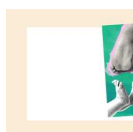




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## Ask An Adult: Is It Ever A Good Idea To Quit A Decent Job And Go Travelling?

When she was in her twenties Poorna Bell left a job to see the world. She reflects on why she would do it very differently now...

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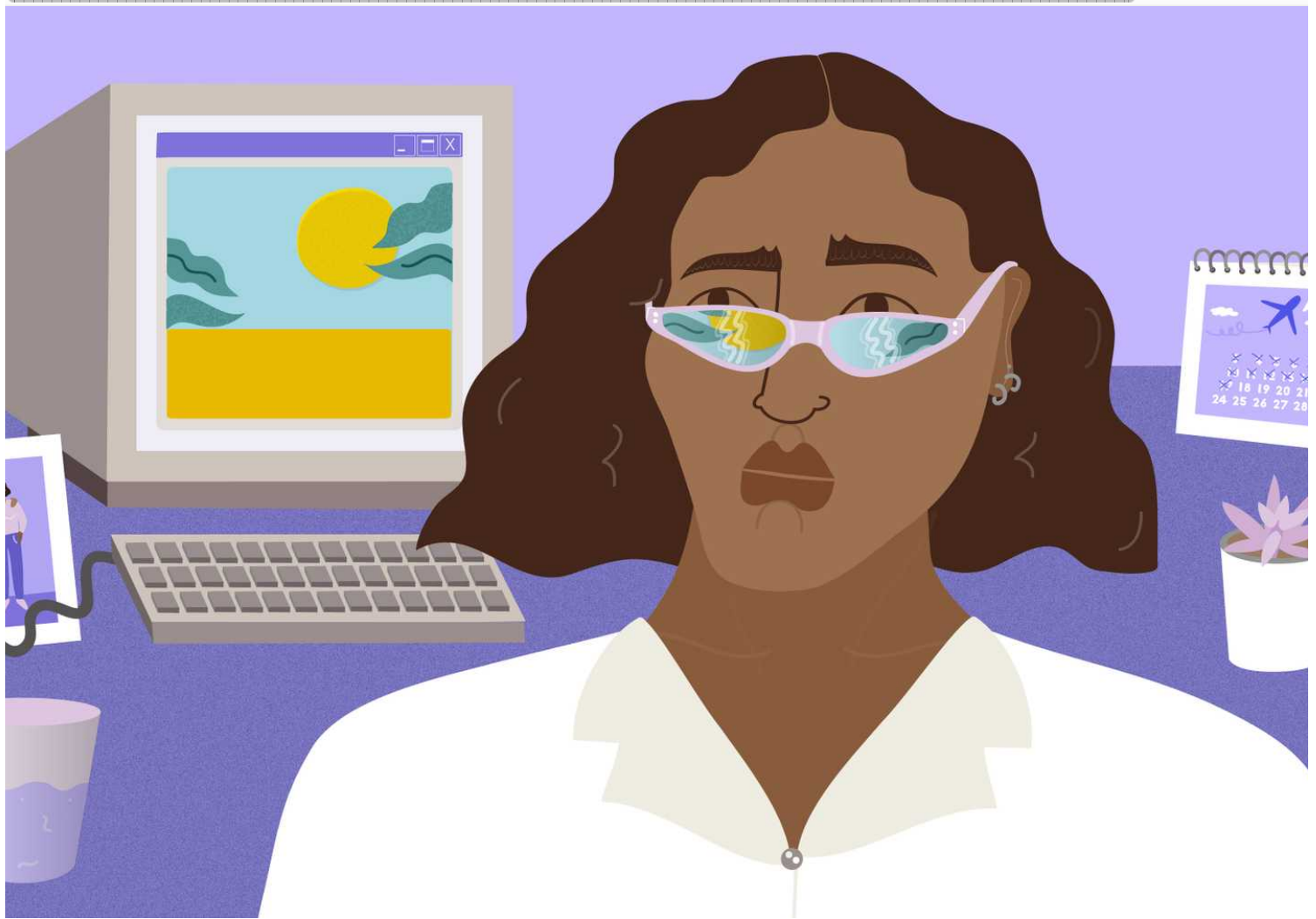
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BY **POORNA BELL** (/AUTHOR/VICKY-SPRATT) | POSTED ON 17 04 2018

In my twenties, I quit my job to go travelling for three months. It was a job that had status but I had started to hate it, and looking back, my decision was less about new experiences and more about wanting a way out of my misery.

