
Editorial: The Difference Between a Job and a Profession

by Thomas D. Landis

Growing up, my mom and dad continually stressed the importance of education and I still remember my dad explaining to me the difference between a job and a profession. I've been thinking a lot about this since I retired almost 10 years ago. Some people are surprised that I still want to work, and have made comments like: "Oh, so you failed retirement". My response is that you can retire from a job, but you don't *want* to retire from a profession.

I went to the internet to clarify the distinction between a job and a profession, and here's what I found (Wikianswers 2013):

Job stands for "just over broke" thus requiring minimal education and one with little to no experience will suffice to get the job done. One can easily be replaced at a job.

Profession is a commitment to a higher level of education where one must attend and acquire skilled training. A profession requires critical thinking skills. The ability to master technique and a desire expand one's knowledge. Usually a profession has a distinct body of knowledge specific to that profession. A profession should be rewarding to self and those served by the profession. A profession should provide the professional with adequate means of compensation. Finally, a profession should be one that the individual continues to desire to return to day after day without dread.

Okay, so much for the clinical definitions. Here are my thoughts about what it means to be a professional:

Taking pride in your work. Here's where I disagree with the traditional distinction: I believe that it doesn't take a college degree to be a professional. Around nurseries, I have seen many professionals at work and many of them don't have a college education. These folks love what they are doing and are doing it for more than just the salary. Nursery work involves constant problem solving and I have been amazed at the skill, innovation, and dedication that our crews exhibit every day.

Providing a Service. In a profession, you want to provide a valuable service and give something back to your community. Nursery folks know that what they are doing is a public service, and that reforestation and restoration are good for the earth. They know that what they are doing is making a difference.

Exhibiting Creativity. Unfortunately, I don't have any artistic talent but my work give me the chance to practice creative thinking. It's very satisfying to solve problems in nurseries, and there's nothing more rewarding than walking through nursery beds or a greenhouse and experiencing the beauty of healthy, growing plants. You can't fake it in nurseries - either your stock is green or healthy, or it's not.

Well, as many of you know, I like to search for the humor in any situation so let's close with these cartoons.

Reference

Wikianswers. 2013. What is the difference between profession and job? URL: http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_the_difference_between_profession_and_job (accessed 12 July 2013).



“It’s good to know about trees. Just remember nobody ever made any big money knowing about trees.”

