

Involuntary Exit: A Woman's Guide to Thriving after Being Fired

Robin Merle

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Robin Merle's Involuntary Exit is a must-read for career-driven people of all genders.

Robin Merle's business book *Involuntary Exit* is a guide to help powerful women who have been let go from their jobs and who need help finding their footing.

The focus of *Involuntary Exit* is the surprise of firings that come without warning, often to women who are leaders at the top of their games, but who are told they make too much money or are too old for a business's future ideals. It also deals with the backwards ways that companies force people out, making an employee feel unsafe or unwanted at work so that they quit on their own.

Real and relatable, the book follows the stories of a handful of powerful, hardworking women in chronological order, drawing guidance from their exit processes, from the moment of their firings through packing up their desks, finding labor lawyers to see if they can sue their companies for wrongful termination, telling their friends and coworkers the news, and preparing for their next roles. These women—who come from various backgrounds and industries—make up the majority of the book's base; only at the end does Merle reveal her own experiences with leaving a company and finding her way.

One of the biggest, most difficult hurdles that comes with being fired is the emotional turmoil, Merle says; much space is given to mental health and self-reflection to aid in feelings of humiliation, depression, and a loss of identity. Smart, snappy advice breaks up each chapter: don't confide in HR, the book says, because they work for the company, not you; don't add drama to your trauma. Other bullet points are reminiscent of tips for a romantic breakup: don't follow them online, don't ask about them. These suggestions are applicable to anyone who works for someone other than themselves, making the book relevant and useful for more than just its target audience (women who are going through a firing).

Merle's experience as a former senior executive for billion-dollar organizations and forty years of working with nonprofits make her a credible source, but the book also includes research from business books and investigative pieces in *Forbes* and *Fortune*, grounding its advice in statistics and trends. It also acknowledges the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and the high rates of downsizing and unemployment, and ends with a fun appendix of a playlist for enduring each stage of grief with a job loss, featuring many empowering songs by women.

A helpful business book that covers the opposite end of leadership and growth, Robin Merle's *Involuntary Exit* is a must-read for career-driven people of all genders.

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