The Story of Unemployment: Lesson 2 Transcript

Stories about Structural Unemployment

Gary's Story:

I, unfortunately, find myself structurally unemployed.

I live in a town on the shores of Lake Superior and there’s a really big ship building yard here. I was a pipe fitter there for about 15 years. I knew troubles were ahead when my friends in the yard started talking about this brand-new pre-fab piping that only needed half the people to install it.

It wasn’t too long after that when my foreman called me into his office and told me my skills were “no longer needed.”

He gave me my termination notice, and that was that. I might be able to move where somebody still needs my skills, or I might even be able to learn heating and cooling or something but, for now, there just aren’t any jobs here in what I know how to do. I have to figure out something pretty quick!

That’s my unemployment story.

Diane's Story:

So, yeah…I’m structurally unemployed.

I went to music school to be an oboe player, and I am really good, but since I’ve graduated, I’ve realized it wasn’t a good choice for my degree. I don’t want to be a music teacher or play in an orchestra.

It seems the only jobs I’ve run across are as music teachers, but I don’t think I would be comfortable as a teacher. The nearest paying orchestra is in a city 500 miles away, and there are no openings for an oboist. I never expected to not have employable skills, but that’s where I am. (sigh) I’m putting in applications around town for receptionists and stuff, but nothing’s come from that yet.

That’s my unemployment story.

Dustin's Story:

My story proves that structural unemployment can happen to anyone.

I used to be a very successful financial analyst for a local branch of a Wall Street firm. Life was great. I had a nice big house, a fine car—the works! It was awesome!

Then the company started to close their branches and move employees to the New York headquarters. They asked me to move, but I couldn’t sell my house. There were no buyers and, more important, my family has deep roots here that are hard to pull up.

Anyway, I lost my job and have slowly started selling my personal belongings to make the house payments. Now I have a house that’s empty, except for a few beds and a couch.

I’m trying to find another job in my field, but nobody around here’s hiring! So, I’m looking farther and farther from home, but driving’s expensive too!

That’s my unemployment story.