

## **You're Fired \* What's Next**

**By: Willis Newton**

Your manager just left a meeting with you, having informed you that your services were no longer required - your employment was terminated - you're fired. In a single moment, your life changed. Now the immediate challenge is to look forward while clearing up loose ends. While each situation is unique, some general aspects are reviewed below.

### **TAKE TIME TO REFLECT**

1. When an outplacement Counsellor has been contracted to assist you, there are a number of reasons why spending some time with the counsellor immediately following a termination of employment can benefit you. Employees in this situation experience a variety of emotions from shock to anger to worry even if there have been indications that a termination was imminent. Whether or not you have the benefit of assistance, by taking a few moments to compose, you are better able to navigate through the rest of the day. Most counsellors have dealt with numerous people and their reactions, so it is likely that the counsellor can help you through some of the immediate issues facing you. As well, you have an opportunity to write a "To Do" list to prioritize whatever activities have to be completed immediately and over the next few days.

### **LEAVE WITH DIGNITY**

2. Housekeeping and exit from the company come next. Return any company property such as keys, security passes, computer passwords and so on. Arrange an appropriate time to retrieve personal property from your work area. So as not to jeopardize your dignified exit from the company, it is always best to ensure that only your own possessions are packed up and that you do not say or do anything that you might regret. You might check with your manager regarding items you are unclear about before taking them. Never destroy company files. If you have company items at home, you can usually arrange to have them returned later. Calm yourself and leave the company property

### **WHAT YOU WILL SAY**

3. Decide what you will say to your immediate family. Rather than raising their anxiety level, be sure to present a clear message and have a balanced response to their questions. Also, prepare an honest and well-thought-out response for those in your network of friends that will ask, "What happened?"

### **FINANCIAL ASPECTS**

4. Take the Letter of Termination along with any personal financial information to an independent financial consultant who can help you with information about the process for sheltering funds, investing, and budgeting.

### **SIGN-OFF**

5. You may want to discuss the severance with an advisor so that you clearly understand all the legal terms of the Release that often accompanies the termination letter. It is not advisable to sign the Release or agree to the terms on the day of your termination. Reflect on whether the severance amount is fair and reasonable as well as on the time and costs involved in seeking a legal solution.

### **EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (EI), HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CANADA (HRDC)**

6. When you first visit your local EI office (formerly - Unemployment Insurance), take your documents with you. The Record of Employment, valid identification, your SIN, a recent pay stub and the Letter of Termination will be useful in responding to questions from the EI counsellor. There may be a time lapse before you are allowed to collect EI benefits depending on your severance package, however, there are services and programs sponsored by HRDC to assist with elements of the job search.

### **THE JOB SEARCH**

7. While this is a fairly involved process, the basic concepts to start investigating include:

- .. Deciding on the career you will pursue
- .. Preparing a resume, cover letter, reference list
- .. Practicing interview responses
- .. Writing a list of contacts you can call
- .. Making a list of agencies and recruiters to call
- .. Researching companies that you might like to work for
- .. Planning every day
- .. Keeping an organized record of contacts made

8. Look to the future, learn from the past, concentrate on the task at hand, and good luck.