

Step 1: Let Go of the Past

A change as radical as the move from job-based to dejobbed workplaces is hard to accept. Such a change requires everyone to go through the difficult internal process of transition. This transition takes place in three phases:

1. *An ending.* You must break away from the way things were.
2. *A neutral zone.* You've lost the old way of doing things but you haven't found the new way.
3. *A new beginning.* Once again, you have become comfortable with the way things are now.

Handling Your Endings

The first step in a transition is ending your ties to the past. To achieve this phase successfully:

- Decide exactly what is over, and what isn't.
- Choose symbolic "boundary" actions to mark your clean break with the past.
- Sort your losses into those that

you can retain (your friends, for example), those you should replace (e.g., income) and those you simply give up (the idea that a job will set you for life, for instance).

- Find and strengthen the continuities in your life.

- Look back at the path you've been following. What is the message in this change?

Don't deny your feelings of anger and depression. They are only natural.

Endings aren't easy. Our first reflex is to deny that the ending is occurring. On the issue of dejobbing, you might point out that jobs still exist in every company. "Why should I quit my job?"

We're not asking you to. Instead, try to let go of the *idea* of jobs. Try to end the attitudes, expectations, assumptions, self-images, and values that come with the traditional idea of "having a job." ☆

Step 2: Face Up to the Neutral Zone

Fundamental changes are slow-moving. As a result, you don't travel directly from the old way into the new. Instead, you find yourself in a neutral zone where there seems to be no way.

How do you survive?

By reestablishing four things that endings often destroy:

1. Control. Create checkpoints and short-range goals for yourself. You will feel more in control of the transition if you see progress. Also, don't burden yourself with unnecessary responsibilities. You have enough changes with which you must deal.

2. Understanding. Learn everything you can, from other people or from resources such as books, about what is going on. How do dejobbed organizations really work and what can you do?

3. Support. Seek support groups at work and outside the workplace. If the transition period is very shaky (you are jobless, for example), make temporary arrangements to help you through.

4. Purpose. What do you want out of life? The neutral zone is the place to reflect on your personal agenda. Now's the time to experiment. Now you must try to go in new directions, and to be creative.

To successfully navigate through this phase, use the tools and assistance provided by society. Career-development centers will help you design alternatives to traditional jobs. Whether or not you are employed, use these centers to learn about reeducation, financial assistance, and any other type of assistance in the search for innovative employment. ☆

Transitions and Reality

Don't question the reality of the changes taking place because of the difficulty of the transition.

Before the industrial revolution brought factories and jobs, work was organized around tasks. The transition to jobs created great distress and unhappiness. (Think of the sweat shops and child labor.) Still, jobs were indeed the future basis of work.

Today the distress caused by the transition to a future without jobs ("How can we survive without a stable income?") doesn't make such a future any less real.

Step 3: Now, Make the New Beginning

In the neutral zone, you gained control and understanding of the changes that are happening. You've reflected on the purpose of your life. Now you must act.

Take your reflections and turn them into objectives. Then design a step-by-step action plan to reach those objectives.

Action plans look notoriously good on paper. The difficulty is adapting them to reality.

Finding a mentor, such as an entrepreneur or an artist who has left the job world, is important to demonstrate the reality of the dejobbed world. Also seek out ideas, resources, and contacts in governmental agencies, educational institutions, or self-help groups.

And put together learning projects. These can range from reading books to earning college degrees.

It will seem easier to "get another job" than to make a real transition to a dejobbed future. Yet the dejobbed future exists. You are surrounded by pioneers who have made a new beginning. Learn from them.

A final reminder: Act, don't talk. ☆