

THE BRIGHT SIDE OF UNEMPLOYMENT



Have you recently lost your job? Well, delight in being downsized! Be jubilant about being jobless. You've been set free. America was founded on liberty--live the heritage.

Wipe that deer-in-the-headlights expression off your face and suck in a lungful of fresh air. The initial shock of being unemployed, even if you saw it coming or even if you quit on your own, is just the paranoid part of your brain panicking. Don't listen to it. This is the best thing that could happen to you. (Wait. Winning several million dollars in a lottery is the best, but this is second.)

Life (and in this case I mean work) has an insidious way of getting us to compromise, a little at a time. There we are--doing what no longer challenges us, for people who don't appreciate it (or even understand it), in a cubicle or windowless warehouse, for less pay than we should, after fighting traffic to get there. ("Dilbert isn't just a comic strip, it's a documentary.") Then one day, a manager, who knows less about employee morale and production efficiency than our goldfish, adds insult to injury by firing us. Or more likely, the gutless wonder has a "human resources specialist" do it.

Go ahead and be righteously indignant. Let the scenarios of arson and homicide play out in your imagination. (ONLY in your imagination or you WILL be having a major career change!) That done, now it's time for the important thinking. Remember what you said when asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" It might be a little late to become a cowboy, or an astronaut, or president, or to win a Nobel prize in something--but WHAT IF IT'S NOT? And if you don't get back on the trail now, how will it get any more likely if you postpone it again?

Here's the easy part: You don't have to do it all at once. You know that old saying, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step"? Well, it DOES. No-one just buys a horse and goes looking for cattle, or walks into NASA with a barf-bag tucked under his or her arm. You do little things. Steady, accumulative little things. You've got a computer, or access to one at least. Research new directions. Network. Tap into the dozens of SUPER employment websites (some nearly as nifty as [this one](#)). The internet will serve up information on any career option and on job opportunities anywhere. If you've always wondered about living in New York, or Upper Michigan, or Australia, here's your method.

Losing a job is a wake-up call. Life's telling us we won't live forever and we need to move on. Do NOT let a transition go by without an improvement. It can be major--a complete career change. Tired of nuclear physics? Really want to grow orchids? Sick of orchids; want to drive a bulldozer? Or did a robot eat your job and what you used to do doesn't even exist anymore? Get to the basics--WHAT do you want to do?

Or the change can be minor--same job, same level, but closer to home or for more money, or even for LESS money but easing up on the stress level, leaving you some strength and sanity to pursue outside interests. Look for an improvement. You don't want to have gone through this hassle and upheaval without something to show for it.

Now, while earning money remains a driving force for most of us (and if you're not frugal, GET frugal--it's a key to freedom), when we're jobless it's even MORE important to focus on personal issues. Give all the aspects of your life a good examination. It's like dusting a shelf. Grab each knickknack and wipe it off until it shines. If a memento deserves a more prominent position then move it forward on the shelf. Before you get back to work and things get dusty from preoccupation again, take stock of all your goods. Maybe it's time to pack away some things and try a new decor.

Once you've purged your last job from your system and you wake up each morning feeling like your real self, with a leisurely look at the morning sky, instead of a mad dash out the door to an unsuitable job, THEN you're ready for your new job hunt.

And when the time comes to take your body to the new job, if you've done it right, then your brain, your heart and your soul can come along too. You have to give it a try, because you never know how long it will be before you're lucky enough to be unemployed again.