I want both
Can you be happy in work and in life?
Pg 03

NEW-AGE NIGHTMARE
Why finding a job you love is imperative
Pg 04

ROCK’IN LAWYER
Juggling two jobs and loving them both
Pg 06

LIFE’S LESSONS
Big questions that you should ask yourself
Pg 10

LOVING YOUR ROLE
WHAT’S BEYOND YOUR JOB DESCRIPTION?
PAGES 6–7
WHEN I was working in health economics, we used the measure “quality-adjusted life years” to help understand the impact of different treatment regimes or health interventions (e.g. minimally invasive surgery, vaccinations, access to clean drinking water).

Someone living in poor health would have a lower quality of life than someone in near perfect health and so assigned a lower number. Seems to me that our choice of work can also be ranked in terms of impact on quality of life (this Eureka! moment just took place in my office – no knowledge is ever lost!).

That (not possible) mission to find work that goes beyond a mere job description struck a chord with several of our contributors – as everyone brought to the table different points of view and key takeaway messages.

For everyone who may feel a little jaded about prospects out there, Joseph Tan (I totally agree with him on this point!) assures us that finding satisfaction at work and in life can occur simultaneously. He offers us some practical points on how to start, and how to make this happen.

Marshall Goldsmith makes a valid juxtaposition of work life in the 1980s and today – saying that our working conditions make it almost essential to love the work we do as there really isn’t any time to find that fulfillment or happiness after office hours (as used to be the case).

And even if you are committed to finding a job that is aligned with your passion, Lee Hwai Tan says perhaps some people simply do not know what their passion’s sweet spot is – and goes on to share how we might discover that.

In quick succession, we have more probing questions one after another – Roshan Thiran to share how we might discover that.

For advertising and advertorials, please contact Pravin Kumar at pravin.kumar@leaderonomics.com or +6011 2377 7850

When you ponder how to make it happen, we thought we'd share some practical tips for success on your way home from work! We’re on Capital FM 88.9FM in the Klang Valley and 107.6FM in Penang every Friday from 8am to 9am.

Join us!

KAREN SAYS

QUALITY-ADJUSTED LIFE YEARS

KAREN NEOH

Editor

leaderonomics.com

By TARA THIAGARAJAN

tara.thiagarajan@leaderonomics.com

FINDING a sense of purpose in our job is an imperative element of work satisfac-

tion. Think about it. If you do not feel that the work you do is significant in any way, would you think that your job is personally rewarding? Doing work that “gives back” in some way can make us feel competent in our work and this can be personally reward-

ing.

But how does one go about finding significance in their job?

WORK, WORK, WORK!

One plain and simple way to do it is by putting more effort into your work. Going to work just to fulfill the required amount of time at the office won’t give you the progress you need to develop your skills and find out what aspects of your work you like. Working harder can also help you pro-

duce a higher quality output. This will not only impress your col-

leagues and superiors, showing them that you can handle issues responsibly, but it will also leave you feeling accom-

plished and ultimately, satisfied!

FINDING MEANING IN YOUR WORK

Do you have an opinion you’d like to share with us? Visit leaderonomics.com or write to us at editor@leaderonomics.com Please provide your full name, occupation (designation and employer) and telephone number.

Want more content sent directly to your email? Subscribe to our Leader’s Digest by emailing leadersdigest@leaderonomics.com

Leadership

Roshan Thiran

Editor

KAREN NEOH

Contributor

Prima Mohd Ali

Lailiyyah Hissam

Tariq Ali

Sel-e-din

Lee Kay Yean

Joan & Debra

Tong Chin Hwa

Zubarah Baharudin

Ahmad Fadzil Tez

Adzhan Affan

Arif M. Salleh

Tara Thiagarajan

Joseph Tan

Marshall Goldsmith

Lee Hwai Tan

Marie Koh

Tara Thiagarajan

Joseph Tan

Marshall Goldsmith

Lee Hwai Tan

Bernard Madir

Stephanie Kye

Cyril Ong

Millee Ong

In 2009, we conducted a survey where we asked our respondents the following question: “What is your definition of success?”

The opinions expressed in this career guide are those of the writers or the people they quoted and not necessarily those of Leaderonomics.

“Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.” — Aristotle

“Find joy in everything you choose to do. Every job, relationship, home… it’s your responsibility to change it.” — Chuck Palahniuk

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” — Confucius

“Making money isn’t hard in itself, what’s hard is to earn it doing something worth devoting your life to.” — Carlos Ruiz Zafon

“Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment, full effort is full victory.” — Mahatma Gandhi

What is…?

1. “Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment, full effort is full victory.” — Mahatma Gandhi
2. “Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.” — Aristotle
3. “Find joy in everything you choose to do. Every job, relationship, home… it’s your responsibility to change it.” — Chuck Palahniuk
4. “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” — Confucius
5. “Making money isn’t hard in itself, what’s hard is to earn it doing something worth devoting your life to.” — Carlos Ruiz Zafon

The final verdict: Yes we CAN find work we love. I have.

Have a fantastic weekend all!

KAREN NEOH

Editor

leaderonomics.com

“Making money isn’t hard in itself, what’s hard is to earn it doing something worth devoting your life to.” — Carlos Ruiz Zafon

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” — Confucius

“Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment, full effort is full victory.” — Mahatma Gandhi

What is…?

