

# Fired to Hired: Bouncing Back from Job Loss to Get to Work Right Now

Tory Johnson

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**Tory Johnson : Fired to Hired: Bouncing Back from Job Loss to Get to Work Right Now** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fired to Hired: Bouncing Back from Job Loss to Get to Work Right Now:

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Laid off? Fired? You're not alone! By Donna Galatas When you're feeling like you can't keep going in your job search or you're still suffering from being fired or laid off from work, you really need to read this book. Tory Johnson didn't have any more advantages than others when she lost "the best job in the world." Read about her journey from the dark abyss of self-pity to the top of the world as a multi-million dollar business owner. It's inspiring and Tory offers practical and realistic advice on all the challenges a job seeker faces today. It's timely and relevant for the American worker.

If you want to get hired today, you must be a great candidate and an exceptional job seeker. Tory Johnson's New York Times bestseller, *Will Work from Home*, was comprehensive and inspiring. Now, the Women For Hire CEO and Good Morning America workplace contributor returns with advice and real-life stories for finding the right job after being let go. Tory knows what it takes to get noticed and hired, and helps you create a concrete action plan—one that will help you come out stronger and more successful than ever. Giving up is not an option. Now's the time to get the lay of the land, sharpen your skills, and energize your search. Here you'll learn how to:

- \*Get over the sting of being unemployed
- \*Develop a digital identity and dive into online social networking
- \*Ensure your resume does not get lost in a big black hole
- \*Build and leverage your "I Rock" file to master essential self-promotion
- \*Pitch and secure an effective externship and make volunteer experience count
- \*Launch a valuable job club that will yield strong support, job leads, and career success

"Tory Johnson is simply the best. Her ideas are exciting. Her heart is big and embracing. There is no better coach, champion, and friend on the path to your dreams." --Diane Sawyer "I love it when I get a chance to work with Tory on "Good Morning America". She is passionate about helping our viewers. Tory's ideas for getting hired and creative and lead to positive results." -Robin Roberts

Tory Johnson is simply the best. Her ideas are exciting. Her heart is big and embracing. There is no better coach, champion, and friend on the path to your dreams.? --Diane Sawyer ?I love it when I get a chance to work with Tory on "Good Morning America". She is passionate about helping our viewers. Tory's ideas for getting hired and creative and lead to positive results.? ?Robin Roberts

About the Author Tory Johnson is the founder and CEO of Women For Hire, a nationally respected organization that produces career fairs and conducts job-seeking seminars for women throughout the country. She is a frequent media guest and has appeared on CNN, CBS, NBC, and FOX news. Robyn Freedman Spizman, has authored more than sixty books and is a frequent guest on CNN and Headline News, and has appeared for two decades as a consumer advocate on NBC in Atlanta. Lindsey Pollak, a Yale graduate, is involved with many national women's organizations and has served as Director of Business Development at WorkingWoman.com.

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CHAPTER 1 "Hello, My Name Is Tory, and I Was Fired" Attitude is everything, so stand tall and get your ducks in a row

In 1993, I was a 22-year-old hotshot. Or so I thought. As a publicist for NBC News in New York—the youngest ever, I was told—I was making enough money to rent a nice apartment near Lincoln Center, enjoy manicures and pedicures on weekends, eat out and shop. Not bad for a good Jewish girl from Miami Beach who had always dreamed of making it in the Big Apple. I was on a roll. I had been offered a job working as a (very) junior publicity assistant for Barbara Walters at ABC's 20/20 while I was still in college. I jumped at the chance. Then NBC recruited me, and soon I was on a first-name basis with some of the biggest stars in broadcasting. Tom Brokaw, Bryant Gumbel, Jane Pauley, Maria Shriver, Stone Phillips, and the late Tim Russert. This was heady stuff. At some point, all of those bold names benefited from my publicity skills for television's top-rated news programs: Meet the Press, Dateline, and the fortieth anniversary celebration of Today. It was my responsibility to promote these superstars and their work. I called newspaper reporters in every big city across the country as well as the producers of TV shows from Entertainment Tonight to Larry King Live to sell them on what my stars were doing. And the answer was always yes. "We'd love to promote Maria's new special." "Of course we'll showcase that investigative piece on Dateline." "Let's plug Sunday's Meet the Press." I was very good at generating great coverage. But it wasn't all sunshine. NBC News got into serious trouble when it aired a controversial Dateline story that showed General Motors trucks exploding into fireballs in certain kinds of crashes. But instead of actually capturing one of those explosions on tape, the story producers rigged a truck to blow up to simulate what allegedly occurred in actual accidents. A bad move ethically and journalistically, as an independent panel would later conclude. And an outright disaster in terms of public relations. Defending NBC and Dateline kept me busy for months. I was grilled by reporters from around the globe from the moment I walked in the door of my windowless office at 8:00 A.M. until I left—hours after Nightly News had aired. It was a crazy and exhilarating time, and I loved the challenge. This is what public relations is all about, training I couldn't get in a classroom. I was truly passionate about my job. I loved NBC and its history and even the fact that I worked in one of the country's most famous buildings, the landmark Rockefeller Center. Everything about the job—the people, the frenetic energy—I loved it all. Like I said, I was a hotshot. I thought I was really good at publicity. A rising star at the network. I was kicking butt. And unbeknownst to me, my butt was about to get kicked. Paying Dues When Megan Henderson, a top morning show anchor in Los Angeles, and before that Dallas, was a television intern, she remembers "begging for extra hours, bugging the reporters, asking a gazillion questions, and

