

No matter how 'stuck' we feel ...

We do have choices



// We have the choice to use the gift of our **life** to make the world a better place, or not to bother.

Jane Goodall

I was travelling to Canberra for a day trip on Monday last week and I sat next to a serious looking business man. He was on his Blackberry frantically sending emails before the plane took off and then after lift off was busy reading the *Australian* and *Financial Review* newspapers from cover to cover. I thought to myself this will be a challenge but I am going to start a conversation with this man. So, I waited for the right time and just as he put down one paper and was about to pick up the other I asked; 'Where are you off to?'

I know, I know - dumb question!! He was obviously off to Canberra, but it was a good way to get the conversation started. Guess where he was going? Yep, you got it ... Canberra! I asked him how long he was going to Canberra for and he told me he would only be there for a couple of hours because he was then getting on a private jet and heading to Hong Kong for a week long convention. It sounded exciting to me! He then went on to tell me that he would be back on Saturday morning and had to leave again on Sunday night for another week of travel with his work. I said to him how exciting I thought that must be and how much he must love it. He looked at me with eyes that seemed to be calling for help and said, "no I absolutely hate it!"

What are we settling for?

His name was Michael and he worked for a global bank. He was probably in his late 30's or early 40's and he was married with three children ranging from 9 to 14 years of age. He rarely saw his wife and kids and he was not enjoying his work at all. In fact, by his own admission, he hated it! I asked him how long he had been doing it for and he told me 16 years. My automatic assumption was that after 16 years of doing something that he hates, forcing him to sacrifice time away from the most important people in his life, he **must be** looking for something else that would offer him satisfaction, significance and be family friendly.



So, I asked him; "What is the next step for you Michael?" His response left me gobsmacked! He said, "the next step is to just keep on hating what I do for just another 15 years or so". He told me that it was what he knew, the money was good

and that he had three children he had to put through private schooling. He seemed to have settled for a life that was pretty depressing.

Sometime we can't see the forest for the trees



I couldn't, knowing what I know, just sit there and accept his lacklustre approach to life. I suggested to him that there are options available to him. Why not look for a new job, start his own business or speak to his boss and modify his current work conditions? All very logical and sensible suggestions I thought, but he was so stuck in the thick of the trees that he couldn't see the forest.

He just kept telling me that he didn't have the time or the energy to look for other options and so he had settled for this life with which he hated. But that is just the tip of it for Michael. What about his wellbeing? How could he ever have optimal health and energy spending the vast majority of his life stressed and anxious about doing something that he hates? What about his relationship with his wife who he rarely sees, and even admitted to me that she was miserable about the situation as well? What about not just the lack of time with his children, but the example he is setting for them? He is teaching them that it is okay to hate their job, hate their life and sacrifice the most important things to them just to make money. What about him? What about his 'me' time to play golf, work in the garden, walk by the beach, ski or whatever it is that 'takes his breath away'? What a sad existence!

We all have choice!

This chance meeting and conversation with Michael reinforced to me again how important it is to take control of our lives and the choices that we make. We all have choices, even though Michael couldn't see it. I just hope for his sake he sees it sooner rather than later, before he loses his family, his health or both.

I wanted to tell this story to hopefully shake some things up a bit! If you are actually reading this article then you are probably already taking control of your life and understand that you have the choice to head in any direction you choose. If you feel stuck, like Michael, then I urge you to understand that there are options for you to turn your life around. Will it be easy? Not necessarily as you will need to invest a small amount of time and effort to not just find the right option, but then to transform your life from that which you despise to that which you desire. Will it be exciting and worth it? ...



Sooo worth it - I can't use any words to describe the incredible joy you will have after the effort has been made and you have taken control of your situation and can live a life which you love with the people you care about. There is nothing better! If you feel you need help with this please contact me ASAP - why waste time, when it is so precious? Have a brilliant week.

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