



Ready for a career change?

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Reflecting on past decade puts troubles in perspective

I was going to write an article today about getting over a pessimistic, rain cloud over your head. Then I realized the date today — Sept. 11, 2011.

The world changed forever 10 years ago today. Privacy laws changed, travel became more difficult and the word terrorism brought a new kind of fear to our way of living. That fateful image of 10 years ago seems like a long time ago, and yet the ripple effects have continued even today.

I guess I do get irritated by people who wine and complain about their jobs, their spouses, their dates or their



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lifestyles. If there is one thing I have learned over the last 10 years, it is that life is too short not to find joy.

We should celebrate our lives and what we have accomplished in the last 10 years, and what we have to look forward to.

Sure, stuff happens: We had a horrific recession, lots of people lost their jobs and had to downsize their supersized lifestyles. Oh well, now there are jobs again, at least in Canada. If we dread going to work every day, we can do something about it! We can find a new job, we can choose which industry we want to be in and who we want to work for.

And don't start sending me mail saying there aren't any jobs — there are lots, but maybe we are so used to a certain level, wage or location that we can't see ourselves taking less?

Well, those are your choices. I am a little tired of hearing about bad relationships, too. Think about all those people who lost their lives or loved ones this day 10 years ago, before you wine about who you are with or not with today.

My business came to a screeching halt on Sept. 12 of 2001. I thought we were going to have to close our doors, as no company was hiring because the stock markets had crashed and we were all afraid of what else was to come.

Over the next year, fear lessened, the stock markets recovered and we slowly built our

business back up. Day by day, we got back to where we were prior to September 2001.

Then, 2009 hit, no one was hiring and recession slammed us into the ground, again. Day by day, for the last two and a half years, we slowly built the business back up. And now, the economy is recovering, there are more jobs, new relationships and lifestyles, and desires are being fulfilled once again!

People and jobs come and go, lifestyles go up and down, and money comes and goes! Today is a great day — a day to reflect on the changes of the

last 10 years and to get over any pity party we may have been having.

It is a day to choose a positive attitude and be grateful for all that we do have.

Sharlene Massie is the CEO of About Staffing Ltd., a dynamic personnel agency specializing in direct-hire and temporary placements. Questions for Sharlene? Visit the About Staffing website at www.aboutstaffing.com, and click on the link under the Sun logo. This article may be reproduced or transmitted if done so in its entirety, including this copyright line: Copyright 2011, by About Staffing Ltd., all rights reserved.

Train in trades

DEAR WORKING WISE: I'm thinking of getting into trades field, but I'm not sure how to do that. How do I find a job as an apprentice?

— READY TO TRADE JOBS

DEAR READY: The trades are an excellent career option for many reasons. First, as an apprentice, you spend about 80% of your time earning a wage while you learn on the job from a qualified tradesperson. First-year apprentices earn about half of a journeyman's wage.

As you take more training and get more experience, your pay increases. You spend the remainder of your time taking technical training at a college or technical institution. Apprenticeship programs can last anywhere from one to four years, depending on the trade.

Second, the trades are rewarding. Tradespeople tend to earn good wages and benefits, plus they have the opportunity to move up into management roles like foreman, construction manager, quality-control inspector and superintendent. Many tradespeople go on to teach apprentices or open a business.

Third, tradespeople are eligible for grants of \$1,000 per year for completing their first and second years. They are also eligible for a \$2,000 Apprenticeship Completion Grant plus a \$500 per year tools deduction on their tax return.

Fourth, there are so many career options within the trades that you are bound to find something you really like. In Alberta, there are 50



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Working Wise

different trades you can apprentice in from Appliance Service Technician to Chef to Well-testing Services Supervisor. For a list, check out: www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca.

How to get started

- Pick your trade. Get as much information as you can about your choices from the Internet, school career counsellors, tradespeople you know, or your nearest Apprenticeship and Industry Training Office.

- Talk to people working in the trades. Speak to employers — they might let you 'job-shadow' to see what the day-to-day work is like.

- Find an employer. Thousands of employers hire and train apprentices. Getting a job as an apprentice is no different than any other job.

- Apply. Once you have a job, you and your employer need to complete an Apprenticeship Training Application/Contract and return it to the nearest office of the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Branch.

Tips for finding a job as an apprentice:

- Prepare a professional-looking resumé and cover letter that explains

your career goal.

- Dress your best when you go out to meet employers.

- Be courteous and grateful for any help or advice provided.

- Search job postings and job boards like the Canada-Alberta Job Bank <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/intro-eng.aspx> using the keyword "apprentice."

- Use "job alert" features on job boards to alert you when a new apprentice job is posted.

- Attend job fairs and talk to employers who hire tradespeople. You can find out about upcoming job fairs at <http://employment.alberta.ca/jobfairs>.

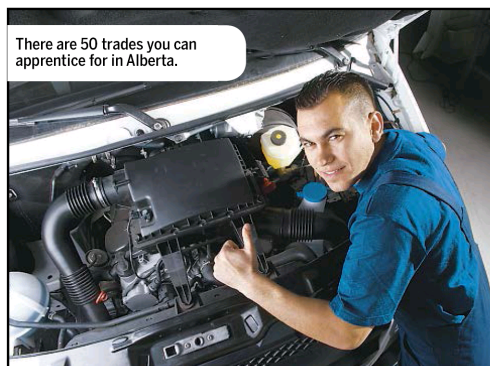
- Talk to tradespeople and get their advice on finding an apprentice position. They might even know someone who is hiring.

- Knock on doors of businesses who employ tradespeople. If they are not hiring, ask if they know someone who is.

- Visit an Alberta Works office and speak to a Career & Employment Consultant. They can provide you with more advice. You can find the office nearest you at: <http://employment.alberta.ca/433.html>.

For more information on apprenticeship and careers in the trades, visit www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca.

Do you have a work-related question? Send your questions to Working Wise, at charles.strachey@gov.ab.ca. Charles Strachey is a regional manager with Alberta Employment and Immigration. This column is provided for general information.



There are 50 trades you can apprentice for in Alberta.

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