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# THE GREAT CAREER

# PIVOT

Are you feeling underappreciated and overworked? You're not alone. Women are switching careers in their droves – and our expert-backed guide will help you nail your next move

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Jacket, £85, and trousers, £60, Topshop (topshop.com); jeans, £30.60, Asos Design (asos.com); shoes, £49.99, Crocs (crocs.co.uk)

**I**t's 9.47am on a Wednesday and millions of women are sat at their desks, poised over an Outlook cursor, thinking one thing: "God, I need a change."

In a way, it's nothing new. Work apathy has been with us for generations. But something *is* afoot – because, finally, we're doing something about it. You'll have seen it in the waves of friends, a decade or more into glossy corporate careers, suddenly throwing in the towel and signing up to culinary school. Maybe you've noticed celebrities shaking things up, too: Charli xcx turning her hand to acting, Jessie Ware becoming as well known for her podcasting as her music. Even the Green Party's newest MP, Hannah Spencer, has pivoted from plumbing to parliament.

Katherine Ormerod spent two decades as a writer. But last year she started documenting, to her 92k followers, her journey to becoming a qualified bricklayer. "I realised the job I 'should' be doing just wasn't working," she tells me. "Stepping off the track and doing something different came with such relief."

Ormerod isn't alone in craving a 180-degree turn. Research has found that 33% of workers want a total career change. But, according to a new report by Careershifters, it's not just money driving us. Instead, the three leading motivations for change are unsupportive or unhealthy work environments, poor work-life balance or wellbeing, and values or purpose misalignment.

You don't need us to tell you that work-based stress is on the rise. Nearly a third of women (versus less than a quarter of men) say they very often or always feel burned out at work, according to a recent Gallup poll. At the same time, many of us feel trapped in unfulfilling jobs because the career landscape outside feels too shaky to take step into or we're in too deep to give anything else a go.

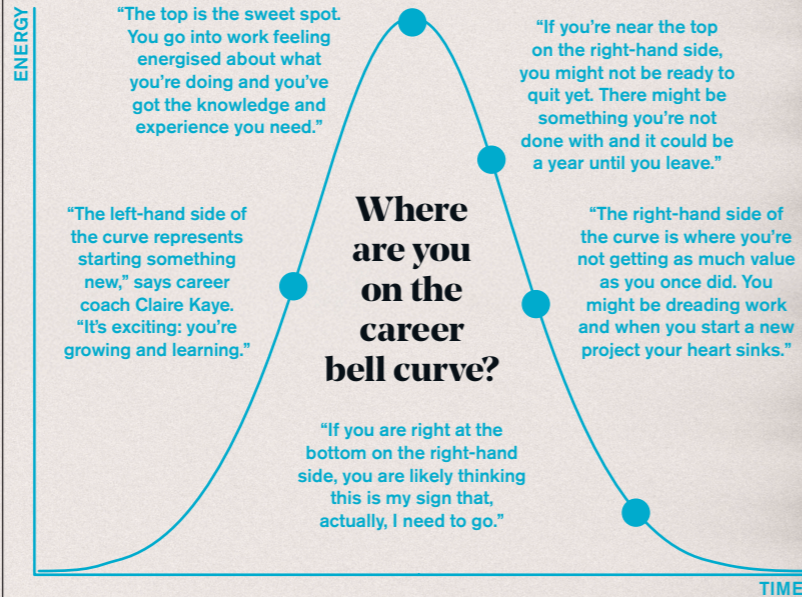
"Many women already have so much psychological overwork. We're waking up thinking: what am I doing? Do I even like my job?" says Jennifer Cox, psychotherapist and author of *Women Are Angry*. For women who came of age when being promoted at work was synonymous with being a good feminist, the realisation that the jobs we've spent a decade or two pouring ourselves into might *not* be the thing that fulfils us can no longer be ignored.

But the working world feels tumultuous right now. Scary stats abound – like the recent analysis suggesting that a quarter of a million people could lose their jobs by the middle of next year. And the still-unknown impact of AI feels unsettling from almost every angle. But there's been a shift. Emily Durham, former recruiter and author of *Clock In* (out 19 May), says, "It no longer feels like we're walking away from perfect job security and great pay. Pivoting now means walking away from one big 'what if?' to another, so why not try something different?"

