

# DESIGN YOUR CAREER FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK - A FREE GUIDE

*“The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is NOW.”  
- Chinese proverb*



## WHY DO YOU NEED TO DESIGN YOUR CAREER FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

Congratulations on getting started with this career guide! There is no better time than this moment to begin investing in yourself and in your career. And there has never been a greater reason to do so than there is NOW!

Consider these:

- With an ever increasing number of career choices, 30% of the workforce is now changing jobs every 12 months.
- The average person will change careers 5-7 times during their working life according to [Career Change Statistics](#).
- By the age of 42 you may already have had about ten jobs.
- As per a study on [LinkedIn data](#), millennials change jobs an average of four times in their first decade out of college, compared to about two job changes by Gen Xers their first ten years out of college.

And if numbers are not your thing, then think about the dozens of people you know (and you may even be one of them) who are frustrated and disillusioned because they can't use their natural abilities in their current jobs or who feel stuck in their work but are struggling to come up with options that are inspiring or fulfilling?

Further, businesses might close or industries diminish. There might be a realignment of personal values during midlife re-evaluation. Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis, the reorganization of the global economy including the establishment of the gig economy as the new norm, means that changing careers and reinventing oneself is imperative for everyone.

Your career is therefore, a continuous work-in-progress, requiring you to not just look for the next promising job, but instead to understand the processes of designing your career so you are prepared for the future of work. Processes like 'how do you set goals for yourself', 'how do you get yourself unstuck', 'how do you generate ideas and solutions for career prototypes' and 'how do you learn from career pivots and move forward'.

From our personal experiences of career transitions and our work with scores of other career changers, enabling them to successfully grow and transition their careers, we've put together 7 solid principles which you should keep in mind as you start designing your career. Use these 7 principles along with our 3 tools for career design and you will be on your way to a great career, ready for the future of work.

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*Your career is a continuous work-in-progress. Don't just look for the next promising job, but instead understand the process of designing your career so you are prepared for the future of work.*

# LET'S START WITH WHERE YOU ARE NOW...

Before we begin, let's do a quick check about where you are in your work and career. Answer the following questions with a Yes/No.

1. Do you feel that in your current work you are doing something that makes a difference?
2. Are you respected at work for your efforts, skills and your contribution?
3. Do you feel like others depend on you at work?
4. Do you have the right resources, tools and skills to do your job well?
5. Do you know clearly what is expected of you at work?
6. Do you find your work exciting and challenging?
7. Is your work so close to your natural talents and abilities that it often feels enjoyable like play?
8. Do you have time to pursue other interests outside of work?
9. Do you feel like you know what next step you want to take professionally?
10. Do you have freedom to direct your work?
11. Does your work fit your most important values?
12. Do you feel like you are on a winning team who looks after you?
13. Do you feel like you are treated fairly by your organisation?
14. Are you able to fulfil your goals with respect to personal growth and achievement?
15. Does a day on the job leave you feeling energized rather than drained?

*Scoring: Give yourself a +1 for every 'Yes', 0 for every 'No'*

## **Total Scores:**

0 to 5: you should definitely think about a job/career change; remaining where you are comes at a serious cost to you

6-10: you may be reasonably satisfied currently with your work, but keep a lookout for jobs/careers where you can develop your potential fully

11-15: lucky you, you've worked your way to a place of fulfilment and we hope you continue to invest in yourself and your career so it stays this way

If you find yourself on the lower end of the career fulfilment scores, don't worry. You can design a great career for yourself by consistently and smartly following these TOP 7 PRINCIPLES along with 3 great TOOLS.

