

**EPISODE 1240**

*“**JC:** People aren't willing to put up with as much as they put up with before. I should say, I don't think quitting is good just in itself, right? It's not just that quitting is so great, no matter what. It's that quitting is good when your boundaries have been violated, or when you've been asked to work 80 hours a week for the last three years, or when you really aren't able to solve the problems that need to be solved at your workplace. That's when you really should quit.”*

[INTRODUCTION]

**ANNOUNCER:** You're listening to Money with award-winning money guru, Farnoosh Torabi. Each day, you get a 30-minute dose of financial inspiration from the world's top business minds, authors, influencers, and from Farnoosh herself. Looking for ways to save on gas or double your double coupons? Sorry, you're in the wrong place. Seeking profound ways to live a richer, happier life? Welcome to Money.

[00:01:08]

**FT:** Welcome to So Money, everybody. I'm your host, Farnoosh Torabi. We're dedicating this entire week to the theme of quitting your job. It is something many Americans and people globally are considering. Can you blame us? A Microsoft survey of more than 30,000 global workers showed that 41% of workers considering quitting, or changing professions this year. In April alone, our country saw more than 4 million people quit their jobs, put in their notices. That's according to the Department of Labor. That is the biggest spike on record. It's what many journalists and economists are calling The Great Resignation.

There's many reasons, of course, for quitting right now. The pandemic has led to a shift in our values and our priorities. It's made us think about what it really means to be happy at work. Employers are also responsible for the reason many people are leaving the workforce; low pay, bad working conditions. A lot of that came to a head in the pandemic and many of us are saying, “No more. I quit.” How do you actually do this so that you can land on your feet? Is quitting always the right solution?

Our guest today is Jessica Carney. She is the host of the And Then I Quit Podcast, where she invites guests to offer up funny and absurd stories about jobs they've quit. Jessica herself, a serial quitter, she is an event planner who's coordinated everything from concerts, to weddings. She's quit a lot of jobs, and she'll talk about that on the show. As well as, why we ought to reframe the cultural narrative around quitting?

We often characterize quitting as an act of cowardice, giving up. Maybe we should talk about how it's a show of confidence. Jessica also has some cool advice for those of us who want to quit, but may not feel as though we have the financial ability to do so. As I said, this is the first of a series of episodes this week. On Wednesday, we'll be talking to a friend who recently left the New York Times, Tim Herrera. What led to his resignation? Then on Friday, we have rounded up all of your questions about how to quit and my co-host guest is Dan Shawbel, employment expert.

If you're thinking about quitting this year, or ever, or if you just want to hear about other people's stories of throwing in the towel, this is the week you don't want to miss. Make sure you're subscribed to So Money, so you always get this episode first before anybody else and you don't have to go searching for it. Here is Jessica Carney.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:03:34]

**FT:** Jessica Carney, welcome to So Money. We're going to talk about how to quit this week. You are kicking us off as the host of the podcast And Then I Quit, which is an incredible podcast. Everybody go subscribe. Highlighting anecdotal personal stories of how people quit. Right now, a lot of people thinking about quitting, so we're very excited to have you on to help guide us through this very big decision.

[00:04:01]

**JC:** Yes, thank you so much for having me today. This is one of my favorite topics to talk about.

**[00:04:05]**

**FT:** I mean, you're experienced in this. You quit your job multiple times throughout your career. Let's start with the news right now. Where we are at in the world? We are, I can't really say post-pandemic yet. I mean, the last year and a half, for many people who had a job on the one hand, maybe you felt grateful that you had work, but a lot of us who worked and maybe parented at the same time, or care-gave for family and friends and neighbors, it was a lot to take on. Now, we're at this place of being incredibly tired and spent and thinking of quitting. 40% of Americans looking at transitioning and leaving the workforce to something new. What's your thought on that, just top line? What are your reflections on that when you read those headlines?

**[00:04:53]**

**JC:** Yeah. There's some really interesting stuff happening right now, in regards to quitting. People aren't willing to put up with as much as they put up with before. I should say, I don't think quitting is good just in itself. It's not just that quitting is so great, no matter what. It's that quitting is good when your boundaries have been violated, or when you've been asked to work 80 hours a week for the last three years, or when you really aren't able to solve the problems that need to be solved at your workplace, that's when you really should quit.

In a lot of cases, people weren't doing that before. You might have heard people say, "Yeah, I've been in this job for five years, and I've been unhappy the whole time." It's like, "Well, what? You've been there for five years, not happy?" In this moment, people are quitting right now, when they're unhappy, which I think is great.

