

*Revised 2011©
All Rights Reserved
Damian Birkel: (336) 972-8876
damian.birkel@earthlink.net*



Coping With Job Loss Through the Holidays

*A Seasonal Survival Guide for
Downsized Employees, their Families, Friends, and Loved Ones*

by

Damian Birkel

Artwork by Cheryl Powell

**Copyright 2011
All Rights Reserved**



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	Coping With Job Loss Through the Holidays
CHAPTER 1:	Don't Be A Humbug <i>Go with the Holiday Flow!</i>
CHAPTER 2:	Top 10 Reasons to ~NOT~ Put Your Job Campaign On Hold <i>Defy conventional wisdom and maximize your Holiday job search</i>
CHAPTER 3:	Surviving Holiday Job Search Interrogations <i>Ambush Prevention & Humiliation Avoidance</i>
CHAPTER 4:	Family Coping <i>You're in it Together</i>
CHAPTER 5:	Million Dollar Entertainment on a Dime <i>Creative Alternatives to Traditional Holiday Parties</i>
CHAPTER 6:	Low Cost/No Cost Holiday Gift Giving <i>Putting Your Gift List on a Low Dollar Diet</i>
APPENDIX	Non-Commercial Holiday Gift Certificates <i>Free Gift Certificates <u>from you to your family!</u></i>
	About the Author
	About Professionals In Transition



INTRODUCTION:

Coping With Job Loss Through the Holidays

Until you and your family have experienced being unemployed during the holidays, it is almost impossible to talk about what it really feels like. After surfing the emotional wave of job loss twice in a ten-year period, I made a promise to never forget what it was like to be downsized. Coping With Job Loss During the Holidays© is a personal gift from me, our many volunteers, and the thousands of people touched by our non-profit support group, Professionals In Transition®. We look forward to your feedback .

Coping with job loss is difficult at any time of the year, but especially challenging during the Holiday Season. There is no socially acceptable way to lose your job. However, the vulnerability, hopelessness anger, and depression that are a part of the job search process is magnified 100% during the holidays.

While the world is full of good cheer from Thanksgiving to the new year, it is difficult to feel joyful, grateful, and generous when without income and a predictable future. Holiday gatherings will now require you to publicly admit your job loss to well-meaning friends, concerned loved ones, and total strangers. But, if you proactively plan now, you can create your own personal Re-Employment Toolbox © **and learn *how to leverage the job search process and maximize the unique job-searching advantages that the entire holiday season offers.***



CHAPTER 1:

Don't Be a Humbug *Go With the Holiday Flow!*

Turning into a Humbug during the holidays feels perfectly natural...It seems like just yesterday, you were investing most of your time and energy at your office. The payback included a job title and office, compensation and benefits, the support of your colleagues, and the respect of the community. *Now you're an outcast.* The rest of the world goes on while your life has ground to a halt. You're feeling hurt, angry, and betrayed, and you wonder whether you'll ever work again. To make matters even worse, you're under intensive pressure to find another job immediately because you have bills to pay.

Go With the Holiday Flow...just like everyone else!

If you've been moving heaven and earth to get a new job, *the thought of taking a few days off to celebrate the holidays may seem wrong.* But didn't you do the very same thing when you were working?

Don't become a humbug. Understand that the holidays temporarily change the rhythm in the workplace. Go with the holiday flow. If you factor into your job search that vacations, curtailed office hours, and many hiring budgets are tapped out until January, your approach will be different.

Concentrate on getting out and meeting people

National statistics show that over 80% of all jobs are never published and less than 10% of jobs come from the Internet. Jobs are created by people for people. 90% of all hiring is done on an emotional level (i.e. “If I like you I may hire you, If I don’t I won’t...”)

Getting out and meeting people significantly increases your chances of finding a job during or after the holidays. It is also a great way to align yourself with the rhythms of the season.

Don’t be a Job-Search Dropout

The natural tendency is to want to cocoon during the holidays and simply restart a job search after the New Year. Feeling vulnerable and embarrassed is common, and wanting to avoid contact with families and friends is a natural reaction.

