THE EXPERIENCE OF REEMPLOYMENT
FOLLOWING A PERIOD OF UNEMPLOYMENT

by

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Abstract

This study investigated the experience of reemployment along with helpful and hindering events inherent in the experience. Fourteen co-researchers were interviewed. They were selected from contacts within various agencies that worked with the unemployed. Participants were asked to describe their unemployment-turned-reemployment experience. The experience of reemployment following a period of unemployment was studied using an open-ended, unstructured interview method with an approach also designed to elicit helpful and hindering events. This technique was developed by Borgen and Amundson (1984). The interviews were taped, transcribed and used as the data for this study. The major patterns of experience were described as were the coping strategies employed; co-researchers' expectations of the future, and events that either helped or hindered the reemployed person's adjustment process over time.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Currently, a great deal of research is being conducted into the effects of unemployment on individuals, families and society in general. Finley and Lee (1981) describe worker reactions to non-voluntary job loss using the grieving process described by Kubler-Ross (1969). This process involves five stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Borgen and Amundson (1984), suggest that all the unemployed in their study found the experience to be a traumatic one characterized by dramatic shifts in economic power, personal support, and self-esteem.

Borgen and Amundson (1984, 1987) also describe the dynamics of job search, which follow the acceptance phase of job loss using the following four stage model: 1) initial enthusiasm; 2) job search stagnation; 3) frustration with the job search and 4) apathy, where there is no hope of finding employment. Marsden (1982), in his book, Workless, has presented some of

Given the enormous amount of research into the traumatic effects of unemployment, this author became increasingly curious about the experience of reemployment following a period of unemployment. Questions of interest to a researcher or counsellor could be as follows:

What is it like for an individual who has been unemployed long enough to have suffered the traumatic
effect of unemployment and job search to finally secure a job? Is the individual euphoric, relieved, frightened, embittered, indifferent, etc.? What kind of job has this individual accepted? Does the impact of unemployment for an extended period of time affect job selection? Is the unemployed person so relieved to have a job offer or possibility that he/she will settle for an inferior position for which he/she is over qualified just to have a job? Or, the opposite, a superior one, for which he/she is under qualified? Is his/her attitude toward his/her work any different as a result of having been unemployed for an extended period of time? For example, Borgen and Amundson (1984, 1987) describe a stage in unemployment where an individual arrives at a satisfactory identity and feelings of worth outside of paid work. If this is so, does the newly reemployed person value his/her job less than any previous ones? Or, to the contrary, has the unemployment experience been so traumatic that the newly reemployed individual becomes anxious about becoming unemployed again? And if so, does this affect his/her job performance? Further, if the period of unemployment has been an extended one, characterized by
depression, apathy, a lack of social supports, a lack of routine, etc., does the newly reemployed individual find it difficult to adjust to a work routine?

Gray (1975) studied the subjective experiences of employees voluntarily leaving one job and starting another. He proposed a model describing two patterns of response to the reemployment experience. The first pattern begins with detachment with the old job, euphoria at securing a new job, followed by shock upon starting the new job and ends with socialization where things go right and the individual adjusts positively to his/her new job.

The second pattern proposed by Gray involves the same responses as stated above, but, instead of adjusting positively during the socialization period, the newly reemployed worker becomes disillusioned with the new position.

Gray's study, which is elaborated upon in later chapters, was used as a point of comparison in understanding the data supplied by the co-researchers in this study.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, then, is to examine the process of the experience of becoming reemployed, following a period of unemployment.

While Gray's sample involved those who voluntarily left one position for another, this study addresses those who became unemployed involuntarily at a time when new jobs were hard to secure.

The study addressed both the positive and negative feeling states of those becoming reemployed; events that caused shifts in the feeling states from positive to negative and/or negative to positive, and the coping strategies employed by the co-researchers when there was a shift in feeling from positive to negative.

Just as Borgen and Amundson (1984) were interested in "examining the evolution of psychological reactions of the unemployment experience over time, and in determining some of the factors that moderate or intensify the psychological impact of unemployment", (pg.1), this author was interested in examining the experience of reemployment, following a period of unemployment.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Very little research has been conducted into the phenomenon of starting a new job or the phenomenon of starting a new job after having endured an extended period of unemployment. As mentioned previously, Gray (1974), who studied the subjective experiences of employees leaving and starting new jobs, proposed a model to describe patterns of response to leaving one job and moving to another:

1. Disenchantment with the old job, which precipitates a job search.

2. Euphoria which occurs later once the individual has secured a new job.

3. This is followed by shock, which occurs when the individual starts the new job. This stage is akin to a culture shock because the new job and company are not like the old ones. According the Gray, no amount of "induction" at this stage can take away the cultural shock, because so many new things have to be experienced.
4. The next stage can be one of two possibilities:
   (a) socialization, where things go right, and the worker adjusts comfortably, likes his/her new job and colleagues, or
   (b) disillusionment, where things do not go right, the individual does not like his/her new job, new company and/or new colleagues.

5. If this disillusionment occurs, the worker will enter a fifth stage, detachment, where his/her energies are directed toward a new job search.

6. If that is not possible, (because of age, economic, unemployment factors, etc.), containment occurs, whereby, the worker "builds a corner for himself/herself where he/she can comfortably weaken the pressures of the organization" (Gray, 1974, pg. 2). Further, if leaving isn't possible, two paths may be taken by the worker:
   (a) he/she attempts to establish himself/herself favorably in order to be granted good references or
   (b) he/she remains unhappy, seeking gratification and satisfaction outside of the work environment until he/she is able to leave.
While he/she puts very little into the new company, he/she will not be disruptive because the main goal is to leave.

It would seem that after a period of unemployment, the newly reemployed person may not have made the best job choice and may in fact become disillusioned. However, he/she may be unwilling to initiate another job search. If so, how does he/she cope? This author was particularly curious about what happens to the individual if disillusionment followed by detachment occurs? Is the newly reemployed person likely to initiate another job search or will he/she simply "create a corner for himself/herself where he/she can comfortably weaken the pressures of the organization" (Gray, 1974, pg. 2). Is it realistic, in the 1980's to believe that he/she will initiate a new job search after having lived through the trauma of a previous extended job search,? And if the worker is reluctant to leave his/her newly acquired position, in spite of the disillusionment from which he/she may be suffering, what are the effects of such disillusionment on productivity and psychological well-being? How does he/she cope on an on-going basis?
It is important to note that Gray's research was conducted with those employees who left their jobs voluntarily, either for a new position or to conduct a job search which would likely be short and positive in outcome. The focus of this research is on people who left their job involuntarily. Little research was found that addressed this population.

The Effects of Reemployment on Self-Esteem

Kaufman, (1980) suggests that while reemployment may contribute to the adjustment of professionals who have been out of work, the job loss experience appears to have long lasting effects which even a return to work cannot completely alleviate.

There is also considerable evidence to support the notion that the job loss experience may result in a loss of self-esteem, regardless of reemployment success (Kaufman, 1973). Another study of laid-off blue collar workers who found work in lower level positions reported that "reemployment in such positions may restore some of the financial deprivation, but it does not necessarily restore the individual to his previous level of self-esteem, morale, and general psychological state" (Sheppard, 1965, p. 171). In a longitudinal
study of terminated blue collar workers over a two year period, Cobb and Kasl, (1971, p. 171) found that "despite the fact that the men eventually acquired new jobs, their life situations deteriorated as if their experiences had permanently uprooted optimistic evaluations of their lives and of their future."