**[00:05:46]**

**FT:** Well, you used a really important word, which is boundaries. Traditionally, we don't think of walking into a job and we creating boundaries. We think our employer is going to establish those boundaries, then we're going to work within those boundaries. Talk a little bit about how to establish boundaries, especially if you're new on the job. It's important, but how do you do it so

that you don't come across as somebody who's not a team player, or inaccessible, all those things that we worry about?

**[00:06:14]**

**JC:** Yeah, and people really don't teach you how to do this. How to talk to your boss, if you feel like, "Okay, I'm getting texts late at night for things that aren't even urgent. This is violating a boundary for me." I really learned that by osmosis, and it took a long time. I did not learn that right away. You really have to have those conversations that are very uncomfortable sometimes, and say, "I really don't need to be getting these texts the evening when I'm at home." Or, "You're really not listening to me when I'm saying I don't want to work 60 hours a week, and there might be some other solutions and ways to spread out duties."

These are uncomfortable conversations to have, but really, no one's going to look out for you, but yourself in that way. You have to have your own boundaries, when you come into a new job. Or even if you've been in a job for a while, you might have to take a minute and say, "Wait a second. What really are the lines that I'm not okay with having crossed?"

**[00:07:17]**

**FT:** Do you think we've come away in the last year or two, we've come a bit of a distance to a place where we now have more agency at work? That employers are now having to listen to us have these conversations with them, for us to be the ones initiating them? Especially in a moment where there's a pandemic, plus a recession and you have a job, you're just happy to be there. I think a lot of people who are coming out of college into a recession, maybe not so much now, but I'm thinking in our recent history, there definitely was a sentiment that take what you can get, happy to be here. I don't want to rock the boat. What can you say about where we are now, in terms of the more freedom we might have to say, "No, I can voice," and without facing penalty?

**[00:08:06]**

**JC:** Right. That's interesting that you brought that up. That's very much my story. I graduated college and was launched directly into the great recession, like so many people. I very much did have that attitude at a lot of jobs. Just happy to be there. Yep, all do these extra things. Yep, I'll work these extra hours. Now, something interesting is happening, where because, and in this moment, this is really just in the last few months, so many jobs are suddenly available. Employers are having to spend less than zero minutes thinking about how to make the workplace tolerable for their employees. They're having to think about this just a little bit.

The funny thing is, that was always a beneficial thing to do, because it's costly to lose employees. It takes time to hire. You lose a lot of knowledge. Really, it would have been great if employers were doing this on a broader scale for a long time. That really wasn't my experience in the workplace, with my 13 years in the working world being heavily tainted by the great recession. Really, this change that you're referring to, I do feel like that only started in what? April and May. This is super recent, where people do have that little bit of agency.

**[00:09:25]**

**FT:** Yeah. Putting the employee first is now more and more a necessity for companies, as they are in depending on the industry, begging for talent. There aren't enough jobs. I see reports of players that do put the employee first, that have great benefits, that are willing to have these hard conversations about allowing for boundaries and all that, seeing an overwhelm of application. That's very telling.

Let's talk a little bit more about your previous life, multiple quitter. An event planner who has coordinated everything, this is you, from concerts at an arena to weddings at a museum. I almost had my wedding at a museum. I think, wedding planners are usually – I bow to you. You have so much to coordinate, and it's like, “The most important day of my life, so don't mess it up. No pressure.” You've also interviewed many people about how and why they have quit on your podcast. Tell me about your experience in your career, quitting the moments when you did quit, what led up to them?

**[00:10:33]**

**JC:** Yeah. I should say, I really never sought out to become the face of quitting, or anything like that. It's a bit of an accident. Like you mentioned, I did choose an extremely stressful profession in event planning. I mentioned in my bio, that it's usually listed as one of the most stressful professions you can have. Usually, the reason given for that is, there's so many things you can't control in event planning. You have a vendor going rogue, and then a rainstorm. Then something breaks in the building. There's so many things that even though you've planned perfectly, you cannot control.

It's a crazy job to pick anyway. I should put that asterisk on it that it's not maybe as unusual to quit a little more frequently, when you pick a really stressful profession. There are many things that led to my quitting stories in those jobs. Some of them are mirrored on the podcast a little bit. One of my guests talked about working somewhere, where they wanted to be a family, right? Everything's like a family, like a family. Really, that meant using that word again, that they were violating this woman's boundaries. They were asking for too much for her. They were expecting her to know things intuitively that weren't explained to her. All those things happened to me.

