



Do Something YOU Love

Design Your Ideal Life

Becky Lynn Smith



Failing is not the end of the world.

A lot of great people have failed. In the grand scheme of things, failing is imminently better than dealing with the regret of never trying something in the first place. And, apparently we have an entire country of people who are someday going to regret not trying new things and eventually finding the ONE THING they are here to do.

NO less an authority than The Gallup Organization says so. Here are their stunning numbers:

Only one in five people, by their own admission get to do what they do best every day.

One in Five.

By their own admission.

That means the problem is probably even worse than that.

Honestly, who REALLY wants to admit they are doing something every day they are not a good fit for? I sure didn't want to. You probably won't admit it to anyone... except maybe to yourself. Perhaps you even feel guilty because something nags at you... you know it's not quite right. You are unhappy and you can't put your finger on why, exactly.

Don Clifton, a positive psychology pioneer and inventor of the Strengths Finder survey used to say that "everybody does ONE THING better than ten thousand other people. That's the good news. The bad news? Most people have no idea what that ONE THING is."

Here is another startling Gallup statistic:

70% of people in the workplace in the United States are either not engaged, or are actively disengaged. This results in \$450-\$550 billion dollars annually in lost profitability, growth, productivity, customer satisfaction, and employee retention.

Coincidence? I think not.

I believe the fact that 80% of people are NOT doing the ONE thing that they are meant to do is directly correlated with the 70% of people who are not engaged.

By Gallup's definition of "Not Engaged" and "Actively Disengaged", these unhappy people are doing the bare minimum to get by at work. They show up to collect a paycheck, but are disengaged, disenfranchised, not really present... and in some cases actively undermining the work of their engaged coworkers. And, this perfect storm is costing us billions of dollars in lost productivity. There are probably other costs as well.

In spite of the millions of dollars now being spent by companies on improving engagement, and the hoards of consultants who have "the answer," whether that is better employee selection or better managers, the reality is that none of those are really making a dent in the problem.

There has to be a better way. I believe there is a better way.

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Start at the Start: Change the Ways Schools Work

I believe the search to find your ONE thing needs to start much earlier in life. By the time we reach high school or college we have already been conditioned by the education system to go along with the crowd. The public education system was designed for compliance and to train people to work in factories. It is, for the most part, not equipped in its current state to help kids find what they are very good at, celebrate that, and appreciate the differences and uniqueness of every person. Not possible with 30 or more inmates in a room and only one warden. Something needs to change here at the early stage of our development.

Parents also need to pay close attention to their kids and watch for those glimmers of greatness, fast learning, fluidity, etc. Those moments are there and they will tell us a lot about what our kids are drawn to and what they will be world class at someday.

Change the Way We Do Career Planning

We also have to change the paradigm around career planning. I believe we need to help people design a plan for their lives that includes a career as only one component. A balanced life includes so much more than a career. Through a process of exploration at an early age, we can help people discover their ONE thing and pursue it. Everyone is unique—and their ONE thing and their life are also uniquely theirs.

But, here is what is happening now for the eighty percent: We choose a job or career, often based on what someone else “thinks” is good for us. Rarely do we actually have a plan for our lives that includes doing the ONE thing we are meant to do. Honestly, I think that if we once knew what our one ONE thing was, we were conditioned by society to ignore it or forget it entirely.

I was one of those people for a long time. For many years I was what I call a settler. Settlers know what they are good at and what will make them happy, but they settle for less than happiness because they believe they cannot make a living doing what they love, or they are afraid of making a change.

My 86 year-old Dad recently confided in me how much he enjoyed reading my latest book, *Designing Your Ideal Life*, and how much he identified with my story. What I did not know about my Dad is that he has lived with regret for years. He told me that he took a job at an early age as a meat cutter because it paid well—it paid better than working on the farm. He eventually moved up to meat market manager because it paid more. He went to work every day and collected a paycheck to feed his family. But his heart was always somewhere else. He confided in me that he had hated his job every day. Now he is 86 years old and he lives with the pangs of regret. He wonders what his life could have been.

