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Choose a Job You Love *And the rest will follow*

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The old saying goes, "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life". That is precisely what I believed in until my financial commitments caught up with me.

I have been working in the I.T. industry since for several years. I have a good first degree, post tertiary qualifications, several prestigious industry certifications and was employed as a Systems Administrator (Health Informatics), however, I was being paid 10% less than a fresh graduate. All of my friends thought I was taking in at least twice my actual salary and those who actually knew what my paycheck was thought I was loose in the head.

"*It's not the money that counts, it's the job satisfaction*", I said. That really was the reason that I stayed at my job - I really love it! Have I not tried getting a pay adjustment? Of course I did! I spoke to my supervisor and her replacement but both times, I didn't succeed. However, I was convinced that my work performance would prove itself. But in reality, all I got was praises, which isn't that bad if you think about it. At least I get some recognition.

After another long period of working late into nights and weekends, I did a reality check - here I am working harder than most people I know, yet I have no money, no time and no health (no time to rest or exercise).

I spoke to my financial planner and she figured that I would never have the money to afford a house or even get married, after which, she 'dropped a bomb'. "You ought to consider a career change; my other clients in the IT industry earn way more money than you. You've been struggling in this industry for so long and even a fresh graduate earns more, maybe I.T. wasn't meant for you?"

I was absolutely devastated. "Maybe she is right", I thought. My confidence level dropped and I began to wonder what went wrong? I was at the top of my class for my post tertiary program (I.T. Security), I am the only one who knows what is going on during meetings at work, and I get excellent ratings for my performance appraisals.

I kept to myself for a couple of weeks before speaking to an ex-colleague (who was promoted to my previous position after I left that company). "Cut your losses and get a new job, the longer you stay the worse it will get. It's obvious that you've been taken for a ride", he said. I toyed with the idea for 2 days and decided to send out my CV and attend a few job interviews. "There's nothing to lose - right?"

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And was I surprised with the response! Even with the economic downturn, I was still able to get jobs that pay 50% - 70% more. "Maybe I'll wait for the next performance appraisal to see if I get a raise", I thought. Then, like godsend, I was offered a job that was somewhat similar to my current position. I lingered on the offer for 3 months, secretly hoping that my employer would adjust my pay until the prospective company gave me an ultimatum - accept the offer or lose it forever.

I thought about it all night and decided to raise the matter to my Head of Department, afterall, "There's nothing to lose - right?" If he rejects my request for a pay adjustment, at least I can leave without regrets. It proved to be the wisest thing I've done for my career and after my discussion with him, I was promised a salary adjustment.

Although the adjustment offered by my existing employer is about 15% less than what the prospective employer offered, it was the sense of pride knowing that I was actually recognized as a valued employee by my company and that they made the effort to retain me. Of course, my ex-colleague still thinks that I should have accepted the new job offer, but it's not the money that counts right?

As the saying goes, "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life".

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