
Illuminated Work

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by Kathleen Gage

Are you doing work that brings you joy, or are you doing work that simply pays the bills? Is your career one that is illuminating, or is it one in which the light has gone dim?

You only have one life to live. In the big scheme of things it passes in a flash. Many people live life as if they have forever to live, doing work that is not fulfilling, with their light growing dimmer by the day. Others show up to their job filled with resentment about their circumstances. The greatest regret most people will have when they come to the end of their life is not what they did do, but rather what they didn't do.

Have you ever wondered if you will have regrets as you move into the next phase of your life? Will the regret you have be that you didn't do the type of work that truly brought joy to your life and the lives of others? Although you may not currently be able to do your "dream" job, the choices you make on a daily basis, in your attitude and actions, will determine the amount of joy you get from your job. In addition, the choices you make each day will either move you closer to, or further from, work that will be fulfilling and illuminating.

There are two primary ways to have work that is illuminating. One is to take the risks involved with moving into a career that ties into your passion. The second is to make the decision right here, right now, to enjoy what you are doing regardless of what that is. To be grateful for the job you have, the people you work with and the experiences you are creating.

The greatest challenge people have in moving forward with their passion is they may not know what their passion is. This can be due to a number of reasons. One, long ago gave up on their passion because they were told to quit dreaming and be responsible. Two, they have gotten so caught up in being responsible they rarely, if ever, take time to reflect on what would bring them joy.

How many people seem to think living their passion is being irresponsible? The fact is that by not living one's passion that may be the most irresponsible thing a person can do. How dull the world would be if the people who had a passion for music did not dare to sing. Or the dancers refused to let their feet move. Imagine a world with no poetry. Or what about a life void of computers because those who did not have the vision may have tried to smash the dreams of the likes of Bill Gates or Steve Jobs.

To move from a place of wondering what your regrets may be to one of knowing there will be no regrets, dare to move closer to your passion. Dare to take the time to learn what would bring you joy. Dare to take a leap of faith and trust that you will either have a solid landing or you will learn how to fly.

Could it be that you are meant to do exactly what you are doing and do it with joy? The challenge here is to give thanks for what you do have in your life rather than what you do not have. Be willing to notice what is good about your current situation and amazingly, more good will come to you.

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Whatever path you are meant to take, for the next seven days try this. Once in the morning and once in the evening do a short inventory of all that is good about your current situation. What is good about your job and the people you work with? If your immediate response is, "Nothing!" perhaps it is time for you to think about those people you know who are out of work. If you are currently out of work, what are your choices today that you may not have had when you were working? What steps can you take to move you closer to doing something you want to do?

The key is to notice if you are more caught up in complaining about what is wrong rather than taking the actions and risks necessary to bring a deep sense of accomplishment and joy.

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