
Career & Employment Center

20 Questions to Ask Yourself When Making a Midlife Career Change

1. Am I dissatisfied with my career or only with my job? Could I find satisfaction in a related job within the same field?
2. Are the working conditions the motivating factor for a change?
3. If so, could I change my environment, or my attitude toward it, or is the only resolution a career switch?
4. Do I wish to express certain values on the job that I can't in my present occupation?
5. Do I feel as though I could use more of my abilities and skills in another occupation?
6. Do I have an understanding of my personality and the type of environment I'd prefer working in?
7. Do I know where my interests lie? What do I know about my vocational interests?
8. Have I taken an inventory of my skills and know what my marketable / functional skills are?
9. Have I acquired new skills that I don't have the opportunity to use in my present occupation even though I'd like to?
10. Am I willing to make sacrifices to start all over in a new occupation - such as taking a salary cut? Are the people who are dependent on me also willing?
11. Can I enter my newly chosen occupational field without retraining or further education?
12. If I need to pursue additional education, do I know how much education might be required? Do I need only a few college classes, a certificate, or should I pursue a degree?
13. Have I investigated all of my options, and have I considered several alternative plans?
14. Are there ways I can try out a new career without quitting my full time job?

15. Exactly what will I be giving up and what will I be gaining to change careers?
16. How important are the "golden handcuffs" - seniority, retirement fund, and other benefits - to my welfare both in the short run and over the long run? Have I done a pen and pencil figuring, or only daydreaming? Could the "golden handcuffs" actually be preventing me from growing?
17. Is there help available in my community, such as the Santa Rosa Junior College Career Development Services, to facilitate my career change or help insure its success?
18. Do I feel that I have the patience to spend the time in an entry-level position to get to my goal?
19. What small preparations can I begin to today to help with my career switch? Do I have a list of small, medium, and big goals drawn up? Micro- and mini goals as well?
20. How willing am I to take risks - like the risk of not being happy in a new occupation? Would I be willing to make another switch if that happens?