

Where have you been? Look to pastimes for better career planning

Written by Julie Desmond • Plan Your Career
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Hella Buchheim is a story-teller. She has landed a vocation that meets anyone's criteria for a great job: she sets her own hours, works with fabulous characters and makes a little money. If she had health insurance, it would be perfect. On her website, Hella writes, "Most writers lament the road not taken. It brings us into a loop of should-as, could-as, would-as. But I want to celebrate the road taken." Watching Hella write her own story and considering that all of us have loops of shoulda-coulda's, I got to thinking that a really great career is the one that capitalizes on the road taken. Every connection, every hobby, everything we do to relax comes out of choices we make on our own behalf: The road taken.

What have you done in the past that really lights you up? Finish this sentence: I always smile when I think about the time... (we built that go-kart, I closed that sale, they gave me that award). What did that feel like? What else were you doing at that time? How did you get to the point where you made the choices that made that situation happen?

Are you looking for work? Or are you looking for opportunities to get that smile back all over again? When your choices take you on a road you enjoy, it shows in your eyes, your face, your attitude. Walk into a business and apply for a position you want, one you know you can do well and you know you're going to smile about, and the hiring manager will catch your excitement before they even look at your application.

The road taken might include scenic routes and roundabouts. Look at these side-trips for ideas on where you should be looking for work. Maybe your career has been in purchasing, but your passion is photography. Every weekend you drive around the city taking photos. You sell some online; you give some away to friends. It's a hobby and it is also a road taken. You made the choice to learn lenses and you get jazzed about cameras. Any film shop or camera dealer would be thrilled to bring you on board.

Soon, many Minnesotans who have been looking for work are going to find opportunities to become employed. In planning your next career move, look back at the road you've been on and think about how you can let your past choices show you where you should go next.

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