

*Careergasm
Crash
Course*

**MAKE
A PLAN,
STAN.**

Okay, first of all, there is no need to breathe into a paper bag. Seriously. We are just going to have a chill, no pressure conversation about planning your entire future.

No, for real. Put the bag down. You won't need it. Promise. Pinky swear.

This isn't going to be as hard as you think it's going to be. Why not? Because I'm not going to ask you to quit your job right now. I'm also not going to tell you that you should sink a bunch of cash into some fancy training program, or an MBA, or some other form of career prep. I'm not going to suggest that you should start your own business, move across the country, write a book, become a painter, live in an RV, or join the circus.

What I am going to suggest is that we do just a little bit of planning in case you might want to do some of that stuff in the future. Because if you want to make some changes (and I know you do or you wouldn't be here), you need a plan, Stan.

Want to quit your corporate research gig and work in design instead?
You need a plan.

Want to leave your sales job and start your own consulting business?
You need a plan.

Want to find a way to devote more time to your art, your garden, your poetry, your knitting, or the twelve baby ferrets you just adopted?
You need a plan.

Still have no idea what you want except that you want to quit your job? You need a plan. One that will help you get clear, gather more information, and weigh your options.

We're going to pull together a little plan that will help you move forward no matter where you are in your career decision process.

If you want to get somewhere, you need to get your bearings first. Have you ever looked for a store on one of those shopping mall directory maps? You wander into the mall and you have no idea where the heck you are in relation to the store, so you look at the store directory map. On every one of those maps, without fail, there is a little red dot that says YOU ARE HERE. Why is that little red dot on every map? Because you need to know where you are in relation to where you're going in order to find your way there. Those two points on the map – where you are and where you want to go – are the things you need to help you navigate.

Where are you in relation to where you want to go? Let's think broadly here - especially if you're not quite sure where your final destination is yet.

Let's say you're currently working in media relations at a large company and you want to make a change to work in internal communications. That's not a huge leap. You already have experience in communications. You're just shifting focus. You're not far off from where you want to be.

But let's say you're an accountant who is dying to quit and start your own custom-made furniture business. That's a bigger jump. There are more things to consider. Have you made furniture before? Lots of it? Do people love your stuff? How much do you know about running your own business? How big is your financial cushion? You might need some more training, some business planning, and some time to save up a bigger nest egg. In this case, there's a greater distance between where you are and where you want to go. Which, by the way, doesn't mean that you shouldn't pursue it. (Not at all! No need to crumple into the fetal position on the floor!) It just means that you need to plan accordingly.

Or let's say you're still foggy on your final destination. You like the idea of working for a startup, but you're not sure which one or even what kind of job you'd want there. All you know is that you're currently working as a corporate insurance underwriter and that's not where you want to be. In other words, you're at the south end of the mall and you know you need to head *north*. You don't have the exact coordinates yet, but you know the general direction. Might as well start moving. You can pick up more navigational clues as you go.

How do you start moving? With baby steps. Strategic ones.

But before we get to that, let's get clear on the distance between where you are and where you want to go. Plot yourself somewhere along the spectrum.

SHORT DISTANCE

I'm not that far off, actually. This isn't as big a leap as I thought it was.

LONGER DISTANCE

This is a big jump! It might take some information, training, money or time for me to get there.

Now that we know what we're working with, let's plan out some strategic baby steps. And to make it even easier, let's break our planning out into four categories – information, training/skills/experience, money, and time. We're going to get clear on how much of each you need in order to make your move towards feel-good work.

INFORMATION

What information do you still need to move forward? What research do you need to do? Are there helpful books you should read? Who could you talk to that can help fill your knowledge gaps? Should you join a mastermind? Hire a coach? Work with a business planner?

Here's the information I need to gather before I can make my move...

These books, blogs, and websites might help...

Who do you know who could help you learn more? (friends, family, colleagues, acquaintances, that guy you met at Starbucks that one time, etc.)

