

How-To Make a Career Decision You Won't Regret



Even though the modern job market is more competitive now than it's ever been, there's no shortage of resources to help you make the right career decision. Between coaches, training courses, online job boards, and advice from everyone in your professional and personal circle, logic would dictate that finding your dream job shouldn't be all that hard. Believe it or not, there's an argument to be made that it's actually quite the opposite. The information age has people so inundated with data and advice, and the opinions of others, that thinking for oneself becomes next to impossible. With all these fancy tools and resources, there are often lots of career paths to choose.

For this reason, it's easy to make important career decisions for the wrong reasons. It could be advice from a colleague. Maybe you even make a choice out of fear or desperation. Unfortunately, these choices that often lead to shoulda-woulda-coulda's down the road. That begs the question, how do you go about making career decisions you won't regret?

Expertise and Purpose

A great place to start the process is identifying what you're good at and the impact you want to leave on the world. Sure, this sounds a little cliché. But, it's grounded in fact. When you get crystal clear on these factors, the decision-making process becomes pretty simple at its core. Does taking that promotion align with your values? Will staying in your current position allow you to perform at your best and grow? If you can't feel challenged and fulfilled, it's not the right fit.

Get Clear on What's Most Important to You

In order to eliminate all the outside noise regarding your career choice, get clear on what's most important to you. Start by writing things down. What does your dream job look like? How will it fit with your dynamics at home? What goals do you want to accomplish? What does your plan look like to get there? What are you willing to sacrifice? The vision you create should be one that gets you excited. If it scares you a little, all the better. Now you share it with others.

Support is Better than Advice

When you start sharing your vision with other people, they're going to be quick to imply their wisdom. In most cases, that wisdom is anything but ill-intended. However, you need to make it clear that you're clear on the direction you're headed. Let them know that the best thing they can do is offer support with whatever decision you make and not impart their fears and biases.

Filter all the advice you hear. Just because it worked for one person in a specific situation, doesn't mean it's the best advice for you. Ask yourself if the advice you receive makes sense for you. If it doesn't, let it go in one ear and out the other.

What's Popular isn't Always Right and What's Right isn't Always Popular

You got me. I stole that one from my fourth-grade teacher. But it's something that's stuck with me my whole life.

The urge to conform is all around you. There's a human need to be part of a group. It gets back to that whole safety in numbers thing. Whatever it takes, you have to do what's right for you. That takes confidence.

Be Confident

Speaking of which... Whenever you're in the process of figuring out the next step, you're going to experience moments when your confidence is in crisis. It's

important to remember that everyone has confidence issues. It isn't some elusive trait that some people have, and others don't.

You also have to realize building confidence doesn't happen overnight. It takes time. As silly as it might sound, positive affirmations do wonders for your confidence. Whether they're something you tell yourself or, notes you post on your bathroom mirror, self affirmations work to rewire your brain in a beneficial way. With a little practice, you can develop the unwavering confidence to make difficult choices.

Everyone says they want to live without regrets. Sadly, the number of people that actually do, is pretty small. When it comes to your career, you're going to face crossroads and difficult decisions. The last thing you want is to look back and say, "I wish I would've taken that chance when I had the opportunity." The good news is that important career decisions are your choice to make, not anyone else's. They're going to be uncomfortable. You're going to second guess yourself at some point. But, if you're clear about what you want and keep the noise from others at bay, you'll arrive at the right choice for you. With no regrets.