Another guest had a pretty extreme micromanager. Have experienced that, too. Part of what I've really learned through the podcast is no matter how weird the job, a lot of the themes about why people are quitting are the same.

**[00:12:11]**

**FT:** You said something earlier about you never thought of yourself as a quitter. You never sought this title of the poster woman for quitting. It's a great transition to talking about our culture, and what we think of quitting. We don't like to think of ourselves as quitters. Yet, when people quit, there is this incredible sense of victory, of a weight being lifted from their shoulders. You wonder why we don't do it more often. Can you talk about that contrast of what we perceive to be, what quitting perceives to be and then what it ends up actually being for us, which is, in a lot of cases, this great feeling of relief?

**[00:12:50]**

**JC:** Yeah. I think, throughout my career, when I would complain about work to family or friends, I feel like, they would just use the phrase, “See if you can stick it out,” just as an instinct almost. Just as a reflex. That isn't always the right thing. Even if you're a driven person and a motivated person, it isn't always the right answer to stick it out. I think, part of what you might be getting at is conflicts with your idea of yourself as a motivated person, as a good worker, if you quit. I really don't think those things are as much in contrast, as people might think.

It does mean that you should maybe try make an attempt, even if you think it's futile, just for yourself to try to solve the problems that you're experiencing work, to try to have that conversation with your boss. If you do that, and ultimately end up quitting, that doesn't make you an unmotivated person, or a bad person. Really, where was that shame coming from that you felt? I think, that was sometimes coming from the employer trying to make you feel bad about quitting, because it's harder for them when you quit than it is for you.

**[00:13:59]**

**FT:** I will say personally, when I was in my early 20s, I had this incredible opportunity to go work at New York One News. I was 23-years-old, or 24-years-old. I was under qualified, but whatever. I'm all about going and shooting for the stars and learning curve, learn on the job. I was definitely learning on the job. It was a big learning curve. I got this job as producer. In fact, the first day I got there, someone mistook me for an intern. When I told her, “No, I was a producer,” she never talked to me again. She was so appalled by this. She's probably like, “Wait, I'm a producer and I'm 10 years older than you.”

This is just to give you a sense of what I was walking into and already feeling in a hostile place, where people were undermining me, because of my age and lack of experience. Some of that, maybe was merited, because I definitely was green. After a while, the stress of the job was really getting to me. In fact, it was my father, after many months of misery, he said to me, “You have two options here. You can quit, or you have to find a way to find happiness at work at the work that you have.” I didn't want to quit. It was like, it never even crossed my mind for multiple reasons. You said, maybe it's because the employer made you feel that. I feel like the employer would have loved it if I quit, frankly.

I think it was one, my background, okay. I'm a daughter of immigrants. Immigrants don't quit. They come here and they stick it out and they work hard. They fight adversity. I just felt like, if I quit, it was going to be a mark of shame on my parents' legacy. Then the other was just the job was so mighty and great. I felt I worked so hard to get it. I mean, I walked into the interview with a PowerPoint presentation. I earned that job. I won the interview. I felt, if I quit, what a waste. I got so far. I didn't get this far, just to get this far. It's like, you know that famous saying?

My father, his second point of find a way to make this work. You can quit, and which was not really an option for me, or you had to find a way to make it work. I took door number two, option B. I learned that I was really sensitive at work. I was just caring too much about what people thought. As soon as I committed to tuning out those negative voices, or those raised eyebrows, I just put my head down and worked and got really good at my job, so that nobody had anything on me. I was there for two and a half more years. I left with a lot of friends and a lot of great references.

Overall, it was an amazing experience. That first six months was very touch and go for me. My question now for you is, how can we make it work at work if we're not happy? We've already accepted that quitting is not an option for whatever reason. Then, how do we make it work at work?

**[00:16:55]**

**JC:** Yeah. I think, one thing to think about is that if you're thinking about quitting, because of one main problem, so one that comes up frequently is a boss. I really like my tasks. I like what I'm doing. Can't stand my boss. Even though I have a podcast called that, And Then I Quit, I wouldn't actually recommend quitting in that scenario, for the most part, because your boss might quit, for one thing. If you've got one issue you're trying to solve, you might be going into another job that has five new issues you didn't know about. That is something I've learned the hard way.

It's certainly not always been a fairy tale every time I've gone into the next job, because sometimes I've just been a little too eager to solve my problem by getting a new job. Then, you've got some new ones there that are a surprise. There are certainly times when that's not



the solution, when if it's truly everything, if it's your boss, the tasks, the hours, it seems like quitting is the best option. If it's one thing, I would hesitate to quit.

