

Work that Suits You – Try it On

While we naturally put a lot of energy into hobbies and personal interests, we'd do ourselves and others a service if we put energy into the type of work and work styles that best suit us.

For instance, we've all seen the generous soul who works in the church nursery only to learn that, by story hour, kids just aren't their cup of tea, and have knocked their tea over, too. Which leaves no further question about their suitability for this vocation - they know it, the kids know it, and the parents know it! Or, how about the teacher that's highly intellectual but can't seem to connect with their students? Or the grouchy customer service rep that doesn't smile, make eye contact, and if on the phone, transfers you in a millisecond, passing you off to the next person?

Past experiences may come to mind involving people in a variety of professions who seemed to be 'misplaced.' After such encounters you may recall having had the feeling of wanting to pull your hair out, someone else's, or cancel your account based purely on one person's behavior. Not only is a misplaced worker bad for business, it can cause the person on the receiving end much anguish. A misplaced person is simply someone who has 'missed their place,' and as a result, is not a happy camper. And since misery loves company, those who come in contact with them feel the effects.

However, when someone is well-placed in their profession, the opposite effect occurs. The message gets across, the service gets delivered, the transaction goes smoothly, the customer is happy, and people are helped, served, and often inspired. Even better, everyone feels good. See what a difference one person can make who's well-placed?

Consider the practical advice of teacher and author Joyce Meyer: "If you want to find out if you can teach, get a group of people together and try to teach them something. If they come back for more, great! But if they never come back, well, you've got your answer!"

So, in response to these thoughts, why not 'try it on?' That's right, try on the work before signing up, and before investing time, money, and energy into a field that may be totally wrong for you. You'll get confirmation – either way.

--First, do as much research as you can to find out what someone in a particular field does and what educational credentials are required. For example, you may have yearned to be a veterinarian as a kid until you learned how much schooling it would take, then opted out. Or you may have wanted to be a rocket scientist but couldn't get past a C in algebra.

--Second, take a few tests to determine your interests and aptitudes. Are you an Artistic-Creative type, or an Intellectual-Analytical? The Choices Assessment at the Missouri Career Center is an excellent start. Do you like to work outside with your hands, or do you prefer to stay cozy indoors? Are you a social bee, or would you rather work alone? Do you work best in a high-pressure environment or in a quiet, low-key environment? Do you prefer a supervisory style that provides constant feedback and close supervision, or do you enjoy a more independence in the workplace? The only way to truly know is to try it on.

--Third, can you reasonably conceive of yourself doing a particular job? What the mind can conceive, it can achieve, but the suit has to fit too!

--Fourth – Do an internship or volunteer for a worksite to get a feel for the work you're interested in.

As varied as there are jobs are people to fill them. When the glove fits it fits, and when it doesn't, everyone knows it! Life is too short to be miserable to miss your niche and your little corner of the world where your presence will make a difference!

The concept of 'trying it on' not only works for the younger crowd with little to no work experience, but for all ages. For instance, a time may come when, as an adult, you're ready for a career change. Maybe you never explored what you wanted to do, but just collected a paycheck for a living and now want to make a life with work that offers a sense of purpose and fulfillment. With time and experience, people change, so be patient with yourself during such transitions and explore your options.

Sometimes we fumble around in life trying to figure out what type of work we're meant to do, but this is a normal life process. It's called trial and error, not failure. For some this takes longer than others, but when we emerge from the processor, it's well worth the spin cycle. The good news is, by trying different work scenarios on, you just might discover a whole new job or interest that brings you joy, and as a result, joy to others.

So, what are you waiting for? Your life is waiting. Try a few suits on, find one that fits your unique shape, and in the course of your work day, you will be the well-placed, happy individual who serves and inspires others!

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P.S. While trying on work that suits you, 'try on' this thought for the week to stay inspired:
"Change the way you look at things, and the things you look at will change"