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Stepping up the leagues of professional life

by Nikola Milošević? - Sunday, August 12, 2018

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Professional life is a competition. However, it is not a competition like a simple race, where all you need to do is to be the best in the race. It is more like an athletic federation league or football league. There are multiple categories of players and you are one of them trying to find your place. You start small in the worst league there is. In most countries, the public primary schools are places that are mandatory for all kids and you are competing against people with all backgrounds. Now if you are successful, there are 3-4 kids of similar strength as yours. You have to do it for a while. Sometimes they let you compete with the best kids from other schools on city or country level, but that happens once or twice a year. But you don't get a grasp of how it is to compete against the best. After a number of years, you step up. In Serbia, you can choose which high schools you want to apply to and if your long-term goal University then you go to Gymnasium. Now one is in competition with the best kids, striving for the same goal from one municipality. It is way harder to be the best. You grow, you strive and you struggle.

Then you go to the University. Now you are in a competition that is more specialized in the area where you also excelled before. And again it is way harder to be good compared to the others. Some people burn out during this academic period and don't graduate. Some do and take it further to specialized jobs, masters, PhDs. Then some move country. Move to some of the biggest hubs in their professional areas. Now it is not any more national competition. You compete with the people who are the best in the area from all the countries in the world.

The whole described process can be very hard and very frustrating for people in it. Some settle for the lower goals. Some make a shift in priorities, where they don't put jobs as the major priority. They settle for the happy family and average job. However, why wouldn't you be able to have both a great job and a great and happy family?

It is dark though, however, life is a struggle. And it never gets easier. My dad used to say "Now you have to struggle for the exam, but afterward, you can have fun." Unfortunately, that is not true, there will be another exam, other work, other competition, each one harder and more challenging than the previous. However, if you find a joy in the thing you are doing and are happy to compete and do more of it, it is great. If you don't like what you do, it is time to settle in the league where you belong and try not to reach the stars.

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