CRITICAL INCIDENTS EXPRESSED BY
MANAGERS AND PROFESSIONALS DURING
THEIR TERM OF INVOLUNTARY JOB LOSS

by
Heather S. Patterson

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Heather S. Patterson

Department of Counselling Psychology

The University of British Columbia
1956 Main Mall
Vancouver, Canada
V6T 1Y3

Date December 24, 1990
Abstract

This study focused on the experience of involuntary job loss for managers and professionals. Fifteen males and females provided details of their experience through in-depth interviews. The critical incident technique was used as the approach to identify the high points and low points during their term of unemployment. The most frequently reported positive incidents included interviews, positive feedback from others, support of friends, family and counselling, and lack of financial pressures. The negative incidents most frequently reported included leaving the previous employer, rejection, lost role, interviews and lost career opportunities. In addition, the research participants reported shock and relief as the two most frequent responses to the termination. When asked about whether a change in attitude to work had occurred 11 reported some change following termination. The most prominent result of this research points to the experience of unemployment as largely an individual experience, only four categories of critical incidents included incidents reported by more than 50% of the participants interviewed.

Counsellors may benefit from this research which provides information particular to this group and which will assist them in determining appropriate counselling techniques and interventions.
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Chapter One

Introduction

The Problem

Our financial economy and the state of the business environment are characterized by technological change, increased automation, lowering of barriers to trade, deregulation, corporate restructuring, mergers and takeovers. As a consequence, companies, in order to be competitive in the local, national and global marketplace, are required to manage their resources more efficiently. In managing these resources, business decisions related to efficiency and effectiveness of operations are made which impact on labour requirements and job security, often resulting in termination for many employees from senior executives to line workers.

To illustrate the extent of employee terminations, Canadian statistics show that in 1989, over one million people were out of work. Out of that number almost 600,000 people were terminated or laid off (Statistics Canada, Catalogue 71-001).

The problem of unemployment has presented an important area of research in the past and continues to attract research as the trend into the future indicates that terminations and unemployment will continue as a part of the western economy (Hepworth, 1980). As Warr and Payne (1983) point out, "Technical and economic factors are combining to ensure that unemployment levels will remain high in western
countries for the foreseeable future yet psychological aspects of unemployment are still under-researched" (pg. 221). Job loss consistently ranks in the upper quartile of the stress chart in terms of the stress it creates compared to other life changes (Leana and Ivancevich, 1987). Physiologically and psychologically individuals are affected by job loss and in this respect support the need for an increased understanding of unemployment through research.

A review of the recent research on unemployment shows that it can essentially be divided into three categories including research which focuses on the reactions and negative traumatic experience of unemployment (Warr and Jackson, 1984; Warr, 1983; Feather, 1982; Kelvin and Jarrett, 1985), research into the phases of unemployment (Jahoda, 1979; Powell and Driscoll, 1973; Borgen and Amundson, 1984), and research which has acknowledged the individual and the contingent nature of reactions to the experience (Hartley, 1980; Fineman, 1983; Fryer and Payne, 1984). Much of the unemployment research has focused on blue collar workers with less emphasis on unemployment of professionals and managers (Fineman, 1983; Latack and Dozier, 1986). Managers and professionals, however, are by no means insulated from job loss. In fact, at times, unemployment rates have been higher for white collar than for blue collar workers (Kaufman, 1982). The availability of increasing numbers of educated workers in the market is creating an oversupply which will impact on employment shifts for white collar workers for some time to come (Jahoda, 1979).
Terminations at the professional and management level may also be increasing due to changes in the philosophy towards retaining middle and senior management. Individuals may be terminated due to personality issues, politics within the organization, incompatible organization and personal goals, career plateauing, technological change, changes at the Board or Executive level and for a host of other reasons. This study focuses its research on this group; a group traditionally assured of job security by the nature of their skills, knowledge and training.

The unemployed white collar worker approaches the experience of unemployment with a variety of different circumstances from the blue collar worker (Feesey, 1987). The research on the differences between the experience for white collar and blue collar is, however, inconsistent and contradictory. Some researchers suggest that the experience is more traumatic for white collar workers (Goodchilds and Smith, 1963), others suggest it is less traumatic (Schlozman and Verba, 1979), and still others report no difference between the two groups (Payne, Warr and Hartley, 1984). Regardless of the inconsistency of the data, the experience of unemployment for white collar workers presents an interesting and important area of study.

One of the most thorough works on white collar unemployment was conducted by Fineman (1983) in Australia. In his research of 100 white collar employees he discusses his perspective about research with this target group.
The images I have in my mind of these people are varied and conflicting. They contain hope, despair, threat, fear, insecurity, shame, stigma, confusion, anticipation, remorse, bitterness and loss. There are accounts of friends and colleagues melting away, and time dragging interminably as letters and applications remain unanswered; the hesitation of opening a letter for fear of yet another rejection; the cautious optimism of getting an interview; the disbelief at receiving an offer (pg. 1).

It is, firstly, the purpose of this research to further the accounts of this experience for this group; to advance the research on white-collar unemployment. As Fineman has pointed out, the experiences reported have been varied and conflicting reflecting a need for further study.

Secondly, much of the research on white-collar unemployment to date has focused on males (Hartley, 1980; Hepworth, 1980; Kaufman, 1982). Often the role of the wife is included in the research (Kaufman, 1982) but less frequently is the experience of women in unemployment included. As more women have become part of this target group it is important that they be included in the research.

Finally, the purpose of this research is to gain insight into both the positive and negative aspects of this experience as reported by the individual such that a comprehensive understanding of the experience can be attained.
The broad research question which guided this study was "How do male and female professionals and managers experience involuntary job loss?" To study this question an interview approach utilizing the critical incident technique was adopted to answer the specific questions:

1. What are the high points for managers and professionals during their term of unemployment?
2. What are the low points for managers and professionals during their term of unemployment?

Definitions

In this study involuntary unemployment refers to the termination of services provided by a full-time employee which was not initiated by the employee. Termination being the cessation of work which has been compensated for by an organization and not including termination of self-employment or contract work. Professionals and managers will typically be individuals which have had extensive education and training which accords them specific skills and knowledge (Fineman, 1983). The managers and professionals included in this research had secured re-employment or become self-employed. The rationale for including only this group of managers and professionals is described in Chapter Three.
The critical incident technique was utilized in the data collection process which identified facilitating and hindering incidents during managers' and professionals' term of unemployment. This technique developed by Flanagan (1954) defines critical incidents as extreme behaviour which is either outstandingly effective or ineffective in meeting the general aim of a defined activity. Further details of this technique and approach are found in the Methodology section.
Chapter Two
Literature Review

Introduction

A review of the literature related to unemployment for managers and professionals can essentially be divided into three main areas. The first area focuses on the trauma of unemployment and the negative effects of the experience. The second includes models of the process of unemployment and the stages or phases one moves through in the course of the experience and the third identifies the importance of the individual and the variances of the experience of unemployment. This last area focuses on differences between individuals and identifies factors which mediate or impact on the experience for the person.

To understand unemployment, it’s importance and meaning to managers and professionals, it is useful to first briefly examine the meaning and value of employment.

The Role of Work and Individual Needs

"We work not only to produce but to give value to time." Delacroix

It is of no surprise that research indicates that most terminated employees report that
they would rather be working (Jahoda, 1982). Warr (1982) studied the commitment to work and found that males and females (69% and 65% respectively) would continue to work if it was not financially necessary. Work plays a very significant role in our society today and for reasons other than economic ones.

The commitment to work is relevant to the target group of this research because for some the need to work may not be financially driven and therefore critical incidents of unemployment as identified by the research participants may not include financially focused events. In Warr’s (1982) study on commitment he found that of those surveyed employed male managers showed the highest degree of commitment. These research participants may also have a stronger investment in maintaining their employment and therefore be dramatically affected by unemployment.

Individual needs are to a greater or lesser extent met by the conditions of employment for managers and professionals. Jahoda (1982) has contributed a description of manifest and latent consequences of employment which satisfy fundamental and necessary individual needs and which is directly applicable to this group. The manifest functions would include the financial aspects and the latent functions include:

- an imposed time structure
- contacts and shared experiences outside the family
- definition of status and social identity
enforced activity

a link to transcending goals and purposes.

Jahoda states that an individual will suffer from unemployment unless other sources are found to satisfy these requirements. Further, she states that in unemployment people have difficulty organizing their time, have a sense of isolation, lack purpose, possess an uncertainty about their status and identity and report a lack of things to do. Structuring time and activities during unemployment has been found to increase self-esteem (Hartley, 1980) and to prevent feelings of apathy (Swinburne, 1981).

Individual needs theory generally identifies requirements for healthy functioning. Maslow (1968) has developed a progressive hierarchy of needs and Toffler (1980) has identified three necessary requirements of functioning. In both of these theories the emphasis is on individual needs for a sense of meaning or purpose, structure and a sense of social belonging. Employment may satisfy these needs therefore the absence of employment may deprive individuals of a source of needs satisfaction.

In summary, employment provides managers and professionals with a source of satisfaction to meet financial, security and stability needs but the value ascribed to work goes beyond this role. Employees are committed to work and to fulfil other individual needs not of a financial nature, but rather needs related to the self, identity, structure and purpose.
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Research Findings

The Adverse Effects of Unemployment

There has been a significant amount of literature generated which reports negative and traumatic aspects of unemployment (Schlozman and Verba, 1979; Borgen and Amundson, 1984; Kelvin and Jarrett, 1985; Warr, 1983; Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, 1938). Also, numerous quantitative studies exist which investigate the relationship between psychological well-being and unemployment (Warr, 1987; Hepworth, 1980; Kemp and Mercer, 1983; Warr and Jackson, 1984; Feather, 1982). It is an area which has received attention in the past as well as recently.

Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938) conducted one of the most comprehensive works completed in the thirties which compiled 28 indices of psychological deterioration including inferiority, depression, distrust, apathy, hopelessness and low self-esteem. The findings indicated that unemployment tends to make people more emotionally unstable than they were before they became unemployed and as the unemployment continues they lose self-confidence and develop feelings of inferiority. However, recent researchers have cautioned in drawing on studies of the thirties to make comparisons to today’s unemployment (Feather and Barber, 1983; Jahoda, 1979).

....some of the investigations lacked the methodological rigor that one would expect today and also because it would be misleading to equate the
cause and effects of present-day unemployment with those of unemployment in the 30’s. Important social changes have occurred and the present context contains much that is different (Feather and Barber, 1983, pg. 192).

Jahoda (1979) points out that "it is a legitimate and open question whether regularities discovered over half a century ago are still valid today" (pg. 310).

Recent studies report much on the negative effects of unemployment and in this research the low points of this time for managers and professionals will further be investigated. Peter Warr in "Work, Jobs and Unemployment" (1983) indicates nine potentially negative features of unemployment including: reduced income and variety of life, fewer goals committed to achieve, reduced decision latitude, reduction in skill use and development, insecurity about the future, restricted range of interpersonal contact, change in social position, and an increase in psychologically threatening activity. However, when consideration is given to the specific losses and negative impacts that could be encountered as a consequence of unemployment for managers and professionals the list becomes even more extensive.

Although for some within this group financial matters may not be a major stressor in unemployment, the importance of economic impacts should not be overlooked. Often managers and professionals are the prime breadwinners in the
family unit with substantial financial pressures including mortgage payments, children, aging parents and the desire to maintain a set standard of living.

Changes in marital and family relations have been studied following termination. Fagin (1981) reports increased marital friction and stress among couples. Wives of men who lose their jobs may begin to work or continue to work after the husband’s termination (Estes, 1973) perhaps resulting in unwanted role reversals and feelings of inadequacy or guilt on the part of the terminated person. In this research both females and males will be included with the opportunity to express family tensions or improvements resulting from job loss.

Estes (1973) compared 200 unemployed professionals with 100 employed professionals. The conclusion reached was that unemployment is a tumultuous time filled with personal recriminations. For managers and professionals losing their position is often the first time that they have faced failure, as they perceive it. Traditionally, they have been in positions of control yet through unemployment they become the controlled. The dominant feelings for this group at this time include failure, rejection and the loss of something valued (Fineman, 1983). Kelvin and Jarrett (1985) support this view in their comment on the most profound psychological impact of unemployment as the way in which individuals comes to see themselves.

