

Career Choices

Guidance counsellor: Hello Leoni, how are you doing? You wanted to talk to me?

Leoni: Yeah, that's right. Yeah, I have a problem.

Guidance counsellor: OK, come on, open up and talk to me, that's what I'm here for.

Leoni: Well, the problem is... is my mother, and I'm sure you'll go "yeah, yeah, everyone's problem is their mother," but basically the problem is, she wants me to do one thing, and I want to do something else, and they're so different those two things... it's just no way around it, I mean, one way one of us is just gonna suffer, and...

Guidance counsellor: What is it that you mother is doing to you? What precisely is the problem?

Leoni: Well, my mother wants me to study medicine, and become a doctor, and I want to study music, and that's the problem.

Guidance counsellor: OK. Are you good at music?

Leoni: Eh... I don't like evaluating myself, and sort of... but, yes, I'd say that I'm good enough at music to be able to study it, and become a musician, at some level.

Guidance counsellor: And, do you see a future for yourself in this? Do you think you could make a living at it?

Leoni: Yes, I don't think I could make serious money out of it, but I could make enough to be able to live off it.

Guidance counsellor: And, when you say musician, what kind of a musician are we talking about?

Leoni: I'd like to be a freelance musician, doing a bit of... You know, different stuff, not just spending my life in a symphony orchestra, or as a teacher at some kind of music school, but...

Guidance counsellor: What instrument are you playing by the way?

Leoni: My main instrument is the violin, but I also play the piano and the drums.

Guidance counsellor: OK, and your mother wants you to be a medical student, you said, or to study medicine, what have you got against medical studies?

Leoni: A lot. I mean, for one, they take seven years, or something like that, and there's loads of reading involved, about things that I'm not interested in, and also things that I'm

not able to understand, like chemistry... And, even when you're finished with the seven years of reading about stuff you're not interested in, you're gonna spend a life practicing what you're not interested in. I mean, it's great to save people, and to help the world and stuff, and I mean, that's also a dilemma, you know, it's like, if you're gonna study music and become a musician, what do you actually do to help save the world? But, I don't think I'd save the world by practicing something that I don't think is interesting, that I don't like, and that makes me sick. I hate the sight of blood for example.

Guidance counsellor: But of course, these preliminary subjects like chemistry etc... that you're not actually practicing chemistry, they're just sort of background subjects, what you would be practicing is medicine, helping people, healing people.

Leoni: Yeah, but, I mean, to be able to heal these people you'd have to... you'd have to know all the stuff about their muscles, about their bones, you'd have to be able to tell them what's wrong with them, and to be able to tell them what's wrong with them you'd have to have a full understanding of their body, and their...you know, partly, or so, their mind, or their... sort of their psychology, and I think, you know, when you... once you've got that, I mean, you've got it, you can use it, but I just don't think... I mean, there's loads of ways you could help people, I mean, my dad tells me that I'll do good whatever I do, if I want to do good.

Guidance counsellor: Yes, of course, but that's a very easy thing for anybody to say, but what guarantees have you got about your music?

Leoni: I don't have any guarantees, I mean, you never do. I mean, in most professions you have no guarantee. I think medical... being a doctor are one of the few professions where you're pretty guaranteed of a job, but in most professions you don't know. You don't know what's gonna happen, you don't know who you're gonna meet, you don't know where you're gonna end up, and that's what's to know; there's no guarantee.

Guidance counsellor: And, what about lifestyle?

Leoni: What do you mean?

Guidance counsellor: Well, what I mean is, if you're gonna be a musician, and you're gonna be a freelancer, you probably haven't got much money, you're much more on your own, you probably will be living slightly above the poverty line, do you think? Is that possible? Are you capable of doing that?

Leoni: Well, I've grown up living there, because both my parents are artists, and that's basically where we've been, so, you know, my whole childhood is influenced of not having enough money, and so on... and... no expensive holidays, and... so, I don't think that would be a problem, I think I'd be perfectly capable of living there.

Guidance counsellor: Do you think this may be could be what is worrying your mother?

Leoni: Yeah, maybe. I mean, my mom's in the theatre, and... but, that's theatre and this is music, they're two different things. I mean, I think, she... she's told me loads of times that if she could choose again she'd choose to study to be a psychiatrist, you know, or whatever, and she's told me that many times, and I'm sure that she'd do great as a psychiatrist, but there's a difference between music and the theatre. There's a difference, and I don't think she'd feel any better if I ended up doing what she would have done if she could have chosen again.

Guidance counsellor: Yes, at this point, I really don't know what my advice to you would be.