



# Jumping Ship

A Holistic Approach to Changing Jobs

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**I don't know much  
but I know how to survey**

So I haven't had a ton of jobs in my career, but I have been part of interviewing and mentoring in all of them. I've also emotionally supported a number of friends and colleagues as they look for jobs.

Even still I don't know much... but I know how to survey.



Dylan Baumann  
*Grain & Mortar*



Sean Larkin  
*Mutual of Omaha*



Melanie Haas  
*Pinsight Media*



Mark Corrado  
*OttoQ*



Raúl Montejó  
*DecisionDesk*



Baldur Rensch  
*LAShowroom.com*



Karl Kedrovsky  
*VML*



Eric Poe  
*Stowers Institute for Medical Research*



Cory House  
*VinSolutions*



Eric J Gruber  
*VML*



Allana Pettigrew  
*H&R Block*



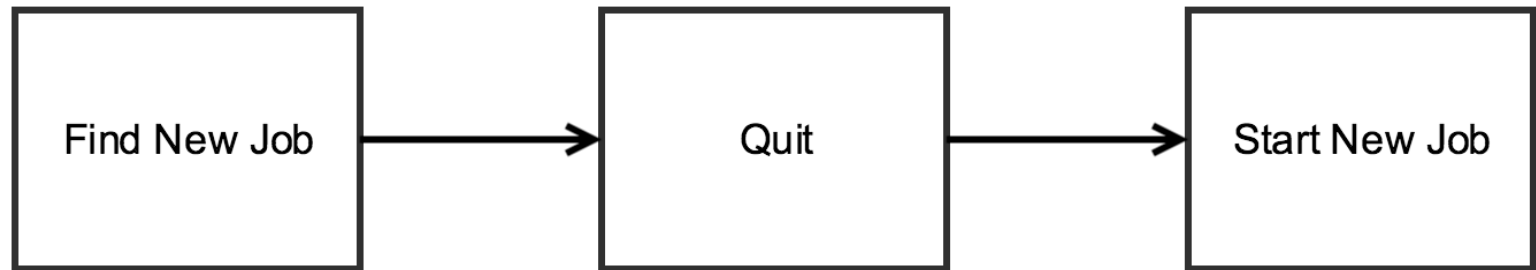
Aaron Wolfson  
*Lyconic*



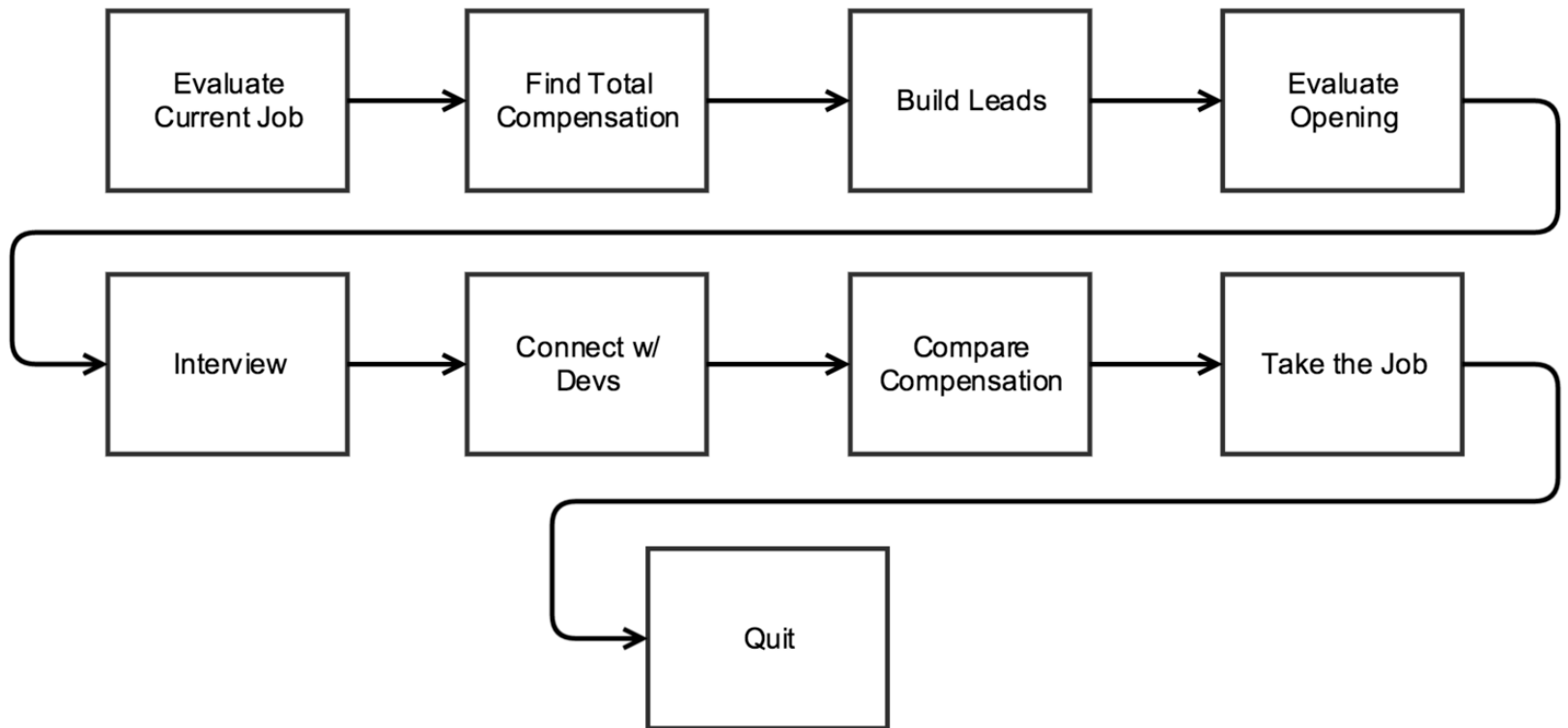
Brandon Edling  
*Dropbox*

I sent out a survey about the topic of this talk and got some great insights from all of these awesome people. Many of whom chose to be anonymous. Their responses are woven in to this talk and you'll see a number of direct quotes from the survey.

I want to extend a huge thank you everyone who helped by taking the survey.



Often times when we first start thinking about changing jobs, maybe a opening gets thrown our way, we think of it very simply. Interview, if the salary is good, get the job, quit.



But it turns out to be much more of a process when we stop to think about it.



# Knowing When to Quit

The first question is whether it's time for you to start looking. If the departure is on your terms, it should never be a knee-jerk reaction.

# You Need a Team

- Your family
- Mentors
- Former colleagues
- Trustworthy current coworkers

*Basically anyone you trust to give you honest feedback  
(even if it's hard to swallow)*

You should not do this alone. There are others out there who care about you and ready to help you find something great. Which just might be the desk you're already sitting at.

You need different perspectives on the process.