The trauma of unemployment has been reported in many studies and will be further discussed in the literature on phase theory of unemployment. Here it is
important to mention that unemployed managers and professionals frequently report an initial feeling of shock or trauma. In Swinburne’s study of the psychological impacts of unemployment (1981) she reported that 50% of her sample were in shock; Schlozman and Verba (1979) found that individuals reported trauma more frequently than those who didn’t; Fineman (1983) reported that separation from work creates a severe emotional shock for white collar workers. For managers and professionals the likelihood of a traumatic reaction may be enhanced because of the investment of energy and an increasing expectation of tenure as you climb the corporate ladder. The contention is that the more you have to lose the greater the trauma.

Research on unemployment and mental health indicates that continuing unemployment significantly impairs mental health (Little, 1976) and that obtaining a job quickly leads to improvement (Warr, 1987). Hepworth (1980) conducted research on British males and found that general distress was higher for the unemployed than for a comparison group of employed. Vinokur and Caplan (1987) have reported that, "Job loss is a key determinant of emotional and physical well-being for the unemployed person and his family " (pg. 1007). Longitudinal research by Cohn (1978) and Cobb and Kasl (1977) show a significant deterioration in affective well-being after job loss. This evidence is substantial in linking unemployment to diminished psychological well-being.
The Phases of Unemployment

As stated previously the trauma of unemployment has been well-researched and discussed. The trauma (shock) response being the first phase in a series through which the individual passes in the course of unemployment. The hypothesis fundamental to this body of research is that individuals show a phasic psychological reaction to unemployment over time.

Studies of the thirties were the first to identify stages of the experience of unemployment including shock, optimism, pessimism and fatalism (Eisenburg and Lazarsfeld, 1938). More recently Jahoda (1979) has developed a detailed theory including shock, constructive adaptation, deterioration, boredom, despair and apathy and Powell and Driscoll (1973) have reported four phases including (1) relaxation and relief (2) concentrated job search effort, (3) vacillation and (4) apathy/cynicism. Hayes and Nutman (1981) identified four phases: shock and immobilization, hope and optimism, depression and withdrawal, and readjustment. Hill (1978) has identified the initial period as one characterized by feelings of being on holiday. It would seem that for managers and professionals whose jobs have been characteristically stressful this phase of relaxation or "on holiday" would be common.

The process of unemployment has appropriately been referred to as an emotional roller coaster (Borgen and Amundson, 1984) emphasizing the affective state of the individual during this time. In this model the individual moves through an initial
period of grieving consisting of denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance, followed by an intensive job search and burnout if the search is unsuccessful. Most people who lose their jobs experience some aspects of the initial grieving stages. This initial reaction of grieving has also been studied by others in connection with counselling implications (Jones, 1979) of involuntary job loss as a time of crisis. Although the comparison of job loss to other losses of a personal nature (death of a close friend) may be extreme, loss of employment represents a significant life involvement loss (Borgen and Amundson, 1987).

In the research to be conducted, both high and low points will be elicited. It is anticipated that some of the low points will relate to the grieving process and expression of loss. Other high points may be identified as part of the job search process and the event of re-employment.

Individual Differences in Unemployment

In the review of the research to this point I have commented on the negative aspects of unemployment and the trauma and phases of the process of unemployment. This section will deal with individuals and the research in support of the necessity of identifying and studying the range of reactions to
the experience of unemployment. What about the people who do not experience unemployment as overwhelmingly negative or who are not grieved at the loss of their employment?

Previously, studies have been cited which attest to deterioration of psychological well-being. However, Hartley (1980) conducted research on 87 unemployed middle managers compared with 64 employed managers and found that self-esteem levels were not lower for the unemployed managers and did not decline with longer unemployment. Also, the universality of the trauma reaction can be contended. Although in Swinburne's research 50% of managers and professionals reported feelings of shock, 50% did not report those same feelings. As Fineman (1983) has pointed out, "one certainly gains the impression that some investigators are perhaps over-keen to 'prove' that unemployed white collar workers are in shock whatever" (pg. 8).

Studies often do not report minority reactions and in this respect miss valuable data. Little (1976), however, reported from his research that 48% of the participants had a positive attitude toward job loss indicating optimism about the future, need for new challenges and expressing relief from stressful work. In an article published in Fortune magazine (March, 1987), research revealed that of 250 displaced managers and professionals 141 found jobs within 3 months and half of the 250 boosted their
income. Some of the comments focused on the experience as a positive one in providing the impetus for change and growth.

Little research on unemployment has recognized the importance of individual differences in understanding unemployment. Managers are not a homogeneous group but rather find themselves in unemployment with varying financial, life skills, support and value structure systems. Fineman has recognized the need for study of individuals in their reactions to unemployment, not to assume generalities but to assume differences. He states, "that the study of individual differences and circumstances may provide a critical key to a deeper understanding of unemployment reactions and adaptation..." (1983, pg. 12).

Fryer and Payne (1984) focused their research on 11 individuals who coped well with unemployment, questioning not the material deprivation associated with the loss of the job but the psychological deprivation. The results show that individuals who did not suffer were proactive and what Fryer and Payne refer to as "personal agents". These people initiate action and change situations to produce opportunities. They are goal directed in line with their values and have the ability to impose their own structure.

In this research the focus on the individual and their high and low points experienced during their term of unemployment will include acknowledgement of individual differences as well as shared experiences. A number of factors combine to
impact on individual unemployment as a very complex phenomena from a psychological view. It is important to address factors which may moderate or impact on the experience for the individual.

Factors Which Mediate or Impact on the Nature of the Experience of Job Loss

Many researchers have emphasized the importance of identifying and researching the moderating or mediating variables which impact on the experience of job loss (Kemp and Mercer, 1983; Hesketh, Skouksmith and Kang, 1987; Hepworth, 1980). One of the key factors in mediating or impacting on the experience of unemployment is involvement and employment commitment (Warr, 1987; Fagin and Little, 1984). The more involved an individual is with their work the more they will suffer as a consequence of job loss (Fineman, 1983). The value of work and employee commitment was discussed earlier in this chapter.

Swinburne (1981) in her interview with 20 unemployed managers and professionals reported that the impact of unemployment for this group was delayed or moderated by a number of factors including severance pay, expectation of being out of work, economics of the time, reduction in the stigma of unemployment, high unemployment, unemployment benefits, spousal support, degree of control, structuring time and participating in worthwhile activities. Other factors have been identified by researchers (Leana and Ivancevich, 1987; Borgen and Amundson, 1984; Fineman,
Involuntary Job Loss

1983; Hesketh, Skouksmith and Kang, 1987; Latack and Dozier, 1986) some of which include age and development, sex, attitude to employment, social status, finances, support systems, personality variables, perception of cause, communication of termination and resolution of feelings, activities, prior work experience and education.

Kirsh (1983) has described five factors which moderate the experience of unemployment for middle class workers or professionals. The first refers to education and training which enable flexibility in the job search. The second is access to helping professionals. The third is professional networking which assists in the job search process. The fourth is the possibility of having a working partner with high earning potential which helps to alleviate financial pressures. The fifth is having a wide variety of interests and hobbies to occupy one's time. Should this target group possess one or several of these factors they will likely show an adaptability to unemployment.

Summary

It is not possible to conclude from this literature review what critical incidents are likely to be reported in this study of unemployment of managers and professionals. What is apparent is that there are significant studies reporting on the negative aspects of unemployment and its effect on well-being from a psychological, economic and social view. It is expected that some of these will be reported by participants in this
research. Positive critical incidents may also be reported which confirm research focusing on the positive aspects of unemployment and supporting individual differences. Further, it is the author's contention that this group is a divergent, heterogeneous group with unique differences which will be reported in their response to unemployment.
Chapter Three
Methodology

Introduction

This research explores the experience of involuntary job loss for male and female professionals and managers. An interview approach utilizing the critical incident technique was selected as an appropriate method of accessing this information.

The rationale for this selection is related to the sensitivities of the research topic and the desire to obtain a full description of the experience as reported by the individual participants. As Borg and Gall (1979) point out, if an interviewee is motivated and feels comfortable with the interviewer, information can be obtained in an interview which the person would not likely reveal under other circumstances.

The Critical Incident Technique

The critical incident technique, developed by John Flanagan (1954) as a research tool for gathering facts concerning behaviour in defined situations, is a flexible approach which can be appropriately applied to involuntary unemployment. Originally, the technique was developed out of a need for obtaining factual reports to analyze performance and improve procedures in identifying requirements related to
successful performance. In its present form, the central focus of the technique is to identify specific behaviours which helped or hindered the participant during unemployment.

The technique utilizes an approach eliciting the individual’s subjective view of the situation and incident reports which are subsequently categorized into a verifiable classification system. In this research the participants were asked to identify high points and low points which generally helped or hindered them during their term of unemployment. From the description of incidents a classification system was derived.

The critical incident technique has been thoroughly described by Flanagan (1954), studied by Andersson and Nilsson (1964) and has been effectively utilized in studies of unemployment (Borgen and Amundson, 1984). Borgen and Amundson have pointed out the particular appropriateness of this technique in deriving facilitating and hindering effects because of the emphasis on the participant’s view and the elaboration of specific behavioural incidents.

**Sources of Data**

**Participants and Sample Size**

Participants were selected for this study from an outplacement program in Vancouver. The participants included nine male and six female managers and
professionals ranging in age from 29 to 47. To be included in the research, the participants had successfully graduated from the outplacement program; that is, they had secured new employment or become self-employed. Participation in the research was voluntary as solicited through a letter (Appendix A) requesting their assistance and outlining the purpose of the research. A summary of relevant demographic information gathered on the participants is reported in Table 1.

The fifteen individuals participated in the research through in-depth interviewing. Other researchers have utilized small samples and support the use of in-depth interviewing techniques in accessing sensitive information (Swinburne, 1981).
Table 1

Demographic Data of Research Participants

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<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Current Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>President - Private Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Manager, Disbursements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Manager, Budget Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Tax Collection Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Collections Correspondent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Supervisor, Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Marketing Manager-Geographical Info-Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Financial Analyst</td>
</tr>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Manager, Business Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Chief Financial Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Financial Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Policy Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Manager, Financial Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Controller</td>
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</table>
Table 1

Demographic Data of Research Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Yrs in Chosen Profession</th>
<th>Mos Unemp</th>
<th>Degrees/Designation</th>
<th>Yrs with Prev Emp</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>B.Sc., M.Sc. M.B.A.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>B.A., M.B.A.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Dip. Acctg. &amp; Fin. Mgmt.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>B.A., C.G.A.</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>B.A., M.A.Sc.</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>B.Comm.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>C.A.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B.Sc., and Acctg.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>C.G.A.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>B.Sc.</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>B.A., C.A.</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>B.A., C.A., M.B.A.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection

The data collected through this methodology is retrospective and self-report. One possible disadvantage of retrospective data is that people may give their experience more coherence and greater continuity than it had at the time in an effort to understand themselves and the situation (Kelvin and Jarrett, 1985). However, Flanagan (1954) states that if suitable precautions are taken, recalled incidents can be relied on to provide reasonable data. Further, he states that memory can be improved if the participant knows in advance the situation and the behaviour to be recalled.

The retrospective view may further be affected by moodstate, but the relationship between recall and moodstate is complex (Hurrell Jr. et al, 1988). An interview at the time of unemployment, however, would also be affected by moodstate and the intensity of the time. Further, an interview during the period of unemployment would not reflect incidents during the entire term of unemployment. For purposes of this research, I was interested in reported critical incidents of a positive and negative nature which occurred over the time of unemployment. This in mind, retrospective data seems appropriate.

Self-report is fundamental to the methodology as the research is designed to determine the individual's subjective view of his/her experience.
Procedures

Preliminary Demographic Data

Preliminary demographic information was collected from the participants in a questionnaire form prior to participating in the interview process. The purpose of this questionnaire was to confirm appropriateness for participation in the research and to collect background information. A copy of the questionnaire is attached in Appendix B.

Research Design

The research design included a single in-depth interview. The data was collected through the interview of 15 participants with each single interview completed in 45 minutes to just over one hour. The interviews were conducted over a six week period. All of the interviewing was conducted by one interviewer. Each interview was tape-recorded with the permission of the participant and later transcribed. Notes were not taken in the interview to avoid distraction and facilitate an atmosphere of attention and caring.
Pilot Interview

The interview was piloted prior to conducting the research in order to include any modifications necessary to the success of the design. Upon completion of the pilot interview the respondent was asked the following questions:

1. What, if any, questions or parts of the interview did you find confusing or difficult?
2. In general, how did you feel about the interview?
3. Did you adapt your answers at anytime because of my responses?
4. Do you have any suggestions for improving the interview?
5. Do you feel anything significant concerning your term of unemployment was omitted?

