

GREAT QUESTIONS for a Prospect

1. Look at the issues that make you crave change and outline your goals.

What are you satisfied with about your current situation? What are you dissatisfied with? Is it your boss or the culture of your organization? Or do you really want to change careers? Outline your goals - for example, more money, more time off or more flexibility. Write it all down.

2. Work to understand your inner critic.

Observe thoughts that trap you with fear and prevent you from achieving your objectives. Write these down on a piece of paper, then crumple it up and throw it away to symbolize your freedom from thoughts that interfere with your goals and dreams.

3. Recognize recurring patterns in your life.

What makes you happy? What are your recurring interests and social needs? What makes a work environment feel good or not so good to you? Write it down.

4. Network and investigate career interests that map to your goals and needs.

Once you've identified your patterns and desires, start thinking about careers that make sense for you. Give yourself one to three months to explore your curiosity by finding people who do these jobs and talking about the pros and cons of their work. Explore anything and everything until you're satisfied -- or until your time runs out.

5. Make a plan that takes your financial situation into account.

Change is never simple, but having a plan that outlines your steps and financial requirements makes it doable. Will your new career require additional education, a small business loan, time off from work or relocation? Make a plan with financial considerations and a realistic timeline and that you can follow through on.

Charting your new professional course can take time, but it is well worth the investment.