

Title: Unpredictable Consequences of Unemployment

Author:

Date: 2010/2/26 3:59:02

URL: <http://www.mntrn.org/modules/planet/view.article.php/2643>

Unemployment will be with us for the foreseeable future. The buildup of job loss that results in the current levels of unemployment started ten years ago and won't dissipate in the current economic climate. The emotional, mental, familial, workplace, and societal consequences of the current level of unemployment will have a profound and lasting impact on the lives and prospects of millions. A whole generation will discover that life isn't exactly what they (or their parents) prepared them to experience.

My colleague, Alison Doyle, has provided an opportunity for the unemployed to [tell their stories](#) at the Job Searching website. Most of the unemployment stories are sad.



People who worked hard and paid taxes all of their lives find themselves unemployed in their fifties with no prospects. Younger people, who studied hard to prepare for a career, find limited job prospects. People who had always worked hard in their office or shop find that their job no longer exists - and they are ill-prepared for the jobs of the new world and the new economy.

Then again, there are stories that make me ask, what on earth was the person thinking in this economic climate? As an example, a young woman, returning from FMLA pregnancy leave, was offered a job that was a half hour further from her home than her pre-leave commute. As an economic condition for survival, the employer had combined several office locations during her absence. She quit her job and is whining to the world about the illegal actions of the employer in changing her work location.

Another man quit because he didn't like his boss. Okay, so some of the stories make me want to tell people to get a life. Other stories did make me cry; from an employment standpoint, the prospects of many people are bleak.

Once again, from the employer point of view, Congress is passing measures, such as extending unemployment compensation benefits, that are benefitting the people who are truly hurting in the here and now. But, the additional burden to employers will interfere with job creation - the engine upon which recovery will be built. The unemployed receive a pittance to help with the now while their future goes up in smoke. (By some estimates, as an example, taxes on my business in Michigan are anticipated to increase by 1000% over the next couple of years.) How can employers expand employment - which is needed - in that uncertain environment?

Societal Impact of Unemployment

In the midst of these thoughts, I came across an analysis in the *The Atlantic*, which is revolutionizing

my thinking about the actual societal impact of the joblessness we see all around us - and the picture is brutal. In ["How a New Jobless Era Will Transform America,"](#) Don Peck, *The Atlantic's* deputy managing editor, summarizes some of his thoughts and offers solutions.

"Of necessity, those solutions must include measures to bolster the economy in the short term, and to clear the way for faster long-term growth; to support the jobless today, and to ensure that we are creating the kinds of jobs (and the kinds of skills within the population) that can allow for a more broadly shared prosperity in the future. A few of the solutions--like more-aggressive support for the unemployed, and employer tax credits or other subsidies to get people back to work faster--are straightforward and obvious, or at least they should be. Many are not."

Further, you may be interested in the interview he did with *PBS*: ["Considering Unemployment's Lingering Social, Emotional Consequences,"](#) during which he highlighted lingering consequences.

"...the average duration of unemployment passed six months last fall. That is the longest that has ever been recorded by the Bureau of Labor Statistics since 1948. And long-term unemployment is really one of the worst things that can happen to anyone.

"Psychologically, it's roughly equivalent to the death of a spouse. And it's a kind of bereavement in its own right. So, when you have large numbers of people who are suffering from long-term unemployment, it's -- it's really a plague on them, on their families, and, if it's widespread enough, on society itself."

Almost no one I know has moved through this economic recession unscathed. The impacts and consequences have been too widespread and profound to ignore. I'd like to hear your thoughts about recovery and moving forward. Do you have solutions that we, our families, and our nation can pursue and adopt? Please read this life-altering article and share your thoughts.

Surely, while recognizing the severe consequences for society of unemployment during this economic downturn, we can create more than gloom and doom scenarios going forward?

Image Copyright Paul Conrath / Getty Images

Recommended Actions in Economic Downturn

[Recession Planning for Employees.](#)

[What's Your Strategy for Keeping Your Job?](#) (Vote in my poll.)

[In Danger of Getting Fired or Laid Off?](#)

[What Did You Do To Keep Your Job?](#)

[All Topics](#) | [Most Popular](#) | [Newsletter](#) | [HR Forum](#)

[Unpredictable Consequences of Unemployment](#) originally appeared on [About.com Human Resources](#) on Friday, February 26th, 2010 at 09:59:02. [Permalink](#) | [Comment](#) | [Email this](#)