

FOLLOW YOUR BLISS -- OR, THE REAL REASON DR. KUTNER KILLED HIMSELF



Someone once asked me a question that really bothered me. Basically, I was asked if whatever I had done that particular day was worth the cost of an entire day of my life. Would I trade a day of my life on Earth for whatever experiences I had or accomplishments I made that day? Because of course, that is what we do every day. Whatever you did yesterday, you spent a day of your life doing it. Since we're all going to die one day, each 24 hours we're alive has a lot of value. But are we spending it well? If you have a job that isn't fulfilling and meaningful, then probably not. We can't all be so lucky as to work as astronauts, emergency room surgeons, rock stars or the Prince of Wales. But anyone can have a job that is worth spending your precious life on, if you really want it. I was reminded of all this today. On this week's episode of *House MD*, one of the title character's staff doctors, Dr. Lawrence Kutner, killed himself. If you haven't watched the episode yet, that was a spoiler -- so don't read it. Anyway, the characters spent the episode trying to make sense of his death, which no one had foreseen. Those of us watching the show tried to figure it out too. But today we learn that actor Kal Penn, who portrayed Dr. Kutner for two seasons, voluntarily left one of the highest rated programs on television. Why would an actor, who has starred in a handful of popular movies and whose career is just now breaking through to stardom, quit the show that was making his career as an actor? Because the 31-year-old Indian-American from New Jersey has accepted a position as the associate director of the White House's Office of Public Liaison and Intergovernmental Affairs. No, really. Not on some TV show -- it's the *real* White House. A man who already has what many would consider a dream career is giving it up, at least temporarily, to pursue something he finds more meaningful and important. Good for him. If this man can leave a great career for a greater one, why can't you give up the job you hate for something that might make you happy? Of course, Kal Penn has money. He can afford to make major changes to his life. You may feel you don't have the financial freedom to switch careers. But you'll never know what opportunities may be available to you until you start looking. A great new career track isn't going to come looking for you -- you have to go out and find it.