Dropping out of the job-search may *feel* appropriate, but why deny yourself the unique networking opportunities that come once a year?

Turn off your computer and tune in to your community.

Look for volunteer opportunities. Call your local church, United Way or favorite agency. They would *love* to hear from you! You’ll feel needed, appreciated, worthwhile, and grateful for all that you still have; not what you have lost. It’s also a great way to meet people in the community.

Holiday Rhythm creates multiple opportunities to network.

People are feeling merry and generous at this time of year. If effectively approached, they may be much more sensitive to your situation, and as a result may be more inclined to help you. Don’t wait until January when normal rhythms resume. *Carpe’ Diem...Seize the day!*

The interesting thing about networking is that you never know exactly where it will lead or whom you'll meet. You simply take cues from those that you meet and flow from one networking opportunity to another. But just because you can't control the process of networking doesn't mean you can't enjoy it.

Aligning yourself with the rhythm of the Holidays creates many unplanned opportunities to talk with high-powered people - busy professionals at the top rungs of their industries' career ladders – which you would otherwise never have an opportunity to meet.

Holiday networking can be an exciting and uplifting byproduct of the “going with the Holiday Flow.”

Don't be a Humbug; enjoy the holidays...join in the celebration.

We all have something to feel good about. Taking time to recognize your individual blessings will actually endear you to friends, family, and others who rely upon you in this time of transition.

Give yourself permission to simply relax. Not only will you enjoy the holiday season, taking a few *scheduled days off* will help you stay mentally fit and refreshed in the months to come -- making you a more attractive candidate and potentially shortening your search.

Job searching is difficult any time of the year. Being in the midst of the holiday season without work is a major challenge, **but it's no excuse to become a Holiday Humbug or Job Search Drop Out.**



CHAPTER 2:

Top 10 Reasons to NOT Put Your Job Campaign On Hold

Defy conventional wisdom and maximize your Holiday Job Search

Despite conventional wisdom, many job seekers will find that *the holiday season is actually a great time to be looking for a job*. While some companies put hiring on hiatus through the end of the year, many others actively interview and fill positions that will begin after January 1st as new budgets kick in.

A recent study showed that up to 30% of HR managers have positions they expect to fill by the end of the year.

Also, the likelihood of connecting with high level executives in many cases may be much greater because they are off the road and in the office.

Here Are The Top 10 Reasons to ~NOT~ Put Your Job Search On Hold During The Holidays:

(1) Less competition. Many job searchers simply give up during the holidays. Putting an active job hunt on pause reduces momentum and potential opportunities. Instead of putting a job search on hold, bump it up a notch by increasing your holiday activities and stand out from the crowd.

(2) It's an outstanding time to network. People are in a generous mood at this time of year and may be more sensitive to the situation of those who are unemployed, and as a result may agree more readily to a meeting.

(3) Holiday parties offer great chances to expand your network. Job searchers should plan to attend any office or business related party they can. There is no more effective event to make contacts for networking afterwards.

(4) Slower holiday pace increases the chances of connecting with a key decision-maker. Assistants and secretaries who screen calls take time off over this period. Opportunities to reach decision-makers may increase since they may be answering their own phone while administrative staff is on vacation.

(5) Holiday cards represent a communication opportunity even if every person you want to network is not available...busy executives often open such mail themselves and are far more likely to read the contents. As a result, you'll have a fabulous opportunity to bring your existing network up to date as well as more elusive targets regarding your search.

Be careful though...you're sending a holiday card, not a job searching advertisement. Offer seasonally appropriate salutations only, and be sure to take the extra step of writing your messages by hand. This is, after all, a holiday card, which makes it an inappropriate vehicle of anything other than good cheer.

(6) The Holidays are a great chance to keep the promises you make. When sending greeting cards or emails, tell your contacts that however bad you've been in the past, this time you definitely will be in touch and not to be surprised to hear from you. They will then take your call with goodwill, not suspicion.

(7) Volunteering to help others can expand the job searcher's network of contacts. Your unique talents may be demonstrated to highly motivated and well connected staff and board members at a time of year when many corporate, charitable or community support programs are short of help.

