

INSIDE GRUNY COUNTY
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There is more to losing a job than just the loss of income. With all the job losses being reported in the news, it might be helpful to those who have experienced a job loss to understand more about the losses involved. To help with that understanding, I would encourage you to visit the ISU Extension's Managing Tough Times website: http://www.extension.iastate.edu/families/files/MTT_Jobloss.pdf for answers. The following is a brief summary of the publication "*Understanding the LOSS in Job Loss.*"

One of the losses people may experience is loss of identity. Many people define themselves through their workplace role. It may also mean the loss of your role as breadwinner. It can also mean the loss of a way of life. In other words, it means saying goodbye to roles, relationships and tasks that have been a part of your living patterns. Then there is the loss of control. One of the most stressful aspects of losing your job is not knowing what might happen.

Through this loss, it is important to remember there is hope. Not knowing what is going to happen can distress anyone but you can learn to live with the uncertainty. You can control your attitude and behavior. Every situation, regardless of how hopeless it appears, does have some hope. It is important to maintain an optimistic attitude and to identify what the next steps are.

The following steps will be helpful. Talk with your family; share what you know both good and bad. Kids don't need details but it is helpful for them to know what mom and dad are worried about. Hold regular family meetings. Talk and have fun together; this will help strengthen family relationships. Talk with family members, friends, pastors or others who are willing to listen to you share your feelings. Give yourself time to grieve. Then sort your losses into those that you can retain (old friends); replace (income); rebuild (a new job using current skills); and let go, such as the concept that good jobs last forever. Remember to focus on what you have not lost and celebrate what you still have. Continue with family celebrations and rituals.

Mixed feelings are normal when you lose your job. You do not need to feel guilt and shame about your emotions. Remember, it is not your fault! Conflicting feelings can cause confusion and drain your energy. It is important to talk about your feelings with family and friends. If you don't talk about them, they can lead to depression and immobilization. When you deny your feelings, you cannot bring closure to the experience and move on with life. Learn the signs of extreme stress. If you are not sure whether or not your feelings and reactions are healthy, talk with your doctor or a mental health professional. Don't let unemployment ruin your family relationships and/or your health.

If you would like a copy of "*Understanding the LOSS in Job Loss*", contact the Grundy office of ISU Extension at 319-824-6979.