KNOWING
WHEN IT'S TIME
TO CHANGE CAREER



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Introduction

How can you tell if it's time to change careers?

There are plenty of signs that it's time to make a move, but they can creep up you slowly and then you suddenly find your current situation has become intolerable.

That's something you definitely want to avoid. So the best time to start thinking about a change is as soon as you feel that things aren't as they should be. This gives you the opportunity to do two things:

1. Look at ways of improving things in your current job

It can take a while to find a new career and you don't want to rush from one problem job to another. So it makes sense to try to improve things where you are. This could stop the situation from escalating or at least slow things down. And you never know, things might change enough for you to decide to stay.

2. You'll have time to start researching information on alternative careers if you decide not to stay,

Is it Time to Go?

On the next page, I've listed some of the most common signs that it's time to make a move. Some will be obvious, others not so much. You could have one or more. We'll then take a look at how to recognize them and some tactics to help you improve the situation and to move on if that's what you decide to do.

Common Signs

1. **Feeling unfulfilled.** You should look forward to going to work and feel that you are making a contribution to the company, its clients and, depending on the job, the wider community.

2. **There are no opportunities to grow and develop**. When you first started the job, you probably had a lot to learn and were able to build existing skills and develop new ones. However, if you haven't been able to progress in the company or have reached a plateau and can't go any further, there is a good chance you no longer feel challenged.

3. **You are experiencing signs of burnout:** You are expected to work long hours and take on an increasing workload. You can end up exhausted both mentally and physically, and also feeling depressed.

4. **Changes in personal circumstances:** Getting married, having children or moving to a new area or a different country don't always mean you need to change career, but it depends on individual circumstances and might be unavoidable in some cases.

5. **You find you've developed a real interest in a new field:** Things are moving so fast in the world these days that new jobs are springing up all the time. There are many careers that didn't even exist when you were starting out, and one of them might just be the right one for you.

6. **You feel your job is insecure:** No jobs are 100% secure, but with recent world events, such as the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, changes in governments, and the rise of AI, some jobs that previously were pretty secure aren't so stable now.

7. **You are struggling financially:** this is a difficult one. If the economy is unstable and prices are rising, it can be hard to make ends meet. If you aren't earning enough to pay the bills, it's time to see what alternatives are out there.

8. **You don't feel valued:** it's not much fun if your boss doesn't appreciate your work, and this can seriously dent your confidence. Finding a job where you are valued is important for your mental health.

9. **You're bored:** We all get bored at work from time to time. But if it's a permanent situation, and you've tried everything you can think of to find more interesting tasks, you should seriously consider leaving for something a bit more challenging.

10. **Your age or stage in life:** what worked for you at 20 won't always work at 40. People grow, mature, develop new interests and often outgrow the career they started out in.

How to Recognize The Warning Signs



It's important to watch out for any of these signs. What starts as a feeling of mild discomfort can escalate into depression or serious burnout.

So trust your instincts, take stock of your position , check out your options, and look at the situation as a positive opportunity to create a new adventure.Yes, it can be scary, but not as scary as being stuck in an unhappy place for years or risking serious consequences for your mental health.

Let’s take a look at these warning signals in more detail and think about what you can do to alleviate them while you make plans for your future.

Feeling Unfulfilled

If you feel unfulfilled you clearly want to feel fulfilled, but what does that mean to you?

Some of your colleagues doing the same type of work might find it really satisfying and you could feel a little guilty that you don't. And we've all heard people who say you should be grateful you have a job and so should stay where you are. Don't listen to them! You can be grateful that you are in work, but at the same time want something better - you're not prepared to stagnate.

You are unique. What would you find fulfilling?

Write it all down – do you want to use specific skills or learn new ones? Do you long to start new projects? Are there aspects of the job that you aren't involved in but would love to do?

Does the work you do align with your values and beliefs? This isn't usually something we're advised to check out when we get careers advice at school or college. And it's not always clear when you are starting out. It can take time to figure out if you agree with the company's ethics or culture and if its products or services sit well with your beliefs.

But your employment can be immensely meaningful and rewarding if it is consistent with your values and the things that are important to you.

Do you have a sense of purpose? Working for a company where you feel as if you're making a significant change in the world or working towards something greater than yourself can be very fulfilling.

Do you enjoy what you do? You probably won't enjoy absolutely everything about any job, but enjoying it for the majority of the time can make a big difference.

There are No Opportunities for Growth or Development

Ask yourself: What exactly feels stagnant? Is it lack of promotion, you're unable to use your skills, there are no opportunities for learning, or taking on new projects and challenges?

