

In 1700, in Western Europe, there were some 400 different kinds of jobs you could choose from. Nowadays, there are approximately 500,000.

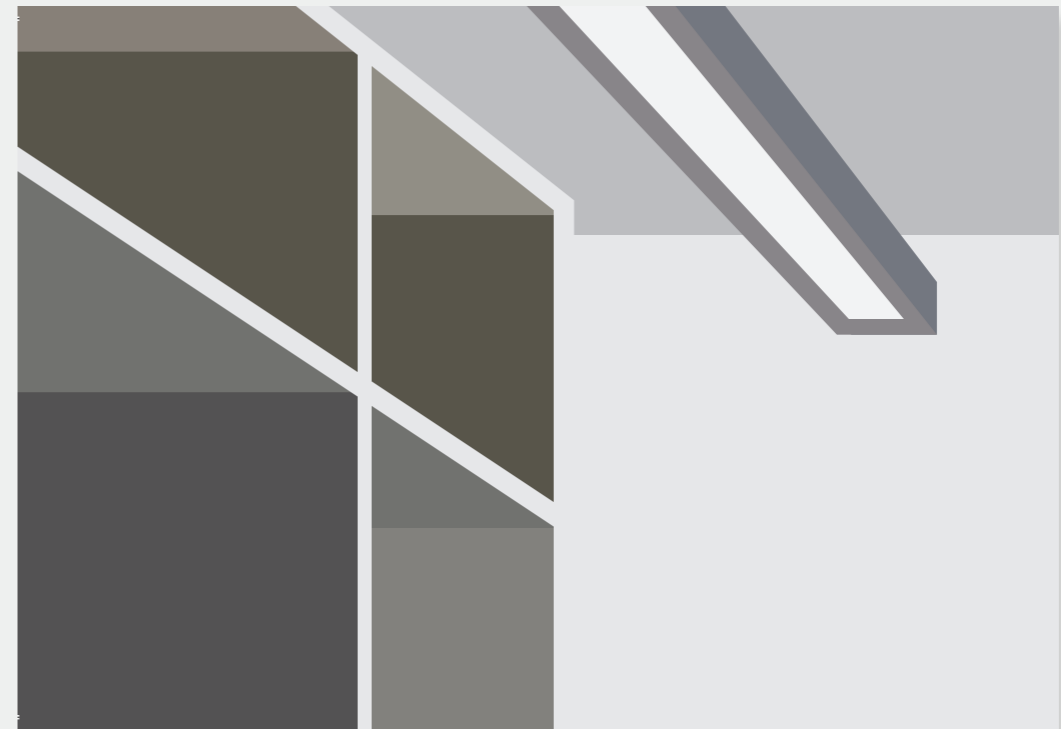
No wonder we sometimes have a bit of trouble settling on what we might want to do.



We pin our hopes for happiness on
Love and Work. And yet in relation to
both, we refuse to

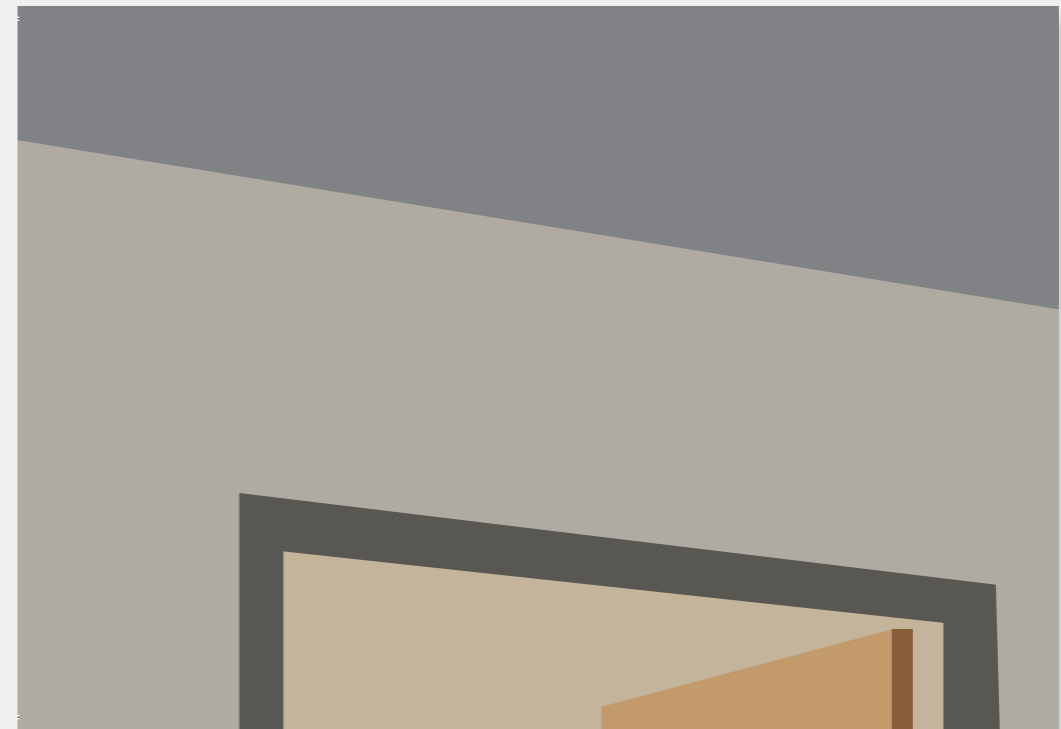
- plan methodically,
- to understand ourselves thoroughly,
- to train relentlessly and
- to go into therapy before we act.