So the question becomes: what next? Selina Barker, a career coach and author of *Burnt Out*, tells me that our dream pivots used to arrive in waves. "A decade ago, everyone wanted to retrain as a teacher," she says. "Then it was opening a cafe. Now, there isn't a theme I can track in the same way." Instead, we're asking big questions about what we *really* want from work outside of the status symbols we grew up planning our lives around.

So, for *Stylist's* May issue, we've become your ultimate career companion. Read on for an expert-backed plan to work through, with coaching tools that will give you true clarity. It's time to plan your pivot.

## BE YOUR OWN CAREERS COACH



## FIND YOUR BIG WHY

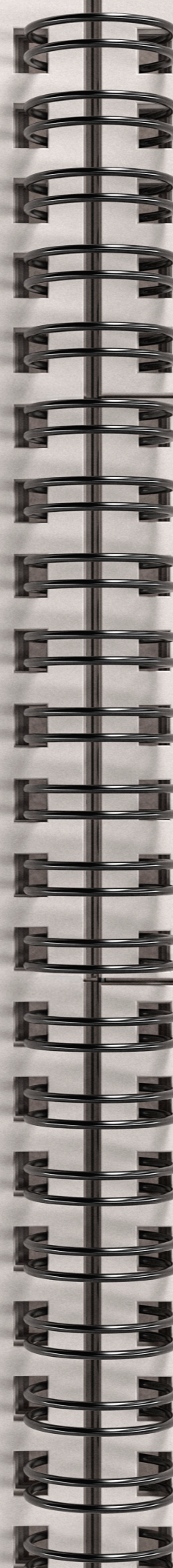
"You need to know exactly what you want out of your job: money, meaning or flexibility," says Ellen Scott, author of *Working On Purpose*. "Ask yourself some questions and record your answers. Take as much time as you need."

- ◆ What do you want to spend your time doing?
- ◆ What do you enjoy doing?
- ◆ What do you want to achieve with your life?
- ◆ What makes your life meaningful?
- ◆ Think of people you admire: what is it that you admire?
- ◆ What gives your life purpose?
- ◆ What makes you feel like you're doing what you're supposed to be doing?
- ◆ What matters to you?
- ◆ What values do you think are the most important?
- ◆ How would you like people to describe you?

"Once you've recorded those answers, review them. Try to see if there are any patterns. Are there common themes? Do any words keep coming up? Then, keeping those answers in mind, it's time for some more questions."

- ◆ Why do you care about doing the work that you're doing?
- ◆ Why does that matter to you?
- ◆ Why does \*that\* matter to you?
- ◆ Why? Why? Why?

"Once your answer is just the same thing repeated ('because I want to create a legacy', 'because I care about animals' wellbeing', 'because the earth is burning'), you've found your big why. Note it down and put it somewhere visible. Keep it as a big mental sticky note. From now on, everything you do, both at work and outside it, can come back to the pursuit of this why. If something you're doing doesn't align with your big why, work out how to do less of it. If something perfectly aligns, do it more."





Jacket, as before; top, £119.90, and skirt, £129.90, Calvin Klein (calvinklein.co.uk); dungarees, £40, and boots, £30, Asos Design (asos.com); socks, £11, & Other Stories (stories.com)

## HOW MUCH CHANGE DO YOU REALLY NEED?

"It's important to know which parts of your job are, and aren't, working for you," explains Valerie Rowles, a career development coach. Mark where your current role falls on these three scales. "If you're scoring near 1, this suggests a big change is needed, either to a new company or a different role entirely. If you're scoring 6 or more in each area, this suggests it's something reasonably easy to sort out within your current role."

To what extent am I getting purpose and meaning from my role?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

To what extent am I getting the remuneration I need to live the life I want?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

To what extent does my work pattern and structure fit with my life?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## MAKE A 'KEEP, STOP, START' LIST

It can be difficult to notice what about your current situation needs to change. "It's not about ripping everything up and starting again," explains careers coach Ruth Winden. "You need to analyse what you like, don't like and want more of."

### YOUR KEEP LIST

Ask yourself what parts of your current career or job you wouldn't want to leave behind. What do you want to take forward with you? Or do more of?