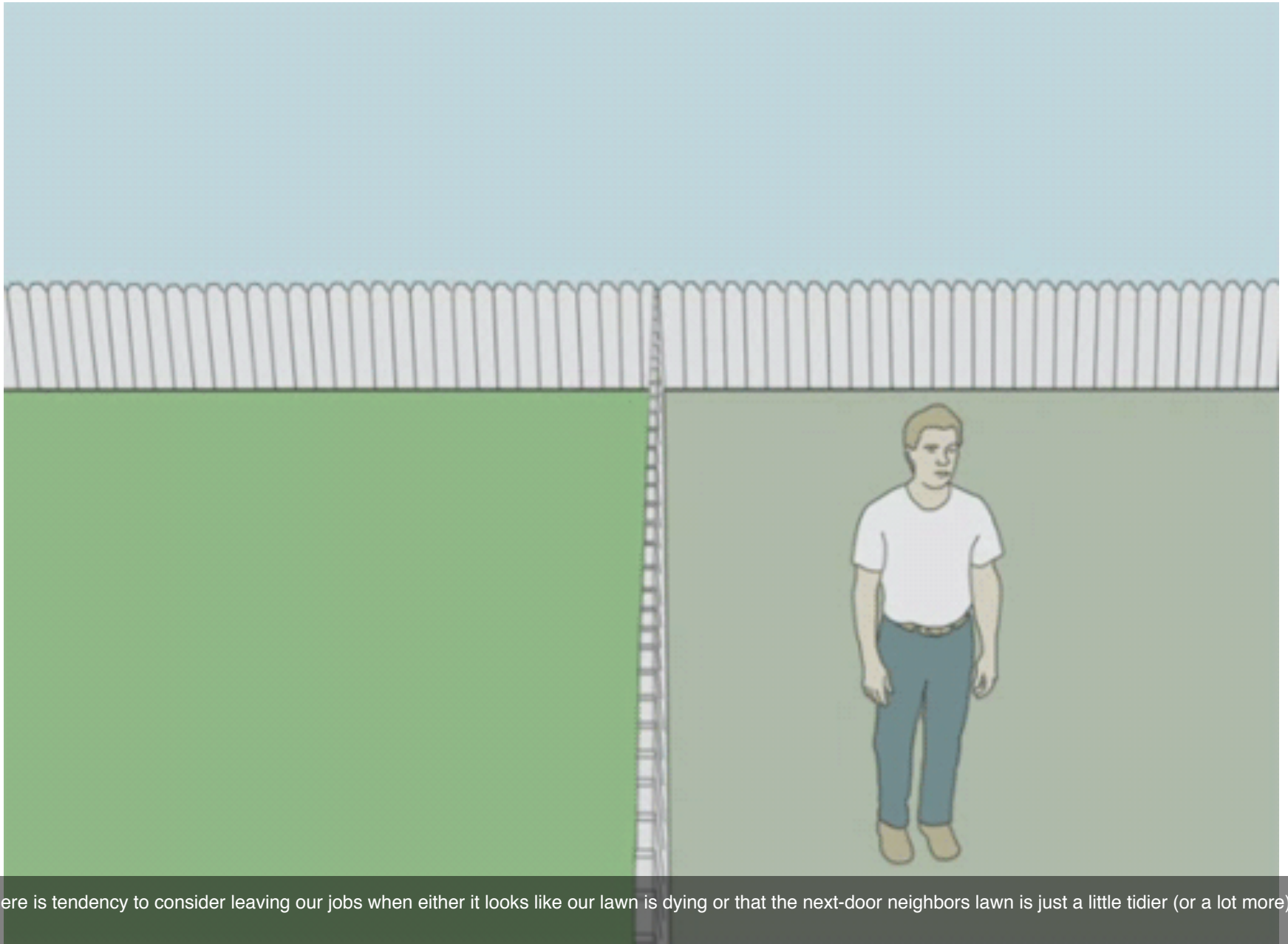
If you don't have this now, start working on it. Even if you aren't ready to switch





*“ Find two or three people that can give you good council -- not just what you want to hear, but what you need to hear. You may have unrealistic expectations.*

*-- Brandon Edling*



So there is tendency to consider leaving our jobs when either it looks like our lawn is dying or that the next-door neighbors lawn is just a little tidier (or a lot more).  
But you have to ask yourself "Is this really the right time to start considering another job? Am I going to be in the same boat somewhere else?"

# Why do you want to leave?

- Not feeling challenged enough
- Writing on the wall
- Not feeling valued by management
- Compensation is not balanced with skill level
- Ready for a technology/career change?
- Personnel issues

When considering leaving you need to have a plan.

Don't knee jerk.



*“ If there are more than three months where you get up every day, look in the mirror and say to yourself, "What the hell am I doing?", you gotta leave. I say three months because every gig has a season... and things change... If you can say it for three months, chances are you've really felt it for longer than that... and life's too short.*

