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Dr. Roberts previously served as the Vice President for Professional Services and Director of the Healthcare Institute at the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association and as Executive Director of the Arizona State Board of Nursing. She has two Bachelor of Science degrees from Elmhurst College in Illinois, one in nursing and the other in psychology. She received her Master of Science degree from Arizona State University in community mental health/psychiatric nursing and is a psychiatric nurse practitioner. Dr. Roberts' Ph.D. is in nursing from the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center.

Dr. Roberts is President of the Alumni Board of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Executive Nurse Fellows Program and was recently appointed to the American Organization of Nurse Executives' International Committee. Dr. Roberts has numerous publications on nursing regulation, long-term care and healthcare workforce issues, and frequently presents on a state and national basis.

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# Grand Canyon University

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## Investing in Yourself During Tough Times

We read articles and hear speakers expounding on how everyone should look at these hard economic times as an "opportunity." Then we listen closely for more sage advice and nothing seems to materialize. After much thought and soul searching, I've got something to offer.

In the midst of being out of control of just about everything...your employment situation, your financial stability, your retirement plans, your spouse's career...what can you control? The answer to this question is YOU! This is the best time ever to become the CEO of you. And the greatest part of this advice is that it doesn't need to cost an arm and a leg.

First, set aside part of a day to attend your own personal/professional "retreat." Bring a notepad or better yet, a flip chart. And focus on the following areas of self-development:

- **Education:** NOW is the time to get that next degree, certificate or continuing education credit. This might sound counter-intuitive during a time where tuition reimbursement may be cut back or program costs are rising. But look around you. Who continues to be recruited and retained for the best jobs? Those with advanced degrees, specialized certificates and better training. NOW is the time to invest in yourself, even if it means paying more out of pocket for that investment. Many programs offer scholarships and low-interest loans. BSNs are now being hired over ADN's. Those with graduate degrees are being retained in higher positions. If a choice has to be made over a nurse with better education versus one with less, the lesser educated nurse is the one eliminated. NOW is precisely the time to make yourself more marketable because our economy won't recover overnight. DO IT!
- **Professional/personal presence:** Stand in front of a mirror. Do you reflect your personal best? Do you project a confident, professional image? Or could you improve your appearance, speech skills and overall presentation? NOW is the time to focus on your personal and professional presence. This does not mean investing in an expensive wardrobe. It DOES mean losing those extra pounds that have mysteriously crept on (Weight Watchers is cheap!). It DOES mean taking a personal inventory of how you speak, act and project. It DOES mean dressing in a neat and appropriate manner (read "get rid of those crummy scrubs!").
- **Kindness/Connecting/Community (KCC):** This is a more updated version of what we used to call "networking." It's hard for a group of people in a social gathering to engage in "networking" if half of them have been laid off and have no business cards! KCC calls for being kind to each other during tough times. We all know colleagues who are no longer employed or have a spouse in this situation. Reach out and connect. Take someone out for coffee. Fear is a huge factor right now and the more we can be kind and connect to each other, the better. It's a "pay it forward" phenomenon. Help build a community of kindness and caring so that we may all survive these hardships. Trust me, you will always be remembered for engaging in KCC and who knows, someone may do the same for you someday.

Spend the better part of a day focusing on yourself and these areas of self-improvement and write down your commitments. Be specific about what you plan on accomplishing and share your own "strategic plan" with trusted colleagues and family. Solicit their feedback and support. Put timelines to your areas of development. And more important than anything else, GET STARTED. The sooner you regain control over your life and become your own CEO, the better!



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*Don't Miss a Day of Your Future!™*

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