



ENTREPRENEURS

Why Personal Goals and Hobbies Are Essential For A Fulfilling Career

They give you perspective and make you better at your job.

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Advancement, promotions and raises are often viewed as the ultimate success in our society. It's not uncommon to meet people who seemingly have no outside interests because they're just too focused on their job. The problem is, for the vast majority of people, the work they do on a daily basis isn't terribly enjoyable. And by focusing solely on their job, they miss out on a crucial element of a fulfilling life and career—personal goals.

When I say “personal goals” I don’t mean, “I’m going to double my sales quota this quarter.” I’m talking about goals that have nothing to do with work. It could be as simple as reading more. Or it could be ambitious, like learning a new language. It's the type of goal that enriches your life, helps you develop new skills and gives you a sense of purpose outside your job.

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I’ve been in leadership positions for over a decade now, and although I take my work seriously, I don’t let it run my life. I’ve played the French horn since high school, and I continue to practice it, with an eye on getting back into playing for an orchestra. I’ve also picked up photography, for no other reason than my own personal interest. It’s highly unlikely I’ll be using either of those hobbies in my day-to-day role as the CEO of a logistics company.

In today’s workaholic culture, many people worry personal goals are a waste of time — after all, a cool photograph isn’t going to get you that promotion. But the reality isn’t so black and white. Your personal goals don’t exist in a vacuum. They have the potential to lead you towards a happier, more fulfilling career and lifestyle.

Personal goals and projects give you a much-needed perspective

Some people think their work and personal lives exist in different silos. To do better at work and advance their career, they believe they have to sharpen their focus on their job and reduce the time they spend on personal activities.

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The truth is, learning an instrument, reading history, planting a garden or working on your novel *will* help you at work. Studies suggest that people with creative hobbies perform better, [recover faster](#) from their work, and are less susceptible [to burnout](#).

When you invest time in your personal goals, you see the fruits of your labor pay off. That happiness often carries over into your work. And a long, difficult day at work is much easier to handle if you feel like you're making progress in other areas of your life.

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On the other hand, if you spend all your time and energy on work, you may find you have nothing in your life to fall back on if you're laid off or a venture doesn't work out. This is especially significant for entrepreneurs, who can easily become so caught up in their business that it takes over their life. If your business fails, you're going to want another activity to give you the perspective and purpose to help you through a rough patch.

Pursuing various hobbies and interests is what makes you a well-rounded person. And most importantly, your pursuits can provide a guiding light when

nothing else seems to be going right.

They can help keep you motivated both at work and at home

Your personal life and your work life aren't completely separate. Just about everyone can set goals that are personal in nature but that also have an application in their career. For example, one of my "combination goals" is re-learning to code. I have some previous experience with it, but it's been too long for me to truthfully say I'm well-versed.

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It's possible that coding will help with some of the work I do at my company, but I also have personal reasons for learning to code. One of my long-term goals is to eventually have my own self-sustaining farm, and there's a wealth of software out there I can use to build and manage automated functions like planting and irrigation. By learning to code again, I'm taking a step towards that long-term personal goal while also giving myself a boost in my current work.

I also am working on a private pilot license, primarily for the enjoyment of it, however I'm sure the benefits of improved situational awareness and better multitasking will pay off in some way. I chose to do it because it's been a lifelong goal of mine, not because I expect to fly for business reasons.

Combination goals that involve aspects of both your personal and professional development are often the best way to keep learning because they provide you with twice the motivation and potential for achievement.

You're never "wasting time" by pushing yourself to learn something new. Setting personal goals is often underrated by those who don't understand their power. But if you begin to pursue some of your own, I guarantee it will change the way you see your career and your personal development.

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