-- Brandon Edling





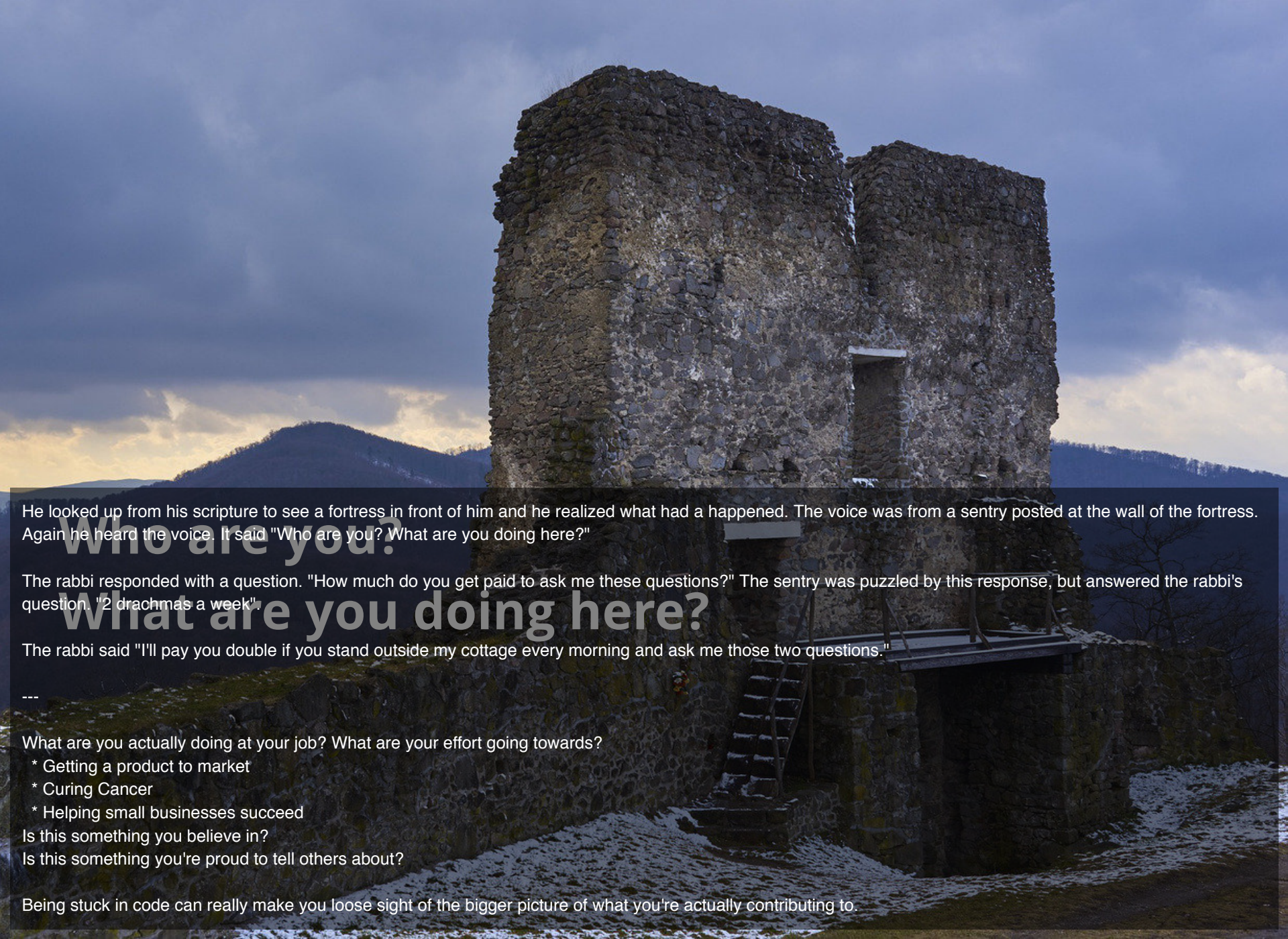
There is a story about a Rabbi, who was on his journey home after a trip to the nearby village. The sun was setting and he intently studying scripture as he went.





Because it was getting dark and he was so deep in meditation he mistakingly took the wrong path and was no longer heading toward home. He didn't realize this until he heard a voice shouting down at him from above.



A photograph of a stone fortress tower on a hill at dusk. The tower is made of rough-hewn stone and has a small, dark, rectangular opening. A wooden staircase leads up to the tower. The sky is dark with some clouds, and the ground is covered in snow. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

He looked up from his scripture to see a fortress in front of him and he realized what had happened. The voice was from a sentry posted at the wall of the fortress. Again he heard the voice. It said "Who are you? What are you doing here?"

