



174: Is it Time to Quit My Job?

I'm Emily P. Freeman, and welcome to The Next Right Thing. You're listening to episode 174.

This is a podcast about making decisions, but also about making a life. If you struggle with decision fatigue, chronic hesitation, or if you just need a few minutes away from the constant stream of information and the sometimes delightful, but also distracting hum of entertainment, you're in the right place for a thoughtful story, a little prayer and a simple next right step.

But first a word from this episode sponsor Skillshare. Spring is here and everything feels a bit new, doesn't it? Sometimes when things feel new, it can be hard to decide where to start. Thankfully, Skillshare has a catalog of thousands of classes that can help you stress your creativity and practice the skills you need to sustain it. One such class is Productivity for Creatives by Thomas Frank, an entrepreneur and author who makes a living, creating content on YouTube. In this class, Thomas teaches all about the relationship between productivity and creativity and how our regular everyday tasks can help us be more consistent in our creative work. He even talks about how to think about inspiration as if it's a muscle that requires regular activity to grow. I love that. Skillshare makes working towards a creative goal achievable with short lessons and hands-on projects. And it's affordable too, with annual subscriptions available for less than \$10 a month right now, Next Right Thing, listeners can get a free trial of premium membership at [skillshare.com/NextRightThing](https://www.skillshare.com/NextRightThing). Explore your unlimited trial access to classes like Productivity for Creatives for free just for being here with me today. Go to [skillshare.com/NextRightThing](https://www.skillshare.com/NextRightThing) to claim your offer or tap the link in today's show notes. Now onto today's episode, listen in.

Of the hundreds of thousands of difficult decisions we make in our lifetime, decisions about our work and vocation top the list. When we ask listeners what decisions are causing fatigue in your life right now, job and career decisions topped that list with 48% of respondents listing it in their top three followed by parenting and time management. If you're wondering if it's time to quit your job, I want to first acknowledge that there are so many situations where quitting our job just isn't an option right now, no matter how much we don't like it. I still think this episode could bring some clarity to your situation. If not for right now, then perhaps for a future decision that you might be in a position to make. I know the question, is it time to quit my job? Well, it's set up in a way that implies a choice that we sometimes just don't practically have.

A note here to say, if you're in an environment that's unsafe for you, I hope to strongly encourage you by saying yes, it's time to quit your job. But if you're in a situation where you have the choice to make, but

the decision seems unclear, or if you have conflicting opinions or ideas about your next steps, then perhaps I can offer a bit of perspective.

You can Google this exact question, is it time to quit my job? And you'll find lots of bullet pointed articles about the best time to quit. You'll find advice about the benefits of waiting until you have a savings account until, or if, you have another job lined up or until there's no room for advancement in your current position. There are lots of articles with solid advice about the particular facts of leaving your job. But chances are, if you're asking that question, you've already found those articles and you've made plenty of lists about the facts. So for the next few minutes, let's consider the question beneath the question and see if we can uncover together more information that could help you discern your next right thing.

First thing to consider, are you asking the right question? If you anticipate a transition is on the horizon, a good practice is to be crystal clear about at least one thing so that you can walk forward with confidence. What is that one thing? Whenever you stand at a threshold of any kind, it's imperative that you're able to name where you are. That's where every journey begins, and deciding to leave a job is most certainly a journey. It might seem obvious to you that you're already asking the right question, and if it is, then this part will go quickly for you, but let's just be sure. You're asking, is it time to quit my job? Sometimes we seek a change in a certain area of life because it's time to make a change in that area, period. Other times though, we seek a change in one area of life when really the trouble lies in a different area. How to discern the difference? Well, let's put on our soul minimalist hats and clear our way through the chaos. It's time to make a life energy list.

Over the last 90 days, what has been life-draining in your work and life? For this exercise, you aren't allowed to just put "my job" on the life-draining list. You have to be specific. This is key when trying to discern if you're asking the right question. For example, you may discover the commute to the job is really the trouble or a particular relationship that you have at work. It could be the odd hours, the pay, the discomfort that you feel when you have to confront a conflict. Maybe it's your inability to meet deadlines, maybe it's a foggy expectation that you feel from your boss or your supervisor and it seems easier to leave than to actually ask about it. There could be a thousand things that are life-draining about your job, but it's important to be specific about what they are.

This will help you see a couple of things. Number one, it'll help you see the particulars of the job in question. Number two, it'll help you see what other factors are at play that are draining your life energy right now, not just in your job but in other areas, too. And then number three, it gives you a clear picture of what is true, even if it's difficult to look at. Well remember now though, this is a life energy list, so I encourage you to finish it with what's been life-giving in the last 90 days. Again, be specific. You could ask yourself, what are some moments of joy that I can recall? When did I last feel most like myself at work and in other environments too? And in those moments, who was I with and what was I doing?

Once you've completed your life energy list, now you at least have a more clear picture of where you are and what is true of your right now life. You may discover it's the job, or it could be the hours or the environment, the commute, your boss, something you could adjust, or either something you could change or tweak to buy you some time or even make it a lot better. Either way, you may have already uncovered some patterns that you didn't see before, or maybe you're able to connect some dots in a new and different way. Maybe you've discovered, yeah I'm asking the right question, is it time to quit my job? Or there could be some other questions rising to the surface as you look at your life energy list. Is it time to ask for

a raise? Is it time to confront my boss? Is it time to change my hours? Is it time to go part-time? Is it time to work remotely, to propose to my girlfriend, to buy a house, to finally forgive my dad?

