

The Bright Side of Unemployment

What can be positive about losing your job? On the surface nothing, but by looking beyond the fear, anger, doubt as well as the questions that arise when we're no longer employed, we can uncover a few possibilities worth considering.

It's been said that we can change our environment by changing our attitude, so rather than focusing on the negative aspects of being jobless, use this time to reevaluate your career and the new choices that are available. Consider taking classes to update your skills and make yourself more marketable. How about learning a new language? Or perhaps it's time to change careers altogether and venture into a field that you've long dreamed about pursuing. Use this time to gather information. Do research on the internet, meet with educational counselors or set up a meeting with a person that works in a field that you're interested in. Another option is doing volunteer work where you can put your skill to good use or perhaps learn new ones. Volunteering also gives us the satisfaction that comes from helping others and knowing that we're making a difference in the lives of people.

This is also a good time to start a new hobby or finish the project you started but never had time to complete. Hobbies can often turn into ideas that lead to new careers or the start of a business. One snowy weekend in my mountain cabin I sat down and wrote an outline and the beginning of a rough draft for a book I had often thought about writing but kept putting off. I was working full-time so the draft sat on my desk for over a year. Sometime after that, when I was informed of my soon-to-be jobless status, I began writing in earnest. I finished the book and wrote two more. The books have exposed me to a new world and increased my knowledge of publishing, marketing and networking that I knew very little about. I've met many interesting people and visited interesting places. I'm currently doing workshops based on the topic of the first two books (grief recovery) and speaking engagements and presentations on the last book (history of the Southwest).

Something else that you might consider doing is reevaluating your finances and see where you can cut costs. Establish a budget that's in keeping with your current financial means. When I did this, I found a few areas that I now refer to as frivolous spending. I was surprised at how much of my previous income was spent on items I didn't really need. Another way of cutting costs is to do simple home and/or auto repairs yourself thus avoiding expensive bills. There are several books and websites that will walk you through the process.

Explore your neighborhood by taking walks. Get acquainted with the people in your community. This can result in leads that provide new direction or perhaps even a job! Like any other challenge in life, being unemployed is an experience we can learn from and make it work to our advantage.

So get off the couch and get going!