

# career advice

you wish your mum had told you



Heather and Karen Miles

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How do you achieve career success and satisfaction?

Where's a modern girl supposed to find practical, tried-and-tested solutions to managing those everyday career crises – like finding your career passion, asking for a pay rise, and dealing with difficult people – without getting lost in the way-too-serious management textbook section?

*Career advice you wish your mum had told you* is a bedside/desktop collection of valuable and inspiring career solutions. Inside you'll find quick and clever step-by-step strategies for dealing with every stage of your career, so you can:

- Discover what you want to be when you grow up!
- Find the right job
- Make (great) ideas happen
- Nail job interviews
- Realise your full potential

And even...

- Start your own business
- Be a great leader
- Develop the best in others
- Manage when your career takes off!

And lots more...

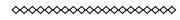
*Career advice you wish your mum had told you* is the essential *career* manual for every *career* woman.

'Looking back, I wish I'd got my hands on a book like *Career advice you wish your mum had told you!* I can relate to so many of the career and business highs and struggles that Heather and Karen Miles have captured in the book.'

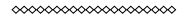
Natalie Bloom  
Managing Director, Bloom Pty Ltd



*Karen and Heather Miles*



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## What Do I Want To Be When I Grow Up?

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**W**HAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP? Tough question for most of us. We look with envy at those people who have supreme self-confidence about the answer and go after their career goals without a hint of self-doubt. But many of us aren't sure of the full range of options, nor where we are best suited. We're not sure what's most important to us – money or prestige or self-expression or changing the world – and we haven't figured out the best path to get there. And we're worried that we'll choose the wrong path and stuff up our careers for life!

Well the good news is you probably will take some wrong steps. So you might as well relax about that. How can you be expected to know all the answers to what's right for you, before you've had a chance to experience any of it? What's more, your aspirations and goals are likely to change over time, so you have to keep asking this question all your working life. And let's face it, the world doesn't exactly revolve around you and your career path – so you're going to have to stay flexible, particularly in today's world. So planning your career is a bit like the old Zen saying, 'All paths are made by walking'. That is, your career will be made by you taking your first job, then your second, then your third – and learning and growing and adjusting as you go.



*Let your heart guide you and don't worry about a few wrong steps.*

But how do you figure out the right first job? It begins with some self-assessment. Here are some questions to ask yourself. When you've got the answers, start talking to friends, family and mentors, and researching what career, or at least, which first job, will be right for you. Here are the questions and some tips to get you started.

- **What are my interests? What do I really enjoy doing?**

Think back over your school life and hobbies and jobs you've held to date, and ask, 'what gave me a buzz?'. It might be a project you undertook, or a team you worked in, or an assignment you had to research and write. It might be that you're really passionate about the environment, or business, or people or design or academia or children. Look for those things that seem to come from your heart, as well as your head. Ideally, these interests will be part of your job (or your hobbies). So list them out.

- **What kind of environment do I enjoy?**

Now figure out the kind of environment you do best in. For some of us, it's working alone, challenging ourselves intellectually or working out a tricky problem. For others, it's thrashing out an issue with a group of like-minded people. Some of us love helping others. Others enjoy performing or presenting great ideas. If you know what kind of environment you enjoy, you'll want to ensure you list this as a requirement for your first job.

- **What kind of skills do I have? What am I great at? What do I dislike?**

Most of us develop and hone skills over time, but we start relatively inexperienced. Think of four or five times when you did something really well. What skills were you exhibiting? They might have been people and leadership skills, communicating skills, business skills, artistic or design skills, mechanical or technical skills. So list out

your current skills and pick your top three. And be honest about what you don't want to do (or can't do).

- **What are my values?**

This is an essential step. If you start working for a company that doesn't share your values, it can get ugly. You'll generally feel out of step or compromised. And the company will think you're not committed, because you question things that are taken for granted. Here's a list of values to think about. Life values include things like: respect for people, honesty and integrity, protecting the environment, taking care of family, patriotism. Career values include degree of challenge, working with others or independently, type of lifestyle you want to lead, money, leading others, technical excellence. So list out your values – but pick the top three that are most important to you.

- **What are my personal attributes?**

While we can change some of our personal attributes, most of them are hard wired into our genetics or upbringing. It's best to match yourself to jobs that use your attributes to the full. For example, your personal attributes may make you: assertive, aggressive, brave, conscientious, casual, comic, energetic, extrovert, helpful, demanding, 'half-full', 'half-empty', imaginative, intelligent, introverted, intuitive, judgemental, kind, loyal, laid back, perfectionist, quiet, supportive, trustworthy.

- **Where do I want to be in two, five or even ten years? What do I want to have accomplished or learnt?**

Think about what you want to have achieved by some time in the future. This can be hard, given you're not sure how you'll get there. You might say: I want to have learnt how to lead people really well within five years; or within three years, I want to be recognised for

my technical capability. Some people set very high targets like ‘I want to be financially independent by the time I’m 40’. Whatever is the right goal or goals for you, write them down.

- **What are my personal and life goals and how do I want to balance work with everything else that is important to me?**

Finally, think about your whole life: your family, partner, children, health, hobbies and other interests. What do you want to achieve? Write these down.

So now you have listed your inventory! Use this list to start exploring the kinds of jobs out there that fit what you want and offer. Talk to your family and friends, people you know in business or those who are working already, career counsellors, and recruiting consultants, and search job noticeboards and the net. Start researching and exploring and forming your views about what’s best for you, to start your career journey.

### Case study

Keryn was exploring what kind of role and career she wanted. She did an honest assessment of herself and here’s what she listed.

#### Interests

1. *Having people reach their full potential.*
2. *Being independent.*
3. *Working with people.*

#### Environments I enjoy

1. *Mix of teams and working on my own, developing new ideas.*
2. *Casual environments. No suits!*
3. *No politics. Just get on with it.*

### **Skills – strong**

1. *Can teach/train – people really like me and seem to relate well to me.*
2. *Develop great ideas that excite people and make them look at things differently.*
3. *IT skills – PowerPoint, Word, etc., can write well.*

### **Skills – OK**

1. *Can sell, but have to work myself up to it. Don't want to do it all the time.*
2. *Budgeting and planning, maths.*
3. *Organisational behaviour.*

### **Skills that I don't want to use**

1. *Chemistry, physics, lab work.*
2. *Mechanical things.*

### **Personal attributes**

1. *Outgoing.*
2. *Energetic.*
3. *High standards.*

### **Values**

1. *Honesty.*
2. *Treat people right.*
3. *Help people reach their full potential.*

## Goals

1. *Develop my skills as a business trainer within two years—both design and delivery, as well as learn how business works.*
2. *Within five years, be running my own training business and making \$200 000 per year.*
3. *Run a half marathon within 12 months.*
4. *Add new kitchen within three years.*
5. *Have holiday in Fiji or other tropical island within five years.*

Keryn had identified that the opportunity for her was in training, so her next step was to learn everything she could about the industry and possible employers, so she could start her job search.