



Be clear how your job serves you  
Find the right fit  
Set your thermostat  
Do  
Make  
Create a lily pad



Have a toad-le blast!  
Chill once in a while  
Handle the office jerks  
Be grateful and  
Perform a balancing act

## SPECIAL REPORT: April 2009

# Congratulations! You're the Winner of a Pink Slip!

## Four Reasons Why This Could Be the Chance of a Lifetime

It's a kick in the stomach even under the best circumstances. Being told you're no longer needed, pack up your things, and don't come back . . . hurts, even when you know it had nothing to do with you. Friends and family pointing out silver linings doesn't help. *"Now you can do something you will really enjoy, where they'll appreciate you!"* they squawk. Oh yeah? Great! I've always wanted to be a professional baseball catcher, or an art dealer, or a novelist. So, how exactly are the bills going to get paid while I'm out "doing what I really want to do" or who even **knows** what they really want to do? Get real!

Let's get real. You are holding onto either a winning ticket or a doom-card. How you **choose to think right now** has a huge impact on which it is. If you are just a little bit willing to consider that you are holding a winner, here are four ways others have chosen to think about getting laid off and they now feel lucky they did.

## TIME

Only a tiny percentage of people on this planet regularly have time and money together. Most of us are either busting our humps working and making money, with no time to really enjoy it or we have plenty of time with no money coming in. At the very least, you have unemployment benefits, and often times some type of severance. Breath, let your shoulders drop, and breath again.

You have just walked into a magic door of time. While you were working, time came in big chunks. You were out the door early in the morning and didn't drag you tired butt home till evening, then night time activities, and, finally, sleep only to repeat the same routine over and over. Now, you are in a whole new world of time that comes in many different sizes and shapes:

- Wake up time can be different each day or the same.
- Work time can be twenty minutes at a time, an hour here, two hours there, in the morning, late at night, on the weekends.
- Play time can be on weekends or during the week.

- You choose the pace of time. Each day you may choose to take it slow, rushed, leisurely, hectic, easy, sporadic, it's up to you.

*"I was at the grocery store during the day on a weekday, and I was like, wow, all these people are out and about? There's this whole other world out here."* laughed Mike, a laid off mortgage broker. Ian, a laid off construction manager said, *"I am spending some time staying with my aunt to look for work. It's been great to hang out with her and help out in the yard on a morning in the middle of the week. I love working outdoors and haven't done it in ages."* (Ian now has a job and moved to Denver.)

Having unscheduled time to explore ideas, leads, and hunches widens and deepens our perspective. When we are chasing our tails in the rat race of seventy hour work weeks, there is no time to reflect. Reflection is what gives us insight, perspective, a chance to see how things are interconnected, and thus, possibilities. Having time to do things like working in the yard gives our minds a chance to run around like an unleashed dog, to snoop and chase.

When you're *"standing at your car with a box of your things in your hand wondering what happened,"* as Brian who got laid off from a printing company describes it, you are blind to all the opportunities, people, organizations, services, etc. that have been hidden behind the curtain. Allowing yourself time to let your mind wonder is not a waste of time. You must remind yourself of that, because your mind is going to be very uncomfortable with the aimlessness of it and not understand the value of it.

Ed took time to listen to what makes a right fit for him. After getting laid off from a consulting firm, he now is working in strategic planning for a large finance company. *"I realized when I had time to think about it, I love the strategic thinking part of consulting, but not the working with people part so much,"* he says, *"now, most of my time is spent assessing risks and analyzing data to determine best options and I love it!"*

You have time. Enjoy it! Take advantage! You are going to be back in the rat race again and you will look back on this time with longing. The insights you have now will direct where you end up. If you shut yourself down and run blindly to the next job without taking time to reflect, you may be perpetuating a cycle. How do you **choose to think about time right now?**

## POWER

You are the boss now. You have the power. You decide the strategy and the direction; you are making all the decisions. Many of the people who have gotten laid off whom I have coached **decided** (after the shock, anger, and demoralization) **to make** this a chance of a lifetime.

Janice got laid off about two months ago. She was a sales representative for a high-end tanning supplies company. Once she got over the initial shock and fear, she started considering some possibilities. One of the challenges she had selling expensive equipment and supplies to spas was that they didn't want to make any big investments in this economy. Janice decided to take her portable tanning machine (which the company said she could keep) and offer the services to the spas and split the profits.

She now has her own traveling tanning business that is really starting to pick up some significant clients. Last week she had a booth at a bridal show and is booking services for bridal parties. I talked to her today and she had a meeting with the Florida Marlins yesterday to do the tanning for their "mermaids." (you can't make this stuff up.)