A study that investigated the experience of out of work professionals for over a year, arrived at a conclusion remarkably similar to that of blue collar workers: that reemployment "did not serve to integrate these workers into a milieu at their previous levels of emotional health or social functioning" (Estes, 1973, p. 277). The study also reported that the "displacement effect following reemployment is somewhat troublesome since it confirms that the previously unemployed harbors chronic, if not permanent scars from their unemployment experiences" (Estes, 1973, p. 277).

**Underemployment**

Other research into the experience of reemployment seems to focus on the underemployed professional, though some data exist on the underemployed blue collar worker, the underemployed college graduate, the underemployed female and the significance of race and
social class in the underemployment issue, Kaufman (1980, 1982), revealed that underemployment, i.e. a situation where a worker's skills are not being used, or where he does not particularly like or enjoy his/her job, was a problem for professionals. He reported that more than one-fifth of the professionals who took a position that left them underemployed, reported that their whole life had changed as a result of their original job loss. On the other hand, only one-twentieth of those who remained out of work or those who were unemployed in their field reported such a drastic change. Kaufman suggests that perhaps the greatest amount of life stress occurs among professionals who take a job that leaves them underemployed, because many of them may be undergoing an involuntary career change.

Other research indicates that if the new job provides job security, it may be viewed as a better job than the old one, even if job satisfaction is a factor (Kaufman, 1980, Brown, 1972). Further, there is evidence that poor utilization of a worker's skills can contribute to obsolescence, job stress, and poor
adjustment to work (Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison, and Pineua, 1974; Ritti, 1971).

It appears that the reason many people become underemployed is that they view it as a temporary "stop-gap" while waiting for a better opportunity. The research indicates, however, that underemployment may in fact contribute to further underemployment and long range career growth damage—especially among college graduates. Apparently, many employers believe something must be wrong with any candidate that was not "good enough" to get a job in his/her field in the first place (Shaffer, 1976). In his book, The Overeducated American, Freeman (1976) documents the changes in the labour market for college graduates, indicating the growing number of college graduates in low level jobs. Rumberger (1984) suggests that as many as 25 to 50 percent of recent college graduates in the United States are, or feel that they are overqualified for their current job. And, with regard to women in the workplace, Rumberger (1981) found that women were more likely to be underemployed at the higher education level but not at the lower.
It appears from the research that while reemployment certainly assists many in their adjustment from the jobless state, other problems often follow. If reemployment means underemployment or a lack of job security, psychological problems may result in the long run. According to Kaufman, (1982), these workers may be no better adjusted than those remaining unemployed. 

Summary

From reviewing the current literature, it appears that becoming reemployed in and of itself, is not enough to alleviate the traumatic effects of extended unemployment. Other factors including job security and job satisfaction appear to impact the adjustment process.

With this in mind, and considering the limited amount of research on the reemployment experience, this author thought it necessary to employ a research method that encouraged subjects to freely discuss both their negative and positive feelings regarding reemployment and those events which either helped or hindered their adjustment process.

Thus, a research approach was chosen which combined an open-ended, unstructured interview method
with an approach designed to elicit helpful and hindering events in the re-employment experience over time. This approach, which encouraged co-researchers to report their subjective experiences and any helpful or hindering events, is described in Chapter Three.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Co-researchers

The subjects were considered co-researchers because they were active participants in the study, who supplied the data and information from which the descriptions of experience were created. Later they were recontacted to verify the experiences reported.

The study consisted of 14 co-researchers. A pilot study was conducted with two individuals to test the procedure. The co-researchers were volunteers drawn from contacts within various agencies, including Unemployed Action Centers, Canada Employment and Immigration, Job Kit, and any other agency that had worked with the unemployed.

Methodological Approach

Swinburne (1981) and Borgen and Amundson (1984), suggest the importance of non-survey techniques in researching the experiences of the unemployed. Borgen and Amundson (1984), developed an investigative method combining an open-ended, unstructured interview with an approach designed to elicit helpful and hindering events in the experience of unemployment. They
describe their approach as "allowing subjects to describe quite freely their experience of unemployment without being led to one emphasis or another by direct questions of the interviewers." (p.16).

Based on these studies, this author believed that the same approach could be utilized when conducting research into the reemployment experience. Hence, the only question posed in the initial stages of the interview was as follows:

"You were unemployed for a period of time, and now you're reemployed. What is this like for you?"

In addition to posing the above question, the interviewer attended to each subject using paraphrased responses to clarify their statements.

Borgen and Amundson (1984) suggested that when conducting research with the unemployed, it is useful to utilize an approach that can help to elicit, high and/or low points in the unemployment experience. This approach utilizing helpful and hindering events was pioneered by John Flanagan (1954). The co-researcher
was asked to specify exactly what helped or hindered in the transition from one event to another.

Flanagan's technique was modified and used by Borgen and Amundson to examine the experience of unemployment over time. This author employed this same modified technique to get beyond any general description of the reemployment experience into a more detailed account of the specific events that either helped or hindered the re-employment process. Thus, the subjects were asked to consider the following statement about 40-50 minutes into the interview:

"Think back over your experience of re-employment and describe the high points of your experience. Taking the first high point, tell me exactly what happened and why it was so positive at that time?"

and then:

"Now let's turn to your lowest points during that time. Taking the first low point, tell me exactly what happened and why it was so difficult at that time?"
After the highs and lows had been explored, the participants were asked to answer the following questions:

1. Were you willing to take any job just to have one, and if so, what is the psychological impact on you?

2. How do you view your employer now (with regard to maternalism/paternalism)?

3. Does the unemployment experience loom large in your mind, has your life been affected in any permanent way, or has it all been forgotten?

4. Has the meaning of work changed for you?

And finally, to conclude the process, co-researchers were asked to complete a demographics questionnaire providing information about themselves including age, sex, length of time unemployed and reemployed, salary of both previous and current jobs, perceived job satisfaction and suitability, and length of time they intended to stay in their new job. Co-researchers were assured that the data would remain confidential and that a co-researcher's consent form would be provided in order to allow for audio-recording of the interview sessions.
This approach elicited from co-researchers both the reemployment experience as it was remembered by each of them and more specific information about any helpful or hindering events inherent in the process of becoming reemployed following an extended period of unemployment.

Data Analysis

The 14 taped interviews were transcribed verbatim. The author then searched each transcript looking for emotions or feeling states inherent in the reemployment experience. These feeling states were then examined with a view to giving them labels that accurately depicted what the co-researcher reported the reemployment experience was like and in doing so, it became apparent that there were many similarities between the co-researchers' experience.

Gray's model was used as a point of comparison throughout the data analysis in order to facilitate an understanding of the data. It became readily apparent that many of the co-researchers' descriptions paralleled those proposed by Gray; however, there were also some apparent differences.
This was followed by a search for any shifts in the feeling states from positive to negative, or from negative to positive, and for the events that triggered these shifts. Finally the data was examined for the ways co-researchers coped with the shifts from positive to negative.

