

LOSING YOUR JOB: 3 REAL LIFE Q & A'S



Summary: Here are 3 real life stories of people that experienced job loss and are reaching out for help. Their questions are answered in the article.

Question: I'm a 26 year-old woman with three years of editorial experience at a literary book publisher and one year of experience in communications at a nonprofit public policy organization. After [losing my job](#) for performance reasons, I began temping at a very visible venture capital firm. I've been offered an [administrative position](#) which I don't enjoy, but my self-esteem is somewhat bruised. I need health benefits, my search may be a long one and this is a nice environment that offers exposure to luminaries in industries that interest me. I feel it's unethical to take the job with the intention of leaving as soon as I find something new. Should I accept?

— Allison, New York City

Allison: With regard to the ethics of the situation, you answered your own question. Throughout your career you will be faced with ethical questions; most will have competing arguments on both sides of the dilemma. If you believe something is unethical, listen to your conscience and don't try to rationalize another course of action.

You are faced with either being candid and attempting to negotiate a workable agreement for you and the employer, or leaving to [find another job](#) more to your liking. Your current position sounds like an ideal interim job that may meet your short-term needs.

In the meantime, review the performance issues from your last job and carefully assess and profile your preferred position. Develop objectives to maximize your current role, and establish a timeline for subsequent moves on your career path. Rather than stumbling into the next job that comes along, this strategy will allow you to approach your employers-of-choice from a position of strength.

Question: My company recently released me with the explanation that they're consolidating my job function with others. I'm 57, and I'd been [director of systems development](#) for my employer, a banking subsidiary that specializes in benefits administration. I was the oldest of five directors reporting to the CIO, but the only one with a track record of completing projects. My problem is that I'm finding it very difficult to find a comparable position. I think that once recruiters figure out that I'm over 50, they don't return my calls. Do you have any suggestions? Should I talk to an attorney about my dismissal?

— Krishna, Reston, Va.

Krishna: Proving age discrimination has never been more difficult following the most recent [Supreme Court](#) rulings. Conversely, many small and medium-sized companies have recognized the value of hiring experienced managers who can hit the ground running. While the compensation may be lower, the opportunities are there. I'd suggest restarting a standard job-search campaign by [networking with contacts](#) who can help you target companies most likely to appreciate your background. And I would strongly advise against become bogged down in a time-consuming legal struggle. Your career and self-esteem will suffer greatly.

Question: I lost my position after my former company's restructuring last September, and although I receive outplacement help from a reputable firm, I feel disconnected from my job hunt. I've made lots of calls, had dozens of networking meetings and sent hundreds of resumes. But at the end of the day, I don't have anyone to commiserate with. My counselor is great but very busy, and most of the other candidates using this come in once a week and don't seem interested in talking. My wife wants to help, but she's burned out on talking about my job hunt, and Internet discussions aren't the same as meeting people in person. How can I find others who are going through what I'm experiencing?

— Bill, Long Beach, Calif.

Bill: It sounds like you'd really benefit from joining a job club. These clubs typically meet weekly at a church or synagogue, YMCA or community center, and they bring together job hunters of all backgrounds to share their stories and find support from one another. Very few charge a fee to join, although many request a contribution for refreshments or resources. There are several in Southern California, including a group called Experience Unlimited, which offers free career counseling as well.