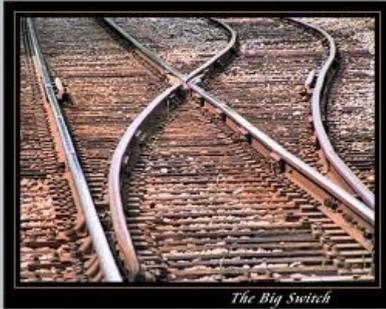


ASSESS YOUR VALUES, SWITCH CAREER TRACKS



We pump up young adults with all sorts of slogans that, if held in earnest, would shame us: "Believe in your dreams," "Be whatever you want," "You are your own biggest enemy," and so on. Yet only 27 percent of college grads work a career related to their major. Further, as we grow older, get our hearts broken a few times, settle down, hatch a family, watch the children grow up, naturally our values mature as well, and we will gladly put childish things behind us. What this means for your career is that you might reflect on what keeps you on this particular career path. Sheer propulsion? Maybe now money doesn't matter so much. What do six figures matter? What does luxury matter? You could make peanuts, nowadays, so long as your work gave you a sense of importance. Or perhaps it's the other way around. You are sick of doing charity work and want to make some big bucks and really enjoy life. Those are personal values, and you can't simply will them into and out of existence. You can't trick yourself into loving your job when you no longer hold the flame. This is clear enough to retirees who rejoin the work force. At this point, work means something entirely different than when they were running the rat race. They might choose a job simply to give their days interest. Why wait till retirement? Why wait for a midlife crisis or to find religion, or whatever else? Why not simply assess what you are doing, now, in your career track, and consider whether something different, either just a little bit, or even radically so, could better suit your mature values. Sheer habit and routine might feel comfortable, but slowly you feel less and less fulfilled. The symptoms come up in other areas, such as marital strain or struggles with the children. Yet having that sense of importance and purpose underlies so many other things that your ultimate malady may ultimately be that you are striving in a direction you no longer believe in. To solve such matters does not require a retreat to Tibet or fasting for forty days, or anything so dramatic. Take time each day, about twenty minutes upon waking up, simply to take some deep breaths, and to reflect on your goals, your purpose, your day. After about a week or two of this, matters will become clearer, and you will be able to **look upon your career as part of a bigger picture** rather than a day to day struggle. Having an eye on the big picture means you see possibilities invisible to the day-to-day. And the clarity of mind is also rewarding in itself.