The reliability of the descriptions of the feeling states and the labels given to those descriptions; the events that created positive or negative shifts in the feeling states, and the ways co-researchers coped with the shifts from positive to negative were tested by asking a colleague to read the transcribed versions of the co-researchers' interviews. The colleague was then asked to compare the transcripts with the labels and descriptions given by this author, to the feeling states, the events that created positive or negative shifts in the feeling states, and the strategies employed to cope with shifts from positive to negative.

Following this, a meeting was held to discuss any discrepancies between the descriptions and labels assigned by the author and those readily apparent to the colleague.
Later, there was a post check with six co-researchers to verify the descriptions. Five of the six co-researchers were from the group who adjusted favorably to their new jobs. One was from the other group who did not adjust favorably to their new jobs.
CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH RESULTS

Introduction

The results of the data are presented in six sections. Section One presents the demographic information that each co-researcher was asked to provide. In Section Two, two distinct patterns of the experience of reemployment are presented. Pattern A describes those co-researchers who adjusted favorably to their new jobs. Pattern B describes those co-researchers who did not adjust favorably to their jobs. Both patterns are compared with the model proposed by Gray, (1974). Section Three provides a rank ordered list of all the events that resulted in feeling states and the time sequences involved. Section Four focuses on the coping mechanisms employed by the co-researchers during the reemployment experience. These coping mechanisms are rank ordered from the most frequently to the least frequently employed coping strategy. Section Five deals with the future expectations of the co-researchers and Section Six addresses the co-
researchers' responses to a variety of questions posed toward the end of the interviews.

As mentioned previously, the reliability of the data was checked by having a colleague and six co-researchers verify the feeling states, the events that shifted feelings from positive to negative, and/or negative to positive, and the coping strategies employed in order to deal with shifts from positive to negative.

In discussions with the colleague about any possible discrepancies in the data, no instances of disagreement were evident.

In discussions with the author, all six co-researchers said that the labels given to the events, feeling states and coping strategies employed, accurately depicted their experiences.

In addition to verifying the descriptions provided, the one co-researcher who did not adjust favorably to his/her job at the time of the study, but who at the time of the post check, worked in a job to which he/she did adjust favorably, confirmed the feeling states and events of the other group. The other five co-researchers involved in the post check
who were in jobs to which they had adjusted favorably also confirmed the other experience of not adjusting favorably. They reported that before securing their current job, they had accepted at least one job they did not adjust to favorably and that their experiences paralleled those of Pattern B.

In summary, all the co-researchers involved in the post check agreed with all the feeling states and events of both groups. They made statements such as, "There's nothing there that I can disagree with"; "Yea, that sounds like what happened"; and "I sure remember feeling like that."

Section One: Demographic Information

Co-researchers were asked to fill out a demographics questionnaire, (Appendix B). The following is a synopsis of the responses to the questionnaire.

Number of Participants 14

Gender

Number of males 7
Number of females 7

Age

Average Age 32
Citizenship

Canadian 13
German 1

Length of Time Unemployed

Range

5 and 1/2 months to 2 and 1/2 years

How did co-researchers get their new job?

a) Advertisement(s), e.g. newspapers, radio 1
b) Through knowing someone who told them about it 6
c) Mass mail-out of resume 2
d) C.E.I.C./Unemployment Action Centres 3
e) Became self-employed 2

How many liked their new jobs?

a) Yes 11
b) Indifferent 3
c) No 0

How long will most stay in their new jobs?

Range: 1 - 3 years, or until a much better position comes along.

Note: Only two participants responded with "forever." These two were in the self-employed category.
The results show that 8 co-researchers were reemployed in similar jobs, while six were in completely different jobs and that in most cases the salaries remained pretty much the same.
Section Two: Patterns of Experience

In this section two distinct patterns of experience are presented: the first is Pattern A and involved those co-researchers who adjusted favorably to their new jobs. The second, Pattern B, involved co-researchers who did not adjust favourably to their new jobs. For both patterns, a detailed account of the events and accompanying feeling states is presented. Also included are samples of experience from the interviews conducted. Throughout the presentation the patterns are compared to the model proposed by Gray, (1974).

According to Gray, (1974), who checked the subjective experiences of employees voluntarily leaving one job and starting another, two patterns of experience occurred. The first pattern was described as euphoria-turned-shock-turned-socialization. This pattern emerged when the worker adjusted positively to his/her new job.

The second pattern was described by Gray as euphoria-turned-shock-turned-disillusionment-turned detachment or containment. This second pattern emerged
when the worker did not adjust favorably to the new job.

After analyzing the descriptions of experience provided by the co-researchers in this study and comparing them to Gray's model, it was apparent that there were many similarities. However, some differences did exist.

The first similarity was that two patterns of feeling states and events occurred. The first of the two patterns that emerged in this study were: Pattern A - euphoria-turned-doubt-turned-socialization to the job context-turned comfort zone. This closely parallels the first pattern of experience proposed by Gray.

Based on the descriptions provided by this study, each co-researcher reported feeling euphoric upon being granted an initial job interview and subsequent job offer. Therefore, this author agreed with Gray's first reported feeling state of euphoria. While Gray labelled the next feeling state shock, all the co-researchers in this study described their second feeling state as being doubtful about their ability to
do the new job. This feeling state invoked fear, worry and doubt.

Whereas Gray labelled the final experience of Pattern A socialization, this author labelled it socialization to the job context because it seemed specific to the job context. The author then added a fourth experience reported by the co-researchers and called it a comfort zone. All of the co-researchers in this study who had been reemployed for several months and who had passed through the feeling states already described, reported increasing levels of comfort in the new position. This feeling state was characterized by contentment, confidence and a tendency to take the new job for granted. This was a surprise to the co-researchers involved because there had been times in both the unemployment experience and the beginning of the reemployment experience where they did not think they would ever take a job for granted again.

The following is a detailed account of the feeling states and accompanying events of Pattern A.

Euphoria:

1. This stage can be described as an initial and very positive reaction by co-researchers to a job
interview and a subsequent job offer that is accepted. The feelings were those of enthusiasm, relief that the job search was over; a sense of something difficult having been accomplished and a sense of being worthy or the "chosen" one.

Sample Statements of Euphoria:

(a) "When the phone rings and the voice on the other end says, 'Yes, we'd love to have you come and work with us,' suddenly it makes all the struggling worthwhile. Suddenly it just takes an enormous pressure off your shoulders. It's like, I'm wanted and appreciated. It's like, I worked hard for this and I was just rewarded. It gave me my faith back and it's a good feeling inside."

(b) "Just getting the job interview is a high and then getting the job."

(c) "The first high was just getting the job."

Doubt:

1(a) This stage can be described as reflection upon one's ability to do the job, job suitability, and whether the right job choice had been made. The feelings of fear, inhibited excitement and doubt
were experienced. All of the above occurred shortly after the job offer was accepted.

(b) As the induction process began, feelings of estrangement or culture shock surfaced because nothing about the new company or job was familiar. More doubt, worry and fear surfaced. At times the new employee felt good about the choice and at times anxious about the choice.