(8) Be open to unexpected opportunities. A man who had worked as an inventory control specialist for a large corporation was in a pizza parlor one Saturday afternoon. In front of him was a tired looking man with an armload of pizza and soft drinks.

"Going to a party?" he asked the man with the pizza.

"No," the man said. He nodded toward the building across the street; "We're doing our annual inventory. We'll be here all week-end working late."

"Don't you have a database program to do all that?" the specialist asked.

"The company has one but the person who knew how to run it left for another job. We're doing it by hand."

The specialist said he believed he could help, walked across the street, and after a quick demonstration of his skills was hired on the spot.

(9) Understand that there may be hidden benefits to being unemployed during the holidays. Enjoy your family and enjoy the season of giving together. Focus on Quality of Life Issues by concentrating on abundance, whenever you can, instead of scarcity.

(10) Don't be afraid to take creative action just because it is the Holiday Season... There once was a creative job seeker that answered a newspaper ad for an office assistant. It was during the Great Depression and the line of applicants wound around the block. Realizing that there were hundreds of people and just one position, he ran across the street to a Western Union office and had the following telegram delivered to the interviewer: "Don't hire anyone until you see the red-headed kid at the end of the line." Shortly after the telegram was delivered the interviewer came out of his office with the telegram clutched in his hand. He found the red-headed sender of the message and took him into the office. The interviewer said, "You are exactly the sort of person we need here," and hired him on the spot. The moral of the story is: "Don't be afraid to take the initiative to contact those that may be able to help you, especially during the Holidays."

Finally, pay attention to your former employer's current situation.

Four specialists with a state agency had their jobs eliminated even though the federal government mandated their work. In a problem solving session, a few of them saw that their work had to be done by someone even if the state had to hire a consulting firm to do it. The solution? They formed a consulting firm and obtained the contract at a higher rate of pay for them all!

Partially Adapted from Professionals In Transition®, and the Career Bounce-Back! series of books and CD's by Damian Birkel



CHAPTER 3:

How to Handle Holiday Job Search Interrogations *Ambush Prevention & Humiliation Avoidance*

Don't worry about being interrogated during the holidays about being unemployed: **You will.**

Picture Yourself Here: With great determination and courage you find yourself standing in front of a festively decorated fireplace, holding a glass of punch, in the company of beloved family and friends. The tree is incredible, with presents stacked high. Christmas tunes play softly in the background. There's a brief lull in the conversation until from somewhere to your right, you hear someone ask, "**Hey Damian, how's the job search?**"

The last thing you really want to talk about is why you are still out of work. Yet, well meaning relatives and friends just can't help themselves. They're curious and probably mean you no harm. **Humiliated, you may mumble** something like "ok" or "it's going." Yet now that your job search has become the center stage, it won't go away. Your questioner and others in the room may look puzzled. Thoughtless comments like: "Didn't you get downsized in, May...What's the delay?," or "What's the outlook in this economy for someone who has so many years of Information Technology experience?" or "I just don't know what I would do if I were downsized like you!"

Be prepared for these types of Holiday Job Search Interrogations.

Avoid being ambushed and plan to have fun.

Attending holiday events can be one of the most effective ways to job search during the holidays. Where else could you meet high leverage folks in a low-key social setting who may be able to help immeasurably in your search?

Consider the Holiday Event.

Your best friend is inviting people from throughout the community for the family's annual open house. They may be executives, staffing or human resources professionals. Well-connected business leaders could be members of your church and planning to attend the holiday potluck. Your next-door neighbor might be inviting her golfing buddy -- an executive recruiter -- to her event. All of these people know people. And the bottom line is that you just don't know who may provide the information you need to find a lead to your next best job.

Be prepared to maximize your holiday party experience by meeting high leverage people.

First, follow the lead of your host...many times they will go out of their way to insure that you connect with party attendees. Even if you know who and what the power attendee does for a living, never discuss work -- theirs or your lack of it. Second, anticipate the questions you'll be asked and develop a strategy for dealing with them.