Question 1 & 2: The respondent replied that he did not find the questions confusing or difficult and generally felt positive about the interview. It was even viewed as helping, in that it allowed an opportunity to "dump" the feelings around the experience, to see the experience in context and with a sense of clarity.

Question 3: He did not adapt his answers at anytime but rather responded with what came to mind.

Question 4: The participant suggested that I include a question about the constraints and pressures concerning the decision leading to reemployment and the process of reemployment. He also spoke of the importance of relationships.
Question 5: He spoke of his overall impression of the experience and summarized how he felt generally.

In general the interview went very well and as a consequence the researcher made the decision not to make any changes to the interview guide. The process of reemployment and what that was like for the individual was determined to be outside of the scope of this research study. The researcher also felt that the general feelings around the experience of unemployment would be gained at the end of the interview when the participants were asked if there was anything they would like to add.

Ethical Considerations

In accordance with ethical standards of the Canadian Psychological Association and in the conduct of research, the researcher ensured the requirements of no harm, confidentiality and informed consent were applied.

Prior to participating in this research the purpose and nature of the study was explained to each person. The individual signed a consent form (Appendix C) indicating their full understanding of the research and agreement to participate.

All data collected is held in the strictest confidence. Names only appear on the preliminary demographic data sheet which enabled follow-up as required. Upon completion of the interviewing and subsequent transcription of the tapes, the tapes were erased. Transcribed interviews carry no reference to individual identities.
The researcher ensured responsible care of the participant during the conduct of the study, both during the interview and in the follow-up.

The Interview

Establish Rapport

Prior to the interview beginning, the interviewer explained the format of the interview, the practice of tape recording the interview, the necessary release and understanding of their participation in the research, the confidential nature of their participation and follow-up process. The participant then read and signed the Consent Form.

The interviewer established a rapport with the individual and built a supportive atmosphere of trust and respect. This atmosphere was critical to the success of the interview and the quality of the data. Any questions the participant had were addressed at this point with openness and honesty, the researcher modelling the behaviour desired of the participant.

Interview Questions

After the initial component of the interview was completed the interviewer asked the following question:
Let’s start by having you think back over your experience of unemployment. Could you begin by describing for me the general circumstances leading up to how you came to be terminated?

then...

During your experience of unemployment you may have experienced high points and low points. Could you think back to your first low point and describe for me the events leading up to that low point and why it was such a low time?

Other low points were requested until the participant had fully described all of the low times during their experience. Then the following question was asked:

Now, let’s turn to the high points of your experience. Take the first one and tell me exactly what happened and why it was such a high point?

After the high points were all reported the following secondary questions were asked:

1. Did you take any actions to alter or compensate for the low points or capitalize on the high points? If so, what were they?

2. What is your attitude towards work now and how does that compare to your attitude prior to your termination?

3. Now that you are re-employed, what learning, if any, has taken place for you?

4. Any further comments you would like to make or mention about your experience that hasn’t been covered?
During the interview the interviewer's remarks were neutral and supportive, reflecting understanding and encouraging the participant to do the talking. It was important for the interviewer to remain neutral so that the incidents were not censored or biased in any way by the participant. The interviewer clarified questions as appropriate to ensure there was no misunderstanding and encouraged the participant to continue when more information was required. The interviewer used paraphrasing and summarization in the reporting of the critical incidents.

The interviewer kept the following points in mind during the interview:

1. What is the critical incident reported?
2. Did the participant experience the incident?
3. Were all the relevant factors of the incident reported?
4. Is the incident really critical?

Following the interviewee's discussion of the last question the researcher then concluded the interview and discussed with the participant any questions that they may have had. It was then suggested that some of the participants would be contacted as part of a validity check on the results of the data collection.

Follow-up with the participants included a letter of thanks.
Data Analysis

Method

Following the analysis procedures as defined and utilized by Flanagan (1954), with modifications, the data was analyzed according to these steps.

1. Each taped interview was coded for anonymity and transcribed, double-spaced to ensure sufficient space for researcher notations.

2. Protocol analysis
   (a) Each protocol was read to get a sense of general themes reported.
   (b) Through an inductive and subjective process the critical incidents from one protocol were sorted into categories relative to the aim of the research; separating positive and negative reports. Brief definitions of each category were formulated.
   (c) Each subsequent protocol was sorted into the existing categories, definitions of the categories were modified and new categories were developed as required. This process continued until all incidents were categorized.
   (d) The categories were combined into more general classifications, if this was appropriate, and the definitions of each classification further refined.
   (e) A second researcher read five of the protocols affirming that the critical incidents were in fact critical incidents and verified the classification of these critical incidents.
3. Reliability check

The second researcher reviewed all of the critical incidents for all of the protocols and agreed or disagreed with the classification of the incidents.

4. The demographic data collected by way of the questionnaire were summarized, although not all of the information collected was reported as some of the information proved not to be relevant.

5. The information generated by way of the secondary questions was summarized and is presented in the results section. The responses to the question concerning compensation for high and low points were not analyzed and have not been included in the results because the responses merely supported the critical incidents and why those incidents were reported as critical. No new information was generated from this question.

Reliability and Validity Checks

Five of the fifteen participants interviewed (33%) were contacted for a follow-up validity check by telephone. A brief description of how the data had been summarized, including the analysis of critical incidents, was explained to the participants and then the summary was read. Each of the five agreed with the summary and had no corrections or additions to make. They stated that their experience had been accurately described as reported. A second researcher, a
Registered Psychologist with a Ph.D. in Counselling Psychology who also has extensive experience in the research area, was selected to conduct a reliability check on the critical incident classification system. One hundred percent of the 201 critical incidents were classified by the second researcher and an agreement rate of 96.5% was achieved. After consideration by the primary researcher some of the incidents were re-classified as a consequence of the reliability check. Also, the second researcher read a sample of five transcripts as a check to verify critical incidents as critical. The results affirmed that all the critical incidents read by the second researcher as indicated in the transcripts were critical incidents.
Chapter Four

Results and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter will focus on the results of the 15 in-depth interviews conducted with managers and professionals concerning their experience of involuntary job loss. Specifically, this chapter will include an analysis of the critical incidents and a summary of other data collected.

Critical Incident Analysis

A total of 201 critical incidents were identified from the 15 transcripts of the taped interviews. These critical incidents were then broadly classified into two major categories, negative and positive incidents which helped or hindered in the experience of unemployment. From there, 39 categories were formulated, 20 positive and 19 negative into which the 201 incidents were classified, 110 positive incidents and 91 negative incidents. A rank order summary of the positive incidents with 25% or more of the participants mentioning an incident in that category is presented in Table 2 and similarly, a rank order summary of the negative incidents with 25% or more of the participants mentioning an incident in that category is presented in Table 3. Following the tables these categories will be briefly described. I have chosen to describe
incidents with 25% or more of the participants mentioning the category rather than all of the categories because of space and detail considerations. Also, in other studies, researchers have chosen to describe categories based on similar percentages. A complete listing of all the categories is contained in Appendix D.
Table 2

Positive Critical Incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th># of Incidents Reported</th>
<th># of Participants per Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive feedback from others/producing results</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of friends and family</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counselling</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning new skills and values, learning and recognizing self</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No financial pressures/sufficient funds</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers of employment/being successful in the search</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a professional office environment to go to</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying opportunities and networking</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation or break from the job search</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from and giving support to similar others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time or contract work</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

Negative Critical Incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th># of Incidents Reported</th>
<th># of Participants per Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaving the previous employer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost role</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost career opportunity/not getting the job</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting the job search</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being unemployed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealistic Expectations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing happening/ Lack of opportunities</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial burden or concern</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Pressure</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positive Critical Incidents

Interviews

Definitions of the categories of positive critical incidents follow, along with quotes from the transcripts which add to the description. Interviews were the most frequently mentioned high points during the experience of unemployment for managers and professionals. The definition of this category of critical incidents includes interviews which were reported as the first interview achieved by the participant, the second shortlist interview or interviews that the participant felt were successful. The results of the positive interviews were that individuals felt that they were a marketable commodity reinforcing their self-esteem and their value as workers. The participants who reported interviews as high points described the incidents as invigorating, uplifting, energizing, thrilling, encouraging and that they instilled hope.

The following quotes were taken from the transcripts of the participants reporting critical incidents in this category and describe the importance of interviews as a high point in the experience of unemployment.

"Anytime you are successful in achieving what you feel is a concrete interview it was a high. I didn’t have too many of those, I think if I remember there were three that looked like they were good possibilities. That was a high point."
"In a short period of time I was able to have, what was it now, approximately 15 interviews, something in that order in a month, a month and a half. So, it was quite a hectic pace. And it was quite invigorating...one of hope and promise."

Positive Feedback from Others/Producing Results

Having your job search efforts recognized as producing results and being accepted positively was the second most frequently reported category of critical incidents for this group. The positive feedback may have been from executive search firms showing some interest in the participant or from colleagues in their network who would be willing to assist them in their efforts through introductions or suggestions. The key in this category is that they were receiving some positive feedback from others and they were doing things that were moving them forward in achieving their goals. As with the interviews, positive feedback would reinforce positive feelings about themselves and support, reassure and encourage them in their job search. The following quotes from the transcripts further describe this category:

"Every time you got at least some positive response it was encouraging and, you know, you sort of feel kind of happy. Nothing may happen but at least you know that there is some interest out there, which is nice."
"...headhunters around town phoning and saying, hey, don’t worry we’ll get you a job before anybody else and we’ll get you a better opportunity than the one you had....So, that initially was a high point for sure."

"...encouraging points would be when you phoned organizations that you’d written cold letters to and they were actually willing to see you. That they were actually impressed by your experience and credentials and so on...That was reinforcing to me, that hey I am still worth something."

Support of Family and Friends

More than 50% of the participants mentioned the importance of family and friends as a high point and one that helped during their experience of unemployment. The understanding of the ups and downs and the help of friends during this time was important as was having their ego bolstered by their friends and family. All of the participants in this research were married with the exception of one male.

The following quotes from the transcripts further describe this category:

"I think the fact that I had a very supportive family made it easier than it probably would be for a lot of people...And my husband was very supportive. He wasn’t
Involuntary Job Loss

pushing me to get a job. He knew what I was going through, he understood my ups and downs."

" Friends are always a help. I relied on them quite a bit, not consciously, but looking back I think I did. I leaned on them."

" Without the support at home it's pretty difficult to do a lot of things and after 24 years of marriage I kind of appreciate it. Maybe there's a lot that can't say that. I can."

Learning New Skills and Values/Recognizing Self

This category included critical incidents which focused on some aspect of learning. These incidents were commented on as high points of this time for a number of the participants. Learning new skills, adopting new values, learning and recognizing self are all included in this category. The experience of unemployment was a time for many to do some personal reflecting, improving technical skills, re-evaluating values, and acknowledging accomplishments.

The following quotes describe this category:
"So, I've managed to find a better balance than what I had at the company and that required going back and re-evaluating some fundamental life qualities, and modifying my priorities. I mean I'm still a maniac I still work hard, but that's not going to change. But there's time to be made for other things and I'm not solely devoted to the company."

"I think that was the first highlight because I recognized in doing those (personal assessment) exercises, some things about myself that I had not recognized before. And they were positive things that I liked."

**Career Counselling**

The participants in this research had the benefit of participating in relocation counselling which was provided by their previous employers. Of the 15 individuals interviewed, 7 indicated its importance as a high point during the experience of unemployment. Career counselling refers only to the counselling and not to other services or facilities which may have been provided. The counselling provided positive reinforcement, professional assistance in presenting themselves to potential employers, support, encouragement, empathy, understanding and a bridge between employment and re-employment.
The following quotes from the transcripts refer to this category and provide further description:

".. career counselling is a good thing. It goes a long way between bridging the gap between having a job and being totally out in the cold...I had an excellent "therapist".. you have a lot of support there, understanding and empathy."

" I think the counselling that...I really thought it was good...it did broaden my view of things. I don’t know what it is exactly but it was just the whole process, the way of doing it, the way the whole thing came together."

"..one thing I asked for was career counselling and I really think that helped... And it gave you positive reinforcement. It made you feel that you had some worth and it made you happy, on the down days."

