

# Downshifting

<http://www.thedownshifter.co.uk>

## ESCAPING THE DAY JOB FOR LESS PAY, MORE LIFE!

For many the word *downshifting* means simply giving up the rat race of 9 to 5 living in a large town or City and moving to the Country, buying a house, preferably Cottage, with a bit of land and living the leisurely life of self-sufficiency.

After doing just that in 1999 and leaving pretty good and well paid jobs in Advertising, Retail and Railway Management I can assure you that it isn't always as easy as that! For some with a lot of money to spare, it can be, but for the normal family, it's hard work which if not planned and carried out correctly, simply exchange one set of stresses and strains for another !

### **A look at how to go about downshifting and what to expect**

There are various options in downshifting; you are changing your full time job for a less stressful full time job or you are kind of 'dropping out', leaving the rat race to search out a better way of life.

### **Unavoidable Downshifting!**

Sometimes downshifting is forced upon us. There are occasions when redundancy may suddenly jump out the blue at the age of 'over 40' and the chances of getting an equivalent job with the same earnings get lesser by each year. Sad, but in the main, true.

In any of the above situations, it is something which needs to be planned and without any doubt at all, supported by the family. When you 'drop', they drop with you.

So I think that first, you have to ask 'why' are you doing this. Sometimes it can be just a spate of bad luck or stressful times in your existing job, so you have to look at the option of simply changing your career path to something with the same hours, same pay but better times outside of work.

There is a perception that downshifting is selling a house in town and moving to the country with a bit of land where you will tend to your livestock and spend the rest of the time knitting jumpers and making crotchet bed quilts. Maybe this is your dream, if so great and go for it. But for many it's simply getting a less stressful job in which you can spend more time at home with the family and more time doing your own thing.

### **Questions to be asked**

So, questions to be asked are; What is my main purpose in life ? Do material things really matter to me ? What will I achieve through doing this ? Have I an alternative plan should it not work out ?

So the 'why ?' is your very own personal reason. If you are more middle aged, there is a chance that the way out should it not work for you will diminish. This would make it compulsory downshifting rather than voluntary.

The 'why' should not be simply a way out from something but a positive move toward something. Bit like an election where we vote for a particular political party, not because we want that particular party to win, but simply to get the existing one out. Is that the answer? Once you've downshifted, it's often not easy to reverse it.

## **Living a frugal & Self-reliant life to live within your means**

Even if you're not downshifting at all, frugality is a fine art to get into and it is an artform I think.

The best tips I can give in this are look at the Home Front during World War Two. I remember as a child going to my grandparents houses and albeit, it was some 10 years after the end of the war, the remnants and lessons learnt were still there.

Many houses were still in the back garden mode of

1. Flower beds and a bit of lawn, then 2. A dividing hedge with an allotment at the bottom. Add that to many ways of utilizing left overs, wastage, re-cycling and general conservation and you had a pretty good existence.

It was only when TV and Magazines took off during the 50's that all this seemed to slowly vanish. It's strange how through the same media it has re-appeared again after 50 years or so. Life is a circle !

Frugality goes right across the board with a new downshifting experience where you haven't so much money as you had before.

### **Frugal is not being poor**

Don't be confused with a frugal person and a pauper. I assure you they are not the same. Sure, you'll get a few strange looks when you park the car outside the house and take out an assortment of objects that you either found in a skip en-route or a plethora of odds and ends given to you by friends or family when having a clear out. 'One man's trash is another man's treasure.

Even if someone's chucking out a load of tatt, ask yourself if the items could be sold on through Boot Fairs, Yard Sales or online auctions. The secret is knowing the time to chuck things away. If you've a load of stuff which isn't selling, throw it, burn it or make something out of it. You can't be self-reliant without being frugal and vice versa, so it is very hard to write about these two things separately.