

# KILROY CAFÉ

Philosophy for the Modern Age

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# WORK SUCKS!

By GLENN CAMPBELL

After years of scientific study, I have determined that work sucks.

I caution, however, against the over-interpretation of my findings. Most people need to work for both financial and psychological reasons, and I am not suggesting that everyone withdraw from it immediately. If you have to work to survive and to assure the health of your loved ones, by all means do it.

My only conclusion is that having control of your own time is better than ceding control to someone else. If you have the option of pursuing your own goals instead of someone else's, you should probably do it.

For teens in the audience who may be unfamiliar with the concept, “work” (aka “a job”) is trading your time, skills and attention to someone else in exchange for money. Money, in turn, is used to buy things you need, like food, shelter and internet access. It's hard to imagine, but without money (yours or someone else's) you couldn't go online, and if you didn't eat, your body would go offline permanently!

Most of us have to work to make money to live, but that's not the only function work serves. It also gives people something to do. It lends them direction when they otherwise might not have any.

The fact is, when most people have time to themselves to use however they wish they invariably waste it on meaningless activities. They'll text each other all day, hang out at the mall, spend hours on YouTube, and engage in various repetitive and addictive

behaviors. Work and the economic pressure behind it at least force them out of the house to *do something*.

When you first get involved in work, it can be seductive. You become part of a “team” engaged in a common task, and the fact that you have to show up at a certain time and obey certain rules helps give structure to your life. The money you earn can also be appealing. With it, you can buy some of the things you see on TV that everyone else already has.

But work can also be a drag after a while. It becomes especially intrusive when you begin to discover more important things to do with your time. I can't say what these things might be, but let's suppose there was a social cause you believed in that needed your attention. Work would probably prevent you from helping as much as you wanted.

If your work does nothing more for society that cramming unhealthy food down its throat, doing it may begin to depress you. The money you make doesn't compensate for the icky feeling inside when you realize you're not doing right for other people and going nowhere with your own life. The money, too, is never enough. Once you start spending it, you realize how inadequate it is. If you play this work game for long, it eventually feels like prison.

Indeed, for the vast majority of the world's population, work is little more than slavery. They don't call it “slavery” these days because technically people are free to leave their jobs, but if they do, they and their families will starve.

Once you have been in the workforce for a while, you will probably start

striving for a better job that gives you more of the things you want and less of the things you don't want. But work is work—serving someone else's interests—and there will always be a limit to the satisfaction you can get from it.

Even “good” careers like doctor or social worker can get you down after a while. Turns out, almost every worker is a slave, if not to an economic system then to a governmental one where they are serving a bureaucracy more than the people they really want to help.

Ultimately, you may find that you have better uses for your time than any employer does and that your own intelligence knows the best way to serve others. That's when you realize how much work really sucks. It's a drain, and it should be avoided whenever possible. When you need to do it, you'll do it, but you don't want to do any more of it than necessary.

You can avoid work through a combination of extreme frugality and finding innovative ways to make money that involve relatively few compromises. Frugality may be painful, but not as much as working long hours at a job you don't like for things you don't need. Unfortunately, I can't tell you the moneymaking ideas. They are unique to your time, place and skills, and you have to find them on your own.

The ultimate goal is to spend more time doing meaningful things and less time doing non-meaningful ones. That, over time, is where your life has to lead.

—G.C.

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