Sample Statements of the Doubtful Experience:
"The first low came right away as I worried about my ability to do the job."

"Obviously the high point is when they make the job offer to you and then there's living up to it. I mean that's another thing."

"I was terrified of some of my work because I knew there was so much I didn't know, so, I was really struggling."

"It went down because I felt overwhelmed until I started to make some progress on my first project."

Socialization to the Job Context:
1(a) In this stage, some doubt was erased as the environment began to feel more comfortable.
Meeting new people, getting on with tasks and
getting into a routine occurred. This stage was characterized by intervals of highs and lows as it was a period of great adjustment. Sometimes the new employee felt good about the job and sometimes doubtful.

(b) Continued erasure of doubt took place at this level, as the new employee decided he/she had made the right choice and liked both the company, its people, and the job. This feeling state was also characterized by highs and lows—higns on a good day—lows on a bad day. Job insecurity, career choice, and job satisfaction were questioned from time to time.

Sample Statements of the Socialization to the Job Context Experience:

1(a) (Initial Erasure of Doubt)
"...I liked my work, felt it was an acceptable challenge...lows occur during the times when you ask yourself, 'Is this really for me, with all my qualifications?'

(b) (Further Erasure of Doubt)
"...everytime a new challenge presents itself you feel low because you have doubts as to your
ability to do the job...you feel high again as your comfort zone is reached."

(a) (Initial Erasure of Doubt)

"The next high point was working with five or six people and I realized I was on the team and people were used to me and they would accept me and help me...".

(b) (Further Erasure of Doubt)

"...another high point was being told by the bosses that I was doing a good job...the next high point was being given new and increased responsibilities...the next high point was finding out I'd gotten a raise for good performance...it was a low point when the company reorganized, I felt very insecure about that...I worried a lot at that time about whether I still had a job."
(a) (Initial Erasure of Doubt)

"A low point was the realization that I've got to go to work and when I first started I couldn't stand it...I got higher again when I started to get to know people and what not...I had to move to another office, it was like starting the above process all over again...then another high came after the new office when things started working out."

(b) (Further Erasure of Doubt)

"...it's been pretty balanced ever since..."

Comfort Zone is reached: this stage was specific to Group A and was characterized by a deep feeling that the reemployed person was comfortable with most facets of the new job, company, etc., most of the time. Some of the initial job related enthusiasm dissipated as "taking the job environment for granted" occurred. This stage was described as consisting of a balance of highs and lows.

Sample Statements of the Comfort Zone Experience:

(a) "A low point came when the initial rush of energy and effort I put in stopped and getting more and
more into a routine...another low point is conflict with a person at work."

(b) "...I'm just gradually coming down to reality and I call this average...it's getting to a point where it's just a job, it keeps me going."

(c) "It goes up and down for the rest of the time and what the lows are about would be when I have temporary feelings of insecurity about my ability to do the job, which are getting less frequent as I get into the system and see how they do things...and now it's more of a balance."

The second pattern that emerged in this study was:

**Pattern B** - euphoria-turned-doubt-turned-disillusionment-turned-change. This also closely parallels the second pattern of experience proposed by Gray. As mentioned earlier, Gray's Pattern B model replaced the experience of socialization with disillusionment. Disillusionment would occur when the newly employed worker did not adjust favorably to his/her new job, company, colleagues, etc. The two co-researchers in this study who did not adjust favorably to their jobs reported similar feelings of disillusionment. Whereas Gray reported two further
experiences of detachment and containment, this author labelled the final experience of this pattern as that of requiring that a change occur. The co-researchers in this study reported the need to change their situation after becoming disillusioned. The change seemed to take the form of attempting to work something out within the new job, company, etc. and/or re-initiating a job search, quitting with severance pay or getting fired.

The following is a more detailed account of the feeling states experienced in Pattern B.

Euphoria:
Same as in Pattern A.

Doubt:
Same as in Pattern A.

Disillusionment:
(a) Initial disillusionment resulted from the realization that the reemployed person was not suited to the new job, company, its procedures, policies, the people, etc. There was a sense of being bored, irritated, discouraged, disappointed, yet there was still hope that everything would work out.
Heightened disillusionment occurred as the realization of being ill-suited to the environment became even more apparent. There was a deeper sense of boredom, frustration, discontent, pressure, etc. A new job search was activated, (usually quietly and surreptitiously). In this stage there was still some hope that things would work out.

Sample Statements of Disillusionment:

(a) (Initial Disillusionment)
"Then came the low of being in the wrong job and slugging it out."

(b) (Heightened Disillusionment)
"What saved me was my close relationships with those who shared similar frustrations. I smoked more. I complained a lot. I had screaming arguments with the manager and part of that I knew wasn't productive, but, it was a relief."

(a) (Initial Disillusionment)
"...and then actually starting the job was pretty low, not all the way to the bottom, but low...and then I sort of drifted along indifferently most of the time with occasional plunges..."
(b) (Heightened Disillusionment)

"...I began to quietly look elsewhere...I was dreaming of another, better way and was trying to actualize that...I'm looking for a different job situation...hopefully, in the fall I'm going to Saudi Arabia."

A change occurs:

(a) A sense of relief from the overall unhappiness resulted when a change finally occurred. The change usually took the form of either quitting, finding a new job, or terminated. If a new job had not been found, the relief stage was also subject to renewed feeling of worry, fear and doubt about the new unemployment situation. These feelings did not seem to be as severe as in the very first job loss.

Sample Statements of the Need to make a Change:

(a) "Then there was getting the severance pay and actually leaving. This was a relief and a high point...the low came again when I had to become concerned about what I'd do with myself."

(b) "...and then I was transferred to a new division. I was quite high because it was a better position."
I still am unable to use a lot of my skills, but at least what I do is more appreciated."

Summary

Essentially the results supported the findings reported by Gray, (1974). Two distinct patterns of experience were reported - the newly reemployed worker either adjusted positively to his/her new job or he/she didn't. When he/she did adjust positively, the following feeling states and experience were reported: euphoria at the interview and subsequent job offer, doubt about one's ability to do the job, followed by socialization to the job context where he/she began to enjoy the new job, the new colleagues and the new company. This led to the newly reemployed worker reaching a comfort zone characterized by being able to take the job environment for granted, feelings of contentment and job competence.