You see, my Dad is a cowboy and one of the most talented horsemen I have ever met. He has a way with a horse unlike anyone I know. Yet, he sacrificed this talent—to conform to society's definition of how he should live—and to pay the bills. His dream job would have been to make his living riding a horse—possibly working on a ranch. But he never did it. Now, at the age of 86 he lives with this regret. My Dad still has horses and rides when he can, but he lives with the regret of sacrificing his life working at a job he hated. He wonders what his life might have been like to do work every day that he loved. It may truly be too late for him, but is it too late for you?

The tragedy in my Dad's case is that he knew what his ONE thing was, and did not pursue it. That puts him in the minority of people, according to Don Clifton, who actually KNOW what they should be doing. I find it very sad to think that Dad spent all of those years unhappy, settling for less, and wishing to do something else, but too stuck in a rut or afraid to do it. Unfortunately we have a huge throng of people who are doing the same thing.

And, then there are the stumped—people who may not really know what they are good at or what will make them happy. These people know they are unhappy, but they need help discovering what they are good at or would love to do to really make them happy. These people are unhappy in their current role and wish for something else, but they are not sure what that something else is.

Does this story sound like you? Everyone told my client she should become an accountant. Her father and her brothers were accountants. Following the advice of her family, she pursued a college degree in accounting with the intention of becoming a CPA. The problem revealed itself late in her studies, when she took an internship and discovered she did not really like the work performed by accountants. She despised doing taxes and keeping the books for other people. It was too late to change degree majors, so she graduated with a degree in accounting. She took a job working as an accountant, but was miserable. She was happy to have a job,

but she did not love it, and she felt trapped. Worse, she felt as if she had obtained a degree for nothing. All of that time and money were wasted to obtain a job she hated. Her self-esteem suffered. With a fulltime job, she had little time or motivation to explore other options. She felt stuck and had no idea what her ONE THING was or even how to figure it out.

To escape this scenario, I helped my client through the process of self-discovery outlined in *Designing Your Ideal Life*. Through this process, she rediscovered her love for cooking. Armed with this knowledge, she enrolled in a culinary school, and is now pursuing a new career as a pastry chef.

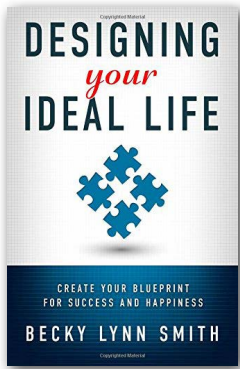
“Through a process of exploration at an early age, we can help people discover their ONE thing and pursue it. Everyone is unique—and their ONE thing and their life are also uniquely theirs.”

So, now what? While all the changes are being made, what can you do to find the ONE THING you were made to do, and move into the twenty percent who get to do what they do best every day? Here are five steps you can take today:

1. **Decide you really deserve to be happy.** You must first decide your happiness is worth the time and effort to explore your options. You deserve to make the choices that fit YOU best.
2. **Get crystal clear on what you really want and why.** Honestly evaluate and envision what is important to you in the major areas of your life. I call these your 8 pillars. They include your health, money, relationships, service, time, gratitude, spirituality, and career. Know what you require and what you won't compromise while designing your ideal life.
3. **Know your starting point.** Gain a firm knowledge of your wiring so that you will know if the career or job you are contemplating is a good fit for you. Recommended assessments include the DISC and Clifton's Strengths Finder.

4. **Create an actionable plan.** Your action plan is the bridge between your starting point and your desired future. Write down the high-level steps you need to take, and then break them down into manageable actions. Exploring your career options may include taking self-assessments, volunteering, working in internships, or talking to someone who has the career you are contemplating.
5. **Take focused action.** The real secret to landing the job that fits you is to know yourself and to take focused action. If you struggle with accountability, hire a life coach or find an accountability partner to help you. You alone are responsible for taking action to design your ideal life. *Designing Your Ideal Life* provides a guide to lead you through the critical self-discovery process to create a blueprint for your success and happiness. 📖

Info



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR | Author and Speaker Becky Lynn Smith found her calling, and now she is on a mission to help you find yours. After working as an IT executive and leader for several world-class organizations including Exxon, Amoco, AIM, and Gulf States Toyota, she discovered what success really meant for her. In her new book, *Designing Your Ideal Life*, Becky shares what she has learned about how to arrive at the place you were always meant to be and have the life you were meant to live. Becky speaks to groups and offers additional tools and resources to help.

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