

Don't Pick a Career Until You Read This

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Choosing a career is one of the biggest decisions you'll make. It affects how much money you'll earn, who your friends will be, and how much satisfaction you'll get out of life.

You're more likely to make a sound choice if you approach the process deliberately instead of just drifting from one position to another.

Maybe you recently graduated from college, and you're looking for your first job. Perhaps you've been in the workforce for years, and you're interested in changing professions. Either way, careful planning will help you to find meaningful work.

Take a look at these strategies for identifying and pursuing your options.

Do Your Research:

- 1. Assess your skills.** Start out by taking an inventory of your interests and talents. What did you like most about previous jobs or college courses? Which accomplishments give you the most satisfaction?
- 2. Discover your passions.** Maybe you can make a living doing what you love or come as close as possible to that ideal. **Pay attention to how you feel about various occupations instead of just focusing on salary data.**
- 3. Take a test.** If you're uncertain where to begin, there are many career tests that can help you to learn more about yourself. Try the classic Myers-Briggs or search online for other options.

4. **Collect job information.** Make a list of occupations that interest you and look up details like salary ranges and future hiring outlooks. Good sources include the Occupational Outlook Handbook published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics or ask a librarian for suggestions.

5. **Consider the requirements.** Figure out whether you're willing and able to invest the time and money needed to prepare for different careers. If going to medical school would be difficult at your stage in life, maybe there are other health care positions that would excite you.

6. **Set priorities.** Narrow down your options to a manageable list. Three to five choices usually make a realistic starting point.

Explore Your Options:

1. **Work with a counselor.** Paying for career counseling may be worthwhile if it helps you find rewarding work. You may also be able to find free or discounted services at your university career center or by signing up for group counseling rather than private sessions.

2. **Conduct interviews.** Use your network to generate contacts for informational interviews. Invite them out for coffee or schedule video chats if they live far away.

3. **Do an internship. Look for ways to test out a field before committing yourself.** You might be able to intern, volunteer, or do part time contract work.

4. **Blaze your own path.** If you're still searching for something that will motivate you, maybe you need to create your own position. Someone must have been the

first social media manager or Uber driver.

More Tips:

1. **Repeat as needed.** Selecting a line of work can be something you do once as a small child or a lifelong endeavor. As long as you're learning and growing, you're on the path to a rewarding career.
2. **Create goals.** At the same time, you need to be practical so you're balancing planning and action. **Develop short and long-term milestones that will give you a sense of direction and help you track your progress.**
3. **Check in regularly.** Keeping up with daily external demands can use up your time and energy if you let it. **Revisit your dreams and aspirations regularly** so you have the career you want instead of becoming stuck in an outdated routine.

Find a career that will keep you engaged and satisfied. When your work aligns with your values and abilities, you'll enjoy more happiness and success.