When the worker did not adjust positively to the new job, the feelings of euphoria at having found it quickly turned to disillusionment and provoked the need for a change. This change took the form of confronting the situation at work, initiating a new job search, quitting and/or being terminated.
To conclude this summary, a chart is provided which compares Gray's patterns of experience with the patterns of experience which emerged as a result of this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gray (1974)</th>
<th>This Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pattern A</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pattern B</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euphoria (upon securing the new job)</td>
<td>Euphoria (upon securing the new job)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shock (which occurred when the individual started the new job - akin to a cultural shock)</td>
<td>Shock (which occurred when the individual started the new job - akin to a cultural shock)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization (where things went right, and the worker adjusted comfortably to his/her new job)</td>
<td>Disillusionment (where things did not go right and the individual did not adjust favorably to his/her new job)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detachment (the individual directs his/her energies toward a new job search or containment occurred when a new job search was not possible. The worker did not cause trouble but contributed little to the new company.</td>
<td>Comfort Zone (the reemployed worker began to feel contented and to take the job for granted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Section 3: Feeling States and Triggering Events (Rank Ordered)

This section provides a listing of the triggering events that led to positive and/or negative feeling states. These events are rank ordered and presented in chart form along with the approximate time sequences involved.
### Table 1

**Section 3: Events Resulting in Feeling States Changing From Negative (Low) to Positive (High) and Time Sequences Involved**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events influencing a shift from negative to positive (rank ordered) i.e. from the point of unemployment turned remployment</th>
<th>Number of co-researchers</th>
<th>Time sequence involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Being the &quot;chosen&quot; one, landing the interview and then the job.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Immediately, upon getting the job offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) People taking an interest in you again; being part of a team</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0-1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Making a contribution again</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1-3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Being able to perform well/ mastery of tasks</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1-3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Getting positive feedback from superiors, subordinates, co-workers; close relationships at work.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1-3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Fitting in, belonging, being liked, liking the job, liking the company, etc.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1-3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Getting a paycheck again.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>First pay period (usually 2 weeks to 1 month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) Reaching a comfort zone on the job.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0-12 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

Section 3: Events Resulting In Feeling States Changing From Positive (High) to Negative (Low) And the Approximate Time Sequence Involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events influencing a shift from positive to negative (rank ordered) i.e. from the point of unemployment turned reemployment</th>
<th>Number of co-researchers</th>
<th>Time sequence involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Doubts about ability to do job</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Not agreeing with company policies, style, procedures, etc.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1 week-1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Getting used to a routine again, e.g. the structure of a new job versus the lack of structure of unemployment</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0-6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Fear of additional job loss, e.g. threat of actually being laid off again, or having to initiate a new job search</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Whenever job loss seemed possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Conflict at work</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Whenever conflict occurred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Money/benefits, i.e. not getting paid enough and owing so much as a result of unemployment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>First paycheck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Boredom and knowing you do not like your job.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 weeks - 1 month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 4: Coping Strategies

Hilgard and Atkinson (1979) suggest the following in regard to coping strategies:

Because anxiety is a very uncomfortable emotion, it cannot be tolerated for long. We are strongly motivated to do something to alleviate the discomfort.

Sometimes we try to deal directly with the anxiety-producing situation by appraising the situation and then doing something to change or avoid it. Both of these actions are designed to cope with the problem. We call the behaviors that a person uses to deal directly with stressful situations coping strategies (p.261).

This section provides a listing of the various coping strategies, (either constructive or destructive), employed by co-researchers in response to events that led to shifts in feeling states from positive to negative. As stated previously coping strategies were employed during times when co-researchers doubted their ability to perform in their new jobs; when they disagreed with company policies; while they were getting used to a new routine again; when fear of additional job loss became an issue; when there was conflict in their new work relationships; when they felt the amount of money on their pay cheques did not reflect their worth; when they were bored and
felt they were not adjusting favorably to their new jobs, or that the incorrect job choice had been made.

Coping took the form of reactivating a job search, dreaming of a better way and trying to actualize that better way. Sometimes forming close relationships with those who shared similar frustrations about the company helped. More drinking, smoking, substance abuse, complaining, absenteeism and psychosomatic illnesses such as colitis and migraine headaches were also reported. The ultimate coping strategy employed was leaving the position altogether. Table 3 that follows, outlines the coping strategies (rank ordered) and the number of co-researchers who employed the coping strategy.
### Table 3
**Coping Strategies Employed:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coping strategy employed (rank ordered)</th>
<th>Number of co-researchers who employed strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Making contacts and networking while on the job.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Positive self-talk.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Always looking toward self-employment, i.e. &quot;What can I learn here that I can do on my own later?&quot;</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Not working as hard as in your previous job.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Not giving the whole process your one-hundred percent.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Close relationships with those at work who share similar frustrations; relationships with co-workers.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Quietly looking for another job and/or dreaming of another better way.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) Drinking more to relax.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) Absenteeism.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j) Inertia, apathy and just generally an overall lack of productivity; making a minimal contribution.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k) Quitting with severance pay.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l) Relocating to another department</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m) Politicking, attaching oneself to the one in command; making oneself visible to the one in command.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 5: Future Expectations

Another area of investigation mentioned in Chapter Three had to do with the co-researchers expectations of the future. The majority of the co-researchers thought that their futures were positive (10). Only two co-researchers reported negative expectations of the future and two were indifferent toward their futures. More specifically, the following provides a complete breakdown which includes samples of co-researchers responses from the interviews conducted.
### Table 4

**Expectations of the Future: Results Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-Researcher Number</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Positive/exciting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Negative--no way around the future commonplace of unemployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Indifferent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Negative--everything is temporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Very positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Indifferent to negative--does not believe he will ever be able to work again in the way he once did, i.e. money, status, professionalism, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Positive--happier than ever and believe he will be forever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Positive in the short term; negative in the long haul about job security beyond a 2 to 3 year period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Statements of Future Expectations from the Interviews

a) "I feel really positive because I have a good position from which to work upwards. I'll never go backwards again."

b) "I've met many, many more people and my employment horizons, my chances for the future have expanded. I think there will be many more opportunities."

c) "I see my future as being one where I'll explore many different things and I see it as being very exciting."

d) "The whole thing of unemployment is something that is going to be very commonplace in the future and I don't see any way around that."

e) "My future expectations are positive for the next couple of years. I feel kind of trapped because it's so much more difficult to get good jobs, so you already know how hard it's likely to be. You feel a sense of helplessness regarding steering your career."
Section Six: Questions

In this section the co-researchers' responses to a variety of questions posed toward the end of their interviews are presented. This section concludes the research results.

Question 1.
Are you willing to take any job just to have one, and if so, what is the psychological impact of doing so, over time?

All co-researchers reported being willing to take any job in their general field at least once after their first job loss; these same subjects reported disastrous outcomes of having done so. Where this had happened once (and in most cases it had), the co-researchers reported being totally unwilling to do it that way again. In fact, they reported that they would rather be unemployed than to take just any job.

Sample Responses to Question #1:

a) "No, not this time. I already did that a couple of times and it proved disastrous, so I don't want to do that again. I learned through the experience that it's just not worth it to take just
anything...I mean you can't be employed and miserable either."

b) "No, I actually had the opportunity to say 'no' to a couple of jobs before accepting this one. I did that previously and it was a disaster. I only lasted three weeks in the company and was terminated. I hated the place. I think you'll hear that from a lot of people who have been unemployed...that they had at least one disastrous job before getting a job they liked."

c) "During my first unemployment experiences, yes, I would have been willing to take any job in my field--so I did. I think it was probably one of the most difficult experiences in my life...so, there came a point in that reemployment experience where being unemployed became more appealing than being employed--somehow it's less degrading to be unemployed."

d) "Yes, as I already had accepted another position and hated it, so it was a relief to be called back after the initial lay-off."
e) "Yes, as I had already accepted another position at $5.00 per hour pumping gas—even this made me feel better."

f) "Yes, in fact, sometimes I wondered if I'd ever see a pay cheque again. I'd line up for jobs as a dishwasher, 7-11 clerk, etc. and still did not get the job."

g) "Within my field, yes, though I felt insecure as a result of two lay-offs—as if there wouldn't be any jobs—so best to create my own."

