



BLOG

How to Find a Career That Works for You

Sometimes the detours end up taking you exactly where you're meant to be.

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I spent the final years of high school suffering from commitment anxiety. “What are you going to do with your life?” is a huge question for any 17-year-old to consider. Yet somehow, I did it. I picked a program, went to lectures, wrote some essays, and graduated with a passion for postwar history and conceptual art. But where do I go from here?

If your career follows an efficient school-to-workplace pipeline, consider yourself lucky. Many graduates struggle to find a desirable career path once they finish university.

Here are some tips that helped me rediscover my direction after post-secondary school:



Learn from Life Experience

Academia is different from the working world in one major way. A humanities or arts program teaches high-level skills like writing, researching, and thinking critically, which can broadly benefit many different career paths. However, they don't introduce you to the nitty-gritty realities of daily life on the job.

Research First

Before locking in a new career goal, do some research. Look for desirable job listings to get an idea of the salary expectations and required skillsets. Speak to people in that field to learn more about what work-life balance the job offers. Ideally, your career should be a good fit for your lifestyle too.

Minutiae Matters

A job may look great on paper, but how will the projects and workflow feel long-term? All those everyday tasks matter because they do add up over time!

Look for Co-op Placements

Co-op placements are an excellent way to enhance your resume, network in the industry, and learn more about the kinds of tasks you enjoy. Is there somewhere you've always dreamed of working? Aim big! In most cases, organizations are happy to take on co-op students.

Get to Work

If you're finished school and didn't have the chance to do a co-op placement, consider working for a year or two before planning your next move. It could be anything – even something as simple as an entry-level office job. This allows you to learn what kind of work you actually like to do. The answers may surprise you!



Find Ways to Reskill or Upskill

Now that you know more about your interests and skills, how do you make a career switch happen? Enrolling in another 4-year program can be a daunting commitment that requires a lot of time and money. The good news is that many paths can lead to the same destination.

Online Resources

Online platforms like LinkedIn Learning and YouTube can be great resources for learning new skills without any major financial commitments. You can go at your own pace, which is perfect for people with busy schedules.

Micro-Credentials

Many colleges and universities offer micro-credentials, which are rapid training programs that teach practical work skills. Most of these programs are flexible, so you can complete them around work and other commitments.

Post-Diploma Programs

Post-diploma programs are focused college-level credentials that can be used to update your skills or learn new technologies. They focus on practical skills to enhance employability and give you an advantage in the job market. Although longer than a micro-credential, these programs are flexible and can usually be balanced while working.



Want to learn more? Our upcoming workshop will help you explore career pathways after university, hosted by University of Toronto Human Resources Professor Melanie Jones.

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