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"You're so lucky! You get to be your own boss, wake up anytime you like, go for holidays whenever you want, and make a living chasing your dreams! I really envy you!"

I get that a lot. I am a grown man whose "job" is writing songs and singing in a band. So, I do live an incredibly fortunate life, and I am indeed blessed to be able to make a living doing what I love. I have been my own boss for the last eight years. If you're reading this, and wishing you too, could quit your day job to become a freelancer or entrepreneur—I apologise—and I'm going to share why I think you shouldn't quit your day job.

GETTING STARTED

First things first: I'd like you to ask yourself why do you want to quit your job?

"Where do I even begin? My annoying co-workers, my rude supervisor, my unappreciative boss, long working hours, and lousy pay. The worst thing is, I don't even find my job fulfilling! I can't wait to quit my job so I won't have to deal with all this anymore."

"Except that you still will.

I hate to break it to you, annoying business partners might one day take the place of your annoying co-workers. You'll probably be forced to deal with a rude supplier instead of a rude supervisor. Unappreciative clients/customers will likely replace the unappreciative boss.

And surprise, surprise, the long working hours are going to make MUCH LONGER once you branch out on your own! Not to mention, the money will probably be worse too – at least for the first few years. There's also going to be a whole bunch of tasks you won't find fulfilling. But you'll just have to do them anyway, because guess what? There's just no one else to do it for you.

WAKE UP AND SMELL THE ROSES

"Wait, are you saying you regret quitting your job?"

Not at all. I absolutely love doing what I do. The thing is, I also love my day job. I believe it's because I was aware enough to realise the beauty of having a day job—you are paid to learn and grow. It doesn't matter if your day job isn't related to what you'd like to be doing, the principle still stands. There will be a salary waiting for you at the end of the month, no matter how much you explore your curiosity or how much initiative you show. It'll be there even if you make mistakes, upset the clients, or just simply, mess up.

And the best part: you have people around you to share all these experiences with.

Sure, you will have all the freedom in the world to experiment and try anything once you are your own boss. But you will have to do most of it alone, and it will come at a big risk. For example, a new marketing strategy might result in you getting no sales that month (and therefore, have no money to get by). Trying out a new product might require you to invest more to develop it (and therefore, have no money to get by)

Heck, even going on a holiday means that you don't get any jobs while you're away and after you return, because clients have forgotten you exist for a while (and therefore, you guessed it, have no money to get by). You could say your day job is effectively the risk-free practice ground for everything you want to do on your own—why not make the most of it?

BE INSPIRED, BE FULLFILLED

"It sounds like you're trying to say being my own boss requires too much risk and sacrifice."

Actually, in spite of all this, being the head of your own company is awesome! I've come to believe the best leaders are the people who have learned to be great followers. Society romanticises the notion of the Steve Jobs and the Mark Zuckerberg— the rare wunderkinds—who drop out, start their own businesses and then become wildly successful and wealthy. We think "Hey! That could be me!" And so, we bide our time in our "temporary" jobs that primarily serve as a source of capital for our future businesses.

What a waste.

First: Why not learn how to inspire yourself to find fulfillment in your job? Believe me, you will learn how to inspire yourself when pushing through the difficult seasons of running your own business (and there will be plenty). You'll also learn what it takes to inspire the staff you'll eventually hire.

Second: Why not look for ways you can add value to the organisation you work for, rather than just clocking in on Monday and counting down the days till the weekend? Because I assure you, adding value to your organisation will equip you to add value to your own products and services one day.

IN SHORT

So what is the message I'm trying to leave you with?

Instead of asking yourself what's wrong with your job, ask yourself what you can learn from your job. Try becoming the employee that everyone loves having around because you're the one who's always full of great ideas and positivity. Try being so indispensable and so productive that your boss wouldn't let you go without a fight. Try finding enjoyment in your job. Every. Single. Day.

I promise, you'll be much better equipped as an entrepreneur. Additionally, there's an unexpected side effect of these principles—you'll find yourself waking up a much happier person.

Ok, so I misled you with the title. I'm not actually telling you not to quit your day job. If you want to start something on your own, turn your passion into a business, or follow your dreams — go ahead and quit your job. I'll be the first to cheer you on. However, before you do, please allow me to leave you with this: Don't quit your job to run away from what you hate, quit your job to pursue what you love.

...the best leaders are the people who have learned to be great followers.

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John O is a chartered accountant. He worked at Sunway College as an ACCA lecturer for three years, before deciding to pursue music full time. He is currently the lead singer, songwriter and producer of his band, Paperplane Pursuit. Article first published on www.leaderonomics.com.

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Paperplane Pursuit. From left: John (lead singer), Andrew (drummer), Alnah (bassist) and Isaac (guitarist). Photo courtesy of Joni Lynne.

Paperplane Pursuit. Photo courtesy of Azhar Madnassan.