They Got Fired. This Mindset Shift Helped Them Bounce Back Stronger.

Key Takeaways

- “All the Cool Girls Get Fired” advises readers on how to turn losing your job into an epic comeback.
- Laura Brown, former editor in chief of “InStyle” magazine, and Kristina O’Neill, former editor in chief of “WSJ” magazine, draw on their personal experiences and advice from the likes of Oprah Winfrey.
- The idea for the book came from a viral Instagram Brown posted after she and O’Neill lost their jobs.

We work our asses off — sometimes we get fired up by the results, and other times we just get plain fired. That’s always fun, right?

This week on *How Success Happens*, I spoke with Laura Brown, who was the editor in chief of *InStyle* magazine…until she wasn’t. And Kristina O’Neill, who was editor in chief of *WSJ* magazine…until she, also, wasn’t. As they put it very bluntly in their incredible book, *All the Cool Girls Get Fired*, they were “shitcanned” (their words, not mine). But they think it is time to stop sugar-coating the end of a job and start viewing it as an opportunity to start the next big thing in our professional lives. No more “I’ve decided to spend more time with my family” B.S. messaging — own that you got fired, and move forward.

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That perspective certainly worked for them — Brown went on to

found LB Media and is the chair of (RED)'s Creative Council, and O'Neill is head of Sotheby's Media and editor in chief of *Sotheby's Magazine*. The mindset has also worked for many other famous fire-ees, whom they spoke to for the book, including Lisa Kudrow, Jamie Lee Curtis, Oprah Winfrey, Carol Burnett and Katie Couric.

Watch our conversation above or listen here, and check out some key takeaways from Brown and O'Neill to transform your thinking on what, in the moment, might feel like the worst thing that could happen, but in the long run can lead to bigger and better things.

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Rest, But Don't Retreat

"When someone goes, 'Hey, do you have a sec?' and pulls you into an office, and you realize that's the last time you're going to be in that office, that's a kick in the teeth," Brown shares.

She says that the initial numbness helped her: "I think that shock is an armor. Shock can actually protect you. I went to a big event the day after I got fired, and the shock led to ownership." Brown says she quickly realized "my worth doesn't disappear because my job did. You own your experience; don't let these people take it from you."

O'Neill adds, "It's all right to wallow, but don't wallow forever. Rest, but don't retreat." She advises against rushing the process of processing. "You will be found again if you were good at what you did. But you gotta listen to your own rhythms."

Takeaway: Take whatever time you need to absorb the shock of getting fired — if you are good at what you do, you will be in

demand sooner than you think.

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Own Your Story

As you begin your new job search, O'Neill suggests sharing your story with people you know. "We advise doing the toe dip. Start small, with familiar things, before you run to the totally unknown. You have to be able to talk about it – and that takes conditioning. You don't want every meeting to end in tears or come off as bitter."

Brown jumps in: "Own it! Something really unexpected can come when you're honest about what happened. I had people reach out from industries I'd never thought of. It turns out your story is more relatable than you think."

Takeaway: Practice saying what really happened – your honesty will open unexpected doors.

Your Next Step Doesn't Have to Be a Huge One

"One of the best bits of advice we got from the experts was to go for the 'fine' job before the 'dream' job," Brown says. "Get your mojo back and practice a little before the big leap. Because after getting smacked on the head by an anvil, your confidence is rocked. You need to get it back through practice and engagement, and then when you go for those interviews, you can stand a little taller."

O'Neill shares how this played out in her own life: "I now work at Sotheby's, an auction house. I never thought I'd be there, but some skills are transferable. Seeing around a corner that wasn't even there a month ago – suddenly, it's a

whole new adventure.”

Takeaway: Warm up with smaller opportunities so you’re sharp when that big dream comes calling.

About *How Success Happens*

Each episode of *How Success Happens* shares the inspiring, entertaining and unexpected journeys that influential leaders in business, the arts and sports traveled on their way to becoming household names. It’s a reminder that behind every big-time career, there is a person who persisted in the face of self-doubt, failure and anything else that got thrown their way.

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