

Squiggly
Career
Stages

Setbacks

How to stay
resilient when
things go wrong

Setbacks

Everyone faces knotty moments in their squiggly career.

Restructures, redundancies, or unexpected setbacks can leave us feeling out of control and anxious about the future.

But these challenging moments can also be pivotal for our learning, self awareness and growth. They put our resilience reserves to the test and help us uncover new opportunities.

This guide supports our podcast episode [Squiggly Career Setbacks](#), and brings together practical advice, expert insights, and useful tools to help you stay resilient when your squiggly career goes in an unexpected direction.

In this guide you'll find:

- 🔗 [Insights](#) from the Squiggly Careers Setbacks podcast episode.
- 🔗 [Coach yourself questions](#) to reflect on your experiences and gain insight.
- 🔗 A [tool to try out](#) to help you move from adversity to action.
- 🔗 [Expert advice](#) on how to make the most of this squiggly career stage.
- 🔗 [Recommended resources](#) to read, watch, listen and learn from.

Episode insights



In this episode, Helen and Sarah are joined by Amy Schoenthal, author of The Setback Cycle, and Mary & Ken Okoroafor, Co-Founders of The Humble Penny and authors of Financial Joy, who share their setback story.

Together they discuss how to stay resilient when you experience a setback, and how to regain agency and take action in the middle of a knotty moment.

Listen and learn how to:

- ↳ Process a setback situation
- ↳ Consider new paths
- ↳ Leverage your network
- ↳ Test possibilities
- ↳ Assess the financial implications

Coach yourself questions

'Coach yourself questions' are designed to create clarity. They help you to press pause and think things through so you can make more informed choices about where and what you spend your time on. Here are 3 questions to help you stay resilient when things go wrong.

What can I learn from how I have overcome setbacks before?



Who could help me understand and explore my options?



How do I want to feel about this in 12 months time?



*“If everything was perfect, you would never **learn** and you would never **grow**.”*

Beyoncé Knowles

Tool to try out

From adversity to action

A career setback can leave you feeling out of control and fearful about what's next. When emotions are high it can be hard to see your situation objectively and you can start to feel stuck.

An **adversity audit** helps you to reflect on your setback situation and turn your feelings into facts. The clarity this creates can help you to feel more in control and take action to move forward. Take 5-10 minutes to answer these 5 questions:

| | |
|--|--|
| How would I describe what's happening in one or two sentences? | <i>Example: My team is being restructured and I'm not sure what will happen to my job.</i> |
| How much of a surprise is this situation, or did I guess/know it was coming? | <i>Example: Complete surprise – didn't see it coming!</i> |
| Do I recognise aspects of this adversity (been through it before?) or is it a new experience? | <i>Example: Been made redundant once before.</i> |
| How much adversity am I experiencing in other aspects of my life at the moment? | <i>Example: Life outside work is going OK at the moment.</i> |
| What happens next? | <i>Example: We have a team meeting with our manager on Friday where she's going to talk to us about what next.</i> |



Expert advice Eleanor Tweddell

Host of Another Door Podcast

Allow some time to process

You might be feeling frustrated, angry, confused - embrace your feelings, but don't act on them. If you can, go for a walk. Talk to someone who can hold space for you to share. Find a way to move away from the news for a while. If you give yourself time for the first emotions to settle, the next step is to act with more rational thought about what happens next.

Beware the doom spiral

Often we want to 'fix the problem' as soon as possible and we operate from a panic state. So we apply for jobs, often many jobs, we get rejected because they aren't what we want, and we enter a doom spiral. Taking time out to think about what you want and need, then doing some research into your options, and then taking some intentional action can get you to where you want to be quicker.

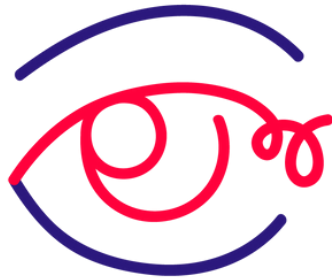
Normalise it

There are 3 stages of a setback: what has happened (the door closing), the messy middle bit of working out what to do next (the space in-between), and then knowing what you want and taking action (the next door opening). When you know there are 3 stages, and you will move in and out of these not necessarily in order, it will help to normalise how you are feeling, but also remind you that other opportunities are possible.

Reset, learn, let go & grow

After you've processed how you feel, you can reset and turn to face what happens next. You can think about what this has shown you and what you don't want to do again. If something is important to you, one setback won't deter you, it will give you more information on how to move closer to your goal. If your priorities change after the setback then create space for a good rethink, let go, and move towards your new goals.

Recommended resources



Watch

How to Turn Setbacks into Success
Amy Shoenthal's TED Talk



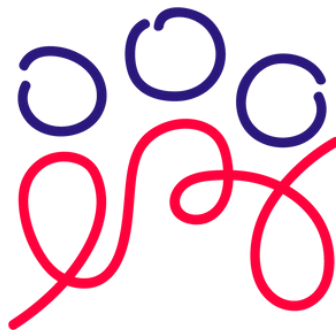
Read

Why Losing Your Job Could be the Best Thing That Ever Happened to You
Written by Eleanor Tweddell



Listen

Squiggly Careers #463
How to stay resilient when things go wrong



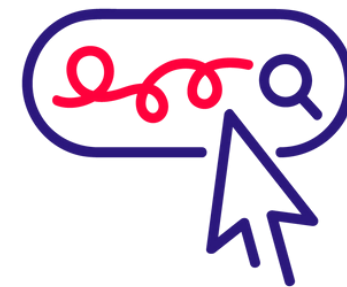
Join

Club Redundo
Members club for people experiencing redundancy



Follow

The Humble Penny
Mary & Ken Okoroafor's TikTok channel for financial advice



Try

Ten Minute Tool
A free workbook to help you to invest in your resilience

Thank you

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We hope you've
found this Squiggly
Career Setbacks
guide helpful.

For more squiggly career support,
follow Amazing If on LinkedIn or
find our free resources at
amazingif.com

