**Could a Sabbatical Increase Your ROL?**

The personal and professional displacement we all experienced during the pandemic has inspired many people to reassess what work means to them. Rather than let these questions linger, it could be productive to approach them with a more formal plan of action, introspection, and recalibration.

If your employer offers sabbatical benefits, now might be the time to use them. And if not, adopting a "sabbatical mindset" could help you to improve the life you're getting from work. Your employer might even offer alternative benefits that help you explore without leaving your job.

Here are four ideas for a productive sabbatical that are adaptable to most working situations.

**1. Keep learning.**

Many companies have started offering continuing education programs to their employees. Talk to your HR department about what kinds of classes are covered and what kinds of skills you could develop to benefit both you and your current employer.

If you're thinking about becoming a full-time student again, it's still important that you focus on specific skills and professional goals. With those aims in mind, you can start exploring the wealth of adult education options available to you, whether that means in-person classes at your alma mater or virtual learning that will let you earn a degree or certification on your schedule. Working seniors might also be eligible for heavily discounted tuition at community colleges and local universities.

**2. Volunteer.**

Allowing for volunteer work during regular working hours is another corporate benefit that's growing in popularity. Whether you're supporting your employer's greater mission or carving a few hours out for your own causes, giving back can open your eyes to the needs in your community and the wider world. If you want to go all-in, you might take a part-time position at a charitable organization or non-profit or join a work and travel program that immerses you in the lives of the people you're helping. That perspective could shape the kind of work you want to do going forward, including a potential career change.

**3. Start hustling.**

Have you ever dreamed of being your own boss? Use a sabbatical to water that business idea you've never had time to focus on exclusively. Perhaps you could burnish your business plan by combining side-hustle time with some continuing education that will improve your CEO skills as well. You could also spend your sabbatical doing small trials of your goods and services or mastering the SEO skills you'll need to zero in on your ideal customer base.

**4. Reconnect your mind and your body.**

Once you've unplugged from your traditional 9-to-5, you might feel compelled to completely revamp your daily routine. Consider making more time for exercise and mindfulness. Try a new sport or fitness activity. Take morning walks with your spouse. Spend a few minutes at the beginning and end of the day praying, reflecting, or keeping a gratitude journal. Or just block off fifteen minutes in the afternoon for a cup of coffee, a good book, and an inspiring view.

Upgrading your routine might not seem essential to answering the professional questions that led you to your sabbatical. But whether you return to your old job or start working towards a new career, self-care will be essential to avoiding more burnout and maintaining your sense of purpose. Once you've found a routine that energizes your mind and your body, you'll be able to structure other essential tasks around it, which can lead to higher productivity and a greater sense of fulfillment.

Are you considering a sabbatical or a career change? Are you concerned about how that change could affect your financial goals? Let's talk about how our Life-Centered Planning process can help you chart the best path forward.