



Pursuing Your Passion

Purposeful Careers

Have you lost the passion for your work?

Ruth was a mid-level manager/team leader working for a multi-national telecommunications corporation overseeing a talented team of 20 customer service representatives. Due to Ruth's talented training, leadership and mentoring approach, she had been able to successfully build a team that was continuously out-performing other groups throughout the organisation. Despite ongoing recognition and accolades for her work, and opportunities for ongoing professional development advancement, Ruth still felt that something was missing, though she did not know what. She had always given 110% dedication to her work, was well liked and respected by both her colleagues and senior management, and enjoyed the interaction with her colleagues. However her job functions and responsibilities no longer held the same meaning and she had slowly been losing interest in her work – something she felt she had absolutely no control over. What made it worse was that she had no idea what else she could do, as this had been her career for the past 15 years. So it was an underlying doubt and uncertainty that kept her trapped in a role that she despised with increasing intensity.

Perhaps you can relate to Ruth's situation? You may be working in a position that no longer inspires you, with each day dragging very slowly, almost draining every last bit of energy and motivation from you.

Unfortunately if this rings true for you, you are not alone. A recent survey by an international recruitment agency showed that over 51% of senior executives were unhappy in their roles and had wished they had followed a career path that was more aligned to their interests. According to a Gallop Poll, 71% of workers are not engaged in their jobs, and the United Nations claims that there are spiraling levels of stress around the world due to people unable to find meaning and purpose in their work. However for whatever reason, they choose to remain working in a role that they often despise, find boring and fails to motivate or challenge them.

Why do people stay in a job that fails to have meaning or challenge them?

Through my work with clients, I have found ten barriers and unhelpful beliefs that have prevented them from exploring and finding a career that they could feel totally fulfilled in:

1. Fear of the unknown: people would rather stay with what they are familiar with, rather than taking that leap of faith into something they don't.



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2. Lack of clarity, vision or purpose: people lack clarity about their own unique talents and their 'visions' and therefore accept whatever comes their way.
3. Fear of failure or rejection: rather than taking the time to research, plan and live the career they want, people take the first job offered for fear that nothing else will come their way.
4. Lack of self confidence: thinking you haven't the skills or knowledge to do anything else.
5. Unconscious unawareness: some people do not realise that they have an option to truly love their work. They think that 'a job is a job', it pays the bills and that's all that matters. How sad – if only they knew what they were missing out on.
6. Caught up in the 'family tradition': people's career paths can be pre-determined by their parents who wish them to continue the long line of descendents who have been working in 'a particular profession'. It's expected that you will follow in the footsteps of your ancestors. Expected to take over the family business.
7. External pressures: financial pressures forcing hasty decision making to accept a position that is of no interest.
8. Doubt: people don't believe that there really is the possibility of living their dream career either because it's impossible to achieve or impossible for them.
9. Money outweighing happiness: people may be in a profession that pays significantly high and therefore continue working in a role that they don't enjoy justifying their unhappiness with the fact that they are being well paid.
10. Procrastination: people may take a role that they do not enjoy with the thought "I'll accept this role and then begin looking for another job once I'm settled", but never get around to doing so. Procrastination sets in and blocks them from making the move.

It is an underlying fear that prevents people from taking the steps in getting totally clear about what their interests, skills, and values are, thus inhibiting them from having a career that they can totally feel passionate and motivated about.

If you have connected with Ruth's story or you could categorise yourself as someone who wished they followed a career more in line with your interests, but are still not ready to move forward, ask yourself:

What is preventing you from exploring and planning a career in which you can feel totally fulfilled and worthwhile, looking forward to each and every day with enthusiasm?

Are you willing to accept mediocrity within your work – or would you rather have a job where you can experience real meaning and fulfillment?



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Remember:

If you continue to do what you have always done, you will continue to get what you have always gotten.

If you were guaranteed not to fail - then what would you be doing?

If you're at the point in your life where you are ready to step up but feel you could benefit from support, it may be wise to hire a career coach.

Here's to reclaiming passion and motivation in your work!



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