

## GOOD GRIEF: COPING WITH LOSS OF A JOB OR MUSICAL POSITION

Reasons why people have parted with their positions:

- (1) Some were terminated for various reasons.
- (2) Some were “encouraged out the door” for various reasons.
- (3) Some left for illness or personal reasons.

Not everyone moves on easily when a position comes to an end. No matter how positive you try to be, it is still a loss. Any time we lose something or someone, there is grief involved.

Dr. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross addressed five stages of grief in her ground-breaking book *On Death and Dying* (New York: Touchstone, 1969). They can also apply to the loss of a job:

- (1) Denial—“The can’t possibly mean me.”
- (2) Anger—“I don’t deserve this! What are they thinking?”
- (3) Bargaining—“If I work toward a degree, or just keep quiet, they will have me back.”
- (4) Depression—“I’m never going to get another job; I’ll never get over this.”
- (5) Acceptance—“I’ll look for another job, or work on another degree, or take a vacation, or just do something for ME.”

Not everyone will experience all these phases, and they may not occur in the same order. They may jump back and forth, and some may recur.

Dr. Roberta Temes addressed a similar list of stages in her book *Living With an Empty Chair: A Guide Through Grief* (6<sup>th</sup> edition; Far Hills, NJ: New Horizon Press, 1992).

These particularly apply to dealing with cancer, but there are similarities with a job loss:

- (1) Numbness—when first learning of the job loss.
- (2) Disorganization—“What is happening? Why?” General confusion.
- (3) Organization—Coming to accept the situation and moving on.

These websites are helpful for practical issues, such as insurance and other issues:

[http://careerplanning.about.com/od/jobless/a/job\\_loss.html](http://careerplanning.about.com/od/jobless/a/job_loss.html)  
[www.rileyguide.com/cope.html](http://www.rileyguide.com/cope.html)

This website deals with rebuilding self-esteem and taking creative action:

[www.thrivenet.com/articles/jloss.html](http://www.thrivenet.com/articles/jloss.html).

Books that you might find helpful in dealing with job loss:

Louis Uchitelle. *The Disposable American* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).  
Individual stories of traumatized people and the different ways in which they coped.

Harry Maurer. *Working: An Oral History of the Unemployed*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979). Individual accounts of job loss and how these people learned to cope.

Other steps to take:

- (1) Seek professional counseling.
- (2) Rely on friends who have lost jobs
- (3) Remember that what may appear to be a disaster may be God's way of "opening a window by closing a door."