

You Don't Need to Make a Career out of Everything You Love

Your happiness is not a career nor is your career the end-all-be-all of your happiness.

Yeah, I know. I've read a copy of *Happiness is an Inside Job* too, but I'm not fooling around with semantic games here. I mean business. No one is going to pay you for your positive emotions and nothing that you ever get paid for will be responsible for every positive emotion you feel. Your happiness and your job will always be separate things even if you have the happiest job in the world. Why? Because there will always be wonderful, beautiful, exciting, and inspiring things in this world that are not directly connected to what you receive paychecks for.

I don't know where it originated, but there seems to be this popular misconception that you're wasting your time if you're mastering skills, tackling challenges, developing expertise, building your network, and playing around with ideas related to some field that you're never going to make money for being involved with.

People are afraid to learn an instrument because they're not sure if they want to play that instrument for the rest of their lives.

People are afraid to learn how to code because they might not get a job as a junior developer.

People are afraid to take jobs that seem interesting or promising because they don't see how that job relates to the millions of other passions that make life worth living.

We've bought into the lie that there are only three possible roads in life 1) Find a job that completely eliminates the distinction between work and play 2) Sell your soul for a job that doesn't satisfy your passions or 3) Refuse to commit to anything that threatens to interfere with play time.

Here's a fourth possibility: Realize that being human means you're bigger than all the jobs and all the passions you'll ever have. And no matter what you commit to or refuse to commit to; no matter where you work or refuse to work; no matter what hobbies you make time for or fail to make time for, there will always be more to who you are, more to what you want, and more to why you're here than anything you choose or refuse to do at a given moment or stage.

Instead of looking for your job to meet all your needs, give yourself permission to simply enjoy and explore things outside the context of your professional life. And instead of requiring your hobbies to be profitable, let go of the need to justify everything you do in

terms of dollars and cents.

Keep it simple. Enjoy your life in whatever way you can. And if you find something that makes your heart sing, make some time to enjoy it even if it's different from your job.

The people who tell you to “do what you love” have always been right. After all, what's the alternative? Refusing to do what you love? Where you'll go wrong, however, is if you make the mistake of equating “do what you love” with “find a way to get paid for every single thing you love or else you're wasting your time.” Whatever you do, don't do that.

You don't need to make a career out of everything you love, but you do need to make a life out of it.