Start by assuming that anyone who asks you about your search is genuinely interested, even if what he or she says sounds lame. Always assume that the person means well. That way you'll have a positive reaction, and that will reflect in your answers.

Let's do a replay...

There's a brief lull in the conversation and you hear someone ask, "**Hey Damian, how's the job search?**" Your well rehearsed, positive and

proactive response should revolve around where you are going and what you're looking for, not where you have been or why you haven't found it:

"Donna, I'm glad you asked. The job search is going really well. It's important for me to find the right opportunity in a place where I really fit. Many companies are hiring, and I easily could get a job, but I'm laying the groundwork to find something that will be rewarding on a deeper level."

"But didn't you get downsized 3 months ago...What's the delay?"

"This is a process, and I have had the opportunity for both personal assessment and exploration of new and different directions. I have a number of potential leads in the works, and I'm confident the right thing will come along. I really appreciate your interest. Could I call you next week to discuss my situation?"

Have business cards printed and ready to distribute so you won't be embarrassed when someone says, "I'll give you a call. May I have your card?" There are a number of resources that you can utilize, but a basic business card should include your name, address, phone number and e-mail address. Doing simple things like this will save you unnecessary discomfort and make you seem businesslike. You can get more information at a number of websites.

Assume that you're at a party where you don't know anyone...

You probably won't have to deal with questions about your status. Your goal is to meet and chat with lots of people without seeming panicked, disgruntled or depressed. You want to appear friendly, calm, and self-

assured - in short, as someone who would "fit" the culture and values of a respected organization.

It goes without saying that you're your best advertisement. Pay attention to your grooming and attire at holiday parties. Don't smoke or drink alcohol excessively. You'll never be referred or recommended to anyone for anything if you're out of control.

People with good social skills will have an advantage.

The best way to be interesting to others is to be interested in them. Ask plenty of questions, but do not under any circumstances ask what they do. As a friend once said, the answer to "What do you do?" is, "What do I do about what?" The moment you ask someone what he or she does, they're going to turn around and ask what you do. You may not want to give them the chance. Responses to this question revolve around societal status, and why go there if your objective is to begin a personal relationship?

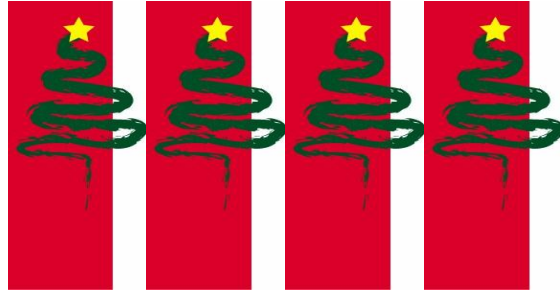
People go to parties to relax, laugh, and socially interact.

They want to talk about things outside of their jobs. *So ask about their families, hobbies, spouses and anything else that relates to their lives before and outside of work.* Here are some questions I always use: "Tell me about your spouse," "How did you two meet?" "Where are you from?" "How did you come to move here?" and "What do you do when you aren't working?" Everyone wants to talk about himself or herself and if you can get them to do that, you have the potential opportunity to establish rapport and a future relationship with them.

Please, don't ever corner someone you've just met at a party for advice. It can be both awkward and ineffective. People don't want to be put on the spot. They have come to the holiday party to mingle, not engage in an anguished strategy session with you. Further, you want them to know that you value and respect their time. If you want to talk to them in more

detail, say, "I'd like to get your thoughts on my situation. Here is my business card. Would it be OK for me to call you next week?" If someone said this to me at a party, I would find a way to make time for an [information interview](#) with them.





CHAPTER 4:

Family Coping

You're in it Together

Family members may experience the same emotions that you experience while you're unemployed. Job Loss is one of the top 10 most traumatic things that happen in life and the Emotional Impact of being out of work is significant. Emotional stages include:

Shock and Denial

Fear and Panic

Anger

Bargaining

Depression

Temporary Acceptance

Holidays are particularly challenging. Help your family cope by:

- Making a special effort to ask how everyone's feeling and what you can do to help, no matter what you're going through.
- Not assuming that your family members' concerns and emotions will be in synch with yours.