annoying everyone around me with my enthusiasm." "I left that unpaid internship and six months later I was offered a full-time producing job with Fox because of it," she recalls. But today, Megan says, many of the interns at her station "just sit and wait to be told what to do. I always tell them, 'It's up to you to make this worth your while. If you truly want to be in this business for the right reasons and are willing to work hard, you will make it. But you've got to put in the work and pay your dues.'" Increasingly, she says, younger people think in terms of immediate gratification. "More so than ever, kids are getting what they want, when they want it, and without a lot of effort." But that's not the reality in most work environments, as Megan points out. That's why it's important not to get ahead of yourself; to trust the journey and know that you are where you're supposed to be. "Working your way up is part of the process. When I was just starting out in the business, I was so focused on getting that huge market job right away. I was disappointed in myself for not getting to my destination immediately. What I didn't realize was that I was paying my dues for a reason. Had I landed that big market job right out of college, there's no doubt in my mind that I would have lost it just as fast. I needed to start in a smaller market so I could make mistakes and learn from them." Megan says that she came very close to landing a job in Los Angeles after only a couple of years in TV news. "I was devastated when it went to someone else, but I now know that I wasn't ready for it. It would have been a total disaster." The fallout from the GM story cost a number of people their jobs, including the head of NBC News, Michael Gartner. Before returning to his home in Iowa, he thanked me for helping him manage the story, and graciously told me that I would succeed at whatever I did. He wished me well. I thought I was safe at NBC, part of the family. I had done a good job handling the GM story. I even talked to the new executive producer of Dateline about switching jobs and becoming a booker on the show that I loved. He said he liked the idea and would run it by the new president of NBC News, Andy Lack, a well-respected veteran in the industry who was hired with much fanfare to restore confidence in the news division. And that's when it happened. I got a call from a human resources representative who told me to report to Lack's office. When I walked in, he was sitting in his big leather chair. He didn't get up to greet me. Not a good sign. He clasped his hands behind his head, leaned back in his big leather chair, and told me that anytime someone takes over a company or a division, he or she wants to put his or her own mark on things; new protocols, new processes, and a new team. The light dawned. "Are you firing me?" I interrupted. He replied, "You have thirty minutes to leave the building." Just as I did for the network with the Dateline story, I went into spin mode; this time for myself. Thinking on my feet, I told him he was making a terrible mistake, and I listed the reasons. Talk to anyone internally or externally, I said, and you'll hear what a great asset I am, that I really know my stuff, and that I'm totally devoted to NBC. He looked at his watch. Changing gears, I asked him to give me a chance to prove myself. "Give me three things to accomplish in three weeks, three months; whatever time frame you want; to prove myself directly to you." All I wanted, I said, was to stay at NBC News. He listened, cold, devoid of emotion. It was clear that I was not going to keep my job. As I stood up to walk out of his office; trying desperately not to burst into tears; his parting words of wisdom were, "Tory, it's a big world out there, and I suggest you go explore it." I walked out in shock. My world as I had known it had come to an end. I thought my career was over. I didn't even get to pack up my office. It was done for me and my boxes were messengered to my apartment later that day. I walked to my apartment, climbed into my pajamas and threw myself a good old-fashioned pity party, catered by Haum!; agen; Dazs. The entertainment? Daytime TV, long conversations with my mom in Florida, and lots of sleepless nights filled with self-doubt. I was embarrassed, humiliated, and just plain scared. Word travels quickly in the world of network news publicity. I felt as if I could hear the whispers of "Tory got fired" down the hallways of NBC. Except I didn't; no whispers, no gossip, no words of encouragement; because my phone didn't ring. I can count on the fingers of one hand how many of my so-called "friends" reached out to me. Ouch. Not long after, I got a kind e-mail from a former colleague, who is one of the classiest women I've ever met: Maria Shriver, now California's first lady but back then a correspondent for NBC News, based in Los Angeles. She told me that I probably wouldn't believe it now; nor would I want to hear it; but that in no time I'd look back and realize that this was one of the best things that ever happened to me. I deleted the message; angrily. How could this successful, rich, powerful Kennedy girl, the gorgeous wife of a movie star, know how I felt? What did she know about having the carpet ripped out from under her, about being afraid where the next month's rent would come from? But there's a reason Maria succeeds at whatever she does. She's no dummy. After the benefit of some distance; okay, a lot of distance; I realized she was absolutely right. This was indeed the best thing that could have happened to me. Yet at that moment, I was still too hurt and bitter to grasp her well-meaning thought. And it was those same feelings that stopped me from picking up the phone and calling the friends and colleagues who could help me get back into the game. Blah: "All my friends were work friends." Ah!: "True friends stand by me in good times and bad. This is the perfect time to realize who they really are." Instead, my pity party turned into a misery marathon for months, financed by my severance pay, unemployment benefits, and my cashed-out 401(k); something only someone in her twenties would think was a great idea. Wallow for a Day, Then Move On. Radio psychologist Joy Browne says she was fired twice in her life and that in both cases it was the best thing. "It never feels that way at the time, and everybody can say to you 'doors open, doors close.' It's true; but it's not the least bit comforting," Joy told WomenForHire.com. "When you get fired the immediate response is just to feel horrible by yourself for maybe about