1. “Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment, full effort is full victory.” — Mahatma Gandhi
2. “Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.” — Aristotle
3. “Find joy in everything you choose to do. Every job, relationship, home… it’s your responsibility to change it.” — Chuck Palahniuk
4. “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” — Confucius
5. “Making money isn’t hard in itself, what’s hard is to earn it doing something worth devoting your life to.” — Carlos Ruiz Zafon

The final verdict: Yes we CAN find work we love. I have.

Have a fantastic weekend all!

KAREN NEOH

Editor

leaderonomics.com

“Making money isn’t hard in itself, what’s hard is to earn it doing something worth devoting your life to.” — Carlos Ruiz Zafon

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” — Confucius

“Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment, full effort is full victory.” — Mahatma Gandhi

What is…?

1. “Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment, full effort is full victory.” — Mahatma Gandhi
2. “Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.” — Aristotle
3. “Find joy in everything you choose to do. Every job, relationship, home… it’s your responsibility to change it.” — Chuck Palahniuk
4. “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” — Confucius
5. “Making money isn’t hard in itself, what’s hard is to earn it doing something worth devoting your life to.” — Carlos Ruiz Zafon

The final verdict: Yes we CAN find work we love. I have.

Have a fantastic weekend all!

KAREN NEOH

Editor

leaderonomics.com
HAPPINESS AT WORK AND IN LIFE
CAN I HAVE BOTH?

BY JOSEPH TAN

Joseph.tan@leaderonomics.com

I

N my father’s generation, words like “engagement” and “aspiration” were foreign because the overriding moti-

vaition for turning up at work was to “make a living”. However, in today’s generation — “living” is no longer an issue and concern because the workforce of today generally have enough to eat and their basic necessities are met (largely due to their parents’ hard work).

In fact, if these privileged ones were to lose their job today, there is no need to be alarmed because there is a parenting-

safety net which catches them should they ever become destitute.

While the generation of yesteryear is happy to have a job that makes ends meet, the generation of today is looking for a job that meets their end. To them, it is not a question of either or, rather it is a question of ‘can I have this and that?’

You can almost feel this hunger to pro-

gress as high as you can, as fast as you can. This is not just about getting to where you want to but how to get there faster, and stay personally motivated at the same time.

In other words, ‘I want to have a happy job, a happy life (and for those who are married – a happy spouse as well)’ — all at the same time!

Here is the all-important question: Can I have both a happy job and a happy life as well?

THE QUICK ANSWER IS “NO”

The single goal of any company is profit-

ability and every job that is offered in the organisation has that one aim as well — every employee is to perform at his or her best for the sake of the company’s vision.

If you want a life, it is imperative you do a good job, first.

A satisfying life is gained when one is able to lock in the “flying hours” — you have to prove your worth by sheer grit and determination.

As one CEO (chief executive officer) puts it, “When I am look-

ing to promote someone, I am looking for some-

one who is already acting like a man-

ager but not paid like one yet.”

Be prepared to go through the school of hard knocks and do not expect many happy moments along the way because experience is the best teacher for success.

The verdict: You can only have satisfac-

tion in life after you have put in the neces-

sary sacrifice in your job. No pain, no gain.

THE DEEPER ANSWER IS “YES”

While profitability is the rightful goal of any organisation, more organisations are now looking for sustainable profitability.

For companies that are growing, the quest is not only to hire the right talent but to ensure that the existing talent stays.

Hiring is only one part of the talent equation while the greater return is always the step to leverage on the current employ-

ee potential.

This strategy of leveraging on the talent potential of every employee is called a cul-

ture of engagement.

Gallup reports (interview with over 10 million executives worldwide across differ-
ent industries) that an employee who has the opportunity to do what he or she does best every day is six times more engaged and three times as likely to report having an excellent quality of life in general.

So, from a leadership science perspec-

tive, it is possible to have both job and life satisfaction but it requires a lot more upfront investment in terms of talent iden-

tification.

Talent identification is not to be con-

fused with training needs analysis because it is a customised approach.

While training needs analysis looks at the skills development requirements, talent identification begins with the person not as an employee with a job description, rather it treats the person as an individual first, i.e. let’s find out who you are first before we decide on what you should do.

The key to leveraging on someone’s potential is not to talent-

manage by comparison, rather it is talent management by clarity.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

Here’s the principle to ensuring that satisfaction at work and in life happens simultaneously:

Focus on your strengths, while managing your weakness.

In the context of what we are discuss-

ing, strengths is not a job skill or functional competency. It is a description of how one naturally thinks, behaves and feels.

In other words, it is a descriptor of some-

one’s potential rather than his/her role. It taps into someone’s aspiration rather than just focusing on his/her action.

The key to identifying one’s strengths begins with the need for a systematic and reliable language by which a person is able to articulate the state of his/her soul.

While there are those who have the natural ability to be articulate in terms of expressing their state of self-awareness, a standardised framework will be useful for the purpose of collaboration and career development.

In short, happiness at both work and life is not possible unless we have a lan-

guage that can describe how happiness looks like.

However, happiness takes on different forms by different people because each one of us is wired and motivated differently — that is the challenge of human capital development.

In this respect, I would recommend a tool that is backed by more than five decades of research and has been administered to over 11 million indi-

viduals to date — it is called the Clifton StrengthsFinder (www.gallupstrengths-

center.com).

The benefit of using such a tool is that it begins by seeking to establish alignment between one’s personal motivation and work-based performance measurement criteria.

