

I Can't Just Quit, I Have Responsibilities

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La she mail said something along the lines of, "My job, hate it, fecking pits, I'm soooooo unhappy, I can't quit, I have responsibilities (children, debt and a mortgage) I cry on the way there, and in the toilet at lunch, don't get me started on the people I have to work with."

"As the months drag by, you're finding it harder to actually make it in to the 'prison' each day, every morning you consider having a 'duvet day' or had thoughts on the commute of what would be the most [believable-not-used-often-sickie-excuse-ever](#), food poisoning is so **old** (that should've been passe but I can't get the little French like thingy above the e) and ~~diarreeeah~~ ~~dioraeaa dioreeha the shits~~ diarrhoea is a bugger to spell on a Dr's note.

Could the 'others' in your cell looking a bit blanched in terror have the same thoughts as you?

Don't tell me to quit Dawn, I can't, I have responsibilities.

I hear you. Look, this isn't going to be a condescending speech. You don't need the lecture on if you're doing **something you love, you'll be happy**. You're smart, and I'm pretty sure you lecture yourself on a daily basis. But you and I are going to tackle the word responsibilities, just to warn you.

We both know you have your life, I have mine and at the end of the day it's up to both of us what we choose to do with it.

Perhaps the politics and conditions cause you pain and anxiety, with no room for flexibility it's crushing you. It feels like you're entering a country ruled by [self proclaimed mini-dictators](#) each and every long, boring, painful day.

I want out. I can't quit, I just can't, I have responsibilities.

Yes, I know, I remember you saying.

So, when you arrive home at night do you nip online and come across endless messages along the lines of 'you only have one life, quit your job and follow your own path, make a million with a blog!'

You know that's ultimately what you want (maybe not the blog part), but just 'quitting' isn't an option for you, is it?

You have responsibilities. <--see, I heard you.

When You Can't 'Afford' to Quit Your Job

You wonder if the writers (me), like you, have mortgages or rent, bills, children to clothe and feed, insurance policies, food, cars and so on, this one does. Minus the children part, though I have dogs, but they are not my children, seriously, I don't get that, they are dogs, you know wolves, not dressing up toys, I mean seriously, what's that all about?

Sorry, where was I? Oh yes....

You want it bad though.

The bottom line is:

You want to get paid for work that has meaning, work where you're full emotionally, mentally and physically.

You can't quit your job, and at the same time (for your sanity) you can't afford not to.

You just want (dare I say it) to be happy.

The Common Confusion

I believe most of the confusion comes from the word 'meaningful', I only know what the word means to me, but what does it really mean to you?

Have you ever asked yourself 'what is my definition of meaningful?' or 'what gives my life meaning?'

Don't roll your eyes back in your head! I'm not getting all kumbayaa with you.

It's really not something to fear chickadee; nobody is asking you to come up with the answer to 'what's the meaning of life', for all of us living here together on planet earth. The greatest thinkers of all time are still debating that biggie, so let's leave that conundrum to them and focus on you.

See, you're just asking yourself '**what is the meaning of my life**'. That you do know. Or you at least know what makes it mean-less.

How to Define Your Meaning of Meaningful

Let's play. Do this exercise. Ignore all the voices in your head that don't belong to you and ghosts from the past telling you what the word 'meaningful' means, only listen to your own.

Ready, answer these questions:

Values. [What are your core values?](#) Not the 'that's nice' values. What do you stand for? What do you tolerate and not tolerate? What are non-negotiable?

Mission. What motivates you every day? [What is your purpose for being here right now?](#) What do you want people to understand about you and your life? What are your drivers? What makes you drag your backside to the prison each day?

Peak Moments. What have been the highlights of your life so far? Where are the moments when you felt that what you were doing mattered? What was happening? Who were you with? What were you doing? Why these moments? When have you stretched yourself beyond what you thought you were capable of?

Conditions. What must be happening in order for your life to be full? Whether or not it's happening now doesn't matter, you do know.

Meaning-less. What does it feel like? What does it look like? What's happening when you experience it? What is poison to you? What is insignificant? What has no purpose to you?