# TOP 7 PRINCIPLES TO DESIGN A CAREER

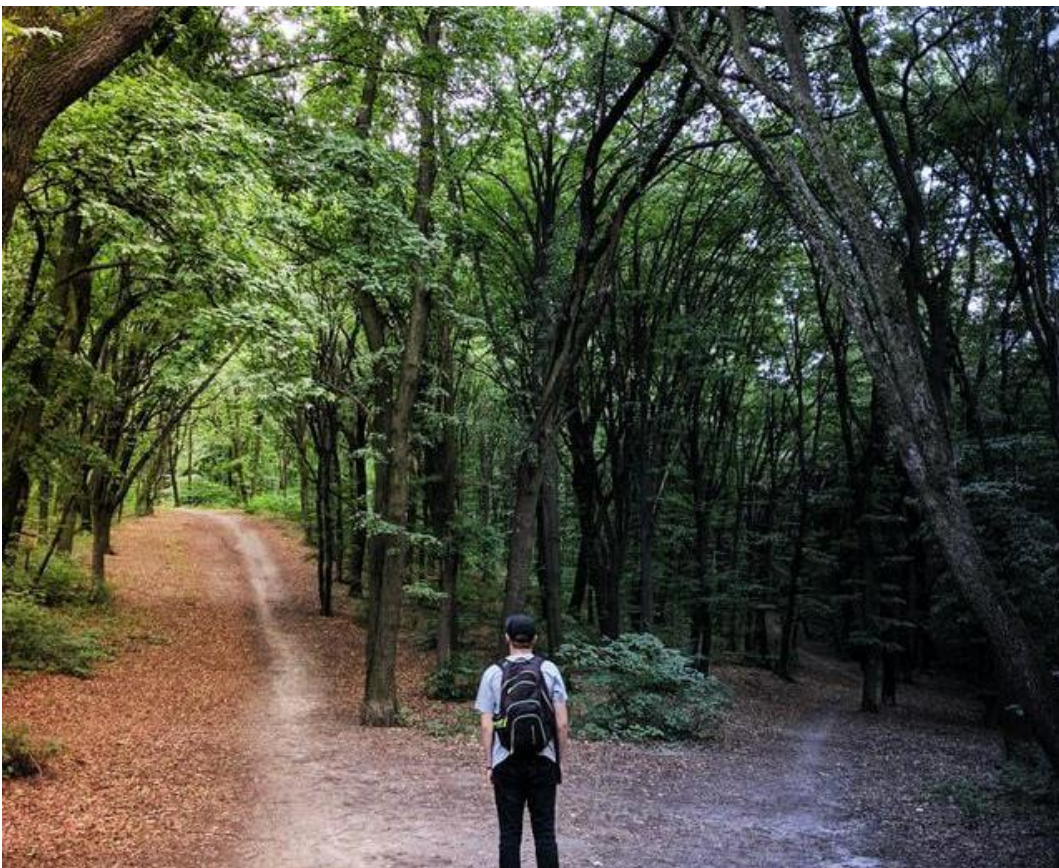
When thinking about changing careers, the vast majority of us feel that finding that 'perfect' job is the sole path to fulfillment. Besides stressing ourselves out, this also makes us hesitant, lest we commit an error.

Instead, remember that there are plenty of 'right' jobs for you. Moreover, at present, what you consider to be your 'right' fit may change over time and that's nothing to worry about. After all the list of career design components that we think are ideal is created by an iterative process and keeps on changing throughout our lives with new experiences.

Keeping this in mind will prevent fear from clouding your judgement and interfering with your career choices. You will then be able to make a career in alignment with your true self.

1

*REALIZE THERE IS  
NO ONE PERFECT  
JOB*



# TOP 7 PRINCIPLES TO DESIGN A CAREER

Have you come across someone who stated an extremely lucky event as their starting point towards their dream career? Well, chances are if you put yourself out there and start to explore your curiosities, you too can attain the same. Of course, your curiosity must be backed by a bias towards action, in no small measure.

Broaden your network by interacting with different people and trying your hand at various activities. Grab opportunities to work on projects outside your domain of expertise. Also, try to pursue a side-project with dedication: Teach, speak, or blog on topics that you are passionate about.

2

STAY OPEN AND PUSH  
PAST YOUR  
AWKWARDNESS TO  
GET CAREER LUCKY

*If you still feel iffy, consider the example of Sheryl Sandberg. Nowadays, one can immediately identify her as Facebook's COO. But how do you think she got there? It all started with a TED talk, which had no relation to her job! It so happened that Sheryl, the keen observer, had noticed that there were only a handful of women in Silicon Valley and many reasons possibly behind this. However, instead of keeping these observations to herself, she started to share them, at first, in informal small gatherings. As her ideas seemed meaningful to her audience, they backed her to take them to the broader public.*

*She did just that with a TED talk - an opportunity which had presented itself then and one she had grabbed and made the most out of. Soon after, the talk went viral and led to other invitations. Her best-selling book, *Lean In*, followed. The credibility the book gave her not only helped her recruit more women to Facebook but also led her to grow her network and finally become a board member of the company.*

# TOP 7 PRINCIPLES TO DESIGN A CAREER

Go and talk to people who are currently doing things you dream of doing. Find out what their role/work actually encompasses. Seek their advice on things one ought to know before embarking on their path. You might be surprised to find out things you had never considered could exist as part of the job. Maybe some of them will not be to your liking, making you rethink whether it is the right fit for you.

