Dealing with being Downsized

Sooner or later, almost everyone has to deal with an unplanned job transition. How you deal with that transition can be as different as night and day. It can also determine whether you're successful at grabbing the opportunities that lay ahead, whatever they may be. But before you get to the opportunities, you have to deal with what’s going on right now. Losing a job is very stressful and the first thing you must do is deal with that stress. Some psychological losses that accompany job loss are the loss of:

- **Attachments** – your close, family-like relationships with co-workers and the organization.
- **Your ‘Turf’** – your actual office as well as your expertise and reputation within an organization.
- **Structure and Routine** – the daily tasks and deadlines defined by your job.
- **Future Planning** – your future plans may need to be adjusted, as old plans may no longer work.
- **Sense of control** – the realization you cannot master your own destiny and do not have complete control over your life.

Once you’ve dealt with the fear and frustration of losing a job, it’s time to prepare for the next step in your life. If the next step is getting another job, it may not be easy, but can be done. Be aware that looking for a new job can be challenging, especially if you haven’t been in the job market for a long time. Some barriers to watch out for are:

- **Lack of information.** If you don’t have a lot of job search experience, you may not know how to research careers, industries, or companies. However you can learn. Visit your local library, be sure to read the newspaper, and research on the Internet. You may consider getting your family involved as a supportive way to get you through this time.
- **Fear of rejection.** You must realize that you might hear a lot of no’s before hearing a yes. Just think of those interviews as practice before the “real” interview where you are offered a job.
- **Lack of self-confidence.** Being downsized can be a blow to your self-esteem. Remember that a downsizing is not personal. It’s a business decision. You were not fired. You were let go. There is a difference.

Once you’ve surpassed these obstacles and successfully transition to a new job, remember the lessons you’ve learned. If there’s one thing you now know, it’s that nothing in life is certain. You should always be prepared for change, whether it’s on the job, at home, or anywhere. If you’ve been downsized once, you may be downsized again. However, you would be better prepared with these tips:

- Accept that you have to manage your own career. You cannot expect your boss or corporation to do it for you.
- Keep your resume current.
- Line up your references in advance. Send them a copy of your resume and tell them which skills you want to emphasize.
- Maintain your network of friends, associates, and colleagues. They can be essential when looking for a job.
- Develop clear career goals. Continuously explore career options and advancement. Reassess where you want to go in your life on a continual basis.
- Adopt a positive attitude. Be proactive, avoid complacency, and be prepared for change.

**Call Your RBH EAP 866 750 1327**

If you or someone you care about needs help dealing with job loss, you may wish to contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP counselors are available 24 hours a day, every day of the week, to provide confidential assistance at no cost to you. Information, self-help tools, and other resources are also available online at www.myrbh.com.