

THE IMPENDING INEVITABILITY OF UNEMPLOYMENT:

Layoff Prep Stage 3 - Into the Breach

LAYOFF DAY 0.

- SHIT, calm down.
- Shut up. Listen to everything. Record it on your phone. Take notes.
- Keep track of papers you get.
- Don't freak out (there'll be time for that later). Put on a mask while you deal with the official bull-shit. You're a professional.
- Keep your wits. Stay organized.
- HR is NOT your friend.
- Ask HR about: Severance, final date of employment, date of last paycheck, last date eligible for benefits, COBRA process, any other benefits.
- Give stock answers to any HR exit questions. You're happy to have worked there and disap-

- pointed that it didn't work out, etc. Don't be emotional. (Hopefully preparation helps here). The general goal is to get the info you need from HR and get out.
- Pack your desk.
- If you haven't pulled work lately (shame on you) do it asap. Most times, though, your computer access will be locked DURING the layoff meeting.
- Otherwise, don't worry about resume or portfolio yet (they should be pretty close to ready to go already, tho)
- Follow instructions re social media, public statements, etc. (severance can depend on this)

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LAYOFF DAY 0, AFTER HOURS.

-LEAVE. Go OFFSITE.

-Take the day/night and do what you want. Go get drinks, go home and cry, go home and play games, commiserate with coworkers, hug your kids, go celebrate, make a cake, watch youtube, buy that game you wanted, take a walk, exercise, go hiking, laugh, have a bath, go see a movie you wanted to see, rent some dvds, eat some candy, call your parents, go for a drive, go watch the sunset, hang out with friends, order pizza, listen to music, draw, write, avoid making big decisions. Relax. Self-care.

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LAYOFF DAY 1-3, GET TO WORK.

- Inform your support network.
- Activate your freelance/contracting network.
- Apply for unemployment (this process takes time and is often stupid and confusing at first).
- Look into COBRA. You have time to apply for this and it is retroactive, but start refreshing your knowledge. COBRA is expensive.
- Maslow's scale of needs: cover the basics, which usually translates to...
- Take stock of your financial situation.
- Identify outflow and income. Make sure you include unemployment payments, severance, COBRA, etc.
- Income more than outflow? You're in good shape!
- Income less than outflow? Work on outflow first: Cable tv, cellphone, subscriptions, etc. Identify how to save money. Cut back luxury items. Contact mortgage lender or landlord about hardship deferments. Contact student loan for deferment. Gaming multiplayer subscriptions, software subscriptions (or scale back), cancel insurance on a 2nd car, cancel amazon subscriptions, downgrade cellphone plan, get on the phone with isp and threaten to cancel if you can't get a better rate, get on the phone and ask people to let you pay less.

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LAYOFF DAY 1-3, SPIN UP.

-Extreme discrepancy? What can you sell? 2nd car? What can you go without? Daycare can be cut if you're gonna be home from now on, etc.

(Remember: portfolio work requires a working computer, electricity, software, internet.)

-Next work on income:

Freelance, contract work, commissions, garage sale. Seasonal employment, stop-gap jobs, helping with a family members' business etc.

-Consider the medium-term: How long will savings last? How long will severance last? How long will last paycheck last? If you're going to need a stop-gap job, start putting a vanilla resume together for that.

-Remember: **HIRING TAKES A WHILE.** Everything takes time. Do your part sooner. Start the wheels turning.

-Talk to your family about possible outcomes.

-Rest. Call friends. Check in with coworkers. Self care. Do something you enjoy. Set goals. Exercise. Start drawing again. Go places with your family. Enjoy your time off (seriously).

-Get your bearings:

-Begin to answer the big question: **WHAT DO YOU WANT?** or **REFER TO YOUR EXISTING ANSWER.**

-Begin to assemble a plan to get there or continue executing your old plan.

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LAYOFF WEEKS 2-6, DIG IN.

- Start thinking medium-term. How long will money last? How long is your RUNWAY?
- What do you do when you run out of RUNWAY?
- Stage yourself for those eventualities.
- Communicate with your support network. "Can I still come stay with you if I lose my housing?" "Is there still help for me where you are?"
- Execute on your PLAN. Apply to jobs.
- Consider taking time for your portfolio. You have 8 hours a day of free time now.
- Continue to engage with freelance networks.
- Continue to engage with professional networks.
- Make networking a daily effort. A little bit of time each day.
- Stay on top of new annoying routines like applying for weekly unemployment checks.
- Take care of your health. Spend the \$300 on preventative care instead of the \$3000 on ER, etc.
- Be agile, light, smart, clever.
- Be active, physically, creatively, but also in the job finding process. It's tiring but worth it.

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LAYOFF MONTHS 3-9, STEADY.

- Adapt to your changing circumstances.
- Do not be afraid to pull the trigger and act on your more dire plans. If you're gonna have to move back in with family, for example, execute on that BEFORE you run out of money to pay for the move.
- Keep an eye on your RUNWAY. Identify key dates where you'll need to shift strategies.
- If you're going to run out of unemployment on month 7, then start applying for stop-gap jobs a few weeks BEFORE that.
- Continue to engage your network. People will understand.
- Still take time for yourself and self-care. Unemployment doesn't REALLY start to take its toll mentally and emotionally until you find yourself this far along.
- Remember the important things: Family, friends, health, well-being, emotional care, routine, your worth as a human being is not tied to your employment.
- If necessary, explore non-gaming alternative paths. Much happiness can be found OUTSIDE.

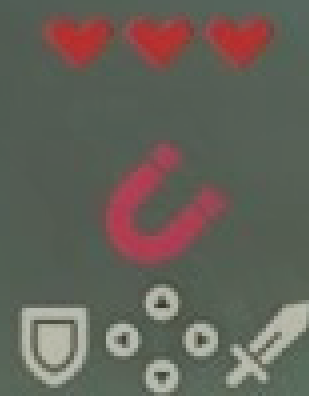
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LAYOFF MONTHS 12+, NEW ROADS.

- Understand that 12+ months of unemployment is not uncommon.
- Engage your network and explore what the issue is.
- Be honest with yourself.
- WHAT DO YOU WANT?
- Consider alternate paths/industries.
- Continue to engage with those who want to help.
- If necessary, get professional or more official help.

- KEEP GOING, be honest, be resilient, bad days are ok and normal, take care of yourself, consider all options.
- Do what you have to.



THE TRUTHS

Your job is not your identity.

You have value beyond your art.

You are in good company.

It will be ok.

That which is most important still remains.

Many people want you to succeed.

You are capable of navigating this.



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