

Some thoughts meant to be helpful...

A lot of this is about attitude. If you are confident in your attitude -- staying positive but not unrealistically so -- you can get through this.

This is hard! Lots of people don't know what to say and may say unhelpful or hurtful things. Yes, this is hard stuff to deal with. Don't berate yourself for not "bouncing back" immediately.

Assess your skills. What things are you really good at? What things could you get better at? What skills would you like to acquire? Do you now have the desire/resources to get these skills?

Get another opinion or two or three. Have someone you trust to shoot straight do a similar evaluation and ask those same questions.

Assess the market for your skills. You already know what's needed, what's being downgraded, etc., so make a list of potential users of your skills.

Get a second opinion. Work with someone who can give you an accurate sense of your marketability.

Look for opportunities to keep your skills sharp. Volunteer opportunities are out there and some nonprofits or government agencies may not even know they need your skills. Think beyond the traditional big nonprofits to events and the like in the community's future. For example, could you help Fresno State with Centennial or Campaign? Maybe the Food Bank needs help with its executive director gone?

Keep up your networking or start doing it. A cocktail party conversation, a church outing or a visit with still-working former colleagues may provide an entry to a return to work. Work that PRSA net.

Get out of the house. Find a reason to do things by yourself, with your kids, with groups, whatever, but be around people who are positive, not churning out negative karma.

Hold your head high. The economy was the cause of this situation and you are in a boat with lots of folks. Don't feel singled-out or downtrodden. Your spirit and character haven't changed. Know the brand that is you and hold your head high.

Limit your news intake. This goes back to avoiding negative karma. Print, tv and radio news is almost all bad, particularly on stories on the economy. You are tender now. Be careful what you read and listen to.

Don't forget about government resources. Many jobs that don't make it on Monster or in the paper are listed on job boards for the Workforce Connection and the State EDD. Be creative in the terms you use to search. Those posting (often HR) sometimes don't know which area in which to post communications jobs.

Think about doing something else. Millions change careers, bringing parts of old skill sets to bear on new challenges. Have you ever wanted to do something else? Is now the right time to consider it?

Make your resume fit the opportunity. Tailor every one you send out and have someone else look over your stuff to make sure it's on point and has no typos, misrepresentations or unexplained holes.

Really examine media for opportunities. You may see an event coming on which you can help someone in immediate need.

Don't panic. This could take some time.

Don't be afraid to move. The opportunity for you may be somewhere else. You can return, of course, but being away can help you evaluate whether you want to.

Stay busy and active. Now's the time to get the house in shape (you may be moving) and the body and mind, too.

Call in favors.

Use social media. Opportunities show up there in friendships, tweets about this or that, invitations to events/groups, etc. Maybe it's time for your own blog on something that inflames your passion.

Face-to-face is best. Electronic or written communication is tempting, but relationships aren't truly developed this way. Visit the places where you are applying. Make an appearance. Follow their rules but also make yourself known.

Follow through. This is a key to success. Whether you are applying for a job or volunteering, be sure to follow through on what you promise. Be impeccable with your word.

Invest in yourself. What would happen if you spent eight hours a day on your job search? That's the same time you would have spent working. Many spend an hour applying online and then move on to other things. YOU are worthy of your best effort. Invest time in your search.

Try something new every day. Maybe it's a recipe, an author, a website, a route, rearranging furniture, a new shopping area, wine or ice cream flavor.

Stay positive. If you're down, try to engage someone who always makes things better. Read an uplifting book. Take a long walk in a nice place. Watch kids in a park (but don't go all creepy.) Sing in a choir. Something, anything that brings a smile or a sense of satisfaction.