The rabbi responded with a question. "How much do you get paid to ask me these questions?" The sentry was puzzled by this response, but answered the rabbi's question. "2 drachmas a week"

The rabbi said "I'll pay you double if you stand outside my cottage every morning and ask me those two questions."

---

What are you actually doing at your job? What are your effort going towards?

- \* Getting a product to market
- \* Curing Cancer
- \* Helping small businesses succeed

Is this something you believe in?

Is this something you're proud to tell others about?

Being stuck in code can really make you loose sight of the bigger picture of what you're actually contributing to.



*// If you want to stay, but something is wrong, TALK TO YOUR BOSS or HR, or whomever can help. But leaving a good job because of a bad person or situation doesn't solve that problem...If you don't tell them there's a genuine problem, they can't fix it.*

-- Melanie Haas



# Before you start looking

- Is the reason you want to leave fixable?
- Do you have some solutions in mind?
- Have you talked to anyone who can make the change?
- Are you the one who needs to change?

Tell your company how you feel without threatening to leave. Just tell them your concerns and at least give chance to make things right. Just let them know there are some things that are making you unhappy.

Make sure to have some ideas for solutions. I don't know of anyone who likes to hear complaining without possible solutions.

Is your attitude and mentality about the position and company causing you to feel this way. Make sure you're not the one who needs to change, otherwise you'll just be taking your problem with you. Introspection is power.

# Don't threaten to leave



Only directly discuss leaving when you have an offer in hand.

Don't play the "Well I could go get a job at XYZ, Inc. tomorrow" game. It's risky and comes off as super cocky.

Someone who threatens to leave or talks about it being easy to get a job somewhere else is just painting a target on their back.

# Don't Knee-jerk

*// Have another vine to grab before letting go of this one.*

-- Aaron Wolfson



*// Get a new job first.*

-- Cory House



# YOU ARE HERE



It's really important to know what you have before it's gone. It may be that you have much more than you thought, but this can help inform your decisions on future job offers.

# Compensation is more than your salary

- GROSS Salary
- Time Off
- Insurance Premiums
- Disability Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Employee Assistance Program
- Wellness Program/Gym
- Food Subsidies
- Retirement Matching
- Other Matching (e.g. HSA)
- Cell Phone/Internet Reimbursement

Before you begin looking you need to have a point of reference to base any potential offer. Let's look at figuring out your total compensation.

It's important to think about what your current employer is paying for you because your next employer may not pay for it and you may have to, or you just may not get it at all.

You need this number to be able to compare apples to apples, otherwise you might unknowingly put yourself in a worse compensation

# Current Total yearly compensation

	Employer Pays (E)	You Pay (Y)
<b>GROSS Salary</b>		
Time Off		
Insurance Premiums		
Disability Insurance		
Life Insurance		
Employee Assistance Program		
Wellness Program/Gym		
Food Subsidies		
Retirement Matching (75% up to 6%)		
Other Matching (HSA)		
Cell Phone/Internet Reimb.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Y</b>

$$E - Y = \textbf{Total Compensation}$$



# Changing Ladders

Keep in mind that if you are changing stacks, you will most likely be stepping down on the ladder.

Changing frameworks, less likely.

# Career change considerations

- You will probably be taking a pay cut
- Get competent on your own to minimize the pay cut
- Go to user groups and start hanging out with the devs who are where you want to be

## MM Story

- \* Didn't know the language
- \* Learn an intro level
- \* Presented at the user group where they would be
- \* Got a job offer even before I presented





# Navigating the Job Market

One of the hardest things in the process is actually finding good jobs and knowing how to evaluate them.

The first thing we need to do if get our priorities lines up.

*// List your top 5 priorities of what you care about. Is it leadership? Tech stack? Work time for opensource projects? Look at what your current employer does poorly in regards to those, and use them as criteria starting your job search.*

*-- Anonymous*

# Get your priorities straight

- Non-negotiables
- Nice to have
- Must not have

1. Figure out your non-negotiables - Things that you will not back down from

- Compensation
- Benefits
- Technology
- Promotion Path

2. Figure out your nice-to-haves

- Atmosphere
- Work from home
- Work hours

3. Figure out your must-nots

- Evil company
- Long hours
- on-call
- high percentage travel

*Revisit this list occasionally, things change.*

This list will inform your interview questions.

