

# How to overcome the shock of losing your job

Many of us know first-hand the pain of loss resulting from death or divorce. We are familiar with the stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance – not always in that order) and we patiently give our friends or ourselves, the time and compassion needed. But there is another kind of loss that is very devastating – one that sometimes inspires little empathy.

Right now, someone in your neighbourhood is grieving the loss of their job. Maybe it's you. Unexpected job losses often happen because of organizational changes (as opposed to poor performance).

The initial shock of a sudden job loss is devastating; the pain is deep and ongoing. Employees who are let go can grieve the loss of title, income, benefits, sense of purpose, routine, status, work friends, structure, respect, stability, security, and the list goes on.

During this time of grief, rather than comforting and nurturing themselves, disenfranchised employees must quickly learn and execute a variety of job search techniques, then go out and sell themselves to prospective employers. All this at a time when their self esteem is in the toilet.

Bruce was the CEO of a manufacturing company when they decided to restructure. He had climbed to the top through 30 years of hard work and dedication. He never slowed down long enough to ponder his marketability as a job candidate and had not taken the time to upgrade his education or consider the advantages of changing employers.

At a time when he should be in his prime, Bruce, a superbly qualified executive, was out of a job without a resume or any experience at sitting on the other side of the interview table.

Kira is a soft spoken, business savvy professional. With only ten years of working experience under her belt, she was still unsure of what her best fit was when she accepted a sales position with a great employer. Six months later she was stunned to be let go after it was determined that she was not enough of a "hunter"; an assessment with which she later agreed.

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## HUMAN CAPITAL



Kira had youth, a good education and a solid track record in sales on her side, but her confidence was shaken by this turn of events. Both Kira and Bruce came to me five months ago as career coaching clients. I watched them endure their respective

emotional roller coaster rides. Looking for a job after being let go is a long, lonely and grueling path. There are no rest stops along the way and the only thing less certain than what direction to take, is where and when it will all end.

The world suddenly seems to move at a snail's pace while each day presents new ways to test one's patience and optimism. Applications receive no reply; recruiters don't call when they say they will; connections dry up; phone calls go unreturned; job offers fail to materialize. For Kira and Bruce, as days turned into weeks, and then months, the support of family and friends kept them going.

Another source of support, besides a good career coach / outplacement provider, is HAPPEN - Canada's largest not-for-profit executive networking organization. Founded 18 years ago and run by dedicated volunteers and a handful of staff, HAPPEN has locations in Burlington, Mississauga, and Toronto. According to HAPPEN President Jim Geraghty, who has seen 10,000 members go through the network, the average time for members to find a job is 19.3 weeks.

HAPPEN provides events and a network

of connections for mid to senior level managers and executives. Contact them through their website: [www.happen.ca](http://www.happen.ca).

If you are between jobs, Bruce's advice is: take a step back and plan your approach. Kira adds: do some soul searching and look at this time as a gift. Bruce and Kira are the lucky ones. They were both able to turn their job search experience into a journey of self awareness and growth. They did not fall victim to depression or negativism. Kira is now working in a new role that seems a good fit. Bruce is still looking, but remains optimistic. (Anyone need a highly accomplished general manager with great business development and relationship skills?)

If you know someone who has lost his or her job, show them some kindness today. Their smile belies their tough journey.

*Hanna Dunn is a human resources professional and president of Dunn People Strategies Inc. She has been helping businesses in and around Mississauga to maximize employee engagement and corporate performance for over 20 years. You may reach her through [www.dunnpeople.com](http://www.dunnpeople.com).*

## Chef's Challenge a 'taste' of spring

Has this snowy winter got you down? Need a taste of spring? Mark down Thursday April 3rd on your calendar. Tickets are going fast for the 2nd Annual Longo's Celebrity Chef Challenge (CCC). It promises to be the social event of the spring season.

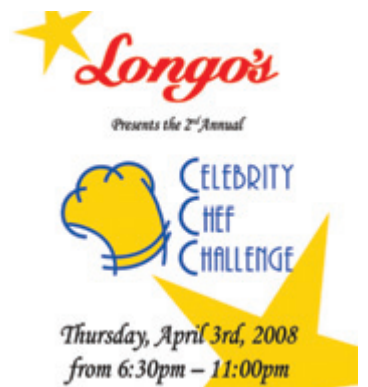
Celebrities and chefs from all over the region will gather with guests for a great evening of fun, superb food, and entertainment – all in one of the prettiest settings in our area.

