Why I Quit My Engineering Job (at Netflix) | Medium

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I thought I was going to stay at Netflix forever. Top of market pay. Freedom and responsibility. Unlimited PTO. What more could you ask for?

So when I quit Netflix in May 2021, everyone thought I was crazy. My parents objected first. Coming from cultural revolution China where they barely had enough food to eat, they thought I was throwing away all the hard work they went through to come to America.

"Just keep your head down and do the work!" they said.

"Don't be ungrateful for what you have!" they said.

None of my friends could believe it either.

"But the free food!"

"FAANG!"

"Just rest and vest bro!"

The only argument I heard against quitting that made me slightly pause was from my mentor at Netflix. He said I shouldn't quit without another job lined up, because "I'd give up the leverage I had with my high salary at Netflix."

That made me pause for all of three days, but I quit anyways. Now eight months later, I am 100% certain this was the right decision.

In this article, I discuss the three factors that helped me understand the real cost of golden handcuffs, and why even a half-million dollar salary a year couldn't get me to stay at a job I no longer enjoyed.

With offices shutting down in March 2020, all the best parts of work — the socializing, the coworkers, the perks — disappeared.

And all you were left with was the work itself. So if you didn't like the work, and that was all you had, COVID magnified this fact 10x more.

And I wasn't enjoying the work. But it wasn't always this way.

I worked at Netflix for almost four years as a Senior Software Engineer in growth. At the beginning I felt like I was getting paid handsomely to learn. And up to around the two-year mark, I loved it…