The greater the overlap between per-

sonal motivation and performance mea-

surement, the greater the likelihood of achieving happiness at work and in life, at the same time.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The verdict: You can have it both — hap-

piness at work and in life. However, you need to be very intentional to define first your unique talents and be deliberate in creating opportunities for you to express your strengths on a daily basis.

How does it look like when some-

one is operating from a position of strengths?

● He/She takes ownership on what needs to be done without having to be micromanaged.

● He/She goes the extra mile and contributes willingly towards excel-

ence.

● He/She is an energy-giver and is constantly on a look-out to contrib-

ute creative ideas.

● He/She possesses a sense of self-

confidence in his/her unique talents.

● He/She performs exceptionally well and is constantly pushing for greater achievements.

The verdict: Though you can have it both — hap-

piness at work and in life. However, you need to be very intentional to define first

your unique talents and be deliberate in creating opportunities for you to express

your strengths on a daily basis.

Joseph Tan is the CEO of Leaderonomics Center of Excellence and is passionate about ensuring all Malaysian employees are fully engaged in their work and with their organisation. You can email him at people@leaderonomics.com for more details. For more insights, visit www.

leaderonomics.com

Be a leader

The key to identifying one’s strengths begins with the need for a systematic and reliable language by which a person is able to articulate the state of his/her soul.

While there are those who have the natural ability to be articulate in terms of expressing their state of self-awareness, a standardised framework will be useful for the purpose of collaboration and career development.

In short, happiness at both work and life is not possible unless we have a language that can describe how happiness looks like.

However, happiness takes on different forms by different people because each one of us is wired and motivated differently — that is the challenge of human capital development.

In this respect, I would recommend a tool that is backed by more than five decades of research and has been administered to over 11 million individuals to date — it is called the Clifton StrengthsFinder (www.gallupstrengthscenter.com).

The benefit of using such a tool is that it begins by seeking to establish alignment between one’s personal motivation and work-based performance measurement criteria.

The greater the overlap between personal motivation and performance measurement, the greater the likelihood of achieving happiness at work and in life, at the same time.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The verdict: You can have it both — happiness at work and in life. However, you need to be very intentional to define first your unique talents and be deliberate in creating opportunities for you to express your strengths on a daily basis.
Do what you love, love what you do

By MARSHALL GOLDSMITH
editor@leaderonomics.com

D o you love what you do or are you living in new-age professional hell? This may be the seminal question of our age.

THEN...
In yesterday’s world, people worked 40 hours a week and took four weeks of vacation. This question was practically moot. If you didn’t like your job it was practically part-time anyway, the benefits were glorious, and it just wasn’t that bad.

I remember visiting the corporate head-quarters of one of the world’s most successful companies at 5pm sometime in the early 80s.

There was almost no one there! You could fire a cannonball down the hall and not hit anyone.

Those days are gone. It was much easier to find meaning and satisfaction in activities outside of work when we were under a lot less pressure and worked far fewer hours. Not only did people have more time, they were not as tired.

NOW...
Today’s professionals have much different experiences.

Almost all of the professionals I work with are busier today than they ever have been in their lives, working 60 to 80 hours a week. This is not unlike the 80s.

They feel under more pressure than ever. Cell phones, tablets, and laptops tether us to our work whenever we are whether we like it or not.

Put it all together and you quickly realize – if you don’t love what you do, you are in the new-age of professional hell where you spend your days waiting for a pause in the steady flow of work so that you can take a break. Let me tell you, that day never comes!

MAKING THE MOVE TO LOVING WHAT YOU DO

Life is too short. It’s not worth it.

In the new world, we do not have to love everything that we do, but we need to find happiness and meaning in most of our professional work.

One of my coaching clients, Vicky, has a mind that races at about 1,000 miles an hour. She is extremely creative and entrepreneurial.

Vicky was working as a division president in a large, somewhat conservative company. The people who hired her believed that they wanted someone who would “rock the boat” and “make waves.”

Once they began to experience “waves” and “boat-rocking” though, they decided that this might not be such a great idea after all.

A MISMATCH

Although I was hired to help her fit in with the existing culture, it was just a bad match.

She was becoming frustrated with her life and all of the frustration of the executives who were running the firm.

Summing it up in one sentence, she groaned, “I feel like a racing Ferrari that’s being asked to act like a pickup truck!”

As her coach, my advice was simple: “Leave.”

She had beaten me to the punch, replying, “I just did!”

A PLACE TO BELONG

There was nothing wrong with Vicky. There was nothing wrong with her company. She just didn’t belong there.

When she asked herself, “Do I love what I do?” her answer was a clear, “No, I am living in new-age professional hell!”

Vicky’s time off for reflection after leaving her job did not last long.

She is playing a key role in an entrepreneurial startup, she is on two boards of non-profits doing a lot of good things for her community, and most importantly, she is having a lot of fun.

She has successfully made the move from new-age professional hell to loving what she does.

And, you can too!

Marshall Goldsmith (www.MarshallGoldsmith.com) is the author of 34 books, which have sold over two million copies and have been translated into 30 languages. Send in your feedback at editor@leaderonomics.com. For more articles on leadership and personal development, visit www.leaderonomics.com

How to find your passion’s sweet spot?

