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Why I'm Glad I Was Laid Off 2 Comments

By Carol Kaufmann October 31, 2013

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“Emotions are high and you are feeling hurt, angry and embarrassed,” says Jennifer Kelman, a professional life coach who regularly dispenses advice on [Pearl.com \(http://www.pearl.com/\)](http://www.pearl.com). “But crying or tearing up the conference room only hurts you. Don’t express your anger and disappointment that in any way could harm you in the future.”

Right. No additional pain to me; I’ve had enough. Check. “Leave the room with poise and an understanding that your next actions are closely being watched,” says Charley Polachi of [Polachi Access Executive Search \(http://www.polachi.com/\)](http://www.polachi.com/). “Be sure to discuss references. Knowing who’s going to give you a recommendation and how they will be doing it is key to ensure you leave on the best practical terms.”

That, to be sure, is a sobering reminder that you need to click on autopilot, compartmentalize your emotions, get references secured and ask about additional

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opportunities (at your company and elsewhere) before your computer passwords have expired.

Putting a layoff into perspective is also helpful. “Understand that you are not special,” says April Masini, who offers counsel on all types of relationships on [AskApril](http://www.askapril.com/) (<http://www.askapril.com/>). “The country is full of companies that are downsizing. And it *isn't* personal.”

Don't take it personally. Ha! We all know that, in fact, a dismissal is extremely personal: It affects your bottom line; your family's ability to house, clothe and feed themselves; your long-term plans; your professional career track; and sense of self-worth. It's about as personal as it gets. But the news generally isn't personal to the person doing the axing, so why expend emotional capital on someone who doesn't have your best interests at heart? In other words, why should you hurt you?

Turn a layoff on its head, Masini suggests. “The opportunity misfortune allows is creativity. You get to decide what you can do next.”

I like that. Although my layoff was hardly convenient, I had been imagining my ideal career for years — writing about topics I care about (in yoga clothes, of course), being a calmer, happier, more available mom for my kids and much less grumpy wife. But I felt tied to a steady job and the security it offered. Then the office-job obliteration gave me the actual push.

I felt not only fortunate but, ultimately, thankful. “You don't have to be a victim,” says Masini. True. Why think of yourself as the downsized gal when you could be the woman who's bravely exploring new frontiers?

During your remaining office time, reach out to those colleagues you've valued. I pitched myself as someone who could help keep the wheels turning while new, leaner systems were put into place. I was able to continue some of the creative parts of the job while shedding the obligatory, politically sensitive meetings that I found so draining. I also reached out and secured so much freelance work that I had little time to contemplate being “unwanted.”

I also learned this: Focusing on life's downers doesn't do a whole lot to further you along the path you'd like to travel. And practically speaking, spending your energy on bitterness, revenge or the “why me” inner dialogue isn't a good use of energy because, for most of us, energy is finite. Bad energy is soul sucking.

A certain boost can come with being let go. The safety net falls away, leaving you no option but to fly.

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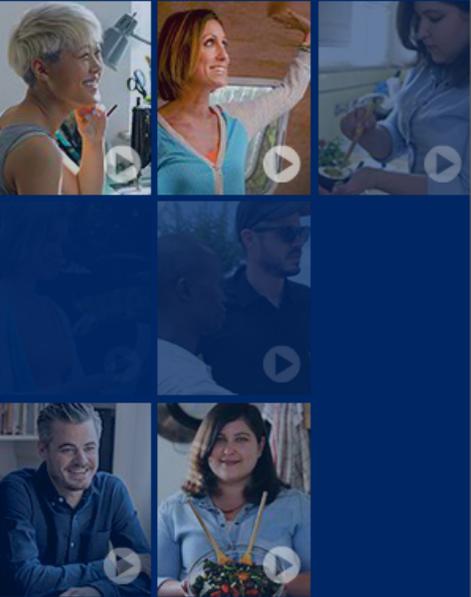
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