### YOUR STOP LIST

Note down the things you don't enjoy or feel you're not so good at. This is a good indicator of the things to leave behind.

### YOUR START LIST

Write all the things you'd like to do at work but your current role doesn't allow. What are you curious about that you've always wanted to try? What is something you want to explore and think you'd enjoy?



### ASK YOURSELF THIS QUESTION: WHAT DO I DO NATURALLY THAT OTHERS DON'T?

"We often struggle to identify our own strengths, which is vital for laying the groundwork for a pivot and deciding what next move might suit us," says Kaye. "Answering this question will help you notice them."



### IMAGINE WINNING AN AWARD NEXT YEAR...

What would you want it to be for? Use your answer to give you a clue about what direction you want your career to go in, says Jenny Blake, author of *Pivot: The Only Move That Matters Is Your Next One*.

### SEND THIS MESSAGE TO SOMEONE WHO HAS YOUR DREAM JOB

"Talk to people in the careers you're interested in," says Scott. "Ask them what the day-to-day of their jobs is really like: the good bits, the bad bits, do they think you'd be suited to it?" Here's an email template that HR expert Anna Campbell swears by...

Hi [Name],  
My name is [Your Name]. As part of my professional growth this year, I'm keen to learn from people whose career journeys I really respect. I've always found your career inspiring, and I'd really value the chance to hear more about your journey – particularly what supported your growth and any pivotal lessons you learnt along the way. My aim is simply to broaden my thinking and learn from your experience. Would you be open to a 10-minute conversation sometime in the coming weeks? I appreciate you may have a busy schedule, so let me know when works for you. Thanks for your time, [Your Name]

Send

## EMPLOYED, SELF-EMPLOYED OR FRACTIONAL?

Your pivot could involve changing the way you work. Here's how to tell which might suit you best, says Campbell.

### EMPLOYED

This will suit you if you're looking for exposure to lots of different departments, skills, opportunities and clients that you might not get on your own.

### SELF-EMPLOYED

People who enjoy this way of working usually have an entrepreneurial streak, so you'll want to execute ideas without a boss or company telling you yes or no. It also gives you more flexibility but can be financially risky at first.

### FRACTIONAL

Fractional working is where you really own being a subject matter expert and do this in multiple roles for different companies for, say, one day a week each. It gives you flexibility and variety but still has the structure of a workplace.

## HAVE YOU HEARD OF JOB CRAFTING?

"This is where you redesign elements of your role to make it a better fit," says Rowles. "That might be work patterns, the projects you focus on or who you collaborate with." Try saying this to your manager: 'As we're coming to the end of this project, I'd love to sit down with you and talk about what's next. I've got a few thoughts on different ways we could look at what I'm doing, to make sure I'm doing well and you're getting what you need.'





## DO YOU REALLY WANT TO PIVOT OR DO YOU WANT A SABBATICAL?

The drivers of these two career moves are usually very different but, at times of burnout, can often be confused. Here, Campbell explains how to tell the difference

### SABBATICAL

- ◆ Usually comes after a period of burnout
- ◆ Most are taken when you've been in a business for a long period of time
- ◆ Often taken to step away and gain new perspectives, knowing you'll come back feeling refreshed

### PIVOT

- ◆ Not so much about gaining new perspectives as acting on those new perspectives
- ◆ Often done after taking time to learn about what you want
- ◆ Allows you to do something different once you're ready to make a change, rather than take a break

## TRANSFER YOUR SKILLS

You've got more transferable skills than you think. Executive coach Nicola Rae Wickham explains:

### If you work in marketing...

At its core, marketing is about understanding human behaviour: how people think, feel and act.

#### Possible pivots:

- ◆ Coaching, counselling or psychology – understanding motivation, behaviour, and emotional drivers is fundamental.
- ◆ Building your own business – you already know how to position an idea, reach an audience and create demand.

### If you're a solicitor...

Legal professionals are trained to operate in high-pressure, complex environments, balancing logic with emotional intelligence.

#### Possible pivots:

- ◆ Mediation or conflict resolution – whether in legal contexts (like family disputes) or within organisations.
- ◆ Business strategy or consultancy: apply your structured thinking to organisational challenges.

### If you're a pharmacist...

Pharmacists sit at a powerful intersection of science, systems and patient care.

