



Impending job doom

Signs you are about to get fired

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Got a feeling you're about to get a work divorce?

You're probably right — "even the least intuitive have built-in radar for when things pose potential danger," says Monica Wofford, a leadership development expert.

So consider heeding the signs you're about to get fired. Being alert and aware of impending job doom can "let you prepare and possibly change what you see before they set you free."

According to the professional speaker and author, although getting fired or laid off may be something we've become more accustomed to and "no longer have the same shock value they once did, they are no less painful to the one who is personally experiencing it."

If you sense you are in the line of fire, take action, says Wofford, of *contagiouscompanies.com*. "Check in with your boss or the next level leader. Ask questions such as, 'What can I do better or different to be a better contributing employee?' or even specifically ask what you can do to make your boss' job easier."

Seeking out guidance is appropriate and often seen as a positive step, she adds. A little improvement and performance upkeep may be needed.

"However, checking in and asking for feedback is far different than being paranoid and asking 'am I okay' or 'am I gonna get fired' every five minutes!"

Demanding constant reassurance is not the way to go!

She adds that if there are simply rumours of an impending layoff, fear and worry about what's coming can greatly impact performance.

"One of the top three reasons people are fired is lack of performance, so if worry and fear are keeping you from performing, find a way to deal with the fear and focus on your work," says Wofford, author of *Make Difficult People Disappear*.

Here are Wofford's signs you are about to get fired:

■ **They get distant:** Sharing bad news is not a favourite office activity and your boss is no different. "Putting off news they know they need to share makes them appear aloof or distant, when it's really because they care."

■ **The fun fades:** The boss stops having fun with you when your job is in jeopardy. "They know what they'll soon share with you is no laughing matter so pay close attention when there's a sudden lack of witty banter."

■ **You get the call:** When HR calls, fear takes hold. "They don't usually call for minor stuff, but agree to a meeting and breathe before you assume it's about to get rough."

■ **Hovering takes on new meaning:** If your boss starts hovering over you like a helicopter in stealth mode, look out, says Wofford. "They could be seeking out data they need to carry out the deed or have been told to catch you in the act."

■ **Delegation declines:** Good leaders give employees the opportunity to develop

and grow in different areas. "What's the point of having you practice skills they already know you'll be taking with you when you go?"

■ **Doors close:** "When doors close and you're shut out, look out!" So too when the higher ups converse in hushed tones or close the door to their office when taking phone calls. "It's only one of many possible reasons, but it's a common sign that someone might be leaving."

■ **Documentation appears:** "The saying in Human Resources is that if it's not documented it didn't happen, so look at what you're doing and why they're writing it down. It might be time to turn your behaviour around."

■ **You can't put your finger on it:** "If you feel you're about to be freed up for new opportunities, you're probably right," says Wofford, adding that this is not to be confused with paranoia or a habit of fear that might rule your thoughts.

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TRANSITION TIPS

There is nothing easy about being terminated, particularly if you didn't expect it.

Make the transition easier with these tips from leadership expert Monica Wofford, of *contagiouscompanies.com*:

■ **Accept that your job has gone away and your employment status has changed.** Negative emotions will prevent you from putting your best foot forward in the future.

■ **Assess what you learned.** "Were there things you would have done differently if given the chance? Maybe those are actions you take in your next job."

■ **Get clear on what you want in a new job.** "Make a list of all the criteria, attributes or responsibilities you want in your new role so that when the opportunity comes about, you'll notice it right away."

■ **Be persistent and positive.** Being positive is contagious and people want to hang around those who have an upbeat energy. "We're not talking about wearing pom-poms all the time, but a general sense of optimism and drive." Resilience is up there too.

■ **Make the difficult voices in your head disappear.** "So often we talk about others who are difficult, but the real challenge comes from the voices in our head. When you talk to yourself, be reassuring and encouraging. Yes, things have changed, but not all change is bad," adds Wofford.



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