

CHAPTER

EARNING THE INCOME YOU WANT FROM WORK YOU LOVE

Discover devastating effects of doing work you don't like, just for the money. Work you don't like may feed you, but it will never nourish you. Working just for the money produces people who feel cheated, people who know the cost of everything and the value of nothing. Earning the income you want from work you love is an act of defiance—it defies both parental conditioning and societal conditioning.

Financial success means earning the income you want doing work you love. One without the other falls short. Earning the income you want from work you don't like greatly reduces your satisfaction and enjoyment.

All of us know people who spend 40 or so hours per week working in an office, where they lift nothing heavier than file folders and telephones. On Friday they go home for the weekend moaning about how tired they are and how hard they have been working. On Saturday they play a vigorous tennis match for two hours, expending more energy than they did all week long. Yet after the tennis match, they say they feel invigorated—tired but invigorated.

Obviously there are two kinds of tiredness. The stress kind of tiredness results from the work of holding in our feelings. In this case it is the feelings about the work we don't like. Five hundred years ago, most people were killed by microscopic organisms, primarily smallpox, plague, and influenza. Today stress-related diseases, primarily heart disease, cause most deaths. The exertion kind

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of tiredness is far healthier and results from expending mental and physical energy in ways we enjoy.

Doing the work you love must produce a sufficient income. Otherwise, sooner or later, you will feel helpless. People in this situation often are quite skilled at their profession but don't possess the business skills required to turn talent into a reliable and abundant cash flow. Such people sometimes are referred to as starving artists. Unfortunately, the stress and uncertainty associated with meeting financial obligations disrupts focus on work and can transform even the most satisfying occupation into drudgery.

What Change May Be Like for You

Change is almost always scary—even change for the better, because it intensifies the basic fear of the unknown. It follows then that fear is the cause of procrastination. No matter how unacceptable your current situation may be, it's known to you. Anything different is not. For this reason, moving forward and making progress toward your goals is *supposed* to feel uncomfortable. Change does not have to be agony, but it certainly will activate uncomfortable feelings.

Remember the Dilbert cartoon that says, "Change is good. You go first"? Fear is chronically linked to change. Unacknowledged fear causes procrastination. At the beginning of an important project, there is fear of failure or fear that you will not be able to reach completion. Toward the end of the project, as success gets closer and more certain, the emotional experience tends to shift to fear about what success may mean. Expect to feel a little uncomfortable about making changes. The discomfort is natural and does not mean that you are doing something wrong. A compulsive desire for emotional comfort can defeat your desire to make the changes you want, if you allow it to.

Misperception of Risk

Most of us realize that change involves risk. The status quo involves risk, too, although that risk is much less noticeable. The current status quo once represented a change from whatever came before it. However, we naturally perceive the risks associated with change to be greater than those of the status quo. Risk is a subjective perception, which cannot be quantified. Figure 1.1 illustrates how most people's perception of risk is distorted. It is different depending on whether we are contemplating a change to a new situation or contemplating the status quo.

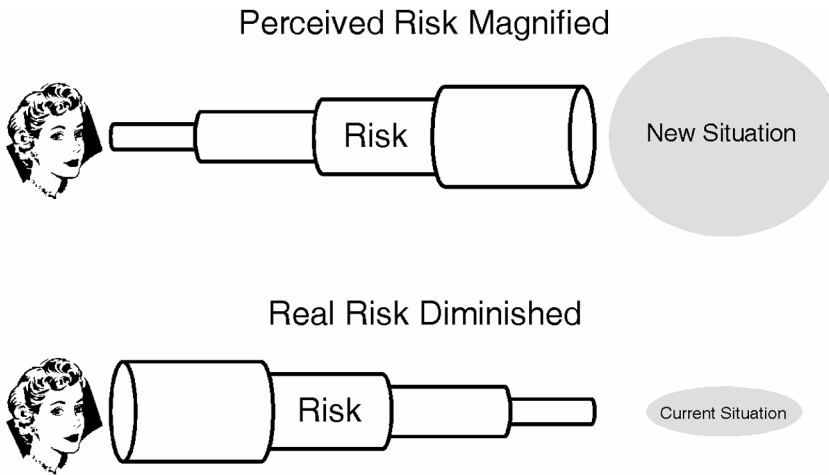


FIGURE 1.1 Misperceptions of Risk

When we contemplate any new situation, we tend to magnify the risk. This isn't logical. Our biggest fear is of the unknown, even in cases where there is no danger. In situations that we have been accustomed to, our minds tend to minimize the risks. In other words, we perceive risk by looking through the large end of the telescope. It's not necessarily bad that our minds do this. However, if you are not aware that your mind is doing this, *any* change is going to seem to be so risky that you will never attempt it.