Keep in mind the special ways in which unemployment affects your children.

- Younger kids will probably not understand enough about your job loss to react to it in the same way as adult members of your household.
- Kids will feel the anxiety and tension that pervades your home, and they'll hear adults whispering in worried tones. That may trigger surprisingly adult emotional reactions such as panic and "catastrophizing."

- As a result, your kids will need your continuous love, reassurance, and guidance as much as the adults in your household who are fully "in the know."
- Take the time to offer an age-appropriate explanation of your job loss. Emphasize the fact that any consequences of your unemployment will be short-lived and that, together, the family can handle any problems that arise.

You may be the one who is out of work, but your job loss touches the lives of everyone around you. Remember that family members are dealing with concerns and fears of their own.

You can't control how others treat you, so instead of worrying about what they can do for you, focus on what you actually can control.

Ask For Family Support.

It's natural to want to appear strong to your family. It doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman. You want to be the rock, the steady force that family members depend on and look to for support. But turning into a silent warrior isn't the answer.

Sometimes asking for support is difficult, but major life events such as a job loss can either bring a family together or tear it apart. If you establish open communication in the beginning, the little things won't become big things in the end.

Find out what worries them most and address those worries.

Everyone in the family experiences your job loss differently. A spouse or partner may wonder what it means to your finances and your vacation dreams. Will he or she have to go back to work or will you lose the house? Your kids may wonder if they'll have to relocate, change schools, move or leave their friends. If your children are older, they might be concerned about paying for high school or college.

Remember that you aren't the only one who may be afraid or anxious.

Ask your partner what his or her greatest concerns or fears are. Take time to process what you hear. Allow your partner to list them all and explain or elaborate. Don't dismiss these issues, even if they seem minor. Knowing the triggers that upset your partner can help you address them. Discuss each matter as directly and honestly as possible. Let your partner know how you plan to manage each issue. If you don't know or lack an answer, say so.

Don't sit on the couch drinking beer and watching soap operas.

Your family is depending on you. Rejection is the hardest part of the job search. Your family needs to know that your full time job is finding a full time job. You need to be up and moving every day and not vegging in front of the television or surfing endlessly on the Internet.

What drives a family nuts is when you act like you are giving up, or simply pausing until the stars and moon align so the "right" opportunity can fall into your lap. Too many job seekers "*over think*" their search, "*over plan*, *over prepare*" or use every excuse for why "*now*" isn't a good time to do anything. This includes sitting around waiting for the holidays to be over, a recruiter to call, your contact to return from vacation, the economy to improve, budgets to be approved, an introduction to come through or waiting for pigs to fly. *Your loved ones need to see consistent action.*

During the Holidays be optimistic, but realistic too!

Optimism is important, but so is reality. The reality is, other than family members, most people are focusing on the holidays, not your job search. Remember that your family is as emotionally involved in your job search as you are. They rise with your highs and sink with your lows. They get as excited as you do when you secure an interview or promising lead and are equally upset when an opportunity doesn't work out or you receive a rejection letter.

It's important to temper everyone's expectations, as well as your own.

You don't want to look or act like the *grim reaper*, however you do want to give a positive yet realistic assessment of your progress, prospects, emotional, and financial status. Be positive and enthusiastic, but don't offer false hope to keep family members from worrying. Be realistic. If an interview went well and looks promising, say so. If you truly feel that it was a bust, or if a lead or contact wasn't as helpful as you had hoped, it's all right to say that, too.

You don't have to suffer through the holidays just because you're unemployed.

Remember, you're much more than your last job! Your personal worth as an individual is not just what you do for a living. Take the time to count your blessings. Your spouse, kids, and you will get cabin fever if you're so afraid to spend money that you never go anywhere. But with a bit of creativity, you can find inexpensive ways of getting out and doing things together. Find joy in all of your holiday preparations. Resist the urge to stay at home because you're feeling "blue."

