

ASK THE CAREER COACH: HOW DO I CHOOSE THE RIGHT JOB?

How do you choose between a quality of life opportunity and one with more pay?

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Dear Career Coach Lisa,

I have two offers to choose from. Here is the situation—one offer is for a high level demanding job with long hours and great pay; the other one is a four-day work week with limited scope and a lot less pay. I am intrigued with the more demanding position, yet I am nervous about returning to work after being unemployed for 13 months. My quality of life with my family during this 13 month period has been great—attending my kids' shows at school, sporting events, etc. I wrestle with taking the lesser job just to keep the family time yet I am concerned that my spouse's job may be in jeopardy. Do I go for the one that will carry us if my spouse loses their job or go with the quality of life choice? How do I choose?

A.T., Short Hills

First, congratulations for receiving two offers. This speaks to your ability to connect and market yourself. As to how to decide which one to take—this is a personal choice. You and your spouse should discuss the pros and cons of each job.

Do you have a "gut" reaction to these offers? A "gut" reaction is what you initially thought and felt as the recruiter extended the offer. I typically suggest to my clients that they keep a "gut" reaction journal including their thoughts when first contacted for the opportunity, when preparing for the interview and after the interview. Note how you felt in the environment you would be working in, the colleagues and vendors you would be in contact with and your family's reactions to the change it may bring to their lives. Keep in mind that if you are asking a teenager to relocate, you may not receive a favorable response. Consider each person's perspective when taking in their feedback. Sometimes the best questions come from the most innocent minds.

When any position is offered, you want to consider what it offers you now and in the future—how does it fit into your short- and long-term career and life plans? Does it offer you entry into a new industry or function? Does it offer you access to subject matter experts? Does it build your network for future growth? Can you establish yourself and eventually design the workload to evolve the job into what you want? Does it fit into your financial plans?

Keep in mind people often make the difference on how a job plays out. A rigid four-day per week position may offer less balance than the traditional demanding job in a culture that supports the whole person—work-life balance. Evaluate these offers based on the people you will be working with and the culture of the organizations.

"Ask the Career Coach" is a column dedicated to those who may be in transition or wrestling with a career dilemma by providing a forum for advice. We welcome your questions. Please send them to CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com.

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