But risks must be taken. Playing it safe may be the riskiest strategy of all. People who risk nothing may avoid pain and disappointment temporarily, but they don't learn, feel, change, grow, love—live. Chained by their fear, they are slaves, having forfeited freedom.

It's quite possible that *any* change—getting married or divorced, moving to another city or changing careers—will appear to be riskier than maintaining the status quo. In terms of job security, having a job may appear less risky than having your own business, but this perception may be distorted by the risk telescope shown in Figure 1.1. One common perception is that having a job in the private sector is more risky than a career in the military. In 1968 I (PL) left the military to attend graduate school and got a job in the computer business. By the early 1990s career military people were being phased out of the service due to force reductions. In 1976 I left my job at a major American computer manufacturer to start my own business. Most people would perceive having your own business as much riskier than having

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a job. By the 1980s the computer manufacturer had laid off more than 30,000 of its workers. These are both examples of misperceptions of risk.

Owning your own business transforms you into a capitalist. If you have always had a job in the past, then your participation in the capitalist system has been as a provider of labor. As a business owner, you negotiate for yourself on a frequent basis; you decide which people to hire and fire; and you invest your capital, your time, and your energy. Most important, you must sell to your customers the products and services you provide. In today's world of downsizing, temporary jobs, and part-time employment, even people who stay in the job market are pretty close to entrepreneurship anyway.

Use Technology to Speed Up and to Multiply Your Work

If you are still a technophobe, get over it. Technophobia is expensive, and today's computers are friendly enough that anyone can learn. Today computer literacy is taken for granted. Surveys show that people with a home-based business who do not use a personal computer make an average income of \$40,000, while those who use personal computers make an average income of \$69,100 per year. Even if these surveys are wrong, you can purchase a personal computer today and learn how to use it for a lot less than the \$29,000 difference between these averages.

Do Work You Love

Nothing can compare to performing work you love. Most of us spend 40 or more of our approximately 100 waking hours every week providing an income for ourselves and our family. Other than the possible exception of good health, doing work you love will do more to increase your enjoyment and satisfaction in life than finding the ideal mate, winning the lottery, or owning your dream house.

Work you don't like can never provide the satisfaction that makes life enjoyable and worthwhile. Work you don't like may provide an abundant income, but it never seems to be enough, because the income represents such a meager return on the struggle and self-denial you invest to create it.

Work you don't enjoy fails to provide the sense of satisfaction that comes from the joyous accomplishment derived from favorite hobbies. Without this, no amount of pay is ever enough. Life is mostly process and a little bit of outcome. If the process is not en-

joyable, then the outcome cannot be. Working just for money produces people who feel cheated, people who know the cost of everything and the value of nothing.

Doing work you don't like leaves you obsessed by results. Without enjoyment of the process, no success ever seems enough. Each failure, even temporary setbacks, becomes intolerable. Work you don't like is the functional equivalent of high-paid slavery.

Work you don't like may feed you, but it will never nourish you. Compulsive spending is a common futile attempt to satisfy this hunger. If your current work doesn't satisfy you and doesn't include expression of your creativity and important values, you may try to fill these needs by buying things. Advertisers use this tendency by trying to convince you that your life will be better if you were to switch to a particular brand of beer or car.

Work you don't enjoy also has negative effects on your loving relationships. If you arrive home on Friday after a week at work you don't like, then you will feel you have made a sacrifice, have little left to give, and thus expect your spouse to take care of you. If both members of a couple are doing this, the relationship soon becomes a hollow shell without much energy for each other.

Working just for the money eventually twists a person's view of him- or herself and his or her worth. In such a distorted and materialistic value system, a successful person is one who can earn money faster than his or her family can spend it.

