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Title:

Older Workers Like Work-One Person's Odyssey

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Summary:

Gee whiz! I never thought I would have to look for a job again, but I do. unny that no one taught or told me that savings don't last forever. I'm in hat "pickle!" Besides savings running out, I feel better working!

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Article Body:

Gee whiz! I never thought I would have to look for a job again, but I do. unny that no one taught or told me that savings don't last forever. I'm in that "pickle!" Besides savings running out, I feel better working!

That idea goes again the grain of American culture. People of a certain age re encouraged to find fun things to do and not work at a job! Work is an American dirty word! But I want to feel productive, make money, be around ounger folks and have some fun times at WORK.

Heck, I don't have time to think about the culture I live in. I'm older and I eed a job!

What can I do to find a job to do? Before I get started in looking for a job, 'm just plain scared that no one will hire me. I've heard lots of stories about age discrimination and I don't want to look for a job where someone will tell me that I'm over-qualified, just to get rid of me because I'm old.

I know it only takes one employer to hire me, not half a dozen at once, but I may have to see more than I think is my share of talking to employers to find something! How can I do this?

I think I'd better not think of how hard this is going to be and concentrate on inding employers who will want to hire me. It only takes one If I let fear take over in the job search because I have grey hair, then I will make my search that much harder & make myself feel useless.

I think I need to talk to someone about my plans to find a job. I can talk to Bob, my nephew; Carol, my cousin about what I want to do to find a job. They have always been kind and helpful to me in the past. I'll let them know soon. They also make me feel proud of who I am and of my age.

Talking it over is good, but I need direction too about what to do next. Where can I talk to others about my situation? I'll just look in the phone book first.

I've found some employment agencies. I know their hours by asking for information on the phone. I'll go to one or two to sign up.

I did get to the two employment agencies. They recommended that I take some computer classes, which they offer for a fee. I can't do that as I'm lready scared about spending more of my savings. The people at these places didn't seem to have other ways of helping me.

The phone book didn't help me much with people or places that might help me find a job. I think I'll look in the help wanted columns of my local newspaper to find a job. There must be some jobs that I can do listed in the paper.

I'm so confused about reading these ads. Nothing seems to fit me. I've never had much of a work history, just being in & out of seasonal farm work. I never thought it was necessary to have a CAREER. I barely got out of high school when I had to work. My family just worked at anything that came along. So did I.

One of my neighbors mentioned that I should go to WorkSource. I had never heard of this place.

I finally went there to find out about what I could do to find a job. When I got someone to help me from there, I was put into a job club for older workers. There were about 12 of us in the job club room. Some were older than I & some were younger.

The instructor in this job club was one of the employees of this agency. It was sure an eye opener to be in there. I looked at some of the others who were there & compared myself with those who looked older, those who looked younger; those who had a give-up attitude & those who might find something to do. I wanted to be one of those finding a real job.

I decided then & there to get a new haircut, get out my best clothes to wear try to lose some weight. That might help in making me look younger than thepeople in this group. If I can manage to feel better then I might have ore of a chance to get a job.

The instructor in this job club wanted to know why we were there. Everyone had to tell their story. I couldn't see how that was going to help me at all. I did enjoy listening to some of the others talk about their backgrounds. One was an ex-teacher who thought she knew everything, but still didn't have a job.

The instructor also gave us a packet of material about who else in the community might help me & others find a job. I see now that I can call some others for help.

Sure, calling on others for help is good, but I need a job. I didn't think a job search was going to be this hard. I had to muster up the courage to talk to the instructor about how to find a job.

She asked me about what my skills are & what was I looking for. No one had talked to me about skills, I just worked at whatever was out there.

She did give me a test to take to find out more about what I wanted to do. It turned out that this test said I would do best in an agricultural setting. I had to laugh as I had done farm & cannery work all of my life.

She did ask me if I knew what my skills are. After this test I had to take, I was still unsure about what I could do best. So, I decided that since I had done all of this agricultural work, I might do well in a nursery selling plants or some such. I had never had any selling experience but I thought that something might just turn up as a job selling plants was still related to what I'd done in the past.

I talked to the instructor again about how I could find a job selling plants in a nursery, just as a hunch again about what I could do. She told me to compose a resume first. A resume would tell an employer some things about ho I was & what I could do. I told her I needed help in making up a resume. I had never needed one. I could understand that a good one might get me a job somewhere or at least get me in to an interview.

We did do a resume. I was surprised that after all this time, a resume is just a piece of paper that tells an employer what a worker can do. I like this exercise & it made me feel like a I could do a lotof things. I'm still a little unsure about what my real skills are although I'm good with my hands, I can sort through materials to find the bad stuff and keep up with a cannery line of products on an always moving belt.

The next step for me in this job club was to contact an employer. I had ever had to do this much as seasonal work was always there & employers just sent out a call for laborers I was called back year after year until I gave it up. Now with government help and a small pension I can just get by. The savings are being spent, fast.

Well, I looked in the phone book again. This time I was looking for places that sold or cultivated plants for sale. I didn't care much if I had to learn to sell plants or if I had to care for them.

With the help of the others in the job club and my instructor I made some phone calls. I didn't ask for a job on the phone. I made an appointment with the owner or manager to talk about what they did. Even though I was scared to do this, after a few calls, I felt better about calling strangers.

I did make two appointments to talk to the day-to-day manager of a wholesale nursery nearby.

When I went to the nursery, I was dressed in casual clothing, not anything fancy. I did wear a jacket, though, as I thought that made me look more business like.

When I got to this place, I felt awkward until the manager & I started talking about the planting & cultivating of strawberries. I did know about growing strawberries from our own home garden.

To my surprise when I was getting ready to leave, the plant manager asked me if I was looking for work. I told him that I was truly interested in seeing firsthand about this strawberry farm, really, not a nursery.

Finally, I had the presence of mind to tell him that I was looking for work at some date. He & I made an appointment to have me come in & talk to him & the owner. I was confused then but agreed to come back anyway.

After this experience I made up my mind that I wanted to work & working here with my background seemed to be a good fit. I was determined to go back & ask for a job, even though that was not what I thought had happened when I was there.

To sum up what I have learned from all of this it is:

1. I have skills I didn't recognize.

2. Potential employers are not "meanies" who are rude.

3. I now know what a resume is and how one can help or hinder me in the job search.

4. Job hunting is not always a hard or hurtful experience.

5. I feel better about myself in knowing that employers do hire older workers. I think I just found one.