

Here I am, writing something personal instead of doing analyses or control tests in this tiny office — white and devoid of colours — a confined place where employees, such as me, are trying to convince ourselves that this is where we belong and that our job is the best of all, desiring to feel proud of belonging someplace or to some entity. From my perspective, being an accountant is certainly not the answer. For the past three years, I've been working for one of the most “prestigious” consulting firms on the global scale. Even though that's not a long time, I've learned and realised a lot of things — good and not so good. Now I believe the not-so-good experiences trigger the best reflections. One of such experiences is working in a subordinated, methodological manner, in one of the “Big Four” — if you've ever worked in one of those, you surely know what I'm talking about. Beyond any doubt, there've been a lot of things that have happened since I entered the corporate world and many of those experiences have helped me see my life differently (in a good way).

I still remember my first day at work. I was doing my fifth semester at university and, just like any other college student, immersed in the obsolete and stupid Latin-American education system, I was intent on graduating get a 9-5 job being employed and serving someone else. I even remember that on more than one occasion, at different classes, the teachers would encourage us to study hard so one day we could work in one of the big firms.

On that day I found my way to the most luxurious offices in the city and, while I was driving, in my mind I couldn't resist thinking that within a very short time, on completing my internship, I would be earning a good salary and have a large desk, and that having a solid career in a respectable firm was the most certain an ideal way of proving myself (in those days, being successful to me meant to be earning a lot of money). I remember that I was barely 20 years' old and I completely changed my manner of speaking, my clothing and even the way I did my hair. Certainly, to my parents it was a source of pride that I would begin my career in a massive company — and I have to say, I felt very proud to belong to that firm. Many a time did I think of my Spanish teacher in high school, a classic teacher who wore a girdle and looked as if he might suffocate with his own belt. I always felt him look at me as if I would be a future “Mr. Nobody” — I honestly don't blame him.

I parked my car, walked to the lobby — I remember it as impeccable — and pressed the button to level 6 of building number 3. I was a bit nervous and lost, but at the same time confident of myself to make the best possible impression. The lift door opened and there was a luxurious desk where the receptionist was waiting to introduce me to my new colleagues, one by one. Their heads were well stuck in the computer screens — at a glance they seemed to be doing something very “interesting” and important, and they barely looked up when I greeted them.

Before all that, at my first interview, the senior manager explained what tasks I would be performing as a financial auditor. He took out a sheet of paper and started drawing the company structure in a pyramid form, from an intern to a partner, ten positions in total. He explained the role of each one and said that the average time to reach the top grade was between 17 and 22 years and that the responsibilities increased with each grade. When you think about that and observe the behaviour of entrepreneurs that the more their companies grow, the less they work and the more they delegate, the above seems to be very primitive to me.

After being presented to my colleagues, I was assigned a seat in a cubicle — just like all other cubicles of lower and higher ranked employees (Just from managers seniors to partners have their own office), about two metres wide, where without thinking about it I would pass long hours doing plain work, without much creativity, boring and repetitive at times, while most of my friends would have a big time at parties. Even though I have always tried not to leave my youth aside, with time I would transform into one of those in a long list of frustrated accountants. Saying “long” would be an understatement: I should say “ENORMOUS”. I wouldn't want to overgeneralise and say that everyone is in that situation but I can say that I heard 8 out of 10 office workers constantly complaining about their work, their low salary, that their children were already adolescent and they didn't understand them

because they would hardly see each other, that they had to cancel their personal commitments because their boss gave them a task 5 minutes before the finish time, that they were suffocating with debts left to deal with by the capitalist system, that they couldn't find a partner that would be happy to follow their rhythm of life which involved doing 70 working hours per week in busy periods, that each time they were more obese, bored, annoyed and — we can't skip the classic: "I don't want to go to work tomorrow".

What I'm writing here I know now however as I mentioned before, in the first year it wasn't like that — that was the year of illusion, that's the way I like to call it. In the first year you see everything through rose-tinted glasses, you're hungry to prove yourself and conquering the world, you want to show off your job at meetings of any sort, you voluntarily stay long hours, decorate your small workspace so it doesn't look that blank, arrive 15 minutes earlier and even have your lunch at the office kitchen to make the most out of the day, projecting a good image of your life trying to hide any flaws that all of us have. I would lie if I said that I didn't dream of being an important director or even a partner. Don't take me wrong, I'm not a hater and I'm not victimising myself with these letters, I'm just laying out some reflections and I'm trying to be the sincerest I can — perhaps that will help someone — though, I've got to be honest, it hurts to read some of the lines I wrote myself.

