

NEWSLETTER · ISSUE 03

*Five years from retirement.
Then the email came.*

Layoffs After 50 Hit Differently.

Here's what nobody in pharma is saying.

***You are not starting
from zero.***

***You are starting
from experience.***

SUBJECT LINE

You are not starting from zero. You are starting from experience.

Layoffs After 50 Hit Differently. Here's What Nobody's Saying.

I want to be honest with you before I write a single word of advice in this newsletter.

I'm writing this from inside the experience, not from the comfortable outside of it.

I'm a pharma professional in the same age group as many of the people reading this. I'm navigating my own career transition right now, exploring both the next employment chapter and the consulting and coaching work I'm building. I'm asking myself many of the same questions I'm about to ask you.

So when I say I understand, I don't mean it in the way a coach usually means it.

I mean I'm in it.

And maybe that's exactly the reason this conversation matters so much to me right now.



A few weeks ago, I had a conversation with someone I'll call Diane.

Diane spent 27 years in pharma. She built a clinical operations team from 4 people to 38. She launched studies on three continents. She trained more CRAs and CTMs than she could count.

And on a Tuesday morning in March, she got a calendar invite labeled "HR Check-In."

By 10:47 AM, she was logged out of her laptop.

She told me what she felt first wasn't fear. It wasn't even anger.

It was **disorientation**.

"I don't know who I am without this job. I'm 56. Everyone tells me I should retire early or 'enjoy the break.' But I'm not done. I'm just... displaced."



The conversation pharma isn't having

There's a generation of pharma professionals quietly navigating this exact moment right now and the industry is largely silent about it.

We talk about layoffs in the abstract. We talk about early-career resilience. We talk about reinvention like it's an Instagram quote.

But we rarely talk about what it actually means to lose your role at 53, 55, 58, when you've already done the climbing, already proved yourself a dozen times over, already planned your last few years before retirement around a paycheck that just disappeared.

Layoffs at this stage aren't just financial events.

They're **identity events**.

Because when you've spent three decades being known as “the expert on the team,” “the one who fixes things,” “the dependable one” and then suddenly the company that gave you that identity decides they no longer need it — *something deeper than a job is taken from you*.

That's the part I want to talk about today. And then I want to talk about what comes next, for Diane, for me, and for you.



Why this hits experienced professionals so much harder

Here's what I've noticed coaching pharma professionals through late-career transitions and what I'm noticing in my own experience right now:

It's not the job search itself that breaks people. It's the **internal narrative** that comes with it.

You start asking yourself questions you never thought you'd be asking at this stage:

- *Am I still relevant in an industry that's changing this fast?*
- *Do hiring managers see my experience as an asset — or as expensive overhead?*
- *Am I being shortlisted, or quietly aged out?*
- *Is it too late to do something different — or too late to keep doing the same?*

Those questions are exhausting because they're not really about the job market.

They're about **whether the version of yourself you've spent decades building still has a place in the world.**

That's the weight nobody talks about. And it's why so many late-career professionals end up either accepting a role beneath them out of fear, or stepping away from the industry entirely not because they wanted to, but because no one helped them see another path.



What I want you to know if you're in this moment

I'm going to say something I tell every late-career client I work with and something I'm reminding myself of every week right now:

You are not depreciating. You are repositioning.

There's a difference, and it's everything.

Depreciation is what happens when you assume your value is fixed to the role you used to hold. Repositioning is what happens when you recognize your value is *transferable* — and the only question is what container holds it next.

Because here's what's true, even when it doesn't feel true:

- ◆ The industry still needs strategic clinical operations expertise and most of it lives in people over 50.
- ◆ The consulting and fractional leadership market is exploding specifically because companies want senior judgment without senior overhead.
- ◆ Biotech startups are desperate for experienced advisors who've actually been through Phase 3 not theorists.
- ◆ Coaching, mentoring, and advisory roles are paying more than ever for people with your depth.
- ◆ Board seats, advisory boards, and fractional roles increasingly go to professionals in your exact stage of life.

What changed isn't your value.

What changed is the **container** you used to hold it.

And maybe, *just maybe*, that container had quietly become too small for what you actually carry now.



A different question to ask yourself

Instead of asking “*How do I get another job like the one I lost?*” — which is the question most career advice answers, I'd invite you to ask a different one:

“What would it look like to design the next 5-10 years of my career around what I've already built, instead of starting over?”

That single reframe changes everything.

It moves you from a position of scarcity (*replacing what I lost*) to a position of leverage (*deploying what I've earned*).

It opens up paths that were always there like consulting, advisory, fractional leadership, building something of your own, joining a smaller company where you can finally have impact without the bureaucracy but that you couldn't see while you were grieving the old container.

It's the question I'm asking myself right now.

I'm pursuing the next employment chapter, yes. But I'm also building the consulting and coaching practice that lets me deploy decades of experience in a way I haven't been able to before. **Both paths are valid. Both can run in parallel. And the answer doesn't have to be either/or.**

That realization changed how I'm navigating my own transition. And it's something I want every pharma professional in this stage of life to consider.



If this is you

If you're a pharma professional in your 50s navigating a layoff, a contract ending, or just the quiet sense that the container you've been in is no longer fitting please hear this:

You are not behind.

You are not too late.

You are not less valuable than you were six months ago.

You are at the stage of your career where your experience is **finally** at its highest leverage *if you know how to deploy it differently.*

That's the work I'm doing with experienced pharma professionals at **Aspire Pharma Coaching** and honestly, it's the work I'm doing for myself, too. Helping us rethink the next chapter not as a step down, but as a step *into* something more aligned with who we've become.

If that resonates and you want to talk it through, I keep a few spots open each month for private 30-minute strategy conversations, no pitch, just clarity on what's possible.

Reply to this email with the word **"CHAPTER"** and I'll send you the link.



You are not starting from zero.

You are starting from experience.

And so am I.

With you in this,

Jennifer Campos

Founder, Aspire Pharma Coaching