Journal your thoughts for clarity. Pinpoint what kind of growth you really want (career advancement, personal development, skill-building, etc.).

Schedule a conversation with your manager or HR. Explain that you want to grow and develop with the company and ask:

- Are there upcoming projects I can join?
- Can I take on more responsibility or shadow someone in another role ?

Start Building Your Skills

- Choose 1–2 skills related to your field or a desired role (e.g., project management, coding, communication).
- Use free or low-cost platforms like Coursera, LinkedIn Learning, or YouTube to learn at your own pace.
- Dedicate 30–60 minutes a day to learning. Track your progress and apply it where you can, even in small ways.

Build a Network Outside Work

- Join online communities, LinkedIn groups, or professional associations.
- Set a goal to connect with 2 new people a week in roles or industries that interest you.
- Ask questions, share your interests, and find out how others navigated similar situations.

Explore New Career Paths

- If internal options remain limited, research other roles or industries that align with your strengths and values.
- Start updating your CV and LinkedIn to reflect new skills and interests.
- Consider volunteering, freelancing, or a side hustle as a stepping stone to transition.

You are Experiencing Signs of Burnout

Recognize the Signs Early

Burnout can look like:

- Constant fatigue (even after rest)
- Lack of motivation or enthusiasm for work
- Feeling emotionally drained, irritable, or cynical
- Difficulty concentrating or being productive
- Physical symptoms like headaches or trouble sleeping

Acknowledging burnout is not weakness — it's your body and mind asking for change.

Take a Step Back (Immediately or ASAP)

If your symptoms are severe, see your doctor immediately. For mild symptom:

- If possible, take a few days off to disconnect and rest.
- Use this time to sleep, nourish your body, and do activities that bring calm — no guilt.
- If a full break isn't possible, build in short recovery moments each day (e.g., lunch outdoors, 10-minute walks, screen-free evenings).

Talk to Someone You Trust

- Speak to a manager, HR rep, or mental health professional about what you're feeling.
- Be honest: you don't need to have all the answers — just say, "I'm overwhelmed and need support."
- If your workplace isn't supportive, that's important information for future decisions.

Reassess Your Workload and Role

- List everything on your plate. What can be delegated, delayed, or dropped?
- Identify the main energy drains — is it the pace, the people, the pressure?
- Start a conversation about making small adjustments if possible.

Burnout Continued

Focus on Daily Recovery Habits

- Prioritize sleep, hydration, and real food.
- Add gentle movement: stretching, walks, or yoga can help reset your nervous system.
- Try mindfulness apps (like Headspace or Calm) for short daily decompression.

Make a Longer-Term Plan

- Burnout is a signal — not just of exhaustion, but of misalignment.
- Ask: What kind of work would energize me again? What do I want more or less of?
- Explore small steps toward a role or career that fits you better.

Remember: Burnout isn't a personal failure. It's a response to prolonged stress — and you can recover with the right support and strategy.

Changes in Personal Circumstances

Changes in personal circumstances—such as getting married, having children, or relocating to a new area or country—can have a profound impact on your career path.

These life events often bring shifts in priorities, responsibilities, and available time or resources. For example, starting a family may lead you to seek more flexible working arrangements, reduced hours, or a role that allows you to work from home.

Similarly, moving to a new country might mean requalifying in your profession, adjusting to a different job market, or overcoming language and cultural barriers.

While these changes don't always require a complete career shift, **they do often prompt a period of reassessment.**

It's important to reflect on what you need from your career at this new stage of life —whether it's stability, flexibility, purpose, or financial growth—and whether your current role still supports those needs. In some cases, a career change becomes not only practical but essential for maintaining balance and well-being.

However, with careful planning, creativity, and support, it's possible to navigate these transitions in a way that both helps you adjust to your new circumstances and supports your long-term professional goals.

You're Interested in a New Field

Look at Why this Field Interests You
Your growing interest in a new field is worth taking seriously. Whether it's sparked by a hobby, a podcast, a course, or something you've seen others doing, it's a valuable clue.

- Write down what excites you about this new field.
- Ask: What is it that draws me in — the work itself, the lifestyle, the purpose, the income potential?

Research the Field
Start building a clear picture of what this new career path actually looks like.

- What types of roles exist?
- What skills, qualifications, or experience are needed?
- What are people in this field saying on LinkedIn, YouTube, or blogs?
- Use AI tools, job boards, and informational interviews to deepen your knowledge.

Try It Out in a Small Way
Test the waters before making a big leap.

