

Career Transitions

Money vs. Passion

Courtesy of Oxygen.com

Should she go with the high-stress, high-paying job or the low-paying job she loves. One community member struggles with career and family.

Which Job Should I Take?

Q: I'm married, thinking about starting a family in near future, and I'm about to leave my job. I've begun interviewing and have two offers: One is with a florist for \$11 an hour (working Tuesday through Saturday, plus all holidays) with the opportunity to be taught the craft of creating floral arrangements. The other job is working as a sales director and earning \$40,000 with a \$12,000 bonus, plus 5 percent commissions over quarterly sales goals for a trendy NYC restaurant. The money sounds great, but I want to get pregnant, move out of the city and buy a house, etc. What to do? I'm enjoying floral design, and it's rewarding because it allows me to be creative, but no money, etc. So how satisfying can that be in the long run?

You've Got Options

A: Sounds like you've got two good options, both of which could have strong potential for the future. As much as I would love to be able to advise you to take one option over the other, this is a decision you'll need to live with, so it's important that you take ownership of the decision-making process. But, what I have done is provide you with five key questions to help guide you as you weigh the arguments for and against each option.

1. What If Money Wasn't An Issue?

If the salary and benefits package was the same for both options, which would you pick and why? The promise of a high income can lure even that most goal-minded individual off her chosen career path. While money is certainly an important consideration, it's helpful to isolate the issue of money from the initial parts of the decision-making process to avoid being blinded by flashing dollar signs. Once you've evaluated the other components of the two offers independently, then it's time to factor income potential into the equation.

2. Which Job Offers Career Development?

Which job will give you more of an opportunity to develop skills, contacts and knowledge that you think you will need and would like to use five years from now? When you leave a job, the salary disappears but the skills, contacts and knowledge stay with you, becoming a part of your marketable portfolio. Focusing on your future career goals (or hopes for starting your own business) should help you more readily identify the most relevant job to pursue.

3. Which Job Fits Your Lifestyle?

Does either job lend itself more readily to your present (and anticipated) lifestyle needs? If you're planning on starting a family, flexibility will become a key issue for you. The costs associated with working when you have children can be quite high -- sometimes almost negating your salary. Think about which career path is more likely to offer options for home-based business opportunities or flexible employment possibilities.

4. Which Job Offers Advancement Opportunities?

What are the opportunities for advancement within each company or industry? Long-term potential is often more important than immediate compensation considerations. Are there other positions within the company that you would like to move into once you've gained more experience? Do you see more opportunities for growth in one industry over the other? Think about the types of jobs you could move into in the future that would be stimulating and meet your flexibility needs.

5. Which Job Feels More Comfortable?

Which work environment feels more comfortable? The people you work with, the types of job duties you handle, the number of hours you're expected to put in -- all of these factors contribute to making a work environment either stimulating and enjoyable or stressful and unrewarding. Having an enjoyable work environment is worth a tremendous amount, particularly when you are faced with the difficulties associated with balancing family and work. The bottom line is that enjoying your job pays dividends that a high salary alone can't provide.

Listen to Yourself

Finally, if you find yourself still wavering after carefully weighing the facts, listen to your inner voice -- what does your inner voice tell you? Sometimes, we just know in our hearts, even when we have difficulty articulating the reasons, that one path is better than another.