Gain knowledge about the job via these conversations by being genuinely curious rather than approaching it as a job search. Be sincerely interested in learning about what they do, what it's really like and how they got there.

Also, as for any interview, learn in advance about the industry, the company and the individual. That way you can keep your queries short and to the point. This is important because more often than not, the conversations won't last long because of people's busy schedules.

3

*PLUNGE INTO  
CONVERSATIONAL  
RESEARCH*



# TOP 7 PRINCIPLES TO DESIGN A CAREER

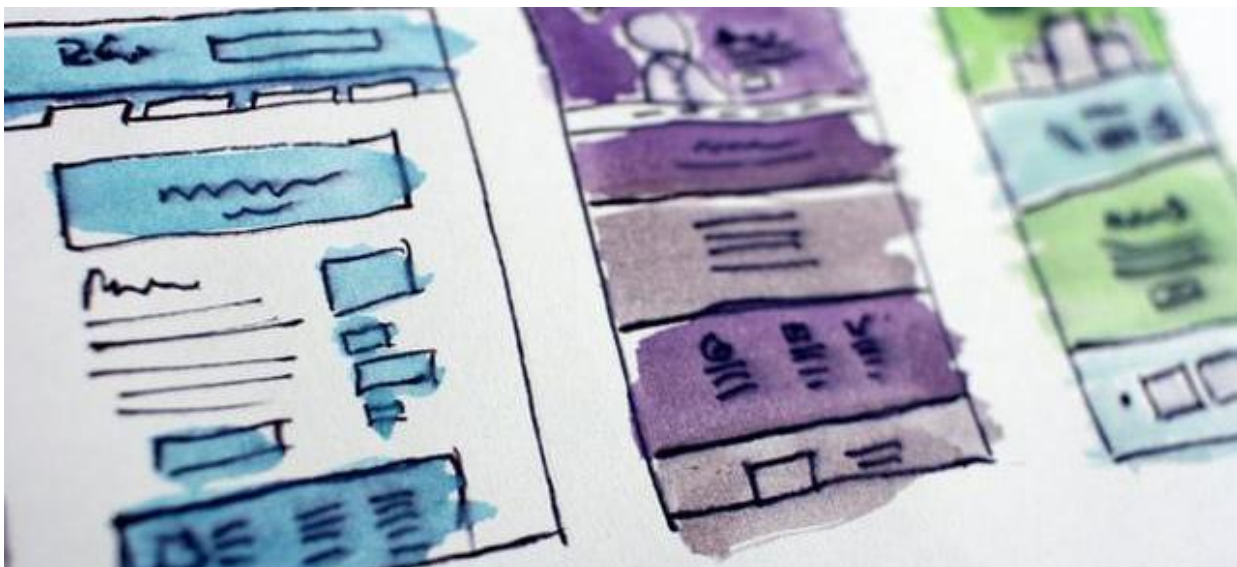
You wouldn't dive headlong into a pool, if you didn't at least know it was deeper than 9 feet! Same principle - before you make the first move, prototype your new career. Visualize and get a taste for the new life that comes with the new career. A good prototype helps you to do that.

While considering your ideas, think like a designer, creating several options and then trying them out. Using DesignThinking to prototype your new career works even better when you cross-fertilize ideas from disparate fields.

Last but not the least, prototyping allows you to try and fail rapidly, without overinvesting in a path. This is important because the assumption that your first idea is the best may turn out to be wrong. If this is indeed so, remember that there are many paths (not just one) that could bring you fulfillment. So continue putting yourself in an exploratory frame of mind. Rather than starting out with 'this is the one', the trick is to start off with various different paths and narrowing down to one.

4

*LOOK (PROTOTYPE)  
BEFORE YOU LEAP*



# TOP 7 PRINCIPLES TO DESIGN A CAREER

You don't just look outside, you look inside too! Tap into the motivation behind the change you want. This is important, because if seemingly obvious things like "money" or "the need to be in a new environment" do not align with your true motivation and needs, the move won't last. Instead, find out the instinct causing your repeated thoughts and follow this rule of thumb: if you have thought about something 3 times, make an effort to do it. A tremendous amount of change is mostly not needed in one go but you do need to be absolutely clear about the thing(s) you are willing to transform.

When you are deciding about a change in career, pause and reflect on your beliefs and connect the dots between them and your occupation. You could also seek out a trained coach to help you gain clarity both on the inside and the outside. Clarity on the inside means being able to picturize your life five years down the line with respect to its outlook and core values and how you want to feel doing the work that you have chosen.