Question 2.

How do you view your employer now (with regard to maternalism/paternalism)?

All co-researchers reported a shift in how they viewed their new employer versus how they had viewed previous ones. All said that they did not view the employers as being committed to their ongoing development and well-being. Rather, an employer/employee relationship was one viewed as a fair exchange of talent and skill for a paycheck. All co-researchers viewed their employers as providing a temporary means of earning a living. As a result, almost everyone reported that they were working with a
view to different, or self-employment. Thus, they embraced their current employment as an opportunity to "take" what they could into a new situation.

Sample Responses to Question #2:

a) "I have a real thing against...I would ideally like to be self-employed. I don't like the control someone else has over my life."

b) "I'm praised dearly by my employer, but it doesn't hold weight because I've heard it all before and I still got axed. Gone are the days of job security. If anyone thinks they have a secure job, they've got rocks in their head."

c) "I don't see the company as paternal. I feel kind of detached in a way--it's more like I'm working for myself in the midst of all this...before I saw the company as permanent--it was like a self-perpetuating machine--it would never stop, I don't think that way anymore. I grabbed more in the sense of benefits. I think it's using anger, the feeling of "damn it," they're going to do it to you, so therefore you've got to get everything that you can. So I'm almost pushier now, demanding that my expenses get paid immediately--that I have my
courses paid—that I have and use all the little benefits, like using the dental plan, etc. What I think I'm doing with the reemployment is carving out what I want—making it much more what I want it to be within the framework of what the company wants from me."

d) "The role I view is not one of paternalism—I view it as we kind of have this equal situation, like, I have this time, skills and abilities that I'm prepared to invest and I expect something for that investment."

e) "I am not committed to my employer; my employer is not committed to me. I can remember for years people were proud that they worked and they worked hard; there was some sense of human dignity in it regardless of what they did. I don't see that anymore! People are always saying, 'Don't work too hard, take it easy', a 'fuck em' attitude and I don't see that as productive for anybody."

f) "I think there are two ways to look at that—in my past job, I felt very secure that I could continue there as long as I wanted to be. I was never concerned with being laid off—but I do not feel
that way here or really anymore...I do not view the
employer as paternal/maternal."

Question #3.

Does the unemployment experience loom large in your
mind and has your life been affected in any permanent
way or has it all been forgotten?

All co-researchers reported that they had not by
any means forgotten their experience of unemployment.
The possibility of being unemployed again was always in
the back of their minds. Further, all reported that
their first unemployment experiences were the worst
ones and that they gained strength and self-security
from the experience, i.e. they learned that security
came from knowing they could survive the worst possible
scenario.

All co-researchers felt their lives had been
changed permanently from the unemployment experience
and even though reemployment had occurred, their lives
had never returned to the way they had once been.

On the one hand, new levels of self-confidence were
reported as a result of surviving the
unemployment-turned-reemployment, and on the other
hand, co-researchers reported that even though they
were well into the reemployment experience, they were only beginning to once again feel any sense of control over themselves, their lives, or their destinies.

This appeared to be the only question that affected co-researchers from either pattern differently. All the co-researchers from Pattern A (those who had adjusted favorably to their new job) reported being happy to be back to work, even if they weren't as happy as they had been in their previous job (prior to their first unemployment experience). And in fact, some reported being happier in their new jobs. Of course, the co-researchers in Pattern B, (those who did not adjust favorably to their new job), did not report being happy to be back to work and in fact, were unhappy about it.

All reported, or felt that it would be better to be unemployed than to be seriously dissatisfied with a job. Most co-researchers also reported that they were not afraid of unemployment recurring and they attributed this to their belief that every job was of a temporary nature anyway.

Most co-researchers reported being more empathetic toward the unemployed than they were previously and
believe that those who had never experienced unemployment lacked that same empathy. Further, they reported being less extravagant; more flexible; more independent; more cautious; less believing in permanency; more confident; more clear about what they wanted from a job or paid work; more sensitive to the human condition; more intent on looking out for themselves; more intent on enjoying their work and having more well-defined work boundaries, i.e. what they were prepared to do at work and/or to further their careers. All participants reported that unemployment-turned-reemployment caused extreme emotional upheaval.

Sample Responses to Question #3

a) "Not really--it's not forgotten...the worst was 1984, (my first unemployment experience), I learned from going through it, that things would always work out, so, while I wouldn't want to be unemployed again, I would still walk out if I felt something was really wrong--though I'd try to have a few things in order, e.g. get something started on the side or quietly look elsewhere, so I'd be more sensible about walking out--not just reacting
on emotion alone...I'd actually say I'm a different person now than before...I've got a lot more confidence, but on the other hand, I want even more than before to specialize, so I have something special to offer--I'm just much more confident and much more positive in that I always think there's a way out.

To summarize it all, I think I've come out a lot stronger and a much better person. I would never, ever want to go through it again. I'm only now beginning to feel like I'm back in control of my life and feel good about everything and to balance things out. I made a commitment to myself to get my life back in order because now I feel I've got my professional life in order. You can't have one without the other. I think anyone would be fibbing if they said that unemployment or reemployment didn't cause a lot of upheaval, havoc and adjustment in their personal lives; e.g. just getting back to hobbies you gave up.
I like to keep any options open--anything could happen tomorrow--I've learned I'm number one and
that I have to look out for myself—no one else is going to."

b) "I learned to be very, very flexible--I think that's the key word. Nothing surprises me anymore. I think I tend to be more compassionate and understanding of people and situations...It's really turned into something positive...I've gone through a real self-evaluation. I told myself I would never give up myself in another job and I don't like it because I feel vulnerable...I don't worry about work anymore...there's things like the insecurity of the closed door. I even want to seek professional help regarding this--everytime the door closes and I'm on the outside--not privy to the information being discussed I feel I'm being fired--it's like a traumatic experience and I can't cope with it. If there's any one thing that sticks with me, it's that. I've had a tendency to over-compensate to prove that I'm capable because all of a sudden you've lost all your credibility...in your new job nobody knows what S.S. is capable of doing--it's like starting all over again."
c) "I'm more interested in the kind of person I work for, rather than the kind of job or the company, itself. I worried every time there was an administrative change or someone would leave. I would get really convinced that I would get fired or, somehow, I would get caught in the middle of it. No one else worried about it because I talked about it. I find it harder now to relate to the people whom I work with, although I get along with them. I don't attempt to make the kind of friendships that I had previously. It's as if there is something there that says this job isn't going to last, so why bother getting really, really involved with all these people.

