPS TO TRANSFORM YOUR MONEY MINDSET

1. Practice Money Journaling to Uncover Unconscious Patterns

Keep a "money journal" for 30 days, recording not just your expenses, but also your immediate, unfiltered emotional reactions to financial decisions. Pay special attention to physical sensations (tightness in the chest, shallow breathing) that occur during money transactions. Our bodies often register unconscious beliefs before our minds recognize them. These visceral responses can reveal deeply embedded attitudes about money that logical thinking alone won't uncover.

2. Excavate Your Subconscious Money Story

Write your "money autobiography" — the narrative of your relationship with money from childhood to the present. To access subconscious material, try stream-of-consciousness writing without editing or censoring. Include your earliest money memories, family money taboos, and words you heard adults use about wealth or poverty. Pay attention to recurring themes or emotional triggers that surprise you — these often signal subconscious beliefs operating beneath your awareness. Once written, ask yourself: "Is this story still serving me? What unconscious rules am I following that I never consciously chose?"



Continued on page 7

MONEY MINDSET, CONTINUED

3. Create Positive Money Affirmations

Replace limiting beliefs with empowering alternatives:

- Instead of "I don't deserve more money," try "My skills create significant value and deserve fair compensation."
- Instead of "Wealthy people are greedy," try "Money is a tool that can be used for positive impact."
- Instead of "There's never enough," try "I attract abundance and opportunities."

4. Study Successful Money Mindsets

Seek out mentors or role models who demonstrate healthy relationships with money. Notice how they discuss compensation, make financial decisions, and view their professional worth. What perspectives could you adopt from them?

5. Practice Discomfort Conversations

Deliberately engage in small money conversations that make you slightly uncomfortable: discussing a split lunch bill, asking about a service fee, or sharing salary information with a trusted colleague. Each conversation builds your comfort with money discussions.

6. Separate Facts from Feelings

When facing a money decision, write two columns: "Financial Facts" and "Emotional Reactions." This exercise helps you recognize when emotions derived from old money beliefs might be clouding your judgment about present opportunities.

7. Challenge Gender-Based Money Scripts

Recognize and question gender-specific money beliefs you may have internalized. Women might examine beliefs like "It's unladylike to discuss money" or "I should be grateful just to have a job." Men might examine beliefs like "My worth is tied to my income" or "Financial vulnerability equals weakness." Regardless of gender, ask yourself: "Is this belief based on my authentic values, or is it based on gender expectations I've unconsciously absorbed?"

FINAL THOUGHTS

Your money mindset has been developing throughout your life, operating largely beneath your conscious awareness — but it isn't stuck. The most powerful transformations happen when you bring these hidden beliefs into the light. This process requires patience and compassion for yourself — and an understanding that these subconscious patterns formed as survival mechanisms and served you at one point in your journey.

Remember: The goal isn't to judge your unconscious money beliefs, but to understand them. Only then can you consciously choose which to keep and which to release. As you develop a greater awareness of your relationship with money, you'll find yourself making career and compensation decisions from a place of authentic clarity rather than unconscious programming. By addressing the root causes of financial discomfort rather than just the symptoms, you will create lasting change in how you value yourself professionally. Your skills, experience, and contributions deserve to be recognized not only by others, but first and foremost by you.

CAREER EXPERTS GROUP RESOURCES

"Your Career > Your Future" Newsletter Articles:

[The Gender Pay Gap, Salary/Compensation Negotiations, and Achieving Pay Equity](#), October 2022

[How to use Salary.com to Negotiate Salary](#), April 2023

[Speaking Up for Your Value: Negotiating Salaries, Promotions, and More](#), July 2024

Resource Guide:

[Job Offer Negotiations](#)

CONFIDENCE: THE CURRENCY OF CAREER GROWTH

Confidence serves as the internal currency that propels professional success, influencing pivotal moments such as salary negotiations and leadership opportunities. A strong sense of self-worth empowers individuals to advocate for themselves and shapes how others perceive and value them in the workplace. If you remember your most pivotal career moments, confidence and self-worth were the driving forces behind them.

THE POWER OF CONFIDENCE IN SALARY NEGOTIATIONS

Self-assurance is key when asking for a raise or negotiating a salary. Confidence allows professionals to articulate their value, present their achievements confidently, and advocate for fair compensation. Those who hesitate or downplay their contributions often settle for less than they deserve. Employers respond to individuals who know their worth; when you believe in yourself, others do, too.

A confident professional walks into a negotiation prepared — having done the research — and presents their case. They shift the conversation from what they are asking for, to what they bring to the table. This mindset transformation turns an intimidating conversation into an empowering exchange of value.

