

RETURNING TO PURPOSE

Find your calling

A short story

by

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Author's note

This fictional 'short story' is about a young woman who was battling with a regular 'nine to five' day job which paid her bills, but she had no joy at the end of her days. For about a decade she tossed with the idea of leaving that job and venture into doing what she loves to do, but the courage to take that leap of faith was her battle. Without that leap of faith, she will have to continue navigating those two worlds.

We shall not only exist to fulfill the dreams and desires of others! Since we all have dreams and desires inside of us, we must do our best to realize those dreams.

Finding and living your dreams is like what most successful people say, "Do what you love, the money will follow; and, when you are

doing what you love, you never work a day in your life... and, you must follow your dreams!”

Lots of us find ourselves living the prescribed lives that the people around us expect of us. Such as the underlying notion of getting a job and remaining faithful to it. That was a great idea in the industrial time, and still in those times, some found what they loved doing and did it. Now, nothing is wrong with the notion of finding a job and remaining faithful to it. But it should be something that you can find some joy in doing. If you have a dream that is different from that, you are left in a battle to fight your way out of that to your dream, it is difficult to get off from something ‘stable’ to go on your own with a dream full of uncertainty, so in many cases, people forget their dreams. Each of us has an innate dream of what it is we are here to do in this world. So, when we

are doing something that we do not like, any work becomes laborious.

All work, of any sort, is honorable and must be respected. The world could not exist with just one occupation; we need every occupation possible to keep this world turning properly.

However, it is difficult to keep doing something that brings you no joy, it might be a job that pays the bills, but the mundane existence of such a life could end up being too challenging and unfulfilling.

It is particularly important that people figure out what it is they 'love doing' and work towards finding a way to do it. It may not be easy, but persistence will pay off, it always does. Also, when one finds what it is they love doing, do it in bit size pieces and keep at it, it will eventually work out.

As the old saying goes, “Life is short!” So, find what you love, or at least like to do, and start doing it!

June

Opening her eyes, Cathy looked at the clock making an awful alarming noise, It was informing her, it is five o'clock Monday morning. That annoying beep of the alarm was so maddening she looked at the ceiling in despair when something in her snapped from a conversation she had with a friend a month prior. She had reached a point in her life that she needed to make a change and stop living the lies she lived.

Quietly she decided that ten years were enough to invest in something that was not working, this slow death to my soul, she said, 'Must end today! The truth must be told today!' Dropping to her knees she prayed for courage to make it through this day and to act on the decision she had decided on.

In two months, she would celebrate her thirtieth birthday and felt terrified

approaching this age and felt the desperate need to live her truth.

Suffocating her life's calling to please her support circle along with the 'fear factor' in her head, she was exchanging her value for a paycheck, while existing in constant dissatisfaction, misery, and agony each morning that consumed her.

Cathy's only joy came on the weekends when she could create paintings that she loves; but as soon as she gets started and her creative juices starts flowing, she is bombarded with getting herself prepared to return to her day job, the problem. The secret way in which she managed what she loved doing almost came to be prohibited, she lived for the weekends and some evenings when she felt she was the happiest doing what she loved and has now reached the point where she wanted an abundance of that happiness. This

double life that she was living must stop - this is not the way she wants to exist in this world, she cannot live this way any longer, the truth must be told, and the consequences faced, today. Not tomorrow or some other day. Today!

A month prior, she heard a story about an eighty-year-old woman named Carolina which motivated her to take her life chances now. Carolina had been retired for about twenty and woke up one morning and decided she would do what she wanted to do for the rest of her life. You see, she wanted to be a florist and have an exquisite garden producing her own blooms. But her day job got in the way of her doing what she wanted to do. Since retiring she took the small back yard of her town home and started tilling the soil and had lots of success with her assortment of roses, hydrangeas, peonies, and lots of baby breath and much decorated greenery, to the point

that she was giving bouquets of flowers to different people, neighbors, friends and family. Requests were made by many of her associates to supply flowers for certain gatherings, this caused her an elated feeling supplying and fulfilling those orders. Cathy felt she was living a worthwhile life for the first time in her existence. She was tilling the soil, and enjoying her blooms, and taking and fulfilling orders.

One day, she decided she would live her dream of having a flower shop. She started searching for the perfect place to have a shop in a well-populated area. Faith would have it that she was able to find a place that was very suitable for a floral shop. In weeks she signed a lease and went about ordering all the refrigerated equipment while getting her shop ready. Caroline felt elated!

She picked an opening date and got the signs made up for advertising her opening day and for 'help wanted.' Carolina was responding to calls and had interviewed a number of people interested in the position of working in and managing her shop. She quickly narrowed the interviews down to two women who loved flowers and could also bring blooms from their gardens. The two selected women were seasoned in age and loved flowers, but they were not in Caroline's age group.