By LEE HWAI TAH
editor@leaderonomics.com

MANY people who are seeking direction in their lives often ask these questions, “What should I do with my life?” and “Why am I not living or doing my job with my life?”

The questions seem simple enough but are really asking, “What do they like about me?”

What do people usually come to you to seek help with? What do people usually ask me to help them out with?

3 What do people usually ask me to help them out with?

What do people usually come to you to seek advice or help on? Are you an expert on a particular skill or subject where you have become a source of solution for many people?

Are you recognized for something remarkable or notable in the eyes of people? What is it that you are so good in and love sharing with the world about?

Well I did say three, but here are two more bonus questions you can use.

4 What am I willing to do for a living even though I won’t be paid a single cent doing it?

This would be your dream job. You wouldn’t mind waking up early in the morning or staying up late at night to do it.

Steven Spielberg once said to George Lucas (or maybe the other way around), “I can’t believe we’re being paid millions for playing with these toys!” They were referring to the expensive video production equipment that they were using to do their job of making movies.

He said “playing with these toys” because it didn’t feel like work to them at all. They were playing.

They were having so much fun and joy doing what they love.

They enjoyed making movies when they weren’t paid well in the beginning, and they still enjoyed doing it when they were being paid a fortune, even though they could have just retired to enjoy the accumulated wealth for the rest of their lives.

5 What would I do if I knew that I wouldn’t fail?

If nothing is impossible, what would you do with your life? If you are truly unafraid, what would you do?

What is so important to you about that? You would still do this even though it is hard and it is the road less traveled.

In conclusion

It will take quite some time to digest and answer these questions. You may want to wrestle with the last two deeper questions and let your mind take its time in working with them.

I know it took me a long time to truly answer them, and I am still on the journey.

Are you asking the right questions that will change your life?

Lee Hwai Tah is the founder of Coaching-journey.com and a Certified Professional Coach and Associate Certified Coach with ICF (International Coach Federation). Contact him at editor@leaderonomics.com. For more articles on leadership and personal development, visit www.leaderonomics.com

Thought of the Week

Are you in a new-age professional nightmare?
The Mega Careers & Study Fair 2015 to be held at KLCC Convention Centre on Feb 7–8, 2015 will mobilise a gathering of Malaysia’s most attractive employers, namely companies who have been voted as among Malaysia’s 100 Leading Graduate Employers (M100).

The awards selection, which was organised in 2014 by GTI Media Asia, seeks to identify the most outstanding graduate employers in Malaysia, including the most sought-after employers in their respective sectors. The Mega Careers & Study Fair 2015 will be the first showcase activity these preferred companies are involved in as M100 winners in the calendar year.

“The upcoming Mega Careers & Study Fair marks the turnout of 60% of the Malaysia’s 100 Leading Graduate Employers, all under one roof, looking to hire Malaysia’s top talents,” said Hee Kim Fah, the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of EP-Asia.

This sets a new record for EP-Asia Group, the holding company for GTI Media.

“It has proven that what was once seen as impossible can be made possible through teamwork,” added Hee.

GTI Media Asia is the region’s largest graduate careers media and research business that provides multimedia solutions for clients in education and graduate careers.

The company publishes leading sector-based publications with careers websites and on-the-ground activation events that provide high-quality information and guidance to help students and graduates make better career choices.

The last instalment of Mega Careers & Study Fair, which took place in Sep 2014, gathered more than 34,000 prospective students and jobseekers who were hungry and raring to take that next step in their lives.

The Mega Careers & Study Fair 2015 is made up of:

- Malaysia’s 100 Graduate Careers Fair
- JobsCentral Career Fair
- Postgradasia Postgraduate Studies Fair

Visitors can expect an exciting array of must-attend programmes such as:

- **Talks**  ‘Discovering possibilities @ LinkedIn.com’ presentation by Edward Ling, country sales manager, LinkedIn on both days of the fair plus exclusive career and postgraduate talks by experts in the field.

- **One-on-One Career Advice**  Exclusive Q&A session with Wwe Kwek Seing, founder and director of Letong.my plus around-the-clock presentations by social media experts in entrepreneurship, design, broadcasting, fashion, lifestyle and more.

- **Activities and Freebies**  Hourly giveaway by sponsors including a chance to win room stays and VIP tickets to ‘Ultraman Live in Genting 2015’ by Resorts World Genting and Genting Bhd as well as special CV clinic by LinkedIn.

- **Professional Image Consultancy**  Free professional makeover for fresh grads and grooming scholarships plus special appearance by Daif AFS by Snips.

The Mega Careers & Study Fair starts at 11.00am. Come early to meet recruiters and potential employers in Halls 4, 5 and 6. There will be over 100 companies in 20 different industry sectors actively looking for new talent.

Come with questions and see them one-to-one! If you’re looking to upskill with more education, then proceed to Hall 6 for the postgradasia Postgraduate Studies Fair where you can learn about your options for postgraduate studies, find affordable programmes and discover how you can fund your research. We look forward to seeing you there!
By Karen Neo
karen@leaderonomics.com

I hear from someone that they truly love their jobs—and they may think, ‘That can’t really be true!’

Rather than something conjured from imagination, it does exist! I have been fortunate to have jobs I loved, and realize how much difference it makes when you believe in what your organizations are trying to achieve.

Whether you do this deliberately, you start to immerse yourself in the organizational goals. The road map to success is then charted out to the largest demographic—anything that increases efficiency and effectiveness of the team in working towards the mission.