SELF-WORTH AS THE FOUNDATION OF CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Confidence is rooted in self-worth. Professionals who recognize their unique strengths and contributions move differently in their careers. They volunteer for leadership roles, speak up in meetings, and embrace opportunities that stretch their capabilities. On the contrary, those who struggle with self-doubt often hesitate to step forward, missing out on career-defining moments.

To cultivate this level of confidence, professionals must invest in self-awareness. A personal brand that clearly communicates their strengths, expertise, and values reinforces their self-worth. When individuals are clear about what they stand for, they exude confidence naturally.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT: CONFIDENCE AND PROFESSIONAL PRESENCE

Confidence impacts how one sees themselves and how others perceive them. A confident demeanor influences workplace dynamics, leadership potential, and overall career trajectory. It is evident in body language, speech, and decision-making.

Strong personal brands are built on a foundation of confidence. Professionals who have mastered their presence command attention in boardrooms, secure promotions, and create meaningful industry connections. They project assurance, making them go-to experts in their field.

CULTIVATING CONFIDENCE FOR CAREER PROSPERITY

Just as financial wealth grows through strategic investments, confidence requires continuous development. Here's how professionals can build and sustain their confidence:

- **Acknowledge Achievements:** Keep track of your wins — big and small. Reviewing past successes reinforces self-worth.
- **Refine Personal Branding:** Clearly define your strengths and communicate them consistently across platforms.
- **Invest in Learning:** Knowledge breeds confidence. Continual learning enhances your skills and self-assurance.
- **Surround Yourself with Support:** Engage with mentors and peers who uplift and challenge you to grow.
- **Practice Self-Advocacy:** Speak up for yourself, whether it's in meetings, networking events, or salary discussions.

Confidence is the currency that fuels career growth, allowing professionals to navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and secure financial prosperity. By recognizing and strengthening their self-worth, individuals can position themselves for success, unlocking doors to promotions, raises, and meaningful professional relationships.

A strong personal brand, backed by unwavering confidence, ensures that professionals thrive in their careers. In the ever-evolving workplace, confidence remains the ultimate competitive advantage that yields lifelong dividends.

Special Feature

THE ULTIMATE JOB INTERVIEW SUCCESS BLUEPRINT: A THREE-PART SERIES
PART 3: ADVANCED STRATEGIES: TACKLING TOUGH QUESTIONS,
CLOSING STRONG, AND NEXT STEPS

This comprehensive three-part series guides you through every aspect of modern interviewing, from understanding interview formats (phone, in-person, video, one-way) to mastering questions and closing techniques, helping you transform interview preparation into career success.

Part three of our series focuses on the critical final stages of the interview process: handling challenging questions, closing strong, following up effectively, and navigating salary negotiations. These elements play an important role in your overall interview success and deserve careful attention and preparation.

ANSWERING CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

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(Situation) Set the scene with the specific context

(Task) Describe the challenge or objective

(Action) Detail your specific actions

(Result) Share the outcomes

(Learning) Explain key takeaways

(Application) Connect to the new role

Mastering tough interview questions requires both strategy and structure. Two powerful frameworks stand out: the STAR-LA Method (Situation, Task, Action, Result, Learning, Application) and the SEER Technique (Statement, Example, Explanation, Relation). The STAR-LA Method expands on the traditional STAR approach by adding crucial learning and application components, helping candidates demonstrate their growth mindset and role relevance. Meanwhile, the SEER Technique offers a clear path for addressing complex questions while maintaining a focus on company alignment.

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(Statement) Clear position or answer

(Example) Relevant illustration

(Explanation) Detailed analysis

(Relation) Connection to role/company

Particularly challenging questions, such as explaining employment gaps or reasons for leaving previous positions, require thoughtful preparation. The key is maintaining honesty while framing responses positively and professionally. For instance, when discussing employment gaps, successful candidates focus on productive activities undertaken during that time and emphasize their readiness to return to work. When addressing a departure from a previous role, they focus on growth opportunities and future alignment, rather than dwelling on past challenges.

ENDING STRONG AND FOLLOWING UP

A strong interview closing sets the stage for success. Successful candidates are prepared to answer "Do you have any questions for me?" with their own strategically crafted questions that demonstrate deep interest and thorough research. The most effective questions fall into four key categories: role-specific inquiries that probe daily responsibilities and success metrics, team and culture questions that explore working dynamics, growth and development opportunities that show long-term commitment, and company direction questions that demonstrate strategic thinking.

