

Free Yourself from Workplace Slavery



33 Ways to Earn a Living Without a Traditional Job

by Daisy Luther

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Most people these days do not own their time. They have to abide by someone else's schedule, accept the amount of money that an employer is willing to pay and organize their lifestyles around those hours, allotted money, and rules.

When people of my generation were growing up, many of our parents worked at the same job for decades, providing stability for us and our siblings. Times have changed, though. A regular, long-term job doesn't always offer stability, a living wage, or fair treatment.

In fact, many jobs these days look an awful lot like slavery, and a lot of indebted Americans end up spending most of their waking hours with people they don't even like, doing something they hate, and barely making enough money to survive.

Is that really how you want to spend 70% of your time? What if I told you that you that it was possible to be entirely free of the "employee" rat race and that you could be in charge of how you spend your life?

Maybe it's time to step off of the hamster wheel. Maybe it's time to stop answering to the middle-management dictator. Maybe it's time to quit punching a clock, asking permission to go to the restroom, or begging to leave early to watch your child's piano recital.

Maybe it's time to be free.

Even if you want a job, they can be hard to come by.

With unemployment rates skyrocketing, going out and finding a new job can be nearly impossible these days. This is only going to get trickier as the government continues to force businesses to increase the minimum wage and businesses respond by hiring

fewer employees or reducing hours. Workloads that used to provide employment to two people are now forced onto one. The work performed gets shoddier as the one employed person struggles to keep up, and the number of people who are employed gets lower.

If you don't have a job, consider making one up. Actually, you might be better to make up several, considering the current economy and how difficult it can be to start a business these days. If you are [in the midst of a personal economic collapse](#), you just might be able to change your course by creating your own streams of income instead of relying on an employer to pay you a living wage.

Let me explain what I mean.

There are a lot of little jobs a person can do that individually would not pay the bills. However, an organized and industrious person can group a bunch of small jobs into a full-time income if they schedule carefully, work hard, and stay organized. I know, because I've done it.

Once upon a time, I did home daycare on the weekends, tended bar on Monday and Tuesday nights, did dog-walking and pet sitting during the week, cleaned house for a person one afternoon per week, and did the shopping and cooking for an elderly neighbor. At the time, I didn't have a car, so all of this was done on foot. Twenty years ago, the \$400-500 a week I made from doing all of these little odd jobs paid the bills and left me with time for other things.

After that, I got a "real" job and spent years in the workforce. After the novelty of a regular paycheck wore off, I realized how much I hated it. It wasn't that I minded working. I hated missing important moments in my children's lives. I hated answering to arrogant middle managers who were consumed with their own importance. I hated having to get up when I was sleepy, drive somewhere that was an unpleasant temperature, and wait to eat

lunch until it was convenient for everyone else instead of when I was hungry.

I eventually got "downsized" and it was the very best thing that ever happened to me. I was set free from a prison that most of us enter voluntarily and repeatedly and I never wanted to go back inside those gates again.

I began to revisit this type of money-making system. In my older-and-wiser version of "make up your job," I ran my own website, was a staff writer for another site, did some freelance editing and writing, and I did other web-based projects and virtual assisting as well. Again, I made enough to pay for all of our needs and some of our wants.

I can tell you for a fact that this method of earning your living works. I've done it for more years than I've spent in traditional jobs, and it can be wonderful if you're willing to take the leap.

Set up multiple streams of income

The key to success with this is to have multiple streams of income. Don't put all of your financial eggs in one basket, because if that should dry up, you'll be left "unemployed" yet again. As well, it really helps with budgeting if you are able to say, "This task pays my rent, this task pays my utilities, this task pays for groceries."

Obviously, we all know that living frugally is like making money, but that is a topic for another essay. Back in the 70s, Dolly Freed lived so frugally that she had very little need for money. While the economy is very different now, there is still a lot you can learn from her example. However, these days, frugality alone is not enough for most people. The fact remains there are some things we need money for, so this article is focused on acquiring that cash.

Some of us have specialized skills that make this easier - for example, I am a writer and editor, so I focus my money-earning

on those two skills. Others might be particularly handy, so they might focus their skills on doing home repairs.

But it isn't necessary to have a skill set to bring in multiple streams of income. You simply have to be willing to do small jobs that may or may not be short term.

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Here are some ideas to get you started. This list, of course, is by no means comprehensive.

- Cleaning houses
- Cleaning out vacated rental properties (as a perk, sometimes you get to keep items that have been abandoned, and you can sell them on Craigslist or make use of them yourself)
- Yardwork: raking, mowing, landscaping
- Trimming trees
- Cleaning out gutters
- Repairing items: home repairs, small appliance repairs – whatever you're good at fixing, there is likely a person who needs that item fixed
- Cooking for those too busy to cook for themselves
- Babysitting
- Before and after school childcare (It can be really tough for working parents to find someone willing to drive their children to school and pick them up)
- Weekend or overnight childcare
- Pet-sitting
- Dog walking
- Laundry service (I recommend doing this at a laundromat instead of running up your own utility bills – you can build the price of the coin operated machines into your fee)
- Run errands – some folks are working during regular business hours and don't have the time to do those little

errands like stopping by the dry cleaner, going to the grocery store, etc.