**[00:18:01]**

**FT:** Yeah. Now, you yourself earlier in your career, I was reading on your website, you experienced a very memorable/horrible interview, where your skirt had torn in the back. By the way, that completely happened to me once in an interview. I think, we're maybe skirts sisters. I don't know. Oh, boy. That was a moment. That interview went south, and not because of the skirt necessarily, which was the funny part. It was a lot of other things that were happening in the interview. That was very revealing to you as far as what you did not want in a job. You ended up not taking that job, obviously. Can you share that experience with us, and maybe some of the learnings?

**[00:18:40]**

**JC:** Yeah, absolutely. I wrote an essay for Shondaland about an interview that went terribly wrong, I really bombed that interview. I didn't even get off of the job, just to say. It wasn't that I chose not to take it. They definitely did not offer me that job. I had taken that interview, because I thought that job might be my step back, my transition into more normal hours, into a little more normalcy at work. I thought that's what that job was.

Once I got there, I realized that was not the case at all. I realized that, because the interviewers were asking me questions like, "Can you work a bunch of extra hours and nights and weekends, whatever?" Of course, I said, "Yep." The real answer was, no, I don't want to, but I had no idea how to say that. Then I just bombed it from there, because I was so stressed out. That was really a turning point in my career, where I realized, I have to ask for what I want, and this isn't what I want anymore.

**[00:19:44]**

**FT:** Yet, how do you ask for that in the interview? I feel that's a deal-breaker for some employers. I mean, if the job requires a lot of hours, and you can't commit to that for whatever reason, it's just never going to be a good fit. Or do you try to find a way to make it work?

**[00:20:00]**

**JC:** I think, you have to be honest, because it's such a pain to switch jobs. If you end up in that job, and that's not what you wanted, it's almost better off to be honest. Honestly, it would have been a deal-breaker, but is it now? I'm not so sure. You might be able to say some of those things at a company that's been desperately searching for employees. They might be like, "Okay, we'll make that work. Well, we can live with your boundaries and your rules, because we need you and we think you'll be great." I might try that now in this environment.

**[00:20:31]**

**FT:** Yeah. Well, a lot of people right now are trying to quit, or have already quit, or let's talk to those who are in the audience who are considering quitting. It's like, it would be their dream come true, but for various reasons; emotional, financial, both. They can't. They're stuck. I think, that that's – it's a privilege to be able to quit truly. To be able to quit and feel safe on the other side of things. What's your advice for somebody who may not feel ready for whatever reason? They don't have a savings cushion, or – Well, let's just take this one at a time. They don't have the savings cushion. Then there's others who may not have something lined up. Even if they have a savings cushion, they're nervous about that gap, like taking six months or a year to find another job and explaining that gap. Let's focus on those who don't have the money to quit. What's your advice?

**[00:21:25]**

**JC:** Yeah. I think, I'd be lying if I say, I have absolutely perfect advice for people in those situations. I do have a spouse who earns an income, that has always given me a little bit of a cushion. That is part of why I've been able to quit so often. I think, it's probably important, to be honest, about that. I've always had another job lined up, but that has given me a little bit of a cushion.

I think, to people with the number of jobs available right now, if people are willing to untie their identity from their work. If they can just find, work at a job somewhere, where it's not your whole personality. It's not everything you are. It truly is just a job. You can probably find a lot of those jobs right now. At least where I live, they're absolutely everywhere. Maybe you can move away from that non-profit that you love working at, but it's absolutely destroying your life within that stress and number of hours, and you can go just take a job for a while and figure things out. I think, that's the only advice I could really offer in this unique environment that we're in right now.

**[00:22:33]**

**FT:** I like that advice. Maybe use your PTO to take two weeks to find another gig? Then you come back and you work a couple more weeks. Then you say, "Bye-bye." That's not very nice to your employer, maybe. You know what? Let's talk about what's nice anymore. It's just business. They're going to fire you one day, maybe without any notice. Maybe there's something there to get over, too. Feeling this loyalty that so many of us have to our employers. Sometimes it's just not warranted.

**[00:23:05]**

**JC:** I think, people 10 years my junior are having this beautiful awakening of that. It's really interesting for me to watch, where they might go get a job that is truly just a job. It's just a transactional relationship. They do a perfectly fine job at it. Then, if they have other creative interests, they do that too, on their own time. If they don't have their personality so sunk into it in the way that – Truthfully, I always did. I always thought, this is who you are. I better make this work. That never really worked out all that well for me, so I don't know that I recommend that.