Post-interview execution requires careful attention to detail and timing. Within 24 hours of the interview, effective candidates should launch a multichannel follow-up strategy. This includes sending personalized thank-you emails that reference specific conversation points, providing strategic LinkedIn connection requests, and documenting key discussion items for future reference. A well-crafted thank-you email does more than express gratitude; it reinforces your value proposition and maintains momentum in the hiring process.

Special Feature

JOB INTERVIEW SUCCESS BLUEPRINT PART 3, CONTINUED

The art of follow-up extends beyond the initial thank-you note. A structured follow-up strategy — with carefully timed check-ins at one and two weeks post-interview — demonstrates persistence while maintaining professionalism. Each communication should add value, whether by referencing an industry development relevant to your discussion or sharing an additional thought about a project mentioned during the interview.

SALARY NEGOTIATIONS

When it comes to salary negotiations, preparation and timing are everything. Successful candidates understand that negotiation begins long before the offer letter arrives. They calculate their salary needs, conduct research to understand and document their market value, and identify the justification for their compensation "ask." This preparation allows them to negotiate from a position of confidence and data-driven reasoning rather than emotion.

The most successful negotiators approach compensation discussions holistically, considering the entire package rather than focusing solely on base salary. They understand that benefits, equity, bonuses, professional development opportunities, and work-life balance policies all contribute to total compensation. They also recognize that negotiation is a collaborative process aimed at finding mutual benefit, not a zero-sum game.

Documentation proves crucial throughout the entire process. **Creating an Interview Reflection Worksheet** (detailed on page 32 of [The Ultimate Job Interview Success Blueprint](#) Resource Guide) helps candidates track key discussion points, technical questions, areas for improvement, and promised follow-up items. This documentation serves multiple purposes: it informs future interviews, provides material for follow-up communications, and helps candidates refine their interview techniques over time.

Remember: in today's competitive job market, how you finish the interview process can be just as important as how you start it. Your ability to handle tough questions professionally, follow up effectively, and negotiate thoughtfully demonstrates your professionalism, attention to detail, and genuine interest in the role — qualities that can positively impact hiring decisions.

As the job market continues to evolve, mastering these aspects of the interview process becomes increasingly crucial. Candidates who excel in these areas demonstrate their qualifications for the current role, as well as their potential for long-term success within the organization. By implementing these strategies thoughtfully and systematically, you can transform the interview process from a one-time evaluation into a powerful career advancement tool.



Ready to take your interview performance to the next level? The strategies covered in this series are just the beginning. For an extensive collection of proven interview techniques, real-world examples, templates, scripts, and step-by-step guidance, explore the Career Expert Group's "[The Ultimate Job Interview Success Blueprint](#)" Resource Guide. This comprehensive playbook contains everything you need to master the entire interview process, from preparation to negotiation. Whether you're targeting an entry-level position or a C-suite role, this invaluable resource will give you the competitive edge you need to stand out in today's job market.

ASK THE EXPERTS

by Deb Squire

My emotions are bouncing all over the place since I lost my job, is that normal? -Katherine Q.

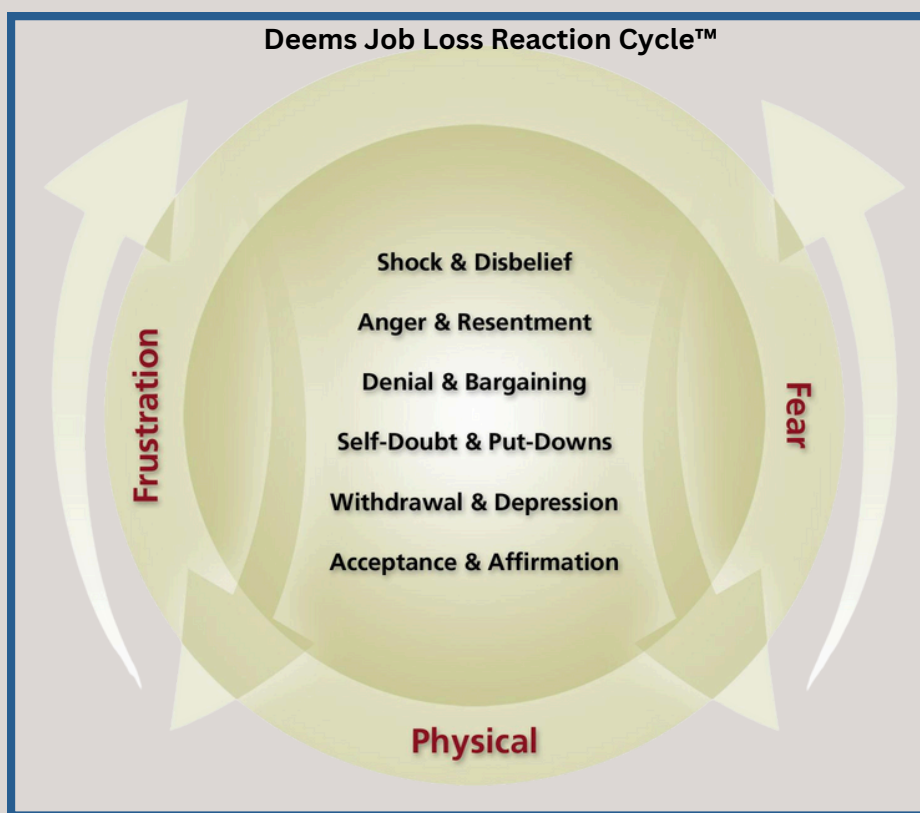
What you are experiencing is completely normal. It was even documented by Richard S. Deems, PhD, Terri A. Deems, PhD, and Sandra Brownfield Deems, MKC in *The Deems Job Loss Reaction Cycle*.TM Consider it your roadmap for the path forward after job loss.

