

You Have To Quit Your Job Now

by James Altucher

This was going to end badly.

My boss screamed at me in front of my colleagues. I had done something wrong of course. I had sent a product to the client without debugging it thoroughly. It was my fault. But I don't like being yelled at.

And fortunately I was sitting on a job offer that I decided to take that moment. So the next day I said the magic words, "I quit".

And then a few years after that, I quit again, and never went back to work in the corporate world.

And now it's too late. Now the course of history has finally written its next chapter. There's no more bullshit. I'm going to tell you why you have to quit your job. Why you need to get the ideas moving. Why you need to build a foundation for your life or soon you will have no roof.

Chapter 1: The Middle Class is Dead

A few weeks ago I visited a friend of mine who manages a trillion dollars. No joke. A trillion. If I told you the name of the family he worked for you would say, "they have a trillion? Really?" But that's what happens when ten million dollars compounds at 2% over 200 years.

He said, "look out the windows". We looked out at all the office buildings around us. "What do you see?" he said. "I don't know." "They're empty! All the cubicles are empty. The middle class is being hollowed out." And I took a closer look. Entire floors were dark. Or there were floors with one or two cubicles but the rest empty. "It's all outsourced or technology has taken over for the paper shufflers," he said.

"Not all the news is bad," he said. "More people entered the upper class than ever last year." But, he said, more people are temp staffers than ever.

And that's the new paradigm. The middle class has died. The American Dream never really existed. It was a marketing scam.

And it was. The biggest provider of mortgages for the past 50 years, Fannie Mae, had as their slogan, "We make the American Dream come true." It was just a marketing slogan all along. How many times have I cried because of a marketing slogan. And then they ruined it.

Chapter 2: You've Been Replaced

Technology, outsourcing, a growing temp staffing industry, productivity efficiencies, have all replaced the middle class.

The working class. Most jobs that existed 20 years ago aren't needed now. Maybe they never were needed. The entire first decade of this century was spent with CEOs in their Park Avenue clubs crying through their cigars, "how are we going to fire all this dead weight?". 2008 finally gave them the chance. "It was the economy!" they said. The country has been out of a recession since 2009. Four years now. But the jobs have not come back. I asked many of these CEOs: did you just use that as an excuse to fire people, and they would wink and say, "let's just leave it at that."

I'm on the board of directors of a temp staffing company with one billion dollars in revenues. I can see it happening across every sector of the economy. Everyone is getting fired. Everyone is toilet paper now.

Flush.

Chapter 3: Corporations Don't Like You

The executive editor of a major news publication took me out to lunch to get advice on how to expand their website traffic. But before I could talk he started complaining to me: "our top writers keep putting their twitter names in their posts and then when they get more followers they start asking for raises."

"What's the problem?" I said. "Don't you want writers that are popular and well-respected?"

When I say a "major news publication" I am talking MAJOR.

He said, "no, we want to be about the news. We don't want anyone to be an individual star."

In other words, his main job was to destroy the career aspirations of his most talented people, the people who swore their loyalty to him, the people who worked 90 hours a week for him. If they only worked 30 hours a week and were slightly more mediocre he would've been happy. But he doesn't like you. He wants to you stay in the hole and he will throw you a meal every once in awhile in exchange for your excrement. If anyone is a reporter out there and wants to message me privately I will tell you who it was. But basically, it's all of your bosses. Every single one of them.

Chapter 4: Money is Not Happiness

A common question during my Twitter Q&A (that I give every Thursday from 330-430 PM EST), asked at least once a week, is "should I take the job I like or should I take the job that pays more money".

Leaving aside the question of "should I take a job at all", let's talk about money for a second.

First, the science: studies show that an increase in salary only offers marginal to zero increase in "happiness" above a certain level. Why is this? Because the basic fact: people spend what they make. If your salary increases \$5,000 you spend an extra \$2000 on features for your car, you have an affair, you buy a new computer, a better couch, a bigger TV, and then you ask, "where did all the money go?" Even though you needed none of the above now you need one more thing: another increase in your salary, so back to the corporate casino for one more try at the salary roulette wheel. I have never once seen anyone save the increase in their salary.

In other words, don't stay at the job for safe salary increases over time. That will never get you where you want – freedom from financial worry. Only free time, imagination, creativity, and an ability to disappear will help you deliver value that nobody ever delivered before in the history of mankind.

Chapter 5: Who Can Ruin You?

Count right now how many people can make a major decision that can ruin your life.

I don't like it when one person can make or break me. A boss. A publisher. A TV producer. A buyer of my company. At any one point I've had to kiss ass to all of the above. I hate it. I will never do it again.

The way to avoid this is to diversify the things you are working on so no one person or customer or boss or client can make a decision that could make you rich or destroy you or fulfill your life's dreams or crush them. I understand it can't happen in a day. Start planning now how to create your own destiny instead of allowing people who don't like you to control your destiny. When you do this count, make sure the number comes to over 20. Then when you spin the wheel the odds are on your side that a winning number comes up.

Chapter 6: Is your job satisfying your needs?

I will define "needs" the way I always do, via the four legs of what I call "the daily practice". Are your physical needs, your emotional needs, your mental needs, and your spiritual needs being satisfied?

The only time I've had a job that did was when I had to do little work so that I had time on the side to either write, or start a business, or have fun, or spend time with friends. The times when I haven't is when I was working too hard, dealing with people I didn't like, getting my creativity crushed over and over, and so on. When you are in those situations you need to plot out your exit strategy.

Your hands are not made to type out memos. Or put paper through fax machines. Or hold a phone up while you talk to people you dislike. 100 years from now your hands will rot like dust in your grave. You have to make wonderful use of those hands now. Kiss your hands so they can make magic.