Our team took the opportunity to breakdown people who have worked with or interacted with in some way, people who have inspired us that finding that ‘dream job’ is not just a dream.

LEADERSHIP TRAITS

Development programmes at Leaderonomics are grounded in 49 character traits and values that form the building blocks of great leadership. Imbibed in youth during their formative years, these traits and values guide us well into working life and beyond.

Of the 49 traits, a few common threads in the top leaders that we have interviewed today. When chosen that form the building blocks of great leadership.

Enthusiasm: The inward strength to persevere

Decisiveness: Knowing their strengths and

Steadfast: Staying true to their values and objectives

I met up with Chin Keat Chuan, a progressively driven gentleman to work with, improving patient access to healthcare. For the entire time we worked together, it was apparent that Chin’s personal mission was to improve the lives of patients, making him both a compassionate and effective leader.

One and Only

Another thing that distinguishes Chin from many of his colleagues is how he engaged with the same organization since the time he graduated.

On alignment with the organizational goals, Chin stated that “Being able to provide access to healthcare is very important. As a public servant, I know that my patients has always been my personal and organizational goal, and where these two core values meet, that’s my greatest source of motivation.”

MELIZA PAKIANATHAM
Head of Marketing, Melazhi, Ampang

After taking her SPM examinations 10 years ago, Meliza joined her current place. Two years after completing her first degree, she found herself in the welcoming workplace, having been an educator in a government school in Malaya for nearly three years teaching English and Music for the upper primary level. “I was officially in charge of the welfare of the students but besides looking into that, I was also given the opportunity to encourage children to be leaders. To build character and their potential, Meliza encourages her students to brainstorm with their peers and also to carry out their plans with confidence.

It also creates a dynamic environment of teamwork and inter-dependence which are characteristics that help build harmonious relationships among them,” shares Meliza.

ON HER SOURCE OF MOTIVATION

“I like hobbies that make me happy in 20 or 25 years when I see my students.”

“Since I started working, I have been exposed to different people and cultures and with different backgrounds, different cultures and with different individuals that we feature today. While chosen that form the building blocks of great leadership.

Karen hopes fervently that more people can find the job that fits them and brings them joy and satisfaction. For more leadership content, do visit www.leaderonomics.com
ESPIE his name, loke yew Joe isn’t your “average Joe”. At 27, he works two jobs; holding a position as a legal practitioner in the Attorney-General’s chambers as well as a guitarist and vocalist for the local alternative/rock band ZERO.

In a recent interview, loke shared how his unique journey as a guitarist/ vocalist started. “I have been gigging since I was 18, so it has been almost 10 years since the first show I did with a few of my buddies for a charity event near Taipan.”

His first show, however, had more of an interesting back story than just playing music. “I will never forget that show,” he reminisced.

“Halfway through the final act of the night, MPSJ (local council Majlis Perbandaran Subang Jaya) intervened, and forced everyone to disperse and started confiscating gear and instruments.”

“The whole ordeal was somewhat sad and symbolic in the sense that the gear and instruments were essentially our life-force. If people were to take those things away from us, what were we going to do?”

“I started ZERO with a long-time friend of mine in early 2012 when we started writing songs. We decided on the name ZERO, as we were coming out of difficult circumstances in our lives at that point. “The word ‘zero’ was symbolic, like a reset button for our lives. It was us going back to zero, starting afresh,” loke explained.

“This band, we see it as an outlet to express our views on injustices, social ills, persecution, oppression, and the struggles of our modern day society.”

A TYPICAL WORK DAY

“I work from Monday to Friday. Officially, my hours are between 8.30am till 5.30pm but I’m normally done with work around 6pm.”

“What I do is generally to provide legal counsel to clients in the form of legal research, write-ups, consulta-
tions and opinions. I don’t actually go to court by choice, “he clarified, quelling the common misconception that law-
yers are only found in court.

“But I guess it works for me since I am more comfortable expressing my opinion through words rather than speech.”

BY NIGHT

As for his career as a musician, loke meets up with the other band mem-
ers once a week to rehearse for at least two hours. “At this point in time, on average, we gig only once a month.”

The band sees the importance in working hard and practising to fine tune their skills, rather than jumping into gigs all the time. “I think as a band, we place a slightly bigger emphasis on spending more time practising and rehearsing more than anything else,” loke said. However, as expected, there are many challenges that lie in pursu-
ing two jobs. “It makes me feel like Batman,” joked loke.

“During the day I am made to fol-
low rules, sit at my desk, and adhere to the norm which society has set for a corporate yuppie. In contrast, at night I get to let go and be myself, screaming my lungs out and head-
banging.

“Despite doing things that I love, there are obviously challenges when it comes to time management and priorities,” he admitted. “I have a family and I am in a long-
term relationship. There has to be time allocated to loved ones which is non-negotiable. It can be exhausting when your plate is so full. Apart from that, loke also goes through obstacles such as financial constraints and rejection. “I think rejection is a common theme when it comes to music,” con-

fessed loke. Fortunately, he is able to direct it away from his passions and continue to focus on his work. “I have been on the receiving end of some negative treatment, which can be pretty damaging. The focus to be the best I can just seems to trump whatever negativity is thrown in my direction.”