Meanwhile, clarity on the outside means that if you are sure about what you want to do, it's time to inform people - friends, family, and co-workers - about your decision to change careers and seek references to contacts in your new industry. Back this up with a LinkedIn or a blog search. If you are able to reach out to someone, follow through with an informational interview as described earlier.

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*LOOK INSIDE  
YOURSELF*





# TOP 7 PRINCIPLES TO DESIGN A CAREER

The future of work needs you to design and not plan your career. Designing is iterative and you don't have to get tied to the first idea. Learn the principles of Design Thinking and then apply them to designing your life and work. Most importantly, practice 'diverging' i.e. generating lots of ideas, and 'converging', before narrowing down to one when it comes to career choices. Planning favours converging much more, assuming a rather stable external environment and that's why designing, rather than planning is a more future-proof career strategy in today's times. Lastly, remember that redesign is central to our lives in that multiple changes in one's career is going to be the new norm!

From a more tactical point of view, assuming you are undecided about your career path, follow the Design Thinking principle of Radical Collaboration wherein you connect with your 'champions', the people closest to you. By doing so, you are actively seeking to trigger your network, thus allowing ideas to start to flow in the process.

6

*DESIGN AND NOT  
PLAN YOUR CAREER*



# TOP 7 PRINCIPLES TO DESIGN A CAREER

Building a support system is vital for a successful career change. Find a coach who will help you sort out the conflicting voices in your head by holding space for you – for both your new ideas and your tangled up emotions. Further, if they are familiar with the sector you are considering to venture out into, they will also be able to bring new perspectives.

Besides this, try to create a team of advisors. Many people don't realise that it is easy to create your own 'unofficial' team of advisors. Curate a group of people (even those you may not know personally) whose guidance you can follow for your career development.

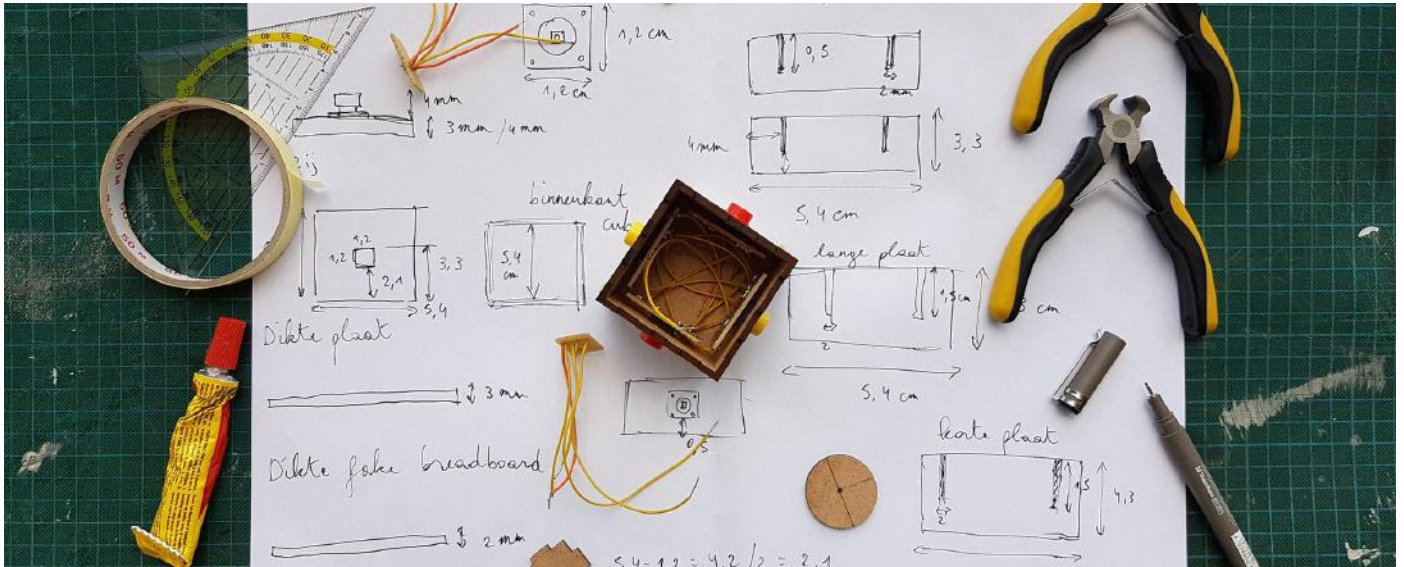
Lastly, note that if you are to leave the familiarity of a business or industry after 5, 10 or 20 years, it can be quite unnerving. There will be things you simply won't know. In situations like these, your 'advisory board' can watch your back, helping you manoeuvre the tricky path, gently but firmly showing you your blind spots so you can overcome them.