Keep this list up to date.



# Finding the Openings

Finding a good position can be a needle and haystack situation. But there are better ways than monster.com to find them.

How many of you knew someone at your current company when you applied for the job?

- All-Natural, Free-Range, Non-GMO Networking
- Keep up with former colleagues
- Open source projects
- Check for connections at companies where you want to work

- Meetups
- Hackathons
- Keep up contacts from previous jobs
- Community groups (Coder Dojo, Code for America Brigade -- Code for KC, etc.)
- Open source projects
- Be a regular and not a flake

LinkedIn is actually good to remember who you know at what companies.

The moral is that personal relationships are arguably the best way to find jobs. This has the benefit of you getting the inside information on what it's like to work there.

*// Read between the lines. Words like "superstar" and "ninja" just mean expectations are unrealistic. Look for places that seem transparent and post realistic requirements.*

-- Anonymous



# Dealing with Recruiters

- They are good used cars dealers out there just like there are good Recruiters. Like our sponsors.
- Many will use a shot gun approach which can really wear on potential recruits
- They don't know you, but they have the perfect job at the best company just waiting for you.
- Having a good relationship with a good recruiter can get you in some doors you wouldn't normally get in to.
- HR recruiters may not be a good representation of the company.

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## Before meeting a recruiter in-person

- Identify the company
- Get the salary range
- Get the employment status
- Get the location

As for cold-calls here are a few tips.

You don't want to waste anyone's time.

If they are unwilling to give this information, walk away. Many times the recruiter will relent and tell you the information.

# The Dreaded Questions

*"What's your desired salary?*

*What do you currently make?"*

Be honest and forthcoming

*or*

Say the salary is negotiable

If you give a number make sure that you caveat that it this is based on your current benefits and that it could change based upon what benefits are offered.

Better yet, find out your total compensation and use that number as a worse case scenario.

# Sean's Answers to the Dreaded Questions™



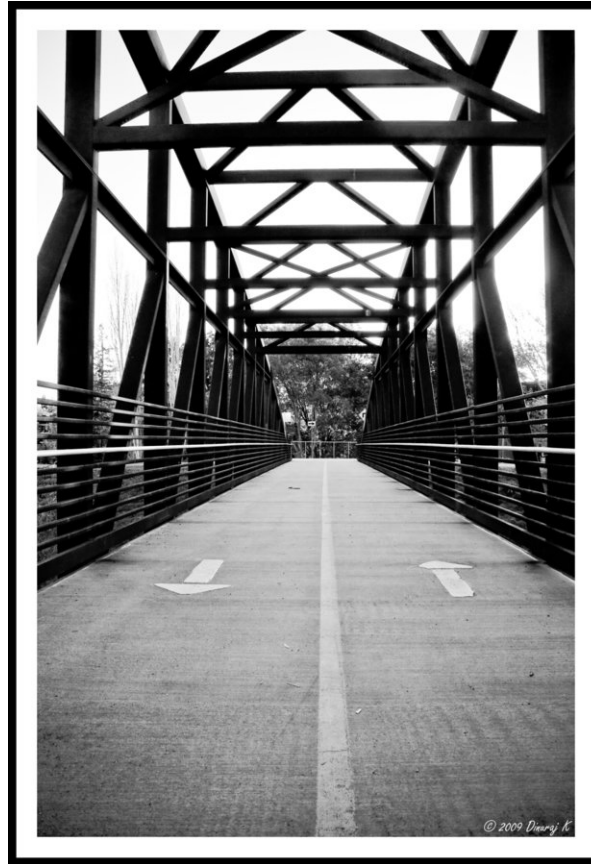
*"It would be unfair to give a number because I haven't researched the 'fair-market' value for this position in this city"*

*"I'm looking for the fair market value for this position in this city"*

*"I'm not at liberty to disclose my salary"*

*"Sorry, but I can't discuss my previous salaries as I have signed a non disclosure agreement"*

--Sean Larkin



# Interviewing and Offers

We're not going to talk about the secrets to a good interview. But we will talk about things you need to watch out for and asking some less common questions.