twenty-four hours; you know, wallow in it and then take a deep breath and figure out why," she says. "If someone will tell you why you got fired if you don't know, that's very helpful," she says. "Talking to the person who fired you, certainly in an exit interview, the most important thing to do is to say, 'Could you tell me what I could do differently next time?' Sometimes there really are things we do that could be changed, and that's at least valuable to know. The more we know, the less likely we are to say, 'I'm a rotten person, no one will ever love me again, I will never work again.'" "With a cool \$23,000 in my checking account, going to the ATM didn't feel so scary. That is, until rent payments, retail therapy, and more than a few cash withdrawals whittled away at those five figures. I could see that my windfall wasn't going to last forever. But before I continue with my tale, let's talk for a minute about what may be happening to you. About to Get a Pink Slip? If you sense that layoffs are coming in your shop, you may not be able to avoid the axe, but you can prepare for the severance possibilities. If you're part of a mass layoff, your bargaining power is diminished because the employer will have a predetermined package for everyone based largely on length of service. If, however, you work for a small company or you're one of only a few being let go, you can—and should—have a say in what you leave with. Severance typically includes cash compensation, which may come in a lump sum payout or the continuation of salary for a specified time frame, benefits, property, and outplacement services. Consider each one carefully before agreeing to anything. CASH There's no precise formula for determining a cash payout. Some employers will offer one to two weeks' pay for every year you worked at the company. Others will offer a firm amount, say, two weeks' pay total, for everyone. Commissions or bonuses that would be coming due may be included in your payout. Unused vacation time can be converted to cash if you're being terminated before you can make use of the time you earned. A quick story: I heard from a woman who negotiated for an extra week of vacation after her second year at the company. When that anniversary came, she went to HR to get that bonus week on the books. The HR person told her that she had to wait another year, citing "company policy." Luckily, she had her email automatically saved in her email program's archive, including the message agreeing to that extra week after two years; sent to her by the same HR person, coincidentally. She decided not to make a fuss because she wasn't planning on using the time just then. Not long after this conversation, the woman was part of a department-wide layoff. When she discussed severance with her manager, she asked to have her extra week of vacation converted to cash. The manager said she needed proof of the promise, which was on her company computer. The problem: She was now locked out of that very computer. She lost the proof and the cash. The lesson: Print hard copies of every promise you receive—bonuses, vacation time, and promotions. Store the printouts at home for safe keeping. BENEFITS The biggest benefit is an extension of your medical coverage, paid by the company, especially because COBRA is very expensive. Push hard for an employer-paid extension so you're not stuck footing the hefty bill nor are you without coverage. If your employer has paid for other benefits—a gym membership, life insurance, tuition, or cell phone bills—those may be extended too if you negotiate. PROPERTY Do you use a company-provided BlackBerry, computer, or car? Severance agreements may include an extension of access to this property. OUTPLACEMENT SERVICES Many large companies offer outplacement services, especially as part of a large layoff. It includes expert assistance with preparing for your next job. Popular services include resume writing, job search coaching, mock interviewing, and retraining. Your employer may not offer any of this. It's up to you to ask for it. So when you get the bad news, don't sign anything. Instead, ask immediately for a copy of the severance package. Find out how much time you have to review the offer before responding. Treat that deadline seriously, but don't allow anyone to rush you. You may have plenty of clout to ask for—and receive—more than what's offered. This includes additional cash, an extension of company-paid insurance, and use of property that's valuable to you. Among the points to consider when asking for extra: Did you leave a prestigious position to accept this one? Reference any personal or professional sacrifice you made to join the company. Have you been an exceptional employee? Strong performance may justify a few extra parting dollars. Will your help be needed beyond your last day? You can agree to help transition your work to a remaining staffer. Perhaps you offer to be on call for a month if questions arise that you're best qualified to answer in exchange for an extension of pay and benefits. Are you being asked to sign a waiver? In exchange for promising not to sue the company or talk publicly about your experiences, you can ask for extra money. If your manager doesn't want to read a blog or a book (think *The Devil Wears Prada*) about your experiences, he or she may readily agree to sweeten the severance in exchange for your silence. Depending on the company and your role, ask about continuing in a freelance or consulting capacity to assist with a transition. This compensation should be in addition to—not in lieu of—your negotiated severance. This is also the time to ask for a letter of recommendation from your boss. You can also ask the HR department to provide a letter confirming your dates of employment and indicating that you were part of a reduction in force, left the company in good standing, and are eligible for rehire. The more they ask of you, the more you can demand of them. Keep track of your unused vacation or other accrued benefits because they may not, which means you'll have to bring it up. Stay up to date on media coverage of layoffs to find out the latest severance packages offered in your industry or your area. Talk to friends who've been through this and ask for a referral to a reputable labor lawyer if you believe you have a claim for more than what's being offered. Don't allow the emotion of the moment to paralyze your confidence in speaking up. The power is in your hands to get the most money before you turn in that ID badge. Healthcare Expenses For many people,