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*YOU NEED SUPPORT -  
MAKE SURE YOU ASK  
FOR IT*



Now that you've understood the 7 principles to Design your career, start getting your tool kit in place, so you can put these principles into practice.



### 3 TOOLS YOU NEED TO DESIGN YOUR CAREER

The Kavyata Career Design tool kit has three main tools - your IDEAS & INTERESTS, your SKILLS and your VALUES. Like a good designer who is about to now execute a DIY project, get your tool kit ready by collecting your thoughts around each of these.



**IDEAS &  
INTERESTS**



**SKILLS**



**VALUES**

## 3 TOOLS YOU NEED TO DESIGN YOUR CAREER



### IDEAS & INTERESTS

This is where you put down every possible idea and interest which ever crossed your mind about what you want to do. Aim for quantity first, quality will emerge later. This is the time to go back to every side project you thought of/started, those forgotten passions and more than anything else, whatever makes you CURIOUS.

Curiosity is worth far more in the career change process than we give it credit for. We mistakenly believe that career change will happen when we know what we want to do. But that's like putting the cart before the horse; you will not know what you want to do, unless you allow your curiosity to open up multiple possibilities for you.

Find a way to capture these ideas. Your tool box will be even richer if you can get creative with how you capture your ideas. Our suggestions

- A collage with interesting images/pictures of things that appeal to you
- Doodling your thoughts
- Mind maps where you begin with one thought and branch out into several associated (need not be closely associated) ideas

The bonus of the above methods is that being non-linear, they allow you to be more open and flexible to new ideas. And of course, you can always list your interests and ideas in one place - strengthen the 'idea muscle'. When you feel you have sufficiently explored your ideas and interests, work on the next set of tools for career change, understanding your SKILLS.

## 3 TOOLS YOU NEED TO DESIGN YOUR CAREER



### SKILLS

You need to start with a skills audit. What you're aiming for is to find what skills you already have and you would love to use in work that you do, and also to know what skills you possess, but aren't greatly excited to use. Some pointers to get you started :

- What achievements across professional and personal experiences are you most proud of? What skills do you think you used in bagging these achievements?
- Ask trusted mentors/friends/colleagues what they think your top 3-5 skills are?
- What are some skills you would love to develop and which you see your role models demonstrating successfully?

As you answer these questions, sort your responses into skills that you want to use further, and those that you don't see yourself choosing to use in the future.

When you have completed your skills audit, ask yourself, 'Am I sharing my skills in the most effective way with prospective employers/business partners?' 'What else can I do to strengthen my SKILLS STORY?'

## 3 TOOLS YOU NEED TO DESIGN YOUR CAREER



### VALUES

The third set of tools in enabling your career change is knowing what matters to you. Values provide the boundary and criteria you need to assess any potential career/kind of work. And everyone has their unique set of values and what they want most out of their work. Values also change in response to the stage of our lives and careers and paying attention to these changes makes a great difference to career change feeling and turning out right for us.

Your values are about the 'why' of your career, and authentically exploring these values sets a rock solid foundation for navigating your career, even when the external environment is turbulent. How do you explore what your guiding values are? Use these reflective prompts to take you closer to your values.

- I want to change my job or career because.....
- Success to me means.....
- I have usually prioritized .....
- At this stage of life, I am more inclined towards.....and less inclined towards.....
- My responsibilities and commitments which I do not want to compromise on are...

Exploring and understanding your values keeps you anchored even when the path of career change feels confusing and messy. What's most important is to be as authentic and true to yourself as you can, so you don't end up taking on values which seem required/expected by family, friends, colleagues etc.

## GOING FORWARD

CONGRATULATIONS! You have lined up all the tools and principles you need for career change. You have done a fair amount of hard work, now step back and look at all these from a little distance. And then start putting these principles and tools into action in small ways and see what that tells you about yourself - you will find yourself getting slowly and surely more confident and clear about how you can design your career for yourself.

In our experience , the best way to design a career which you will enjoy and be good at is to work with an expert-coach-consultant. At Kavyata, we have worked with hundreds of people on enabling them to design their careers, whether its mid-career professionals who want to make a career transition into something completely new or early careerists who want to get clarity about taking the right professional steps.

Designing a career is a continuous process and we hope you have embarked on this process, with enthusiasm and the right guidance. Enjoy the design process!