Now that we're completely honest with each other, if you're reading this, you need to know some things: if you aspire to be rich while being an employee you'll never make it. You may aspire to have a "good" position and earn "good" money after many years of sacrifice, and show signs of a lot of stress, and surely, what will cost you most of all will be burying your dreams to fulfil the dream of a person or people who did dare to fulfil theirs. On top of that, if you are really good at what you do, it will take you 10 or 12 years to get to that "good" position and you won't have the time to enjoy the money that you earned. A day will come during the crisis of your 30s, 40s, 50s that you'll look in the mirror and ask yourself why is that you're not feeling fulfilled and happy. If you're working in a place that doesn't excite you, what are you doing there? Are you going to do it all your life? What will happen if they fire you off all of a sudden? Being an employee and depending on just one source of income is a very risky thing — even more so if you're over forty and have mouths to feed, mortgage and other debts to pay, just like a vast majority of employees who are deeply immersed in the system.

Let me ask you, dear reader, Don't you think that you're wasting away your capabilities? Think of the following: if you tell me that in the last 3 years you've been earning roughly the same amount of money and you're hoping for a 15-20 percent rise compared to the previous year, I regret to tell you, my friend, that you're wasting your life away being an employee. Imagine a day that may come when you think of starting your own business and think of how many things you could have achieved and learned by then. Perhaps you would have failed but surely you would have learned heaps in the process. If you think you're intelligent and gifted, able to help a company grow as an employee, I'm going to put things clear to you: YOU work from dawn till dusk, investing YOUR energy, intelligence, attitude and all the abilities you possess or have gained at some point at the university or in the course of your life, carrying a lot of luggage on your shoulders, while the owner or the owners of the company actually used their intelligence when establishing the business and MADE IT HAPPEN.

While you toil away all the weekly hours, the one who acted with intelligence spends theirs playing golf, drinking coconut water on the beach (Passive income) literally making money while enjoying all that life has to offer, enjoying a real financial freedom. Tell me: Wouldn't you rather earn money while you sleep, eat and party? Honestly, wouldn't you like at some point of your life to earn more and work less? And if you think it's impossible, stop reading right now because you're like the majority and you won't be interested in what's coming next.

You have surely come across people in your job who have a bad vibe, are jealous, gossipers, manipulative, self-victimising, etc., and those people are present behind the doors of all workplaces you may ever knock on — negative people who you need to avoid as they may rob you out of all the energy you bring into the office. You need to adapt to that as you don't choose with whom you work. Wouldn't you want to choose with whom you work though? Positive people that bring something good every day, from whom you work and vice versa, who are better than you and don't repress you — instead, they help you grow in every aspect. In job offers, there are always requirements concerning the years of experience. Will that experience and knowledge be useful in 30 or 40 years? What do you prefer? Learn to do something you'll be doing repetitively or learn to earn generous amounts of money doing the things that you are passionate about?

In this part of the essay, we'll be walking on thin ice, this is at least what I'm looking for: that you become sensitive to what's important in life on a personal level. Why would anyone impose on you what's important? The brainwash we all undergo. To me, it's impossible that having to stay at work till 10 PM or later because it's a busy period, in order to finish a report requested by your boss as urgent, is more important than going home and spend time with your kids or see your beautiful wife and make love to her. Perhaps you think that if you stay working till late is because you're not efficient enough to deal with your workload on time and go home early. If that's what you think, it's not what it is in the corporate world.

Bronni Ware is an Australian nurse specialising in the care of terminally ill patients. In her book *The Top Five Regrets of the Dying* she lists five main regrets of people on the deathbed — I listed them here for you, so they can speak for themselves:

5 — I would have liked to be happier.

4 — I would have wanted to have more contact with my friends.

3 — I would have wanted to have more courage to say what I really felt.

2 — I wish I hadn't worked so much.

1 — I wish I had had enough courage to do what I really wanted to do and not what others expected me to do.

Think of the times when you were a child. We were passionate about many things and we always did what we were genuinely passionate about. Life is too short to work in the wrong field or make yourself a victim of the study you once chose and there's no way you can accept that "work is work" if you're feeling unhappy with what you're doing today, your heart is surely calling you to do what you're passionately thinking of when you get back home and would like to start the next day. Sometimes I don't understand people who say, "Be grateful that you've got a job" or "it's better to be working here than to be unemployed". I think that these thoughts fall behind all the things we've received from life. If you've got a heart, brain, and spirit, why do you limit yourself? There are so MANY things you could be doing, dozens of thousands of things that can make you happy and also rich — making excuses is not one of those things.

