

HOW TO Figure Out What to Do with Your Life

(next)

An amazing and brilliant
instruction manual on how to
find purpose, build a career,
and live a life of fulfillment.

— DEEPAK CHOPRA, M.D.

JENNIFER
TURLIUK

Praise for *How to Figure Out What to Do with Your Life (Next)*

How to Figure Out What to Do with Your Life (next) is a comprehensive look at making the big career decisions in your life.

— Eric Boyd, co-founder of StumbleUpon, serial entrepreneur, and angel investor

How to Figure Out What to Do with Your Life (next) is an actionable, step-by-step framework for moving your life and career forward. Jennifer Turliuk's book shines with wisdom from her years of experience and knowledge from the many experts in her network. This is a must-read for anyone looking to level up their career or make a change in their life.

— Ben Parr, author of *Captivology: The Science of Capturing People's Attention* and co-founder of Octane AI

How to Figure Out What to Do with Your Life (next) takes the idea of prototyping and applies it to designing a career that feeds your soul and your bank account. Recommended reading for anyone trying to figure out what to do next in their career.

— April Dunford, CEO, Ambient Strategy, and author of *Obviously Awesome*

Are you feeling lost in your career and life? *How to Figure Out What to Do with Your Life (next)* is an insightful guide that helps set you on the right path in life. The path to success.

— Sean Cooper, bestselling author of *Burn Your Mortgage* and mortgage broker

School does not help you figure out what to do with your life. But lucky for you, *How to Figure Out What to Do with Your Life (next)* does. Read this book, implement its strategies, and share your gifts with the world; you are needed now more than ever.

— Sean Aiken, author of *The One-Week Job Project: 1 Man, 1 Year, 52 Jobs*

Too many people are waiting for someone else to figure out what they should do with their life. Take Jenn's advice of "prototyping" and actually figure out for yourself what you truly are meant to be doing ... and in the process how you are meant to help serve the world.

— Yanik Silver, author of *Evolved Enterprise* and creator of the Cosmic Journal

Jennifer provides us with the often-missed bridge from inspiration to action. She shows us how to do what we know we want to do. This book tells you everything you wish you knew at the start, not the end, of your journey through the working world.

— Kunal Gupta, CEO, Polar, and tech entrepreneur

How to Figure Out What to Do with Your Life (next) is an insightful new guide that simplifies and demystifies career planning. Read this book! It will help you make smart decisions to successfully pursue a career you will love.

— Mike Brcic, founder/chief explorer of Wayfinders

Jennifer gives clear strategies to help people find and do what they love, while at the same time helping them build financial well-being for a whole lifetime, not just retirement.

— Kira Leskew, founder and CEO, the Eagle Institute

In this decade of uncertainty, this book is relevant and practical. Many people are asking themselves: What am I meant to do? How do I make the transition? Jennifer has been exploring these questions for many years and shares her insights.

— Cherry Rose Tan, founder and CEO, #REALTALK

Not everyone knows what they want to be when they grow up — not even most grown-ups! In this super smart and accessible book, Jennifer Turliuk breaks down how she figured out what she wants to do with her life — and how you can pinpoint your purpose, too.

— Sofi Papamarko, writer and entrepreneur

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JENNIFER
TURLIUK



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To my family

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Introduction

He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often, and loved much; who has gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who has left the world better than he found it, whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul; who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty or failed to express it; who has always looked for the best in others and given the best he had; whose life was an inspiration; whose memory a benediction.

— BESSIE ANDERSON STANLEY

If you're stuck in a job you hate, you're unfortunately not alone. In fact, astonishingly, more than 80 percent of Americans and 75 percent of Canadians are dissatisfied with their jobs.¹

I was unhappy with the career path I entered just after graduation from university. I woke up late, went to sleep when I got home at 6:00 p.m., and developed all sorts of aches and pains I had never felt before. It took me a while, but I finally gathered the courage to quit. Like many people, I'd put more thought and effort into getting the job than into figuring out if it was something I actually wanted. There's plenty of research and advice out there on how to write the perfect résumé and ace that interview. But when it comes to figuring out what you want to do with your life, the strategies aren't so clear.

I realized that although I could predict and pontificate about a career path that might make me happier, I'd never actually know until I was in the thick of it. I had an idea that I might like to do something related to entrepreneurship but didn't exactly know what that meant. Did I want to join a startup? Start my own? Try to get into venture capital? Join or start a non-profit? Do international development work abroad?

