

My Clothing Is Confused

By Liz Cummings
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My alarm clock is out of a job. My car feels like a neglected dog not taken out for a daily walk. My business-casual clothes are confused because they are hanging in the Goodwill instead of in my closet. I'm retired.

The standard advice is abundant. You'll need \$2 million in your 401(k). (Not even close.) Don't take your Social Security early. (It's not that early.) Have a plan. Know what you will do with your time. (Advice to self: Forty years of making "to-do" lists is enough. Pop the lid off each day and see what it holds.)

Characters in the books on my shelves have been waiting for me. Now in my hands, they live. Floating mental images materialize on canvas. My piano has recovered its voice. Recipes filed in a box are now meals on a plate. Friends who were told "We should get together one of these days" actually find me on their doorstep.

I'm doing things I knew I would do. But following impulses is even better.

I'd seen the sign at a local horse rescue farm so many times. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED. One day I didn't just drive by, I pulled in. Found out there's a place for someone who has always loved horses but has no idea how to care for them.

So I'm learning ... respect and admiration for their power and beauty, the depth in their eyes, what it takes to give them the lives they deserve, how much we need each other.

Mucking stalls, feeding, careful grooming — it's hard work. But it's not work to me, because I don't work anymore. I play.