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To Freelance or Work Full Time – That's the Question

Two weeks ago, I had my first job interview in years. It came to me out of the blue: I e-mailed someone who e-mailed someone else, and before I knew it, I was called in to interview for a full-time position, the kind of position I have not held for a number of years.

Since 2004, I have been working as a freelance writer. I decided to do this after my second child was born because I am in a line of work where freelancing is easily doable, and I wanted to give it a go in order to spend more time with my children. It also seemed economically pointless to work full time, since about 80% of what I earned at the time would have gone on full-time care for two kids.

I have been lucky to get a steady stream of freelance writing work from a range of places, and this has enabled me to not only spend more time with my family, but to do different things like travel the world and live in different countries. I am my own boss and my friends who work full-time envy me my position.

But the lure of a full-time job has always been there. I watched closely as colleagues and friends who had worked with me at my old job rose through the professional ranks to take on positions at noteworthy publications. I envied women who despite having had children, chose to work full-time and I wondered how they did it so efficiently. I thought often about the benefits a full-time job offered, the security it seemingly afforded people. I worried that the freelance work might one day dry up, even as I told myself that those with full-time jobs were never totally secure either.

Yet it's exciting to think of going back to work in an office, of wearing a business suit and heels instead of lounging around in jeans and sneakers all the time. The idea of being part of a team, of attending meetings and holding a position of responsibility is enticing, not to mention being able to avail of other perks, such as subsidized health insurance. I

also feel that going back to full-time might make it easier to make a clearer separation between home and work.

Yet I'd still hesitate to take this job (if I'm offered it, of course), not only because I'll have to give up a lifestyle I have become very used to, but because it will mean having to put in place a whole new system to strike a work/life balance. I don't do things perfectly now, but I think I've managed to strike some sort of equilibrium between my work and personal life and I have a certain *modus operandi*.

This can be achieved by working full-time too, of course, but it will mean having to entirely rejigger the ways I do things right now, and to rethink all logistical (schedules, support systems) and emotional factors (needs and desires) of myself and my family.

I may be throwing away a great opportunity if I'm offered the job and don't take it, but the more important question is do I have the energy and the enthusiasm to put in an entirely new engine right now, to start from scratch again? I am not so sure – but I guess I'll go for the second interview anyway. – *Savita Iyer*