

## Job News & Views

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### Human Collateral: More Tales of Bliss After Wall Street

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Last week's column described how two professionals found their career passion after leaving finance: one who became an author and expert on the explorer **Ernest Shackleton**, and one who launched and runs a nonprofit organization that brings together emerging music artists with teenagers in middle and high schools.

Here are two more ex-Wall Streeters whose work became more satisfying after moving in an entirely new direction.

#### Shaun Eli: From Wall Street to One-liners

Seven years ago Eli left his job as a vice president of fixed-income for the Israeli **Bank Hapoalim**, ending a two-decade finance career. "I turned big piles of someone else's money into slightly larger piles of someone else's money," he says.

Funny quip from a funny guy. Not surprising, as today the MBA is a professional comedian. He was always witty. Then in 1992 when **Jay Leno** took over *The Tonight Show*, Eli noticed that many of the monologue jokes mirrored those he'd thought of while reading the morning newspaper. Eli started selling jokes freelance, landing one-liners with Leno, **Jimmy Fallon** and **Conan O'Brien**, then completed a comedy course in New York. Today he continues as a comedy writer, but makes most of his living at comedy clubs, corporate events and private parties. He's on stage about four nights each week.

Eli describes his shtick as "clean, smart comedy – it's clever rather than raunchy. The Wharton side of me says that if I work clean there are more business opportunities," he says. "IBM doesn't want to hire a dirty comic to entertain clients."

While he made as much as \$200,000 as an investment banker, today he makes less than \$100,000, which is still comfortable since he is single, his Westchester home is paid off, and he drives a 15 year-old car.

Convincing his Depression-era parents that comedy is a feasible career path was another thing. "One of my brothers is a doctor, and the other is a PhD computer scientist, so you can imagine they were not thrilled with my new job," says Eli, 48. "But now they see I'm making a living at this and they understand it."

Job satisfaction, however, is not measured in money. Eli was touched after performing for cancer patients at a hospital recently, when a man told Eli his wife smiled for the first time in three months.

"People ask me how happy I was in banking. I was 43 percent happy," he cracks. "It was an okay job, and I worked for okay people. But shouting into a phone is not as fun as standing up on stage and seeing people directly affected by your work."