the cost of COBRA to extend their health insurance coverage after a layoff is prohibitively expensive. If you're concerned about losing coverage, check with your state about less expensive alternatives or visit [ehealthinsurance.com](http://ehealthinsurance.com). Some coverage is better than none at all. Nobody ever thinks he or she will get sick or have an accident, but when those unexpected events happen, uninsured people risk financial ruin. Safeguard yourself. You may also be able to negotiate fees with doctors and pharmacies if you're no longer covered by a plan. At your doctor's office, before receiving treatment, ask about a discount for payment and a reduction in the standard fee because you're uninsured. When visiting your local pharmacy, explain that your coverage has changed and ask about special programs that provide significant savings.

**Sock It Away** If you're like most Americans, you've always lived paycheck to paycheck, which can mean sudden shock when the money stops. There's no greater fear than not knowing how you'll keep a roof over your head, the lights on, and food in the fridge. Even if you've never paid particular attention to money matters, now is not the time to turn a blind eye. Financial panic will negatively affect your job search and could lead you to make bad decisions. Ask yourself these money questions. Turning the answers into action will ease an already stressful situation. What am I owed? File for unemployment immediately (accuracy and honesty are the keys to avoiding a delay or denial of benefits) and pay particular attention to eligibility requirements in your state for emergency extensions in case it runs out before you've found a new job. Calculate this along with the amount and duration of any severance pay, including continuation of benefits. What do I have? Make a list of the account balances for all of your assets. No matter how big or small, jot down the value of savings; checking and investment accounts; and 401(k), IRA, or other retirement accounts. Also make note of the amount of available credit on your credit cards and home equity account. Even though tapping into retirement funds is not recommended because of penalties, you should know what you have in case of a financial emergency. What do I owe? Now focus on the flip side. Make a list of your monthly expenses in order of priority. Divide the list into two columns: necessities and nonessentials. Rent or mortgage, utilities, food, health insurance, gas, and car and other loan payments are likely to be your must-haves, while clothing, premium cable, and entertainment are not. Depending on severance or unemployment benefits, it's likely that while out of work, your monthly expenses may exceed your monthly income. What to do? Cut costs. Obviously dining out isn't an option when you're not bringing in the bacon. And the cuts should go deeper. Examine your bills to figure out where you can trim any excess. If you're paying for extra features on your phone or cable bill, downgrade now. Avoid canceling insurance at all costs, but consider downgrading the policy as an option if you're seriously short on funds. Conserve cash. Consider making minimum monthly payments on outstanding balances to hang on to as much cash as possible. Before making any new purchase, wait at least 24 hours before deciding if you really need it. Everything must go through the want versus need scrutiny. Steer clear of situations in which you know you'll be tempted to spend money that you can ill afford at this time. When a pal suggests a get-together for an afternoon at the mall, counter with a couple hours of strolling in the park. Contact creditors. Ignoring the bills and avoiding contact with creditors is guaranteed to result in penalties. Instead, call to explain your temporary circumstances and negotiate payment options. This may include delayed billing, lowering monthly minimums, adjusting an interest rate, and even extending credit limits. For one-on-one assistance with finances, contact the National Foundation for Credit Counseling, an association of nonprofit credit counselors ([nfcc.org](http://nfcc.org)).

