



# Choose your work carefully

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COLUMNIST

DEAR CHIEF: I'm still in high school and am having a tough time deciding what I want to do with my life. I plan to go to college but am wavering in my choice for a major. My parents are putting pressure on me to be a lawyer because they have their own practice and eventually want me to join it and to keep it in the family. I guess I can pursue that but I'd rather do something art related such as being an artist or graphic designer. Everyone's telling me to do what my parents tell me to do because they're the ones paying for my college tuition and lawyers get paid more than artists or graphic designers. What do you think I should do?

CONFUSED STUDENT



DEAR CONFUSED STUDENT: Your dilemma is one shared by many high school students whose parents are paying their way through college. Quite often parents think they know what's best for their children and that includes what their children should do for work when they grow up. This is not alarming because parents act this way out of love as most want the very best for their children.

Despite pressure from your parents, I'll tell you to do what will make you most happy. Here's what I've learned about work:

Work is more than a paycheck to pay bills and enjoy life. Your work makes you who you are because it is where you put your time. We are what we do, and the more we do it, the more we become it. When you give a job your time,

you are giving it your consciousness. Eventually it will fill your life with the reality that it presents.

When it comes to work, you have to look beyond the superficial attractions of a particular job or profession and consider what it will require you to do on a daily basis, hour-to-hour, minute-to-minute. Determine if that's how you'd really want to spend your time on this earth. If it isn't, your job will become your prison rather than the platform for your dreams.

You should think of work as a vocation or calling. This means that work should be something that calls to you, giving you a voice to who you are and what you want to say in the world. If you find a vocation, embrace it.

Finding a vocation is not easy though. You can't really know what it is you want to do by simply just thinking about it. You have to do it and see how it works out for you. You have to let the work take over you until it becomes you or you become it. Only then will you truly be able to determine whether to embrace it or abandon it.

There's nothing wrong with abandoning a job if it isn't a fit for you. It is now common for people to have three or more careers during their lifetime. No amount of security is worth the suffering of a life lived chained to a routine that has killed your dreams.

Is your heart set on being a lawyer? Does that style of job fit your talents and personality? Would that type of work make you feel fulfilled? If your answer is no to any of these questions, then tell your parents how you feel and why.

And by the way, I know an artist who paints ten pictures a month and sells

each one for an average price of \$1,500. That's an average income of \$15,000 a month! And there are graphic designers like Paul Rand, Saul Bass, Milton Glaser, and Ruth Ansel who are millionaires as a result of their work. And there is also a lawyer I know who does not earn to her potential because she hates her work. She only takes the mundane, easy cases, drawing in an average of \$5,000 a month instead of the \$10,000 she could make if she were passionate about it. Her bouts of depression and anxiety don't fare well for her either. Trust me, her life is a train wreck! So don't believe it when people tell you that you can't make good money as an artist or graphic designer.

I ask the following question to people when they're trying to figure out what to do with their lives: Is there anything you like doing so much that you can see yourself doing it for free? If so, then do it so well that people would gladly pay you for it.

For this to happen though, you have to learn all you can about your work, whether in college, trade school, or from a personal or private teacher, then hone your skills, perform in an outstanding manner, and showcase your work. Do these things and people will want your product! When you reach this status in your work life, you'll be truly content.

Good luck with your decision and future.



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