

Don't let the Global Financial Crisis become your Great Depression



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The current financial climate has presented a range of new challenges for professional people. For those located in the Middle East, many are experiencing economic downturn for the first time. Those who have thrived in the burgeoning economy of the UAE over the past few decades have enjoyed a very comfortable and secure existence, but are now faced with uncertainty and fear. Words like 'redundancy' and 'outplacement' are relatively new concepts and the scale of job losses is unprecedented.

When organisations shift down a gear and people lose their jobs, a complex chain of events and reactions are triggered. In addition to the obvious practical and financial considerations, exiting employees have to deal with a range of emotional and behavioural reactions to a force that is essentially beyond their control. Those who possess an Internal Locus of Control believe they control their own destiny and are better placed to put the situation in perspective and move toward constructive solutions. Those who have an External Locus of Control however, tend to believe that they are at the mercy of external influences and are often vulnerable to self doubt and associated emotional upsets. Perceived lack of control is one of the greatest causes of stress, anxiety and depression and such perceptions are common for people whose careers have been hi-jacked by global economic factors.

It is common for career driven individuals to tie their sense of self very closely to their professional identities. In such cases, when there is a sense that professional identity has been undermined, it is common for people to generalize their feelings of loss from their career realm to their broader life. Thus, the cycle of negativity can develop and the 'woe is me' song is played as a soundtrack to relationships, health, fitness, recreation and a range of other non-work related activities. Negative self talk is one of the greatest self sabotage strategies people employ. For example, a resilient person with a tendency for positive self talk might say to himself "I lost my job due to broader economic factors, the job rather than the person was made redundant, my performance appraisals were positive and I added value to the company, just like I will in my next role". Whereas a more pessimistic, less self assured person might say to himself "I lost my job because they had it in for me, no-one listened to me and they never noticed my value, I'll never get another job". Thus, personal resilience and emotional maturity become key factors in predicting the coping mechanisms of people exiting the business.

So, what can you do to ensure you maintain a positive mindset during these turbulent economic times? Try these simple techniques for adjusting your focus:

1. Keep it in perspective – try not to generalize your negative



feelings about your career, a job set-back does not necessarily mean your relationships or health will suffer

2. Reframe negative thoughts – when you notice yourself focusing on the worst case scenario, flip it up-side down and consider the likely benefits and opportunities
3. Set personal goals – use this time to reconsider your longer term goals
4. Visualize success – spend 10 minutes per day in a relaxed state, visualizing yourself in the ideal career scenario
5. Create a vision board – use pictures, words, magazine cut-outs to create a collage of the things that represent where you want to be, and place it in a prominent place
6. Talk about it – consider who are the people you trust to give you honest and empathic feedback and to support you through tough times; friends, partners, colleagues
7. Keep fit and healthy – this is the most important time to look after your physical health, eat well, exercise and drink lots of water
8. Sleep – it's the most valuable (and cheapest) regenerative process we have access to, make the most of it
9. Stay in the moment – this situation will not last forever, stay focused on the immediate

- steps you need to take in order to get through this time
10. Seek professional help – if you are experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression talk to your health professional

And remember the underlying premise of the Laws Of Attraction; your thoughts create your experience. Therefore, what you focus on, you get more of. So if you focus on the fact that you have lost your job and all the anxiety and pain it represents, what are the chances of creating your next job opportunity? Reframe your thoughts to focus on all your valuable strengths and visualize yourself employed in your next role.

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