

HELP, I NEED A NEW JOB!

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While the details may differ from person to person, **working women are often concerned about three job topics:** achieving work-life balance, knowing when to leap to another company, and deciding when it's time to switch careers. Here are tips for handling these workplace issues.

Q: My work permits me to help people, which is really great. But I'm also interested in interior design, creative writing, fashion design and photography. Should I change careers?

A: It sounds like there's a wide spectrum of occupations that appeal to you. Beginning with what you know about yourself is a great place to start. Notice your reaction to the above jobs. Which ones interest you? You'll likely categorize these as being enjoyable, even fun. Here are some other things to consider:

Which activities are you passionate about?

These are things you typically believe are important, that you value and love doing. Now think about the skills you're using when you're at your best.

Which career would bring out the best in you?

What knowledge, strengths, abilities, experience and education do you have for each of these fields? Which occupation is the best fit for you given your personality and preferences? Assessment instruments like the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and DiSC Profile can provide pointers on how your personality jibes with certain careers.

Make sure you target the type of work that most fires you up! Making the distinction between what you're curious about and what you're committed to can help steer you toward the job that's right for you. If these other areas are simply hobbies, recognize them as such so you can get down to the real business of doing the work you love.

Q: I'm having trouble with work-life balance. What can I do so that I won't feel so overwhelmed?

A: First, recognize that you want to develop a tailor-made definition and understanding of work-life balance that works for you. Coming to grips with your professional and personal activities requires gaining insights around where you are now versus where you want to be and recognizing when things are off kilter. It entails knowing what your core values are and what's important to you. Finally, it means making choices based on your values and how you define success.

There's often a sense that time management is the answer, but day planners can't help us gain control over our inner world or our personal priorities or become strengthened when we're weary. To find the right balance, envision what success would look like for you in all spheres of your life. **Complete the following sentence, "I will know I am successful when...."** Use this exercise to develop a response for all the different aspects of your life such as career, finances, health, family and friends, spouse and romance, personal growth, fun and recreation, and spirituality. Armed with these answers, you'll be able to establish priorities and make daily choices that align with what really matters to you. By eliminating those activities that *won't* contribute to your view of success, you'll increase your ability to experience better balance in work and life.

Q: I get more respect and acknowledgement from colleagues at other companies than I do from people inside my own organization. Should I switch companies?

A: Changing companies can seem alluring when you sense your needs are not being met. Before deciding to jump ship, take some time to reflect on what's going on at your current workplace:

1. How do you know that you're valued more by others outside the organization?
2. What has 360-degree feedback (i.e., feedback that comes from all levels) or a performance review revealed?
3. How might you be contributing to the perceptions that others hold?
4. What developmental opportunity is there for you based on the feedback you've received? Where might you be resistant to change?
5. Does the company overall encourage and support the respect and acknowledgement of its employees?
6. How might you find what you're looking for inside your organization?
7. Whose support do you most need?

The current culture may not be a suitable match for you. The work world is filled with stories of capable employees leaving because they weren't appropriately recognized. Still, examining which possible shifts you can initiate may help you determine if leaving is in your best interest.

When it comes to work matters, think of the information above as a type of career compass. You now have a general guide that can keep you headed in the right direction. Whether you are facing a fork in the road or an outright obstacle, knowing what matters to you, and reflecting on some key questions can assist you choose the career, company and opportunities that will be truly satisfying to you.

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