

RETROSUBURBIA

THE DOWNSHIFTER'S GUIDE TO A RESILIENT FUTURE



CHAPTER 27: CREATING YOUR OWN LIVELIHOOD

QUESTIONS:

- What was the last time you used a small producer / seller / provider? What did (or didn't) make this a pleasant or satisfying experience?
- What is your understanding of 'disintermediation'? Can you give an example from your own life or someone you know? Are there any areas of your life ripe for disintermediation?
- What is the difference between credit and debt?
- Do you think you would find it easy/enjoyable/useful to work from home? Why?
- When you were growing up, were your parents in small business, self-employed or working from home? How has this affected your outlook on livelihoods, career and lifestyle?
- Do you agree with Holmgren on what livelihoods might be resilient to energy descent futures?
- Has anyone been involved in a LETS or other system of labour exchange? Why did or didn't it work for them? Why did or didn't it work for the community?

ACTIVITIES:

- Make a list of all the things you are good at and/or enjoy doing. Which of these could potentially form the basis of self-employment? Are any of these discussed in the 'Future livelihoods' section?
- Take a few top items from this list and research them further. Would there be start up costs such as for equipment or internet connections? Do you need to gain any further skills? Do you have people/places through which this could be done? Who would be your customers? What could they afford? How local are they? As a starting point, would any members of the group be interested in the goods & services you offer?
- How much does it cost you to do your paid work? * Use the questions on p 407 as a guide
- How can you reduce the amount of money your household needs to spend? (You might like to go back to the spending per week activity in Chapter 25)? Consider the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
- Bring something to the meeting to trade with other members
- Explore the options for trade and exchange within your group and local contacts – would setting up a timebank or other formalised system be worth it in terms of the time and energy needed to maintain it?

* Further resources for this activity may be available to registered book clubs

