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# Biggest Mistakes to Avoid

...when making a career change

# 1. Driving with your hands on the rear-view mirror

When you're first considering a career change, it's natural to use your CV or resume as a starting point. After all, the whole recruitment industry is set up on the basis of using your previous experience to guide your next steps.

But if the answer was on your CV, you'd probably have found it by now, right?

Your resume can provide a spark of inspiration if you've done things you love in the past, but if you really want to do something new and different, you're going to have to branch out a bit further. Take a look in new places, broaden your horizons, and step outside your comfort zone.

A great place to start is remembering what you loved to do before you even had a CV. What made you happiest when you were a child? (If you had a hobby or passion as a teenager that you gave up because someone told you it wasn't 'reasonable' or 'practical', you should definitely revisit it now.)

What jobs have you heard of other people doing that really excite and intrigue you? What blogs, magazines or websites do you regularly read – and why?



*"I've learnt that you have to be open to change, spontaneity, and the opportunities that arrive when you least expect them."*  
~ Katherine Preston - Investment Writer to Public Speaker and Small Business Founder

[www.careershifters.org/success-stories/from-finance-to-books-and-business](http://www.careershifters.org/success-stories/from-finance-to-books-and-business)

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## 2. Getting tied in mental knots

Thinking is great. It's important. Taking time to consider your skills, desires, and what you might enjoy is a key part of discovering what you'd love to do. But with career-change, thinking and action must go hand in hand.

You can sit still for days, thinking about your career-change, and when you finally come up for air you'll still be in the same job as when you started (that's if your boss hasn't fired you in the meantime).

A thinking-only approach will also send you round and round in circles, tying yourself in knots as you try to twist the same old information into a new idea.

Changing career to something you'll really love is an active journey, not a theoretical riddle. Sometimes it's illogical and surprising, only revealing pieces of the puzzle, one by one, once you're already on the journey. So make your journey as much of an adventure as possible.

The more new information you have in your head, the less you'll find yourself chasing your tail. Put yourself in new, inspiring environments; talk to interesting people; try things out; and make sure your career change happens out in the real world, not just inside your head.



*"I would advise people to really take some actual time to think about what they really want and to actually TRY it. Don't just think about what you don't want because you'll very rarely find what you DO want from doing that." ~ Charlie Moritz, Travel Agent to English Teacher*

[www.careershifters.org/success-stories/from-travel-agent-to-english-teacher-in-japan](http://www.careershifters.org/success-stories/from-travel-agent-to-english-teacher-in-japan)

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### 3. Flying solo

Changing career isn't easy. It's a challenging process: mentally, emotionally, and often financially.

Trying to go it alone can turn into a lonely and frightening experience, and it's all too easy to get caught up in self-doubt and give up. That's why it's essential to surround yourself with people to support you.

Whether it's friends, family, co-workers, or a community online, having people around to cheer you on and offer a helping hand when things get tough can make the process infinitely smoother.

If you can connect with other career-changers who can fully relate to what you're going through, be a sounding-board for your ideas and hold you accountable for your actions, so much the better.



*"I got support from my family and my partner's family. My partner was hugely supportive. I know I couldn't have done it without him. It always helps to have a lot of support." ~ Dee Ripoll, From the Law to the Waves and the Stage*

[www.careershifters.org/success-stories/from-the-law-to-the-waves-and-the-stage](http://www.careershifters.org/success-stories/from-the-law-to-the-waves-and-the-stage)

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## 4. Surrendering to safety

You know your career inside out. You've worked towards it for a long time, and you're respected for it. You have friends at work. You're financially secure. And now, you're considering giving all of that up.

Even if you hate your job, these are enormous anchors that can keep you in the same spot for years on end.

To make a successful career change, it's vital to find ways to break through inertia and keep moving towards the goal of a career you love. Usually, the key to this is to take small, regular steps forward; no great terrifying leaps (they can be paralysing) and no 'analysis paralysis'.

Keep checking to see if you've fallen into inertia, and if you have, remind yourself of what's at stake.

Your future self will thank you for it.



*"The process of leaving the Bar was difficult – after working so hard to get a place in Chambers, realising that it was not going to work for me in the long term was very hard.*

*Do not be put off by what you perceive to be the stigma of 'giving up' what you are doing. I think this can be a common*

*problem where people are in professional jobs that they don't like. My experience is that people very much respect and admire my decision to take a leap into the unknown." ~ Angela Newman, From Legal Chambers to Gorgeous Gardens*

[www.careershifters.org/success-stories/from-legal-chambers-to-gorgeous-gardens](http://www.careershifters.org/success-stories/from-legal-chambers-to-gorgeous-gardens)

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## 5. Listening to your Little Voices

One of the most dangerous mistakes you can make in your career change is trying to predict the outcome of things that haven't happened yet.

Have you ever caught yourself considering a great idea, and then finding your head filled with twelve different reasons why it couldn't possibly work? Those are your 'Little Voices' piping up.

Career change is a hell of an adventure. It requires you to try things you'd never dreamed of before, make requests of people you've never met, and discover options you didn't realise existed. Most of all, it requires you to believe that having a career you love is possible.

To do all of these things, you have to be able to push aside your limiting beliefs, ignore the voices in your head telling you it can't be done, and do it anyway.



*"I think you've got to be brave. Don't be put off by people around you saying 'why do you want to do that?' or 'is it the right choice?'. It was very scary jumping off that hamster wheel and deciding to do something different. I'm not saying it's the right thing for everyone, but if it feels like the right thing for you then you've got to just do it. Once you've made the leap, stick at it and take courage in your convictions." ~ Natalie Boxall - From the BBC to the Birthing Suite*

[www.careershifters.org/success-stories/from-the-bbc-to-the-birthing-suite](http://www.careershifters.org/success-stories/from-the-bbc-to-the-birthing-suite)

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