




C A R E E R

How To Handle a Midlife Career Change

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BY LEAH SHEPHERD | DECEMBER 9, 2019 R E A D



Many women change jobs in their 40s as their career and family circumstances evolve. In fact, maybe you feel burned out in your current job or want to pursue a passion in a different field.

When switching careers, you may have to face some roadblocks along the way. A big one is feeling like you lack job experience in a new field you want to pursue.

Other common hurdles include letting money worries stop you from considering new and different possibilities, a fear of failure, and analysis paralysis, which means doing nothing because you're not 100 percent sure of what to do next.

There's also age discrimination in the workplace. Stereotypes about older workers make it harder to get certain jobs in your 40s, but the [Age Discrimination in Employment](#) Act prohibits age discrimination against people who are age 40 or older.

You might also worry that you're too old for a certain type of job, but remember that your 40s can be a great time for a career change. "You'll likely have a rich set of experiences (both in and outside of a work context) to draw on and a level of self-knowledge that people in earlier stages of their life won't yet have," says Natasha

[Quintz, author of 'The 40 Hour Workweek'](#)

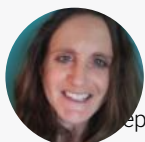
Stanley, head coach at [Careershitters](#).

Don't let naysayers — well-meaning friends and family members who don't want you to change and project their own fears onto you — get you down. Talk to at least three people who you know will be supportive of you making a career change. Even better if it's a mentor who has gone through something similar in your field.

But most of all, "don't do it alone," Stanley says. "Put a support team around you. Career change takes time, and big journeys are much easier with a team of supporters. Surrounding yourself with other career changers, trusted family and friends, experts, and mentors, can help you get inspired, find solutions to obstacles, and stay accountable."

4 Steps Toward a Seamless Career Transition

1. **Get your financials in order:** The first step to overcoming obstacles is to get your financials in order before you change jobs. Fully understand what your current financial situation is and what it will allow you to do.
2. **Promote yourself where people are looking:** Make sure you have an updated profile on LinkedIn because people will use that to vet you and follow up with you. Use LinkedIn and other social media to promote your skills and recent accomplishments that are relevant to the job you want.
3. **Keep an open mind:** Look for possibilities and opportunities that you never considered in the past. "Don't try to drive with your hands on the rear-view mirror. Rather than being limited to what you think you can do, based on your current skill set and past experience, look at what you're naturally drawn to, in and out of work," advises Stanley.
4. **Network in person:** Embrace a positive mindset and expand your network in person. "Get off Google or job sites and get out into the real world. Ask for introductions. Meet new people. Take up an evening class. Do things that are different from what you've been doing up to this point. This will help you discover new career possibilities," says Stanley. "Instead of looking for jobs, look for people. Not only is there is a huge hidden job market (an estimated 80 percent of jobs are never advertised), but connecting with people allows you to present yourself in a way that you can never do on paper. And in your 40s, you've likely got a much richer network to draw on than at any other time in your life," she adds.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leah Shepherd

Leah Shepherd is a freelance writer who lives near Baltimore with her husband and two sons. She has been writing about workplace and HR topics for 15 years.

[Career Advice, Winter 2020, Women in Business](#)

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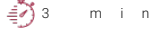
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