- Take a short online course or free webinar.
- Volunteer, freelance, or build a personal project in that field.
- Join communities or attend local meetups to learn from others.

Identify Transferable Skills
You don't have to start from scratch.

- List your current skills that could be useful in the new field (e.g., communication, project management, leadership).
- Update your LinkedIn or CV to reflect these and tailor them to new roles.

Create a Learning & Transition Plan

- What else do you need to learn? Create a learning path (e.g., courses, certifications, mentorship).
- Set short-term goals: "By next month, I'll complete X course" or "This week, I'll message two people in the field."
- Start applying for entry-level or crossover roles once confident.

You're Interested in a New Field contd.

Stay Open and Be Patient

- Career shifts take time and often involve detours. Stay curious, stay flexible, and track your progress.
- Celebrate small wins — every step forward is part of building a new path that aligns with your evolving interests.

Remember: Just because you didn't start in this field doesn't mean you can't grow in it now. The world is changing—and you can too.

You Feel Your Job is Insecure

Don't Panic—Assess the Risk

Job insecurity is unsettling, but it doesn't lways mean immediate danger.

- Ask yourself: Is this fear based on real changes (layoffs, budget cuts, automation), or general anxiety?
- Talk discreetly to trusted colleagues or mentors to get a broader perspective.
- Read up on industry trends—are roles like yours shrinking, evolving, or in demand?

Strengthen Your Position

Take proactive steps to make yourself more valuable where you are.

- Volunteer for high-impact projects or tasks others avoid.
- Show initiative and adaptability, especially around new tools or challenges.
- Build strong relationships with key people—visibility matters in uncertain times.

Update Your Professional Toolkit

Even if you're not leaving now, stay ready.

- Refresh your CV, LinkedIn profile, and
- portfolio if relevant.
- Make a list of your recent
- accomplishments and measurable wins.
- Ask for testimonials or references

You Feel Your Job is Insecure contd.

Start Quietly Exploring Other Options
Security often comes from having choices.

- Research companies and roles that are growing or less vulnerable to disruption.
- Network a little each week: reach out to old contacts, join professional groups, attend webinars or virtual events.
- Consider upskilling or reskilling in areas like tech, digital communication, data literacy, or leadership.

Build a Financial Cushion
Reduce financial stress by creating a buffer.

- Cut unnecessary expenses and set a savings goal.
- If possible, set aside 3–6 months of basic expenses as an emergency fund.
- Explore side income options if time and energy allow.

Stay Focused on What You Can Control
Job insecurity is often rooted in uncertainty.

- Taking small, consistent actions gives you a sense of control and direction.
- Remind yourself: being prepared is a strength—not a sign of defeat.

Remember: You don't need to make a dramatic leap—but you do need a plan. Being proactive now can turn fear into confidence.

You are Struggling Financially

Understand Your Financial Situation
Start by getting clear, not scared.

- Track your income, expenses, debts, and savings. Use a simple spreadsheet or an app like YNAB, Mint, or Emma.
- Calculate your "bare minimum" monthly cost of living—know exactly how much you need to feel secure.
- Identify any spending leaks (subscriptions, impulse buys, takeout) that can be adjusted.
- Look into free financial advice services or debt charities if needed.

You are Struggling Financially contd.

Create a Financial Safety Net
Stability starts with a buffer.

- Set a goal to build an emergency fund (start with £500–£1,000, then aim for 3–6 months' expenses).
- If you're in debt, consider strategies like the snowball or avalanche method to start reducing it.
- Look into free financial advice services or debt charities if needed.

Explore Ways to Increase Your Income
If your job isn't covering your needs, it might be time to supplement or switch.

- Ask yourself: Can I take on overtime, a freelance project, or a part-time side hustle?
- List your skills—writing, design, admin, tutoring, crafts—and research ways to earn from them.
- Check if your current role is underpaid—compare salaries using sites like Glassdoor or PayScale.

Build a Plan to Transition (if needed)

- If your job can't ever offer financial security, start mapping your exit.
- What kind of role or career would offer better pay and align with your values and lifestyle?
- Begin building relevant skills or experience now (through online learning, volunteering, or networking).

Focus on Long-Term Stability

- Set small, regular savings goals—even £10/week adds up.
- Automate saving and bill payments to avoid surprises.
- Learn basic investing principles when you're ready—knowledge builds confidence.

Remember: Feeling financially insecure at work is common—but it's also a sign you're ready to take control. You don't need to do everything at once, but you do need to start.