FEAR: A DRIVING FORCE

When asked what motivates him to keep going, he gives credit to an unlikely source: fear. “There is a drive to be the best I can, because my big-
gest fear is actually not fulfilling my potential and letting others down. ‘Others’ being people whom I hold dear to my heart — be it friends, fam-
ily, colleagues, superiors who have entrusted me with something.”

Additionally, loke is able to express himself through both his jobs. “To be honest I am not the most sociable per-
son. It could be tough for me to inter-
act and communicate with strangers.”

“In spite of that, law allows me to express my views via the research, opinions and write-ups I produce, providing a platform for me to chan-
nel what I think to the world outside. Music does the same as well. I am able to express my views, emotions and thoughts in songs.

“The cool thing with music is, although sometimes your words or lyrics may be drowned out by the sound of instruments, the emotion, energy and motive of the idea, opin-
ion, and emotion will still transcend the manner the music is played, per-
formed and produced.”

A COMPLEMENTARY UNION

“Music and law to me is an unortho-
dox yet complementary union in my life,” he stated. “The biggest lesson I have learnt from being involved with two such diverse fields is that investing your heart and soul into something you are passionate about is more important than talent, ability, qualification or intelligence,” he answered.

Fervently in favour of living out your full potential and investing in your given talents, loke presented me an interesting analogy. “Imagine a soldier being given a shield, sword and full armour for an impending war. What good would that do him if he left the weapons dormant and not actually take the time to practice, apply, and hone it? Would that not be wasted potential and equipping?”

PARTING ADVICE

Finally, when asked for advice on pursuing your dreams, he simply responds, "Go for it. We should seize the moment and live life today.”
JOBS

INTERVIEW

THE 5 QUESTIONS YOU MUST ASK

By BERNARD MARR
editor@leaderonomics.com

It's the inevitable question that comes at the end of nearly every job interview — and yet it's the one question jobseekers rarely have an answer prepared for.

When people do think to prepare for this part of the interview, they often ask bland stock questions that aren't truly important for their job hunt.

People get so hung up on preparing for the question they might get asked that they often forget to ask important questions they should have and need answers to.

Unfortunately, in a downturned economy, job hunters tend to adopt a scarcity mindset.

If you need work, you may not be able to afford to be picky about which offer to accept, but that doesn't mean you have to approach the interview with that same frame of mind.

Rather, if you ask questions as though you are weighing the offer of this job against other offers (whether you are or not) you'll be in a better position to know if the job is a good fit for you and how you can best succeed with the company.

Remember: the power in these situations is with the listener, so you can end on a powerful note by asking thoughtful, insightful questions that not only make the interviewer think, but give you answers you need in order to make a choice about whether or not to accept the job.

One is going to be confident enough to ask whether or not to accept the job.

If you manage an obstacle that was detrimental to achieving your goal.

Your reply would show how much you understand about the requirements of the position and if you have done your homework by reading up on the organisation and the way it functions. This includes the culture too.

Being aware of the organisation and what it stands for makes a very good first impression to interviewers, and if you handle the questions well, you may have just landed your preferred job.

Prema Jayabalan believes that your answers are borne from your personality, working style and principles. Hence, always be truthful as that gives you the best results in the long run. If you have a story to share, write to her at editor@leaderonomics.com.

WHAT YOUR ANSWERS COULD MEAN

By PREMA JAYABALAN
prema.jayabalan@leaderonomics.com

Now, when an interviewer asks a candidate a question during a job interview, it's not merely to get an answer but to enable the interviewer to understand the candidate's personality, experience and approach to managing setbacks.

Here are some questions that you may be asked during an interview and what your answers may let on about you:

Question 1: Give me an example of a time you managed an obstacle that was detrimental to achieving your goal.

Motive: Your answer here could give your potential employer a clear picture of what you consider an obstacle. He/she would also be able to gauge your problem-solving style and how tactful you are at approaching issues that involve people.

Question 2: What methods would you take to improve on your skillsets for professional development?

Motive: Your answer here would show if you are empowered to look out for opportunities that would help you better yourself or if you are dependent on your employer to provide you with options. I am sure you know which is better.

Question 3: What would be the first thing you would do if hired for this position?

Motive: Your reply would show how much you understand about the requirements of the position and if you have done your homework by reading up on the organisation and the way it functions. This includes the culture too.

To the interviewer, it shows that you're a bold thinker and demonstrates that you're willing to fill any gaps that might exist.

For you, the worst-case scenario is that there are gaps that will preclude you from getting the job, but that's valuable information to take into your next interview.

In the best case, the interviewer won't have any answer, and hopefully you'll be shortlisted for the position!

YOUR END OF THE DEAL

Some interviewers may consider this portion of the interview a "throwaway," answering easy questions about salary, benefits, time off, etc.

But for the applicant, it's an excellent opportunity to stand out, get important answers you need to know if you're a good fit for the job, and how you can best succeed with the company.

Remember: the power in these situations is with the listener, so you can end on a powerful note by asking thoughtful, insightful questions that not only make the interviewer think, but give you answers you need in order to make a choice about whether or not to accept the job.

In the best case, the interviewer won't have any answer, and hopefully you’ll be shortlisted for the position!
By STEPHANIE KEE
editor@leaderonomics.com

EIGHTEEN months ago, I graduated from university. While my friends found glamorous jobs with “Big 4” firms or jobs that sent them jet-setting all over Southeast Asia, I found myself plunged into a life crisis, struggling to find my perfect job. I wondered: What do I do with my life?

