Career Moves

How one woman used burnout to chase her wildest dreams

August 31, 2015 As told to Kate Ferguson

At the age of 35, I was an executive secretary at a major international shipping company based in New York City. I'd been there for almost 15 years. Although the money was good, I was stuck in a dead-end job. There was no place to go in a company where all the executives were men and all the secretaries women.

In addition, I felt unappreciated. The executives I worked for were rude and ungrateful. They took the secretaries for granted and hardly any of them even bothered to say thank you as a simple courtesy. Soon, every day began to feel really awful. I was always tired, the workload was daunting, and the tasks each day were tedious and boring.

It seemed like nothing I did at work made any difference. Each day played out the same. That's when I knew it was time to leave. But where would I go and what would I do?

After some soul searching, the answer dawned on me as if by magic. I'd always wanted to go to medical school, so I began the process of applying.

Today, I'm glad I burned out on my job. Without this catalyst, I would never have pursued my dream to become a doctor.

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