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GUIDE

Career Change Roadmap

Move into Work That Fits You

SELF-PACED PDF COURSE

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Move into Work That Fits You

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How to Use This Guide

Changing careers is one of the bigger decisions an adult makes, and most of the advice about it is either too cautious (“stay where you are, the market is tough”) or too reckless (“follow your passion and the money will come”). This guide takes a middle road. You will change careers the way careful people change anything important: by finding out what is really wrong, learning what you already bring, testing new directions in small and cheap ways, and building the skills, story, network and money cushion that make the final move a step rather than a leap.

The roadmap in five stages

Stage	What you do	Chapters
1. Diagnose	Work out whether you need a new career or just a new job, and how ready you are	1 and 2
2. Take stock	Define what “fits you” means and list the skills you already have	3 and 4
3. Explore and test	Widen your options, talk to people doing the work, run small experiments	5, 6 and 7
4. Build	Close skill gaps, write your change story, grow your network, plan your money	8, 9, 10 and 11
5. Move and settle	Apply, choose an offer, start well and handle setbacks along the way	12 and 13

Chapter 14 turns everything into a 90-day plan you can start this week.

The stages overlap and loop: an experiment in Stage 3 can send you back to Stage 2 with a sharper idea of what you want. That is not a sign you are doing it wrong. It is how career change works, as Chapter 2 explains.

How long it takes

A move into a closely related role can take a few months. A move into a field that needs a new qualification can take one to three years. Plan for longer than you hope, and budget three to five hours a week. Every stage produces something useful (contacts, proof of work, savings) even if you change your mind about the destination.

The companion workbook

The Career Change Roadmap Workbook holds the full-size tools: the problem locator and readiness check, your work fit profile, the skills inventory and translation table, the option map, the informational interview log, the career experiments tracker, the money runway calculator and the 90-day transition plan. The exercises in this guide are shorter versions so you can think on the page while you read. Use the workbook for the versions you will keep and update.

How to get the most from it

1. **Read Chapters 1 to 4 before you research any new field.** Start with yourself, and job boards become far more useful.
2. **Write your answers.** Written answers show you what you actually know.
3. **Talk to real people early.** Chapter 6 is the one readers most want to skip and the one that changes the most minds.
4. **Keep your current income while you test,** unless your health or safety requires you to leave.
5. **Review every 30 days.** The plan in Chapter 14 builds this in.

TIP

About the examples

The people in the example boxes (Nadia, a retail store manager; Tom, a mechanical engineer; Ines, an accountant; and a few others) are fictional composites, written to show the methods in realistic situations. Any numbers in their stories are illustrations, not statistics. Pay, qualifications and hiring practices vary a great deal by country, region and industry, so check the specifics where you live.

CHAPTER 1

Is It the Job or the Career? 01

When work makes you miserable, the whole career can look like the problem. Sometimes it is. Often it is not: the real trouble is one manager, one employer's culture, a schedule that collides with your family life, or plain exhaustion. Leaving an entire field to escape a problem that would have followed you into the new one is the most expensive mistake a career changer can make. This chapter helps you locate the problem before you choose the solution.

Why diagnosis comes first

Dissatisfaction spreads. When you dread Monday, you tend to judge everything about your work through that dread, including parts you might enjoy somewhere else. That is why "I hate my job" is rarely precise enough to act on. It also helps to separate two kinds of motivation:

- **Push factors** drive you away: a toxic boss, burnout, boredom, low pay, no progress.
- **Pull factors** draw you toward something: a kind of work you enjoy, a field that fascinates you, a lifestyle you want.

A change built only on push tends to land you wherever is nearest, not where you fit. The strongest changes have both: something real to leave and something real to go toward.

The problem locator

Your dissatisfaction can live at six different levels. Each level has a different fix.

Level	What it covers	Test question	Typical fix
1. Tasks	The specific things you do each day	Could I change the mix of tasks in this role?	Job crafting, new responsibilities

Level	What it covers	Test question	Typical fix
2. Manager and team	The people you work with most	Would this problem vanish under a different boss?	Internal transfer, new team
3. Employer	Culture, pay policy, workload, values of this organization	Would the same job elsewhere feel different?	Same role, new employer
4. Industry	The sector's norms, pace, ethics, pay ceiling	Would my role in another industry solve it?	Same function, new industry
5. Occupation	The core work itself, wherever it is done	Would I dislike this work at the best employer in the world?	Career change
6. Life outside work	Health, caregiving, burnout, life stage	Would any job feel this way right now?	Recovery, support, changed conditions

Work through it in four steps:

1. **List your frustrations.** Write ten specific complaints, not general ones. "Sunday night dread" is a feeling. "Every Monday starts with a two-hour status meeting where nothing is decided" is a frustration you can locate.
2. **Assign each one a level.** Ask the test question for each. Be honest: "my manager micromanages" is Level 2 unless every manager in your field is required to.
3. **List your pulls.** Write down what draws you toward something new, as specifically as you can.
4. **Read the pattern.** If most frustrations sit at Levels 1 to 3, try a cheaper fix first: a new team, a new employer or a reshaped role. If they cluster at Levels 4 and 5, and you have real pulls, a career change deserves serious exploration. If Level 6 dominates, deal with that first (see the caution below).

⚠ CAUTION

Burnout first, big decisions second

The World Health Organization's ICD-11 describes burnout as an occupational phenomenon caused by chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed, with three features: exhaustion, growing cynicism or mental distance from your job, and reduced professional effectiveness. Burnout makes every career look gray, so where you can, recover enough to think clearly before making an irreversible decision. Talk to a doctor if low mood or loss of interest has lasted two weeks or more, or if you have thoughts of harming yourself. In a crisis, contact your local emergency number or a crisis line now.

How ready are you?

Readiness is not a feeling of confidence. It is a set of resources. Rate each from 1 (very low) to 5 (strong):

- **Clarity:** how well you know what you are moving toward.
- **Money:** savings and flexibility to absorb a pay dip or training costs.
- **Time:** hours each week you can give to exploring and building.
- **Energy:** physical and emotional capacity right now.
- **Support:** people who will encourage you, help practically or share the load.

Low scores do not mean "don't change careers." They tell you where to start: low clarity, Chapters 3 to 7; low money, saving and a slower route (Chapter 11); low energy, recovery and very small first steps.

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WORKBOOK

Career Change Roadmap Workbook

Skills Inventory, Career Experiments Tracker and 90-Day Transition Plan

COMPANION TO CAREER CHANGE ROADMAP

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Readiness Check

Rate each resource from 1 (very low) to 5 (strong). Low scores show you where to start, not whether to change.

Resource	Score (1 to 5)	What would raise it by one point?
Clarity		
Money		
Time		
Energy		
Support		

Non-Negotiables

Three to five conditions you would turn down an offer for. A long list is usually preferences in disguise.

#	Non-negotiable	Why it matters to me
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		