

# TAKING TIME

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## The Family Side of Downsizing

There are some days when I really wish that I didn't have to get up and go to work. But for people who have felt the brunt of factory or business downsizing, the wish may be just the opposite.

Downsizing and layoff decisions don't just affect a company's bottom line. These decisions also affect families — both the families whose members were cut and those whose members are now doing two people's jobs (because they weren't cut). The stress can be very hurtful to a person's physical health but also may impact relationships.

According to Joan LeFebvre, University of Wisconsin-Extension, "Losing a job is one of the most stressful events a person can experience. Unemployment can be personally devastating and can trigger the same reactions you might feel during other serious crisis, such as divorce or the death of someone you love." People often base their worth and identity on their employment. We're often more comfortable saying, "I'm a grain farmer." "I'm an accountant", "I'm a child care provider." "I'm an EMT," than we are saying "I'm a caring husband." "I'm a thinker" or "I'm a concerned

member of my community." When that source of identity is taken away, a person may begin to doubt his or her self-worth.

Losing a job forces a person, against his or her wishes, to make rapid changes in life plans. It can disrupt habits and normal routines. It may actually provide a person with too much free time. LeFebvre explains that a person experiencing a job loss may feel tense or angry. They may suffer from dramatic mood swings and lash out at others — even those not responsible for the layoff. Recently unemployed workers may encounter increased numbers of arguments at home. They may feel depressed. These reactions are normal, but they aren't wonderful to live through.

If you are unemployed, don't expect to just "snap out of it." It takes time. Try to talk through your ambivalent, even negative feelings about your situation. Remember, you have lost a significant part of your life with this change. Allow yourself to grieve that loss. On the bright side, because of the layoff you may have more time to spend with your family. You may be able to work on some long-delayed household project or do some reading or training in a new, exciting area.

Unemployment is a family issue. Research shows that during times of unemployment, when parents support each other, the entire family fairs better. If your family is suffering because of company downsizing, try some of these suggestions: Go outside. Make a "To Do" list (break your job search, housework into small tasks.); Write down your frustration. Stretch; roll your shoulders slowly; massage your neck. Cry; laugh. Make a list of two to three things you do well. Post it on your mirror or refrigerator.

These are just a few things that people can do to help lower the stress of unemployment. Anyone who is on the other side of the picture, being asked to pick up additional assignments because of staffing changes, can also benefit from these techniques. And all family members need to remember that a layoff doesn't just affect the one person who was the employee. Everyone is influenced by the change, and all will suffer the loss in some way. Allow time to grieve. Also seek outside help when needed. This is especially important if people in the home:

- ✓ begin to hit or shove during arguments
- ✓ think of suicide
- ✓ feel overwhelmed with bills
- ✓ consider separating from spouse because of problems
- ✓ constantly put down themselves or others
- ✓ take a drink in the morning or hide alcohol to disguise the amount of drinking
- ✓ notice that children start acting "crazy" and begin getting in trouble with the law or other authorities
- ✓ start lying about what has happened or what they are doing.



# Farm Women Societies

## Lancaster Society 18

Lancaster Society Farm Women #20 met on April 10 at the Memorial United Methodist Church, Quarryville, when they entertained Societies #25, 15 and the county officers at a covered dish luncheon. The committee consisted of Lillian Winters, Marion Hastings, Emily Gallimore, Thelma Miller, and Vivian Trout. Following the meal Lillian read the 126th Psalm and the poem "All it takes is one hello". The Lord's Prayer was prayed in unison followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. The president, Nancy Axe, presided at the business meeting when among other items the society yard sale

was announced for the 4th of June at Nancy's home. The Sunshine committee reported 6 cards sent since the last meeting.

The program was very interesting when Ellen Baber spoke and showed slides of her and her husband's visit to St. Petersburg, Russia through a poultry exchange, and they were privileged to stay with the mayor of the town.

For the roll call, each one mentioned their favorite vacation spot and the guests were introduced. The meeting closed by singing "Brighten the Corner" and in May members will be going to Living Waters and then have lunch at Schoney's.

## Lebanon Society 20

Lebanon Farm Women Group #20 met April 11 at the Ono Fire Hall and entertained Group #21.

Elaine Shuey had devotions. The speaker was Dr. Charles Dahlstrom. He spoke about spinal adjustments. We played several games and held a short meeting.

The County Convention is Oct. 12. A motion was made to give \$100 to Jr. Holstein Club to be

used for expenses for Leb. Co. Jr. Dairy Bowl to go to Seattle Wash.

County cookbooks are available. Members gave \$20 to help sponsor Sally Martin who is walking for the Pregnancy Center.

Members will be entertained at the Bellgrove Fire Hall April 19 by Group 19. The next meeting is May 9 at Mary Stamm's Home.

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