

Words of Wisdom

Do What Makes Your Heart Sing

Hate your job?

Many of my clients who are nearing retirement are worried about what life will be like in the next chapter. Even those who are not approaching retirement, but rather are looking to change horses in mid-race, will benefit from these *Words of Wisdom*.



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Certified Life Coach

How many people have you seen lately who dread Mondays because they hate their jobs? Too many, I'm sure. Life is just too short to spend so much of our time and energy doing things that drag us down. Don't you know there is an energy crisis, and I am not speaking of gasoline? As a society we are almost always tired. We have trouble sleeping at night; we have little energy to spend with our families and doing things that nurture our souls. We are overweight and have high blood pressure...no energy to cook healthy foods or exercise regularly. Why? Because a large part of our energy reserves gets eaten up every day going to a job that sucks us dry.

When I was teaching Life and Career Decision Making I often encouraged my students to discover what made their hearts sing and then figure out how to make it into a career. Often they would chide me about being out of touch with the real world...after all, I already had a job I loved. They would describe how they needed their dead end, energy draining jobs in order to survive. The ones who took the journey with me to find a new direction for their lives many times "found" their perfect careers hiding in plain sight.

I kissed quite a few frogs before I found my prince, so to speak. I have had lots of skills and interests over the years and tried jobs/careers in several of

them. In my younger years I was a very good Accounting Clerk in a large bank, but I found it boring and my absenteeism almost got me fired. Later, I was a Junior High Science Teacher...that was fun.

Kiss a Few Frogs Find a Prince

During that time I discovered that, although I loved the science and continued learning new things myself, the real joy came from my interactions with the teens. Imagine that, I liked teenagers. I began to realize that my joy and energy came from interacting with people. In my early years teaching at the college level, I found myself teaching four different courses in one semester, very unusual for someone whose primary assignment was not teaching, but counseling. What I discovered was enlightening. I was really delivering the same message in each of the classes, just using a different backdrop for each. It was then that I finally figured out what made my heart sing. I love to teach and coach people to be the best they can be.

I tell you this story so you can appreciate the process. Discovering what makes your heart sing is not accomplished by completing a quick survey or a battery of tests. It can be a lifelong process. Along the way you may have several jobs and careers that meet your needs at various times in your life. However, if you are considering

retiring in the near future or are thinking about a change of careers, take some time for your own exploration and discovery, you deserve it.

It is important that you identify your current values and create goals consistent with these values. When your goals align with your values there is a harmony that surfaces naturally. You will also benefit from identifying your Temperament. Many of us have learned how to be and do things that are not reflective of a natural strength. You may not even know where your natural strengths lie; you may have been straining to sing soprano all these years when you were really a natural alto. Somewhere along the way you will explore various possibilities and then choose one to try out. It is much like choosing whether you want to learn to play the piano or the violin. Your decision will reflect your values, goals and temperament.

Go For It

The last step is the hard part. You have to DO IT. Have you ever seen someone standing at the end of the high diving board and struggling to get enough courage to step off? Many of us are very good at decision making but not good at decision DOING. All along the way it is a good idea to have a support system. It is much less intimidating to sing in a chorus with a director guiding you than it is to sing a solo.

You may need to test several alternatives before you find one that resonates with you. Give yourself all the time you need. Discovering what makes your heart sing will make a difference in the rest of your life.

*I welcome your comments and suggestions for future topics.
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