**Hold the Excuses** Good Morning America anchor Robin Roberts says that she once came home after failing to get a job she wanted and complained to her parents that it was because she's black. That didn't sit well with her parents; her dad was a Tuskegee airman, the first black military air corps, her mom was the first black person on the Mississippi State board of education. "They were like, 'Sit down, missy girl! We love you, we think you're terrific, but you've got to realize you might not be good enough yet. Don't ever say it's because you're black or a woman. Don't look for excuses.'" Robin says that this little chat has stuck with her over the years. "I never have looked to make excuses or find faults in others. I just try to be the best that I can be." As women, we have a lesser degree margin of error," says Robin. "I can't tell you how many times I've been places and they hired a black or a woman and for whatever reason that person didn't work out. And they're like, 'Oh well, we tried, so we're not going to do that for a while.' And I would say, 'How many white men did you hire and that didn't work out, but that didn't prevent you from hiring, you know, another white man?'" "Don't be consumed with wanting to be liked, Robin says. "As women we want someone to like us. Yeah, I do too. But you just have to have thick skin. Do not look for excuses."

**Own Up to Reality** Back to my story. With my money dwindling and precious time wasting away, I had to quit assigning blame for my unemployment. I had to find a way to finally shake my unresolved anger; the intense, forced; 10 frustration I felt at being so rudely dismissed by my former family. I needed a vehicle to blow off steam, lots of it, once and for all. The answer came to me out of the blue. I'd take a cue from the Dear John letters by out; of; love women, and I'd write a Dear Andy letter from an out; of; work woman. And I really let him have it. Dear Andy: You're a jerk. As the new boss, you have every right to clean house and fire me. But the way you did it; with a dismissive smirk as you barely gave me five minutes to make my case; is forever seared into my memory. I will never forget how you reclined in that leather chair, hands clasped behind your balding head, as I; a terrified 22; #45 year; old publicist in my first real job; fought to stay at a company I considered heaven on earth. "Tory, it's a big world out there, and I suggest you explore it," you said. I have no other choice now, do I? But you had a choice in the way you treated me. Just

because you have the clout to hire and fire doesn't mean you have to do it so coldly and cruelly. Your arrogance astounds me. I can't help think of the scene in *Broadcast News*, where the creepy suit asks the guy he just fired if there's anything he can do for him. "Well," says the man, "I certainly hope you die soon." "I don't wish that on you or anyone. But I do wish that what happened to me happens to you someday. Mean people like you always get theirs in the end, but it often takes a while. I hope it happens to you real soon. And I wouldn't mind being there to see it. Sincerely, Tory

