

The Difference Between a Job and a Career

Posted By: [Melissa Kennedy](#) On: 3/1/2013 6:00 PM In: [Changing Careers](#)

[Publisher's Note: In this installment of the *Journal*, we are—for the first time—printing an article from a source outside of law enforcement but focused on our continuing theme of professionalism. We are pleased that the author and Beyond.com website were reception to this.]

Often, I hear people talking about finding a job or how much they dislike their jobs. Other times, I'll hear people discussing their careers – about how to further their career or what they think is the next move.

After doing a little research and reading an article at [Harvard Business Review](#), it seems that the biggest difference between a job and a career is how well they integrate with the rest of your life. The people who have jobs are always striving to find new ways to strike a balance between their work lives and their home lives. Those who have careers tend to already have this balance.

The article describes how the biggest complaint people have about their jobs is that it requires too much effort. However, the amount of effort something takes is relative to how much you enjoy it. If you think about it, reading a book for pleasure is simple, but reading a book for a college course can be a chore. If you're passionate about what you do, it doesn't feel like work and the extra hours you devote to it are much easier to sacrifice. On the other hand, when your job doesn't challenge you and you don't enjoy doing it, any amount of effort you have to expend will feel like too much. Soon, your job becomes a chore and one that you don't enjoy. Suddenly, your career becomes just another job.

If you are trying to find a better work-life balance and turn your job into a career, here are a few ways to help:

Realize that complaining about it is pointless – We all seem to have this idea that the goal of our lives is to be happy and do as little as possible; however, that's not the case. Complaining about the fact that you have to work everyday is pointless. No one cares about how boring or silly your job may be. Instead of complaining about it, find a way to make peace with the job you have and do your best to make it as pleasant as possible.

Find something that engages you – No matter what your job is, you can find something about it that you enjoy. Whatever that is, make the most of it and find a way to feel enthusiastic and passionate about what you do. This change doesn't have to be a big one. For example, if your job is to file medical records all day and you find it terribly boring, look for ways to turn it into a challenge. You could try timing yourself by creating new goals to reach each day. It might sound silly, but the more engaged you are, the less each minute at work will hurt.

Make the changes you want to see – Too often we complain and say things like "Somebody ought to..." or "I wish they would ...". Instead of wishing for someone else to make the changes that will get you excited about your career, realize that you are somebody and can create the changes you want to see. If you feel that your office is too dreary, ask your boss if you can add some decoration. If you think that some of your tasks are overly repetitive, present your ideas for streamlining them. Remember, you are the

person they hired to do the job, which means that you are the only one who has the power to make your vision a reality.

The biggest difference between having a job and having a career is how happy you are about doing it. When you only have a job, finding a balance between work and home will be a constant struggle. However, when you create ways to feel enthusiastic and engaged, even part of the time, your job will quickly become a career.

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[As always, anyone interested in submitting an article to the *Journal* is invited to do so by emailing: mlindsay@ilea.in.gov with a copy of the article attached to the email.]