This is not the time to be timid and get seduced into your comfort zone. If this is going to be a chance of a lifetime, you need to think like a mover and a shaker. NPR had a segment on how this economy is ripe for entrepreneurs. Prices are low for services, real estate, equipment, etc. If you have had a great idea, but have been too busy to put any energy into it, now's the time. One person called up with an idea for a solar water heater he's been working on, another a hybrid trolley car, someone else has an idea for spiral construction. (Spiral construction is building buildings in modules built off site.) For each of them, this economy is a chance of a lifetime. In ten years, some of these folks are going to enjoy telling the story of how it all got started back in '09 when the economy was down the drain.

Kurt got laid off last year. He and his wife, Danielle, have two children about 7-10 years old. Daneille had been a stay at home mom. Kurt and Danielle decided to switch roles. She went out and got a job as a marketing manager for a power and light company. Kurt now has a business he does from home and she loves her job and he loves his. Their children have had the chance to have each one of their parents full time. This is a time to explore as many options as you are willing and able to think of.

On CNN the other night, this guy who is 61 years old got laid off and thought even if he gets another job, he'll be facing the same problem in a few years. He was walking by an antique clock shop and it got him remembering how much he loved working with clocks. He even studied it in college. This was two years ago, he now has a clock shop that is in the black.

Most of us ended up in our jobs by chance. We graduated from college majoring in business and took whatever job sounded most appealing at the time. People who have gotten laid off have a second chance and are discovering lives they never would have known existed. You can too! It depends on **how you choose to think right now.**

## RELATIONSHIPS

All the relationships you have with your friends, kids, spouse, neighbors, sisters, brothers, parents, old acquaintances have suffered from lack of time and attention, you now have a chance to rekindle them.

- Be there to meet the kids when they get off the bus and take a leisurely walk to the local store for an after school snack.
- Greet the mailman.
- Take the dog for a walk, stop and chat with a neighbor.
- Linger at the wine store and enjoy the wine tasting.
- Indulge in some lovemaking in the middle of the week during the day.
- Plan and cook a nice meal for the family or friends when they get home.

- Rekindle your relationship with **you**, spend some enjoyable time alone, take your run through the park, or by the lake instead of the treadmill.
- Call your mother.
- Send your sister an email to say hello and see how she's doing.
- Let the kids bounce on your bed before everyone gets up.
- Help your Dad with some chores he may be getting old for.

*"I love not rushing the kids to get ready for childcare! Now, sometimes I don't even bring them, we just hang out in our pajamas all morning,"* says Donna who got laid off from a pharmaceuticals firm.

*"It's nice to have a few minutes to chat with my son's teacher when I drop him off, and visit with some of the other parents. I like not being the drop n' dash Mom,"* says Martha who got laid off from her finance job a few months ago.

Slow down to save time. Let your inner pace slow down a bit and enjoy all the wealth you have around you. Again, you are going **to be** back out there, don't miss this wonderful chance to be around. It's just a matter of how **you choose to think right now** about the people around you who you love and who love you.

## FREEDOM

You are free! No one is telling you what to do, how to do it, why it's not good enough, no schedules, budgets, expectations, demands. It is just you. We often ache for freedom when we don't have it, but it can feel scary when we do. But don't let it paralyze you, breath into it, use it, enjoy it, celebrate it. Go out and run with it.

Brian, who has been involved in four mergers and moves, learned that every time his work life changed he learned something new about himself and got closer and closer to learning what he really wants to do. *"It's not accounting (which he went back to school for) or banking. Most of us majored in something when we were 20 years old, stuck to it and hate it,"* he says, *"by going through hard knocks, I've learned to adapt."* Brian is now starting a home based business of technical writing. *"Bye, Bye, 80-mile commute!"* he cheers. He's free!

Time, Power, Relationships, and Freedom what more could you ask for? Are you holding a winning ticket or a doom card? How do you **choose to think right now?**

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## **About Sharon:**

Sharon Hoyle Weber began her career as a modern dancer and choreographer. Seeing how little money followed when she was doing what she loved, she started working with Forum Corporation, a training and management firm. She was initially a project manager, but soon became certified as a corporate training facilitator.



For fourteen years, she has been traveling around the country teaching skills that help people work most effectively together. Through her relationship with Forum and Results by Design, she has worked for many Fortune 1500 companies such as Deloitte, Liberty Mutual, Bank of America, and Hasbro Toys. Her experience with such a variety of organizations has taught her that the real self is at risk in the workplace.

She describes her own experience as if “my real self was dripping out of me every day.” Once her colleague described it as the “Boiled Frog Syndrome,” she could immediately relate to feeling boiled.

After meeting thousands of employees and interviewing thirty Thrivers, people who make a good living and maintain a sense of authenticity at work, she discovered the Twelve Secrets of Thrivers that contribute to reviving and sustaining the real self in the workplace.

Ms. Weber lives in Cohasset, Massachusetts with her husband, Steve.