

Chapter Three

Reinvent Yourself with New Skills

There has never been a time like now to start a “side hustle” or a new career. You can acquire new skills online for free or almost free. In addition, you can teach online and start a new adventure while getting paid.

How can you do this?

One example was found at my local university. It offers free courses for senior citizens in my area. They also offer other courses and certifications. Please check with the university in your area.

Online Learning

If you have a computer and an internet connection, the world is literally at your fingertips! For example, I found a summary of 14 major online learning websites on **themuse.com**. I’ve listed them below for you as follows:

1. **Alison:** Free comprehensive classes on technology, languages, science, financial literacy, and soft skills.
2. **Udemy:** Relatively inexpensive courses on many trending subjects. These courses are affordable, starting at \$9.99 per course. I have taken a photo-

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graphy and an Airbnb course here. I have also signed up for other courses. I get to set my own schedule, and I'm satisfied with the courses I've taken.

3. **Coursera:** Free college-level courses taught by professors from top 10 universities. You can earn a certificate by paying \$29.00 and up. Specializations or professional certificates can cost \$50.00 or more. For example, I took a free class on happiness some time ago. A professor from a top university taught it.
4. **edX:** Similar to Coursera. You can audit most classes for free but you can choose to earn a certificate and complete assignments at a cost of \$50.00 to \$300.00. Top partners include Harvard, Dartmouth, Georgetown, and the University of Chicago.
5. **Udacity:** The focus is on software development. Free courses in programming, data science, web development, and other tech areas such as management, marketing and cybersecurity. You can pursue a nano degree program if you want to master a skill or continue a full-time career in tech at a price.
6. **LinkedIn Learning:** Subscribe and access thousands of courses in business, design, art, education, tech, and career and personal development. You'll get the first month for free and then pay \$26.00 and up.
7. **General Assembly:** Tech courses. Offers free workshops for introductory digital marketing and software engineering before one commits to longer courses.

- 8. Skill Share:** Offers “bite-size” classes so you can learn something new daily in as little as 15 minutes. There are 27,000 free and premium classes on topics such as film, writing, tech, visual arts, productivity, and entrepreneurship. You get a free seven-day trial and then pay \$14.00 monthly.
- 9. Codecademy:** Teaches you how to code (often for free) and covers Javascript, Ruby, HTML, CSS, and Python.
- 10. Pluralsight:** Subscription required. Offers software development, web design, cloud computing, CAD software, etc.
- 11. Adobe:** Free tutorials on its products: Photoshop and InDesign
- 12. Google Skill Shop:** Free certifications on Google’s web, software, and hardware tools such as YouTube, Android, and Waze for various careers and business opportunities. You get certification in cybersecurity, marketing, design, teaching, and data analysis. Google also offers free courses on digital skills and growing your business.
- 13. Future Learn:** Classes have a tier system and are entirely free. They’re taught by universities and special organizations on all subjects. These subjects include e-business and management, creative arts and media, law, literature, IT and computer science, healthcare and medicine, science, engineering and math, politics and society, psychology and mental health, study skills and teaching.
- 14. Academic Earth:** This site is for the academically inclined. All courses are free: art, science, humanities, computer science, etc.

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Are you overwhelmed by the choices? Here's another website that can help guide you—**Class Central**. Again I ask, what are your interests? I wanted to improve my cooking, so I went on Skillshare and enrolled in a basic cooking class for free. Remember, you can do such things for fun or business. Either way, you're enriching your life.

I've taken a few courses online to improve my photography skills. I learned that the best camera is the one you have on hand when you need one. For example, I use my iPhone to take pictures when I travel and right here at home—because it's always in my pocket. In addition, I enjoy composing photos of my flower garden and landscapes throughout my community.

Some years ago, Ariel Melchoir, the Virgin Daily News publisher, took a helicopter and flew all over the islands in a helicopter and scattered flamboyant seeds everywhere. Fast forward to today, and you can find numerous towering trees that bloom for three months in the summer with red and yellow flowers. They bring me such joy, so I photograph them every year.

Another tree that I've photographed is the Baobab. It's one of the oldest trees on the planet, and there are still a few here in my hometown.

It has never been easier to upgrade your skills or learn something new. You'll be surprised at the number of places in your community ready and willing to help you learn such skills as woodworking, pottery, candle making, painting, glass blowing, jewelry making, and writing. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention YouTube University. You can get tons of information there. There's also Khan Academy, a nonprofit with the mission to provide a free, world-class education for anyone, anywhere.

Starting a business or learning a new skill for the kitchen is easier than it has ever been. So why not become more interested in life and more interesting to others by developing new skills and augmenting your talents? You can also become more relevant by keeping up with the trends. At the very least, you can enrich your life and the lives of those around you.

And what about music? It doesn't matter where you live, there's a music community ready to embrace you. Learn to play an instrument and join them. It can change your life in remarkable ways!

I imagine some of you groaning and saying, "I'm too old." It's just not true. I know many people who have returned to school in their 40s and launched new careers. A housewife who became a nurse. A teacher who became a pilot and a lawyer in mid-life. She finished her career as a judge. Another who went back to school and graduated—in their 90s! And a 74-year-old accountant who devised a new and easier form of mathematics. He even wrote a book about it.

You're never too old to reinvent yourself.