More importantly, I didn't know how I could figure it out without a huge investment of time, like starting another full-time job with a new company.

But then I had a different idea. I decided to enter a competition to shadow Dave McClure, who founded the accelerator 500 Startups. Being selected as one of the top six finalists gave me the kick I needed to quit my job, fly down to Silicon Valley, and begin what I call a "self-education program" on something they don't teach you in school but is arguably the most important thing of all: what I wanted to do with my life.

What is that? I run my own company and make a competitive salary. I control my days and who I spend time with. My company makes a difference in the lives of our customers, staff, and community members — and has strong potential to grow. Sometimes I have bad days, but many are good. Certainly, there are many more good days than I used to have. And the work is fulfilling. I learn new things every day, and I've met the most amazing people through my involvement with this business. I can't think of anywhere I'd rather be. In this book, I share the Career Design Process I created to get to this point, made up of ideas from the quantified self movement (users and makers of self-tracking technological tools), design thinking, lean startup methodologies, and more.

So what did I do during my self-education program? So many things — and I'll tell you all about them in this book. Over the course of a few months, I began cold emailing anyone I could think of who I was interested in meeting and learning from. To my surprise, I had a shockingly high response rate. I met with the founders of Airbnb, Square, Kiva, Mint, Color, and many more, and also with various investors and professors in the Bay Area. I asked them about their career paths, how they'd come to be where they were now, and what recommendations they had for figuring out my next move.

And I didn't stop there. I also volunteered at major conferences such as DEMO and Founder Showcase so I could meet more people and attend the talks for free. I checked out various events and lectures in the region, and even sat in on classes at Stanford University, which the professors were kind enough to let me attend. Finally, to get a full holistic experience, I lived in a co-op in Palo Alto, California, and had an amazing time learning about cooking, co-operative living, and various lifestyles.

One of the most important conversations I had was with John Krumboltz, an international career expert who teaches career coaching at Stanford. He advocated an idea that stuck with me: testing out the different career experiences I was interested in, in the most low-commitment way I could for each option. I had just been introduced to the entrepreneurial concept of “minimum viable product” — an interesting parallel, I thought — so I decided to apply these same principles to deciding what to do next with my career.

I began “prototyping” the different work experiences I was considering — dipping my toe in each, so I could figure out which I liked best. Again, using my favourite tactic of cold emailing, I reached out to and secured “shadow experiences” with companies, including Launchrock (a 500 Startups company), Dojo, Causes (started by Sean Parker), Kiva, the Stanford d.school, and Ashoka (a non-profit that supports entrepreneurship). I spent one to five days with each company, not only learning from them but also assisting them wherever I could. At Causes, I helped produce success reports for clients and sat in on strategy meetings and interviews with potential hires. At Kiva, the then CEO Matt Flannery let me follow him around for the day (the literal definition of a shadow) and

experience “a day in the life,” complete with accompanying him on his daily walk in the park to clear his head.

So what did I learn through all of this? I realized that I wanted to pursue my own business as soon as possible. In one of the classes I sat in on at Stanford, the professor asked the students how they wanted the world to be different when they died. I knew then that not only did I want to be passionate about what I was doing — I wanted others to be, too. I wanted my business to do something that helped other people find and pursue career activities they were passionate about, and I’ve worked toward that objective ever since.

But looking back, I’m so happy I took the time to prototype my different career options and am grateful for the fact that it was nearly free to do so — much cheaper than an M.B.A., which many people say they take to figure out what to do with their lives. I learned more in those few months than I had in years.

And whether or not you can spare a few months off work, you can learn like that, too. If you’re not quite sure about your career path, you can pick a few things you think you’d rather be doing and then prototype them yourself by setting up experiences in which you can try out your different options. Find companies you’d like to work for and individuals whose career paths you admire and then reach out to them to see if you can shadow them for an afternoon, a day, or a week. This book will show you how. Try informational interviews, volunteering, internships, and more. And don’t be surprised when they say yes, or even if many of these experiences lead to job offers — without you even asking for them.

One thing that really surprised me during my experience was how easily approachable, open, and helpful most people are. Cold emailing has become perfectly normal, as has saying, “I saw you on Twitter and thought you seemed interesting, so I wanted to reach out.” This is the first time in history that people’s career interests and hobbies are listed online and are easily searchable — and it’s an amazing opportunity to create your own network beyond just the people you meet in person.

