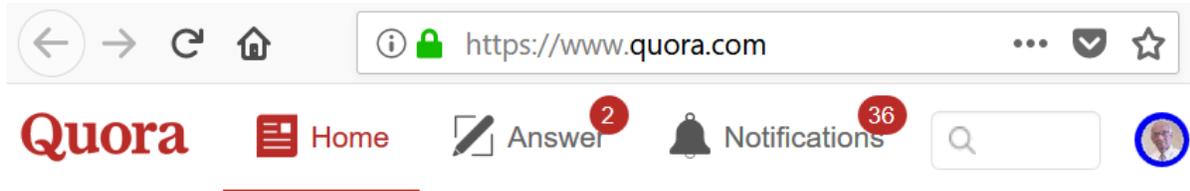




22 November 2017

*IN HOW MANY WAYS DO I LOVE CIVIL ENGINEERING?*



**I made a mistake in choosing civil engineering, I have 2 exams left but I just realize I don't want to work in this field, what should I do?**



Bob S., M.S. Civil Engineering, Oklahoma State University  
Answered Nov 22

*Isn't it kind of late to realise you made a mistake?*

You can never get back the time you have spent on an effort which if you quit now, you will get nothing for all that! Grit your teeth, finish it, and you have something to keep going while you start afresh on your next love.

But I want to tell you something else.

When I was about to choose my degree path, I wanted Aeronautical Engineering and next choice Mechanical Engineering. In those days (1951) a youngster from a lower middle class family could not pick and choose, and I was able to get into the lower choice, namely civil engineering.

It broke my heart, but I made up my mind to do well, and went on to get ranks the first three years and stand first for my college in my final year.

Almost from the first year of my C.E. course, I found myself changing from hatred to tolerance to curiosity to like and then a passion.

Fast forward, after 59 years in the civil engineering profession, 42 years in my special field of structural mechanics in USA and India and Singapore, and last 17 years in workplace safety and risk management (mostly in construction) in Singapore, I want to shout from the rooftops: *"If I have to be an engineer (— God, I don't want doctors on my neck!) give me Civil Engineering any time!"*

Why? Very simple!

1. We CEs build everything for all the other professionals to work on, live in, cross over, drive upon, fly off of, store water in for very survival, ... all that you ask for it, we provide!

2. Talk about living art: Our creations are literally monuments to the human spirit, icons that live for ages, artifacts our children's children can point to and say, "My great-grandfather built it, my granny designed it!"
3. Not for us flights of fancy that strut in the limelight for a week, a month or less, and then seduce the unwary and the weak into throwing away and buying anew. We are here and now forever!
4. We CEs were the first civilised group to build, the only older engineering older being military engineering which was the antithesis of construction. And we and our creations will be here when all is molten or pulverised.
5. We are the only ones to toil in the sun and rain and cold and dust and noise all day long and for years on end, only to bring comfort to all humanity, so that other creative minds may bring forth more conveniences and luxuries to mankind.
6. We CEs are the only professionals who do not have the luxury of testing full prototypes to failure with a view to perfecting our designs before we offer them to our customers.

Have I left anything out?

CEs are the salt of the earth.

We are not eligible for Nobel prizes, the fruits of our labors often carry the names of our bosses or our rulers on the ceremonial stones; we are certainly paid much less than many other professionals, often sidelined as we work most of the time behind the scenes, failures often unfairly blamed on us, but successes often shared with so many that the leaders and the innovators are buried under the owners and promoters. We are the unsung heroes and forgotten doers.

No matter. Deep down, society knows. If there is a God who keeps track, It knows. Your loved ones know — if they really love you.

Check around how many civil engineers — with no more than their civil engineering BS or MS, have become top managers over many other more qualified professionals from other engineering branches.

Enough said.

And, Bob S\_\_\_\_\_, you want to give this up?

Go ahead, the profession won't miss you. But you will miss it — because you have already put so much of yourself into it!

You may get out of civil engineering, but civil engineering will not get out of you!

Best wishes!

***Prof Krishna***

[www.profkrisna.com](http://www.profkrisna.com)

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