#### Possible pivots:

- ◆ Product development – using your knowledge of formulation to create more effective solutions.
- ◆ Health tech: your understanding of medicine and systems can help shape new digital healthcare tools.

## DIP YOUR TOE

"Try before you buy," advises Kaye. "It allows you to test out the things you think you might want to do without having to commit to them long term." Here are three ways to make it work

### TRY A BRIEF SIDE HUSTLE

It might be a cliché of the lean-in era but there is a time and a place for side hustling. Rather than doing it for the long term, look at it as a temporary way to scratch an itch – be that starting a supper club or coaching padel.

### DIP INTO A PROJECT

Know there's a project going on elsewhere in your company that relates to your passion or a role you might like to do? Ask to be involved as part of a working group or sit in on meetings.

### SHADOW FOR A WEEK

Find someone doing a job you're interested in and reach out (using the template on page 61), then see if they'll let you shadow them for a week. You may need to use annual leave but it'll give you invaluable insight.



## YOU WANT TO BE...

We asked Stylist readers what job you'd most like to pivot to: here are your top three



### A BOOKSHOP OWNER

**Danielle Moylan, founder of Lala Books**  
The best days... are when

it's sunny, lots of people want to come to the shop to hang out and get coffee or book recommendations. The worst days... are when I get my rent bill! It's the same problems that come with every small business: the shop has been broken into twice, rubbish doesn't get collected, the coffee machine breaks... Nobody told me... I'd have to get really comfortable turning people down. Be it a publisher or an author asking us to stock their book, you won't have space for everything. I'd recommend it if... you're OK with not making a lot of money. It's amazing, but you have to do it for the love of it.



### A TRAVEL WRITER

**Jini Reddy, author and travel journalist**

The best days... are when you have the freedom to explore. It feels like

a miracle that I can go somewhere, have it paid for and write about it. The worst days... are really hard work. You're not going on a holiday, you're going there to fulfil a commissioning brief. There's not a lot of time to just stop and be. Nobody told me... that writing a travel feature can be quite prescriptive: you can't just say anything you want. You might have had an extraordinary experience but your commission might be on a different angle. I'd recommend it if... you're interested in seeing the world through more than your own eyes. A big part is realising it's not about you.

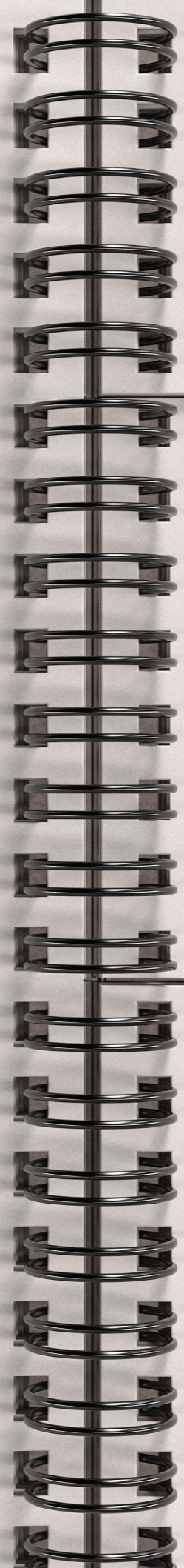


### A FLORIST

**Catherine Foxwell, founder of Floral Evolution**

The best days... are when you get to be part

of a special day for someone – a wedding or celebration – and see your vision come to life. The worst days... involve getting up at 5am to go to flower markets (at least three times a week) and washing a lot of buckets. Nobody told me... how much networking I'd need to do. I assumed it'd just be about the flowers and the work would come to me. You really have to work hard to be recommended. I'd recommend it if... you're prepared for it not to be glamorous. The actual arranging of flowers is about 15% of what I do. It's lovely, but you have to deal with the buckets and sweeping to get there!



Hat, £13, M&S (marksandspencer.com); yellow T-shirt, £3.90, Uniqlo, (Uniqlo.com); white T-shirt, jeans and boots, as before

Art direction: Jessica Andrews-Lockett  
Prop styling: Tom Gormer  
Hair and make-up: Julie Reed at Carol Hayes Management using Pixi Beauty and Amika  
Model: Gabriela B at Body London  
Astronaut costume courtesy of Costume Studio (costumestudio.co.uk)

