

4 Careers

4.1 About business Career choices

Discussion

1 Mark your position on the scales below. With a partner, explain and justify your choices.

I have no idea how my career will develop.	←-----→	I have a clear idea of my career path.
I expect to work for one company all my life.	←-----→	I expect to work for several different companies in my life.
Money, status and a comfortable lifestyle are my priorities.	←-----→	Job satisfaction, variety and being useful to society are my priorities.

Internet research

In Part 2 of the interview with Timothy Butler, he refers to eight core business functions that correspond to life-interest categories. Search for the keywords "job sculpting" to find out what the eight business functions are, and how they are being used to retain valuable employees.



Predicting and listening

2 🎧 2:01 You are going to listen to an interview with James Waldroop and Timothy Butler, business psychologists and directors of MBA career development programs at the Harvard Business School. Before you listen to Part 1, try to predict what they will say about the differences between:

- 1 careers ten or fifteen years ago and careers today
- 2 a vocation (or 'calling'), a career and a job.

Then listen and check your predictions.

Listening for detail

3 Listen to Part 1 again and answer the questions.

- 1 What does Waldroop say about the kind of contract:
a) you had ten or fifteen years ago? b) you have today?
- 2 What does Butler say is very dicey or unpredictable?

4 🎧 2:02 Listen to Part 2 of the interview and mark these statements *T* (true) or *F* (false).

- 1 It's wise to find a compromise between two competing needs.
- 2 You can have several different values (e.g. earning a lot of money, having a satisfying lifestyle and influencing people) all at the same time.
- 3 A good career choice is to do something you are good at.
- 4 Choosing jobs that correspond to your interests is a good way to manage your career.

Discussion

5 In small groups, discuss what these statements from the interview mean for your career.

- 1 'You are responsible for creating your own career within an organization.'
- 2 'The most common mistake that people make in their career decisions is to do something because they're "good at it".'

Scan reading

6 Read the article opposite and find which two tips can be summarized as:

- 1 Move towards your long-term goal in small, easy stages.
- 2 Make sure that preconceived ideas about success and failure are not preventing you from reaching your goals.

The words in grey are explained in the *Wordlist* on page 153.

Summarizing

7 Summarize each of the eight remaining tips in one sentence. In small groups, compare your sentences with other people and choose the best summary for each tip.

Ten Tips for Creating a Career That LIGHTS YOUR FIRE

Have you ever found yourself so excited about something that the energy it generates just seems to pull you along? Imagine feeling that every day in the work you do. It's possible! Begin exploring your passions and discovering ways, big or small, to incorporate them into your life.

1 GET TO KNOW YOURSELF – Before you strike off in pursuit of a career that really lights your fire, take some time to do some serious self-exploration.

Make a list of all the things in your life that you have really enjoyed. It could be work or play, an event, a period of time in your life, etc. Pick one and start digging into the reasons why. Get beyond what you love doing, and break it down into the underlying characteristics. Think of it as identifying your passion's building blocks.

2 BRAINSTORM – Once you have a picture of the things that light your fire, brainstorm ways you could incorporate them into your life. Write them down alone or with friends, in one session or on a small pad of paper you carry with you. Above all, be creative. You never know what crazy idea is going to spark the Big One.

3 EXPLORE – Ask, ask, ask! Once you have identified some things you think you might be interested in, identify people who are knowledgeable in those areas and contact them. Explain that you are exploring your options and ask if you can pick their brains. You'll get some fantastic insights if you make this a habit, not to mention making some great contacts along the way.

4 BABY STEPS – The fear of jumping in the deep end of the passion pool keeps many people from swimming at all. Remember there's a shallow end too, so you can still enjoy splashing in the water. Look for baby steps you can take that will bring your passion into your life and keep you moving towards your long-term goal.

5 IDENTIFY YOUR OBSTACLES – What things are getting in your way? Make a list. Maybe they're real – financial obstacles, or perhaps the need for more training. Maybe they

are internal. What's stopping you? Fear? Self-doubt? Simple inertia?

We all have voices in our heads that are always telling us 'You can't do that', 'You're not good enough', 'What will they think?', etc. Identifying and acknowledging those voices is the first step in taking their power away.

6 CREATE A PASSION POSSE – In my interviews with people who have followed their dream, the most commonly mentioned success factor has been the support of the people around them. Friends, family and colleagues can all be a great source of support and inspiration. It can be an informal support network, or a regularly scheduled meeting to exchange ideas and brainstorm solutions to challenges.

7 RE-EXAMINE YOUR DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE – What is your definition of success? Is it getting in the way? Our culture places a lot of emphasis on material accomplishments, status, etc. Unfortunately, that gets in the way of real happiness for a lot of people, who choose to stay on the treadmill in pursuit of that version of success. Perhaps you're not at a point where you can or want to change that definition of success. That's OK, don't. Instead, try identifying one or two less common ways of identifying 'success' – ones that come from the heart – and try to move towards them as well.

Our definition of failure, which tends to be all or nothing, also gets in the way. If you try something and it doesn't pan out, how do you see that? Is it a failure? Or is it an opportunity to learn? If you 'fail' in an effort to move toward your passion, it's not really failure. Think of it as a step in the right direction. Taking a longer term view can help with this.



8 MAKE A PLAN – Whether it's a high level overview or a granular action plan is up to you – you know how you work best. Creating a plan will force you to think things through and add some comfortable structure to something that can seem very up in the air and undefined.

9 ACT! TODAY! – The fact is, the time will never be right. Something is always going to be less than optimum. Don't wait! Do something right now that will move you toward your passion. What two things can you do right away that will start the ball rolling? They don't need to be earth-shattering, they just need to happen.

10 COMMIT TO MAKING IT HAPPEN – Let it out of your brain and into the open. Say, 'I am going to do this.' Say it out loud to yourself. Say it to a friend. Put it in writing and put it where you can see it. Once it's out in the open it will have room to grow. And that's exactly what you want!