For the next 18 months after graduation, I tried everything that had almost nothing to do with what I studied: interned with a political party; served as an assistant for a talent search company that promoted local independent musicians; and signed up for a talent centre; and studied: interned with a political news agency; and even self-indulge – considering the possibilities of audit and accounting papers in a single attempt. And graduated with first class honours. And lo and behold: here I was, in a land of milk and honey, with so many possible audit and accounting firms to choose from. I should have been proud of my achievements. But somehow, all I could think of was, why do I still feel so lost?

As I clinched the hard-earned certificate that would launch me into a 30-year career trajectory, I began to wonder, “Is this what I really want to do for the rest of my life?”

Most of us feel this way. But rather than think this through, we get busy by emailing our resumes, like a game of roulette, hoping to land a decent job that we do not hate. And that’s why most young people feel half-hearted about their jobs. A 2012 Kelly Global Workforce index survey in Malaysia indicated that less than half of us feel that our jobs give us a “sense of meaning.”

According to the survey, young people want personal fulfillment and personal growth more than compensation and benefits. We want meaningful work.

And that’s how I found myself sitting alone on a beach in Koh Phangan, Thailand, toes buried in sand, questioning the wisdom of pursuing a conventional career path. As I flipped the pages of Barefoot Leadership by Alvin Ung, a paragraph drew my thoughts to a halt. “Pay a costly price when we choose not to act on our most deeply held convictions. We violate our essential selves.”

“We are paralysed into inaction. Above all, we are held hostage by our own minds. The fear of failure, ironically, booms larger than the failure itself.”

LISTEN AND ACT

I knew what I didn’t want to do. I just needed the courage not to do it. So I took a leap of faith. I made the decision not to venture into audit after spending the past three years studying ACCA.

That was the toughest decision I had to make. My decision seems ridiculous – even self-indulgent – considering the efforts my parents saved and scrimped so I could get a higher education. And that’s why most young people feel half-hearted about their jobs. A 2012 Kelly Global Workforce index survey in Malaysia indicated that less than half of us feel that our jobs give us a “sense of meaning.”

The biggest lesson I learned is this: we need to change the way we ask ourselves questions about life.

Stephanie is embarking on a journey of self-discovery, carrying a backpack filled with big questions and a notebook to scribble down ‘aha’ moments. She hopes to find her true north some day and help other lost souls along the way. She is currently helping Alvin Ung, the author of Barefoot Leadership, facilitate workshops and write a book on purposeful leaders in Asia. To connect with her, email editor@leaderonomics.com.

Here are my big three:

1. In what ways can I best use my skills and strengths for this season in my life?

2. Right now, where do I feel myself being led to serve, learn and grow?

3. What are the opportunities I see in front of me that will help me take one step forward?

These questions have propelled me on an unexpected, soul-searching journey. The really nice thing about the three questions is that you can use them, too, even when you’re pursuing a conventional job.

I KNEW WHAT I DIDN’T WANT TO DO.
I JUST NEEDED THE COURAGE NOT TO DO IT.
ONE OF MY GOALS IS TO RE-UNITE WITH THE PEOPLE I LOST CONTACT WITH, AND TELL THEM WHAT GREAT TEACHERS THEY ARE

L
EARNING to behave and to possess an extent of humility is something that should be developed early on. This usually starts with development within the family system.

We argue because we want to defend our ideas and values, but humility is about being able to accept the truth. If a father does not admit his faults to the observant son whom he wronged, he loses credibility and trust.

So, when the relationship with family members and close friends is not stable, how do we expect to forge strong relations with strangers or colleagues? In today's society, people develop egotistical personalities at such a young age, and this is due to the fact that expectations are placed upon us to be competitive and perform well.

Psychological egotism is not necessarily bad, as we are internally motivated to achieve something that is of our self-interest.

But what if we fail? What if, we do not meet these expectations and demands, that it hurts our ego in a way no one else can? Does this mean we are hurting ourselves?

Vigilance and attentiveness towards family and friends did not fall under my daily consciousness while I was younger. I would constantly neglect my responsibilities towards my family and friends, be it mutual or in the emotional attributes.

Not until I left home to pursue my education did I realise my shortcomings during those years. Independence and freedom from the clutches of family is misused when we only do things for our own benefit, disregarding the interests of others. Moreover, ego kicks in when we are forced to admit our faults.

My personal development is far from being over. Suffice to say, the individual I am today is rooted in being able to accept my faults as a young person, and learning to see from the perspectives of others. One of my many goals is to one day re-unite with the people I lost contact with, and tell them what great teachers they are.

GOAL-SETTING IDEAS

Personally, my style of goal setting is still very rudimentary; hence what I usually do is to take the simplest and smallest step forward (complete anything that comes within my reach), and move on from there.

There does not have to be a specific goal in place all the time, therefore this method works for those who are yet to realise their ultimate goals.

There are many approaches to goal setting that one can adopt. One that we often stumble upon or hear about is the specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (SMART) model.

Regardless of its unquestionable effectiveness, we can also use other goal setting models, such as GROW: Goals, Reality, Obstacles/options, and Way forward. This is a more direct approach used by countless life coaches.

FAILURES AND OBSTACLES

Learning to adapt to the surroundings in terms of culture and language takes both effort and concentration. It is a constant challenge to learn about others and appeal to the crowd.

