

6 Tips for Landing Your Dream Job

By Alexandra Levit

As unattainable as a dream job might sound, with the right amount of forethought and preparation, you can make the move as well. Here are six tips to get you started:

1) **Learn about yourself.** Take time to do a self-assessment of your values, how you like to work, and what you'd be compelled to do even if you never got paid. Research careers and industries that map to your skills and interests. Hit the Internet, set up informational interviews, take relevant coursework, and arrange to go onsite at a company in your chosen field.

2) **Don't be deterred by a lack of experience.** In developing a resume and other promotional materials for the field you want to pursue, think about how your current skills and talents apply to the responsibilities you'll hold in the new job. For example, knowledge of project management, client relations, information technology, and sales will take you far in most types of careers.

3) **Ease into a new career one foot at a time.** Perhaps this means earning a paycheck at your current job while doing a part-time internship in your new field or taking an adult education class or workshop on the weekend. The only way to find out if you're passionate about something is to try it – ideally with as little risk as you can manage.

4) **Remember that any progress is good progress.** Even confident people stay in unsatisfying jobs because they feel safe, and because they're afraid of making a bad decision. But in the quest to uncover a source of meaningful work, though, your worst enemy is inertia. Make an effort to do one thing, like e-mailing a networking contact or attending an event – that moves you a bit closer to your big picture goal.

5) **Start early.** Younger professionals have more flexibility when it comes to test-driving different careers. The process of self-discovery is much easier when you're unencumbered by family responsibilities and substantial financial burdens, and when you haven't yet reached a level in a career where it's tougher to turn back. That said, it's never too late to pursue your passion. More and more baby boomers are leaving the world of traditional employment for alternative career paths that will fulfill them well into retirement age.

6) **Have realistic expectations.** Even if you're lucky enough to hold your dream job, there's no such thing as the perfect work situation. Every job has its ups and downs, and aspects we love and aspects we don't love. And dream job doesn't mean "cushy" job. As your mom always told you, anything worth having in this world requires some effort. There will be some days you feel like shutting the alarm off and going back to sleep, but many more where you feel more energized by the prospect of work than you ever thought possible!

*Alexandra Levit is the author of *New Job, New You: A Guide to Reinventing Yourself in a Bright New Career*. Learn more at www.newjobnewyou.com.*