I know I took a turn there and it might seem weird in an episode about wondering if it's time to quit your job, but the human soul is a powerful force. Never underestimate your mind's ability to distract you from what might really be going on, maybe even in an effort to protect you from having to confront it. So that's really the first thing that you have to do when you're asking a big question like this. Clarify the question and confirm that you're asking the right one. If yes, move on to the next step.

If you wonder if it's time to quit your job, here are some reasons why the answer might be a yes. Maybe you're completely burned out or exhausted. The question to ask yourself is, does this mean I quit or does this mean I need to adjust or ask for some time? If you're willing to quit, then you've nothing to lose. Do you just dread the work, and to what extent do you dread it? You could return to your life energy list for clarification. Do you dread it because of the physical energy it takes, the emotional energy that you exert every time you show up, are there mental gymnastics that you're engaging in on a soul level in order to convince yourself that this is the right place for you? Is there a deep misalignment in your values with the values of the company? Is this job proving to be bad for your health? Do you spend off the clock time worrying about your work? Is this job having a negative impact on your relationships or your self-esteem?

Usually, when we ask the question, is it time to quit my job, we already know that we want a change, but we aren't certain of either the next step or the timing of the next step. In other words, it's not maybe a matter of if, but when. If it's becoming clear that you need to quit or make a change, but you don't know when or how it could be helpful for you to begin to find three particular things.

The first is a path, who else has done what I want to do? Can I have a conversation with that person? Can I look to someone who has modeled this for me? Maybe there's a certain prayer you want to begin praying, an email you need to send or a connection you like to make.

Secondly, begin to think about, okay what's the plan? What do I need to have in place in order to transition well? Maybe it's a financial question or a living situation, or again, conversations or connections that you would like to have. You don't maybe have to know the whole plan, but maybe you consider what's one next right thing I can do in order to move towards making a plan.

And then once you begin to think about that and carry that, the third thing that you might want to find or create is a process. What's going to come first, second and third? What does my contract say? What is available to me? What are the phases of leaving this position? What do I need to do now so that I can leave this job as the person I aspire to be? In other words, I don't want to leave this place bitter and angry or suspicious, if at all possible. But I'd like to leave confidently and kindly and professionally. What's the process that I need to go through? Maybe if it's not time to leave yet, but maybe if I see that in the future, what are some things I can do now to prepare myself to leave well?

So those are three things to consider within the second step, which is, is there a path, a plan or process that I can begin to either get advice on or develop myself? And the third thing after you clarify that you're asking the right question and after you consider some of the big reasons why it might be time to quit your job, the third thing to consider is simply, do you want it to be time to quit your job?

If you're asking the question, I think part of you wants it to be time. Are you able to articulate why? It could be time for another list, what I call a hopeful vision list. In the same way, your life energy list helps you to see where your energy is going, whether it's being drained out of you or whether it's being poured into you, a hopeful vision list can help you discern what you really want. So write it down.

You could start with these three fill in the blanks. I feel most like myself when I'm, what? Or if I could do anything, I would, what? Finally, if I was doing what I believe I'm made to do, my greatest contribution would be, what? Does this require quitting your job or would it be possible to make these things true where you are right now?

I hope these questions have been helpful for you as you carry the important question of wondering, is it time to quit my job? I also wonder if you're considering, do I really need to quit or do I need to rest? Are my only options quitting or staying, or is there a third way? If so, what would I want it to be? As you pay attention to your life, your family, your workmates, your prayers, your fears, desires, and life energy list, as well as your hopeful vision, I have every confidence that the God who sees you and loves you is perfectly capable of providing for you in every way as you do your next right thing in love.

Thanks for listening to episode 174 of The Next Right Thing. I hope this simple practice of carrying important questions can be just one more rung on the trellis upon which your rhythm of life can continue to grow. Because while it's true this is a podcast about making those important decisions, the bigger truth we know is that all of these decisions are actually making our lives. As always, you can find me @emilypfreeman on Instagram or at emilypfreeman.com where we have this and every episode provided for you and a transcript version so if listening just isn't your thing this week, you can always download a copy of that transcript. And listen, if you make a decision about quitting your job after listening to this episode, I'd love to hear from you. Just send an email to info@emilypfreeman.com with the subject line Next Right Thing, and we'd love to hear more about your story.

Well, in closing, I'd like to read a portion of a book. One of my favorite books, it's called Essentialism by Greg McKeown. And this is what he says,

"The word priority came into the English language in the 1400s. It was singular. It meant the very first or prior thing. It stayed singular for the next 500 years. Only in the 1900s did we pluralized the term and start talking about priorities. Illogically we reasoned that by changing the word we could bend reality. Somehow we would now be able to have multiple first things, people and companies routinely try to do just that. But when we try to do it all and have it all, we find ourselves making trade-offs at the margins that we would never take on as our intentional strategy, when we don't purposefully and deliberately choose where to focus our energies and time, other people, our bosses, our colleagues, our clients, and even our families will choose for us. And before long we'll have lost sight of everything that is meaningful and important. We can either make our choices deliberately or allow other people's agendas to control our lives well."

Well, here's to making choices deliberately, as we do our next right thing in love. Thanks for listening and I'll see you next time.