

—you're

NOT

your

Going above and
beyond for yourself

job

Daniel Voigt Godoy

You're
Not
Your
Job

Daniel Voigt Godoy

You're Not Your Job

by Daniel Voigt Godoy

Copyright © 2023 by Daniel Voigt Godoy. All rights reserved.

For more information, please send an email to contact@dvgodoy.com

This publication is sold with the understanding that the author is not engaged in rendering psychological, financial, legal, or other professional services. Under no circumstances shall the author be liable for any loss, damage, liability, or expense incurred or suffered as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of the use and/or application of any of the contents of this book. Any action you take upon the information in this book is strictly at your own risk. If expert assistance or counseling is needed, the services of a competent professional should be sought. All trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), or by any information storage and retrieval system without the prior written permission of the copyright owner, except where permitted by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

"It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble.

It's what you know for sure that just ain't so."

Mark Twain

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	viii
About the Author	ix
Introduction	1
Your Journey	4
The Hero's Journey	8
The Price	12
Time	18
The Pursuit of Happiness	26
Money	30
The Unknown	36
Conformity	42
You're Not Your Job	46
Enjoyment	51
Choices	57
Success	72
Small Bets	78
Procrastination	84
Transformation	94
Appendix A	103
Appendix B	106

Acknowledgements

First of all, I'd like to thank YOU, my reader, for giving this book a chance even though I didn't promise you any answers. The fact that you're reading these words, right now, means a lot to me as an author. So, once again, thank you!

Many thanks to my friends Mihail Vieru, José Quesada, and Marcelo Ferranti for providing feedback on the content, tone, and design of this book. Also, I'd like to thank Daniel Vassallo, from the Small Bets community, for being an inspiring figure, and leading the way so other content creators like myself can follow his footsteps and venture on their own journeys.

I'd like to thank my therapist, Ângela Cardoso, for her support and guidance through this transformative stage of my life. I'd also like to thank my former therapist turned technical consultant, Rita Tolotti, who provided me with valuable insights while reviewing the content of this book through the lenses of both a trained psychologist and an interested reader.

Finally, I'd like to thank my wife, Jerusa, for her unwavering support through it all :-)

About the Author



Daniel is a husband, a brother, and a son. In the last 25 years, he had many jobs — developer, data scientist, teacher, writer — but he's none of them. He is an avid learner and he has a curious and restless mind. At age 46, he was finally able to switch gears. It took him several years and lots and lots of questions to figure out what the right path for him was. Now, he's finally at peace and happy with who he is while living his life the best he can.

Introduction

Do you sometimes feel like a square peg in a round hole? Do you feel like what you're doing is not really meant for you? Do you wonder how you ended up in your current situation? Did you choose your current life? Would you rather be doing something else entirely but don't know where to begin?

I wrote this book to make you think. It doesn't offer you ready-made answers, but it will hopefully make you ask yourself lots of questions. As we live our lives, we don't ask ourselves enough questions. We follow the lead of others because they seem to know what they're doing or, at least, that's what it looks like from our perspective. But everyone is learning as they go, following someone else's lead.

Along the way, you may lose track of who you really are. You mistake your identity for your job. Deep down, however, you know something isn't right. You were not meant to be living like this.

Sometimes you dream about leading a very different life. Maybe you even have a plan to switch gears. You've been saving money to one day, finally, take the leap and go live the life you want. You tell yourself: "*I just need to stick with this a little longer, and then I will leave this behind me.*" But you never do.

Been there, done that. Trust me, I get you. We get

attached to our dreams, and we don't want to spoil them. Thinking about an idealized life that will eventually be yours is a cozy refuge to escape an unpleasant reality. It is a psychological or emotional crutch that distracts you from the fact that you cannot metaphorically walk by yourself. The crutch may be so effective that you don't even realize it's there.

But then, all of a sudden, you notice the crutch. Once you see it, it's really hard to unsee it. You try to ignore it but it gets increasingly more difficult to do over time. How did I get to this point? What am I doing? If you're asking yourself these questions, you've already noticed the crutch.

As I said, I can't offer you answers. It's a bit cliché but only you can find your answers. It's a very personal journey of self-discovery. More cliché, I know. What I can do for you is ask you lots and lots of questions. Actually, I want you to ask yourself lots and lots of questions. I don't know which questions, if any, will do the trick for you. Maybe none will, maybe you don't like any of them. The only way to know is to try them out.

This is an opinionated book and it offers my own perspective on the subject. Although I may refer to my own experience throughout the book, I've mostly kept my personal story completely separate by sharing it in sections throughout the book titled My

Own Story. Keep in mind that I am not a psychologist nor a trained counselor. I won't be justifying my views on the grounds of one theory or another. I am writing the book I wish my past self had at his disposal. I truly hope it will be useful to you too.

Your Journey

If you're reading this, you are probably at a point in your life where you've started asking yourself difficult questions about your job, your career, and even your identity:

"How did I get here?"

"What am I doing?"

