

## Finding Career Satisfaction

*Find a job you love and you'll never work a day in your life. ~ Confucius*

At graduation, each of us has visions of what we'll accomplish. Years later, even the best and brightest from the most prestigious universities aren't immune to feelings of failure and disappointment.

Many people who maintain a veneer of professional success report feeling dissatisfied and doubt they're in the right job. They often find themselves trapped in meaningless work.

The cliché holds true: You have only one life, and it's not a dress rehearsal. Outside forces and bad decisions can derail you at any time. How can you protect yourself from making the wrong career moves – the ones that thwart your quest for happiness and meaning?

Clayton Christensen, author of *How Will You Measure Your Life?* (with coauthors James Allworth and Karen Dillon), writes:

“We pick our jobs for the wrong reasons and then we settle for them. We begin to accept that it's not realistic to do something we truly love for a living.”

He proposes three questions to guide career and major life decisions. How can I be sure that:

- I will be successful and happy in my career?
- My relationships with my spouse, my children, and my extended family and close friends become an enduring source of happiness?
- I live a life of integrity – and stay out of jail?

How many times have you made important life decisions without considering – and even intentionally ignoring – these critical issues?

In our quest for immediate gains, we conveniently forget to weigh potential consequences.

### *A Message from Nancy...*

I have a couple of questions to ask you:

1. Is your business as successful as you think it should be?
2. Are you and your team able to pinpoint the solutions necessary to create positive changes to get where you need to go?



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## Strategic Living

Career choices aren't simply a matter of finding a good job, at an acceptable salary, with appropriate benefits. The quality of your work impacts your personal life, leading to satisfaction (or, conversely, dissatisfaction).

If you've studied business strategy, you know how important it is for companies to embark on the right plan and direct organization resources toward accomplishing its goals. Sustained business growth and success depend on following the right strategy.

A strategy must be flexible enough to meet rapidly developing marketplace challenges and opportunities. Businesses are successful only when their leaders allow for strategic shifts.

The same principles apply to your personal life. Always start with a clearly defined plan that remains flexible, yet never veers from your core values.

The quest for meaning in life certainly isn't new, nor has anyone discovered any quick fixes for universal problems. But harnessing a few tools and theories can make your choices easier.

How you allocate your resources - your time, talent and energies - determines your strategy. The process begins with determining your priorities: What is most important to you in your career?

Significant problems occur when your strategy fails to align with what really makes you happy. If you allocate time and talent to whoever screams the loudest and offers the fastest reward, you set yourself up for an uncertain and unfulfilling future.

## Motivation Theory

Many people are confused about the relationship between incentives and motivation. It's generally accepted that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are separate, independent measures, which explains why you may love and hate your job at the same time.

Psychologist Frederick Herzberg's theory of motivation identifies two work factors that cause dissatisfaction: hygiene and motivation.

- **Hygiene factors** include status, compensation (salary and benefits), job security, safe and comfortable work conditions, company policies and supervisory practices. With

these factors in place, you're generally satisfied with your work. You may not love your job, but you won't hate it, either.

- **Motivation factors** include challenging work, recognition, responsibility and personal growth - all of which allow you to feel that you're making a meaningful contribution. You are motivated by the intrinsic conditions of the work itself.

Herzberg's theory explains why some people with immense talent and the best intentions make choices that leave them dissatisfied. If you base career decisions solely on hygiene factors (including income), you're likely to end up demotivated and disengaged.

The pressures of status, providing for our families and paying off debt are assuredly tough, and they should never be ignored. But you need to recognize that they're not true motivational factors. Making money your top priority may lead you to choose the wrong job. As resentment creeps in, you'll eventually ask yourself, "Where did my passion go?"

When considering career opportunities, most of us have been taught to focus on hygiene factors. Of equal (if not greater) importance are the following questions:

- Is this work meaningful to me?
- Does this job offer a chance for professional development?
- Will I have opportunities for recognition and achievement?
- Will I be given responsibility?

"The only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work," said Steve Jobs in his famous 2005 Stanford University commencement address. "And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it."

When in doubt, seek guidance from a trusted mentor or experienced coach.

