

Re-Tooling Your Skills For A New Profession

By Kathy Duncan

This is probably the most opportune time to go for that new profession that you have always wanted. They say, do what you love, but most of us do whatever our education and local market will offer. Most recently, because of the recession, many people have developed large, blank areas on their resume calendar, or have started doing whatever they can to make money. This leaves the things that you have a passion for waiting in the wings.

If you are one of the lucky ones to be receiving unemployment benefits, now is truly the time to change things up on your resume and in your physical search. I have hired hundreds of people over the years, and I will admit that their eagerness and attitude about my health club and what I offered had much more to do than how many degrees that they held. I needed professionally Certified Instructors, Personal Trainers, and Massage Therapists, but I didn't need for them to have a degree in business and finance. My point here is that the person dripping with qualifications, acting like the most important person in the room didn't get as much consideration as the Certified Instructor with a passion for exercise and an interest in my club members. A lot of trade "certifications" can be attained in 40-100 hours which is pretty simple for a whole new career.

What is it that you have a passion for, or maybe do for a hobby? If you love to spend your time doing something, it shows. If you worked as a carpenter, but would rather be selling your own wood carvings, then you already have the tools. You will need a business plan that includes the name and address of shops and online stores that sell products like yours. Think about staying home and carving things in your own shop, then shipping them off for someone else to sell for you. If you're on unemployment, what else are you doing for your future besides looking for a job like the one that you don't have any more? Now is a good time for change.

If you were employed in the restaurant business and you love cooking for people, there are numerous opportunities in private catering. In towns where there are a lot of senior citizens, you might be able to pick up a few regular jobs. Maybe you could market Roast Beef meals on Sunday. If you cooked a turkey or a roast, you could probably make several meals to go. Your customers could save two or three of your individually portioned dinners for another time. There are commercial businesses that provide these services, and yes, there are *Lean Cuisine* meals available at the grocery store, but this is special. It comes with your passion for cooking and serving. Senior citizens on a fixed income would rather visit with you than buy a frozen meal.

By now, you are probably getting my message about re-tooling. People work at jobs that they cannot stand doing for most of their lives. They are rarely blessed with the opportunity to change to something that they are passionate about. Now is the time to pursue something better. If you

think that going back to work at the job that you had is good enough just because it's a job, you might miss this great opportunity. The fact that I am writing this article is proof that with a few changes, you can re-tool yourself.

I have worked in the Health and Fitness Industry for most of my life. This includes working with people and performance horses. As I began to reach near retirement age, I kept wondering how I could continue to train people, but get out of the gym (where everybody is less than half my age,) and away from the heavy work with horses. I have since written a book about horse fitness, and completed a Professional Coaching Certification where I can help people to reach their goals. I am out of the tough physical environment, and setting my own schedule, but essentially doing what I have always loved doing by helping other people be strong and determined. I really love what I do, and I'm good at it.

Here are some suggestions;

Make a list of your favorite pastimes. Choose two that you want to spend more time exploring.

Go online and lookup a variety of businesses in that field. Get an idea of how many diverse ideas have been used in that business. Call them. Ask about pricing. Ask them how business is going. Ask them if they are hiring. Ask them what their hiring requirements are.

Find out what types of certifications, licenses, insurance, and tools or supplies are required to perform this pastime professionally (if you choose to go into business for yourself rather than work for someone else.)

Design a business plan. You will want to list everything including education, licensing, insurance (including health insurance), tools and supplies, advertising, and transportation. Get involved in details. Call for prices. Then according to the prices that other businesses are charging for the service, figure out how you can realistically cover your own expenses independently, or what it would take to be hired by someone else while learning the ropes, even if only part time. The more that you involve yourself, the more you will be on your way to visualizing and eventually making your dream become a reality. By exploring the possibilities, you will learn the business while making new contacts.. If changing your profession is what you really want, believe in it.