

Bad experiences make good requirements

After painful experiences, we humans try to avoid similar situations in the future; our emotions support us in this endeavour. This is helpful and necessary. However, people often do too much of a good thing and throw the baby out with the bathwater, so to speak: They don't evaluate their experiences enough and, in a short-circuit action, avoid anything that even remotely resembles the unpleasant experience.

Peter Näf

A few years ago, I did a personal and professional assessment with a client. She had a rather varied career: she had started her professional career with an apprenticeship in the hospitality industry. She then worked in a restaurant for several years. Starting as a waitress, she gradually took on the role of hostess as Chef de Service, which she enjoyed very much.

After a few months, she no longer liked it and resigned. Her next professional step was in the specialised trade. She again enjoyed working in sales for a few years.

Get to the bottom of your experiences

At some point, something was no longer right at this job either and she resigned. She ended up working in the security department of a large company. After initial satisfaction, however, motivation problems arose here too, which is why she came to see me.

She couldn't tell me what had prompted her to leave the various jobs, as she never analysed the reasons in depth. She assumed that the respective function was not a suitable profession for her, despite her initial satisfaction.

For the first job in the restaurant, we analysed why her motivation had changed. She realised that the reason was a new supervisor who had a different view of her job and did not allow her to work independently to the same extent as before.

Refine your requirements profile

The situation was similar in specialised retail: a new manager had changed the responsibilities and she lost part of her area of responsibility. Both hospitality and retail had appealed to her in principle, as she enjoyed customer service. But she had transferred her problems with one aspect of the professional situation not only to the job, but to the entire industry.

We re-evaluated her negative experiences and reformulated them into personal requirements for a professional situation. Among other things, it was important for her to have her own area of accountability in which she could bear responsibility and fulfil various tasks.

For most people, no one job is necessarily the right one. Instead, different careers are possible, but under certain conditions. Painful experiences help us to orientate our careers more and more towards our needs and ideas, if we evaluate them correctly.

My client has returned to the hospitality industry. This time, however, she had clear ideas about how she wanted to work and negotiated them during the application process.

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