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DESIGN & BRANDING

Career tips

12 tips

For the person considering a career change or planning the next move.

1. Know Thyself

When looking for the right job, consider **characteristics**, not just functions or industries.

There's a lot that goes into a job and whether or not it's a good fit for you. Compensation, work-life balance, company culture, autonomy, structure, mastery.

In your job experience, you will likely learn about what you like vs. what you thought you would like. There can be a big difference. There can also be a discrepancy between what something looks like vs what it will feel like.

You will likely enjoy and have talents in more than one thing, which means you have options. Really do your research. Is that industry notorious for burn out? Is this company aligned with your personal values? Can you see a pathway for growth? Is that even something you want? All you need is the right fit for you. And only you can figure out what that is. But you have to do the work to know yourself and what you're looking for before you can begin to find it.

2. *Follow your envy*

I highly recommend the Happier podcast with Gretchin Rubin, mainly for life well-being.

She has an episode (I could NOT find the number, sorry) where she talks about using envy as a tool to learn more about what you really want.

Who or what do you envy? In my first job at an ad agency, it was the designers and art directors - their sense of style, their creativity at work, their lack of spreadsheet-related-responsibilities. I knew then I wanted to be a creator.

Envy sucks, but it holds a ton of information that can help steer you.

3. *Interview everyone*

A wise sage used to say this to me: "**Listen** when you get advice. Even if you already know 99% of it, if there is 1% that you didn't know, that's more information. (Okay, it was my mom. She's the smartest person I know.)

It's great to talk to as many people as you can, in different

industries and functions. One thing I figured out early on is that people spend their lives compiling skills and experience, and often would love to teach it all to someone else. There's something so fundamental about it.

It's flattering. It reminds people that they are experts in some capacity. **Every time** I've ever asked someone to lunch to pick their brain, they were so tickled that they treated. Every single time, and I never asked.

This means that there is a wealth of free experience and knowledge out there that people are dying to give away for free that goes largely untapped.

Take advantage of it. Ask them their process for things that you don't understand, or to describe their day-to-day. This gives you insight into what a certain job would really look and feel like, and you can decide if you'd like yourself there.

4. *Do what you gotta do*

"Do what you have to do until you can do what you want to do." -Oprah.

The reality for most of us is that even if we know what we want to be doing, we can't just snap our fingers and do it.

The side hustle came about to give people the freedom to

pursue or nurture passions that could help them transition into a new career in the future.

Being in the wrong place or position can be painful, especially when you've identified that your goal is elsewhere. In the meantime, remember that the obstacle in front of you is a necessary stepping stone on the way.

Keep pushing through and do what you want to do (on the side) until one day, you get paid for it.

5. *Don't wait for permission*

Don't wait for someone to tell you you're qualified.

It's time for an AHA! moment. Guess what? It's all made up. Everything, the world we live in. **We are all co-creating our reality with individuals who are just like us.** The same is true for work. Your job description, the company mission, industry trends. It's all made up, and it can all change.

Knowing this fact, there should be no imposter syndrome. You are what you make yourself.

Also, let go of the idea that you are "too late" to make an impact in an industry or craft.

Technology changes so fast that "expert" knowledge one day can be irrelevant a few years or even months later. You'll find yourself having to learn and relearn your skills all the time. **With that in mind, anytime is the perfect time to jump in.**

"Fake it til you make it" will always be sound advice.

The secret sauce is something you are smart enough to figure out.

6. *Keep your eye on the prize*

In every individual job, keep your greater career in mind.

It's easy to put your head down and get lost in the minutiae of the day-to-day.

One powerful way I keep myself motivated and focused is to remember the bigger picture, even if it's more of a rough, flexible trajectory, not a concrete goal.

Be strategic, no matter where you are. **Pull out the gems from the experience you are gaining.** Only you will really know what they are. Form relationships with key people and cultivate skills that align with your greater goals.

7. *Be a cheerleader*

Be a cheerleader wherever you go. This has been a semi-unintended strategy of mine, as a side-effect of being positive.

Attitude is almost everything when it comes to your reputation in a job. **Positivity** goes a long way.

While internally you must always be looking out for #1 (you! No one else will), externally, you want to be an ambassador for the company.

Foster within yourself a real desire to help further the company's goals, get to know the team, and have the company's best interest at heart.

Just by helping out, taking initiative, and being a friendly face around the office, you can build a presence in the office.

The goal is to make it feel like you're a key part of the team. If colleagues say, "You've only been here (X amount of time)?? It feels like you've always been here." You've nailed it.

8. *Protect your time*

Your time (and energy) is a finite and valuable asset. It can be hard to say no to things, but you must remember that a

yes to one thing often means a no to something else. So you must be disciplined with your use of time.

Saying “no” to the wrong thing can be just as important as saying “yes” to the right thing.

*One caveat to this is that “wasting” time in the form of relaxation or entertainment is okay. This is necessary recharge time.

Spend time well and waste time well, where appropriate.

9. *There is no dream job.*

There is a career pathway, and for most people it's not linear.

We make a move for a better fit, a step up in title or pay, a step in the right direction. These things can all be good, but they don't guarantee a complete fit.

People are often quick to toss around the term “dream job” especially in the honeymoon phase of a new job.

A real, longterm perfect fit in a job is so nuanced and hard to identify and acquire, that it's incredibly rare.

Not unattainable. Rare.

So don't be discouraged if you don't find it right away, or if something ends up being not as perfect a fit as you suspected.

Also, keep in mind that a job could be the best job for you right now, but maybe not forever. You'll evolve and your career needs will too.

You'll have different priorities at different parts of the journey. For example, when you're young and restless, you may want an exciting challenge and the ability to make an impact on the world. Later, say, when you have small children, you may value work-life balance and flexibility over anything else.

So don't sweat the dream job thing.

Look for an **awesome** job. For **you**. Right **now**.

10. *Commit to your craft*

Consider committing to a craft or industry rather than a company.

Are you an SEO wiz? Compliance expert? Operations genius? Accounting rockstar?

There are many skills that can be applied to any industry or company. It's awesome to not be tethered to either; it widens your options.

I've worked for several different companies, moving around

for various valid reasons that contributed to my overall career narrative, but I looked up one day and realized that I'd been doing the same thing for six years.

I'd always considered the companies to be my clients. I'd always seen the milestones in the context of my greater personal brand.

Even if you haven't found your home yet, your efforts can still be building toward something.

Building up yourself professionally is one of the best investments you can make, and being confident and capable is the best way to give yourself job security.

11. *Be a Big fish*

Be a big fish in a small pond early on in your career.

At a smaller company, there are more opportunities to be hands-on, wear multiple hats, and grow faster.

Starting in a smaller company or startup to gain experience and then transferring that experience into a larger organization down the line is a great strategy to make a name for yourself and expedite your career growth.

Bonus tip:

Self Care is crucial

“The more you give yourself, the more you can expect from yourself” -gretchin rubin. (Yes, I love her)

Know that in this age of social media comparisons, always being plugged in and working more hours than ever, and always being distracted, we have to work harder at mental health and self care.

We demand so much from ourselves, and feel silly when we need to replenish. It's not weakness, it's reality.

Just know that you are okay. People crap on millenials all the time, but we work very hard and, along with technology, we are changing the way the world approaches work.

Take care of yourself first.

I try to stick to healthy basics to keep me functioning well, like healthy eating, **getting enough sleep**, working out, lighting candles, drinking tea, reading a good book before bed, journalling, and **taking walks**.

Thanks for reading and I really hope this helped, even if only 1%! (see tip #)

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