

What matters to you more than money?

Dramatic changes in the job market – and the way we live – have left many of us re-thinking our priorities in the wake of COVID-19, and doing some soul-searching into what really matters. And for many of us, it isn't money.

If you've had a taste of working from home during lockdown, you might now be looking for a permanent work-from-home role so you can spend more time with your family.

Or if you've faced redundancy, job security might matter more than anything else right now.

In fact, more money isn't the main driver for a lot of us now. Most people would choose job security, less stress and time with our families before higher pay, research for SEEK shows.

If Kiwis were choosing between higher pay and other options:

- 60% would opt for job security over higher pay;
- 51% would choose less stress over higher pay;
- 60% would rather more time with family over higher pay.

Leah Lambart, career coach at [Relaunch Me](#), gives some practical advice around these three alternatives to higher pay.

Job security

If you've been made redundant or been stood down during the pandemic, job security could be more appealing to you than higher pay.

"Many clients that we are speaking with are very happy to take a step back financially if it means that they can get back into the workforce sooner," Lambart says.

"They are willing to take a lower pay and work at a lower level if it means they can return to work and start contributing to a good company."

But Lambart warns that people should be wary of employers who may take advantage of the situation by offering lower pay for jobs that still require high responsibility and stress.

Whether you decide to take a job at lower pay will depend on your values: what is important to you right now?

"Are you able to wait it out, or do you need to make some compromises in order to meet certain commitments?"

Less stress

Living through a pandemic is stressful enough, without extra pressures at work. If you're dreaming of a less stressful job, you're not alone.

For some people, the enforced downtime during COVID-19 lockdowns meant time to reflect.

Many of Lambart's clients have used this time to take stock and think about what they want from their next role.

"In many cases, they enjoyed the slower pace of working from home, spending more time with family and not having the stresses that they usually face," she says.

"As a result, many have suggested that they are open to taking a smaller role with less responsibility, less travel and less stress so that they can continue to go at a slower pace after things return to normal."

Time with family

Flexibility was prized before the pandemic hit, especially for parents, who want flexibility around family commitments without feeling guilty.

Now more people have had a taste of working from home, it's become a top three priority.

If you've been working from home, you might have felt more productive and energised without a long commute, while also having more time with your family.

So it's no surprise that many people would prefer a role that lets them work from home for some or all of the time, or a role that's closer to home, Lambart says.

"Employees are not necessarily only looking for part-time work, but just a bit of flexibility around family commitments without feeling guilty."

"Hopefully after COVID-19, more employers will be open to this type of working arrangement, which will make it much easier for employees with family commitments or who work a long distance from their office."

If you're in a role that you'd like to bring more flexibility into, [here are some tips to help you tell your boss you want to work differently now](#).

If your values have shifted recently, you're not alone. Take heart that for many people, the massive changes from living through a pandemic have shown that there are new ways of working – and money isn't always what we want most.

Source: Independent research conducted by Nature on behalf of SEEK interviewing 4000 Kiwis annually. Published October 2020.

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