

Room at the Bottom

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It's crowded up there, isn't it? Barely enough room for one man at the top, with quite a crowd in your pyramidal structure all striving to get there. And there is only one way for the next man to reach the pinnacle: *you* have to be moved!

Management is young today, and at fifty you are no longer the experienced sage that your father was—you're just an old man, inflexible, incapable, in the way.

Not only does the responsibility become greater the longer you remain there, but the precariousness of your position becomes your permanent problem — at work and at home, awake or asleep. If you can sleep!

The strain mounts—the stress becomes greater each day until the inevitable happens: a coronary, followed by a seat on the board—out of harm's way. Provided you survive that coronary!

But before that happens, why don't you consider doing your own thing? Or, to put it more professionally, why don't you become a free-lance? You are going to retire anyway, sooner or later. Make it sooner. What are you going to do with yourself when you retire? Have a hobby, doubtless, but will eighteen holes of golf every day stimulate your brain? Or will classifying your stamp collection from nine to five be a challenge to the mind that once planned the take-over of the decade?

If you are fifty and caught in the rat race, take stock of yourself. Discover your particular creative talent and develop that as soon as you can. Bring it to the point where it can be a marketable proposition and go forth as a free-lance—a one-man concern.

Naturally this won't work if you still have three children at university and another two at high school. But if there are only yourself and your wife to feed, for the sake of your happiness, leave the rat race before you are a loser, and learn to relax. Discover the pleasures of working for yourself and of receiving praise—and money—for your talents.

Before you take this step, there are a few very personal decisions that you will have to make. Like making up your mind firmly about which of the

many luxuries surrounding you are mere status symbols and could be discarded. Or deciding how much money is necessary in order to live comfortably as opposed to luxuriously. You'd be surprised how little you need in order to live very happily. After all, how much do you pay your typist or your young accountant? Not an awful lot to be sure, yet they live on it.

That executive 8-cylinder of yours. If you get rid of it you could pocket almost R9 000 after buying that basic small car for transporting yourself and your product around town. Let your wife have her good, medium-sized car and use that for your longer journeys.

Your R100 000 home. As a free-lance you don't have to impress anybody. You could let it to the ambassador for a princely rental and spend one-third of that money on a luxury flat. No more pass troubles with the gardener, no more brawls in the backyard, no more algae in the swimming pool.

Another pleasant little side benefit is the fact that you are no longer the free boarding house for all the family coming down to the Cape for the summer or to the Transvaal for the winter months! Besides, you are going to be far too busy as a writer or a fretworker or a carver of delicate statuettes to be the year-round host.

Make no mistake, you *are* going to work hard! And you are going to require self-discipline and regular working hours—remember that old story about genius being 90% perspiration and 10% inspiration? Well, that is precisely what the free-lance game is all about. You set yourself a target of how ever much you need to live on and you go out and earn it. That and no more. Don't start your own private rat race! Now, for the first time in years, you will be able to enjoy—deeply enjoy—what you're doing. At the same time you will experience an immense satisfaction as a creative artist. And the joy when that first cheque arrives! You will be able to go to bed pleasantly tired and ready for sleep. You will wake up, not dreading the new day and its accompanying problems, but impatient to get up and get stuck into a project of your own

choosing. With your creativity will come restfulness and relaxation. You are going to be flattered by friends who will keep telling you how well, or even how young, you look. And you will smile to yourself because you know why.

So start looking around now. Find out whether you can do that own thing that you have always

wanted to do. Maybe it's building swimming-pool filters that really work—or painting water colour studies of Transvaal wild flowers—or you may have a flair for writing very funny 'Get-Well' cards. Whatever it is, start practising now and when you are ready . . . jump off that pinnacle. There's lots of room right here at the bottom!