

Learn to Build an Ideal, Secure Lifestyle

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Do you already enjoy an ideal, secure lifestyle?

Here are a few questions to help you check on whether you do:

Think back to 6:30 p.m. on your last day of work. Were you at home? If not, why weren't you at home with your loved ones? What could possibly have been so important at work that it took you away from your family?

How do the hours you spend commuting each week compare to the number of hours you spend in loving conversations?

What things frighten you? Why are you frightened?

Will your children and grandchildren have more loving childhoods while they live at home than you did?

Will you be able to retire when you want? Why would you ever need to retire if your work is enjoyable and an ideal complement to your family life?

How is your relationship with God? Do you always have the freedom to follow His ways?

How much energy and enthusiasm do you have when you awake each morning?

If you were to die tonight, how would you assess the quality of your life in the last year?

Those are the kinds of questions that people with careers sometimes ask themselves. While it's good to ask the questions, it's far more important to answer the questions and then act on what your answers tell you should be done.

For as far back as anthropologists can describe daily human life, most people have had to work hard and for long hours. However, unless someone was a slave, work usually involved being close to family and friends.

It has only been since the factory system arose in the last few centuries that long hours meant long periods of separation from family for most people. During the post-industrial age in economically advanced countries, most work continues to involve separation from family.

Fighting against that separation, many people are finding that there are rewarding careers that can be engaged in at home or in a business where the whole family can be either present or nearby. Examples include creating art, farming, online sales and services, psychiatry, software development, tutoring, and writing.

In fact, many creative jobs can be better performed in friendlier environments. The extra nurturing such environments bring can improve emotional stability and encourage creative risk-taking.

However, most people fall into a way of earning a living, rather than choosing a lifestyle to live. That's a mistake.

If you realize you've made that mistake, how can you adjust? Let me share an example with you of someone who has designed and is creating an ideal, secure lifestyle that many people would enjoy.

Leon Holtzhausen holds an MBA degree from Rushmore University where he is now a Ph.D. candidate. He became interested in academic studies late in life. As a youngster, Mr. Holtzhausen was far more interested in sports and exploring the world. For instance, he hitchhiked through 16,000 miles of the United States after graduating from college.

Mentors played a big role in his life by suggesting what kind of jobs he should seek, what experiences he should gain, and what kind of career he should aim for. We should all be so lucky to have such good mentors.

But the biggest and most positive change in his life came when he married a woman with a deep passion for horses and a well-grounded sense of right and wrong. His wife's character became a bed rock on which Mr. Holtzhausen built his life choices. After their children were born, the

Holtzhausens moved from South Africa to Germany, believing there were opportunities there for a solid career and an ideal family life. After the move, Mr. Holtzhausen found corporate life to be a bit disappointing in terms of his colleagues' ethics. He therefore switched to management consulting where he was more frequently able to act with personal integrity. Unfortunately, his consulting assignments were hard work and frequently took him far away from home. He recently returned to corporate life, leading a large change management initiative for a major company.

When he's home, life is wonderful for everyone in the family. The Holtzhausens own a farm near the Baltic coast where they are exploring Mrs. Holtzhausen's interest in breeding Trakehner horses (large, intelligent, well-tempered, and sturdy horses developed from the original breeding stock at an eighteenth century East Prussian farm that perform well in dressage competitions). Their horse farm is in a rural setting that permits their children to grow up away from the tensions and traumas of an urban neighborhood. In fact, Mr. Holtzhausen likes to dream about what it would be like to retire there:

I picture myself on a Sunday afternoon, sailing down the Peene River with a basket of goodies, a good book, and a fishing rod with no hook, never wanting to catch anything, but simply enjoying the occasion.

Mr. Holtzhausen enjoys some aspects of business and doesn't want to quit altogether after he retires from the corporate world. Instead, he imagines making the breeding farm pay and supplementing that income with a small business operated from home.

We all have dreams, and this is a nice one. Why might Mr. Holtzhausen be able to grasp this dream at a young enough age to enjoy it with his wife and children?

First, the ideal home is owned and at-home occupations have already begun through buying the farm and starting to breed horses. The home, farm, and horses are enjoyed by his family while he is at work and by him whenever he is home.

Second, by earning an MBA degree, Mr. Holtzhausen built the knowledge and credibility base that has profitably boosted his current career through gaining a solid business understanding and becoming a more

informed supporter of his wife's breeding activities. In the future, he intends to use this knowledge to start a new business. The degree was also a personal milestone in light of his earlier academic limitations. He is excited about the new learning that his Ph.D. studies are bringing, and he looks forward to the recognition and respect that a doctorate will bring him.

Third, he has set specific goals and dates for gaining this ideal life . . . dates that are not too far in the future.

Let me ask you these questions to help you gauge how well you are doing:

1. What is an ideal, secure lifestyle for you?
2. What plans do you have to gain that lifestyle?
3. Do you have goals and dates set for accomplishing this lifestyle?
4. Are you accumulating the knowledge and resources that can speed fulfillment of the plans?
5. Are you ahead of or behind schedule in meeting your targets?

If you aren't satisfied with your progress, step back now and develop the necessary plans, knowledge, and resources to accomplish what you want in the near future. You and your family won't be getting any younger.

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