I'm not relaxed; I'm not as cozy as I was in my other job. I don't take it for granted in the same way. I'm being more competitive in the sense that I try to be in the limelight--I try to have the work that I do recognized. Before I didn't always put my name on the work. I was contented to let it flow through the hierarchy. Now I take the initiative--now I make suggestions directly to the top decision-making powers. I don't flow through
the system anymore. I don't decorate my office anymore either—I don't personalize it as much—I've started lately, but it's been a year."

d) "Oh no, it's not been forgotten at all. I've never had problems getting jobs before. To know that it's a real possibility is really frightening. I guess it's the uncertainty of the future and wondering just how bad it was going to be. Yes, it's frightening enough that it would likely send me back to Saudi Arabia."

e) "Yes, what frightens me is that you can be out of a job any moment and how is one going to live on U.I.C., I mean we're not talking about buying a new car, clothes, etc., we're talking about a roof over your head. As a result of my unemployment I faced bankruptcy, so what's changed is you don't see me with a credit card; you don't see me throwing money around. I'm very cautious with my money because I realize you've got to make a little go a long way...I'm much more secure about my relationships because I'm nearer my family and some day I'll probably eventually marry."
f) "I guess in total the experience I've had over the past two years of being unemployed then reemployed a couple of times, for me, has been one of the most frustrating, most painful time, in my life; but not just the work thing--during that period of time, I separated and changed my appearance and style of clothing and all the rest of it--changed my friends...I've discovered inside myself an inner strength that I didn't realize was there. I feel more happiness and satisfaction around the things I do in my life than I ever have.

It's a tremendously powerful feeling for me to realize that I can go and do whatever it is I need to do. So that the strength I feel--that no matter what happens, I'll handle it. I definitely have a totally different approach to work than I did before. I enjoy the flexibility and ability to set my own hours."

g) "The reemployment is exciting but there's still that feeling of being reserved because it's temporary and it's not really your field and still not knowing how long am I going to have this job. So there's that feeling of excitement, tempered
with, "I can't get excited 'cause it'll all be gone." It's always in your mind, i.e. 'When will it happen again?'"

h) "I feel the same way now as I did before when I worked but several things have changed; e.g. you think unemployment can't happen to you but now it's always there--a little fear that it can happen again...so you live with a feeling of--'When is it your turn to be laid off again?!--whereas you never thought about it before."

i) "I have really quite a different approach--the idea of being my own person; being in control and being at peace with myself is so much stronger now than it was before.

Another area that has changed since my reemployment is the relationships that I have with my family. I have the sense of closeness that I didn't have before.

One of the things I find, is that it doesn't matter much anymore in terms of what happens in my work life. I have this sense that I have the strength and stamina inside me to go on and do whatever it is I need to do. A lot during the past
I depended on other people to point me in a direction and I feel now that I don't need that. I feel direction comes from within me."
j) "I'm not as extravagant as I used to be when it comes to spending money. There's not much money left for fringes--before I foolishly spent money on fringes. I think you look more at other people, too, who are laid off. You look more at them and how they're dealing with it, as before you didn't care."
k) "My value system has changed drastically...when I got my settlement from M.B. I put it into R.R.S.P.'s. I don't wear suits anymore, or very rarely. I eat differently, more naturally. A lot of this is due to the people I've met sailing. I live a healthier life and I actually gained a bit of weight, but I quit smoking."
l) "I realize, Unfortunately, how much I attach my self-worth to work and that is something I have to live with. I think previously I would have denied this because I wouldn't have had the occasion to see it. I guess it just reaffirmed how much I need work. I'm a more self-confident person and a
better person now. I'm constantly being mindful of the future; of needing another job--I'm thinking about that all the time."

Question 4.
Has the meaning of work changed for you?

All co-researchers reported that the meaning of work had changed for them. The following are examples of how it had changed.

Sample Responses to Question 4.
a) "I am no longer worried about having job security or not having a job tomorrow."
b) "I will never give 100% in a job again."
c) "I will never give up myself in another job again."
d) "My attitude about work and career has changed. I no longer have the career aspirations that I had. I really got sick and tired of people asking me what my long and short terms goals are. No longer do I want to go to night school. Like what good did it do me to expend all that energy...now I enjoy walking out the door at 4:30 p.m. and doing my own thing; whereas two years ago, I didn't mind staying late...and night school, etc., because I thought it made a difference. I don't have a fear
of losing a job anymore. Gone are the days of security. If anyone thinks they have a secure job, they've got rocks in their heads."

Summary of Results

According to this study the reemployment experience initiated one of two possible journeys. The first pattern that emerged began with euphoria and ended with the reemployed person reaching a comfort zone in the new job. The second began with the same euphoria but ended in disillusionment. The following two paragraphs elaborate on these two patterns:

In Pattern A, the co-researcher reported going into a feeling state of euphoria upon getting the job interview and subsequent job offer. This was followed by the feeling state of doubt, where the reality of returning to work began to surface. Questions about one's ability to perform and job suitability were raised. As the reemployment continued the socialization process began and the reemployed person decided if, indeed, the correct job choice had been made. If so, the reemployed person became job satisfied and eventually reached a comfort zone
characterized by feelings of confidence, and of being competent at work.

The second pattern involved the same feeling states of euphoria and doubt. What differed was that the socialization process did not lead the reemployed person to a comfort zone at work. Instead, increased job dissatisfaction was experienced leading to disillusionment and eventually a change was necessary.

This change took the form of initiating a new job search, quitting, or being terminated. If a new job had not been found, and leaving seemed imminent, the feeling state was a combination of relief and fear, or worry at the prospect of unemployment.

Gray (1975), proposed a similar model to describe a person's response to leaving one job and moving to another. Gray's model proposed disenchantment with the old job, euphoria at securing the new one, followed by shock during the induction process and, if things worked out, socialization was the final stage in adjusting favorably. If things did not work out, disillusionment resulted, followed by detachment, where the person's energies were directed toward a new job
search or containment where the worker stayed but contributed very little to the company.

Gray's study was restricted to those who voluntarily left one job for another. This author's study, concentrated on the experience of those who found themselves involuntarily unemployed at a time when jobs were very hard to find. In spite of the difference in samples, the feeling states appeared similar in both studies with some differences arising, as have been stated.

The study showed that the unemployment experience was not forgotten, in spite of a return to work. Co-researchers reported that the entire experience of unemployment-turned-reemployment, was an emotional upheaval they preferred not to repeat. Further, their entire outlook on the meaning of work had changed. Specifically, they reported a general trend toward the belief that all jobs were to some extent, temporary. This had both a negative and a positive effect on their lives. On the one hand, they were more cautious and less giving in a job; on the other, they were more self-sufficient, with a view toward the future possibility of once again needing a new job.
This study also revealed a trend toward positive expectations of the future. Most reported a belief that the future would provide ample opportunity for employment and that they could survive quite well with or without a permanent job. This may have been influenced by the fact that 12 people in the study had adjusted favorably to their new jobs.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Statement of Results

This study addressed the experience of reemployment following a period of unemployment by focusing on the feeling states and the helpful or hindering events inherent in the reemployment process. Fourteen co-researchers were included in the study based on the criteria that they had been unemployed involuntarily for at least three months, had been reemployed for at least three months, and were able to clearly articulate this experience to the author. The co-researchers were asked to describe their experience as if telling a story; with a beginning, middle and end. They were also asked to describe both the high and low points of the experience. This was followed by answering a series of questions regarding their perceptions of their new jobs, their new employers, themselves and their future expectations. The descriptions were tape-recorded, transcribed and categorized. In the process, patterns of experience and helpful and hindering events emerged, which were then compared
across co-researchers. The author, a colleague and six co-researchers validated and verified what was revealed at each step of the described experience.

