

Top 10 Tips for Good Career Choices

1. Begin with your values. What's really important to you? What turns you on? What do you like to do so much that you would almost feel guilty getting paid to do it? These questions are designed to help you get at one of the key elements in career choice: values. Satisfying careers are built upon the notion of a high correspondence between one's personal values and the work they will be doing.

2. Identify your skills and talents. A skill is something you've learned to do. A talent is something you've been born with, or at least that you seem naturally qualified to do. It's important to recognise the difference between the two. You may be skilled at something and still not find it interesting. Chances are, however, if you are naturally talented at something; there will be a correspondence between that particular talent and your values. Put another way: you are more apt to enjoy doing what you do well naturally than what you have simply been taught to do.

3. Identify your preferences. From early on, we approach the world with certain personal preferences - how we perceive others, how we think and make decisions, whether we prefer concepts over people or vice versa, and the extent to which we are comfortable with uncertainty in our lives. For many, these preferences operate at a subconscious level, but they strongly influence the way we function with others. Some questions may help: Do you regard yourself as highly intuitive? Are you outgoing or reserved? When faced with a decision, do you rely primarily on facts or feelings? Your answers to these questions can tell you much about the kinds of work you will find interesting and challenging.

4. Experiment. There's no substitute for experience, the more the better. If you're new to the job market or if you are considering a career change, get out and talk to people who are actually doing it. Take a job in the field or industry and see for yourself if it's really all you thought it would be. And don't rely on a single authority or work experience.

5. Become broadly literate. In this high tech information world, there is an incredible pressure to specialise, to know more and more about less and less. That's dangerous, because it immensely increases your chances of being obsolescent. Many people lose their jobs and scuttle their careers because they have gradually developed tunnel vision about who and what they are and what their capabilities are.

6. Early in your career, opt for experience first, money second. A good way of sizing up several opportunities is to ask yourself: "Which position will offer me the best chance of becoming excellent at what I do?" And that may not be the one that pays the highest initial salary.

7. Aim for a job in which you can be 110% committed. If you aren't able to commit 110% to what you are currently doing, start NOW to find something in which you can.

8. Build your lifestyle around your income, not your expectations. A great way to begin is to structure your lifestyle in such a manner that you can put away 10% of every pay cheque. Starting early and investing regularly and wisely are probably two of the greatest secrets of wealth accumulation.



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9. Invest 5% of your time, energy, and money into furthering your career. In terms of a forty-hour week, that's only two hours per week. The point is, you cannot rely on your employer to spoon feed you. Dedicate yourself to getting ahead by managing the one thing you can control - your dedication to being the best that you can be.

10. Be willing to change and adapt. Goals are useful, but they should emerge naturally. Even though you may write them down and paste them on your mirror, they should not obscure the need to be willing to change and adapt to new conditions, your own growth, and developing opportunities. The distinction here is between "direction" and "plan". Planning breeds performance.