**[00:23:38]**

**FT:** Yeah. Working to live, rather than living to work. Yeah. For those people who don't know where they're going to go next, they're unhappy at their job, but maybe it's not even the job. It's the whole industry that's telling them that's just not the right fit, what are some steps that they

can take to create a relatively smooth transition from quitting, to finding their next role, or going into their next role?

**[00:24:05]**

**JC:** Yeah. I know just one example from my life when I was working full-time at a job, I started freelance writing during that. I started to dip my toe into that before I quit. I then took that on in a bigger way after I quit that job. I started to dip my toe in it and see if it would actually work. Now, that doesn't apply probably, to some other scenarios. It's a little hard to give universal advice for that. I think, if it's an option to try something out, or in a little way, if it's being a freelancer, being a graphic designer, or being whatever that is, just do it for one friend, or try it once a month and see if that seems like it's going to fit.

**[00:24:47]**

**FT:** What's been your favorite interview? Just reading the titles of some of these podcast episodes, which capture the essence of why that person quit. For example, they asked me to erase their glass door reviews. Uh-huh. My boss turned our office into an escape room. I accidentally set Def Leppard's dressing room on fire. All of these episodes are explicit, by the way, probably for good reason. What's been one that really sticks out to you, one that we should definitely start with, if we're going to subscribing to your podcast?

**[00:25:22]**

**JC:** Yeah. I should say, I was just nervous in how to label them. They're really not all explicit. I think, there's just a couple swear words there, and I didn't want to get in any trouble.

**[00:25:31]**

**FT:** Well, just a little pocket, just to geek out on podcast. You know, because if you don't say explicit and iTunes finds out, they drop your show, or they drop that episode. It's whatever. It's rare, but it happens. Erring on the side of explicit is not always a bad thing.

**[00:25:48]**

**JC:** Right. Yeah. I wouldn't be too worried. I still wouldn't listen to them at work, just for other reasons.

**[00:25:53]**

**FT:** Not safe for work.

**[00:25:54]**

**JC:** Yeah. The majority of them, there's just a swear word slipped in there, too. I'm a goody-two-shoes, so I just labeled it that way. Anyway, my personal favorite episode is the Def Leppard's dressing room, because the person I interviewed is just hilarious. We actually worked together. He reported to me is the funny twist of that episode. We worked at a concert venue, and we tell some of the crazy stories about what it's like to actually work at a concert venue, like setting the dressing room on fire, on accident. That's my favorite one. People have been the most drawn to the episode where someone worked for a funeral home for exactly one day. I've gotten the most comments about that.

One of the most interesting parts to me about that one is he quit for such a normal reason. His whole story is crazy and morbid, just as an FYI. At the end of his one day, he quits, because his employer asked him to work six more hours than he was planning on. He was like, "Well, I'm not having that, so I quit." That's just going back to the themes of even the craziest jobs, a lot of times the reason for quitting is the same.

**[00:27:07]**

**FT:** Well, Jessica. It's been really great to connect with you and learn more about your world. I've learned so much already, the importance of establishing boundaries, which sometimes you may not feel you can at work, but now I think we have given more permission to. Employers, if they want to stay competitive, need to foster an environment where there can be dialogue, and they are actually putting their employees first.

I also really liked your advice about if you don't have the financial cushion right now to afford quitting, think about detaching your identity from the job title that is your dream job title and just looking for a job out there, because there are many jobs right now open, available, that will pay the bills, get you set hours, won't be too stressful, so that you can – it's like a transition job. You can work on planning out your next real big step as you're doing that job, which is getting away from that toxic place that you may be in right now. Thank you so much. Really setting us off strong for this week as we focus on how to quit and how to change the culture and narrative around quitting. "You're not a quitter."

**[00:28:17]**

**JC:** That's right.

**[00:28:18]**

**FT:** By quitting, you're actually taking a proactive step in protecting yourself, and taking more control of your career future. Jessica Carney, thank you so much.

**[00:28:28]**

**JC:** Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[00:28:32]**

**FT:** To learn more about our guest, Jessica Carney, go to [jessicacarneywriter.com](http://jessicacarneywriter.com). Her podcast again is called And Then I Quit. You can subscribe everywhere podcasts are available.

Stay tuned for Wednesday's episode. We'll be talking to Tim Herrera, former editor at the New York Times, who recently left his job just weeks ago; what led to his decision and his advice for others who want to follow in his footsteps. Thanks for tuning in and I hope your day is so money.

[END]