*“ It's important to remember that even though you feel like the interviewer is in the driver's seat, you have a lot of power. Demand for talent is high. If they aren't working to impress you and show you how awesome they are, be very skeptical.*

-- Melanie Haas

I think many people mistake an interview as a one-sided experience. If you want to be happy you have to find out all you can about the company you might work for. Otherwise you may not know what you're walking in to.

# Red flags to watch for...

- Vague Job Descriptions
- Too much HR involvement during interview process
- Needlessly complicated interview processes
- Upper management present at all times
- Attitudes of those interviewing you
- Promises, promises, promises
- No on-boarding/training plan and options
- Inspirational sayings on the walls

You need to watch out for these things when looking at postings and interviewing. They could save your butt.

\* "We'll figure it out as we go"

Also, the company's CEO loved having inspirational sayings all over the company... on walls, pillars, etc... big bold letters (stuff like "We're different." or "We're a balanced people."). A company that has to constantly say how they're different probably isn't. Differentiation should come mainly in what you do, not in what you say.

# Less Common Questions

- What is the leadership structure like? Who would be my supervisor?
- What is the turnover rate like? What's the average tenure for these types of positions?
- Tell me about the last 3 developers you had to let go
- How does the annual review process work?
- Is there a budget and time available for R&D?
- Are developers dedicated or shared across teams?
- How often are developers working after hours?



# Meet the team

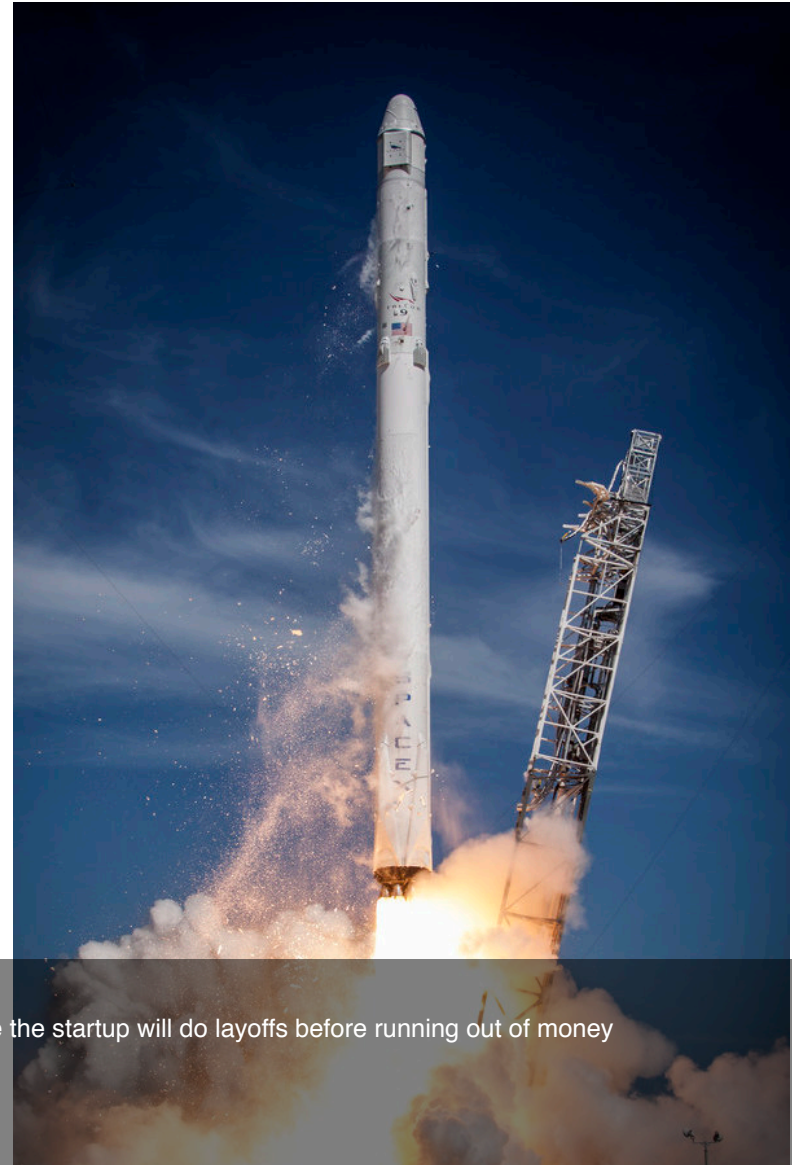
Make sure the team is represented in your interview. If not ask to talk with them.  
Try to meet outside of the interview with some team members and get their impressions.  
Ask to work with the team for a day and see how you jive.



