

Can the pursuit of happiness begin with your job?

Written by: Lisa Guard, Career Coach
December 2006

Considering how many of us spend most of our waking life at work, just think what more personal fulfillment from work could do for someone's overall happiness? Sadly, statistics have shown a majority of the working population is dissatisfied, yet changing careers is often overwhelming for many to even think about. By answering a few questions and analyzing those answers some direction may be established that if explored further could lead to more fulfilling work. Here are some key things to consider.

What do you like to do? We all have things we like to do. Things that, while we're doing them, make time pass without notice. Start by listing these kinds of activities and take a look at the list. Are they inside or outside activities? Do they involve others, or are they solitary in nature? What physical activities are involved? Finding the commonalities can be helpful in establishing some options, but there is still more work to do.

What are the types of things that motivate you? Why do you work? For many, earning a living is at the top of this list. But there are other motivating factors that are important to consider. Which of your past accomplishments make you most proud? Are they related reaching personal goals, recognition by others, overcoming obstacles, helping others, etc? What makes these things important to an individual can be a key factor in determining what in addition to compensation will be required for a more fulfilling work environment.

What are you naturally good at? Think of the things that just seem to come naturally to you. You may not necessarily like to do all of them but it's important to list them all anyway and take notice of any trends. Are you naturally good at things involving data or people? Are your natural skills and abilities artistic and creative? Do these things involve working with your hands, problem solving, communicating with others? Do any of these activities appear on the list of things you like to do?

What is your background & experience? There may be obvious synergy with possible future goals or perhaps hidden, transferable skills that need to be uncovered and explored for their usefulness in moving forward in a different direction. Regardless, your background can provide helpful information in considering and pursuing successful options for the future.

While choosing a new career path takes a great deal of research and strategic planning, looking at this information from above can be helpful in providing an "aerial view" of some direction(s) for further exploration.