I think that being an entrepreneur is not only starting a business and trying to generate income without thinking responsibly. These days it's also creating value — a business is a direct opportunity to make other people's life better, solve problems and positively transform the needs within the environment where we develop. I feel that as entrepreneurs we don't want to be just another person — we want there to be a "before" and "after" of our existence. It's not only about the money — it's about the vision — we're the people who want to leave the world as a better place.

I forgot to tell you that while writing all that, I'm still employed at the firm. For six months I've been planning my exit from this place. It was when I started reading Robert Kiyosaki and Napoleon Hill that I began seeing things in a different way and recognised a desire in me to do something different with my life, to wake up and take the shackles off me. In those same days, I had an opportunity to start my first business, step onto my own path and walk ahead of learning how to be responsible for something that grows within my own limits.

My manager asked me to meet her and other managers to discuss my next two months plans. This was my opportunity to speak with them and thank for all. At the end of the day, you spend a lot of hours with them and to some extent, you should be grateful for the opportunities they give you. I explained them my situation and how I felt about the job. I was respectful but blunt in telling them that I wasn't passionate about this profession as much as they were (I want to believe they were) and that I was thinking of living somewhere where I think it was better to do what one enjoyed. I explained them my intentions of preparing myself for what future held for me, that soon I would be emigrating to new territories and that my destination was Australia, where I would study entrepreneurship and business. They supported me in my decision and they wished me much success and good luck. At that moment I felt nostalgic about all the memories I was leaving in that office — thinking that I had one month left there, I recalled many good anecdotes with workmates with whom I had made good friends and spent good times. At the same time, I'm feeling very excited about what's in store for me in life and preparing myself to continue building something of my own.

I'll change my life, leaving behind a career that I have already begun, my family, friends and a good woman, in order to follow MY DREAMS, to expand my mind to embrace a new world. If I have learned anything from travels overseas, it's that there's a lot to see. The irony is that the more I see, the more I realise I haven't seen anything and in this world that's more and more globalised it's important to have the advantage of different perspective. It makes you a person with a critical mindset that questions the "why" of many things that for other people are mining-less. If it hadn't been for my journeys, I wouldn't have become the person I am today and perhaps I would be one of the people who believe that you can't dream awake — I have accomplished some of my wildest dreams. Doing a recap of my life, I couldn't be more grateful for taking the call when they offered me a job at the firm — I think it's very important I could see how it was to be working there. And to realise that I didn't want that lifestyle.

Today I can say with confidence that I don't like being an employee having lived it myself. You not only see the superficial, what people say about their job trying to make it sound more interesting and attractive. Something I can recommend people younger than me is that you start working at an early age — that will enable you to take a different path if what you do in the real working world turns out to be unappealing. For example, if you start your internship or work being twenty years' old, while you're still studying, when you finish your study three or four years later, as a 23 or 24 years' old person you will already have an understanding of what it is to be an employee in your career. If you decide to finish your study first and start working then, you'll have already lost 3 years: either of working experience if the career is for you, or of your life if it is not.

We've got to appreciate integrity and integrity shows when all falls into place — one has to be ready to quit from jobs, give up salaries and negative relationships, and many other things but NEVER give up on who you are. Who are you? Where are you going? What you should never give up on is your integrity. If you're one of those who says, "Winners never give up," you may suffer loss. You've got to know the point where you lose yourself, where your integrity dissolves. Resignation is wrongly interpreted. I think that the saying "winners never give up" has lost its context. To me, winners have to give up on all that's in conflict with their integrity, their ideas, and what holds them back from where they want to go. Are you following your ideas? Or are you selling your essence out for a pay-check?

Sometimes I don't understand people: they complain but don't change, say that they hate where they are in life and they stay in the same spot, same life; they want to be successful, but they hate success; they want fame and money but they're not willing to risk and try to get it — why? I don't understand. They say they want to do something big and they do the same thing every single day. Do you want big changes? Take big risks. Are you willing to sacrifice yourself? Why are you selling yourself for less than you're worth? For less than

your potential is? Who cares if you fail once? You're going to get up. You're not even living, you're dying each day because you know deep down inside that you've given up on your dreams. Yes, it will be hard and that's what will make it all even bigger. There'll be a time in your life when you'll say "look at what I've achieved" — in that moment of pride you'll know beyond any doubt that you made it, you created it. It's that moment of renewal when you realise that everything is possible. I don't understand why you wouldn't try it. You only live once and if you do it right once it's enough. You should be paying attention because one day it's going to be very late. I can't think of anything worse than not trying to use all potential within you, not living before dying. Think of what you really want — if you fail, try again. It's a bigger failure to not follow what's your real passion and makes you fulfilled.