**No Financial Pressures/Sufficient Funds**

Finances were indicated in both the positive and negative categories of the classification system. Here the lack of financial pressures or concerns are reported as positive points. Having sufficient funds to hold the participant and the family over until re-employment was secured, having a good severance package, not having to
change lifestyle and having spouses who bring in an income are included in this category. Seven of the 15 participants reported that finances were not a concern and that helped them during their period of unemployment.

The following quotes from the transcripts provide additional description of this category;

"I think one of the key things that allowed me to be like that (be positive) - that allowed me to be like that, was that I had space. (Name of spouse) was working. The mortgage was taken care of, um I had a severance package...."

"We were lucky we had two very good incomes. My husband makes good money. I could have been unemployed much longer. We wouldn't have exactly been trying to sell the house or anything like that."

**Offers of Employment/Being Successful in the Search**

The goal during unemployment is, for most, ultimately to become re-employed. This classification category includes being successful in securing a new job and being offered employment (which could be a contract, partnership or full-time) but not accepting the offer. Six of the 15 participants interviewed reported being successful or
receiving an offer of employment as a high point during their period of unemployment.

The following quotes from the transcripts add further meaning to this category:

"..it was really a high time when I was offered a position in a firm and it was a decent position but I decided that even though it was a decent and good position I think that there’s a better position for me out there..To me that was really good, that was really good for my self-confidence.."

" And being selected as the candidate for the opportunity...I guess it’s just the feeling that you’re special. That, hey, you’re the number one guy for the opportunity."

Having a Professional Environment to Go to

It was suggested by 6 participants that having an office and a professional environment to go to daily was a high point. The office provided a place to go, support services to the conduct of the job search, facilitated routine and helped to maintain self-image.

The following quotes from the transcripts illustrate this category:
"I think that the Centre was good for that because I am sure that if I hadn't gone to the Centre I wouldn't have found a job quite so quickly...too many other things happening (at home)...and I wouldn't focus on my job search. The Centre helped an awful lot. And from that point it was very positive."

"One thing in retrospect, my wife and I have talked about it, one thing that was important to me was having the facilities at the Centre and keeping a regular routine."

**Identifying Opportunities**

Identifying opportunities through research and networking contributes positively to helping during unemployment as suggested by one-third of the participants in this research. The opportunities that were identified by this group were typically better opportunities than they had previously, consulting opportunities and new opportunities with the right potential. In identifying the opportunities the participants were reminded that there were jobs out there in line with what they were looking for and as such these incidents were encouraging.

The following quote from a transcript further describes this category:
"..the networking really opened up a lot of possibilities and I've got a lot of info of which even today I still use as business manager and sort of taught me to open up and speak to more people rather than just focusing in."

Vacation or Break from the Job Search

Taking time off from the job search was reported as helping or being a high point for some of these participants. The time off was a diversion and may have taken the form of a ski weekend away, a major vacation, long periods of time off to do nothing or short breaks to read or shop.

The following quotes describe this category:

"..we had several holidays in there which were great, those were highs, some nice holidays."

" A friend came into town and we would go off skiing...And that was nice. It was a diversion..."

Support From and Giving Support to Similar Others

Being with others who are in the same situation as you are and supporting them or receiving support from them defines this category and was commented on as a high
point for just over 25% of the participants. The following quotes further describe this category:

"knowing that there are other people out there going through the same process and then knowing who they are and being able to sit down and talk to them, was as valuable as talking to the counsellor, for me."

"I don’t know if it has happened with any other group that has been in that office but that group developed a real interesting camaraderie. That was really a high point as anything was."

Part-time, Contract or Volunteer Work

Participating in contract or part-time work provided a sense of meaning and accomplishment for just over 25% of the participants who reported this category as a high point. One participant reported that he forgot he wasn’t being paid to do the work at the time, he was enjoying the work and it was keeping him busy. Those who were paid were entertained and provided with an income.

The following quotes further describe this category:
"...taking the time off to go and work with the Armed Forces again. I had a really good summer. I had a really good job... I did it exceptionally well... A feeling of accomplishment that something was done."

" I guess the other high points were in getting this extra money from the United Way. The experience was good and the networking and lots of travel, presentations... another good interlude during the job search."

Negative Incidents

Definitions of the categories of the negative critical incidents follow.

Leaving the Company

The number one low point described by over 50% of the participants focused on leaving their previous employers. This category included the conduct of the termination interview, feelings around leaving the company, negotiating the terms of severance and leaving co-workers. The feelings around the termination are referred to subsequently in this data analysis as a separate issue because of the importance ascribed to these feelings by the participants.

A sample of quotations from the transcripts are presented here to illustrate the participant’s reports concerning this low time.
"The way it was done was particularly negative. I found out on the street basically that there was a search going on and that didn’t do a lot of good for me."

"The first low point was the day I found out. I could feel my spirits starting to go down and I think that I felt, well I know that I felt, shocked."

"I think the first low point was right after I was let go. Telling you that I was shocked, I really was and I -- I’m still not sure that I’ve come to terms with what happened."

Lost Role

Another low point which is closely tied in with leaving the company and again reported by more than 50% of the participants concerns the loss of role. For this group they describe such aspects of the experience as no longer being part of the team, having no job title, a loss of belonging, a void, and no where to go in the morning. The individuals reporting incidents in this category felt shock, uncertainty and disorientation.

The following quotes provide further description of this category:
"I guess the first initial low point would be right after the lay-off. You don’t have anything to do and you’re in a quandary as to what to do. What direction to take. Having only had one job for 28 years it’s quite a new prospect."

"Working with these people for five years and finding out all of a sudden that I am no longer part of the team. You know that was a real low point."

"...this is it, that’s the end of twenty years and it’s finished."

Rejection

Rejection is referred to during the interviews in many forms. In this category it refers to rejection in job search activities such as rejection letters, people not returning calls, failing exams and not being able to arrange meetings. Six of the 15 participants reported incidents in this category.

The following quotes from the transcripts further illustrate this category:

"I guess it would be after you have written many letters and applied for many interviews and consistently coming back in the form of no, you’re not wanted, you’re too old, you make too much money, there’s no room for you, we don’t need anyone...And that’s very demeaning to one."
"I had to set about looking for jobs and getting rejections, my first set of rejections was probably very difficult to deal with. And I would go home and be very uptight."

Lost Career Opportunities/Not Getting the Job

In this category having opportunities fall through for various reasons and having participated in good interviews but not receiving an offer provide the basis of definition. The opportunities may have proven to be lower level jobs than anticipated, the participant may have had to give up a part-time position to accept a full-time position and offers may have disappeared or not worked out. In most cases the frequent description of feelings at this time was disappointment.

The following quotes further define this category:

"...later on they called me and I was very excited. I thought this was it, this was the job...And they’d called me for a temporary position...And that was very difficult to deal with."

"They were interviews established by well known agencies in town and at levels that were not appropriate to my education and experience...disappointing in the sense that I didn’t get the job but also that there wasn’t enough substance to the opportunity."
"...the other low point happened at the end of the period when I went and found what I thought was a business and partnership arrangement and that didn't work either. And that meant walking away from that one as well which is disappointing."

Interviews

Interviews were reported earlier as high points but were also reported as low points by one-third of the participants. Interviews were considered to be low points which were expressed in terms of fear of interviews, lack of interviewing skills, poor interviews and not getting interviews. Fear, disappointment and stress were indicated as feelings accompanying these low points.

The following quotes further describe the low points within this category:

"I think the first couple of interviews that I went to ...were also quite anxiety producing. It is very difficult to do something that you haven't done for a long time."

"...the first time I had applied for something that I thought that I had a really good chance of getting the interview but... I didn't were probably the lowest points."
Conducting the Job Search

In this category the consistent theme is the frustration, difficulty and fear in conducting a job search. The behaviours required during job search and maintaining an activity level that would eventually lead to re-employment are part of the definition of this category. On-going networking, writing letters, reading papers, applying to advertisements and making calls were the source of frustration and anxiety for one-third of the participants interviewed.

The following quotes describe this category:

"...a certain frustration set in toward the end in the sense that I wanted to be finished job searching and I wanted to work..Putting out all that energy, looking and getting excited about a job, researching, sending out letters and talking to people.. I wanted that to come to an end."

"Its not easy doing cold calls and trying to sell yourself on the phone. I'm not a salesman..its not easy to go out there and pick up a job."

Being Unemployed

For many of the participants interviewed, this was their first time being unemployed. The idea of unemployment was new to them and brought with it new
feelings of fear, embarrassment and for some, shame. Six of the 15 participants reported incidents which were classified in this category.

The following quotes provide a further description of this category:

"So, at first I didn't want my family to know I was unemployed. Family events became embarrassing for me...I felt like the respect that they had given me wasn't there or I didn't deserve to receive it any more."

"I had never been terminated before and I think I had to come to terms with those things...Cause fired has all kinds of awful connotations to it that you weren't doing your job, you know.. there was something wrong with you."

Unrealistic Expectations

As mentioned above for many of these people it was the first time they were experiencing unemployment and as a consequence many of them had unrealistic expectations of how long it would take them to become re-employed. To some extent they relied on their experience and professionalism to enable them to move easily into another job. As they soon found out that was not necessarily the case. Six of the 15 participants in this research mentioned low points that were classified into this category.
These quotes further describe this category:

"I really thought it would take me about 6 weeks to find a job. I don't know why I had that impression but I guess if you have never been through a situation like that before I figured this would be easy."

"..I had always thought that being a professional one could walk out of one job and into another like that. And I found out that it wasn't quite that simple."

Nothing Happening/Lack of Opportunities

During the interview, six of the participants reported low points as times when nothing was happening and when there seemed to be no opportunities on the job market. At these times the participants reported feelings of discouragement and frustration.

These quotes typify this category:

"The only time I remember being extremely low was in November.. Maybe it was the point where I was running out of things to do or I was waiting for things to happen."
"...And it had been a month and nothing was happening. And when nothing was happening that was probably when that was really gnawing at me, I was fidgety."

Financial Concerns or Burden

Finances were reported both as positive and negative critical incidents during the experience of unemployment. In this case the reference to finances is a reference to the lack of financial security, worry over financial matters and the concern of not being able to provide financially for a family. One-third of the participants reported low points related to financial matters.

The following quotes describe this category:

"..that’s where the frustrations and fear and all those things that occurred where the package (severance)..always concerned the package wouldn’t have an impact and can my family survive long enough to go on. So that was the low point."

"..the money was a big concern because I didn’t know how long it would take to get a job and you had the worry of having a family and that hadn’t sunk in."
Internal Pressure

Approximately one-third of the participants reported critical incidents or low points which were classified into this category. These participants reported being depressed, stressed or anxious during this time and described events of their experience which were tied to the feelings as described. They reported feelings of being overwhelmed, pressured, unhappy, disheartened and discouraged.

The following quotes elaborate on this description:

"..I would go into the Centre and I would have to leave after two or three hours because I had such a bad stress headache. It was just unbelievable."

"I do recall that after all the rejections you really do look inward and become very depressed. You even doubt your own abilities and competency..it becomes very depressing because you know if your don’t get something you will lose some of your faculties or it appears to be."

Christmas

Christmas is typically a season characterized by happiness and joy. For the participants reporting low points in this category this was not a happy or joyous
season. Over 25% of the participants in this research mentioned Christmas as a low point.

The following quote describes this category:

"It was getting toward Christmas. It's supposed to be a happy time and there was really nothing to be happy about."

Reasons for Termination and the Feelings Around Termination

At the start of the interview the participants were asked to describe the events leading up to their termination to assist them in becoming comfortable in the interview as well as provided information concerning the reasons for termination. The responses to this question indicated that downsizing, mergers, takeovers, re-organizations and restructuring of position responsibilities were the most frequently named reasons. Others included change in management, head office relocation, performance and fit with the organization.

Feelings around the termination and leaving the company were also elicited. The range of feeling responses are included in Appendix E attached. The most frequent feeling response to the termination was shock; 7 of the 15 interviewed reported that the termination came as a shock. The second most frequent response was relief; 6 of the 15 participants interviewed reported feeling some relief as a
consequence of the termination. Four of the 15 participants reported that they were expecting or somewhat expecting the termination. More negative feelings than positive feelings were reported as being experienced at the time. Some of the negative feelings mentioned included disappointment, betrayal, feeling upset, resentful and bitter. Some of the positive feelings reported included happy, ready for a change and comfortable.

The following quotes describe some of the feelings experienced by this group as a consequence of the termination.