Take it from me: if you’re trying to decide on your next step, it’s an opportunity you can — and should — take advantage of.

Now, am I an expert on success? It depends on how you look at it. I'm definitely still in the process of figuring everything out, since I believe everyone is for the entirety of their lives, but so far some people have said I've managed to figure out, sort through, and accomplish some pretty amazing things for my age. I was inspired to write this book because of the reaction I got from an article I wrote for *Forbes* about my Career Design Process.²

When I set out to write the piece for a blog called *The Daily Muse*, my main aim was to get it on *Forbes*, one of *The Daily Muse's* distribution partners. I didn't expect it to go anywhere or to get much traffic — I just wanted to have an article on *Forbes*, and that was that. I thought it would be pretty cool. *The Daily Muse* said it would definitely be able to put the article on its site and would try its best to get the piece on *Forbes* but couldn't promise anything.

So the article went up on *The Daily Muse's* website, and the next day, imagine my surprise when I got an email from a reader saying, "Hey, I loved your article on *Forbes*." I replied, "What article on *Forbes*? Can you send me the link?" And the emails didn't stop from then on. In fact, years later, they still haven't ceased, which has provided me with one of the most remarkable experiences of my life. Either every week or a couple of times a month, I hear from incredible people trying to navigate their next steps in life. Some of them are extremely accomplished — and it's a real comfort to know that even *they* don't have everything figured out. Everyone's just trying to make the best of what they've been given in this world. When you walk down the street, everyone you see along the way is attempting to make life as good as possible for themselves, their families, and in general, the people around them. It's amazing!

I think the reason the *Forbes* article got so much traction was because it was something of a unique story. Within a short period of time, the piece had over 250,000 views, was reprinted in New York City's daily morning newspapers, was featured on *LinkedIn Today* and the *Forbes* "Most-Read and Top Trending Stories" lists for more than a week, and resulted in multiple requests for book proposals. Now it's up to over 1.5 million views. And it's also led to thousands of emails, tweets, LinkedIn and Skype requests, and even some phone calls.

At first the experience was a bit overwhelming. And to some extent, it still is. But I feel exceptionally privileged to help so many people figure out what to do with their careers, figure out how they can make the biggest impact for themselves and for the world, and figure out how they can be happier than they were when they first got in touch with me.

I've been doing career coaching for a number of years. It's one of my favourite things to do because I'm a strong believer in the power of human potential, especially when it's aligned with the strengths and desires of the individual and the world. I also believe that what you do in your career has a huge impact on the rest of your life — either positive or negative. So it's important to make sure it's positive! The halo effect of your work can affect everything from your family life, friends, physical shape, and spending, to sicknesses, bodily problems, and many other things.

What topics will we cover? We'll start with a bit of background about me and my career choices so you can get an idea how I came to develop my methodologies. Then I'll show you how to develop your own ideas of what you might like to do as your next career move, based on what you like, what you're good at, what the world needs, what you can make money from doing, and a series of experiments I'll guide you through to set yourself up. We'll also cover self-education programs and the ability to train yourself to be virtually anything you want to be. Once we've begun figuring out what you want your next career move to be, we'll shift to definitive strategies for getting what you want, dealing with everything from cover letters and résumés to job search tools, online presence, networking, interviewing, and the day-to-day of being in your new position. This book is both for people who want to find a job and for those who want to be entrepreneurs. It will help you figure out what you want to do and then go get it. If you're unemployed and looking for a job, this book will help you with that, too.

My writing is based on more than 10 years of career counselling, personal career experience, interviews with countless successful people about how they got to where they are today, hundreds of books I've read about career choices (plus many more articles), and the education I've received in business, marketing, psychology, happiness, and

storytelling. I've helped my clients land jobs at Google, Procter & Gamble, Kelson, and many others; make investments; sell franchises; and get into prestigious incubators.

Everyone wants to be happy with what they're doing in the world and how they're spending their time. I've interviewed some amazing people about how they created careers they love — and how you can do that too. Some of the people I spoke with and/or interviewed in preparation for writing this book include Peter Thiel (co-founder and former CEO of PayPal), Dave McClure* (angel investor who founded the 500 Startups incubator), and the founders and CEOs of Airbnb (Joe Gebbia), Square (Randy Reddig), and Kiva (Matt Flannery). I also leverage my experience participating in Singularity University's Graduate Studies Program at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to discuss not just where the market stands today in terms of work and job opportunities but what the future of work will look like — as told to us by Sophie Vandebroek, the chief technology officer of Xerox, and many others — and how you can fit into it.