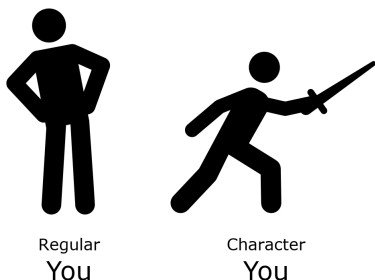
"Is this what I want to be doing for the rest of my life?"

There are no straightforward answers to any of those. The fact that you are asking yourself those questions, though, is a sign that you feel the need to reevaluate your choices so far. Perhaps, what you're trying to figure out is this:

"Should I keep going, moving forward along the path I know, or should I take a different path?"

If that's the case for you, I have good news for you: you're the hero of your journey. "Oh, c'mon," I can almost hear you saying in your head. But don't stop reading just yet, let me explain. The "hero's journey" is actually a well-documented and studied plot

structure identified by Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. You know that point in the story when the main character is faced with a dilemma and has to make a hard choice for their own, and sometimes humankind's, sake? Well, that's you — hopefully not the feeling responsible for everyone around you part — you're faced with a dilemma. You are the main character of your life.



Source: Adapted from the original Human icons and Sword icons created by Freepik — Flaticon.com

Can you picture yourself as the main character in your own personal story? It may help you get some perspective. When confronted with a decision in the past, you may have already heard this advice before:

"What would you tell a friend if they asked for your help with exactly this situation?"

The reasoning here is, it's easier to give advice to a friend than to give advice to yourself. You can be

more objective simply because it's not about you.

If picturing yourself as a character doesn't work for you, that's OK. Be it a character or a hypothetical friend, the important thing here is to try to distance yourself from, well, yourself to see the bigger picture. I will keep using the "hero" character to illustrate my point, but feel free to replace it with a friend, real or otherwise, or even a real character from any story, book, or movie, that you can relate to.

My Own Story

I started asking myself "*What am I doing?*" a few years ago when I was about 43 years old. It felt like some sort of midlife crisis at first. My wife and I had moved to another country five years before, and I wasn't happy with my life there. It never felt like "*home*," I never belonged there. Objectively speaking, my career was going well and I was making good money. But I didn't care about the job I had, I was going through the motions. It felt off, and it was making me feel anxious about the future. I lost my mom to cancer when she was 47 years old. In my mind, I worried that could be my fate too. What if I only had four more years? Am I wasting the time I have left?

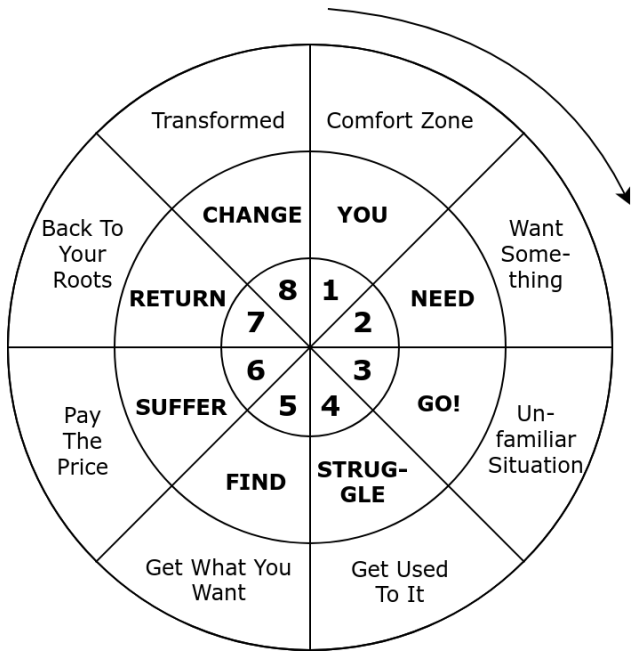
Ask Yourself

"Should I keep going, moving forward along the path I know, or should I take a different path? Why?"

The Hero's Journey

What is the journey of the hero? The character starts in their comfort zone, and ventures into the world to seek something they want, a prize. They eventually succeed at great personal cost, and the character is ultimately transformed by the experience. While Campbell's proposed journey had several stages (from eleven to seventeen depending on whom you ask), TV writer Dan Harmon (creator of multiple TV series including *Rick and Morty* and *Community*) proposed a simpler eight-stage approach. It is called the "Dan Harmon Story Circle," also known as "The Embryo," and it goes like this:

1. The character is in their comfort zone [**YOU**]
2. But they want something [**NEED**]
3. They go into an unfamiliar situation [**GO!**]
4. And get used to it [**STRUGGLE**]
5. They get what they want [**FIND**]
6. But they pay a hefty price for it [**SUFFER**]
7. They go back to their roots [**RETURN**]
8. The character is transformed [**CHANGE**]



Dan Harmon's Story Circle

Sound familiar? This is not only the plot of countless books, movies, and TV series, but it is also a good description of our professional lives:

