

Is your side hustle making you RICH OR JUST TIRED?

Not too long ago, "doing what you love" was the ultimate dream. We were told that our passions could pay the bills, that 9-to-5 jobs were soul-crushing, and that financial freedom lay in turning hobbies into income streams. Baking, painting, editing, writing, reselling thrifted clothes or importing designer ones, designing mugs and t-shirts! Suddenly, everything had the potential to become a 'brand'. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and, of course, Facebook gave us the tools to do it.

But in this culture of creativity-turned-commodity, something quietly started slipping away. What began as liberation slowly morphed into more work, and we barely noticed. The lines blurred. Our side hustles stopped being about passion and started looking suspiciously like second jobs.

Somewhere along the way, the thing that once brought us peace now became another reason for missing out on sleep.

The appeal of side hustles makes sense. In an economy where living costs are rising and traditional jobs often offer little flexibility or satisfaction, having a second income stream feels smart. Plus, there's the seductive idea that if we hustle hard enough now, we will earn ourselves a cushy, passive-income future.

It also does not help that everywhere we look someone seems to be doing it better. The friend who grew her candle business to 10k followers? The coworker with a viral food blog? The cousin who turned weekend photography into wedding bookings.

Their glow-ups are documented in curated reels, motivational captions and aesthetic packaging shots. We genuinely cheer for them and somewhere along the



way, can't help but quietly wonder if we are falling behind.

And so, we get pulled in, too. We stay up late editing, calculating prices, managing orders, and answering DMs. We post when we are supposed to. We read content strategies and chase algorithms. All while juggling full-time jobs, families, and social obligations.

We are still dreaming, yes. But at what cost?

The reality behind the hustle isn't always as glossy as the feed. For every success story, there are countless others burning out in silence. Passion becomes pressure. Every quiet evening feels like a missed opportunity to be 'productive'.

Guilt creeps in when we choose rest over reels.

People do not always talk about the cost; the back pain from packing orders on the floor, the emotional fatigue of customer queries at midnight, the money invested in packaging that might never be recouped, the anxiety when posts don't perform.

The emotional toll is real, too. When something we once loved becomes transactional, it's hard to feel joy in doing it anymore.

You might start dreading your art, resenting your customers, questioning your worth. Not because you failed, but because

you were running two races at once without realising it.

Why is it so hard to pause then? Because capitalism does not like pauses. It tells us that every hour should be optimised, every skill monetised. If you enjoy something, there must be a way to make money from it. Otherwise, what's the point of even having a hobby, right?

This generation is deeply creative, ambitious, and resourceful. It's a beautiful thing. However, we also need room to be just creative, without turning every painting into a product or every poem into a post. We need time to breathe without strategising it. Joy without a hashtag.

Rest is not laziness. And it is high time we realise that.

It's okay to want to earn more. It's okay to dream of building something outside your 9-to-5. But maybe it's okay to slow down as well? To separate passion from performance. To remind ourselves that not every interest has to be a business plan.

If your side hustle genuinely lights you up, that's beautiful. But if it's draining you, if you're constantly overwhelmed, maybe it's time to reassess. Is this still what you wanted? Or has the pressure to 'make it work' overshadowed why you started?

It's not failure to step back. It's not quitting to want peace.

You're allowed to just bake without selling, paint without posting, and create without explaining.

Because you are not a brand. You're a person. And maybe, just maybe, the best thing we can do for ourselves is not another hustle. It's giving ourselves permission to pause. Even if just for a little while.

By Nusrath Jahan
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