

DEFINING A DREAM JOB

By Alan Ludmer

It's out there. Somewhere. For sure. Somewhere is your dream job. I even know people who have them. We all know those people who enjoy their work. Their faces light up when they talk about what they do. They bring energy, creativity, and fun to the workplace. Sound like you? Sound like someone you know?

What is a dream job? Obviously for each of us, it's something different. Take, for example, the woman in her forties who left a career in the ministry to be an entrepreneur and manage a travel agency. Her dream job? Yes - a chance to control her own employment, to travel, and to grow something. All three of these spoke to fulfilling deep needs in her life.

For another man, the dream job is a bit in the future. Right now he sells industrial equipment, but he yearns to run a recording studio. He has, he says, absolutely no musical talent, beyond the ability to recognize and promote it in others. His imagined life is one on the cutting edge of music and young musicians. When will his dream come true? It's probably a few years off yet, but he's making steady progress toward it.

And then there's a young college student struggling with the decision of a major. Should she do what's easy, or go with what she loves? For that love, competition will be fierce and financial remuneration minimal. It's a difficult decision to make at age 19. That dream seems far away and illusionary. Some counseling might help sort out the alternatives.

Dream jobs are as individual as the person who aspires to one. But they do have some common characteristics.

First, a dream job must use an individual's most favorite skills. Keep in mind we can think about ourselves in several ways for making career decisions: what we do well and what we prefer to do. One individual I know earns most of his income as an extremely talented and gifted military leader. But his passion is working on

implementing cutting edge and highly technical learning programs in higher education. And, his leadership skills often come into play as he manages the start up activities that excite him. In defining our dream job, we seek to identify and fulfill what we prefer to do, because it's likely to be what we do best.

Secondly, a dream job must fulfill some of our important values. Identifying and living our key values is not easy – particularly given the influences of culture and society. But, take, for example, the successful corporate president who not only gives of his time and skills to the community, he also encourages and supports his employees to do so

Generally, dream jobs involve some risk. One person I know left the place of her birth in her 50's to take a medical position on an Indian reservation five states away – sight unseen!

Finally, a dream job must make a difference to others in some way. In other words, it must contribute to the greater good. One man had a long and satisfying career running an important state agency during a time of great change. He sought a second career, after retirement, the chance to return to an area he had left years ago – vocational rehabilitation.

Are dream jobs perfect? No. They have their frustrations, problems, and down times like any position. But what makes a dream job better is knowing that we're doing something that really matters to us.

When are we successful in reaching our dream jobs? It's when we think deeply about what matters to us, define that goal, and seek ways to attain it and ultimately do so. Our dreams have become reality. What are your dreams today?

About the author

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