The date for the opening of the shop was closely approaching and the only way Carolina could move forward with this grand plan was to produce some initial funds for employees' salaries and supplies which she did not have. While making her plans she was tunnel visioned to seeing her floral shop up and running while she was supplying some of the

blooms from her garden; but she needed much more supplies to start and manage her shop, and for that, she needed funds.

Two weeks before the opening day, she went to her bank where all her retirement funds were kept and asked to speak to the financial officer who managed her funds. She said, 'I need to withdraw one third of the funds from my retirement savings,' her request produced a number of concerning questions from the financial officer. Carolina sat quietly while listening to all the reasons why it is not a good idea, at her age, that she should use this money now, and how it can affect her future.

Carolina responded, "My future is now! I am eighty years old, and I want my money on this very day! If I do not do what I like now, the money I have, then when? I did not come seeking advice as I have always done. I will

enjoy using this money now while I know what I am doing, verses waiting for it to be paid to a nursing home.” The debate continued for many minutes and before long, Carolina had the funds she requested in a check to which she went to a bank down the block and opened a business account and started her business.

This story about Carolina was told about seven years after Carolina started living on purpose and is vibrantly running her floral shop, and her backyard blooms. She has people to help in every area of her life and feels that makes her existence a bit easier. And she said if she did not go out on a limb and start her floral shop, she may have already been in a nursing home waiting to transition from this life; or already transitioned.

In her floral shop window, she has a sign that reads. *“We stop doing things when*

we get older, but we get older when we stop doing things.”

After Cathy heard this story, it resonated with her that she did not want to work until retirement and then become what she wants to be.

Cathy was a born artist with extraordinary skills, she was not doing what she really wanted, and as such, she was dwindling away while her soul begged to be released into the artistic field even with its uncertainties.

Twice a year, she attended art fairs around the country, and some in her state and community where she displayed her creations to which she has been fortunate to sell many pieces. She saved all her vacation time for possible travel to art shows.

Recently, one of the most sought-after art shows was in her neighborhood, and her not having any art to display or sell due to her busy work schedule, she was confounded but she attended nonetheless. Finding herself more tormented by the lie she lived which came alive at the show letting her know she could not continue life like this. She could no longer do her life's calling on the side of a day job.

All her close loved ones advised her to keep her artistic endeavors on the side and focus on a regular job to pay the bills and she obeyed; but at the end of the day, she had little energy to invest in her art. With many attempted pieces of art that she could not complete – her artistic dream was slowly dying along with her soul - until this bright, beautiful, Monday morning, she would not live the lie anymore.

It was 8:00AM., Cathy sat in her cubicle with tons to do, she read that most heart attacks happen on Mondays, and it was the most depressing day of the week - she decided that this will not be her story, hers must be different. Reviewing her work and the long day ahead she felt she would 'fall-over' dead if a decision is not made soon. She did not feel she could even wait for the end of the day to be free, she needed her release, her freedom now!

The invisible bars on her cubicle now feels like a prison cell and her creative ideas showed no respect for her nine to five commitment; her best ideas visited at the most inappropriate times; late at night when she needed to rest; early in the mornings while preparing for, or commuting to work; or the middle of the day when she was inundated with projects at work.

This job was paralyzing her life; she did not socialize much because she was always running home by an early hour to rest and prepare to come back to the job; she was unable to do anything significant on the weekends because she was tired on Saturdays; and Sundays she prepared for the work week ahead. And it was in-between the weekend schedule she tried to create her beautiful artwork. She was dismayed about her choice to earning an income; though her work was honorable, she found no joy doing it day in and out, there was no creativity. Art was work, creative work - and for that kind of work she was willing to work.

Cathy's prayer for courage was answered at 11:00AM., and she made her decision.

“This is the day! *Not only that this is the day, but this is the hour; and now is the moment!”*

Skillfully she performed the function of assembling the projects, assigned to her, to one side of the desk while looking in a file drawer that housed a few personal items she no longer wanted; she clutched a pen and note pad from her desk and, feeling the edges of the paper on the note pad while admiring the pen, she meticulously scribed,

Dear Sir/Madam: *I am moving my life in the direction of my dreams; working here is catapulting me in the wrong direction; nonetheless, thank you for the opportunity, and my very best wishes.*

Placing the note on the pile of projects, she picked up her purse and moved toward the elevators and was almost stricken by her

‘voice of fear’ asking, *“How could you do this? How will you get by financially, what will your loved ones say?”* Looking around she raised her voice and yelled, yet still under her breath...

“SHUT UP! ENOUGH OF YOU!”

Lightheartedly she stepped on the elevator and became one with it. Pushing the ‘L’ button and arriving in the lobby she walked into the bright, clear, beautiful sunlit day through the oversized glass doors. Out in the open, she inhaled the fresh air like one just released from long detention breathing contaminating air, while the sun caressed her face; exhaling she felt peaceful knowing the right decision was made.

