

The Placement Diaries: Week 17 - Having an Anti Capitalist Mindset

7th January 2022

It's the first week of the New Year, and I'm already having doubts if self-employment (including freelancing as well) is even for me because there's a very fine line between being your own boss by being able to do your own thing, and monetising everything that you do, which also includes feeling guilty for taking time off, not to mention that the line is so thin, you don't know which side of the line you're on. Also, at this point, I kind of wish that I either took up a paid placement by an actual employer, or just went straight into my final year, because one thing about starting up your own business is that it involves a lot of work, and you have to do it all from scratch, whereas with a job, you just do what you're told to do, and in best case scenarios, you get to just leave your work at work, instead of having to think about it all the time.

I'm also beginning to wonder if self-employment is what I actually want to do, or if I've felt like I'm obliged to do it because everyone on social media is doing it, offering "easier" ways to make money. Maybe it's just an old dream that I've outgrown, since it's something that I've wanted to do, especially when I was younger. I know for a fact that making money off of people (mainly through them buying things from me, hypothetically) seems wrong and a bit illegal as well as a bit unethical, by contributing to consumerism when there's no need to do it. I also know for a fact that I can't stand mainstream social media at all because that's just a nightmare in itself and I wish that I could just bring myself to delete those accounts, but the main reason why I still hold onto them is partly because of fear and partly because I feel obliged to keep them in order to "network" with others (what happened to keeping a good old address book with people's contact details and only contacting them if you had to?). On top of that, I don't like being the center of attention at all because it feels uncomfortable and it's all eyes on me, which is absolutely terrifying.

Maybe I'm just talking myself out of it. Maybe I've just become disillusioned with consumerism and mainstream social media. I don't want to contribute to it anymore, and in that sense, I'm essentially an anti capitalist. I don't want work to become my whole life, and I don't want it to consume my entire identity, to the point where I'm just what I do and that's it, because I know that there's more to life than just fancy job titles and statuses. Maybe all I want is a job with decent hours that pays well, where I just go in, do the work, and get paid, as well as having my free time where I don't even have to think about work at all. Maybe I don't want to feel like I'm monetising my hobbies, because one thing I've realised is that once I turn those into a business, it sucks all the fun out of them, and they become work. Maybe I want to keep my work and personal life

as two separate things. Above anything else, all I want is a certain structure as well as stability in doing something meaningful, because I know for a fact that dealing with uncertainty is absolutely tiring, but at the same time, I also don't want to live life on autopilot either.

Great, now that's another dilemma to start my year off right. I think all of this pressure comes from all the hyper productive and typically alpha male "motivational" speakers (where they basically yell at you as well as belittling you, all in the name of motivation, because to them, the most important thing in the world is money along with power), who are usually a part of hustle culture, as well as being the ones who make you feel guilty for relaxing. Maybe all I want is a simple life where I don't have to spend every single second of my day working but never being able to enjoy the fruits of my labour because I'm too busy working.

To me, starting a business makes you become a capitalist and I realise that I want none of that. Sure, I'll have some flexibility in being my own boss or whatever, but I'll also be responsible in how successful or unsuccessful the business itself is.

I think I need to rethink my values, as well as considering what they really are, without any external influences, although that would be easier said than done, and figuring out a way how I can live my life according to my values. So far, my values consist of: avoiding corporations when I can by using sustainable alternatives (whether it's opting for plant based things, or using free open source software) because it seems more ethical, and avoiding mainstream social media since it's all full of ads and algorithms anyway, so I don't get why people still use those platforms (mainly out of obligation, habit, and addiction, I suppose). I realise that I don't want to go big or be the next famous person, I'd rather just be me, doing the things that suit me, whether they are popular or not.

I have a feeling that you're either a successful and popular entrepreneur, or you aren't, and I'm slowly realising that I'm not, along with accepting the fact that it isn't who I am, no matter how hard I try. Surely, some make it big, but it's mainly down to luck as well as certain aspects of their personality (in this case, being more extroverted and wanting to be seen, whereas I'm the opposite), but others can put in all the hard work, and their business won't take off.

So, that's been my anti capitalist musing of the week, but it's essentially the middle of the placement year, and I have to at least finish what I started, so that I might have a very slim chance in turning this into a full time career, but then again, a placement year is where you get to try your hand at the industry that you want to go into before fully launching yourself in, and so that you get the time to figure out if it's right for you or not.