*Remember that the New Year is just around the corner, and it will surely bring renewed opportunities for your job and career as long as you **continue to believe in yourself, and keep active in your job search.***



CHAPTER 5

Million Dollar Entertainment on a Dime

Creative Alternatives to Traditional Holiday Parties

Perhaps the most difficult part of working through job loss is the realization that in many cases those who you thought would help you the most turn away, while complete strangers (out of the generosity of their hearts) bend over backwards to help. *You quickly learn who your true friends are and who your work acquaintances were.*

Friends can really lift your spirits at any time of the year, but when you're job seeking, you need their friendship, love, and support *even more than ever*. Don't turn them away at holiday time! You don't have to worry about breaking your budget as long as you select activities where you can share, but not spend.

Why not enjoy million-dollar entertainment on a dime?

Plan *inexpensive lunches* rather than dining or drinking at expensive restaurants to celebrate the holidays. Why not suggest holiday shopping together this year, followed by a *restorative drink* at a beverage bar, instead of eating a meal? Another idea is to both take your kids downtown, and *enjoy looking at the festive decorations* in the stores. Invite a few close friends over to bake batches of holiday cookies, and divvy up the results. *There's room in even the tightest budgets for these special and merry activities.*

Don't withdraw from festive party invitations.

If you're worried about what you'll say when you're asked: "What do you do for a living?" Just smile and say that you're in the middle of a career search.

Instead of focusing on your problems, take time off to read the paper every day (not just the classifieds) so you'll be well informed and have something to talk about besides your job search at holiday parties.

Chat about all the good things you're doing and what you hope to do in the future.

Resist the urge to launch into a litany about how frustrating the job search really is. Avoid the temptation to talk about your former company in a negative fashion or discuss your anger about losing your job and the trouble you may be having paying the bills.

Creative Alternatives to Traditional Holiday Parties.

There's no reason to postpone a holiday party. If treating your friends to a festive event makes you feel good, *just do it*. You may have to offer a lower cost holiday spread if you're between jobs, but your family and friends will be doubly appreciative of your effort. Go ahead and schedule the party, but cut costs by serving chicken instead of salmon, wine instead of champagne, and homemade dessert instead of fancy, bakery items.

Cut costs even more by changing to a theme party instead of having a full holiday dinner.

How about having a dessert party, where you serve homemade desserts and fancy coffee drinks, instead of a full bar? Bring-your-own-bottle or bring-your-favorite-dish events are great alternatives. Planning a progressive dinner party can become a low cost, festive event for family and friends. One family or friend in his/her house can host appetizers, the main course is served in another close friend's house, and everyone ends up in a third house for dessert.

There's no need to skimp on Festive Decorations or Gifts.

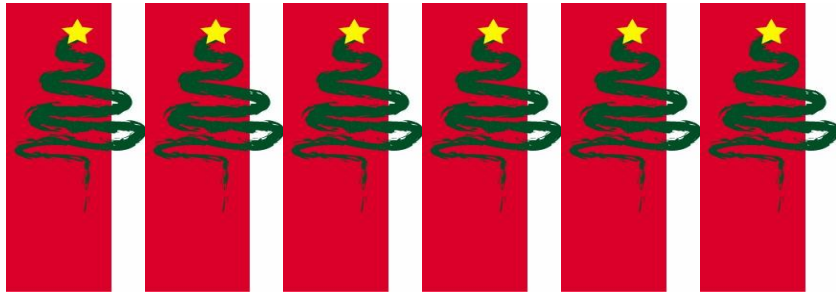
Too many people turn the preparation of traditional holiday parties into a Hollywood production. Planning and decorating needn't bankrupt you. Why not instead, *simplify the process by creating an old-fashioned theme* with thrifty, but still highly festive holiday decorations and presents?

Forget the latest store bought glitz and instead string popcorn, cranberries, or beads on your tree. Hand make ornaments out of oranges and apples stuck with cloves, or cut shapes from old holiday cards and put ribbons through them. Or, purchase low cost ornaments and lights from a discount store and add the personal touch with glitter, sequins, or ribbons.