I've written this book with the hope that I inspire others to follow their passions in a way that makes a positive difference in the world. If I do that, I'll have truly succeeded.

Now, let's begin.

* Dave McClure has since resigned from 500 Startups.



The Career Crisis

Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.

— T.S. ELIOT

Are you having a hard time figuring out to do with your career? Are you dissatisfied with your job? You're not alone. Nowadays, people feel worse about their jobs and work environments than ever before¹ — over 80 percent of Americans and 75 percent of Canadians are unhappy with their jobs² — and the statistics are similar around the world. In 2011, a shocking 32 percent of workers said that they wanted to leave their jobs and 25 percent had no definite plans to leave but were apathetic and even more negative about their work than employees considering an exit.³ Employee turnover is at an all-time high, and there's no sign that any of these statistics will improve. And at the time this book was in production, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically affected both the work environment and unemployment.

Why is this important? Well, people who feel successful in their work lives are twice as likely to feel very happy than those who don't, regardless of income level.⁴ The opposite of this is "learned helplessness," where people simply give up and stop trying to succeed, and we're beginning to see more and more of this with the number of workers worried about being laid off at an all-time high of 30 percent.⁵ Low job satisfaction is correlated with high rates of anxiety, depression, psychosomatic symptoms, heart disease, and poor mental health⁶ — all of which can also lead to problems with family and romance. Job dissatisfaction is terrible for the world.

Most of my classmates from university who I've talked to since graduation are unhappy about or only okay with their jobs, and there are consequences when you don't do something you like. Most people only think about the financial aspects of taking a risk to do what they love. But what about the risks of doing something you dislike: such as doing something that goes against your values, doesn't let you reach your full potential, or involves working with people you dislike? For me, this meant I got depressed, had health issues (back and wrist pains and a random eye twitch for the first time in my life), and wasn't performing. It was one of the worst times of my life. I think this quote from the book *The Monk and the Riddle* perfectly exemplifies how there are more risks to consider than just financial ones:

Personal risks include the risk of working with people you don't respect; the risk of working at a company whose values are inconsistent with your own; the risk of doing something you don't care about; and the risk of doing something that fails to express — or even contradicts — who you are. And then there is the most dangerous risk of all: the risk of spending your life not doing what you want on the bet that you can buy yourself the freedom to do it later.⁷

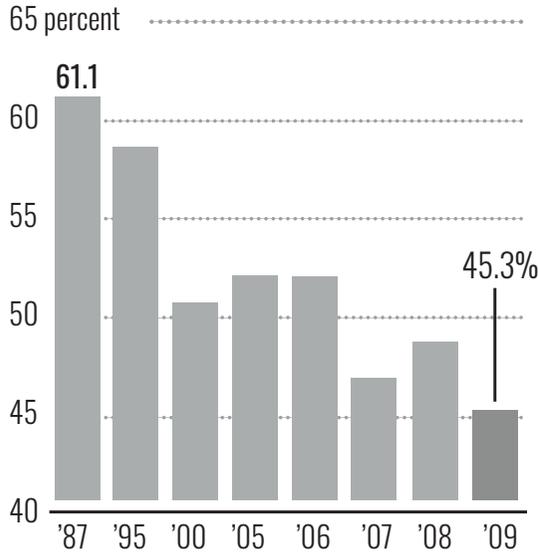
Along those lines, there have been plenty of examples of people working in jobs they hate to save up for retirement and then promptly dropping dead very shortly after retiring.

For corporations, low job satisfaction leads to lower productivity and innovation, as well as increased recruiting costs due to high turnover. America's disengagement crisis costs corporations a staggering \$300 billion in lost productivity annually.⁸ The simple fact is, workers perform better when they're happily engaged in what they do. Even worse, job dissatisfaction also leads to lower levels of innovation. If you compare the job satisfaction and innovation rates over time, you start to see some patterns.

With an army of unhappy workers, how can we expect to solve the grand global challenges? How can we make a major impact on issues such as climate change or poverty if we aren't able to bring our full energy to work?