Her thoughts traveled before her and went to her dining room which faced south and was accompanied by sunlight and warmth

all day long; a place she loved spending time thinking - a place that inspired her. She was making her way there and was tipsy from her breakout, thinking aloud she said,

“Today, I will not breathe the recycled office air with people sneezing, breathing laboriously and coughing all day; I will value the talent God has placed in me and break these invisible chains to accommodate my freedom. No longer will I allow my soul to be depleted, then go home exhausted and drained to flop into bed with the television as my companion watching shows I never see the beginning or the end. I cannot witness my life diluting to meager survival; I cannot expose my soul to this devastation any longer.”

Returning to the lobby after being caressed by the sunshine, she again became one with the elevator and pushed the button to the garage.

With a piercing cry at 11:45AM., she squealed, *“I am moving toward freedom and purpose. I am answering my call; seizing my freedom; and returning to my purpose. Life never announces a right time to follow your dreams, you must listen to your heart, and it will let you know when the time is right – my heart is ready to live loyally!”*

Absconding from the building that kept her restrained at 12:00PM., she drove a few blocks to an elegant cafe that she walked by during her lunch hours many days and ordered a cup of coffee; sitting and caressing this enjoyable beverage with her legs crossed, she felt accomplished, she felt peaceful, and a sense of calm swamped her thoughts causing her to wonder why it took her so long to come to this decision, but nothing before its time. This is the right time!

Separating herself from her empty coffee cup, she started her journey home. Returning home as a different person than the miserable one who left hours prior, she looked in the mirror and saw the woman she once knew and was excited to be re-acquainted with her. Attractive and petite with brown shoulder length curly hair, she stretched out on her bed hugging pillows and thinking, *“I am free and unchained; I can get back to the reason for my existence.”*

To the shower, she washed the job out of her hair and robbed herself in her favorite pajamas before pouring a glass of wine to rejoice and, to her hearts delight, slumbered on her sofa and kept vigil on a movie and a few television shows.

Drawing close to midnight she felt like a child on Christmas Eve, a feeling of joyful anticipation. The rest of the week was a

celebration of her freedom while she collected her thoughts before recapturing her life's passion.

One week later... In the room where the sun was never scarce, Cathy officially faced her truth. Her beautiful six-foot mahogany table, accompanied by a wall of bookcases and artifacts, was now her desk of creation. Taking a seat with her sketch pad and artist supplies her life's calling was answered.

She jumped into her art as one jumps into a swimming pool. She said, I will learn to swim as I enter the water and that is exactly what she did. Cathy painted as if her life depended on it and primarily it did. She felt that if she did not take that chance now, then when? And as life kept going, she felt it would become more difficult and complicated to make the choice.

During the months up to about a year, she had her moments of fear and wonderings of ‘what if’ but she put those fears into her paintings and got over those humps, one by one.

Five years later... Cathy could not be happier. There is purpose in her work and freedom in her life. She paints when her creative ideas are flowing and rests when she needs to. Art transforms her into places of beauty and that is where she fashions her creations.

There were rare moments that occurred when cash was short, and flashes of full-time employment prowled; but miraculously she was always on time with her responsibilities and did move to a smaller apartment with a similar set up to cut costs. She works more hours than she did at her previous job; but she works differently. She works when her

creativity is alive and that happens at any hour of the day or night. She was not tied to any hour to be productive.

Cathy has refused to serve a ‘work life’ sentence just to pay bills with a sure monthly paycheck. She recalls someone saying, *‘the paycheck that your employer pays you is a drug/token to keep you from realizing your full potential.’*

In the art world, she has cultivated new relationships and goes out frequently to socialize and promote her creations; and now she includes her old friends in her new life and enjoys their astoundingly respectfulness.

Satisfied with her choice to escape nine to five office work, she now enjoys each day and gazes jubilantly to the future.

When she served her office sentence, she despised her life and the lie she lived. Painting always brought her joy; and with the freedom to manage her schedule allows her the luxury to observe sunrises and sunsets which previously passed with her in involuntary dazes. With time to marinate her ideas, she creates impeccable pieces, and with her networking and love of what she does, she has been very happy and comfortably successful with her life's decision to live her dream and not let her life be wasted just pleasing the people who had expectations for her to work as they thought she should.

Since we are all working towards freedom; some toward retiring, some toward other dreams, why not grasp our freedom while we can, why wait for a future that may never come?

Capture your moment, take the opportunity when you feel it is right and go in the direction of your dreams. Everyone has a dream, and every dream is different. Understand your dream and go in its direction. And in the direction of your dream, you will most likely find your life's calling.

The End