

Are You Where You Belong?

“The true way to render ourselves happy is to love our work and find in it our pleasure.” - Francoise De Motteville

Chapter Four

Are You Where You Belong? Based on what you have read so far, are you feeling dissatisfied at work? Have you outgrown your job, or are your career prospects limited? Maybe you have realized that it's time for a change from your current job or career. Since your career is a major component of your life, you should invest some time to ensure that you're in the right job at the right time. Let's consider a few questions you may want to ask yourself in determining if you're where you belong.

- Do you enjoy your work?
- Does your work coincide with your interests?
- Is your work aligned with your values?
- Have you outgrown your job?
- Are you ready for a new career?
- Does your job provide you with the lifestyle you want?

Most of us will readily confess that we didn't do any career planning and that our career path has been based on what job was available when we were looking. Some of us may have lucked into a job that is satisfying, but generally, some planning is extremely worthwhile. I find it amazing that most of us spend more time planning our family vacation than planning our career. In order to find a job, you probably spent a ton of money on a college degree, or invested a considerable amount of time learning a skill, so why is it that we don't invest the same amount in regularly assessing our career and planning for the future?

For you to find out if you are on the right path career-wise, you need to ask yourself these questions on a regular basis:

- Is this job right for me?
- Am I currently where I want to be with my career?
- Is there a future for me in this career?

Answering these questions is very important and will help you to assess your goals and aspirations. For some, this is a positive and empowering process, while for others it can be overwhelming. Exploring your professional life should be done with confidence and a strong sense of direction. You have to have a vision of where you want to go. This ensures that you are managing your career, rather than it managing you.

If the thought of spending one more day at your job makes you want to run down the hall screaming, you need to consider your interests, values, and skills. This is vital to gaining insight into why you're unhappy. Take me, for example. I spent several years in the human resource field and was miserable because it didn't completely align with my personality.

I am a positive, upbeat person, who always sees the glass as half full. An early version of my purpose in life was to help people. I love people, and that is why HR appealed to me. However, I didn't choose HR; it chose me! The HR field is very difficult because the department is always in the middle of situations. HR sees itself as the advocate for employees to management, and as a resource to the leadership team. In a lot of cases, management sees the department as a necessary evil—as a cost center. Progressive organizations want to embrace the strategic value HR can bring to the table, and HR desires a seat at the table, however, it is rare that these goals are achieved. The environment can become very negative as conflicts between both sides arise.

In my research, I found that other factors such as organizational culture, management, and colleagues will also impact your satisfaction from time to time. If you're not interested in the core purpose of your job, or if your values are largely compromised by your workplace environment, it is time to consider a change.

Problems may occur when people choose careers that are out of alignment with their purpose. Imagine if your main interest was helping others, and you were stuck working in an office environment that involves a lot of research and statistics. Similarly, a competitive salesperson would be frustrated working in a team-oriented environment that places little value on structure and financial reward. It doesn't mean you can't work in an environment contrary to your nature, but it can possibly make it more difficult and less enjoyable.

Your option to change is available to you even if it means a completely new direction. You might be apprehensive about change, especially if it means sacrificing a larger salary. But, finding more satisfying work is preferable to staying in a miserable environment. Is it worth exploring other workplace options by talking with a wide range of people, and developing a network within your interest area, or you are likely to find yourself in a job you're not enjoying for the next thirty years?

Aligning Your Job with Your Purpose

We were put on this earth for a reason and a purpose. Once your job is aligned with your purpose, and you have an action plan, the universe opens its doors to you. Just having a purpose is not enough, however; you have to have a vision and an action plan. Once you align your purpose and vision, you cannot only lead yourself, but also others.

Some of us knew our purpose at a very early age, while others are still searching. I had to spend a lot of time searching within myself to find my purpose. I'm going to share something very personal with you now. In Chapter One, I mentioned a little about my story, and I feel it is important for you to know how I changed my results using the same material that is included in this book. In my last job, before starting my own company, I used to sit in my office during lunch time. Everyone went out for lunch, and I felt no one wanted me around them. Instead of going out with others, I hid from everyone; I didn't want to be around anybody. They were picking up the vibration I was giving off, a Universal Law called the Law of Vibration or Attraction. I would shut my door, close the blinds of the window facing the hallway, and put my phone on "do-not-disturb." I would stare out the window facing the parking lot at a row of pine trees, wishing I were someone else. I was the HR Manager of a start-up manufacturing facility. It

was the reason I moved to Florida from Alabama. I began to hate my job! I blamed everyone else for how I felt. You see, unless you face your fears, you will continue to repeat the same mistakes, or have the same type of circumstances over and over until you learn the lessons. It was so bad that during my little lunch time office retreat, I would pray that I could go home. I thought this way for over a year before the opportunity came up that allowed me to go home—not the way I had wished for, but nevertheless, I was able to go home. You see, I told the Universe I wanted out of there, but I couldn't just quit; I had responsibilities, and I had bills, but I didn't have a plan! I also didn't have a clear vision of what kind of life I really wanted. I knew I wanted better results, but I never clearly stated or envisioned what that looked like. So the Universe handed me the plan. Whatever you think about will manifest itself in your life, one way or the other, negatively or positively. This is not the way I would suggest anyone go about making changes in their lives. You must have a plan and a clear vision of the life you want. Do not let someone else make the choice for you.