Meaning-full. Who do you think you really are? Without looking into the future what fills you now? What does it feel like? What does it look like? What's happening when you experience it?

Go through all that you've written and let me ask you one big question:

Does what you get paid for right now hold any meaning for you?

If you've complete the exercise I'll take a guess that you'll have said:

- a) No, are you having a 'effing' laugh?
- b) Sometimes, it depends, a little, but...

I don't usually tell people what they must do, but I own this one, **you must find tasks, jobs, activities that you actually care about.**

But I have responsibilities!

I know. Have I asked you to quit your job? I'm asking you if it's possible for you to find some meaning in that job, or find meaning outside that job to make that place more bearable, before you make any move.

But I hate it! And I do fill my life with things that make it more bearable, don't we all?

I know you hate it, and you may hate everything you ever do **because no job will ever make sense to you until you make finding meaning a priority.**

And no, I disagree, not everyone fills their life with meaning, they fill it up with 'stuff' that means nothing to avoid the pain of thinking they will never achieve a life that is filled with meaning. Have you watched the X-Factor? Big Brother? Fecking Jerry Whats-His-Name? Or in the UK Jeremy 'here's some shit that doesn't even belong to you but will add to the burden of yours' Kyle? Soap operas, don't even get me started.

That's entertainment!

We'll have to agree to disagree on that one.

So I should trash my telly?

Your choice. But I recommend binning "fillers".

Another big question for you: why are you genuinely staying in a role you hate?

Is it the money? Go back to your list; does money make your life meaningful? Is money one of your core values? Does having no money make your life meaningless? Who taught you that in order to do the work you love you will have no money? Have you started to build your 'screw it' fund?

Is it the fear of losing what you do have? Again back to your list; do 'things' make your life more meaningful? Who taught you that meaning is what you own and possess?

Are you scared? When it comes to the crunch many people stay put no matter how bad it gets because they think that in order to do what they love it will come at a price (unless they become mentally exhausted and get signed off work first.)

Getting to grip on the word responsibilities

One definition is '*duty, obligation, or burden*' and another is the '*ability or authority to act or decide on one's own*'.

There will be *responsibilities* in your life that you have a duty to, and some I bet are brilliant, your children may fill this spot, yes?

Others are a burden, the biggest burden (for the majority of people) is *being in debt*. Debt keeps anyone miserable and unhappy (and in fear). No, even that's inaccurate, the biggest burden being the fear of the consequences of not paying your debt.

A life with meaning (which banks don't own and have no control over) probably always include fantastic responsibilities The part that may be keeping you stuck and miserable is not being able to see past the burdens, not being able to visualise a time when the stress of carrying all the burdens will be lifted, changed or stopped.

Would that be more accurate?

Just don't make responsibilities your excuses:

Why assume that the burdens are never going to change?

Why settle for a life meaning-*less*, when you have another 130 hours a week for creating meaning-*full*?

Start taking back authority: take action on the work that will bring meaning to your life.

How?

Find it. Find a way to make the work that will be meaningful to you a reality. Too simple? What if it is that simple?

I thought this wasn't going to be speech?

Okay, I had hoped this could be avoided - take authority and do it for the responsibilities that you love. When you think of your children's future do you want them to be happy, fulfilling their dreams and passions? When they ask you '*what would make you proud of me?*' Do you say 'as long as you're happy that's all I want?' or do you say '*Have burdens, live in fear and work a role you hate?*'

Set the example. Show them that you are serious about the words that come out your mouth.

Am I using emotional blackmail? Yes, I am using your children as emotional blackmail on you. Because this shit of miserable work has to stop. If they are the only way I can make you see creating meaning as important, you're damned right I will use it.

I'm not telling you to quit your job, start down the path of creating the work you really want today, *right now* the outcome doesn't matter. And if it's a little scary, you're on the right path.

Meaning isn't in the future. It's never going to be a place you arrive.

Tell Me

What is it you really want to do? What does the word meaningful mean to you?

Nip to the blog and tell me. [Click here](#).