Job Satisfaction

Only 45 percent of American workers were satisfied with their jobs in 2009, down from 61 percent in 1987.



NOTE: Initially reports were not conducted yearly.

FIG. 1: Comparison of job satisfaction rates from 1987 to 2009 in the United States.

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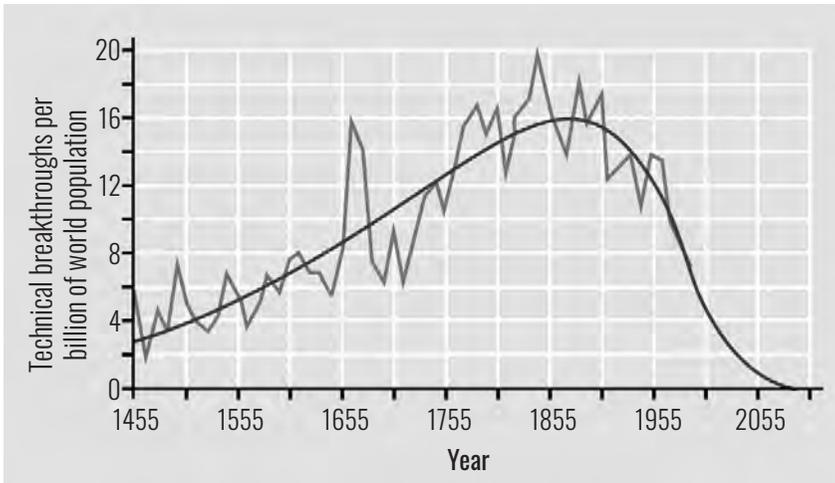


FIG. 2: Global technological innovation rates from 1455 to 2055.

Source: Jonathan Huebner, “A Possible Declining Trend for Worldwide Innovation,” *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 72, no. 8 (October 1, 2005): 980–86. Copyright © 2021 Elsevier.

I became passionate about this issue when working in my first job out of university — a marketing position at a large corporation. Many of my classmates viewed landing this role as a huge success, and I also thought I’d be happy in it. However, I became extremely dissatisfied almost as soon as I began working there, which had a huge effect on my whole life. I became extremely depressed, and every night I’d get home from work and fall asleep around 6:00 p.m. because I didn’t have enough energy to do much of anything else.

Yet it was extremely difficult for me to muster the courage and ability to actually leave the job. I looked around and saw that in such a bad economy many people were having a hard time even *finding* a job — so who was I to complain? Because I didn’t like what I was doing, I started to feel as if I was underperforming, which made me begin to lose confidence in myself. Maybe I couldn’t get a better job. And even if I could, I thought surely the “black hole” that would result on my résumé from leaving a job within less than a year would blacklist me from ever getting further positions or having a good career. Most of all, I had no idea what to do next. Sound familiar?

I realized that there weren't many good tools available to help me choose what type of job I'd be happier in — I'd done extensive career testing that had said the corporate job was a good choice. I wasn't sure what I was passionate about and whether I wanted to work for a non-profit or for-profit, or start my own company. So I quit my job and set up my own self-education program where I shadowed at six different companies for one to five days each, learning from them but also helping them wherever I could. It made me realize I wanted to start a for-profit startup that helps people find and choose careers they're passionate about. This concept of validating what you actually like is a major topic of this book.

Since my self-education program, I've done many things that I wouldn't have been able to do if I'd stayed at a job where I was so unhappy. I launched an accelerator program for young entrepreneurs in Toronto, where many participants ended up leaving their jobs, receiving multiple investment offers, and opening franchises of their businesses. I organized programming classes for students in Chile on programming languages such as Python that they don't normally teach there. Then I went to Singularity University to try to figure out how to flip the statistics so that 80 percent of people are satisfied with their jobs ... or 100 percent.

How can we solve this pressing issue? For individuals, the single most important factor to employee engagement is simply to feel you're making progress in meaningful work, which can lead to joy and excitement and improve performance — a positive upward spiral. This alone carries people through many things, including long hours and low pay. It doesn't mean picking a job off a list of the 10 happiest occupations or choosing any noble cause and devoting your life to it — it entails figuring out what kind of work is truly meaningful to you as an individual and then finding a job that allows you to do it, even if it has a low salary, although that doesn't always have to be the case! The difference between the happiest and the most hated jobs is whether the job feels worthwhile or pointless. There are a number of different techniques to figure this out.

