

# DOWNSIZING... RIGHTSIZING... REDUNDANCIES...

*Any Way You Say It, You've Lost Your Job!*

## Relationship Awareness Theory helps employees of The Northrup Grumman Company make the transition to a new career.

Part of the price of peace is the consolidation and downsizing of aerospace firms. The Northrup Grumman Company will have completed their task of building B-2 bombers by 1999. The ever increasing rate of technological change, corporate mergers and acquisitions and a world economy in a high state of flux virtually guarantee that few people will hold a single job or even a single career in their lifetime. Lifelong employment has been replaced by the multi-career path. Recognizing opportunities within the apparent disaster of job loss separates the successful career changer from those left behind. Following is a process that The Career Transition Center in Southern California used to assist employees at Northrup Grumman. It is a process that has been effective at **restoring a sense of self-esteem** and helping dislocated workers to focus on the path ahead.

Employees who received notice of layoffs were invited to attend a two-day "Job Search Strategies" workshop. The workshop's goal was to focus participant's attention on the task of finding not just a job but a rewarding new career. After dealing with some of the initial emotions brought on by the sudden loss of work, the participants were offered an opportunity to "learn something new about themselves" through the **Strength Deployment Inventory (SDI)**.

In administering the SDI to this type of group, we found it to be vital to emphasize that the SDI is about their whole life, not just their work. Participants that focus only on the work setting tend to get inaccurate results with the SDI, especially when they had just lost their job. Participants are often under stress and at the "end of their arrows" because of their situation so we spent much of the first day identifying and understanding conflict and the associated emotions.

We used "The Five Stages of Layoff" model to help participants move through the process:

1. Shock
2. Denial
3. Anger
4. Depression
5. Acceptance & Movement Forward

We relate the first four stages of layoff to individuals' conflict sequences from the SDI and ask them to share how they are feeling about this time in their lives. While this can be a highly emotionally charged time, it also shows that they are not alone. Everyone in the room is experiencing some level of stress or discomfort. The fifth stage, Acceptance & Movement Forward, is related to resolving the conflict and returning to the Valued Relating Style.

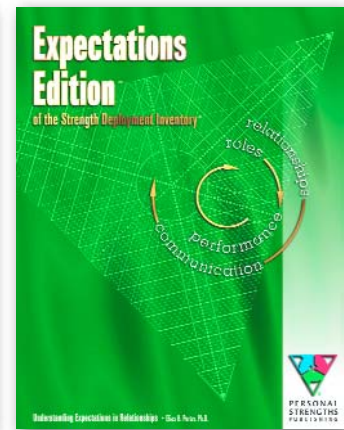
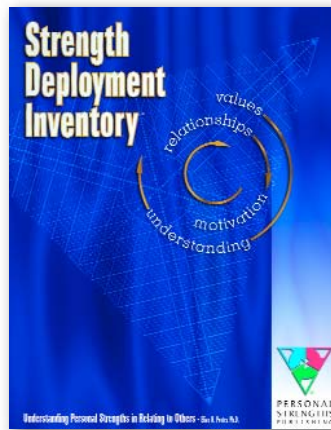
Shifting gears, we asked the participants to focus on the job they just left and recall some of the positive and negative experiences they had there. At this point, they completed the Job Interactions Inventory or JII (now the Expectations Edition of the SDI) focusing on that job. Comparing the JII arrow and the SDI arrow is always an eye-opening experience. Participants whose arrows are similar usually say that they really liked their jobs and are truly disappointed by their situation. Participants with very different arrows usually say that they were experiencing a high degree of job stress. This revelation often leads them to a sense of relief.

For homework, participants were assigned the task of completing another JII, this time based on their ideal or “perfect job.” In the morning, we compare the arrows from the SDI to the ideal job. These two arrows are usually fairly close and we are able to deliver the main learning point of the session. “You will be happiest in a job that rewards someone with your unique abilities—Go find that job!”

Each participant was asked to think about that perfect job and list jobs that they might find rewarding—without regard to qualifications or experience. We then narrow the list down to the top two or three and build a job search strategy. What will it take to get from point A (this room right now) to point B (a rewarding new career)?

After the workshop, participants are assigned to individual case managers who help them structure their job search or take advantage of retraining opportunities offered through the PAN funding network. The employees at the Career Transition Center list their highest reward as the news that someone they have helped has made the transition and found that “perfect job.”

*“You will be happiest in a job that rewards someone with your unique abilities—Go find that job!”*



**Written by Kim Miyashiro & Lana Gray of the Career Transition Center** *The Career Transition Center is funded by the County of Los Angeles Community & Senior Services Department through PIC Aerospace Network (PAN) funds, which are administered by the South Bay Private Industry Council (SBPIC). PAN is a coordinated system of sixteen Southern California Private Industry Councils (PICs) to assist downsized aerospace workers during their career transition.*

*At the Career Transition Center, Tomkinson & Associates, Inc. provides services to Northrop Grumman B-2 Stealth Bomber employees downsized from the Pico Rivera, California facility. At the plant's peak employment in 1987, there were close to 12,000 employees. As of March 1997, there are 4,100 employees left at this site. The Pico Rivera plant was slated for final closure in 1999.*