

Ann Landers

He Makes \$80 a Week and Doesn't Want a Thing

Fifth Estate Collective

Dear Ann Landers: I am a person of simple taste. I don't need much to make me happy. A can of beer, two good baseball teams, a freeway and a tank of gas. A sunny day in early June. A brisk run at sunrise. A pretty girl who smiles when I look her way. A short story by William Faulkner.

None of these will pay the rent, so I have to work—which I hate, but I realize a person must be practical. What I need to know is why should I kill myself to meet someone else's definition of success?

To me, success is having enough money to prepare tomorrow's meal. Since I was old enough to talk, I was told I was brilliant and would make a lot of money and have the world on a string. So here I am 23, netting \$80 a week, but I'm genuinely happy and don't want for a thing.

My father (who has ulcers) is ashamed of me. My mother (her life is the beauty salon and clothes) thinks I'm a disgrace. I respect your opinion and would appreciate your opinion of my lifestyle. Am I wrong? Are they right? Where do you stand?

—Jerry In Yonkers

Dear Jerry: The most revealing part of your letter can be found in four words, "work—which I hate."

Why does a smart guy like you hate work? Don't you realize money is only one of the benefits of labor? If you hate your job and view it as something you must do so you can eat the next day, you are wasting your time and probably ripping off your employer.

This country wasn't built by—men who wanted nothing more out of life than a can of beer, a tank of gas and a story by Faulkner.

And it's a good thing, because if everyone thought as you do we'd still be living in caves. There would be no progress in the sciences or the arts—or in any of the areas that separate us from primitive people.

As a person who has worked very hard for many years (and I didn't need the money), I can tell you, my young friend, that work can be tremendously rewarding and wonderful fun. My idea of hell would be a life of leisure. The happiest people I know are the busiest.

I'm sorry about your dad's ulcers, but I'll bet your relationship with him has a lot to do with why you hate work. Anything he likes, you probably hate. Too bad you didn't get that problem resolved earlier. Since you are only 23, it's not too late.

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