Life's most profound insights often emerge from our most challenging experiences, as Richard Deems discovered when his professional focus shifted from end-of-life care to the emotional journey of career transitions.

Through his transformative work coaching individuals facing terminal illness or coping with the loss of loved ones, Richard gained profound insights into the grief reactions documented by psychiatrist Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. However, when experiencing his own career transition, he discovered an opportunity to develop a new understanding of job loss.

Inspired by this personal journey, Richard dedicated himself to extensive research on career transitions, ultimately uncovering a valuable six-stage process that illuminates the path forward after losing a job. While everyone navigates through these stages, each person's journey unfolds at their own pace. Richard's work provides a roadmap for resilience and renewal in the face of professional change.

The arrows in the Cycle go up and down and back and forth because you won't go through the stages in a neat, sequential way. Everyone experiences job loss differently, and you will encounter the stages differently from day to day – until you reach the final stage of Acceptance and Affirmation.



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by Richard S. Deems

HERE ARE THE PHASES PEOPLE GO THROUGH WHEN LOSING THEIR JOB:

Shock and/or Disbelief. Even if you suspect it is coming, hearing “Your job is being eliminated” is still a cause of shock and disbelief. It can feel like being in a bad dream. You may stop hearing what is being said beyond the initial announcement.

Continued on page 12

ASK THE EXPERTS

My emotions are bouncing all over the place, continued...

Anger and/or Resentment. Shock turns very quickly into anger that this has happened. Anger can continue as Resentment. As you discuss these feelings with others, be careful not to degrade the company or people in the organization. Turn that anger and resentment into action.

Denial and/or Bargaining. Do not waste time and energy thinking the employer will call you back. Most terminations are permanent.

Self-Doubt and/or Put-Downs. Even if the economy is uncertain, or your organization is being reorganized, you may start feeling this was your fault. "If I really was good at my job, they'd have found a way to keep me." You may undervalue what you contributed in the past and what you can contribute in the future. You may think that you have let your family down or wonder if you can ever do anything right again.

Withdrawal and/or Depression. This phase can be devastating. It's very easy to sleep late, to surf the internet, and to not use time wisely. The longer it goes on, the more a person withdraws and doesn't reach out to others. Depression can set in.

Acceptance and Affirmation. This stage may take many months for some. It includes Acceptance that you went through a major job change and Affirmation that you have much to contribute. This is the time to stop and evaluate your strengths, values, and what you really want from a position so that you can identify your ideal job.

FEAR, FRUSTRATION, AND PHYSICAL EFFECTS

People go through the Job Loss Reaction Cycle experiencing a sense of fear, frustration, and physical effects:

Fear that it will take a long time to find another job. Fear that bills won't get paid. Fear that friends and family may lose respect for you.

The **Frustration** of not knowing exactly how long it will take to find a new position, which may in turn cause a lack of connection with others or a lack of routine. **The job market is constantly changing. What worked for you last time likely won't today.** If you are offered outplacement services through your employer, take it. If not, consider hiring a career coach and/or joining a support group.

Physical effects resulting from the tremendous stress caused by job loss. Because stress can impact your resistance to fighting infection, you may have more colds, headaches, and flu. Incorporate physical activity and healthy eating into your daily routine.

While all of these stages and effects are normal, long-term issues with daily functioning -- including sleep, appetite, and concentration -- are not. Consider obtaining additional support from a behavioral health professional.