Could working with a professional or joining some kind of group help you get the information you need? Who else could you reach out to that could help you make your transition? (these are probably people you don't know yet – a coach, a mastermind group, networking group, business planner, etc.)

TRAINING / SKILLS / EXPERIENCE

Does getting to your desired destination require more training? A degree? A certain designation? More experience in a certain area? Think of the many ways you could gain the training, skills, and experience you need.

Do you need more training or skill development or experience to make this change?

YES

NO (Woohoo! Skip the rest of this section.)

What kind of training, skill-building, or experience do you need? Get as specific as you can.

Where can you get this training / skill / experience? By taking a course? Taking on another project? Watching YouTube tutorials? Working with a mentor? Write down anything and everything you can think of that could help you get what you need.

MONEY

Breathing into your paper bag again? That's okay. Thinking about money can be stressful (but it's also really important). Is your desired career path potentially less financially lucrative than your current one? How will you manage that? Is there an extra cost associated with making your changes? Training costs? Some kind of certification? Do you need to save up a certain amount of money before you take your leap?

Is there an expense related to your transition? One thing? A few things? Write 'em down...

1

2

3

What are the dollars and cents costs (and gains!) related to moving forward. Get out your calculator and crunch those numbers, baby! Ballpark it if you have to.

\$

\$

\$

How do you plan to cover that? Take some cash out of savings? Take on some extra freelance work? Ease up on the retail therapy for a little while? Apply for a small business loan? Etc. Get specific.

TIME

Doing what you need to do for your transition will likely take some time. Gathering information takes time. Getting additional training, building your skillset, and getting experience takes time. Saving money takes time. How much time will you need to do these things? Some people have less free time available than others (I'm talking to you, parent of toddler triplets!). How much time is already available to you, and how much time will you carve out? Do you want to make your transition fast or slow?

I want to make this transition

Like, yesterday.

In a few years.

What time are you going to carve out to work on this transition? For example, take a course Thursday evenings, read up on this on weekends, use your lunch to do research, stop Netflix binging every night and work on this instead, etc.

Now that you have a loose idea about what you need to do and when you'll make the time to do it, you can create a couple of stepping stones – the small steps you're going to take between here and there so that you don't faceplant in the mud along the way. You decide which ones to take first and which ones come later.

Here's what some of your stepping stones might look like...

- Google the shit out of this topic on the weekend
- See if there are any night classes I can take about _____.
- Talk to my acquaintances _____ and _____ who do the kind of work I'm interested in.
- Save up \$___ so that I can _____.
- Hire/join _____ to help me with _____.
- Revamp the hell out of my resume.
- Create a schedule so I can _____.

And the list goes on. Now you try.

My stepping stones...

STILL FEELING LOST?

Do many of the details still seem suuuuper fuzzy to you? That may feel like a problem, but it's not. It just means that all of your stepping stones are going to be in the area of information gathering right now. Once you have the information you need, you'll be able to make some decisions.

For example, if you still need more clarity about what kind of work would make you happy, there are tons of books and tools and courses to help you with that. Heck, you can find one of them at Careergasm. You don't have to go far. If you do know what you want, but not how that industry works or how it's regulated, you're gonna research your ass off until you find out. If you don't know anybody who works in the field you're interested in, you're going to find and connect with some of those people. And there are no excuses. Because...internet.

All of the information you need is available to you. You just have to go out there and get it.

BABY STEPS

Here's one thing I'm going to do this week to get moving in the right direction...

Here's two or three more things I can do later this month that will help...

And believe it or not, that's how it happens – one shaky baby step at a time until one day you look up and, *Holy shit, you're on the doorstep of feel-good work!*

Happy trails, my friend. And don't worry, you don't have to do this alone. I'll be right here, sending some career inspiration to your inbox each week.

Sending you lots of good vibes for your journey!

xo Sarah