



Career Planning for Graduates

This past month I've been contacted by 3 parents, all of whom wanted advice on behalf of their sons. One of the emails is typical: "I am looking into what assistance there is available for my son. He got a 2:1 B eng degree in Sports Engineering last summer, but is still at home working in a pub. We are not clear what his motivation or direction is?"

It's so hard isn't it we want our young adults to find a career that suits them but it isn't always easy, and we can't do things for them.

Some young people have worked so long and hard for A levels and a degree that they need some time to chill out a bit and reflect on what they want to do in a career.

This can be time well spent if people are looking into what they want to do but too often the weeks turn into months and then a whole year has gone by. This means when they start applying for graduate jobs they are competing against the current graduates as well.

As parents we can get frustrated, wanting to help our children but we can't do it for them, they have to want to take action.

Working in a pub isn't a bad job – you meet people and develop good people skills but probably 6 months is long enough.

So what do I suggest?

You can make suggestions, perhaps forward them a copy of this article, but you can't do it for them. As we all now the more we suggest something the more stubborn some people become. However you may like to tell them some of my top tips

Top tips for graduates who have yet to find out what they want to do as a career

1. Think about how happy you are right now – do you like your life and job?
2. If you aren't happy ask yourself why not? Do you think the job is beneath you? Are you having to do a job that's boring or low paid, do you think there is a lack of prospects?
3. On a scale of 1-10 how much do you want to do something else? If you score 7 or below you are unlikely to put in the effort to find something more.
4. Think about your current job – is it really so awful? Think about what you are learning from it that would be useful for a future job
5. Could you do something a bit more in the job – volunteer to take on some extra tasks, or make suggestions for improvement? This can sometimes lead on to you getting an offer of something more suited to your ambitions

What do you want to do? Do you have a career path that interests you?

I sometimes see people (of all ages) who tell me that they want to follow a particular career path but don't know that much about it. So of something does interest you first of all find out as much as you can via the Internet, then find people to talk to – conducting [informational interviews](#) will help you learn so much more about the job that will really enhance your application form and at interview.

What if you don't know what you want to do?

If you have no idea what you want to do think about what you do like, what you enjoy, what ties in with your values etc.

One of the reasons I put together the 10 Steps to a Job you Love eProgramme was to give people a structure to follow. If you would like a copy you can access it from my [home page](#). It doesn't cost you anything.

You could also find out more about the company you are working for to see what other options might be available.

Don't beat yourself up!

You may look around and see that many of your friends appear settled into a "good job" but appearances can be deceiving. There are many people who follow a particular path into a good job and then when they reach their late 20s or 30s they realise they have followed the wrong path and need to work out where they want to go.

So be kind to yourself but do create an action plan.

Create a plan

If you are not sure what you want to do and when, why not give yourself 2 months to see what happens if you carry on as you are – if not, why not create a plan taking account of the points in this article.

If you would benefit from discussing this please [contact Denise](#).

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