This is your chance to mingle with hockey's Johnny Bower, skating's Barbara Underhill, radio's Ted Woloshyn, TV's Francis DeSousa, along with our very own Jake Dheer, Ron Lenyk, Steve & Katie Mahoney, Ron Starr, Ron Duquette and many more.

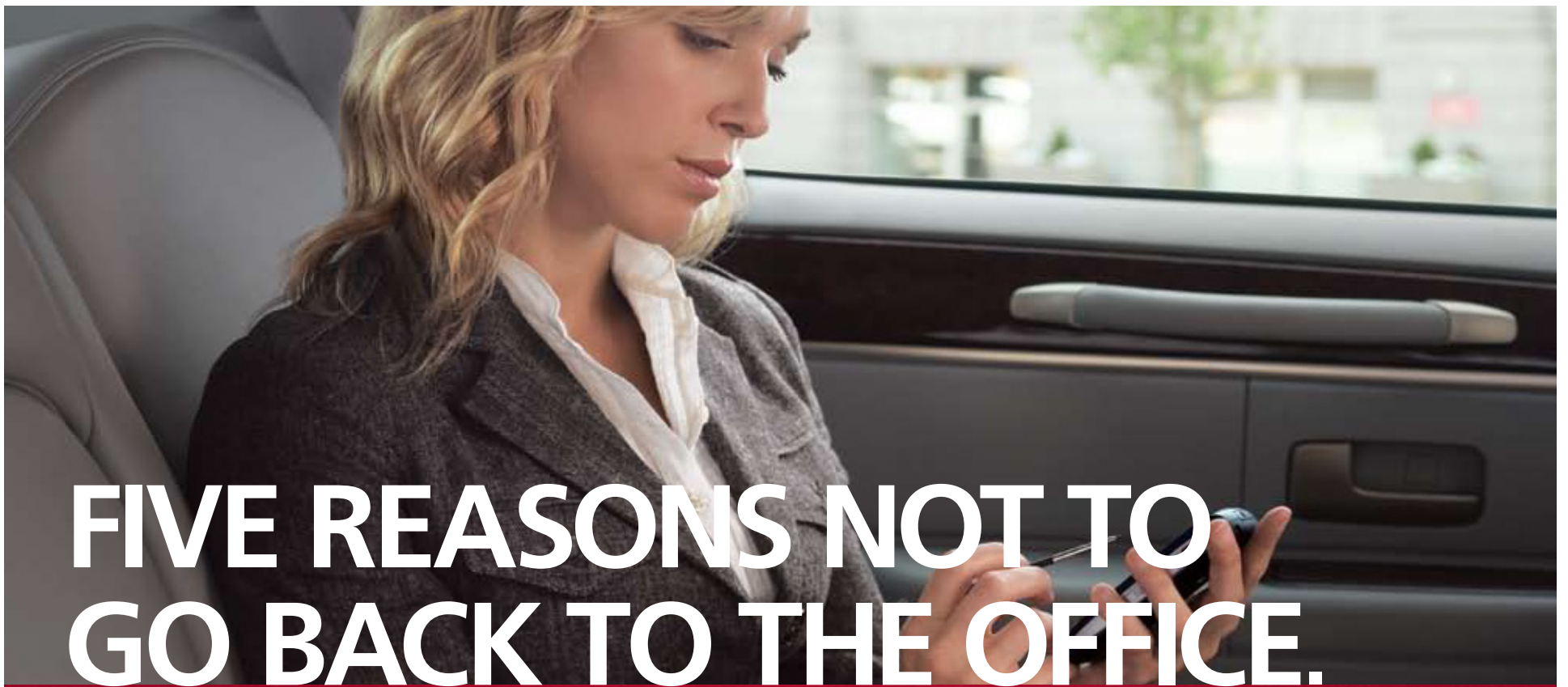
Savour the flavours from Lucy's Seafood Kitchen, Longo's Kitchen, Hip Restaurants' Executive Chef Bruce Robitaille, Pearson Convention Centre, Tikki Tikka, Chef Jono, Organic Oven, McCullagh Coffee, Feast Your Eyes, Fanzorellis, Dirty Martini, Barefoot Wines and many more.

The CCC's SECRET venue is one of the most compelling spots in the entire region and boasts some of the prettiest vistas. This all adds up to a great night of classy dining. You can almost taste the excitement this evening will provide.

The event is a fundraiser for Victim Services of Peel (VSOP), a registered charity. It partners with Peel Regional Police as the only around-the-clock crisis intervention agency for victims of crime or tragedy in Mississauga and Brampton.



For ticket information, please call Dianne Morgan at 905-453-2121 x 7653 or e-mail [dianne@vspeel.org](mailto:dianne@vspeel.org)



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