"..I felt I wasn’t treated fairly by the organization and so it was more relief than anything else getting out of there."

"..it was not something that I didn’t expect...No, disappointing but not a surprise...I wasn’t upset to be gone from the circumstances that I was in."

"No, I was pretty shocked, I was one of the people who thought I was more or less indispensable, and it wouldn’t really happen."

"..I went through a period of resentment. Why did I have to do this? I liked what I was doing."
In addition to the questions concerning high and low points during the experience of unemployment and reasons for termination, the participants were asked about their attitude to work and any learning which occurred as a consequence of their unemployment. The following is a brief summary of the information gathered through these questions.

**Attitude to Work**

The question, "What is your attitude to work and how does that compare to your attitude prior to your termination?", was asked of the 15 participants interviewed. Of the 15, 11 reported some change in attitude while 4 reported that there had been no change. The change that occurred in one instance was one of increased initiative shown to the job. The other 10 that reported some change reported changes in what they expect of and from employers and, changes in attachment to the job or level of responsibility.

These managers and professionals frequently reported a strong work ethic. They work hard and do what’s required to get the job done. However, some of these same managers reported that they now work hard but not as hard, and that they don’t work as long hours or weekends or at least not without some kind of compensation for their effort. They try not to have too much invested in the company personally. A listing of some of the changes in attitude of these participants is presented in Appendix F.
The following quotes were taken from the transcripts concerning attitude change.

"There's a bit more of a conscious feeling or attitude of looking out for yourself as opposed to blindly, perhaps not blindly but unconsciously, you know, giving it all to your employer. That always used to be my attitude. You go out there and do the best possible job you could. You know, just work your heart out for the employer. No matter what the circumstances were and then find that at the end of it all you are met with some disappointment...I have a much more vivid realization of those types of things now."

"Yeah, its changed. I feel fear....I have the fear of putting everything into my job that I have because it hurts quite badly to have done that and then just be let go. I am very careful...I have a line..in my own personal life I will not, I will not jeopardise that for the work."

"Yeah, now I think its more not just what I can do for them but what they can do for me."

"I don't have the same commitment and yet I work just as hard."
Learning

One of the additional questions asked of the participants was, "Now that you are re-employed what learning, if any, has taken place for you?" The responses included technical, management and functional skills as well as self-management and self learning. A listing of some of what was learned as a consequence of the experience is reported in Appendix G. The most frequent reported learning dealt with learning about themselves and a need for a balance in life of work, family and activities. As well, several participants reported skills gained which focused on job search activities such as interviewing, marketing and networking. Knowledge of business, management and politics within organizations was also gained.

The following quotes were taken from the transcripts and add to the understanding of the responses concerning learning during this experience.

"...certainly learned that you uh, your need to recognize when you are burning up and burning out."

"The learning is I am more aware of the political situation within the Company. I am more careful of what's going on around me."
"I've learned that job search takes a little longer than you anticipate, especially if you're trying to get the right next job."

"...life needs to be more balanced. There is a happy balance that involves more than just work. It involves family, it involves work, and I had lost that perspective."

"Learning what you like. The types of environments. Definitely an increased sensitivity to people who are being laid off...You're not secure no matter where you are."

**Summary of the Experience**

The participants were asked if they had any additional comments they would like to make about their experiences. Four of the participants reported that the experience was a negative one or spoke mostly negatively about that time. Eleven participants reported that it was a positive or good experience, that they had a fairly easy time of it, that there were positive aspects to it, that they feel that everyone should go through it or that it should be viewed as a positive change.

Some of the following quotes characterize the responses.
"It's not something that I want to do again. It's not a positive experience. You doubt your self confidence, your self worth, your ability, all of it. It's not fun. It's a negative experience."

"The experience that I have gone through has not been a pleasant one but it was one that was met with strength and vision on my part that tomorrow is going to be a better day. And you have to have a positive attitude."

"...everything about changing a job isn't necessarily negative. There is some very positive things about it...Ultimately, things work out."

"...its a basic belief that things will work out plus money plus friends."

"Putting all the negative aside, it was a change in life, a change in job, and to change jobs is not necessarily a bad thing..It's a new challenge. Perhaps it has been a positive thing. It certainly has been on the family."

"I just would summarize that and say that the experience wasn't that painful and it wasn't a set back in terms of career. It wasn't a set back financially. And in terms of life it probably was a positive thing anyway."
"That overall it was a good experience. Even though it had some ups and downs to it. Overall, it was positive...I think I'm better off than I was there. As a matter of fact I know I am better off that I was there."

Discussion

General Themes

The overall experience of involuntary job loss has been reported by this group of managers and professionals as having more high points than low points. Of the 201 critical incidents reported, 110 were positive and 91 were negative. When asked about the experience generally or for comments, 11 of the 15 people discussed some positive aspect of this time or what helped them including positive results of the experience, acceptance of the time or an integration of the experience as part of their life. Four of the participants described the experience as totally negative or focused solely on the negative aspects of the experience.

One of the apparent similarities between the participants in this research is their attitude to work. Overwhelmingly, their response to attitude to work reflected a strong work ethic. Doing a good job was important to this group. Although their attitude had changed, perhaps as a consequence of job loss, the indication was that they still worked hard but not as hard or not with the same personal commitment in terms of loyalty, respect or all encompassing purpose to life.
Males and females were included in this research. However, gender differences related to this experience were not analyzed as that was beyond the scope of the project. Generally, it could be stated that there were no notable differences in terms of the experience, attitudes or learning between the two groups. In this research the range of reactions and individual differences were more prevalent than gender difference.

Specific Themes

The high points of the experience for this group focus on behaviours which built self-esteem and confidence including good interviews, positive feedback from others, offers of employment, networking and part-time or volunteer work. Beyond building self-esteem the high points focused on reinforcing their identity and value as a worker, and confirming their desirability and marketability for what they do as a professional or manager. The participants view these high points as increasing positive feelings.

The support of family and friends was reported by over half of the participants as helping or important to them during this time. This general kind of support by significant others was critical to negotiating this time successfully. To know that other aspects of their lives remained unchanged and relationships were still strong helped to make those affected by job loss feel positively about themselves. People who turned to family during this time to receive support fair better than those who don’t (Payne,
Warr and Hartley, 1984). Support came from another source for these individuals as well, career counselling. They reported the counselling received as a high point and a benefit during their experience of involuntary job loss.

Having sufficient finances to cope during this period reduced additional stress and strain. To know that major changes in lifestyle for themselves or their family did not have to be undertaken as a consequence of insufficient funds was a positive point that almost half of this research group reported.

The termination experience itself and the subsequent loss of role as a worker was the most frequently reported low point with 55% of the participants indicating critical incidents in both of these two categories. Also, in terms of feelings around the termination, 46% of the participants reported that they were in shock as a consequence of the termination, 40% mentioned some feelings of relief and 26% reported that they had some sense of the termination beforehand. Only three of the participants had experienced termination before and as such this group was somewhat unfamiliar with how to conduct a job search effectively, or with what it's like to be unemployed. They were also unfamiliar with how long they could expect to be out of work and how to cope with the ups and downs ahead. The realities of job search, a lack of challenging things to do and a consequent difference in the sense of time had to be dealt with by these individuals as part of the experience. The feelings of rejection were reported specifically as well as indirectly through lost interviews and lost jobs.
Confusion, frustration, anxiety, depression, anger, hurt and lack of confidence resulted from the rejections.

Overall it is interesting to examine how many of the high points and the low points identified by this group fit together. The positives and negatives are often the inverse of the same factor and are positive or negative depending on the result or interpretation of the factor. For example, finances were reported as both positive and negative, either sufficient finances which assisted the individual in directing their energies to effective job search or lack of finances which raised concerns and anxieties for the individual. If the factors as contributing to or detracting from job search are summarized in this way it appears that the major critical events in job search for this group include interviews, leaving the previous employer, feedback from others, support from others, finances, events that affect self-esteem and confidence, job search activities and opportunities in their market.

The following chapter looks at the results of this research in connection with fit to the research as outlined in Chapter 2 and suggests implications for counsellors and further research.
Chapter Five
Implications, Recommendations and Summary

This final chapter will discuss the theoretical implications, recommendations for counselling managers and professionals, and a summary outlining suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Implications

The Role of Employment Commitment and Individual Needs Theory

One of the strongest results of this research focuses on the role of work and commitment to work as expressed by this group of managers and professionals. When male and female managers and professionals were asked about their attitude to work there was an overwhelming response indicating a strong commitment to work and a developed work ethic. Warr (1987) reports one of the key factors in mediating or impacting on the experience of unemployment is involvement and commitment to work and Fineman (1983) suggests that the more involved an individual is in their work the more they will suffer as a consequence of job loss. This group was indeed involved in their work as reported, 55% reported the loss of role as a low point and 55% reported leaving the company as a low point. Another view however, is that 45% of the participants did not report leaving the company or the loss of role as a
negative critical incident. Therefore, support for Warr’s work is inconclusive with this group. It may be that this group is more committed and involved in their work, but that does not always end with the termination of their employment. As professionals and managers, they have a developed role identity which may be deeper than employment with one company and as such do not all suffer because they still retain that ethic and carry that with them to the next career opportunity. Certainly, the work ethic of these people will drive the need to work.

The needs of this group as satisfied by employment fit well with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. In terms of Maslow’s needs hierarchy, this group had certain needs which were affected by unemployment. The lower level physiological and safety needs, as identified by Maslow, were not consistently impacted by unemployment. Only 33% of the subjects reported a worry over finances, while close to 50% reported finances as not a concern or having sufficient funds. Participants did not report threats to significant lifestyle changes in terms of security, safety, food or housing. However, certainly esteem and the need for belonging, higher needs in the hierarchy, were affected by job loss. The rejection reported during unemployment, lost career opportunities and the stigma of being unemployed affected one’s feelings of pride, achievement and acceptance as part of the group.

Jahoda (1982) states that in unemployment people have difficulty organizing their time, have a sense of isolation, lack purpose, possess an uncertainty about their
identity, and report a lack of things to do. Although the reported high and low points from this research indicate some support for Jahoda's theory, 66% of the participants didn't mention the importance of structure, 40% reported taking holidays or a break from job search as a high point, and 40% reported high points as learning new skills and values during this time.

Managers and professionals in this research had certain needs which were fulfilled as a consequence of employment. It may be that this group copes well by finding alternate sources of need satisfaction during this time. Regardless, it appears that the needs most affected by unemployment for this group focus on esteem and sense of belonging or value. It should be noted, however, that the needs of these individuals and the process of meeting those needs, through work or otherwise, varies considerably.

**Individual Differences in the Experience of Unemployment**

Another key result in this study is in the range of responses to the interview questions and individual differences addressed in the experience of unemployment.

As an example of the basis for this point, reference can be made to the considerable variety in the reactions to the termination experience. Although the predominant response to termination was shock, relief was a reaction as was the fact that some were expecting the result and even were glad that it happened. This finding
indicates support for Swinburne's research where 50% of her subjects reported shock but 50% didn't. A similar statistic is reported in this research. It supports the premise that trauma is not universally experienced as a consequence of job loss. Fineman (1979) and Little (1976) confirm that in some situations unemployment may be perceived as respite from stressful work.

Although there were negative aspects of the experience reported by this group, it was not an overwhelmingly negative experience for all. In fact, the majority, 11 of the 15 participants, reported that it was a positive experience or that it had positive aspects to it. Fineman (1983) recognized the need to look at individual differences in the reactions to unemployment, not to assume generalities but to assume differences. This research indicates that the high points and low points of the experience vary among these managers and professionals. There were four high points or low points reported by over 50% of these managers and professionals. The remaining 35 categories of high points and low points had less than 50% of the subjects reporting these incidents. This supports the diversity of the experience.

Little (1976) reported statistics in research that 48% of the subjects had a positive attitude toward job loss. There is support in this research of the positive aspects of job search. Generally, those that were positive about the experience identify learning about themselves, having their values challenged, an opportunity for growth and change as key to their experience. For some, the experience provided the
impetus for change and growth in learning about themselves and the need for balance in life. As with the research of Fryer and Payne (1984) on proactivity in job search and Warr (1983), those who were positive, optimistic and proactive in their job search in identifying opportunities, and could somehow structure those activities to produce results were more positive of the experience than those who were focused on the termination experience and harboured feelings of bitterness, anger and resentment.