Create heirloom gifts the same way, by hand making them with glitter glue or paint. To inexpensively light up your holiday nights outside, purchase votive candles and put them inside holiday lunch bags (lined with sand to protect them from catching on fire), or use plastic milk jugs and/or terracotta pots.

The bottom line is: you can enjoy million dollar entertainment on a dime by creating low cost/no cost alternatives to traditional Holiday Parties.





CHAPTER 6

Low Cost/No Cost Holiday Gift Giving *Putting Your Gift List on a Low Dollar Diet*

Putting your gift list on a low dollar diet is an appropriate strategy for the holidays. Preserve the magic of the holidays! Good friends and family already know about your job situation and may automatically suggest that you not exchange gifts this year. That shouldn't be a barrier to gift giving, though. Forget about the size of the gift...*it is the ritual, love, and good wishes behind gift giving that really counts*, not the dollars involved.

Don't feel ashamed because your gift may be smaller this year--it is the thought that counts...so *be sure you put extra thought into what you select*, this year. Shop wisely and well in advance of the holidays. Avoid waiting until the 11th hour to shop when there's little left to choose. Don't just buy anything because you have just one day left, and you're still not finished with your list!

If you celebrate Chanukah and can't afford eight big presents, make or purchase eight small but highly appreciated items geared specifically for that special family member.

Gift baskets *made by you* are a great way to put your gift list on a low dollar diet. Bread packaged with a cutting board, candies and cookies packed in inexpensive tins from the dollar store, or easy-to-make-oils in unusual bottles, can be included. Fruit, jam, wine and cheese or other goodies are great too. Hand made decorations or holiday sweatshirts (use fabric paints or

iron-on designs, or glued-on appliqués, trim, sequins, beads, and glitter) are always appropriate.

Homemade gifts can be ready-made cakes, muffins, cookies, hot cocoa, coffee, tea or other kitchen products. Wrap and include them in baskets, or hand-sewn fabric bags, along with the cooking instructions. Include related products like a cake pan, muffin tin, cookie cutter, or a mug. Personalize your homemade gifts by using your computer or decorative stamps to make "your own brand" labels.

Leverage Low Cost/No Cost Holiday Gift Giving by giving the greatest gift of all...yourself! Offer your services for something specific. Task related coupons are really appreciated. You could baby-sit for your favorite couple to give them some romantic time together. Cater a dinner for your always-too-busy friend. Be a personal shopper for an elderly family member.

Announce your gift with a certificate, which you put in a festive beautiful box, or in a pretty card. **You can make your own or utilize the free downloadable gift certificates on the pages that follow in the Appendix of this e-book.**

Free Gift Certificates from You™ include:
Set of (6) Gift Certificates redeemable any time!





 <p><i>Gift Certificate</i></p> <p>This certificate is good for unlimited number of</p> <p>HUGS</p> <p>(redeemable immediately!)</p> <p>Happy Holidays</p> <p>to: _____</p> <p>from: _____</p> 	 <p><i>Gift Certificate</i></p> <p>This certificate is good for your choice of one</p> <p>Snow Shoveling or Lawn Mow</p> <p>(redeemable immediately or when needed!)</p> <p>Happy Holidays</p> <p>to: _____</p> <p>from: _____</p>
 <p><i>Gift Certificate</i></p> <p>This certificate is good for one</p> <p>Garage Cleaning</p> <p>(redeemable immediately or when it's really messy!)</p> <p>Happy Holidays</p> <p>to: _____</p> <p>from: _____</p> 	 <p><i>Gift Certificate</i></p> <p>This certificate is good for one week's worth of</p> <p>Laundry Service by M</p> <p>(redeemable immediately!)</p> <p>Happy Holidays</p> <p>to: _____</p> <p>from: _____</p>
 <p><i>Gift Certificate</i></p> <p>This certificate is good for one</p> <p>Dinner Cooked by Me</p> <p>(redeemable immediately!)</p> <p>Happy Holidays</p> <p>to: _____</p> <p>from: _____</p> 	 <p><i>Gift Certificate</i></p> <p>This certificate is good for five nights of</p> <p>Homework Help</p> <p>(redeemable immediately or save it for a really tough</p> <p>Happy Holidays</p> <p>to: _____</p> <p>from: _____</p>



Damian Birkel is a Certified Career Counselor and the Founder of [Professionals In Transition](#) Support Group, Inc. (PIT®), a non-profit organization founded in 1992 to assist downsized employees.

