

The gap between what I want and what I can

By Eti Katabi

Today our lives are based on expectations. It is about what the environment expects from us and what we expect from ourselves. And our expectations of ourselves are based on what the environment expects from us. It starts with our parents' expectations and continues with our friends' expectations and expands to the environment's expectations. We learn to understand what is perceived as success and we want to be part of those people who are perceived as successful.

Being part of this successful community means being accepted, being connected to power, being an influence on others and being rich.

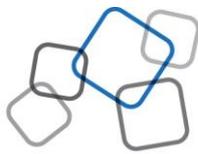
We want to be part of this community so much that we forget about ourselves – who we are and what really suits us, what we like and what we hate, what is right for us and what is wrong for us. We start with our career when are still young and we do not know enough about ourselves; about our desires; about our preferences; and about our strengths and weaknesses. Over the years we little by little 'meet' ourselves and learn about our needs. This is the time to stop and learn more about our aspirations.

We can find ourselves suffering without knowing why. We can be very successful but very miserable - yes, the two words can go together - although it may sound strange and confusing - being successful and miserable at the same time.

One of the common causes of this strange situation is the gap between "what I am doing and what is the right thing for me to do, based on my needs and my strengths, my values, my feelings, and what I really want. Many people discover these aspects about themselves late in their careers. It takes time to know about yourself and to realise what is good for you. This discovery can be disappointing; you can not disappoint the people closest to you. It is not easy to comprehend the gap and it is not easy to deal with this issue. In fact, it could be easier to ignore these feelings.

From my experiences, ignoring our feelings is not the right way to deal with the gap and not for the long term.

When everything is ok around you, and you are successful and everybody appreciates you, but you are feeling miserable and you can understand why, the best way to deal with the strong feelings is first not to reject them. Accept them and take time and to understand more about yourself. Ask yourself deep



questions and give yourself deep answers. Consider doing the same test to check your strengths, your other skills and other options. At the end of the process, you will probably be able to identify the gap between what you are doing and what the right thing is for you to do.

Discovering ourselves is the most important thing in our life, and we should know this - and not allow ourselves to escape from knowing about it.

Most of the time we blame our environment, especially our workplace for our bad feelings. The excuses are usually, "I work hard and I don't have room for my own private life" or "I did not get the promotion I wanted" or "I'm not paid enough for my invested time" or "I feel exploited", etc. etc.

We can stay in this situation and all of our energy will be wasted on complaints and misery.

But if we want to do something with these feelings, we must look into ourselves and examine our needs and our desires. Our awareness of knowing if we're in the right place and the right position for us is important. It can be the answer to our suffering and be more productive than complaining.

In the end, it is up to us, and it is all about us.
Don't forget yourselves.

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