To provide meaningful work, companies need to redesign their human-resources strategies. Some, like Google and Facebook, are doing a great job providing supportive and flexible work environments. Others are asking talented people to “design their dream jobs” and then creating

roles around them instead of trying to fit them into one-size-fits-all job descriptions. As such, individuals need to find companies and jobs that align with their passions and skills. Currently, most recruiting focuses on skills and not passions, but as I've mentioned, passion is one of the most important factors toward doing good work.

Corporations need to ensure they offer an environment that's supportive for employees. They should train managers on the importance of supporting progress, removing barriers, and giving workers a direct line of sight to customers and the impact of what they do so they can see meaning in their work. Other ways to increase engagement are to allow work to be done in self-organizing teams and to provide options for career-advancing work, flexible schedules, and telecommuting. Governments can improve mobility and opportunity through education reform, pro-growth policies, and an entrepreneur-friendly economy. Companies that don't delight customers don't survive, but I would also argue that companies that don't delight their employees won't survive, either. Working adults spend more of their waking hours at work than anywhere else, so let's make sure those hours are life enhancing.

With more people in developed countries finding careers they're passionate about, there will be more happiness, less health issues, and more good work on critical issues such as the environment and poverty in the developing world. So, my ask of you is to make sure you find and do work you're extremely passionate about and help others do the same. Our planet needs it.

WHAT NOT TO DO

First, let's start with what *not* to do:

1. **Don't just blindly do what your parents tell you to do:** Seriously, don't. Now I love my parents very much, but let's face it, parents have a different objective for your career than you do — security. Your parents want you to be safe and have enough money to live off of, so obviously most will, either consciously or unconsciously,

point you in the direction of the most well-paying, secure option. Do you *really* think they're going to be excited about the fact that you want to jaunt off to Africa to take a barely paying job helping local entrepreneurs? No! But that sounds pretty badass to me! I can't even believe the number of people I know who, when I ask them why they picked the job or career they're doing, answer that it's because their parents told them to. For the love of God, don't become one of those people. If your parents really love you, they'll get over it and support you in whatever you do. I know mine did. At an early point in your life, pay doesn't matter as much as great experience that can set you up for future possibilities of high pay. Richard Branson and Oprah Winfrey, for example, both made very little in the early days of their careers. So unless you have massive amounts of debt, or a significant other and kids you're supporting, choose a great experience over high pay, because it's better to enjoy every day than to hate work and end up blowing the extra cash, anyway, on partying and vacations to try to make things palatable. You can always get more money, but you can't always get more time.

2. **Don't believe the hype that you need experience before doing what you love:** This is simply not true. Don't get convinced that marketing dish detergent or pushing boxes around on slides will help you be a successful entrepreneur, fashion designer, or whatever your dream is. Know that some of the most successful founders (e.g. of Google, Apple, et cetera) had little or no corporate experience at all. As a *Harvard Business Review* article put it, "To paraphrase Warren Buffett, a career strategy based on doing what you *dislike today* so that you can do what you *like tomorrow* is as wise as deferring *sex* while young so that it can be enjoyed in old age."⁹ Happiness is wanting what you have — so aim for that instead of having a deferred life enjoyment plan.
3. **Don't listen to anyone except yourself:** At the end of the day, all that really matters in your career decisions is you and what you want, and ideally, what positive impact you want to have on the world. Everyone looks at things through different lenses based on their experiences, so no one can have the right answer for

you — except you! Try to stay away from the gossip about who got what interview, what offer, et cetera. Knowing that information isn't going to help you at all — it will only clutter your mind with useless thoughts that will distract you from your pursuit of awesomeness. Also, mentors and role models are great, but again, don't take their word as gospel. They might have tried something and failed, or not been brave enough to try anything at all. But since it was their life paths and choices, in most cases they'll defend themselves and perhaps advise you along the same path. Remember, you're different — in a good way!