Professionals In Transition is one of the oldest non-profit service organizations offering free, weekly support group meetings for the unemployed and the under-employed in America. Nationally recognized for its unique program, PIT has been highlighted in numerous printed and electronic publications including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *Associated Press*, *Fortune Magazine*, *Los Angeles Times*, *CNN*, *Oprah's Oxygen Network*, *National Public Radio*, *Parade Magazine*, *Entrepreneur*, *Ebony*, *ABC.com*, *MSNBC.com* and *Monster.com*.

Having lost a job as a result of downsizing and having survived three company reorganizations, Birkel established Professionals In Transition ® to create "safe space" where members could discuss the issues surrounding unemployment. He has written widely about career topics in numerous publications and is the co-author of [Career Bounce-Back!](#) which has recently been reprinted in a second revised edition. Birkel's book is a direct outgrowth of time spent with [Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross](#) (a world class expert on death and dying) and [Richard Nelson Bolles](#), author of *What Color Is Your Parachute* (Ten Speed Press)



About Professionals In Transition

MISSION:

The Mission of Professionals In Transition Support Group, Inc.® is to reach out to downsized employees and help them deal with the experiences or re-employment in an atmosphere of confidentiality, integrity and trust. PIT has helped hundreds of members over its' twelve year history rebuild their self-esteem and restart their careers.

Job loss... how do you cope?



You have just been told that your position has been eliminated. You've been instructed to return to your cube, get your car keys and leave the premises. Eyes burning, overwhelming shame and humiliation scorch through as your co-workers look away as your boss escorts you on the long walk from the Conference Room to your former workspace. Your security clearance has already been revoked and badge turned into Human

Resources. But *the good news* is that you'll have the opportunity to make an appointment to return to your cube after hours to pack your personal belongings. Now you have to go home and tell the family.

Where do I go? How do I begin? Who will help me find a job? I never had to look for a job before...this is the only job I ever had! My family is in danger of losing everything we have worked so hard to gain, and this is all my fault. Isn't there anybody out there who can help? This is a picture of an individual and family in crisis. There is a tremendous need to provide job search techniques, reemployment leads, empathy, hope, ideas and perspective, but where do you turn for help?

Professionals In Transition® (PIT) @ www.jobsearching.org

serves as a lifeline to the downsized employee facing the terror and trauma of unemployment. We provide information, networking, fellowship, confidentiality, trust and hope. Since 1992, PIT has held weekly meetings helping downsized employees and their families deal with the trauma of the unemployment, underemployment, and re-employment process in an atmosphere of confidentiality, integrity, and trust. Professionals In Transition is open to anyone in need of its support. All occupational groups are welcome.

Professionals In Transition has responded to the re-employment needs of over 3,000 downsized employees and their families by offering:

- Emotional Support.
- Job Search Tools, Tips and Techniques.
- More information at www.jobsearching.org

***Coping with Job Loss Through the Holidays* is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is provided at no cost with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting or other professional service. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a professional competent person should be sought.**

Copyright 2007

Revised: 2011

Contact: Damian Birkel

damian.birkel@earthlink.net

(336) 972-8876

[Professionals In Transition](#)®, [Professionals In Transition](#)® (briefcase logo, PITA©), and [PIT](#)® are registered trademarks owned by Professionals In Transition Support Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

[Career Bounce-Back!](#) Is the publishing division of Professionals In Transition

[Damian Birkel](#) is the Founder of [Professionals In Transition](#)®, Author of the [Career Bounce-Back!](#) series of books and tapes

All rights reserved. This publication may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review or article.





HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM ALL OF YOUR FRIENDS AT PROFESIONALS IN TRANSITION!