Not bad, eh? Wait till I tell you what happened when he got the note. You'll freak. Actually, no you won't, because I never sent it. But that doesn't mean it didn't feel good; really good; getting that anger off my chest. I still have the missive, tucked away in a safe place, not to hold onto my fury but as a reminder that it's okay to be angry when you've retreated badly and to never, ever treat someone with such disrespect. Writing a letter to the person who fired you; or who was responsible for your being fired; is an easy and effective way of making you feel better and stops you from spewing that anti-boss venom to the very people who may help you get that new job. Blah: "No job, no money, no hope." Ah!: "New life, new energy, new way to focus on what I really want to do." Lesson Learned I learned a few valuable lessons from my abrupt exit; uh, termination. Here are some of them: ALL JOBS ARE TEMPORARY Even though we think of ourselves as permanent staffers, nobody holds on to the same role forever. All of our positions are somewhat temporary. At some point; whether by choice or circumstance; it is time to move on. Sometimes that happens sooner than we would have liked or we're stunned by the suddenness of the change, but in the grand scheme of things it shouldn't be unexpected. LIFE ISN'T FAIR, AND NEITHER ARE COMPANIES Sometimes you can do everything right and still lose your job. New bosses want to bring in their own teams or old bosses think that by letting some people go they'll shake up the office. The sooner you accept that simple workplace truth, the sooner you'll get over the shock of getting fired. Another truth even more important to remember: You may have lost your job, but you'll always retain your talent. And with that talent, you can get back on your feet. MAKE THE MOST OF THIS SITUATION But sometimes making the best of it is the only thing you can do. It's still hard to admit this; even to myself; but Lack actually did me a favor. Working for someone so disrespectful and dismissive of your talents can have an adverse effect on your life and career. Just as you should end a toxic personal relationship, you should get out of an unhealthy working relationship. If you are undervalued and unappreciated for what you bring to your workplace, it's time to move on. Vice President Joe Biden tells a story about his father, who worked a variety of jobs to support his wife and four children. At one point Joe Senior was employed by an auto dealer who liked to reward his employees with silver dollars. At a company Christmas party, the boss dumped a bucket of silver dollars on the dance floor and watched as his workers scurried to pick up the coins. Joe Senior left the party, his family in tow. He never returned to his job at the dealership. His rationale: A job is not supposed to be degrading. It's supposed to be rewarding. "That's how you come to believe, to the very core of your being, that work is more than a paycheck," Senator Biden said in his speech accepting the Democratic vice-presidential nomination last year. "It's dignity. It's respect." Even if you still have a job, you may be one of the hundreds of thousands referred to as the walking wounded; you're still employed or you're underemployed, but the terms have changed. Reduced hours, pay cuts, and forced unpaid vacations or furloughs are putting the squeeze on your compensation. And while you're no doubt appreciative of that paycheck in these tough times, even as it shrinks, it's high time to kick your job search into full gear. DON'T BAD-MOUTH YOUR FORMER BOSS If you have nothing nice to say, don't say anything at all. Fight the impulse to tell everyone within earshot what a jerk your ex-boss is because, fair or not, trash talking your former employer reflects badly on you, not him or her. So vent your anger in a Dear Andy letter of your own. You'll find a place to write yours at the end of this chapter, along with a little help to get you started. When you need to talk about your hurt feelings or your fears for the future, confide in a trusted family member or friend. It may take a day, a week, a month or even a few months to get there, but once you make that cognitive shift and decide to permanently move on, I promise life will get better. It's the first step in restoring your confidence and ego; two things you will need when you seriously and effectively look for a new job. Just Do Your Job Whenever anyone asks Good Morning America Radio host Hilarie Barsky about work advice, something her dad told her early in her career comes to mind. "He was a tough guy who was very respectful of hard work," she says, and he urged her to "avoid petty office politics, gossip, and other people's drama." "Don't put your angst on others, don't let their angst rub off on you, and don't be bogged down by all of their stuff," says Hilarie, whose program airs on XM Satellite Radio. Another bit of advice from her dad: "Go to work. Do a good job. Get your money. And get the #@#\$ out of there." She took his words to heart. "I resist the urge to respond in the moment, and I'm not a confrontational person," she says. "I won't go tit for tat when someone else gets moody or frustrated. I'll bite my tongue." Silence Can Be Golden During her early years as a writer, Joanne Gordon felt she had to prove to others what she knew. That was ironic, the former *Forbes* staffer says, "since there was so much I did not know." As a result, Joanne says she probably "did more talking than listening in interviews, in meetings, and in performance reviews. I not only missed opportunities to grow, but I'm sure I failed to impress. I wish I knew that it is okay not to have answers, or to voice them if I did." No one ever told her that she was talking too much, but one day she heard someone say that whenever she heard herself talking she stopped because it was a clue she'd gone on too long. "I adopted it for myself. When I did talk less nothing was lost, only gained. Less is more." These days, Joanne says she embraces her ignorance.

