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COLUMNIST

DEAR CHIEF: I want to leave my job but am so scared to do it. I need to make more money for sure but when it comes down to it, I don't really like my job. It's definitely not something I want to do for the rest of my life. And I really can't afford to quit without having another job immediately available. I also don't want my current employer to know I'm looking for another job because they'd get extremely mad at me and probably give me a bad recommendation. Week after week goes by and I fail to take action. Any advice on how I can leave my job without causing any heartburn for anyone?

AFRAID TO LEAVE



DEAR AFRAID TO LEAVE: First of all, if you're unhappy or unfulfilled at work, you must take action and make a change at some point to find happiness or fulfillment or you'll have a long and miserable work career (and don't worry about causing heartburn for your employer--they'll find someone to replace you and the world will continue to turn).

Deciding when to leave a job can be even more difficult than starting a new

Leaving a job

one. Is there anything in your current job that would keep you there? Before you throw in the towel, let me ask you the following questions:

Do you feel valued at work?

Are you adding any value to your organization or work center?

Is your organization or work center adding any value to you?

Is your work interesting?

Is it challenging?

Does it offer enough variety?

Does it offer enough autonomy?

Do you have good relationships with colleagues?

Do you look forward to going to work each day?

Does the job pay you enough to meet your financial obligations?

If you answered “no” more than “yes,” it's time to go. If the only issue is that the job isn't paying enough, you need to be forthright with your boss and ask for a raise. You never know, you might get one just for asking!

It can be time-consuming to look for a new job while you are busy holding down your current one. While opportunities will typically present themselves, it is a good idea to introduce a degree of structure into your job search. It will involve time and energy on your part during nights or weekends,

plus some potential covert behavior or actions at work.

You can maximize your choices by submitting clusters of job applications at the same time so that potential offers crystallize around the same time. This allows for timely comparisons and decreases the likelihood of you getting a better offer from someone else after you just accepted an offer and are in the second week of orientation.

Lastly, be careful not to let emotions get the better of you. Make career moves using your head AND heart. Make a list of all your options, criteria, and priorities, think them through, and then step back. Allow yourself time to see how you feel. You must feel good about your decision--confident that you have based it on the best available information, and with full knowledge of the consequences.

Whatever your decision, remember it is YOUR decision. Have no regrets. If you make your move, be confident and don't look back. Good luck!



For an opportunity to have your question, issue or concern addressed in the Dear Chief column, go to www.DearChiefAdvice.com and submit your comments or email them to Jeff@DearChiefAdvice.com.