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# I refuse to be CONTROLLED by MEDIOCRITY

## GITTE RANDRUP:

HR BUSINESS PARTNER, CONSULTANT/  
RECRUITER, BLOGGER

### Having the courage to make decisions provides a greater purpose in life.

I'm one of those people who has "pulled the plug" several times, as doing so was necessary for me to take my life in another direction, toward greater satisfaction or simply because I wanted to pursue a dream. I once asked for a leave of absence for three months so that I could go to Argentina and dance the tango. Another time, I quit my job because I wanted my career to go in another direction.

People have asked me how I dare to do this. I'll put it this way: "I don't dare to do it." Why is that? The answer is that remaining in mediocrity has never

done me any good. On the contrary, it has drained energy and joy from me.

It's my impression that a lot of people would like to do something similar—follow their dreams and get a more satisfactory working life. This is my impression because people have asked me about it with great interest. They have asked how I dared to take these actions, and how they could do something similar themselves. What makes me sad is that, for some, this never becomes a reality.

And I think that's a shame. We each have only one life and that life shouldn't be a rehearsal. My mother died at 66. She had been more or less suffering from an illness for the last 10 years of her life. This made me adopt a lifestyle of eating organic and healthy food, focusing on a partial vegetarian and vegan diet. I combine it with walking, biking, Pilates, and tango—not in abundance but a few times a week.

I'm aware that this doesn't guarantee a long, disease-free life. I've done what I can do about it. And it feels good. My mother's death also gave me the courage to change things if I wasn't

happy or wanted to make a dream come true.

*"How do you find the courage to go by yourself to Argentina without knowing anyone there?" a colleague asked me. I didn't have a clear-cut answer; I simply had the courage and wasn't afraid to do it.*

Probably, the answer is that I didn't want to look back at age 90 and regret not going to Argentina, as I wanted to delve deeply into the tango.

The same goes for situations in which I've either handed in my notice or decided to not pursue a prolongation or permanent position when an interim contract was about to end—when it had reached a point where the price for staying in the job was too high because I wasn't able to use my skills and was bored. Then I chose to quit and believe something better would be waiting for me in another place.

According to the 2017 Gallup report "State of the American Workplace," only 1/3 of the American workforce feels engaged at work; 16% are actively disengaged and 51% are not engaged—

they are just there. Staying in a job you don't like can have negative consequences. The book "Diagnosis Boreout," written by Philippe Rothlin and Peter R. Werder, who have examined job satisfaction, states that approximately 10% of the workforce in the Western world doesn't find their job meaningful. The authors state that especially behavioral strategies like pretending to be working, boredom, and a lack of challenges can eventually lead to illness if one succumbs to the pressure.

Yet how can we make a change without losing our homes—which no one wants to do?

I highly recommend putting aside money from your paycheck each month to secure a financial buffer. In time, this will give you freedom—the freedom to take a leave of absence to travel, to quit a job you don't like and pursue a new career, to write a book or whatever you desire. You may also choose to move to a cheaper area. I know people who have done so to follow their dream of going freelance and to deal with the insecurity in earnings that follows.

It's only your fantasy that sets the limit. I believe that material stuff doesn't provide real happiness. What does provide happiness is having something meaningful and energizing to look forward to every day.

~Gitte Randup <http://grconsult.dk/en/>

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**Gitte Randup** is an HR expert based in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the founder of GR Consult.

She is an advisor and HR Business Partner to managers on a wide range of HR subjects, such as recruiting, onboarding and organization and management.

Her vision is to create mutually satisfactory long-term working relationships between employers and employees combining business needs and strategy with the wants of the employees.

Gitte holds university degrees within HR, Organization & Management and Languages. She has worked with HR in companies, such as GEA and Nordea.

She is also an HR expert blogger on the Danish online debate forum Amino with more than 100,000 debaters and readers. <http://grconsult.dk/en/>

LinkedIn: [Gitterandrup](#) FB: [@Gitterandrup](#)



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