I finally learned to listen to my inner voice. I finally accepted responsibility for my life. I put the plan in place to take the road less traveled. Instead of looking at this situation as a failure, I saw it as an opportunity to change my life. Of course, the first day, I lay on the couch in a fetal position, literally shaking from fear. But what I realized, as my new husband of five months held me in his arms, was that I really was relieved. I was happy I didn't have that job anymore! It was such an amazing feeling, and I was finally free to make choices. We had no idea how we would meet our obligations, but I began believing that there was nothing to worry about, and that something would happen.

I told all of my close friends and family that this was the best thing that could have happened to me. And losing that job was the best thing that ever happened to me. The last area of my life that was not in alignment with my purpose was finally coming together. Within seven months from that day on the couch, I was the President of my own company. I had thought during my lunch meditations that having my own business would be interesting. And the Universe found a way to make this goal manifest in my life. When it did, I acted on it.

So, I know from firsthand experience that what you think, you become. For years, I was a different person, imprisoned in my own created tower of misery, because I allowed others and my outside conditions to dictate who I was. I had already put in place several changes that were leading me toward the path I am now on. It all finally came together one October, lying on a couch feeling scared and excited all at the same time as I faced an uncertain future.

After a twenty-one year marriage, I divorced in 2000 and my mother told me that she was glad to have me back. I asked her what she meant, and where did I go. She told me, "You've been gone for a very long time." You see, I was a different person when I allowed others to think for me. Change doesn't happen overnight. The Universal Law of Gender, or Gestation Period, dictates how long it will take for something to develop. It took twenty-one years for me to realize the relationship with my first husband was not what I wanted or needed. It takes a certain amount of time for an apple to grow, and it takes a certain amount of time for ideas to grow. You may have several little steps to complete along the way, in order to be ready for the big steps. Completing one step moves you closer to the next. Having a plan, a clear vision of what you want and a purpose are critical parts of this process.

Once I found my purpose, I was then able to create a vision for my life that has led me to where I am today. For many of us, finding our purpose involves looking at life in reverse. Take a moment to reflect back on your life as you ask yourself the following questions:

- When did you feel that you were living life to the fullest?
- When did you feel that you made the most contributions to the universe?
- What was your greatest sense of accomplishment?
- What do you want most out of this life?

Be specific; saying “I want more money” isn’t specific enough. Instead, verbalize a specific dollar amount that you want and when you will have it. Saying “I want more friends” isn’t specific enough either; how many new friends would you like to meet?

Often, people don’t believe they have a purpose because they think the purpose has to be one that moves mountains. This isn’t the case. Your purpose is something that gives your life meaning. Your purpose can be to raise a family or to work at the job of your dreams. Your purpose can be to inspire others through public speaking, or teaching someone to read. Everyone’s purpose is as unique as they are. Once you discover your purpose and use it to guide your life, you’ll feel connected in a way that you could never have imagined. You’ll be using the gifts given to you, and you’ll be walking the road toward your success.

Is your current job congruent with your purpose? Most people can sustain a variety of stressors within their work, but when your job clashes with your purpose, it can be a difficult issue to surmount. What do you value—security, financial reward, the environment, opportunity? to travel, helping others, recognition, work-life balance, or flexibility in your time? Does your current job satisfy your purpose? If not, you may wish to reconsider your priorities.

Your integrity and the elements at the core of your belief and value system will affect how well you fit into a job, organization, or industry. If conflict between your purpose and the expectations in your job exists, then it is time to think about what you currently want from life. It may not necessarily mean a change of career, perhaps just a change of organization or even a change of role within your workplace.

Many people who change careers are simply reassessing what’s important to them and what they would like to have achieved by the end of their working life. After people find their purpose in life, they frequently decide that they wish to work toward it. Some who have been very career-focused decide at some point, that there should be “more to life,” and seek a less high-powered career that enables them to spend more time in other pursuits. Frequently, a life change can jumpstart reassessment of values and a subsequent career change.

Do you enjoy your daily work? Do you feel that your skills and abilities are being challenged in your current role? Are you motivated by the current work environment you are in? Do you need to better develop your skills and gain more experience in order to feel more confident about your work, or to move into a new role? Reassessing the work you do will help you to determine areas for further development as a part of considering your next career move.

Often your understanding of your career's potential is limited by your knowledge and awareness of what's actually out there. Through the networking processes outlined above, you can discover areas of the job market you didn't know even existed. Newspapers, trade magazines, and searching the Internet are all valuable tools to help you better determine where the employment opportunities are likely to be. You can also review job titles, position descriptions, and company profiles to decide if they're likely to be a good fit for you.

Taking the time to evaluate if you are in the right job is important to your overall wellbeing. By carefully exploring your values, interests, and purpose, you will soon find the path that is right for you, or discover you are in the right place and be able to create a plan to enhance it. Either way, you will be on your way to a more fulfilling career and satisfying balanced life.

877-474-6295  352-474-6297
www.RobinHarpe.com, copywrite 2008