



From the age of four until age 15 or so, you probably had six or eight different ideas about what you were going to be when you grew up. How did your ideas change over the years? Do you still want to be a firefighter, or a teacher?

While some of us grow up to have the career we talked about when we were little, most people's idea of their ideal career changes many times in their life. Getting to the top of your field does not guarantee happiness – in fact, it can have just the opposite effect. Imagine how disconcerting it would be if you spend four years in college, an additional four in medical school, plus internships . . . only to discover that you are miserable. While most people do not have that extreme of a situation, it is not unusual for people to become disillusioned at a mid-point in their career and want to make a change. It is good to keep in mind that while it may be scary, there may be nothing really holding you back from making a change except some solid planning (and maybe a little education!).

Creating a Career Plan

Short and long-term goals help you set a beacon to work towards, and can help you maintain focus when the world can become incredibly distracting. As you are working through your career plan, many different goals will come to light, and they could be as diverse as “making a million dollars”, “move to a leadership role in my organization”, “spending two nights a week with family”, or even “leaving time to serve others”. Creating a set of goals and keeping yourself accountable to them can help you be successful in the game of life. As you are creating a plan for yourself, always stay positive. While you cannot always control the reactions of those in the world, you can control your ideas, and out-of-the-box opportunities are much more likely to happen if you are walking around with eyes wide open.

Always Have Plan “B”

Few things in life work out exactly the way we expected them to, and careers are no different. Being disappointed in your career certainly doesn't mean that you've failed in any way – it simply means that you've grown and changed, and change is not a bad thing! You may have a change in your personal situation, such as relocation, illness, or the birth of a child. You may have gotten laid off from a job that you thought you would have until retirement. No matter the reason for your needed change, having a Plan B can help you get on the path to finding your new career in no time. Each of the skills and experiences you have had until now have crafted you into a unique individual and employee; all you have to do is find the path that will be a fit for you.

No More Burnout

Once you have found a career that you love, there can be a burning desire to get ahead and always take that next step. Unfortunately, overexposure even to something you love can be unhealthy. When that happens at work, burnout can be the outcome. If you find yourself staying up late working, neglecting family and friends, and being increasingly uninterested in anything except work, a downward plunge may be on the horizon so guard against it before it happens. Get some exercise, break away and take a vacation that's long enough that you forget all about work for a few days, or take some time to unplug. Sometimes speaking with your manager can provide some needed perspective. Finding your dream job can take planning, energy, and yes – work! However, that focus



and effort are worth it in the long run
if you can find a career that energizes you and keeps your motor humming on all
cylinders.

Social Teasers

Learn how to create a career plan with concrete goals to make sure you get the job you
want.

Don't suffer career burnout; stay engaged and positive with these quick tips.

Feeling stuck in a rut? Check out these easy steps to define the path to your next career.