The travel part was immense fun, except I wazzed all my money in the first month and when I came back, navigating the work space and my depleted finances was incredibly hard. It was a time of incredible anxiety and stress which left me wondering: was it actually worth it?

The short answer is that yes, of course it was. At the very least, because it got me out of the toxic environment I had been in. But the long answer is that I would do it differently now. Because, while the idea of travelling is romantic and carefree, there are practical measures you can and should take to mitigate the bum-clenching anxiety of what to do about work on your return.

**READ MORE: Facts About Women Around The World**



Factoring in the current financial market is also savvy (I did mine on the cusp of the double-dip recession). Right now, things aren't quite so dire but our economy still hasn't totally recovered.

According to [the latest report by the Resolution Foundation that came out in February \(https://www.theguardian.com/money/2018/feb/19/uk-millennials-second-worst-hit-financially-in-developed-world-says-study\)](https://www.theguardian.com/money/2018/feb/19/uk-millennials-second-worst-hit-financially-in-developed-world-says-study) around the state of the millennial economy, while things aren't great in terms of home ownership and salaries, youth unemployment is almost as low as it was in 2000.

So, if you're thinking about quitting your job to travel the world, this is what you need to consider:

## First things first, ask yourself why you want to travel

You need to work out whether it's about escapism, or because you're looking for a different experience that will add something to your life. There may not seem like an obvious difference, but the first is reactive, which may mean you end up unprepared and worse off in the long run. The second means you can work out what you want and need from the experience.



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Puja K McClymont, a life and business coach for 'fierce millennials' (<https://franklycoaching.com/>) says that you need to 'ask five times from the first time you ask that question'. She adds: 'If you said "I want more from my life", then ask what exactly do you want more from? Is it sunshine? A clean break? And so on. Then you can drill down to the deepness of the issue'.

Jo Dunscombe, co-founder of [The Quarter Club](http://thequarterclub.org/) (<http://thequarterclub.org/>), a network which connects 'ambitious and creative women', says that city living often creates this claustrophobic bubble which creates a 'perpetual feeling that it's time to leave'. But she advises taking your time. 'The step before deciding to leave, is giving yourself enough time to philosophise and think about what you want from your life. The overall problem is the concept of time and investing time in yourself. That's a hard thing to do'.

Quite honestly, if I had sat down and thought about it, I wouldn't have travelled when I did. I would've sketched out what I wanted to gain from my travels, and whether, at such a formative time in my career dropping everything was the right thing to do.

## Understand that you have to make a decision that's right for you and only you

We live in the age of comparisons, made worse by Instagram and Facebook. But when you're deciding to leave, don't just copy other people. There's no one size fits all approach to life.

Temi Lasade-Anderson, 28, a marketing specialist, decided that she was going to quit in three months and move to Australia. 'I didn't hate my job, but I was completely burnt out. I was working in advertising at the time, in a good role at a brilliant agency. But I didn't want my manager's job – that is, I didn't feel the passion to continue working so hard (sometimes 65-hour weeks, at 24 years old) to reach the top of the career progression I was on, and that felt like a huge sign to me'.

Jenni Regan, 40, who is a Senior Media Advisor at [Mind](https://www.mind.org.uk/) (<https://www.mind.org.uk/>), went travelling when she was 22 after quitting her job overnight. In hindsight, she says the hastiness of it may be due to her then-undiagnosed bipolar disorder, but she strongly advises anyone thinking of doing this to 'plan, plan, plan'.