# Startup Concerns

- Runway
- Clients
- Investors

1. Years of runway if all customers stopped
  - This isn't a guarantee of your job security from a cashflow perspective, because the startup will do layoffs before running out of money
2. How many clients
  - Free beta customers
  - Discounted customers
  - Retail customers
3. How many investors
  - How successful was the last round of funding?



# Evaluating Job Offers

- Get all of the numbers
- Compare the total compensation to your current
- Make sure those who depend on you have buy-in
- Find out the pay period timing

Make sure that any expected salary you give them is caveated with "assuming the same benefits I have now."

Get the numbers, you might not know what could come back to bite you.

Get the pay periods especially if you budget monthly.

# Current Total yearly compensation

	Employer Pays	You Pay
<b>GROSS Salary</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	
Time Off	\$2,400	
Insurance Premiums	\$3,600	\$3,600
Disability Insurance	\$300	
Life Insurance	\$130	
Employee Assistance Program	\$15	
Wellness Program/Gym	\$1,000	
Food Subsidies	\$600	
Retirement Matching (75% up to 6%)	\$1,800	
Other Matching (HSA)		
Cell Phone/Internet Reimb.	\$720	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50,565</b>	<b>\$3,600</b>

$$\$50,565 - \$3,600 = \mathbf{\$46,965}$$

This is the point where you negotiate a higher salary to make up the difference in compensation.

# Offered Total yearly compensation

	Employer Pays	You Pay
<b>GROSS Salary*</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	
Time Off*	\$1,600	
Insurance Premiums*	\$1,200	\$6,000
Disability Insurance	\$300	
Life Insurance	\$130	
Employee Assistance Program*	\$0	
Wellness Program/Gym*	\$0	
Food Subsidies*	\$0	
Retirement Matching*	\$0	\$2,250
Other Matching (HSA)		
Cell Phone/Internet Reimb.*	\$0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$53,230</b>	<b>\$8,250</b>

$$\$53,230 - \$8,250 = \mathbf{\$44,980}$$

# Remember

- Vacation time is negotiable
- Know your worth and don't get undervalued
- Be OK with walking away if things don't match your priority list.



# Leaving on Good Terms

It's really important to leave on good terms with your current employer. You want them to say "You are welcome back any time". You never know if things happen and you'll need to come back. Maybe things improve, policies change, projects change. Leaving on bad terms will leave a sour taste for your co-workers and they might not recommend you for a future position at another company. You don't want to go out like Gus here. As much fun as that would be.

***" Do your best to **not burn any bridges** on the way out, even if your previous workplace wouldn't do the same for you.***

*-- Dylan Baumann*



***" Don't burn bridges. Leave any position professionally.***

*-- Allana Pettigrew*

***" Do not burn a bridge.***

*-- Cory House*



***" Don't be a dick.***

*-- Aaron Wolfson*

***" Don't burn bridges...***

*-- Melanie Haas*



***" Make sure you **don't burn bridges** on the way out***

*-- Anonymous*



# The Counter Offer

There are (obviously) two camps in this debate.

If you take it you might be seen as who is not a long term employee and therefore not invested in.

But if you really want to stay and the only thing making you leave is the compensation then you should consider. But make sure it's understood that you intend to be around for a long time.



## Leaving Well

- Mind Payroll's timing
- Give plenty of notice
- Train the next in line
- Show your appreciation
- Happy Hour!
- Keep in touch
- Thank your old company



# Thank you!

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