

Jan Sharry for The Huffington Post: Knowing When to Leave

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If you believe the old Burt Bacharach / Hal David song from the late 70s: “Knowing when to leave can be the smartest thing a girl can ever learn.” We are more than girls now, but we still struggle with the decision on when and why to leave a job and when and why to seek a new assignment or a new position.

I can’t tell you how many times I have asked young women associates at various law firms why they decided to leave for an in-house position or another law firm and they have difficulty explaining the rationale for their decision. In some cases, it is a “gut call.” In other cases it may be labeled as a perceived vision that they may not be able to achieve what they want in their current position—whether it be more flexible hours, partnership or an allocation of work responsibilities. Yet, when pressed on the issue, it becomes clear that in many instances they have never have even asked for what they want or what they think they deserve. Instead, leaving is easier.

At the same time, recent research by Leanin.org and McKinsey & Co. has shown that women at more senior levels of management leave their positions less frequently than men. If we extrapolate, does the failure of women to leave positions or jobs at these more senior levels mean that they aren’t willing to take the risks necessary to achieve the top job? So, do women really know when and why to leave a job? Or are our own issues dictating decisions that don’t necessarily mesh with our own overall career strategy?

Excerpted from *The Huffington Post*. To read the full article, please [click here](#).