

A job!

On the last day of 2019 I received a notification that I had been declared permanently incapacitated from work. An IVA as it is called in the Netherlands.

2020 therefore was all about saying goodbye. In March, with pain in my heart, I signed a settlement agreement and said goodbye to my employer. Due to Corona, the farewell was without any bells and whistles - my leaving get together was canceled. It was all very sad and brought a lot of things home to me.

I realised that work was and still is an important part of my my life, and I admit, it is part of my identity. I was, and still am, very sad that I can no longer fully contribute to society, and that my financial independence has disappeared, also that I have lost the challenges and personal development that a career offers. I now depend on what the government decides to pay me. Do not get me wrong, I am grateful that I live in a country where the government gives you disability benefits, but even so...!

I started to fill my days with what I felt like doing - activities I had the energy for and that in turn boosted my energy. Various small volunteer activities: writing for the Pur Sang, guiding a support group for young women with cancer, giving short workshops and lectures, and working on my crowdfunding foundation.

Then in September last year I noticed a vacancy listed in an email from my professional association. A vacancy for 80 hours per year. That's 1.5-2 hours a week, I calculated - a viable option. After applying and being asked in for an interview, I received a call that they selected me for the job. I started in December, slowly to begin with, but from this January I was fully onboard.

The effect on me has been positive. I feel valuable once more, I feel like I am really using my brain again, it feels "more real" than volunteer activities. I am happy!

There is some uncertainty however. Can I maintain this, can I deliver what I have promised? And how will the UWV (the government department that pays invalidity benefit) respond to me working part-time? Even so it is still exciting.

But above all, I am happy that I got this opportunity, and I am really looking forward to investing what energy I have in to this job. I feel grateful.

Emilie, March 2021