So how are you going to figure out what to do? Keep in mind a couple of points:

1. Career counsellors can't give you *the* answer of what to do. They're good at résumés and cover letters, but helping you figure out what you want to do is way tougher because there aren't proven techniques (career testing is flawed because it only lists a limited number of occupations). Also, to make a good decision you need to decide for yourself, not let someone else do it for you.
2. Other people can't give you the answer of what to do. As I've said, everyone looks at things through different lenses (e.g. failure, success) based on past experiences, so they'll advise you on what they'd do in your situation, but not necessarily what's best for you. So take other people's advice with a grain of salt — even mine. Especially because asking people older than you means they grew up in a completely different time/culture, where, for example, manufacturing was hot and the internet or apps hadn't been invented yet.
3. Remember that most people aren't happy with their jobs. So it's hard for someone who hasn't found a job that makes them happy to advise you on how to find one that *will* make you happy.
4. Also, keep in mind that corporate experience doesn't necessarily help to become an entrepreneur. I met a young entrepreneur who began his startup at age 19 and has been super successful. And it's pretty easy to get sucked in and end up staying in a corporation

for way longer than you wanted or expected to when you began, because they're masters at dangling carrots in front of your eyes (e.g. raises, cars, et cetera) just when your eyes are starting to wander or glaze over.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

Now let's turn to what you *should* do.

1. **Devote time to a new career:** This book is for you if you're ready to devote time to a career change. I sometimes hear people say something along the lines of "I want to do more job applications, but I just can't seem to find the time." This seems ludicrously counter-intuitive to me. Shouldn't finding a job that you love be one of the single most important things you do during your life? Forget an assignment that makes up 3 percent of your total work time — this is a matter of where and how you'll be spending a significant amount of your time in your life. Better find something you're happy doing — and find it soon! The only resource you can't get more of is, you guessed it, time.
2. **Do it now:** The sooner you know what kind of job you want, the more streamlined your job search will be. You'll spend less time waffling about and preparing for interviews for jobs you might later decide you don't want. Without these added hassles, you have the potential to find a job you really want more quickly. You can always change later. Figuring out early what potential options you like will allow you to do internships or short jobs in those areas and determine if you really could see yourself working in that area for years on end.

WARNING

Finding a good career fit for you isn't for the faint of heart. That might sound crazy — after all, aren't we all entitled to a good career fit? But

the possibility of us all achieving it couldn't be farther from the truth. Attaining a great career fit is like hunting for a needle in a haystack. There's a possibility the day will never come. And, in fact, chances are you'll never feel that one day the heavens have opened up and this is "it" — the dream career you'll want and cherish forever.

At the time of writing this book, I'm not married, but from what I've been told about finding a husband or wife, it isn't really a fairy tale where all of a sudden Prince or Princess Charming comes riding along out of the sunset and dips you into an amazing dance move and the two of you caress and are married days later. Maybe for some people it's like that. I don't mean to sound cynical, but I think that for most, choosing a career is a balance of probabilities and pro/con lists that help you to decide what's best for you in this moment — with a healthy dose of intuition and serendipity added in, of course.

There will always be the "grass is greener on the other side" syndrome. But the key is to recognize that even if one choice is imperfect, there's no perfect choice, you can never have all the information you need to make a perfect decision, and what you've chosen now is what's right for you now because you chose it. It's been said that maybe *you* don't find the right career, that maybe *it* finds you. I guess it depends how much you believe in serendipity and the like. But I think it's a good idea that perhaps the career you end up with is the right one in the universe for you at that time. For example, if you get a certain position but not another, maybe that second one wasn't right for you, anyway. Maybe the position you have is what's right for you now. Maybe you're exactly where you need to be. We only have a limited time on this earth, and finding a great career next step is amazing, to be sure, but spending all your days wondering whether there might be something else that's better isn't the best or most productive way to spend your days.

If you find yourself in this position, try timeboxing your apprehension. Instead of doubting all the time, decide on a time slot, maybe a certain hour per day or an hour per week, if you can manage it, where you worry non-stop. You can wallow in the agonizing, but only for that hour! Then when you find yourself worrying outside that time, because it's bound to happen, stop and remind yourself that you've scheduled

your fretting (as laughable as that might sound) and that now isn't the time to be stewing. I find that for many things in life, scheduling is a highly effective answer.

You may read this book and end up considering quitting your job only to find yourself in an abyss of worry, regret, and doubt. I'm not necessarily advocating that. The strategies here can be done in any amount of time, even if you have a full-time job or two full-time jobs. In fact, for some people (many!), it's better to stay in a job and explore your next step on the side rather than investigate your next step full-time. Then at least you have something, and you're not stuck explaining a huge résumé gap to potential employers. But if you do have a big résumé gap, not to worry — there are ways to explain it away.

