

## Why Do We Work?



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I grew up in a household with two parents who both worked full time — if full time means 60 hours/week. Work — such a fascinating concept. A concept that has not been questioned or reconsidered since the invention of currency. We work because that is what we are told to do. We are taught to learn in order to work.

We pay ridiculous amounts of money to universities in order to have them stamp us with a seal of approval: “ready to join the workforce.” In every country, in every culture, in every society in the world, people are working. But are they working for the right reasons? Do they even have a reason, or are they just being complacent? The truth is that we do not need to work. We don’t. What we do need is to survive — and in order to do that, and because we live in the world that we live in, we need to be capable of paying the cost of living.

The cost of living is different in different parts of the world. In some parts, there is no need for currency, simple labour and trade will suffice to keep you alive. You can work on a farm, maybe herd some animals, and for all that you don’t have, but need, you can trade for. The bartering system does still exist in certain parts.

In the most modern of civilizations, we no longer work in order to meet our most basic of needs. We have progress to higher needs, to needs that go beyond survival alone. We look to improve on our lives, to make them better and to make ourselves happier. While many still do work in order to pay for the most basic of necessities, a good amount of people (although a minority in the world) have moved on towards working towards happiness — no longer only survival.

Such privileged people, myself included, have the rare opportunity to live a fulfilling life. While the majority of the world live in poverty, most of you reading this are going to be working not just to have something to eat today, but to have some of the things on your long list of wants — a list of things most would consider luxuries.

I understand that working and earning wages is not much of a privilege, but the compared to the alternative it is. I’m sorry to say, however, that the majority of people who are so privileged as to be working are doing so for the wrong reasons. Rather, they are confused as to what the right reasons for working are. You see, the right reasons aren’t simply to make money — money is only as good as what you can use to purchase with it. If you are going to be working then work in order to fulfill your higher needs — those that go beyond survival and safety.

We have been led to believe that the best jobs are those that bring the biggest bucks. We now live in a society that values material possessions, in many cases, higher than human life itself. People work their entire lives in order to collect and to save money so that they can one day retire and begin living their life.

Have you ever heard anything so stupid in your life? I'll be damned if I have to work for 60-70 years just so that I can live for the 20-30 years that hopefully follow, hopefully. There is a better reason to be working: fulfilment.

If you should aim for anything in life, it should be fulfilment. Fulfilment is a combination of accomplishment and purpose. Once we have met our basic needs — food, water, shelter, safety, companionship — we move on to our more exclusively psychological needs. An average person's life is split between work life and "personal life."

We then allow ourselves to drudge through work so that we can enjoy our personal life — the life that comes after we clock out. Our personal life is the only time that we have to grow, to explore and to find fulfilment — it doesn't have to be, but that is how we for some inexplicable reason decide to divvy things up.

What if the work that you did didn't feel so much like work? What if you decided to do something that wouldn't separate you from your life, but add to it. What if your work fascinated you, excited you, showed you a new perspective on life? What if you used your work as an outlet for fulfilment and not just as some mundane actions that you need to roll through in order to collect a paycheck? Our lives are shorter than we realize and we spend a huge part of them working.

Work shouldn't be something you don't enjoy, something that you feel that you must do. Work should be something that you want to do, something that you feel is just as much a part of you as your left arm. There are plenty of bad reasons to work, but there is only one good reason to work. Seeing as you have little choice but to get a job, do your best to make it one that adds to your life and not one that drains the life out of you.