

## AUTUMN MIGHT INSPIRE CAREER CHANGE

BY GRETA DAVIS

Autumn is often associated with transformation and letting go. Just as trees shed their leaves for winter, fall encourages us to shed old ways, even careers that no longer serve our purpose. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average worker will have 10 different jobs before the age of 40. Today's youngest workers are projected to hold 12 to 15 jobs in their lifetimes.

Autumn can be a time for introspection and evaluation, research and exploration, skill development and education, networking and building relationships, as well as transition planning.

**INTROSPECTION AND EVALUATION** The first step in preparing for a career change is engaging in self-reflection and evaluating personal goals, values, and skills. Considering past experiences can shed light on transferable skills and highlight areas of passion and interest. Identifying values that align with a desired career can help ensure a sense of fulfillment and purpose in the long run. Self-assessment tools, career counseling, and informational interviews can all be valuable resources.

**RESEARCH AND EXPLORATION** Conduct thorough research and explore potential career options. Gather information about various industries, job markets, and the skills and qualifications required for different roles. Online resources, industry publications, professional networks, and mentoring are invaluable in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the target career. Consider factors such as salary expectations, growth prospects, work-life balance, and cultural fit when evaluating potential paths. Engaging in informational interviews or job shadowing experiences can provide firsthand exposure to the day-to-day realities of a particular career and valuable networking opportunities.

**SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION** After narrowing down potential career options, assess your skills and identify any gaps. Pursuing additional education, certifications, or training programs can help prepare you for the new career. Online courses, community colleges, vocational schools, and professional development programs often offer good options. Meanwhile, leveraging existing skills and experiences can help position you as a strong candidate in the new field. Volunteering, freelancing, or taking on side projects can provide practical experience and build a portfolio.

**NETWORKING AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING** Building a professional network is key for a career change. Actively networking with individuals in the target industry or attending industry-specific events can open doors. Joining relevant professional associations, attending conferences, and leveraging social media platforms such as LinkedIn can facilitate connections. Engaging in informational interviews or seeking out mentors in the desired field can provide valuable guidance, advice, and insights.

**TRANSITION PLANNING** Create a plan to guide your career change process. Breaking down the transition into smaller, manageable steps helps maintain focus and ensures progress. Setting short-term and long-term objectives, identifying key resources and support systems, and regularly reviewing and revising the plan are critical to staying on track and adapting to unforeseen circumstances.

Autumn reminds us that change is a part of life. In today's rapidly evolving world, the notion of a lifelong career with a single company or in a specific field has become increasingly rare. Preparing for a career change requires thoughtful self-reflection, diligent research, skill development, networking, and effective planning. By embracing these steps and considering the valuable insights gained along the way, individuals can embark on a new career path with confidence, adaptability, and a renewed sense of purpose. While transitioning to a new career can be daunting, autumn reminds us to let go of what is not serving us well and embrace change and the possibility of new growth.



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