'If I had planned it better', she says, 'and spent a few months saving and making connections I could have benefited a lot more from this trip. But maybe in some ways just going off and having fun for a while was also important'.

That said, it's important to have faith in your abilities and take a leap if that's what you need. Siobhan Kangataran, author, coach and founder of [Together Further](https://togetherfurther.org/) (<https://togetherfurther.org/>) says: 'I've seen that people have gotten jobs lined up fairly quickly after taking a break. There is work out there'.

## Preparation and planning is everything

Once you decide to leave, don't just burn your P45 in a blaze of glory. Export all of your contacts to a separate document, make sure you check in with people before you go, and always, always leave things on a good note in case you need to ask your old employer for freelance work. The scorched earth approach to resigning is no good for anyone and could come back to bite you.

Although it seems ridiculous to do so before you've even left, think about your return – it doesn't undermine the free-spiritedness of your travel.

Puja says: 'It's an insurance policy – you have to have that mindset. Unless you have money, you can't jack up and leave and do what you want to do – you have to plan. Plan for it to not work out.'

Siobhan adds: 'It's all about expectation. If you prepare for the worst you can be pleasantly surprised when things do work out. There is a lot that can be done to create resilience'.

## Also, it's 2018 which means you can also work while on the go

There's a misnomer about travelling, which Puja sums up perfectly. 'It is not the same as a holiday. Travelling is a different form of living. You don't have everything in a convenient little resort for you, you have to figure out your day to day life while moving around'.

This is one thing I got catastrophically wrong when I travelled. I assumed it was a full-on break from life in general. Yes, travel involves doing lots of amazing things you wouldn't get the chance to if you were shackled to your desk, but there are still general life admin things that need to be done. In fact, doing them means you have an easier transition when you do return.

'I would start planning while you are away', says Puja. 'Get your LinkedIn profile up to date way before you come back. The job market at the moment can be volatile. Bear that in mind while you're doing it. Plan before you come back so there is less fear – winging it is going to cause anxiety'.

From her own experiences, Jenni says: 'I would recommend some time as a holiday (I still remember walking on a deserted beach in my bikini on a Wednesday morning) but also think about actually living somewhere and experiencing the culture. Don't just see the trip as a tick box exercise where you are 'seeing the sights'. If you can have either a job or a really clear career plan waiting for you when you get back then all the better'.

Working out your possible support system is also a good idea, says Temi. Knowing that she would be able to stay with her parents to give her a respite from rent helped her with making certain work choices.

## This could change the way you think and work forever

The good news is that the world is a more connected place than it has ever been, this lends itself to flexible working. If anything, travelling teaches you that it's possible to work in more creative and inventive ways. Travelling enabled Temi to have the confidence to kick start her freelance career, and Siobhan says that all of the amazing lessons and benefits learned from travelling can be used to amplify your work when you do get back.

But, if you still have doubts, Jo says that you have to stop worrying about keeping up with other people. 'Don't think about your own situation about being modelled through someone else's. Life is more than about careers and making money'.

## And, above all...

Sometimes, change is good in and of itself, it doesn't need to add to your CV or fundamentally transform who you are. Travelling, Puja reflects, simply makes 'you value life more'. She says 'when you are working in a city environment, everything is taken for granted. You are working pay cheque to pay cheque. You lose perception and reality of what is real, and what your values are. Travel opens your mind to how other people live. I think you will live a better life when you come back'.

And isn't that really what most of us want?

**Follow Poorna on Twitter** @poornabell (<https://twitter.com/poornabell>)

*This article originally appeared on The Debrief.*

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### Mary-Kate Olsen Opens Up About Married Life With Oliver Sarkozy

The notoriously private fashion designer, Mary-Kate Olsen, has now revealed details about her marriage for the first time. Read the full story on Grazia, **Grazia**

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