



SHERYL SANDBERG, COO, *Facebook*

Changing the World, One Job at a Time

I'VE CHOSEN MY JOBS based on the mission of the organizations and the vision of their leaders: Larry Summers at Treasury; Sergey Brin, Larry Page and Eric Schmidt at Google; and Mark Zuckerberg at Facebook. They all believe the right decisions and the right investments can change the world. They are each dedicated to making the world a better place.

My first job was at the World Bank, where I worked on health projects in India—leprosy, AIDS and blindness. During my first trip to India, I was taken on a tour of a village leprosy home, where I saw people in conditions that I would not have thought possible. I promised myself that going forward, I would work only on things that really mattered.

That's why I ended up in business school. I realized that I needed a better understanding of how organizations work—and don't work—to create real change. I wasn't crazy about business. In fact, I never thought I would work at a for-profit company. But learning how to harness the power of large organizations appealed to me.

A few years later, I became chief of staff for Larry Summers when he was secretary of the Treasury. This was during the Asian financial crisis, and I witnessed how quickly policy changes could affect lives. Fears of economic contagion were rampant; we were trying hard to prevent a panic from spreading. The burden of international debt was the key issue for developing nations. By

thinking creatively about debt relief, money that would have been used for debt repayment went instead to build schools and hospitals.

Since I was a political appointee, my job vanished when the Clinton administration ended. Even though I had once thought I would never work in the private sector, I recognized how entrepreneurs were changing the world. I realized that I wanted to work in technology because it had the promise of

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making the world a better and more connected place. I went to Google—then a small company, but filled with talented, ambitious and idealistic people. For six and a half years, I grew the online sales and operations teams, starting with a team of four in California and ending with thousands working worldwide, including in India. Returning to India—where technology has created real opportunities for millions of people—was deeply fulfilling for me. We weren't building hospitals, but we were helping to grow the global economy. In many ways, I felt that we were making an even larger impact than the work I had previously done there.

When the time arrived to find the next challenge, I came to Facebook. Mark Zuckerberg is a different kind of entrepreneur, and Facebook's technology offers new ways to bring people together. Facebook allows people to be their authentic selves online and therefore use the power of technology to discover each other and share who they really are. The connections they make have a real impact on their lives. Collectively, those bonds can change societies.

When I am asked about career strategies, I respond that you need two things: a long-term dream and one- to two-year plan. A long-term dream allows you to work with purpose to achieve real fulfillment. A short-term plan makes sure you are learning and growing from the work you do each day. All the stuff in the middle is confusing at best and anxiety-producing at worst. If I had tried to connect those dots when I left college, I would never have worked at Google or Facebook, companies that did not even yet exist. When you try to plan every step, you miss opportunities. I believe that if you are open to opportunity and respect the people who share their dreams with you, the rest will take care of itself.