

Detaching My Worth From My Resume

By: Saiarchana Darira

What determines a person's worth?

Is it their resume? Or could it be whether or not they are in a relationship? Perhaps it is the amount of likes and comments one gets on their social media post? Or could it be how other people treat them?

I wondered this as a student navigating college. During the past two years of my college experience, I found myself in the search of my worth, attributing it to external things, such as accomplishments, my projected image to others, and the validation I sought from people.

Out of insecurity, I decided to overwhelm myself by doing many things that didn't fill up my heart, in order to fill up my resume instead. I aimed to grow my resume to find a deeper sense of worth. Yet, during this time, I felt further away than ever from my worth. One day, when I received a rejection letter from a competitive study abroad program I had applied to, I looked down at my resume in tears. I wondered: What was I doing wrong? What did I need to be doing differently in order to seem more worthy to employers?

As I anxiously started searching for more things to do in order to make my resume more competitive, I looked down at my resume again. At that moment, I realized how impressive it was. I had done so much within the past two years of college, and accomplished remarkable things. Yet, at that moment, I still felt empty. I leaned forward at the computer, staring at my resume closer.

Then, I wondered: When did a piece of paper determine my worth?

No matter how hard I tried, no matter what accomplishment I did, I realized that there would always be someone out there who may not think of it as the right fit for their job offering or opportunity. I realized that perhaps, instead of not being "enough" due to the study abroad rejection, I could instead see the rejection as not being the right fit. Instead of attributing my worth to a stranger who reads my resume and tries to understand me from a single piece of paper, I decided that perhaps, I needed to discover my worth somewhere else.

As I looked within, I realized that perhaps, my sense of worth could never be fully cultivated by external influences. It was something that could only be cultivated within. Then, I decided to go deeper.

As I decided to start deconstructing my identity away from my resume, I realized that instead of trying to make my resume strong, I could simply do things that make my heart strong by doing things that bring me joy.

Perhaps the art of this game of applications and jobs that humanity pursues holds a secret. The secret: joy. We are all in pursuit of it. Yet, I was doing things that weren't bringing me joy in order to



build my resume, and it was coming from a place of feeling inadequate. I realized that the life I wanted to be living was one of joy, and one where I felt worthy with or without a list of material accomplishments on my back.

So, I decided to take a step back from a few commitments to start doing things that filled my heart with joy, instead of what I thought would help me feel safe: meeting an employer's approval.

Because... what was the point in meeting their approval when I hadn't even met my own?

So, I sat myself down with my journal, and asked myself truly: what do I want to do? Instead of what an employer wants me to do? Because, I was spending too long trying to answer the second question instead of the first one. I had been asking myself the wrong questions.

As my hand started flowing on the journal in front of me, I wrote from my heart, and realized that there are many things that bring me joy that don't fit on a resume. For example, I love writing poetry. It's something that genuinely fills my heart up, instead of something that feels like an obligation. Another thing that brings me joy is spending time in nature. After I realized this, one day I decided to take a walk outside my home for the very first time in months, and as I felt the fresh air hit my face, I smiled. At that moment, I realized that that was the first time I had genuinely smiled in a long time. It felt freeing. I made a list in my journal about what things I would love to do if I decided to no longer attach my worth to my resume. Here are a few things I wrote on the list, besides writing poetry and spending time in nature:

- Having deep conversations with loved ones
- Advocating for human rights
- Taking time out of my day to connect with myself
- Meditating
- Doing yoga
- Baking
- Creating works of art
- Doing work where meaningful human connection is involved
- Advocating for mental health
- Designing artwork for social media (which led me to discovering graphic design)

Then, I closed my eyes and went within. I thought of my resume. It once felt like my entire existence. Yet, a lot of the things on my resume didn't seem to align with what brought me joy. At that moment, I decided that my existence was far more vast than a collection of words on a piece of paper. I am a whole novel, and limiting my sense of worth to one page would never do my self-esteem justice.

So now, I am only doing things that bring me joy. I took a step back from a few opportunities to focus on things that fill my heart up with joy. For example, one thing I've been doing is writing a poetry book to give hope to those who are struggling based on what I have learned from my own struggles. Every time I write, I feel unexplainable joy. Writing has always been something that deeply touches me to my core, because even though I know that it may not match other things that are on my resume, I am not doing it for my resume, but instead for my heart.



Because, isn't that the point of this all? To find value?
And now, I know that my worth is far more than my resume.

I hope you learn this too.

You are so much more than a piece of paper.

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