When we fail, we blame others for it. If that happens, we lose something called the internal locus of control, together with our opportunity to learn.

Personally, I've blamed a number of people on my way to university. In college, I would blame the teacher for being too strict, or the school facilities for being insufficient.

In university, the blaming continued, because I felt it was even worse than college.

But when I entered the workforce, things became different. My boss told me to find my own resources or else. It is all about responsibility. When we possess the responsible attitude, we increase our internal locus of control. That is where self-esteem and belief lead us on.

ACCOUNTABILITY

In clinical social worker and psychotherapist Amy Morin’s article entitled 13 Things Mentally Strong People Don’t Do, she mentions that the inevitability of failures and sorrow could lead to the engagement in self-pity, which is counterproductive to our development when we fail to act appropriately.

It was the best advice anyone could get, to exit the zone of self-pity, and learn to account for our own actions, during and after the time of that action.

The CEO (chief executive officer) of Leaderonomics, Roshan Thiran, echoes the same words as leadership expert, Simon Sinek, on what it takes to be a role model who inspire others.

We must constantly be aware that the people who work with us are the more important ones.

Leaders put the people first, and themselves last, not when it comes to taking the bullets, but when it comes to accepting the praises and standing ovations of those who notice their success.

When trust and cooperation are established, the system in which we work naturally becomes the perfect environment for productivity.

Who is to say it will definitely pay off, but one thing is for certain: we are constantly making progress, and that itself is an achievement.

Thomas Chan is a psychology graduate who aspires to become a certified professional corporate trainer. To achieve this goal, he is actively exposing himself to the corporate environment and engaging with some of the prominent leaders in this society. For more leadership content, visit www.leaderonomics.com
Job satisfaction can be understood as an employee’s perception towards his or her job as providing for a positive and fulfilling experience.

It is a subject that has been thoroughly studied in attempts to find the right formula towards designing work (and the workplace) to elicit the right amount of employee satisfaction.

Why? Because as an employer, it would make sense that you would want your employees to feel satisfied about their jobs as opposed to having a team of disgruntled staff.

Research has drawn links between job satisfaction and increased employee happiness, decreased turnover, increased productivity, and even improved organisational commitment and even improved productivity rates.

Volumes of research have been dedicated to this subject, in an attempt to find the right recipe for job satisfaction.

In culinary arts, there’s a term called mise en place which means to set up the ingredients before the actual cooking begins. So, among the ingredients for job satisfaction, we have:

**COMPENSATION**

Proper and fair compensation for an honest day’s work is at the top of the list of important aspects leading towards job satisfaction (2014 Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement Report (2014 Report)).

Many individuals require the rewards and compensation offered by a job to satisfy a basic need for stability and security in their lives.

Compensation can go beyond money, and include fair recognition from supervisors, on-the-job perks, or good benefit packages. These incentives ensure employees feel the exchange between them and the organisation is a fair one, and prevents feelings of under-appreciation.

**CHALLENGING WORK**

Repetitive work that doesn’t fully utilise one’s abilities can be draining as well as extremely boring.

According to the 2014 Report, the opportunity to really use one’s skills and abilities in their work was listed as the third most important aspect for job satisfaction.

A crucial step to improve employee satisfaction within a job is to establish a strong relationship between the two parties – creating a sense of connection that is not governed by power or status.

An open channel of communication will allow information and ideas to flow both ways.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH**

Today’s workplace is not just a venue for an employee to spend eight hours working in return for a salary. Instead, it has become the new place of learning for adults – offering opportunities for employees to sharpen their talents, experience novel situations and learn new skills.

Employees too, benefit from employers who are able to continuously improve and change their game.

Employees who see their work as an avenue for personal development find more meaning in their jobs, leading them to feeling more satisfied at the end of the day.

As employers, it is also crucial to ensure that all employees are given fair opportunities to grow, with no discrimination.

**AUTONOMY**

One commonly cited factor leading to employee engagement and satisfaction is autonomy in the workplace – whereby an employee is allowed to navigate their work independently.

Rather than being just a cog in the machine, the opportunity to make one’s own decisions can be a strong motivator for an employee.

Giving employees the chance to have a say – either about their work schedules, how the company treats them or in their work itself, gives them a sense of autonomy that validates their contributions to the company.

**THE FORMULA**

So, we have the ingredients but what is the perfect ratio for creating employee satisfaction in their jobs? To tell you the truth, there isn’t a perfect formula.

It is up to each individual to find their own formula, and take the necessary steps towards becoming satisfied in your profession.

For many people, a job can mean different things – a way to provide for their lifestyle, an extension of their identity or an outlet for their ambition.

By identifying what is highest on your priority list, you can then determine if your job currently matches this or help you find a job that can meet your personal satisfaction levels.

Even if you find that your job cannot fully satisfy you, have a conversation with your superiors about creating a more satisfactory environment.

Although some aspects that contribute to job satisfaction may be out of your hands, there are equally as many aspects that can be altered to create a more ideal work environment.

**IN CONCLUSION**

Focus your efforts on improving factors that are highest on your own personal priority list to create a job that you can be satisfied in.

Pick your favourite ingredients, and toss them into the pot accordingly!

**Millie Ong would like to know what your satisfaction trigger is, and what would make up your personal perfect recipe for job satisfaction. She can be contacted at milie.ong@leaderonomics.com. For more leadership content, do check out www.leaderonomics.com**