The 5-Step Comeback



Back on

YOUR FEET

Your first week, back on track

davebator.comeback

You wake up and there is nowhere to be.

The phone is quiet, the day stretches out in front of you, and somewhere around ten in the morning you catch yourself thinking, “I don’t know what to do with myself.”

You’re not sleeping well, you’re dodging calls, and the confidence you had a month ago seems to have gone with the job.

Most people think the hard part is the money, and the money matters.

But a job also gave you a reason to get up, people to talk to, something to finish and a sense of who you are.

When all of that disappears on the same day, the mind fills the empty hours by turning what happened into a verdict on you.

Then a few bad nights of sleep make every thought feel heavier, so a bad week starts to feel like you’re falling apart.

I’ve had big wins and real disappointments in business, and what got me moving again each time was a few small things done in the right order.

People who get back on their feet fast tend to do the same handful of things, and here they are.

THE 5 STEPS

1

Write Down What Happened

Your mind is telling the story without the facts that matter.

Take one page and write only the facts.

Write the date, what they told you, who was in the room, whether it was a whole team or just you, the reason they gave, and what money you'll get and for how long.

Then write three things you were truly good at in that job, with one real example for each.

Under that, draw two columns. In the first, write what this says about you.

In the second, write what it does not say about you, and spend most of your time on that second column.

This works because when you go over it in your head, you leave out the circumstances, like the merger, the budget cut or the new boss, and you blame it all on yourself.

Putting them on paper puts them back in the story.

Write it once, in one sitting.

If you find yourself writing the same story the same way tomorrow, you're not getting over it, you're rehearsing it.

You'll know it's working when the second column feels a little easier to fill than you expected.

ONE PAGE, ONE SITTING

THE FACTS

- ☐ DATE
- ☐ WHAT THEY TOLD YOU
- ☐ WHO WAS IN THE ROOM
- ☐ WHOLE TEAM OR JUST YOU?
- ☐ THE REASON THEY GAVE
- ☐ WHAT MONEY, FOR HOW LONG



3 THINGS I WAS GOOD AT

1 REAL EXAMPLE EACH

1. _____
   example: _____
2. _____
   example: _____
3. _____
   example: _____



WHAT THIS SAYS ABOUT ME	WHAT THIS DOES NOT SAY ABOUT ME

SPEND MOST TIME HERE

THE MERGER

2 Do One Thing Today That You Control

Feeling useful comes back from finishing something, and it doesn't need anyone else.

Pick one task that you can finish today, in under an hour, without waiting on anyone's reply.

Good ones are filing for unemployment, putting every bit of paperwork into one folder, listing every date in your severance letter, calling the bank, or walking the same loop around your block.

"Apply for jobs" and "update LinkedIn" feel like the obvious choice, and wanting to get moving is a good instinct.

But those tasks end in silence or a form that eats your effort, so they leave you feeling more stuck.

A task that ends with something visibly done gives you a small piece of control back, and that is what lifts your mood.

One warning, because it's the one place a rushed day can cost you real money: never sign a severance agreement the day it's handed to you.

If you're 40 or over, the law gives you time to think it over, so use it.

You'll know it's working when, tonight, you can name one thing you finished today.



3

Set One Ten-Minute Action for Tomorrow

Tie it to something you already do, and put it right where that happens.

Write one sentence in this shape: “When I’ve made my coffee, I’ll open the severance letter and highlight every date.”

The first half is something you already do every day, and the second half is a job that takes about ten minutes.

Then put the note where the first half happens, so tape it to the kettle, the bathroom mirror or your laptop lid.

“I’ll do it tomorrow” slips away easily, but linking it to the coffee means the coffee reminds you for you.

Write it before bed. Putting tomorrow’s job on paper helps you fall asleep faster, because your head stops holding onto it at 2am.

You’ll know it’s working when you see the note, do the ten minutes, and the day already has a start to it.



4

Keep Three Lines a Day

What you did, what happened, and what it showed you. Three lines is enough.

At the same time and in the same place each day, write three lines. The first is what you actually did.

The second is what it showed you. The third is the one thing you'll

change tomorrow.

The second line does the most work.

“Called the unemployment office” is a fact, but “That call showed me the deadline is the 19th” is something you can use.

A large study of people who kept trying after setbacks found that the ones who went on to succeed started out just like the rest, and what set them apart was that each try got a little better than the last.

A notebook is best, but the notes app on your phone is fine. Keep it to what happened and what it taught you, and leave out any verdict on yourself.

You’ll know it’s working when, by the end of the week, your log reads like evidence instead of feelings.

5 Plan for the Hard Day, and Pick One Person

The bad day will come, so decide now what you’ll do and say.

Write down the moment most likely to knock you over, like a rejection email, a Sunday night or someone asking “So what are you doing now?”

Name the feeling and the urge that come with it, such as staying in bed or not answering the phone.

Then decide exactly what you’ll do instead, and picture it from inside the moment as if it’s happening.

Practise the actual words, for example “I’m taking a few weeks to work out the right next role.”

Picture the worst version too, so you’ve already lived it once.

Now choose one person to tell.

A kind friend feels good to talk to, and it also pays to pick someone whose opinion you respect or who can actually help.

Give them a clear ask: “Ask me every Friday what I actually did this week.”

A secret you carry alone feels heavier, so sharing it with one person makes it lighter.

You’ll know it’s working when telling them feels like giving a report.



WHAT TO EXPECT, AND WHEN

In the first day or two, the day will have an edge to it because you finished something and can name it.

Use these days for paperwork, because that has deadlines, and make no big decisions.

Around day three or four, start getting up at the same time and getting dressed, even with nowhere to go, and add a walk.

By the end of the week, something you did will have taught you something useful, and that's the sign you're moving.

Your log is the best measure of how far you've come this week, because confidence builds from the evidence in it.

From the second week, start a focused job search aimed at roles that truly fit you, so every application teaches you something.

If you miss a day, start again the next day, because one missed day changes nothing.

But if low mood, poor sleep and no interest in anything carry on past a few weeks, go and see your doctor.

Follow @davebator.comeback for the steps I used to get moving again after every setback in business.

- **Instagram @davebator.comeback**