



How to Keep Your Chin up after the Pink Slip

Ingrid Padilla

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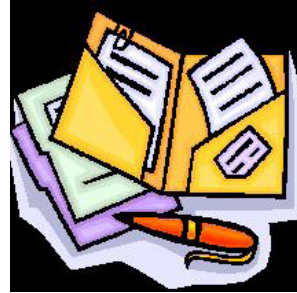
Introduction

Pink slip. Two four-letter words. They change your life in the blink of an eye and make it a challenge to hold on to your wits.

Like many Americans, I was laid off earlier this year. Once past my lethargic “post-layoff coma” days, I brainstormed to think of ways to keep myself going during my existential sabbatical. While this is not an “I’m OK, You’re OK” type of book – let’s face it, unemployment stinks – it is a short guide for those who have lost their jobs on how to keep your spirits up during this crazy time.

I want to thank my family and friends for their kindness and support, and for helping me keep my head above water.

1 Put out fires



Unemployment benefits, COBRA, retirement and flexible spending accounts, etc. Get your affairs in order as soon as possible, before the post-layoff haze sets in. If you need an incentive to get yourself going, bear in mind there is a one-week waiting period after filing for unemployment benefits before you start collecting, so it is important that you deal with it day one. It sounds like a pain and it normally is, but thank goodness you can now take care of most of these administrative things online – yes, even filing for unemployment (it sure beats waiting on the phone for an eternity for “the next available representative.”).

Let's be realistic. Being "downsized" – the politically correct word for "laid off" these days – is a kick in the pants. Whether or not you liked your job, chances are you feel unappreciated and disposable. Add to that having the rug pulled from under your financial stability and you have a recipe for an existential funk.

You will not be doing yourself any favors by trying to repress it. Trust me, it catches up with you. Just let it all out, knowing that in a few days you will once again make sure to bathe every day.



2
Let it all out

3 Call the troops



Call your friends and family. Vent, make plans to get together. By all means, fight isolation – it only exacerbates your lows. A word of advice: Diversify your vent sessions and get together. Even the most well-intended individuals in your support network will grow weary if you rely solely on them. It's only human!

Stick to a regular schedule. I have a friend who does and she says it really helps. Every day she gets up at the same time, gets dressed, and even puts on make-up – whether or not she has a reason. It gets her moving and helps her be more productive; reserving “office hours” to work on her job search while making time for other things on her “to do” list.



4
Maintain a schedule

5 Take inventory



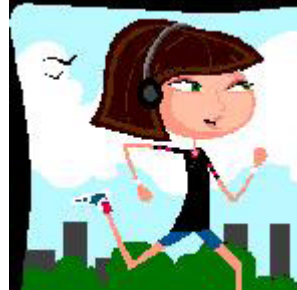
You lost your job. Now what? Take inventory. What do you like to do? What are your skills? Are there skills you could develop to make yourself more marketable? This may be a chance to change careers, or focus on particular aspects of your current path. Determine your target market. Devise a strategy. Stick to the plan.

Whether or not you feel you have the energy – GET OUT! Make it a point to be in touch with the rest of the world every day and take in some sunshine. Go for a walk, run errands, go to the grocery store; think of a reason to step outside. It'll be good for you.



6
Get out

7 Get moving



Exercise. There's no better way to fight lethargy than to get yourself moving. Be it a solo activity or something more sociable, exercise will help put some pep in your step.

Feel like you're too out of shape? Then now is the time to work on getting fit! Make it a personal project, be consistent, and you will see the results. Not only will exercise itself perk you up, it'll make you feel good about yourself.

Be nice to yourself. Get enough sleep, eat right, read a good book, play your favorite music. Take time every day to do something you enjoy. This is not the time to beat yourself up over your current situation. It was not your fault you got handed that dreadful pink slip.



8
Be nice

9
Be smart



Have you ever wanted to take a class but couldn't fit it into your schedule? One of the perks of unemployment is you now *have* the time. Learn a language, learn to cook, learn to play tennis – you could even take classes to expand your marketable skills! It gets you to focus on something other than unemployment and the frustrating job search, acquire knowledge, and – most important – have fun!

Believe in yourself. Layoffs are a consequence of poor business performance, not a reflection of your abilities or worth as a person. You have what it takes to make it through.

Good luck with your job search, or whatever you choose as your next endeavor.

Remember – always keep your chin up!!



10
Keep the faith



Ingrid Padilla is a marketing communications professional and amateur writer. After a recent layoff, she has been working as a consultant in her field, while dedicating part of her time to writing.

In this book, she draws on her personal experience to bring us a light-hearted approach to coping with unemployment.

“Inner strength does not preclude the normal blues experienced after a layoff. Ingrid reminds us the important thing is to regroup, be kind to ourselves, and draw on our strengths to carry us through this tough time.”

— *Meditation Weekly*

“Energetic and sometimes funny, the author helps us see unemployment as a challenge, a chance for self-improvement, and an experience we can learn from.”

— *Holistic Introspection*