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Your Start-Up Life: Should My Husband Take a Long-Distance Job Offer?

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Thursdays at the Huffington Post, Rana Florida, CEO of [The Creative Class Group](#), will share her conversations with entrepreneurs and thought leaders and answer readers' questions about work, life, relationships and more. Send your questions to rana@creativeclass.com.

My husband and I live in a suburb of Detroit. Like several others, he was laid off last year and has been job searching for months. It's been very stressful but he finally got a great offer in Chicago with more pay, a better position and excellent benefits. We have a family with small children in terrific public schools. The public schools in Chicago are not great and the private schools there are way out of our budget. I also have a job, which is close to home, pays well and gives me flexibility. We have a big support system of family and friends who care for the children and we don't know a single person in Chicago. He has until next week to accept the offer. Look forward to your speedy advice.

Jennifer

Northville, Michigan

Jennifer,

I can empathize with your husband's situation. You're right the neighborhoods and schools are terrific but the job market is bleak. I lived and worked in the suburbs of Detroit myself and spent years looking for a better job with higher pay. It wasn't until I expanded my search outside of Detroit into Chicago and Washington, DC that I began to recognize my value. I accepted an offer in DC making three times -- yes three times -- what I was making in Detroit, for similar duties. What was even more surprising was that once I arrived in DC, I began to receive multiple calls weekly from headhunters seeking my skill set.

The data doesn't lie. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Detroit's [unemployment rate](#) is 10.2 per cent, compared to Chicago's 9.0 per cent. Recently, the [U.S. Conference of Mayors](#) and [Global Insight](#) released a [report](#) that projected Detroit's employment will not return to its peak pre-recession levels until after 2025. While not as strong as Dallas-Fort Worth,

Washington, DC or Boston, which have already recovered the jobs they lost during the downturn, Chicago's economic outlook is a lot brighter than Detroit's and 2015 is the estimated date by which its lost jobs will be completely replaced.

Detroit and Chicago are about an hour apart by air, and there are multiple flights daily. According to the U.S. Census, your husband would be joining the ranks of about 10.4 million Americans, 7.5 per cent of the workforce, who have to travel 60 minutes or more each way to and from work. Just [over three million Americans](#) have commutes that are more than an hour and a half.



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When you look at it that way, it's not such a big dilemma after all. It's time to grow up and do what's best for your family. Your husband should accept the offer.

Of course it wouldn't be practical for him to make the trip by air twice a day (unless he is earning a very high salary indeed). But assuming the job pays well enough to cover an efficiency

apartment, he should accept the offer on the condition that his employer offers him a travel stipend instead of a relocation allowance, which most companies are prepared to do.

He should let them know that while he will be available and committed seven days a week, he will need some flexibility. Perhaps he can work Monday through Thursday in the office and spend Fridays and weekends in Detroit with you and the children.

He will get to know a new job market and the experience will make him more marketable. The separation will also put the flame back in your marriage. Chicago will be a great place for you and the kids to visit during school breaks.

Sounds like a win-win.

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