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## Books | How to Find Fulfilling Work

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### Peter Holmes à Court

If I were ever to plan a leap from an airplane, I'd want my instructor to be more than an optimist: I'd seek someone highly experienced and thoroughly trained.

Leaving your job in search of more fulfilling opportunities is one of life's most intimidating jumps, and Roman Krznaric's *How to Find Fulfilling Work* is an indispensable handbook.

Krznaric is an optimistic philosopher from the school that believes better things come to those who take a deliberate approach.

He's also experienced in the art of the jumping, having changed jobs often: from call centre manager to professional gardener, university lecturer, financial journalist and perhaps the most underappreciated role of stay-at-home dad.

The intersection of work and happiness is a less visited corner of the practical philosophy genre, but it fits Australian-born Krznaric well. He lives in Britain and this book is one of six in a series edited by Alain de Botton from London's School of Life.

You might subtitle this, "How to chuck in your well-paying desk job and do something good for the planet but less so for your bank account". His interviewees have all made brave career changes. I am not sure what the British think of him citing the example of the Australian executive who finds happiness as an embalmer. On some level, it must reinforce British prejudices that Australians are just bloody happy. The book has its share of listless white-collar workers on six-figure salaries who are not sure whether to quit their job.

The book is crisp and concise and fits between Krznaric's historical review of mankind's search for happiness, (*The Wonderbox*, Profile Books, 2011) and his most obscure work, a study of the world's hardest racquet sport, royal tennis (*The First Beautiful Game*, Ronaldson Publications, 2006).

The author is not a big fan of psychological profiling as a career counselling tool, or of doing what your profile says you should do. His challenge is to justify a strategy of "act first, reason second" and he does a convincing job. His work is well researched and he offers small assignments at the end of each chapter, with a section at the end called "homework".

What's missing is how to get your current job more aligned with your desires. Before you get to the point of telling your boss where to stick it (my words, and certainly nothing like his), perhaps there is room to improve the job you are in. And perhaps there is also room to learn to see what you have in a better light without that sounding like settling for less. Sometimes it takes work to see how good your situation really is.

It's not what you do, but how you do it. And in one's career, Krznaric shows that can be a deliberate choice.

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