Patricia Randolf (1983) examined managers and professionals perceptions of job loss and found that much of the variability in the experience was accounted for by gender difference. This research did not verify her work. Rather, it was more a case of individual differences in the perception of the experience rather than gender differences.

Managers and professionals are not a homogeneous group and face termination and unemployment with a unique set of circumstances. Any generalizations applied to managers or professionals in the experience of unemployment should be tempered with the importance of recognizing individual differences especially in describing the traumatic events and experiences in unemployment.

The Adverse Effects of Unemployment

Kelvin and Jarrett (1985) state that the most significant psychological impact of unemployment is the way individuals come to view themselves. Although this
research did not specifically focus on how the participants perceive themselves, indirectly several of the categories of the low points were tied into self-esteem and rejection. The loss of role, which was a frequently reported low point, is very much tied into how these people view themselves. Identification with job title and company suddenly disappears. The resulting impact is dependent on how they interpret the loss and how they cope with the transitional time.

Hartley (1980) in his research on self-esteem for unemployed and employed managers reported no significant difference in the levels of the two groups. However, he notes that there was a problem with the research in focusing on global self-esteem rather than role self-concept. There may be an acute lowering of role self-esteem which is regained after re-employment. This concept may well fit with this group of individuals.

There is much research that points to the impact of unemployment on mental health, distress and emotional well-being. Thirty-three percent of the subjects in this research reported experiencing depression, anxiety and stress during their period of unemployment. The stress and strain of personal rejection is present for some of these individuals. Certainly, disappointments, fears, stress, discomfort, embarrassment and discouragement were present for this group of managers and professionals.
Involuntary Job Loss

Finances were a concern to 20% of this group although it was more a future concern or worry than one based on the realities of the moment. It did not appear to be a major stressor for many of the participants interviewed.

Perhaps one of the adverse effects of unemployment which potentially impacts on others besides the employee is the change in attitude toward the employer. In a survey conducted by Industry Week (June, 1987), 71% of those participating believed loyalty between employers and employees is dying and 57% reported that they were less loyal to the company than they were before. This trend is supported in this research. Cutbacks, mergers and terminations may be having a more widespread adverse effect on employee commitment and loyalty. As reported in the article, "not only is restructuring forcing many of them to change jobs (middle managers) its also prompting change in long-held attitudes as well," (pg. 47).

The trauma of the termination and the loss of role in connection with self-esteem and self-image opposite their role as a professional or manager is the strongest adverse effect of unemployment facing this group and deserves special note.

The Trauma of Termination and the Phases of Unemployment

Although this research did not specifically look at the phases of unemployment there was some support generated for past phase research concerning the initial phase and its importance. Several researchers (Jahoda (1979), Eisenburg and Lazarsfeld
(1938), Hayes and Nutman (1981), Borgen and Amundson (1984)) have presented phase models and theories of unemployment. The first phase typically involves shock. Forty-seven percent of those managers and professionals participating in this research reported feelings of shock in response to the termination. This was the most prevalent feeling expressed in reaction to the loss of their job and supports the research conducted by these others.

The second most prevalent feeling expressed was relief, 40% of those in the research reported feeling some sense of relief at the termination. Twenty percent reported leaving the company as a high point. Typically, this response followed the end of a very stressful position or the end of a difficult work environment. This finding supports the first phase of Powell and Driscoll’s (1973) model of unemployment, relaxation and relief, characterized by feelings of "being on holiday".

Borgen and Amundson (1984) have described the period of unemployment as an emotional roller coaster. Again, although this research did not specifically test out this description, several subjects used the description of roller coaster or periods of ups and downs to describe their experience. The highs and lows, for some, also seem to fit together. For example, a high point may be a great interview followed by a low point of not getting a second interview or the job offer. It’s important to point out that the most frequently mentioned low point was leaving the employer but finding re-
Involuntary Job Loss

employment or job offers was only mentioned as a high point by 40%. The most frequently reported high point was interviews.

The trauma of termination and phases of an unemployment experience are affected by a number of factors. The next section addresses the importance of considering factors moderating or impacting on the experience of unemployment.

Factors Which Mediate the Experience of Job Loss

What helped or hindered in the experience of job loss? The keys to this experience based on the research findings were the communication of the termination and the resolution of feelings, support systems and counselling, finances including severance pay, participating in successful job search activities, recognition of value as a professional or for what one does, times away from the job search to provide perspective and readiness for job change.

Kirsh (1983) reported five factors moderating the experience of unemployment which is supported with this group. The first is education and training which enables flexibility. The participants which had the most difficulty in making the transition or were out of work for longer periods of time possessed limited transferable skills or had a specialization with a limited market in Vancouver. The second is access to helping professionals. All of the participants in this research had access to counselling and some to financial or legal counsel. Forty-six percent of the participants reported
career counselling as a high point or as helping in the job search. The third factor as identified by Kirsh was professional networking. Positive feedback from others, success in producing results from executive search firms, the network and identifying opportunities were reported as high points by this group. The fourth is a working partner which assists in reducing financial pressures. With this group 11 of the subjects had working partners at the time, 46% reported that they had sufficient funds to continue with essentially an unchanged lifestyle. The fifth is having a variety of interests and hobbies to occupy one’s time. This factor was not as strongly indicated by the group as important although certainly participating in family, quiet time or hobby activities and taking breaks from the job search were mentioned as helping. Other factors identified by various researchers did not emerge from this research.

Given these findings focusing on individual differences, the reactions to the termination, the impact on self confidence and factors affecting the experience as identified by this research the following implications for counselling are suggested.

Implications and Recommendations for Counselling

The contribution counselling makes to easing the unemployment experience for managers and professionals is demonstrated in this research. Close to half of the subjects interviewed reported the benefit of counselling. The effectiveness of
counselling this group is facilitated by adopting various strategies and methods focusing on identified key issues.

Initially, the managers or professionals may be in shock caused by the involuntary career loss. Crisis management will assist these individuals to regain control and rebuild their career. Jones (1979) has suggested utilizing a developmental model stressing growth, development and new opportunities. This fits for this group as being helpful in negotiating this transition effectively.

Because of the diverse range of reactions to the experience of unemployment it is critical to fit the counselling to the individual needs. In this research there has been an emphasis on the importance of recognizing individual differences in meeting the challenges of unemployment. Referring back to the earlier example of crisis intervention at the time of termination, suppose the individual terminated is not in crisis but excited about future opportunities and ready to move into job search. It would be inappropriate to spend extensive time and energy in exploring the feelings around leaving the company. Assessment of the individual's present situation and feelings would assist in successfully fitting counselling to the needs of the client.

Over 50% of the participants in this study reported the importance of family and friends in helping them through this time. It is apparent that enlisting the support of significant others in counselling will facilitate the process of career transition. Meeting with the partner to initially assess the level of support and to provide
information concerning what to expect during this period will foster a greater appreciation and understanding of their partner’s experience.

Building self-esteem and confidence is also critical as much of the negatives associated with the time are focused on rejection. Providing course information, books, tapes and resources in this area, providing counselling and positive reinforcement will benefit an individual experiencing low self-esteem or confidence.

Interviews were the number one high point in the experience of unemployment for managers and professionals. Therefore, the counsellor would be assisting the client if job search techniques focused on helping the client get interviews. Training in identifying opportunities, networking, "cold calling" and interview skills should be addressed by counselling.

One of the key strengths in counselling is building awareness to the importance of career planning on a continuing basis to reduce the need for termination. By instructing this group in the advantages of ongoing career management practices the necessity of job loss and its traumatic consequences may be reduced.

In summary, in counselling this group it is helpful to be aware of the negative impacts of unemployment and the existing phase research, but to approach counselling with openness to the importance of individual differences and factors which mediate or accentuate the experience of involuntary job loss for managers and professionals, as well as to teach ongoing career management.
Limitations of This Research and Suggestions for Future Research

This study presented some interesting findings identifying a fairly close balance of high and low emotional points for this group but with high points being more frequently reported than low points. This does not, however, indicate the relative impact of these categories on individuals. It may be that one category of the negative critical incidents far outweighs any other low or high point suggested. Certainly, the lowest point for many was the termination experience itself. In general terms the majority of the subjects reported feeling more positive than negative about the experience but this may have been influenced by a number of factors including the nature of the successful re-employment. At least two of the subjects who reported the unemployment experience as negative also reported feelings of discontent with their re-employment.

Cause and effect or far reaching generalizations cannot be made from this research. It was meant to investigate the experience of unemployment for this group including males and females, identifying negative and positive critical incidents and that is what the research accomplished. The size of the sample is small and the relative merits of this type of research have already been identified. As a consequence caution must be exercised in the interpretation of these results. Also, all of these individuals participated in outplacement counselling and as a consequence the
experience may be different for them than for managers and professionals who do not receive this kind of service. It may be that there are more high points and positive feelings expressed by this group because of this support.

Future research could focus on a wider group of managers and professionals including those not afforded outplacement work or a comparison of the two groups to investigate the impact of career counselling and outplacement work. There would be a benefit in investigating the sequence and relative importance of the high and low points to address more fully the phase theories relative to unemployment with this group. Quantitative work concerning self-esteem changes as a consequence of unemployment would also present an interesting area of research.

There is much research which could be conducted for this group to further develop the information available to counsellors working with this complex group of individuals.

**Summary**

This research set out to examine the experience of involuntary job loss for managers and professionals and to provide insight into the high and low points. It is clear that the research has accomplished this task. For this particular group, more high points than low points were reported and 11 of the participants generally reported the experience as not all negative. However, what is evident is that the experience for this group is far from a homogeneous one. I am in agreement with Fineman (1981) in his
statement concerning his images of these people as varied and conflicting. The range of reactions to the experience included totally negative views to little affected or positive views of the experience.

The value ascribed to work goes beyond financial security and includes needs related to self, identity and meaning. The dominant negative aspects of unemployment focus on the loss of role, rejection and the conduct of the termination. It is also important to note that support from others, success in the job search process, filling time with worthwhile activities and taking the opportunity to re-evaluate career aspirations help managers and professionals through the experience. Getting the right next job is not an easy process and one which requires continuous effort and perhaps a little bit of luck.

As our economy shows signs of weakening, terminations are more widely considered by corporations. It is relevant that given the importance attached by this group to the conduct of the termination that considerable thought be given to the process. Also, attitudes to employment may change as a consequence of termination with employees less committed to providing extra effort to the organization. This could impact on the culture and the company’s ability to attract and retain qualified and capable employees. When terminations occur, more than the terminated employee is affected. Survivors and management conducting the terminations are also impacted. Termination is a complex area and one which warrants ongoing study.
References


Longman Inc. New York.


*Journal of Counselling and Development,*(66), 180-184.


*Social Psychology, 41, 81-93.*


APPENDICES
I will call you next week to ask for your participation and to answer any questions you may have at that time. In recognition of the time and assistance the participants are providing, I am holding a draw for $50 and will enter your name should you agree to participate.

I sincerely hope things are going well with you and with your career and look forward to meeting with you in the next few weeks.

Yours truly,

Heather Patterson
Appendix B

Demographic Data for

Research on the Critical Incidents of Involuntary Job Loss

As Expressed by Managers and Professionals

Please complete the demographic data as requested below and bring it with you to the interview. I will be in touch with you to arrange a convenient meeting time.

Thank you.

Name: ___________________________  Age: ____________

Male/Female: ______________________  Marital Status: ______

(1) Professional Designation and Employment Title: ______________________

(2) Number of years in post-secondary education and training: ______________

(3) Post-secondary degrees: __________________________

(4) Number of years in chosen profession or as a manager: __________________

(5) Length of time in the labour force: ____________________________

(6) How many years were you with your previous employer? ______________

(7) How long were you out of work as a consequence of your job loss? ________

(8) Have you been terminated before? __________________________

(9) If you have a partner, does that person work? ______________________
Appendix B-1

Demographic Data for

Research on the Critical Incidents of Involuntary Job Loss

As Expressed by Managers and Professionals

(10) Is your employment or your partner’s employment your only significant source of income?

(11) Number of children and age of children:

(12) How many memberships do you hold in clubs or professional organizations?

(13) What activities do you participate in outside of work?