Determining the income you want requires independent thinking because you cannot judge from appearances. Some folks use their wealth (or high credit rating) to impress others. They struggle to make the mortgage payment on a half-million-dollar home and the lease payments on two luxury cars. Conversely lots of millionaires live in ordinary houses and drive secondhand Chevys. The value system of conspicuous consumption comes up empty, because there never seems to be enough. In some cases, people who realize there is never enough to be satisfied conclude "that there is no reason to try to get any more." If this is your situation, you'll achieve both higher income and more satisfaction by choosing work you love that supports your purpose beyond gaining the approval of others.

Work you love will make you more alive, healthier, more enthusiastic, and therefore more successful. Work you love provides an outlet for your creativity and permits you to express your important values. It possesses an intrinsic satisfaction independent of your ex-

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ternal success or financial results. Unless your chosen work is very strenuous physically, you can look forward to doing it as long as you want to, instead of counting the days until retirement.

But even with work you love, a balance is required. Sixty hours per week at work you love will burn you out, just not as quickly as 60 hours per week at work you don't like.

The possibility of actually deriving income from an activity you find pleasurable may be an alien concept for some. You may be imprisoned by views that associate work with struggle and unpleasantness—thinking it is necessary to do a lot of what you don't like in order to get a little of what you do like. If you look around, you can find someone who derives income from just about any activity you can imagine. You have the *choice* to do something more suited to your personality and talents.

Work you love isn't completely free of stress and frustration. Professional golfers sometimes curse and bend a club over their knees. However, the personal passion and satisfaction from work you love eases and speeds the recovery from any setback.

Clearly it is impossible to suggest a single method of identifying a perfect career that will work for everyone, because there is such a wide variety of starting points on the issue of career satisfaction. We authors are not suggesting you quit your day job as soon as you finish reading this book to become an aspiring actor, business owner, self-employed accountant, landscape artist, or something else. This book will show you several ways to make the transition with far less risk than abruptly quitting your day job.

You can reduce the difficulty of transition with a “test drive” of your intended new career while keeping your day job. Do this either by accepting a part-time position or by giving away your services to see how you like it. Just because you enjoy playing golf doesn't mean you will enjoy teaching golf, for example. If you intend to purchase a restaurant franchise or a picture-framing store, then take a part-time position in such a place to see how you like it first.

Staying in a Job

Across-the-board salary increases are a thing of the past. It doesn't matter whether you are an accountant, baker, chemist, doctor, or zoologist; your advancement will depend far more on your ability to sell yourself and your organization than your occupational competency within your field. If you intend to remain as an employee in

today's turbulent job market, the entrepreneurial skills in this book will be extremely useful, both in securing advancement in your current company and in a job search, should one be required.

As an employee, you create your greatest success by making your boss a hero in the eyes of his or her boss. Do this repeatedly and you will move up rapidly. The skills of negotiation, selling, and planning that this book teaches will help you greatly in moving up in the organization of current and future employers.

Moving yourself to earning the income you want from work you love is a process that will occur over time. Here are seven helpful hints that will get you started immediately and accelerate your progress.

1. *Beware of addictions.* Bad habits cost you twice. The worse the habit, the greater the cost. Stop wasting both your energy and your money by giving up your worst habits now.
2. *Stop complaining.* Don't wait until you feel grateful to start giving thanks.
3. *Stop hanging out with negative people.* Do everything possible to minimize your contact with the naysaying, hopeless victims of the world who (well meaning or not) sabotage and enfeeble your efforts to improve.
4. *Stop listening to music with negative lyrics.* This rules out most country western and most rap.
5. *Accept your feelings.* It is OK to have them. If you fight against them, then they have you. They don't mean anything. In particular, they don't mean anything about you. They are like internal weather.
6. *Realize that your parents did not give you useful training about money.* It's not their fault, and it's your responsibility to give yourself the proper training.
7. *Live below your means.* Money is better used to express your true purpose than to impress others.

The next two chapters deal with the current economic situation and trends related to prospects for your income in the United States and the European Community. If you detest economics, you may jump ahead to Chapter 4, but you'll miss the explanation, not available in the financial press, of why even dual-income families find it difficult to make ends meet.