If you do decide to quit your job, this is your official warning that it might not be the walk in the park you imagined it to be. Sure, it might sound appetizing to spend your days at the beach, having leisurely lunches with friends, or watching Netflix. But what happens when the beach gets cold, all your friends are working so they don't have time to lunch, and you've watched everything on Netflix (if that's even possible)? You're sunk. You might think that would take months or even years to happen, but it's amazing how quickly being sick of unlimited free time can occur, especially if you have a tendency to get sick of *whatever* is happening.

Be honest with yourself about this! I know that I, unfortunately, have a tendency toward dissatisfaction and looking over my shoulder, wondering, *Is this what I should be doing right now?* But the good news is that these days we don't technically need to choose. Today, for many people, there isn't that *one thing* they do day in and day out. Instead, their careers are portfolios of different micro-jobs they perform on different days, on a regular basis, or for short periods of time. Such is the case of freelancers, consultants, or anyone participating in this new work economy, the new way of doing business.

So if you think your ideal day is to go to the beach and watch Netflix (or better yet, do both at once), think again. After a few days or weeks of that, you may start to wonder what you're contributing to society. You may begin to get bored. Your creative muscles might atrophy. You may soon *want* a job. But then when you apply, it could take months to find something. It's

not necessarily a matter of weeks — it can take much longer than that. So this is my case for staying in a job until you find another one.

Then there are those of us who feel that the mere existence of a job in our life suffocates us from discovering an alternative, from devoting the mental and physical space to explore, dream, and do. This might be true for some of us. At times I've certainly felt as though it were that way for me. But a good friend pointed out that perhaps that's only a perception of mine, and maybe if I'd stayed in a job, I might have avoided the wallowing and uncertainty that ensued. Yes, it happened to me. It happens to the best of us! But sometimes the difficulties that come with transitions can end up helping us figure out and find something better.

Studies show that after a job loss, mental health issues such as depression are likely to ensue.¹⁰ In many cases, these are temporary. But for others, some can linger. If you find yourself *funemployed*, my best advice is to try to fill your days with activities you've scheduled in your calendar, ideally with other people. Things to look forward to. Things that make it feel less like a big empty open calendar for the rest of your life. You can also establish a "place," somewhere to go to aside from your house to do your job search and exploration. A place with familiar faces — one that feels supportive. This will help replace the sense of community and familiarity you had in your job with your colleagues, at least until you find something new with a new set of awesome people! Looking for work while unemployed can be lonely. If you do get depressed, find a therapist to talk to. If things become dire, call the emergency department. I'm not saying things will get that bad, but I am providing a warning in case they do. It's pretty tricky to go from a lifetime of days programmed by others, whether it be school, a job, whatever, to a long, seemingly endless time in which your days are programmed (or not so programmed) by you.

There, you've been forewarned! Still want to proceed? Then dare to look deep within and see both your flaws and potential for greatness and increased fulfillment.

About the Author



Jennifer Turliuk is an entrepreneur, writer, and speaker. Her work has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Huffington Post*, *Fast Company*, *Wired*, and more. She attended Queen's University and Singularity University (at NASA) and was awarded an honorary degree from Humber College for her contributions to society. Jennifer's writing can be found in *Forbes*, *Business Insider*, *Strategy*, and various newspapers.

This book is definitely the must-have “career bible.”

— KYM MCNICHOLAS, Emmy Award–winning journalist

New, different, insightful, and inspiring.

— BRUCE SELLERY, bestselling author of *Moolala* and money columnist for CBC and *Cityline*

Jennifer Turliuk was dissatisfied in her corporate job, so she quit. But she had no idea what to do next. After university, she, like so many graduates, focused on just getting a job rather than figuring out the career she really wanted.

Instead of getting another degree or going back to school to change her career path, Turliuk embarked on a “self-education journey,” interviewing and shadowing some of the world’s leading professors, founders, and investors from Silicon Valley companies such as Airbnb, Square, and Kiva. What she discovered was not only a way to find out what she really wanted to do with her own life, but also a career-design process that would help others do just the same.

Turliuk’s career-prototyping framework uses tested strategies and exercises, including quantified self, design thinking, and lean methodology to help everyone from recent graduates to mid-career workers looking for a change. Let this book be your guide to finding a satisfying and passion-driven career that is right for you.

JENNIFER TURLIUK is an entrepreneur, writer, and speaker who has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Wired*, *Forbes*, and more. She lives in Toronto.



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