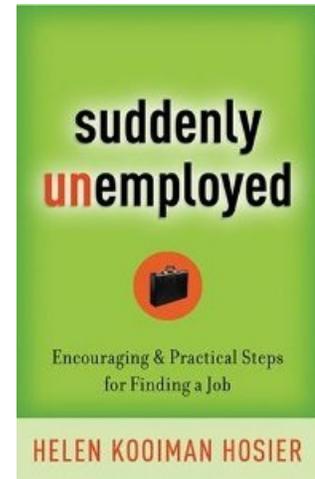


Suddenly Unemployed A book review by Jeanetta Chrystie

Do you know someone who is reeling from the shock, fears, and frustration of an unexpected job loss? Perhaps that someone is you. In *Suddenly Unemployed: Encouraging & Practical Steps for Finding a Job* by Helen Kooiman Hosier, we learn valuable insights from the author's seventeen-month experience with unemployment. Sudden job loss seems like an unthinkable experience; something that only happens to other people. The toxic-sludge mixture of emotions hinders our ability to positively cope with the realities of unexpected job loss.



Job loss creates emotional, financial, and even relationship stresses in our lives. The upheaval can be overwhelming. Getting help from someone who has been through a similar experience is invaluable when our lives are suddenly filled with uncertainty. In the chapter about “First Things to Consider Doing” the author suggests practical actions to begin the coping process, thus unfreezing us from inaction and helping to prevent destructive less-than-well-thought-out reactions.

In chapter four, “Be a Master, Not a Victim, of Your Situation” addresses the issues of euphemisms that attempts to make our situation seem less dire than it is. Our reality is unemployed, whether someone calls it downsizing, reorganizing, early retirement, layoffs, or something else. Hosier exhorts us to take control of our situation by refusing to think of ourselves as a defined by our job, which leads to a victim mentality; and instead, begin to purge our pain by verbalizing our traumatized feelings to good friends who will listen and affirm our value.

Hosier's describes each item thoroughly while sharing a list of potential actions, including: (1) Contact good friends to help you deal with the shock of sudden job loss. (2) Locate your local unemployment office – even though it feels bad right now – they have many resources to help you recover emotionally and financially. (3) Learn how to update your resume for various job markets where your skill set could be useful to a new employer. (4) Write cover letters to each prospective employer. (5) Call your friends to network and find job leads.

An essential warning is: Do not close yourself off from family and friends because you are embarrassed or don't know how they'll react. Their reactions are their responsibility. Trust God to console you through them, and help you begin a positive coping process. People who close themselves off and refuse to talk about their job loss will suffer more emotionally, and risk far longer unemployment and financial difficulties than those who call on family and friends for comfort and guidance.

Most of us know people who have experienced sudden job loss. The affirming presence of friends or family members is your greatest need, whether they have any words of wisdom to offer or not. Hosier reminds us to recall our experiences when someone contacts us, and assure them of their value and your prayers during this difficult time. Self-disclosure to some people can be risky, even devastating, when our emotions are still raw from the pain. However, most people respect others who are willing to be open and honest about job loss; as long as it is balanced with seeking help. Focus on sharing with those who generously affirm you, and refrain from sharing more than once from those who do not know how to warm your aching heart.

The author provides entire chapters about writing a resume, doing job interviews, handling job offers, coping with job non-offers, and other topics. In the “Writing to Influence” chapter, Hosier says our job search cover letter needs to introduce you to each specific prospective employer in a positive and engaging manner. “Write the entire letter from [the reader’s] point of view—what’s in it for him... Surprise him by answering the questions and objections he might have.” The author continues, “Create a mental image of your reader.” Other advice includes: In a polite and natural tone, tell the reader what he or she needs to know to want to hire you. Use more nouns and verbs than multiple adjectives. Do your research and describe ways you can benefit their organization. Good, clear writing takes time. Write, read it to others, revise it.

Use whatever submission method each employer prefers. Change your cover letter to better fit each prospective employer, addressing their organization and the job skills they need. Many more specific cover letter guidelines and examples are available in this book. While it isn’t a recent publication, it offers very useful advice that you can obtain very cheaply. This easy-to-use book was updated and expanded, published by Revell in 2005, and may be obtained from online sources such as Amazon (less than \$2 plus shipping) or local used book resellers. You can search for ISBN 978-0-800-75924-7.