



Do you feel passion, energy and fulfillment in your work?

In our society, its assumed career decisions happen naturally. Surprisingly, countless people don't make career decisions. Some take up the same or similar roles of their parents, others continue summer and part time jobs permanently. Parents and guidance counselors will make career suggestions based on practicality or fields of work perceived to have plentiful employment opportunities. A small percentage will say they have always known what they wanted to do since childhood, but for the most part, students end up trying a few subjects in school or college and go with something they think they'll like.

For most, the process of career selection starts in high school when students haven't yet mastered practical life skills or grown in self-awareness. Upon graduation, some will take a first job and enter the workforce, others choose technical education. Those going on to college are expected to identify majors of study when they have no idea of their career direction. Even after college graduation, the career search continues and many struggle with it for years suffering in the process. Allow me to share Ginny's story.

Ginny was working for an accounting firm. She had taken a part time job in the 11th grade after school to save up for a car. The firm owners, a husband and wife, were wonderful people- pleasant, appreciative

and generous. After high school graduation, they offered Ginny a full-time job as an accounting clerk with a raise in salary. Ginny accepted the role after discussing it with her parents. She decided to take an accounting major at a local college. Her bosses couldn't be happier. They had become fond of Ginny, knowing she was a quick learner and an asset to the firm.

Ginny found the accounting major fairly easy, and her employers assisted with questions and projects. She did notice that the courses were not exciting, but ignored the thoughts being pleased with her salary and job. She met a great guy in class and married just before college graduation. Post-graduation, she received a promotion to accountant with a nice bump in salary. Within a year she delivered her first child. She took a four month leave of absence. During that time, she enjoyed being a mom. In her extra time, she took out her paints and brushes, and painted three canvases. She enjoyed decorating her new home by creatively sewing curtains and painting the rooms herself to save money. She went on frequent outings with the baby and met a number of new friends that she enjoyed conversing with. She inspired and taught them about color and made suggestions for decorating their homes as well. She felt like a new person and attributed it all to the baby.

She returned to work feeling confident her baby was cared for by a loving relative. On and off over a three-year period she felt depressed and irritable. She didn't know why. She was grateful for her job, her husband and child. She had a good friend at the firm and confided in her about her feelings. Three years later after her second child was 1 years old, she developed anxiety. She felt stressed and started having problems sleeping, a racing heart rate and tightness in her chest. Her doctor prescribed medication for anxiety and depression and recommended a therapist. Ginny saw the therapist for eight months and ran out of insurance visits. By the time she was thirty-three, she realized she was unhappy in her job. She felt very guilty. She paid for four years of college, always liked her employers, enjoyed an excellent salary, had a good marriage, loved her children and was proud of her home. She felt trapped and didn't want to let her family, employer or herself down. She was miserable, but needed her income to maintain the family's financial obligations.

Take a moment to envision Ginny's situation. It echoes the lives of people we all know. Some of us can sense it in ourselves. Being stuck is like quicksand. The more you try to get out, the deeper you sink. At times we ask ourselves, "Is this just the way my life is?" or "I am confused, is it time to make a change?"

Take a moment to ponder what this means in your own life. I invite you to join me in my next blog for the stirring conclusion of Ginny's story.

Be well.

Mary Ellen