- Shovel snow
- Help people move – if you have a strong back, you can be the hired muscle
- Wash cars
- Do a paper route (it's not just for kids anymore)
- Recycle aluminum or plastic
- Recycle scrap metal – if you have a truck, run an ad offering to pick up used appliances, etc. Most people are thrilled to have someone haul off their old junk.
- Pick up poop – a friend I used to know made a LOT of money from his willingness to pick up dog poop in people's back yard on a weekly basis
- Make and sell...something. Maybe you make jewelry, knit scarves, carve duck decoys – whatever. Find a venue to sell your handmade items, like Etsy, craft sales, EBay, or the local paper.
- Rent out a room in your home – you can get big dollars if you live near a college.
- Sell excess garden goodies from a stand in your front yard
- If you have a really good eye, you can make money buying cool vintage stuff at yard sales and online, cleaning it up, then reselling it to an antique shop. Be careful, though – you can just as easily lose money doing this.
- Do you sew? You can make money doing mending and alterations – many tailors charge up to \$20 to hem a pair of pants.
- Got a green thumb? Set up and tend to vegetable gardens for your neighbors
- Sell social media influence: if you have a busy Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook page, sometimes you can do sponsored posts for companies who want to reach the people that interact with you

- Start a blog about something you love. Keep in mind, this is not immediate money. It can take months or even years before you make a profit.
- If you have a marketable talent, create an account on Fiverr. You can sell logos, digital artwork, small online jobs...the sky is the limit but the price is \$5.
- If you have professional experience, use it to hire yourself out as a consultant. You can charge a great deal of money to provide an outside perspective in many different types of industries.
- Teach something. Again, you can use former professional experience for this. But you can also teach some of the marketable skills above, like crafting, repairing, or gardening.
- Network marketing sales. I know, I know. You're going to say I'm crazy. But there are a lot of people making a lot of money selling things like Scentsy, Pampered Chef, and essential oils. Beware of spending a whole lot of money getting started, but if you find a product that you love and believe in, you may end up joining the ranks of those who are very successful at it.

A few keys to success

It's important to make a good impression on your customers. Handle these small jobs just like you would a corporate job and follow these key steps.

- Be professional.
- Arrive promptly.
- Be courteous - the customer is always right.
- Be tidy in your appearance
- Work hard
- Try to exceed the person's expectations

Keep these principles in mind and you will never lack the opportunity for work. Word of mouth is the very best form of advertising.

Don't forget about the barter system

Don't limit yourself to only doing jobs for money. Is there a good or service that you want? Sometimes you can approach people and offer them a barter, particularly if they are in business for themselves. For example, I used to clean house for the person who cut my family's hair. Once I was hired to clean up a person's yard and I politely asked if we could keep the walnuts that had fallen from their tree. They didn't mind at all, as they had just asked me to rake everything up and bag it, and it gave us a nice little bonus of a winter's worth of delicious black walnuts for a weekend's work.

More recently, I've traded my home-raised goods for someone else's. I've swapped chicken pound-for-pound with pork, traded my excess tomatoes for someone else's excess squash, and traded homemade blackberry jam for homemade plum jam. This provided us all with variety at no additional cost.

Don't be afraid to approach people about the potential of bartering - the worst thing that can happen is that they say no.

Do be aware that the government would like you to pay tax on barter. They like to be involved in all transactions.

Get the word out

Sometimes you can find work through people you know - maybe they expressed a need to have someone walk Fido partway through the day. Other times, you will need to search a little harder to find customers for your services.

- Put an ad on Craigslist

- Find some local message boards online and post your services there
- Make flyers and hand them out in your neighborhood (be sure to respect the wishes of those homes that say "no flyers")
- Post flyers on telephone poles if that is allowed in your area
- Put a sign in your front yard - I used to advertise "Daycare Space Available" at my home
- Put an ad in the classified section of your local paper
- Put a sign up on grocery store or other community bulletin boards

Living without a job can mean a kind of freedom you never had before.

Creatively funding your life without regular employment can give you a whole new kind of freedom.

- **You have the ability to pick and choose who you work with or for.** If someone is unpleasant to deal with, you can find another way to fill in that portion of your income. No more horrible bosses.
- **You can make your schedule fit your life instead of the other way around.** You no longer have to miss your child's events because your employer won't let you leave work to attend them. You can make your starting time begin when it is convenient for you instead of sticking to someone else's arbitrary schedule.
- **Your fate is not in the hands of someone else.** One of the most stressful things in a workplace environment is the fact that you must answer to someone else all the time. And if those answers aren't "the right ones" you can lose your entire stream of income in a heartbeat. Personality conflicts have the potential to end your career.
- **You can work as many or as few hours as you need to.** One of my favorite things about working for myself is the ability to cut my workload when I want more time than

money or increase it when I need more money to fund more fun time.

- **You can work when you want to.** Are you a night owl? Stop dragging yourself out of bed at the crack of dawn and choose jobs that work with your personal circadian rhythm. Are you a morning person? Work then and be in bed early. Stop setting your watch to someone else's clock.
- **You can include your children.** For many of us, daycare is a massive expense. Some of the work ideas listed above mean that you don't have to have your children raised by strangers. They can come along with you, help you work, and learn marketable skills too.

While losing your job in this economy can seem like the most horrible, stressful thing in the world, sometimes it can be the best thing that ever happened to you. It can be like a reluctant baby bird getting shoved out of the nest. You can fly or you can fail. If you choose to fly, you'll discover a whole new world of freedom.