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Lizette Epps

New Year, New Career?



The new year often is a time of making changes. It can be to a new diet, new exercise routine, personal development, or for many, a new career. As someone who has made a career change within the last two years, and who counsels others on their career paths, I can confidently say that changing your career is doable! Even amidst a pandemic, you can make a positive change more suited to your skills, values, and passions.

Before leaping into a new career, you should take some time to identify what you value and what you are passionate about. Identifying and reconnecting with these parts of yourself will help you remember the things you've loved doing. For example, when I was younger, I loved to read, write, and do research. When I got a bit older I realized community and volunteering was something I was passionate about. Today, I have a career where very many if not all of those traits are woven into my job.

On the flip side, you also want to identify the things that you don't like doing. Now, don't get me wrong, there are always going to be things that you don't like to do, even at a job you love. However, what you don't want to end up with is a career where 80% of what you do are things that you despise. Be honest with yourself and jot those items down so that you can avoid a career you won't be happy in.

Know your values and what you won't compromise on. Helping others, having high levels of interaction with the public, room for innovation, or recognition are values that may challenge you or inspire you. Ensuring you choose a career that will allow you to live your values will warrant that you won't grow to hate it.

DO NOT let money be your motivator! Yes, money is an essential component of life, however, it won't guarantee that you love what you do. When you examine your relationship with money, take a good hard look at what money means to you. Is it an ego boost to make a certain amount? Are you living in such a way that money is what makes your world go round? To find true happiness in your career you'll have to redefine what money means to you and reconfigure it to fit in with the values that are important to you.

It's not often that careers fall into your lap, so it's important to evaluate and do the work to determine what makes you happy. After assessing what's important to you, the next step is to try it on for size. You can volunteer, intern, job shadow, or even take classes to help provide you with an avenue to test drive the career field you are interested in. This will be the best way to personally experience this new career path and see if it really is for you.