"Then I ask, listen, and learn. And the moment I hear myself talking too much, I try to shut up." **Get on Your Way Now** it's time to get to work. Here are some tips to start you off on your path toward securing a new job. Write these tips down and post them on the fridge or the bathroom mirror—any place where you will see them every day. **DO NOT PANIC** Getting anxious about what you perceive as a hopeless, dismal situation or your inability to find a job is counterproductive. Nip it. It only increases your stress level—the last thing you need right now. Stay calm and in control of your emotions, because a level-headed you is much more effective than a frantic, frazzled you. **SET THAT ALARM!** Like to stay up late and sleep past noon? Great! That's what weekends are for. During the week, you have a new gig—it's called "Find a Job," and you have to get out of bed in the morning to do it. Now you're working for the most important client you'll ever have: you. Also, you don't want to miss a phone call from a prospective employer because you were asleep, nor do you want to answer that phone with a groggy voice because an HR person woke you up. This is not a vacation; this is the time to dedicate yourself to finding something better for you and your life. **PUNCH THE CLOCK!** It's natural to goof off while job hunting but it's important to approach your job search like a professional. That means putting yourself on a regular schedule. Wake up early, shower, get dressed, and have breakfast, just as you would do if you were heading out to an office. Map out a period of time each day—I recommend a minimum of four hours—during which you do nothing but make networking calls and follow ups, check online job boards, or meet professional connections. You'll be amazed at what you can accomplish in as little as four hours a day. By focusing on your job search as intently as you would a job, you're more likely to reach your goals. **GET OFF YOUR BUTT!** Pounding the pavement is not the same thing as doing cardio. While plotting your new workday, pencil in some time for exercise, even if this isn't part of your old routine. Exercise will give you added energy, enable you to blow off steam, and help you avoid depression. An hour at the gym, a brisk walk in the park with your dog or a friend, or some downward dog in your living room will recharge your body and spirit. **KEEP A JOB JOURNAL!** Buy a lined notebook to maintain a job journal dedicated to your search. On those pages, make note of at least three specific things you do each day toward finding a job. Keep track of the people you meet, paying particular attention to any required follow-ups. Since successful job searching is broken down into regular and continuous baby steps that lead to the giant goal of getting hired, all of these entries will enable you to monitor your progress. Skipping days only delays your ability to cross the finish line. End every day by reflecting on one thing that went right on the job search front. Sometimes the victories may seem awfully small, and that's perfectly acceptable. You made a cold call and the voice at the other end was friendly. You sent an introductory email to a new contact and it wasn't returned "undeliverable." You added a new connection on your LinkedIn profile. Woo hoo! Don't belittle those moments. Instead, claim them with a smile. Every step counts and it's those teeny weeny triumphs that will result in the big payoff. **DON'T IGNORE THE PAIN!** Loss of income can wreak havoc not only on your finances but also on your self-esteem. Men can be especially hard hit. If you were accustomed to being the main breadwinner, it can be emotionally crippling to admit to your family and friends that you're now out of work. Add to that the pain of not being able to take care of your loved ones financially. If these feelings are bottled up inside and they're causing friction among you and those closest to you, consider seeking professional help. If you still have access to your employee assistance program, you may be eligible for free confidential counseling. If not, contact your local Career One Stop Center or even a public or county hospital to ask for a free or low-cost referral. Until you take care of your mental health, it's difficult to put your best self forward in the job search. **Overcoming Worrying** For most of her career, Working Mother Media president Carol Evans believed that worrying about the problems at work was a necessary part of business life. "I worried about everything," she says. "How would we reach budget? What if the CEO wouldn't fund my big idea? What would happen if my ad director quit? Is that new competitor going to ruin everything? What if no one shows up for our event?" It was exhausting, Carol recalls, but necessary because if she didn't worry about everything, important things would fall through the cracks. "I convinced myself that not only was worry necessary, no, it was the secret key to my flourishing career." Then about 10 years ago she met executive coach Mary Lynne Heldmann. "I was telling her a few of my business problems and she was telling me how to handle them from a psychological perspective," Carol says. "The problems wouldn't really be solved by strategy and energy and proposals. They needed to be solved by finding a new and different strength inside myself." Over the next year Carol worked with Mary Lynne on many issues. "It took a while for me to embrace the opposite of worry—confidence—and to see that I could get much more accomplished with confidence than with worry." Today, Carol credits Mary Lynne for helping her buy Working Mother Media and run it for seven years before selling it to the Bonnier Corp. "It certainly wasn't worry that allowed me to do that," she says. "It was my strong sense of confidence—and sharing my executive coach with my management team." **BE PREPARED FOR REJECTION!** I advised a job seeker to get contacts from the alumni association of his MBA program. The first phone call he made—after he introduced himself and mentioned the connection—was greeted with, "Just because we went to the same school doesn't mean I have time for you." This guy was so horrified that he dashed off a snippy letter to me for giving him the advice and refused to make any more cold calls. All this based on one bad call. You can't be afraid of cold calling; it can cost you many good opportunities. Be prepared for rude people to reject you, to let your calls go to voicemail, to hang up on you. It's all part of the process, and it can be very upsetting, but you can't let it get to you. Just pick up the phone. **Take Criticism in**

