

Leap of Faith: A Millennial's Story of Saying Goodbye to the 9-to-5

Journalist Dontaira Terrell's journey to call her own shots and take back her independence

Working a 9-to-5, climbing the corporate ladder and retiring after 30 years is a thing of the past among the millennial generation. On average, 60% of millennials are abandoning their day jobs to pursue personal endeavors. I'm included in this percentage. After four years of working in the corporate world, I knew it was time for a career change. Overstressed and overworked, I sat at my desk staring at the computer thinking, "Is this my life for the next 30 years?"

Alena McCord-Estes, co-Founder of GyrITalk, a mobile social network, recalls the biggest challenge she faced was fear of failure and a "fear of myself and my capabilities." Unfortunately, this is a common theme for many of us.

The thought of leaving behind job security and financial stability to pursue my entrepreneurial undertakings frightened me. Once I defined my own rules of success, which didn't include climbing the corporate ladder, it was time to make the transition.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics recently identified an upward trend of self-employment, with more than 50% of millennials identifying themselves as serial entrepreneurs. However, achieving work-life balance and doing it on your own terms is no easy task.

Many millennials are constantly redefining the concept of success and are willing to take risks by any means necessary, including living with family. After abandoning corporate America, I relocated to live with my sister and her husband. Realizing I needed to take a step back to move forward in my quest for entrepreneurial success has proven to be my best decision yet.

The number of young adults living with their parents has steadily increased reaching 36%. Unlike previous generations, we're unconventional and have been described as ambitious, tech savvy and innovative. Why not move back home to save some coins in order to get that small business off the ground?

Here are five tips that helped me in taking the leap, to make my career goals a reality instead of a fearful dream:

Exit Strategy: Developing an exit strategy is beneficial when planning to leave your day job. It allows you time to save money and determine a realistic timeline.

Research: Once I began my freelance career, not completing extensive research was my biggest mistake. When speaking with editors it was clear I hadn't done my homework leaving me without assignments, without pay and without responses from editors. Understand your audience, know your brand and create a business plan.

Triple R's (Resourceful, Relentless, Resilient):

- Making money isn't going to come instantly or easily. Budgeting is key.
- You're going to hear "No" a lot but its ok! Don't take it personal.
- Although challenging, rejection is part of the game; just keep pushing. Continue to fine tune your product.

Patience: Known as a generation consumed with instant gratification, understand it takes time to develop and cultivate your brand.

Networking: In order to stay connected attend events and establish meaningful relationships.