

Five Activities That Make A Difference When You're Looking for Work



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This article will not tell you which job lists to subscribe to, how to organize your email into folders, update your resume, interview like a champ or track every job application. Those are important activities when you're in a job search and there are hundreds of places where you'll find guidance on those aspects of the job search.

This article focuses on using the period of time when you are without a "regular job" as an opportunity. The moment you begin looking at this interlude as an opportunity is the moment you'll start to feel the enthusiasm and energy that you associate with life going well. You'll not only feel great, you will exude energy and enthusiasm. Potential employers will sense that during interviews as will everyone in your life. Your enthusiasm will not be a superficial act. You will be filled with possibility.

Create a schedule

You have 100% control over how you spend your time. You may choose to spend 8 hours a day glued to a screen; if you do, you will go crazy. So, what else are you going to do? Many of my clients choose to create a structure for their day. It adds to their feeling of control and helps build feelings of accomplishment. Typically, people start by identifying a number of hours they will spend on the job search. Four hours per day is a common choice. Allocate that time during the hours when you are most able to concentrate. Select other activities from the categories discussed below. Put all your choices on your daily calendar and treat them like commitments. Ask someone non-judging to hold you accountable for keeping your commitments.

Grow Yourself

The day I was laid off, I enrolled in a three-day workshop designed to help people explore their possibilities. The workshop gave me a new perspective and new skills that I immediately put to use. If you've ever wondered what you're going to be when you grow up – now is the time to answer that question. Similarly, if you're struggling with emotional baggage or your inner critic is making you miserable, you

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have a perfect opportunity to clear away blocks that have held you back. Watch TED Talks on topics that expand you. Visit the self-help bookshelf at your library. Start a journal. Take a deeper look at who you are, what you want and what a purpose-filled life looks like for you. Consider that this may be the reason why you have been given this "time out."

Do something other than look for a job

You have more discretionary time than you're used to having. Choose to accomplish things that you've been putting off. Clean the basement, organize the family photos, go through your closets and get rid of things you'll never wear, ebay or Freecycle stuff you no longer want. Go to your doctors and take care of all those check-ups you've been putting off. Prepare healthy meals. Work out daily. Learn to play an instrument or speak a foreign language. Read a book. Write a book! On those days when you feel the job search is going nowhere, give yourself credit for all the other things you've accomplished. You have been productive and what you've accomplished is important.

Get out of the house

Create reasons to see something other than the four walls of your home and the inside of your fridge. Leaving the house shifts your perspective. The more different the environment, the bigger the shift. Go for a walk. Play nine holes of golf. Visit the library, Starbucks or Panera. Have a cup of coffee and use the (free) wireless there to check your email. Visit a park. Go to a museum. Attend a lecture or concert at a local college campus. Volunteer at an organization that helps others – your church, a local food bank, thrift shop or no-kill animal shelter. If you help others, you will be far more attuned to the blessings in your own life. Focusing on what you are grateful for in your life reduces your stress and improves your attitude.

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Keep in Touch

People want connection to other people. Miss your co-workers? Miss your customers? They miss you too. Some have probably written or called to ask how you're doing. How did you respond? Being out of work is no reason to cut these people out of your life. Reach out and invite someone to meet you for a meal or a cup of coffee. What about others in your life that you haven't had time for? This is a great time to reconnect with relatives and old friends. Be with people you love. There is no way to know when you'll get another chance.

If you treat this time as full of opportunity, it will be. You set the stage for great things to come by being with people that matter, taking care of yourself, consciously accomplishing objectives and cultivating gratitude.

Finding it difficult to act positively during your job transition? That's not unusual. An Energy Level evaluation and transition coaching can help you clarify your goals and establish motivation. See www.excella-llc.com for more information.