The study showed that for the co-researchers who adjusted favorably to their new jobs, (those in Pattern A), the unemployment-turned-reemployment experience was less traumatic than for the two co-researchers who did not adjust favorably to their new jobs, (those in Pattern B). These newly reemployed workers suffered greatly and either quietly looked for another job, quit, or were terminated. The study also showed that most individuals would not remain in any job just to have one. Further, co-researchers reported that the memory of unemployment remained with them even though they were reemployed and that their lives had been affected in a permanent way by the whole process of losing one job and finding another.

Finally, the study showed that in spite of their unemployment-turned-reemployment, most co-researchers were positive about their futures.

Limitations

This was a foundational study designed to investigate the feeling states and helpful and
hindering events inherent in the reemployment experience. The generalizability of this study is limited somewhat, in that not all co-researchers had been reemployed for the same length of time. In fact, the range was from three months to two years. It is likely fair to assume that some of the experiences and feeling states inherent in the reemployment experience could not be as fully experienced by a co-researcher reemployed three months, as a co-researcher reemployed two or more years. However, most feeling states did take place within three months and all co-researchers had been reemployed at least that long.

Another limitation of this study involved the variability in the number of job losses and subsequent reemployment experiences of the co-researchers. Some of the co-researchers reported that after their first job loss, they relocated one or more times, into a situation that was ill-suited and disastrous both personally and professionally. It is possible that this is a stage in the reemployment experience. Had more research been conducted, minimizing the differences in the length of time reemployed, and work histories, a clearer picture may have appeared.
Yet another limitation of this study lies in the many personal variables that may have influenced the reemployment experience of the co-researchers. Some of the co-researchers had more financial struggles than did others. Some were married, and had financial support from a spouse, so felt less desperate to stay employed. Some were single, or sole breadwinners who depended on a pay cheque for survival.

Another limitation may occur as a result of the question: How do you view your employer now, (with regard to paternalism/maternalism)? The fact that the author asked specifically about paternalism/maternalism may have led the co-researchers to one emphasis or another versus some general description of how they viewed their employers. Also, the fact that the research was conducted with volunteers may limit the generalizability of the study. And finally, the fact that 12 of the 14 co-researchers had adjusted favorably to their new jobs may also limit this study.

Counselling Implications

The results of this study have some important implications for the fields of both career and personnel counselling. Firstly, it identified a large
group of people, mainly the unemployed-turned-reemployed, who experience an adjustment process that could be better facilitated through the help and support of knowledgeable personnel managers and/or immediate supervisors. The fact that all the co-researchers reported having had difficulty adjusting to a routine again, points to the possibility that the newly reemployed person is unlikely to make his/her usual contribution for approximately three to six months into the new job. Judging the newly reemployed persons competence and/or abilities prior to this time would seem inappropriate.

Further, if a newly hired employee has preceded his/her employment with a lengthy period of unemployment, he/she may not seem overly committed to his/her new job or overly excited about it. Fears of further job loss and his/her ability to do the job will likely affect his/her immediate job performance and/or attitude.

The newly reemployed person may also have accrued a considerable debt load during the unemployment period and as a result may be under a great deal of financial stress. This could create the conditions whereby the
employee appears discouraged and unmotivated, particularly on payday. The new job may not pay as much as the employee feels he/she is worth and at times he/she may resent this. He/she may demonstrate his/her resentment by withholding his/her best effort at work.

The results of this study indicate that the unemployment experience did not necessarily end when the reemployment experience began, and in some cases, securing the new job was just the beginning of a whole new set of problems. Counsellors working with the unemployed need to make their clients aware of this possibility. Information about the experience of reemployment needs to be provided. Special emphasis should be placed on the potential highs and lows inherent in the experience. Issues of socialization to the new job context and disillusionment need to be addressed both by the worker and the company involved.

When disillusionment occurs for the newly reemployed worker, further support services need to be made available. A new job search may need to be initiated and information on constructive coping strategies need to be provided if the worker is forced
to remain in the new job due to economic reasons and/or an inability to relocate quickly.

The results of this study indicate a move away from employer/employee loyalty and may point to a newly emerging "worker mentality," that places less emphasis on employer paternalism/maternalism, and more emphasis on a temporary exchange of money for services rendered. And finally, co-researchers reported selecting their new jobs based on liking the tasks they were required to perform and relational factors such as liking the person they reported to, as opposed to the image of the company, the prestige of the job, the amount of money being offered, etc. Co-researchers adjusted to their new jobs more positively if they liked both the job and their immediate supervisor. This combination seemed central to their decision to stay with a company or not.

Implications for Further Research

It is hoped that the experiences revealed in this study can be used as a foundation for building upon, developing and expanding an understanding of the reemployment experience following a period of unemployment. A longitudinal study made up of a larger
group of reemployed persons may provide further insight into the long term effects of unemployment on career development. If possible, the study should attempt to minimize and/or isolate, the number of personal variables across subjects, such as married versus single; sole versus co-breadwinner; skilled versus unskilled worker; length of time reemployed, and job suitability. This could help minimize the differences between groups or categories of experience. If this were achieved, a clearer picture would result of both the facilitating and hindering events inherent in adjusting to the reemployment experience. Thus, more positive assistance and education could be made available through personnel and career counsellors for those who had once been unemployed and are now reemployed.

Summary

The experience of reemployment following a period of unemployment was described in this study. It appears that there is indeed an on-going adjustment process for reemployed persons who have been involuntarily unemployed. This adjustment process effects their daily lives, their job performances and
their well-being in general. Hopefully, understanding and knowing the full meaning of the reemployment experience, over time, will serve to make the lives of those who share the experience and those who are closely involved with the newly reemployed person, more positive.
REFERENCES


Subject Consent Form

I agree to participate in a research project about the effects of extended unemployment on subsequent reemployment. I understand that participation in this study is voluntary, that I am free to withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question.

I understand that this project will require me to talk with an interviewer for about sixty minutes about my reemployment experience. I also give my permission to have the interview audio-taped with the understanding that the contents of the interview will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. Further I agree to be contacted for a post-check upon completion of the research.

______________________________  _______________________
Signature of Participant             Date

______________________________
Signature of Student/Co-investigator
Linda Williams, M.A. (Candidate)
Counselling Psychology Department
University of British Columbia
Demographics Questionnaire

1. Name ______________________________  2. Age ______
5. Previous occupation (before becoming unemployed) ______
   ____________________________________________________________________
   6. Length of employment therein ______________________________________
7. Salary (per year) ___________________________________________________
8. Current position _____________________________________________________
9. Length of employment therein _________________________________________
10. Salary (per year) ____________________________________________________
11. How long were you unemployed prior to securing your present job? ________________________________
12. Briefly describe the process you underwent in finding your current job--i.e. How did you finally get this job? ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
13. Do you consider yourself to be working at a job you like? ________________________________
14. If you answered NO to Question 13, please comment further on this, describing what it is about your job you do not like.

15. How long do you plan to stay in your current job?

16. Make any other comments you wish to in the remaining space or on the back of this questionnaire.