Why staying in just one profession? Why learning just one thing during your whole life? It's not impossible, it only takes your commitment and courage. Fear staying in the same place you are today. It all depends on you and you are capable to achieve it in time. Sometimes I hear people talk about their thousand problems and saying that if they didn't have those problems, they would do what they like. They offer pure excuses for why they can't stop doing the thing they don't like doing. I don't care if you have a thousand problems, don't victimise yourself, continue going ahead as if you had no problems. I don't care about your limits because they are smaller than your capacity of overcoming them. Why are their people with a thousand problems and they still achieve their goals? Why are their people with a thousand opportunities and they still achieve nothing? Ask yourself.

Many people are incentivised by money to do boring jobs they don't like. I think they forget that money runs quicker than they do. The moment you decide to do what you really like, money will follow you. Find your talents, value yourself, decide what those talents are and those miracles you've got inside that no one can copy, LEAVE YOUR COMFORT ZONE AND GET TO KNOW YOURSELF — the rest of us are waiting. Show us who you are, put a price and we're going to buy you, and the more you hone your talents, the more creativity you put in it all, the freer you'll be in your thoughts and acts, the more you'll value yourself. Not just work 40 hours weekly like a robot (if you're lucky) to get your payroll.

It's rare to wish someone to be jobless — I don't wish you badly. I just want you to improve yourself. At first, you may be thinking that I don't respect you, that I'm an egoist and that you disagree with me completely, but think: What will the future bring? Technology has advanced so much that the job you and I do repetitively won't exist anymore — it will be done by robots and artificial intelligence, and if you think that I'm looking too far into the future, let me tell you that it's already happening in 2018. If you think that you live in a third-world country where there are no means for that to happen, don't forget that a vast majority of multinationals have their offices here because of cheap labor, even including doctors, lawyers, accountants with a solid academic background, and they are already looking at based solutions.

Let's back this up with numbers: Foxconn, the main supplier of Apple, have just announced that they will order a million of robots that will replace three million workers. Robots can do a better job than a human but apart from that, robots don't need to be on a payroll, they don't receive a rise, they don't need to go on holiday, they don't receive benefits or have retirement plans.

I dare you to think how many people, in the next 10 or 15 years, may be replaced by one machine that can work 24/7. The same technology will take our jobs — not me or my thoughts. This is where the ego comes into play — we always think we're irreplaceable and at one point we won't be. If you become slack for a moment, trust me, you will have to wake up. We'll have to give ourselves new employment and create a habit, we've got to change the nature of our work, we've got to stop doing a job just to do it. You live for something better than that and you know it. Now, if you love your job, focus on it and, besides, do something that can change the world — be aware that we're not leaving it and we need

all humans, with different values, to be able to change our current situation, thinking of the lives of those who will come to this world.

We live in the age of consciousness, of being, of awakening. What are your talents and virtues that others can benefit from? Not the repetitive job that you can do, charged per hour and from which you return home annoyed. You're wasting your life doing something stupid that's not your essence and you're not bringing your talents to the table. Survive is not live — that's why you hate Mondays – Mondays are not bad. Shake it off and let it go.

If someone asked us what our goal in life was, probably most of us would say "be happy," "be a millionaire" or "have a beautiful family". The truth is there's no single proven formula to achieve happiness. The world and human being are so diverse that it would be impossible to find one — why don't you go and search for your own?

We, the new generations, are changing the world. There's a documentary directed and written by Roko Belic ("Happy") where he mentions and explains common factors and different realities of how to be happy. Belic is analysing happiness and its components, based on the opinions of scientists who specialise in that field, as well as the basics of positive psychology (a branch of science that investigates wellbeing).

The gross domestic product is being replaced by the domestic product of happiness — what it means is that in some countries they don't only measure the per capita income of the population but also if the inhabitants are really happy with their life. It's interesting that a country such as the USA have tripled their gross domestic product in the last 50 years and yet the Americans don't feel even 5 percent happier than in the previous decade. This is to say that even if people have a "good job" and a "good salary," they don't live their life abundantly. There is research showing that half people are born happy because of their genes composition (I'm very skeptical of that), while the other half is happy not because of their economic status but because of being able to succeed in something there are passionate about and they can share with affection. The documentary reaffirms that the things that make us genuinely happy are free – DO WHAT YOU'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT, money will follow you.

I've always known we're expected to go downstream, they tell you what's convenient for you, but I want to move and improvise, re-learn in order to advance, I fight fear to be free, I risk because I want something new to come, I prefer to confront all life mistakes I decide to. If I regret, at least I faced the challenge. Constant movement brings a new challenge to make a dream come true.

Gil Mendoza.