StrideYears ago, before she became one of television's biggest news stars,ABC's Diane Sawyer walked into an TV station in her hometown ofLouisville, Kentucky, and asked for an onndash;air job.Answer: no."They said I wasn't polished enough to be on television news," she told WomenForHire.com. "It's funny, every time I run into the guy who said that to me he just rolls his eyes and says, 'Don't tell anybody!'"Being told that you're not the right woman for the jobmdash;or thatyou're bad in your current jobmdash;is tough to hear, Diane says."The first few times it happens, you're just devastated," she says. "Itjust seems so mortally wounding."In her early years, when she was unsure of her TV skills, rejectionand criticism hurt."When I would be criticized for looking icy or of seeming like asnow princess, I would think, 'Well, it's not entirely wrong because I'mnot myself on TV.' I didn't know how to be myself on TV. I was still toonervous and green, so that was wounding because it was true."But as Diane became sure of herself, she learned to take criticism instride. "You discover this funny thing happens, and as you go throughlife and it happens off and on, you feel it less."For Diane, the litmus test rests in the validity of the critique. "If I don't think it's true, then it doesn't get through my radar. I don't evennotice it."ENGAGE IN A STRATEGIC ACTIVITYProspective employers and other professionals you meet will askhow you're spending your time. You'll want to have somethingsmart to share with them. Two options: Enroll in a course that willsupport your skills development or introduce you to a new field.Another idea is to identify a worthy volunteer initiative and committo longndash;term service. You should focus your time on a cause that'saligned with your career interests or in a capacity that relates toyour career. For example, if you're in technology, volunteer for anorganization that brings technology to underserved public schoolsor give your time to a homeless group that needs a technology proto help with its internal backndash;office needs.SET MINI GOALSJob searching is a marathon, not a sprint. You won't nab the bigprize overnight, so don't torture yourself trying. While it's importantto be optimistic every day, you want to sprinkle that witha healthy dose of reality. If you wake up each morning obsessedabout getting hired that day, you'll go to sleep each night feelinglike a failure. But if you set mini goalsmdash;making five cold calls, followingup on several reacute;s, and so onmdash;you'll stand tall, pleasedwith your accomplishments.REWARD YOURSELFIf there is a single selfndash;help or motivational book out there that doesnot mention rewarding yourself for a job well done, then I have yetto find it. Looking for work is often long and hard, and there areelements of it that can be degrading as well. So it's important toset some goals and list rewards when you achieve them. Land abig interview? Treat yourself to a free career makeover at Sephora.You may even decide it's worth investing a few bucks to spruce upyour look. Send out 10 reacute;s? Have dinner with a friend at yourfavorite "cheap eats" restaurant. Hit 10 cold calls? Order in Nineto Five from Netflix. You get the drill. Rewards need not be expensive,but the feeling you'll have when you reach one of your goals ispriceless. And make sure to share your achievements with supportivefamily members and friends, who can help cheer you on.REPEAT AFTER MEI used to dismiss the power of positive thinking as some hokey gimmick.I was especially suspicious when my daughter, Emma, ended ayoga lesson and kept muttering, "I am strong, and I hold the power."But week after week, she'd stand taller and proudermdash;and evenloudermdash;when repeating the refrain at the direction of her instructor.Emma had a bounce in her step and felt good about herself. Monthslater as she'd struggle with a homework assignment, I'd overhear hersaying, "I am strong, and I hold the power." Just those wordsmdash;andsaying them out loudmdash;helped her get through a challenge. I watchedEmma have her Blah to Ah! moment. Now it's your turn.Time to download "Good Riddance" by Green Day or "Survivor"by Destiny's Child and start writing a Dear Andy letter of your own. In the box below, you'll find Mad Libsndash;style assistance. Trustme, you'll feel better before the song is over.Dear \_\_\_\_\_ [ exndash;boss' name],You are a \_\_\_\_\_ [descriptive word you'd never say in front ofyour mother].I have worked for \_\_\_\_\_ [the name of the company] for\_\_\_\_\_ [number of years], often putting my job before mypersonal life.I became used to your refusal to \_\_\_\_\_ [a verb thatshows appreciation] my efforts and your lack of \_\_\_\_\_[respect, praise, or anything positive] and complete disregardfor \_\_\_\_\_ [anything from your feelings to the good of thecompany].But I never thought you would fire me.If you only knew what it was like to listen to your \_\_\_\_\_[again, something that mom would not approve of], day afterday, forced to follow your \_\_\_\_\_ [something juicy about theboss' lamendash;brained ideas] that were not only \_\_\_\_\_ [nastyadjective] but \_\_\_\_\_ [even worse adjective], you would be\_\_\_\_\_ [how you felt when you first realized your boss was ajerk]. I certainly was, at first.But as the years passed, I realized that \_\_\_\_\_ [somethingpetty your boss prized] and \_\_\_\_\_ [something even pettier]were more important to you than getting the job done well.Despite that, I continued to work hard to fulfill the company'spromise.Clearly, \_\_\_\_\_ [anything from shared achievement tosuccess] is not on your agenda. Your expectations are \_\_\_\_\_[unreasonable? impossible? You get the idea], your manner\_\_\_\_\_ [time to make mom ashamed once again].I see my firing as evidence that you are a \_\_\_\_\_ [failure,fool, flopmdash;or another choice findash;word] as an employer, unableto \_\_\_\_\_ [inspire? appreciate? recognize?] people who arededicated to their work.In the words of the immortal Joni Mitchell, "You don'tknow what you've got till it's gone."With no regrets and in all sincerity,\_\_\_\_\_ [your name!]What Comes Aroundhellip;;Cosmetics queen Bobbi Brown is known around the world but therewas a time when she couldn't even get a job at a cosmetics counter."I tried to get a job doing makeup at Marshall Fields in Chicago,"Bobbi told WomenForHire.com. "I wanted to be a makeup artist at thecounter, and they rejected me, which I let them know when they comeinto my office wanting to carry my cosmetics. That's always a big joke."It won't be easy, but I promise you'll find success faster witha positive attitude than with negativity guiding your

days. You'll face numerous challenges in the weeks and months ahead, but you'll come out stronger and more resilient than ever, if you maintain that smile and stiff upper lip. Nobody likes a grumpy person, so you may have to force yourself since a positive, upbeat attitude is a must. Now let's get going!