Richard's unique perspective offers invaluable wisdom for anyone facing career disruption. His six-stage model not only validates the complex emotions of job loss, but also transforms them into stepping stones toward renewal. Understanding this emotional roadmap empowers those experiencing job loss to be gentler with themselves during difficult phases and more strategic in their approach to finding new opportunities. With the right support and self-awareness, this challenging transition can ultimately lead to professional growth, renewed confidence, and often, a more fulfilling career path aligned with one's true values and strengths.



HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

NATIONAL STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

In 1992, the Health Resource Network (HRN), a non-profit health education organization, designated April as National Stress Awareness Month. The goal was to increase public awareness of stress, its impacts on health and well-being, and strategies to effectively manage it within and outside of the workplace. At work, unmanaged stress can lead to burnout, decreased productivity, higher turnover rates, and serious health issues including heart disease, anxiety, and sleep disorders.

According to OSHA, more than 80% of U.S. workers have reported experiencing workplace stress, with over 50% believing that employment-related stress impacts their life at home [1]. Additionally, the American Psychological Association's 2023 *Work in America Survey* found that 77% of workers reported experiencing work-related stress within the past month [2].

As workplace stress continues to rise, employers and employees can take proactive steps to create a healthier work environment. Here are some suggestions:

- **Encourage Work-Life Balance** – Companies can offer flexible work arrangements, remote work options, and mental health days to help employees recharge.
- **Provide Mental Health Resources** – Access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), counseling services, and wellness workshops can support employees facing stress. For more information on EAPs, see our May 2023 “Your Career > Your Future” Newsletter’s [Ask the Experts](#) question.
- **Create a Positive Work Culture** – Providing open communication, recognizing employee efforts, and fostering psychological safety can reduce workplace anxiety.
- **Encourage Regular Breaks** – Short breaks throughout the day, mindfulness sessions, or group wellness activities can help employees stay focused and reduce tension.
- **Manage Workloads Effectively** – Employers should set realistic expectations, delegate tasks properly, and prevent employees from being overwhelmed.
- **Prioritize Personal Stress Management** – Employees should engage in exercise, mindfulness, meditation, and self-care practices to improve their overall well-being.



REFERENCES

[1] OSHA.gov, [Workplace Stress - Understanding the Problem](#)

[2] APA.org, [2023 Work in America Survey: Workplaces as engines of psychological health and well-being](#)

CAREER EXPERTS GROUP RESOURCES

“Your Career > Your Future Newsletter” [Ask the Experts Question about EAPs](#)

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH

National Volunteer Month was established by President George H.W. Bush in 1991 as part of his Points of Light initiative. Celebrated each April, its goal was to encourage volunteerism and civic engagement and to honor the millions of individuals who contribute their time and skills to strengthen communities and create positive change.

Volunteering offers numerous benefits, not just for communities and organizations, but also for individuals. Studies show that volunteers experience increased happiness, reduced stress, and improved mental and physical health. According to the Mayo Clinic, volunteering can lower blood pressure and decrease feelings of loneliness by fostering a sense of purpose and connection [1].

Following are some of the countless ways that you can get involved. You can also check [VolunteerMatch](#) or local health departments for more options.



Local Food Banks & Shelters – Organizations like [Feeding America](#) always need volunteers for meal distribution and food sorting.

Animal Shelters & Rescue Groups – The [ASPCA](#) and local humane societies and shelters welcome help with pet care and adoption events.



Environmental Cleanups – Groups such as the [National Park Service](#) organize park cleanups and conservation efforts.

Youth Mentorship & Education – [Big Brothers Big Sisters](#) connects volunteers with children in need of mentorship.



Disaster Relief & Crisis Support – [The Red Cross](#) seeks volunteers for emergency response efforts.

Health Research & Advocacy – Numerous organizations are seeking help. Volunteers help with activities such as fundraising, patient transportation, and awareness campaigns.



[The American Cancer Society](#)



[Leukemia & Lymphoma Society](#)



[Alzheimer's Association](#)

Housing – [Habitat for Humanity](#) builds accessible housing, improving overall community health and well-being.



Empowerment – [Special Olympics](#) supports individuals with disabilities through sports and wellness programs.

Combating Hunger – [Meals on Wheels](#) delivers meals and companionship to seniors in need.



This **National Volunteer Month**, consider giving your time to a cause that matters to you. Your contribution, no matter how small, can make a lasting impact!

REFERENCES

[1] Mayo Clinic Health System, [3 health benefits of volunteering](#) – [Mayo Clinic Health System](#), Aug. 1, 2023

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