

How one woman was able to quit her \$300,000 job to start her own business



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Until June of 2015, Angela Clark was the VP of sales for a large senior living organization in southern California, earning nearly \$300,000 a year.

"I had really hit all my goals in my corporate job," Clark reflects. "I could have stayed, but I knew there was something inside me — that little voice my whole life saying that I was going to do something for seniors, and have a business that was going to be mine. I had hit personal goals within my career at that point, and gotten to a place in life where it was like, if I'm going to do this, I've got to do this now."

At the time, three of her four kids were in college, making it a risky time to take the leap.

After she made the decision to prepare to branch out on her own in 2013, she started setting money aside to ease the way. Over the course of two years, she says, she saved about \$150,000.

"I saved all my bonuses, and I just started to think, 'If I want to do this in the next two years, how much money am I going to need to start? Do I want to go shopping for clothes, or is it worth it to me to skip that extra dinner out? I made sure I had a two-year cushion for the things you have to have, like housing and food and tuition, and the other things could be let go.'"

After only a few months away from her corporate job, Clark says it's been an adjustment. "It does take a little bit of time to get it going," she says. "It's not that instant paycheck coming every few weeks. You have to be prepared for what you plan to do about your benefits package — people forget corporate jobs provide health insurance, and a lot of companies provide a 401k."

Clark says her senior housing business, [Living Your Choice](#), is currently growing, and she's choosing to invest any money she makes back into the company rather than draw a salary. She chose to stop contributing to her retirement savings while things are in flux, and will pick it back up when she starts earning income from the business. She estimates that will be in the next two years, during which her family will be supported by her savings as well as her husband's income as an independent business owner.

She was prepared for the financial side of things, but says the emotional changes caught her by surprise. "I was excited to be doing what I dreamed of for years, but felt at times a sadness and a loss — almost a depressive emotion," she says. "You do question yourself and have days of highs and lows, which is something I did not anticipate at all. As I got comfortable with the change, this has stopped, but it can be very powerful in the beginning of a new venture."

As far as people who might want to leave their jobs to branch out on their own, "Be very proactive," she advises. "Make sure you have a really good plan. You really need to formulate a



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good business plan, and have that laid out for two to five years. It has to be a roadmap of what your goals are. What's the company going to be like?"