

10 Signs It May Be Time to Quit Your Job

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Should you stick it out or simply head out? See if any of these apply to you

By Melissa Fiorenza/Women@Work

Play along with this hypothetical scenario for a minute. Say you work the typical 9-to-5 schedule. That's eight hours a day, 40 hours a week that you spend on the job. Maybe you get 10 federal holidays and take off, perhaps, two weeks total for vacation or sickness. After counting up the number of working days in 2013 and factoring in all of that, your time spent laboring this year clocks in at 241 days, or 1,928 hours. That's a lot of time to spend doing something — especially if it's not something you love.

But it's not always clear-cut if where you are is the best place for you—and even when it's obvious, it can be tough to make the decision to leave. That's where these 10 signs come in. Can you check any off? And more importantly, have you tried to fix the problem?

“Assuming that you've already gone to your manager or HR, expressed your concerns, tried to find a solution ... and nothing is done, start looking,” says Renee Walrath, president of Walrath Recruiting, Inc., a staffing and recruiting firm with locations in Albany and Saratoga. “In other words, if no one is reacting and the problem is out of your control, it's time to get out.”

Here's when that might be the case.

1. You're grossly underpaid. If you think you might make too little or deserve more, run an online search to find out the typical salary range of your position, taking into account where you live. If you're below the average and all your attempts to right the situation — you've proven your worth and asked for a raise — have been futile with no hope in sight, consider a change. “Money isn't always everyone's motivator, but if it's impacting the way you live and your desire to do well, it's a good reason to look elsewhere,” says Walrath.

2. You're not excited to start the day. No one loves Monday mornings, but if every single morning of every workday is dreadful, that's a problem. So if you always wake up with that attitude, ask yourself why, suggests

Walrath. Is it because you don't like the work or your coworkers? Or you're afraid of something? Whatever it is, something has to change. "We're at work more than we're at home, so if it's gotten to this point, move on."

3. Organizational changes have made things worse. "Sometimes during periods of transition when organizations are making changes, it impacts the roles and working relationships of employees," says Dr. Sarah David, author, career coach, founder of Social Savvy Sarah and NICE-National Institute for Career Empowerment™ (socialsavvysarah.com). "It may mean the boss you had yesterday is no longer your boss today. Maybe the organization downsized and now you are stuck with doing the work of two or three people," she adds. Or perhaps you're no longer in the boardroom when big decisions are being made. If that's the case, you may want to start considering something new.

4. Your values and life situation no longer line up with the company's mission. Maybe when you started your job, you were single or in a different place in life, and now you are married with a family or have elderly parents to care for, says David. Are your current family values peacefully coexisting with the demands of your job, or have you repeatedly asked for a more flexible schedule? If the latter rings a bell, you may want to pursue a more family-friendly opportunity.

5. You can never own your ideas. Joanne Cleaver, author of *The Career Lattice* (thecareerlattice.com), told us: "You pipe up with good ideas and stretch your comfort zone in meetings, only to find that somebody else gets to run the project based on your insight." If this is the norm, confidentially ask the decision-makers why you didn't get the chance to execute your idea. "Sometimes this is literal — a dominant personality drowned you out. And sometimes this is metaphorical — you said it, but there isn't the perception that you are capable of doing what you mentioned. But if they heard you, and they know you can do it, and you didn't get the shot ... why waste your good ideas on bad management?"

6. Your company won't let you grow (even for free). Have you ever requested a strategic lateral move that will help you grow your skill set or expand your network without costing your organization a cent — only to be shot down? "If they won't invest in everyday advancement, they sure won't write you into the big plans. Time to go," advises Cleaver.

7. You're no longer passionate about what you do. "Not only do you want to be happy with the work environment, but also with what you're doing," says Walrath. Not that work has to be fun every single day, but you want to feel as if you're making a difference and enjoying the work. If you're not, Walrath advises this strategy: Write down the skills and

attributes you're good at, and write down your interests and industries that interest you. What would make you give 110 percent and help you get that spark back? Walrath also recommends reading the well-known book, *What Color Is Your Parachute?* by Richard N. Bolles, for inspiration.

8. There's no promotion for you in sight. You've taken on extra work. You've joined committees. You've volunteered for special projects. But no matter what you do, you can't seem to get to that next level. "If you love what you are doing then by all means work with a supervisor or trusted mentor to identify opportunities within your organization to expand your skills," says David. But if you have exhausted all avenues for advancement, she recommends looking outside your organization.

9. There are rumors about layoffs. Or perhaps, you read or heard about how your company's finances are going south. Your first plan of action should be to find out if the rumors are true. Cleaver says one good way to find out is to network with a supplier with whom you have a good relationship; is your company paying that supplier on time, or at all? "Also, find out if your company's brass are canceling appearances at industry functions where they'd be representing the company. That's another insidious sign," she adds. "If the head rats are bailing, maybe you should too."

10. You're being bullied. "If you are ever feeling disrespected or undervalued, reach out to your supervisor or other human resources representative to address the issue," says David. If the bully is your boss, go to HR. You should feel good about where you work, she says, and not intimidated.

Any of these signs hitting too close to home? Dr. Tom Denham, career counselor with Careers In Transition LLC of Albany, advises: "Don't quit based solely on one factor. Inventory and rank the advantages and disadvantages of each issue." Thinking strategically, he says, will increase your chances of taking the next step in the right direction. That may mean it takes a while before you actually make a change. "Remember, the more dramatic a career change, the more planning that will be necessary. You'll need a lot of courage and conviction to make it happen. Be prepared to make some significant sacrifices," he says. And one last word of advice: "Please look before you leap; your future depends on it."