(14) Have you taken a vacation in the last year?
Appendix D
Positive and Negative Critical Incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th># of Incidents Reported</th>
<th># of Participants Per Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive feedback from others/producing results</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of friends and family</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counselling</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning new skills and values, learning and recognizing self</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No financial pressures/sufficient funds</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers of employment/being successful in the search</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a professional office environment to go to</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying opportunities and networking</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation or break from the job search</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from and giving support to similar others</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time or contract work</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time for self, family, friends and hobbies</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leaving the previous employer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others similar to being successful</td>
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Appendix D-2

Positive and Negative Critical Incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th># of Incidents Reported</th>
<th># of Participants Per Category</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and fitness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing a resume</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not having a routine</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a positive attitude to finding employment</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having choice or control over the next opportunity</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>110</td>
<td>94</td>
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### Appendix D-3

**Positive and Negative Critical Incidents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th># of Incidents Reported</th>
<th># of Participants Per Category</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaving the previous employer</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lost role</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost career opportunity/not getting the job</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting the job search</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being unemployed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealistic Expectations</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nothing happening/ Lack of opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial burden or concern</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal Pressure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christmas</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikelihood of similar reemployment in Vancouver</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of challenging work to do</td>
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<tr>
<td>Driving downtown</td>
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<td>1</td>
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### Appendix D-4

Positive and Negative Critical Incidents

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<th># of Participants Per Category</th>
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<td>Self-blame</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others in a similar situation taking a long time to find re-employment</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having your values ascribed to work challenged</td>
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<td>91</td>
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Appendix E

Feelings Around the Termination

<table>
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<th>Lost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disappointment</td>
<td>Traumatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betrayal</td>
<td>Not ready to leave</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upset</td>
<td>Entitlement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Unhappy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitterness</td>
<td>Relief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resentful</td>
<td>Expecting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss</td>
<td>Happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasted effort/Futility</td>
<td>Ready for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>Fair/Well-treated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unjustified</td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty/Apprehension</td>
<td>Satisfied with surprised accomplishment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F

Attitude to Work

Work hard and gets the job done/strong work ethic.

Works hard but not as hard.

Doesn't work as long hours or weekends with little or no reward.

Tries not to have too much invested in the company personally.

Doesn't have the same commitment or get the same fulfilment.

Two-way street now - looks for compensation of effort.

Works the hours to accomplish the task.

Protective of self now - careful not to sacrifice too much.
Appendix F-2

Attitude to Work

Personal pride, integrity and professionalism doesn’t change, the attachment has changed.

Looks out for self more now, doesn’t give blindly to company.

Lost feeling of trust for the company.

Definition of loyalty has changed.

Doesn’t define self by the company any more.

Has more of a sense of worth.

Now takes a macro view of self as a professional, outside of the company.

Works smarter now.
Involuntary Job Loss

Appendix F-3

Attitude to Work

Takes more initiative now.

Puts in more effort and is more fulfilled.

Looks forward to work everyday - likes it.

Life is too short - different perspective.

Has less responsibility.

Delegates more.

More conscious of how treats other staff

Less sympathetic at senior levels.
Appendix F-4

Attitude to Work

Not as challenged in work.

Financial reward is not as critical.
Appendix G

Learning Gained Through Unemployment

Technical skills - computer training, small business, consulting, other technical areas.

Better management skills - increased sensitivity to staff, how to be a better manager.

Business and politics - similarities between organizations, how to better handle political situations and be more sensitive to them.

Changing nature of job security and loyalty.

Self as an employee - value on the market, work and identity, present opinions more often and more strongly, take the initiative.

Self learning - need for balance in life, not to push self too hard, need to recognize burnout, gained confidence, re-evaluate values, came to know self and family better, to evaluate and take risks.
Appendix G-2

Learning Gained Through Unemployment

Job search skills and the unemployment experience - interviewing, networking, marketing, realities of job search, not to jump into opportunities, can’t dwell on the negative in job search, put more money away for emergencies, deal with the situation as best as you can, not alone in the experience.
Interviewer: Let's start by having you think back over your experience of unemployment. Could you begin by describing for me the events leading up to how you came to leave your company?

Subject: The general circumstances. We should probably go back three years in time, approximately three years before I left the company there was an amalgamation of ---- --- and another company to form ------ and in effect ------- disappeared, as did senior management of ---------. They pretty well all went by the wayside with the exception of three or four senior people of which I was one. At that time my feeling was that I was coming to Vancouver I expected based on the way things had gone that I would be there probably about three years and they would draw as much information as they possibly could from me in three years which I thought it would take them, three years and my timing was pretty close. That is sort of the early stages of it. After about two years, two and a half years it became quite evident in certain respects that the job that I was doing was going to be eliminated in Vancouver. Partly as a result of comments that I was making in that I didn't feel that it was necessary that the job be done in Vancouver and also that much to my surprise my boss went the same time that I did so that was a real surprise because I said that I would go and he would stay because
they needed someone in a senior capacity in accounting but they didn’t need two of us. I felt one of us would go, which was me, and over a period of several months certain things were done and they were done in such a manner that they were almost wanting me to trip up so they almost had reason to get rid of me without severance. And much to their chagrin, I didn’t trip up and a lot of times there were things done that were, even for me they ended up being done in such a manner that I didn’t know how they ended up getting done. We just kept going and I had people working in such a manner that... they changed deadlines, they changed projects, they changed what they wanted, we responded and they got the work done. It was really quite interesting. But it became very evident that they were wanting to do a lot of data processing directly, and by doing the data processing, they changed the ledger system so they could do my job there. Number one I was really expecting that I was going to be gone before too long and to be quite honest I was not unhappy in a lot of respects. As you are well aware.

I: So, the whole idea was first of all there was a merger and ..

S: Yes,------ and --------, then that company ended up merging with --------.
I: Which caused you to move to Vancouver and the new firm could extract information from you concerning the way the systems in the old company were and the knowledge that you had about the operations.

S: And the land base that ------- had which was considerably different operation from what the ------- had. Very different operation and organization. That's why they didn't understand at first that there was a lot of tax implications specifically that they didn't have any knowledge of and they needed knowledge of.

I: O.K. And you came over to Vancouver and you were working in Vancouver in a consolidated team effort but you had a sense that you weren't going to last long within that other organization.

S: My feeling was that I was going to get the team together, get it organized and when it was operating relatively smoothly I would no longer be required.

I: So, when they didn't need you anymore..

S: I would be gone. Yes.
I: And is that actually what happened?

S: Almost 100%. Plus, I think, bear in mind that the senior management at the local level also changed and that senior management believed in the chaos theory very, very strongly. So, their feeling was clean everything out, change over and it's still going on.

I: Could you tell me a little bit about your leaving the company specifically?

S: Basically, I guess I kept my wits about me and I just made sure that everything that they were asking to get done, was getting done to the best of everyone's ability, not just mine but the people who were working for me. And I guess the determining factor that put it all together was that we were looking at putting in a new ledger system and by putting that new ledger system in we didn't have to do a lot of the work in Vancouver. So, therefore it became a logical period of time to do something, for them to do something. So, it was all making sense that I was going.

I: And what was that like. How did it come about?
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S: How did it come about? I got a call at 4 o’clock, between 4 and 4:30 in the afternoon from the regional VP and he called me up to his office and before I went up I said well, I guess its my turn. Expecting that was exactly what I was going up for and exactly what it was. So, it was not something that I didn’t expect.

I: No surprise.

S: No, disappointing but not a surprise. And I say disappointing in that I gave them a lot of good years and a lot of extra effort and things over the years and I guess no one likes to get that after the effort that they put in. That’s sort of ... and I think of all the feelings that I had about it that was probably the one that I would say was the strongest.. the disappointment that this was the way that I was being treated.

I: After the extra effort and loyalty and the extra hours..

S: Months where I put in over a hundred hours of overtime just to keep things going and do things. For what? At the time I did it because I probably had a lot of pride in getting the job done. I really wanted the two groups to come together and do the job well. And that’s sort of where we had gotten to.
I: During your period of unemployment you may have experienced high and low points. Could you think back to your first low point and describe for me the events leading up to that low point? The first time you felt low.

S: Probably there were more high points than there were low points and I say that because of being relieved not having to go through anymore what I had been going through. Low points... concern as to what I was going to be doing. I think anyone that has been working for a company for \( X \) years ...concern because of the uncertainty of whether or not you are going to find another job you are going to enjoy as much as the aspects of the job you had been working on. I enjoyed my work. I enjoyed the people I dealt with. My days at ------ I had a lot of autonomy. It was a great place to work. And the concern was am I ever going to find anything that is going to be as much fun. So, that would have probably been a low point.

I: When did that happen, do you recall?

S: Probably about two months after I had been terminated. The first month I think that I was really gung ho trying to get myself back into the marketplace. After the first month I got a resume together and was starting to get it out and do something
with it. And it had been a month and nothing was happening. And when nothing was happening that was probably when that was really gnawing at me, I was fidgety.

I: Why was that such a low point for you?

S: I had never been unemployed before. And I guess that I had always thought that being a professional one could walk out of one job and into another like that. And I found out that it wasn’t quite that simple. That the jobs that I was looking for were basically higher level and it was going to take some time. And that I wasn’t just going to be working tomorrow. That’s really what it amounted to.

I: Other low points? That was your initial concern or wondering about whether you would get a job as good as what you wanted.

S: Other low points.

I: Specific times?
S: Specific. Probably one of the other low points that I had was relative to how I thought that I got treated. You know, I got a severance package that was not really contestable in a court of law, I wouldn’t have got a lot more out of them yet it was not overly generous. I had something like six months vacationment entitlement that I hadn’t taken which I said well if I am going to be off looking for a job under normal circumstances with holidays I would have my benefits continue I can’t see why it isn’t reasonable to continue my benefits during my holiday entitlement. It’s part of what I have earned. And either that or when I find a job and they just said nah, that’s it. That sort of treatment and I think that is when I started to become very bitter at the whole thing and finally I had someone point out to me that I was becoming very bitter. And I hadn’t realized that I had become that bitter. But it was affecting me without my knowing it.

I: Would you say that was your lowest point that you had during your period of unemployment? The actual termination and your severance and the whole issues around your leaving the company, was that the lowest point for you?

S: I would say it was because quite frankly I wasn’t upset to be gone from the circumstance that I was in. I think if you recall there were a number of other people
that were up there that were somewhat skipping around the office or close to it. You
got another one up there right now.

I: So, what was the hardest part for you?

S: Accepting the circumstances as it was and getting on with it. Doing what had
to be done with the rest of my life. Someone had to point that out to me and quite
frankly I hadn't realized that is where I was at in my feeling. I guess I realized that I
was bitter about the treatment that I was getting. I knew that there were people that
had been with the company a lot less years than I had were getting a lot better
treatment than I was.

I: So, you felt justified in your bitterness.

S: I was but life goes on. Financially, I had no concerns so that wasn't a bother.

I: But it was the treatment or the respect or the fairness?...
S: The fairness, exactly. I guess that I believe in fair play. And to this day I don’t feel like I got dealt fairly. But life goes on and when things turn out to be better what can you say.

I: When did this period of bitterness happen, was it within the first month or when did this happen?

S: It was probably within the second month because in the first month really nothing was happening in terms of correspondence back and forth about severance. I had written a letter after having seen a lawyer. I didn’t have a lawyer write it I wrote it myself. And it took a long time to get a response.

I: So, it was the second month that had your period of disappointment, frustration and bitterness. All of those feelings around your interaction with the company and your concern whether or not you could find employment again that was going to satisfy your needs of what you wanted in a job.

S: I wasn’t working already. I think I’d expected that work was going to be pretty easy to come by. Find a job like that.
I: So, it looked like it was going to be a little bit tougher than you thought.

S: It was going to be a longer process. And quite frankly looking at some of the other people that had been around the office there, some of them had been around a number of months. And weren't getting very far. And seeing that was a little scary.

I: How about other low points? Do you recall other low points after that second month? Other specific incidents that were tough for you?

S: No, actually I would say that after I got over, I won't say got over realizing but once I realized I was bitter and that is what I had to deal with I think it was uphill from there. I really do.

I: O.K. Let's talk about that uphill part. Let's turn to the high points of your experience. Take the first one and tell me what happened and why it was a high point?

S: Getting good interviews or getting good responses to different correspondence that you put out. I think my early correspondence just wasn’t working. I changed my style. I did several different things until I finally found something that was getting me
Involuntary Job Loss

some response in the marketplace. And when I saw that I was starting to get some reaction it was very positive, fuelled the fire, started getting the odd interview and that yes maybe there was something out there and not just am I going to get a job it's a matter of time. There was a definite period where it became obvious that the frustrations of the first couple of months were going to be overcome and now it was a matter of time. That things were starting to happen I was starting to at least make the contact that I needed to make.