1. You are in your comfort zone [YOU]

- Childhood, living with your family, hanging with your friends, few responsibilities

2. You want something [NEED]

- A job, a career, a nice car, a nice home to call your own

3. You go into an unfamiliar situation [GO!]

- Hitting the job market with little to no experience

4. You get used to it [STRUGGLE]

- Office politics, layoffs, overtime, the typical rat race

5. You get what you want [FIND]

- A high salary, a fancy office, an important title, a luxurious home

6. You pay the price [SUFFER]

- Time away from family and children, health issues, burnout

7. You go back to your roots [RETURN]

- Self-discovery process, reevaluating your choices

8. You are transformed [CHANGE]

- Prioritizing your family, your well-being, and your mental health

Remember those questions? *How did I get here? What am I doing?* These are questions you start asking yourself after you hit stage number six. That's the turning point in the hero's, I mean, your journey.

Ask Yourself

"Did I get what I wanted? Do I still want it?"

The Price

The main problem with the price you pay is that you're not truly aware of how steep it is until you've run up quite a tab. It's only when you cannot afford it anymore that the price reveals itself. Until that critical stage rears its ugly head, you'll be telling yourself these lies:

"Just one more year, and then I will stop."

"After I get promoted to <insert your dream position here>, I will slow down."

Sound familiar? In a movie, a supporting character often says something along these lines to their loved one:

"One last job, my love, and then we're set for life', I promise you!"

And then they're killed by the bad guys while doing that one last job that would finally set them free. In our own lives, however, we're the main character, and we're hoping to survive the critical sixth stage.

Now, read the lies we tell ourselves one more time. Did you notice anything? Just like the supporting character in the movie, we actually know that something isn't right: *"I will stop," "I will slow down."*

But we can't bring ourselves to act on it, and we postpone it again and again. And then, something happens that triggers the sixth stage in you. It may be one of many life-altering or life-threatening events:

- the loss of a loved one
- a serious illness
- a near-death experience
- a divorce
- being laid off
- a sabbatical

The last one may seem out of place, right? However, it doesn't take a necessarily bad or difficult time to trigger the realization about the price you paid to get what you wanted. A sabbatical offers you the kind of perspective you may not have while handling your everyday routine. You have the chance to lead a different life, even if it's for a short while. You may realize you missed simple things such as spending more time in nature or a hobby you loved when you were a teenager but couldn't find time for in the last twenty years. Many people that go on a sabbatical end up abandoning their former careers and becoming park rangers. Really!

Unfortunately, most of the other items on that list are part of life. You'll eventually lose someone you love, get sick, break up with someone, and be laid off. You

may have a friend that recently got divorced (or broke up), another friend that just got fired, and perhaps even a friend that recently lost a parent. These things usually happen at different stages in life for different people. Until they don't.

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered all these events in millions of people around the globe:

- millions of people lost loved ones to the disease
- many millions more had serious health issues as a result of the pandemic
- extensive lockdowns strained marriages and families
- the sudden travel ban forced many companies to lay off their employees
- working from home allowed millions of people to have more free time to dedicate to their families and hobbies

All of a sudden, millions of people around the world were forced to face stage six head-on. They had to reckon with the fact they would never get to spend time again with the loved ones they lost. Some may never fully recover from the impacts of the disease and they have to deal with a permanent loss in quality of life. Many more felt they were treated unfairly or deemed downright expendable by the companies they worked so diligently for.

My Own Story

There are so many little things you take for granted in your life. You don't really know how precious they are until you lose them. Sunny days. Food. The way people act and how they talk to you. You don't even need to move to a different country to experience that. It can happen if you move from one state to another in continental countries like the US or Brazil. It may even happen if you move from a rural area to a big city or the other way around. I always regarded myself as a fairly rational person, and I believed the bottom line was more important than those little things. So what if there are fewer sunny days there? It will be great for my career, I will make a lot more money.

To be honest, it took me several years to even start noticing that, yes, these little things were taking their toll on me. I was always in a really bad mood, irritable, and annoyed by pretty much everything. I struggled with some really bad episodes of anxiety, including full-blown panic attacks. It wasn't a pretty picture. My health was being negatively impacted. My constant bad mood was straining my marriage.

On top of all that, adding to the overall level of anxiety, the clock was ticking and I was closer and closer to the age my mom was when she passed. But the money was good, so I kept telling myself:

"Just one more year, and then I will stop."

Once I had enough money, I could afford to live the way I always wanted to live.

So, what is the price you pay, after all? The price is time:

- The time you wish you still had to spend with the loved ones you lost.
- The time you wish you could have spent outdoors while you still had your health.
- The time you wish you had spent watching your kids grow instead of working overtime for a company that laid you off.
- The time you wish you had spent on your hobbies instead of commuting back and forth for no reason.

In a nutshell:

The price you paid to get what you wanted is the time that you wish you had now.

I'd like to talk more about time.

Ask Yourself

"Am I trying to convince myself to hang in there for just a little longer? Why?"