One can argue, "not everyone is entitled to have all of those needs satisfied at a job." That's true. But since we already know that the salary of a job won't make you happy, you can easily modify lifestyle and work to at least satisfy more of your needs. And the more these needs are satisfied the more you will create the conditions for true abundance to come into your life.

Your life is a house. Abundance is the roof. But the foundation and the plumbing need to be in there first or the roof will fall down, the house will be unlivable. You create the foundation by following the Daily Practice. I say this not because I am selling anything but because it worked for me every time my roof caved in. My house has been bombed, my home has been cold and blistering winds gave me frost bite, but I managed to rebuild. This is how I did it.

Chapter 7: Your Retirement Plan is For Shit

I don't care how much you set aside for your 401k. It's over. The whole myth of savings is gone. Inflation will carve out the bulk of your 401k. And in order to cash in on that retirement plan you have to live for a really long time doing stuff you don't like to do. And then suddenly you're 80 and you're living a reduced lifestyle in a cave and can barely keep warm at night.

The only retirement plan is to Choose Yourself. To start a business or a platform or a lifestyle where you can put big chunks of money away. Some people can say, "well, I'm just not an entrepreneur."

This is not true. Everyone is an entrepreneur. The only skills you need to be an entrepreneur: an ability to fail, an ability to have ideas, to sell those ideas, to execute on those ideas, and to be persistent so even as you fail you learn and move onto the next adventure. Or be an entrepreneur at work. An "entre-ployee". Take control of who you report to, what you do, what you create. Or start a business on the side. Deliver some value, any value, to anybody, to somebody, and watch that value compound into a carer.

What is your other choice? To stay at a job where the boss is trying to keep you down, will eventually replace you, will pay you only enough for you to survive, will rotate between compliments and insults so you stay like a fish caught on the bait as he reels you in. Is that your best other choice? You and I have the same 24 hours each day. Is that how you will spend yours?

Chapter 8: Excuses

"I'm too old". "I'm not creative." "I need the insurance." "I have to raise my kids." I was at a party once. A stunningly beautiful woman came up to me and said, "James, how are you!?"

What? Who are you?

I said, "hey! I'm doing well." But I had no idea who I was talking to. Why would this woman be talking to me? I was too ugly. It took me a few minutes of fake conversation to figure out who she was.

It turns out she was the frumpish-looking woman who had been fired six months earlier from the job we were at. She had cried as she packed up her cubicle when she was fired. She was out of shape, she looked about 30 years older than she was, and now her life was going to go from better to worse. Until...she realized that she was out of the

zoo. In the George Lucas movie, THX-1138 (the name of the main character was “THX-1138”) everyone’s choices are removed and they all live underground because above ground is “radioactive”. Finally THX decides better to die above ground than suffer forever underground where he wasn’t allowed to love. He wasn’t free.

He makes his way above ground, evading all the guards and police. And when he gets there, it’s sunny, everyone above ground is beautiful, and they are waiting for him with open arms and kisses. The excuse “but it’s radioactive out there!” was just there to keep him down.

“This is easy for you to say,” people say to me. “Some of us HAVE to do this!” The now-beautiful woman had to do it also. “What are you doing now?” I asked her. “Oh, you know,” she said. “Consulting.” But some people say, “I can’t just go out there and consult. What does that even mean?”

And to that I answer, “Ok, I agree with you.” Who am I to argue? If someone insists they need to be in prison even though the door is unlocked then I am not going to argue. They are free to stay in prison.

Chapter 9: It's ok to take baby steps.

“I can’t just quit!” people say. “I have bills to pay”. I get it. Nobody is saying quit today. Before a human being runs a marathon they learn to crawl, then take baby steps, then walk, then run. Then exercise every day and stay healthy. Then run a marathon. Heck, what am I even talking about? I can’t run more than two miles without collapsing in agony. I am a wimp.

Make the list right now. Every dream. I want to be a bestselling author. I want to reduce my material needs. I want to have freedom from many of the worries that I have succumbed to all my life. I want to be healthy. I want to help all of the people around me or the people who come into my life. I want everything I do to be a source of help to people. I want to only be around people I love, people who love me. I want to have time for myself.

These are not goals. These are themes. Every day, what do I need to do to practice those themes? It starts the moment I wake up: “who can I help today?” I ask the darkness when I open my eyes. “Who would you have me help today?” I’m a secret agent and I’m waiting for my mission. Ready to receive. This is how you take baby steps. This is how eventually you run towards freedom.

Chapter 10: Abundance will never come from your job

Only stepping out of the prison imposed on you from your factory will allow you to achieve abundance. You can't see it now. It's hard to see the gardens when you are locked in jail. Abundance only comes when you are moving along your themes. When you are truly enhancing the lives of the people around you.

When every day you wake up with that motive of enhancement. Enhance your family, your friends, your colleagues, your clients, potential customers, readers, people who you don't even know yet but you would like to know. Become a beacon of enhancement and then when the night is gray, all of the boats will move towards you, bringing their bountiful riches.

Summary

Don't believe me. Stay with a boss that hates you. A job that is keeping you locked on a chain around your neck, tantalizing you with incremental increases in pay and job title. Stay in a culture that is quietly replacing the entire middle class. This is not anyone's fault. This is the tectonic plates of economics destroying an entire suburban culture that has lasted for almost 100 years.

Until you choose yourself for success, and all that choice entails, you will be locked into the prison. You will stare into your lover's eyes looking for a sign that he or she loves you back. But slowly the lights will fade, the warmth of another body will grow cold, and you will go to sleep dreamless in the dark once again.