We worship instinct in precisely the
wrong places.



As with relationships, it's an immense relief — and no sign of meanness — to know that other people are also very unhappy around their work.

Not feeling alone is a significant, dignified consolation.



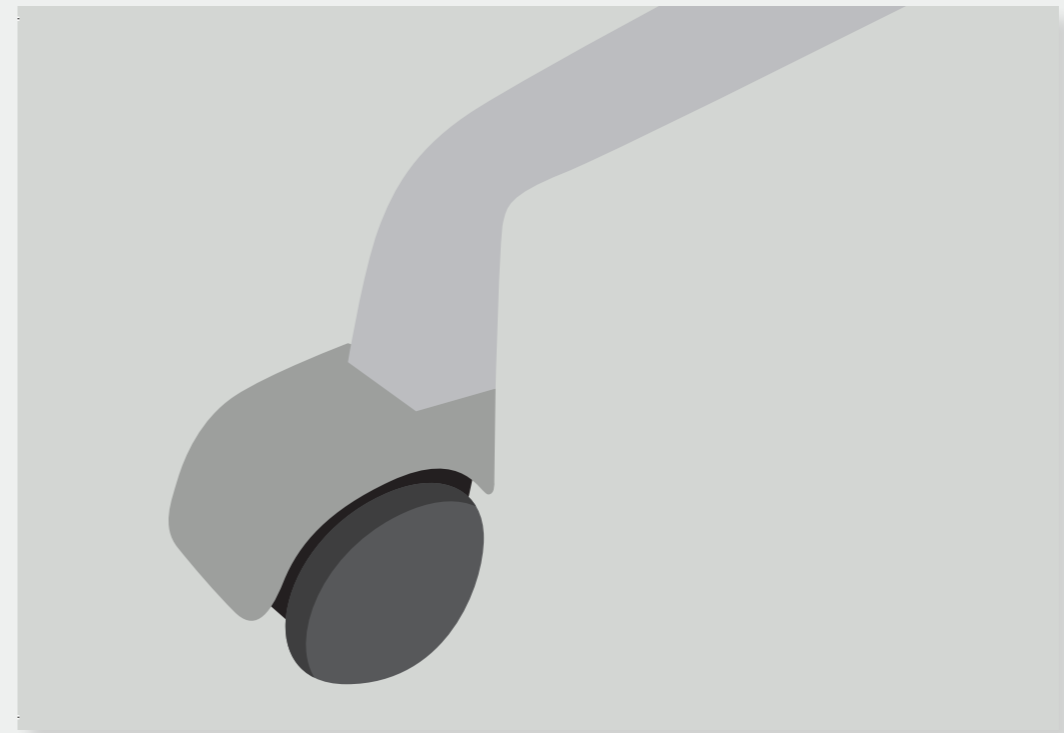
Career anxiety
is our latent talent howling
through our minds,
desperate
not to go to the grave
unspent.



It is only in very recent history that we've even attempted not just to make money at work, but also — extraordinarily — to be happy there as well. How deeply peculiar the idea would have sounded to most of our ancestors, especially the aristocrats who never worked and the working classes who would most strongly have wanted not to. Happy work is the genius, malevolent invention of the bourgeoisie.



Many of us are still trapped within the career cage unwittingly created for us by some hasty choices made by our unknowing 18-year-old selves.



When work feels meaningful, you'd be ready to lay your life down for it in return for a salary roughly equivalent to the minimum wage. When you know it ultimately makes no sense, you quibble over millions.

Soldiers vs bankers.



Envy feels unpleasant and shameful, but it's a vital clue to your own submerged ambitions. Keep a record of everyone you meet whose job makes you envious.

Slowly assemble a portrait of your ideal occupation through an analysis of your envious emotions. Keep an Envy Diary.



Reflecting back on our most satisfying childhood interests matters in part because we were at that stage free of the two great anxieties that later inhibit the flowering of our real working selves: the need for money and the longing for status. True success might mean, by 50, having returned in key ways to what it was fun to do at 5.



On a large sheet of paper, make a map of how you have got to where you are now in the shape of a river; show tributaries feeding the main current and dams where things got blocked or failed.