You Don’t Feel Valued at Work

Start Exploring New Possibilities
If nothing changes and the boredom continues, consider it your cue to plan a transition.

- Research roles or industries that are more dynamic, creative, or aligned with your curiosity.
- Identify your transferable skills and what types of work environments energize you.
- Begin networking—reach out to people in fields you find exciting.

Build a Low-Risk Exit Plan
You don’t have to leap overnight, but you can start laying the groundwork.

- Refresh your CV and LinkedIn profile.
- Apply to roles or freelance gigs that seem more stimulating.
- Set a target date for change—even 6–12 months ahead can give you direction.

Remember: Long-term boredom isn’t just dull—it can dull your skills, confidence, and ambition. Challenging, engaging work is out there, and you deserve to find it.

Seek Feedback and Growth

- Ask for constructive feedback to better understand how others see your work.
- Look for ways to develop—take on a new project, attend training, or mentor someone. Proactive steps can boost both your confidence and visibility.

Bored at Work?

Recognize the Pattern

Occasional boredom is normal—but if you feel disengaged most days, it's a sign your role may no longer be a good fit.

- Reflect honestly: Are you bored because the work is too easy, repetitive, lacks purpose, or no longer aligns with your interests?
- Track how often you feel this way—keeping a log for a week can reveal patterns and triggers.

Try to Reignite Interest

Before making big changes, explore what can be improved.

- Ask your manager for new responsibilities, a special project, or cross-team collaboration.
- Look for training opportunities or propose an idea you'd enjoy leading.
- Shift your mindset by setting micro-goals (e.g. improve one skill, automate a task, mentor a colleague).

Use the Time to Upskill

If your job isn't stretching you, create your own growth plan.

- Learn a new tool, software, or language related to your interests or a potential future role.
- Take free or low-cost courses (e.g., Coursera, LinkedIn Learning, FutureLearn).
- Use podcasts, books, or webinars to spark new thinking during quiet moments at work.

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Your Age or Stage in Life

Acknowledge That Growth Is Natural

You've changed—and that's not a failure, it's progress.

- Reflect on how your values, priorities, and lifestyle have shifted since you began your career.
- Ask yourself: What used to matter to me? What matters now?
- Recognize that outgrowing your job is a sign of maturity, not weakness.

Define What You Want Now

Your next chapter should reflect who you are today, not who you were at 20.

- Make a list of what you need now from your work (e.g. flexibility, purpose, stability, creativity).
- Identify non-negotiables: what you're no longer willing to tolerate (e.g. long hours, low pay, high stress).
- Imagine your ideal workday—what are you doing, where, and with whom?

Take Inventory of Your Skills and Interests

You've gained experience and insights that could open new doors.

- List your transferable skills, strengths, and accomplishments from past roles.
- Ask: What do people come to me for? What do I enjoy doing without being paid?
- Revisit hobbies or past interests—some could now lead to fulfilling work.

Research Career Paths That Fit This Stage of Life

Explore roles or industries more aligned with your current goals.

- Consider coaching, consulting, flexible freelance work, teaching, or mission-driven roles.
- Look for jobs that value life experience, emotional intelligence, and perspective—not just speed or youth.
- Read success stories of people who changed paths later in life to stay inspired.

Start Small, But Start

You don't need to leap—you need to move.

- Take a course, update your CV, or reach out to someone doing work you admire.
- Volunteer, shadow, or freelance to try something new in a low-risk way.
- Set a simple goal each week to explore or build toward your next step.

Remember: A career that suited the old you might be too small for the person you've become. Now is your time to design work that fits your life—not the other way around.

Conclusion

If you've recognised yourself in any of the signs we've explored—boredom, burnout, lack of growth, feeling undervalued, or simply sensing that your role no longer fits—remember that these feelings aren't failures. They're signals. They're telling you that you've grown, your needs have changed, and it's time to realign your work with who you are today.

Leaving a job is a big decision, but staying stuck in the wrong one can slowly drain your energy, confidence, and sense of purpose. You deserve more than just surviving the workweek—you deserve a career that supports your well-being, growth, and fulfilment.

This isn't the end. It's the beginning of something new. Use what you've learned here to take small, intentional steps forward. Whether you choose to change roles, industries, or even start something of your own, know that you have options—and you have the power to choose.

The next chapter of your work life is waiting. Make it one that feels right.

THANK YOU

If you'd like more information on career change, check out our blog at

https://coolercareers.com

And if you'd like help with changing career go to:

https://wallerjamison.com/work-with-me

feel free to get in touch with us for any questions

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