

Rodger on Retirement

Focusing on what is important - your personal development

I recently overheard a millennial, let's call him Kevin, saying he had mastered the video game, *Guitar Hero*, a game available on Xbox and PlayStation. He said that it took him almost 60 hours. Kevin's friend Larry then responded by saying he had spent the last four weekends on his PlayStation waging make-believe war on *Call of Duty*. Worse yet, he explained that he spent three months to make his way up to level 15.

I smiled and remembered what my mentor, Brian Tracy, loves to say: "One of the very worst uses of time is to do something very well that need not be done at all." Imagine spending hundreds of hours mastering a video game. This may be great for the ego, but probably not so much for achieving your life goals and advancing your career, unless that is your career. It's kind of like being superb at getting a cup of coffee. So what?

Let me contrast this with George, who I recently met at an investment conference. He graduated from Georgetown University a few years ago and had an entry to mid-level job at a nonprofit. He participated in his employer-sponsored 403(b) retirement savings plan and contributed to a ROTH IRA. Outside of work, he participates in an online marketing class twice a week; attends out-of-state conferences; and devours newsletter, blogs, books, online forums, and CDs on professional development. My discussions with him are fascinating and I recognize that this is a man with a purpose. I doubt that several years from now, he will be at that same nonprofit in the same entry to mid-level position.

It would not be a leap of faith to imagine where Kevin and Larry will be two to three years from now. I assume Kevin will have invested several hundred more hours in *Guitar Hero* and Larry will have conquered unimagined levels on his game. My guess is that George will outpace them by a wide margin in many areas of life. Where Kevin and Larry spend large amounts of free time pursuing trivial activities, George allocates his time to personal development and career improvement. When Kevin and Larry are done mastering their games, they may just begin to think about opening up an IRA account! My bet is that in the game of life and success, George will run rings around Kevin and Larry.

Take a moment of your time to do a self-check. Where do you spend large portions of your time? Do spend most of your time on activities for self-improvement? Or perhaps activities that are fun, yet trivial? The quality of your life will be determined by the quality of your decisions. The decisions on how you spend your time and what you will focus on is paramount.