I: Other high points?

S: Probably some really encouraging phone calls from people that I had corresponded with, network saying hang in there we know that you are going to get something good and if we hear of something we will certainly be letting you know and the reassurance that people out there..

I: Were these people friends or colleagues or ..

S: They were some friends some business people that I had corresponded with. The likes of getting a letter from ------ saying I’m sorry to hear the circumstances I’ll check with people here and see if there is anything they know of that might be of
interest to you, there’s nothing we can see at this point but if we know of something we will certainly be in touch. Very positive type correspondence so it was encouraging.

I: Anything else?

S: Very strong family support. And that was more than strong from my wife because she was happy that the whole circumstance that I had left ————. It was very supportive. And it was don’t worry about things. We have lots of money in the bank. If we have to we have enough money in the bank to go on for another two years so that sort of thing is very supportive. And my kids were pretty good too. Yeah.

I: They had some understanding of what you were going through.

S: I think that they had a difficult time understanding initially but they realized that Dad was sort of coming down to earth again and I was becoming a human being again.

I: So, let’s go back to the high points again. The first one would have been interviews and getting feedback.
S: Getting feedback that my resume was maybe in a form that people were starting to notice it. The enclosure letters that I was writing were starting to produce some interest as opposed to ..we’ll put it on this pile over here, it was starting to get into the shorter pile and ..

I: Why was that so helpful to you?

S: It gave me an indication that I was starting to do things in a manner that was going to produce results. I learned a few of the things that I should be doing and a few of the things that I shouldn’t be doing. Very important. Structuring a letter so that it really replied to the ad as positively and in the areas that they were looking for interest.

I: How about the second one, the support from friends and colleagues, just sort of receiving the again hang in there kind of support, why was that so helpful for you?

S: It indicated that over the years maybe I really hadn’t built up false ideas about the kind of work that I had been doing. That I had built some reasonable relationships that were based on what I had been doing, my abilities.
I: So, it just sort of reaffirmed your belief of what you could do.

S: That's it exactly.

I: And that you were doing good work and others appreciated it.

S: Right.

I: And how about the support from your family, why was that so helpful?

S: Helpful? Without the support at home it's pretty difficult to do a lot of things and after 24 years of marriage I kind of appreciate it. Maybe there's a lot that can't say that. I can.

I: Any other high points that you can think of?

S: Yes, there is a certain counsellor that did an awful lot to get me back on track. Seriously, don't underestimate, I had basically written off ----- as being any use to me and I guess about that point and time I started dealing with you and you're always
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giving positive feedback and always encouraging and that’s really important to people. Most definitely.

I: Any other high points that you can think of? Anything else that stands out in your mind about that time?

S: Yeah, there’s one particular morning very definitely. We had taped an interview, a mock interview with me and at that point and time you really brought me back to earth as to where I was and from that point and time it really was uphill. And there is no question in my mind that is sort of the change in both my attitude and how I was approaching things.

I: That was the point where you realized you were reflecting more of a negative image than a positive one.

S: Oh, most definitely. It got clubbed on me and I needed that. It was something that I couldn’t see in myself but you brought it out and I saw it on the tape and I’m sitting there, hmmm, yes.

I: Other things? Other high points?
S: I guess when I started to get the odd second interview. The first interview was finally the second interview. Even the company that I ended up with I didn’t even know the name of the company that I had been for an interview with. That’s serious. I didn’t know who I had been interviewed by. All I knew was that they were a manufacturer and they had a plant in ------ and from that I went to a telephone book and I figured out who they must have been. But even then I wasn’t sure. The funny thing is that the interview that I had gone to I had a cold at the time and I was on anti-histamines and I was somewhere between here and there and I don’t know what it was but I went into that interview and it was like, no sweat. I had three of them going at me and who was the major owner was in the middle of asking me a question and the general manager started chiming in with another question and I just calmly and quietly turned and said excuse me I am not finished with the answer I’ll be right with you. So, I finished the answer and said now what was the question. It was a bizarre situation but it seemed to have gone very well to the point that it was about five interviews later before I took the job. I can remember it very vividly.

I: So, you came away from the interview feeling very good.

S: I felt that I had done a very good interview. And from then on I think I had an interview with every senior person in the company plus the same people again and
their external auditor, their tax advisor, you name it. Probably the only person I didn’t speak to is their insurance agent.

I: Any others? Any other high points? Things that stick out in you mind that were positive for you?

S: Those were the major ones. One thing that in retrospect, my wife and I have talked about it, one thing that was important to me was having the facilities at the Centre. And keeping a regular routine.

I: Why was that so important to you?

S: I’m a person that requires a certain amount of routine. And I needed that to continue in my life not to sort of just stop and be at loose ends. It’s important not to be at loose ends for my personal self. That’s probably important for a lot of other people to.

I: So, having that sort of structure in place, a place for you to go every day and participate in routine business things was very important to you.
S: Yes. The ability to get different things done and also a certain amount of comraderie with the people that were there. It helps.

I: Any other high points that you can think of?

S: Yes, sure. Not as it necessarily applied to me but as it applied to other people from the same company that were being successful in there job search. ------ he had gone to the Centre a little before myself but a month and a half or so after I got there he ended up with a pretty good job. Seeing that kind of success for others was good for me. Because I am a very person type person and I like to see people doing well, nice people. Yes, it gave me incentive most definitely. It spurred me on to say yes there is something out there. Go for it.

I: And one day that is going to be you.

S: That’s right. It can’t go on forever. You can only apply to so many different ads and unless you’re a total turkey..

I: ...somebody’s got to want you.
S: There's a place for everyone.

I: Others?

S: Those are major ones. Good understanding of friends along the way. Took off with a good friend of mine and just got away for a couple of days. Certainly supportive friends like that.

I: Let's get back to the low points for just a moment, especially that second month that seems to have been the tough time for you.

S: Things weren't happening.

I: Was there anything that you did to compensate for that time or was there anything that you did to change the way that you were feeling?

S: Throughout the whole period I found that I did an awful lot of things to get exercise to work the energy off physically to avoid it becoming a major burden on me. I find that when I get exercise it helps me to relieve the stress and knowing that I was under the stress I did a lot more exercising and I walked for miles. I would come
downtown here, I’d be in town by 7:15, the Centre opened at 8:30 between 7:15 and 8:30 I walked. I walked miles around Vancouver...where would you like to go in Vancouver. So, I knew that I had to do this. And I just set off to do it. After I got home from the Centre at night I probably walked another hour at night. Actually, my wife and I probably went out and walked every evening. But its very important to work off some of that frustration.

I: Any other way that you coped at all? Or that helped you?

S: I tried to maintain a way of life that was in a lot of ways unchanged in terms of routine some people might have gone to the bottle and tried to drown it with the bottle. I enjoy a drink but I didn’t drink any differently after than I did before. So, I tried to maintain a certain normality.

I: Did you find that that helped you?

S: Yeah, it did. That same normality again relates back to being able to go into the Centre on a regular basis. To have sort of regular hours. You need to maintain that. Well, to me it was important. Maybe to some it isn’t but to me I found that it helped me.
I: How about capitalizing on the high points. What did you do to take advantage or did you do anything to take advantage at the high points, how you were feeling at the time? What were the impacts on you?

S: Probably ended up being spurred on to work a little harder to try something new, to try something different. I became rather creative at trying to write letters after awhile. All because I felt that I was getting somewhere. I also started to try to apply for jobs whether I wanted them or not just for practice. Because I felt that I was making progress. Some were blind alleys, others were very encouraging. It was one of these things where...it became a game. And I started playing it like a game. Let's see what we can get out of this one. It helps. As one could say, it maintains your sanity. It becomes a game.

I: What is your attitude to work and how does that compare to your attitude prior to your leaving your previous company?

S: I still go to work on a very professional basis. I probably do not take the same amount of time at work that I used to. I put in a full day and if anything extra has to be done I do it. But at 6 or 6:30 I pack up and go home for the day. I also, seldom work weekends which I used to do quite regularly. And I encourage the people that
work for me also to get out and enjoy the rest of their life too. I’m at the point where I realize that there is more to my life than the work aspect which is sort of the routine that I had gotten into whether I liked it or not, it was the routine that I had gotten into. I had anticipated that my life would be over by the time that I was 50 because of a heart attack when I was at ------ and I had accepted that fact and was pushing myself into that grave and I am now looking at what ways I can work towards my retirement. So, I have a very different outlook not only to my work but to my life. In that I don’t want to kill myself anymore and I don’t want to have that noose around my neck.

I: That’s quite a change.

S: It is. It’s monumental. I might see 65 where I never figured I would while at ------.

I: Any other change in your attitude at all? I mean that is a tremendous change but anything else?

S: I probably delegate a lot more. I used to do a lot of things myself which anything that I can delegate I do. I have good people working for me and I am encouraging them to reach their potential also. I should explain a little of my
philosophy. I got people that are on courses working toward professional designations and the approach is I don’t know if you will be working for me three years from now or five years from now but I know that if I push you, three years or five years from now if you’re not working for me you will have a better job than what you had here. And I am quite willing to accept that fact if it improves you. Different philosophy but it’s important and I get a lot of mileage out of it with people. A lot of respect for it. I got one person who had said that if it weren’t for you I know that I wouldn’t be trying to get to the goal that I am working on right now. It is really encouraging.

I: Now that you are re-employed what learning if any has occurred for you?

S: Learning? No one is indispensable and you should always be at least thinking of what your next step should be. Don’t be waiting for things to happen to you. I am very happy with most of the things in my job but if something came along and it looked as if it was for me, I would probably take it. Strictly because I don’t think that a job is worth committing your life to. Commit your life to something that is good for your life not to something that is controlling it. One other thing that is as important if not more important in terms of what I have learned is that I am probably now more inclined to question or speak up when something doesn’t appear right to me, in terms of how it affects me or the company. My last three years I did a certain
amount of that but there have been a couple of incidents of that where I got pretty ticked off at things where I was ready to say that's it, out. And finding out that you can't do it that way. And saying o.k. we've got to talk about something, this is really bugging me and we've got to get it squared away and we've got to straighten it up. Under the circumstances it's not working. I'm more inclined to face that now and say this has got to be done. And it's really important and there is some pretty soul searching discussions as a result of this but the results have been very positive. In that I have had comments like, is that really what I am doing? is that really what is going on? So, it's been good. That was a real learning experience to me to have to come up and say let's talk.

I: So, you've learned to be assertive in terms of your own judgement and things that were bothering you or you wanted to see changed you have become more vocal about that.

S: Just do something about it don't let it fester. Very much so.

I: And the other learning is that no one is indispensable. Any others?
S: Yes, life needs to be more balanced. There is a happy balance that involves more than just work. It involves family, it involves work, and I had lost that perspective. Very much so.

I: Essentially that is all the questions that I have to ask you, is there anything else that you would like to add or you would like to say about your experience that we haven't touched on?

S: Yeah, that would be a couple of good valid points. One is that everything about changing a job isn't necessarily negative. There is some very positive things about it. You build up certain ideas and security blankets that will I ever make as much money as I am working here for a long period of time and one shouldn't have those concerns. Ultimately, things work out. I am making 175% of what I was making before and it's out there. You just have to go out there and try your damnedest and if you try your damnedest it all comes together. Certainly from a monetary point of view it's like I fell off a log and came up dry.

I: You said a couple of valid points, do you have another one?

S: That is the major one.
I: So, it's not necessarily a totally negative experience and once you get out there, there are good things out there for you.

S: Much... sometimes much better in many respects. The other valid point is that there is some damn good people out there that basically don't destroy your faith in how you feel you should be treated. The company that I ended up with maybe I am very fortunate because they are very humanistic. They believe in people, they are people-oriented. They have education funds so that is people want to take a course the course will be sponsored. Everybody in the plant contributes to this fund so we are all contributing to education in addition to what the company throws in. And things that... it is very progressive. The incentive plans, it's really neat. And to see that in action is really neat. Occasionally you have to throttle the GM to bring him back to earth and say you can't do it that way. He's a real go getter. Probably the only MBA that I have ever dealt with that I have had respect for. I am serious on that one. I haven't dealt with very many that I have respect for cause we've got three or four around the company and some of them are useless. But you know, it's a positive world out there and it's nice to be back in it. I think that is about all I would like to say.

I: That's a good note to end on.
S: I feel that way.

I: Good. Thanks.