



10 TIPS TO DESIGN WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU

1. Believe it is possible to design a new chapter that you will love!
2. Start with how you want to feel - not with what you want to do.
3. Let go of your old stories and everyone else's beliefs about who you are.
4. Start with all of the things you love to do and that make you happy.
5. Activate your passions.
6. Brainstorm a large list of different possibilities.
7. Prioritize the possibilities that make you feel most inspired and energized.
8. Explore each lead possibility to discover new pathways.
10. Ask for help.

Ready to design your What's Next – the one you love?

Schedule complimentary 15 minute call with Mary to discover how Design Thinking tools offer a unique approach to creating your more inspiring, energizing and passion-filled What's Next. (Mary@marywallacejaensch.com) Also, check out www.MaryWallaceJaensch.com for more information and news about upcoming events and webinars.

If you are looking for a community of people on a similar journey, join us at What's Next For You, a Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/389033511768248/?ref=bookmarks>) committed to helping all of us make the change journey easier!



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1. Believe it is possible to design a new chapter that you will love!

Many people don't believe that it is possible to design a new chapter that they will love. They live within the constraints of cultural and professional definitions of the possibilities. It is hard to believe that many possibilities lie outside these definitions. People often think that they are either too young and inexperienced or too old and over experienced to be able to make a change for the better.

In truth, there are always significantly more, different ways of living and working than any of us have personally experienced. If you are considering new work directions, look to new industries, new businesses and turning passions into money – all ways to step out of the usual and create what works for you. Exploring new lifestyles as your life situation changes also reveals the enormous variety of how people live, even within your own town or city.

Several recent articles highlight how successfully people of a certain age are stepping out and carving brand new paths to next chapters that they love. Shift your perspective. Open up new career and life possibilities that will inspire and energize you by believing it is possible.

<https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/companies-hiring-over-50/>

<https://www.retailmenot.com/blog/midlife-career-change.html>

<https://www.hermoney.com/earn/careers/3548-6-successful-women-who-didn-t-make-it-until-after-40/>

2. Start with how you want to feel - not with what you want to do.

Too often career and life coaches and advisors start from the perspective of helping you figure out what you want to do. This can limit your set of options to what you already know and has the potential to create new opportunities that won't leave you feeling any better than you do in your current situation.

Starting with how you want to feel in your new career or life direction (using Design Thinking principles to focus on your experience) prompts new points of view, generates ideas you haven't considered before, and initiates a process that has a higher probability of ending with new directions that inspire and energize you.

Imagine a fulfilling day in your new career and life!

<https://www.creativityatwork.com/design-thinking-strategy-for-innovation/>

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/career-advice_b_3203922

3. Let go of your old stories and everyone else's beliefs about who you are.

A key step to creating the What's Next that you will love is moving past your old stories – how you have seen and thought about yourself and how other people have seen and thought about you. Old



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stories keep us stuck in what we know, in what is familiar. As Einstein so aptly noted: you can't create new solutions with the same thinking that created the problem or situation in the first place!

When was the last time that you experimented with a new story about yourself? Do you remember starting at a new school or new job and recognizing the opportunity you had to "start over" and be someone new? Remember the energy and excitement you felt realizing a new story and all the new possibilities to try new things and have new experiences.

Letting go of some of your familiar stories - I am an accountant, I am too old, I don't have a passion, work is hard, etc. – is an important step to creating the space for new directions. Think of it as doing a Marie Kondo (only keep what brings you joy) and throw all the other parts of your story away with gratitude for getting you to this point in your life and career.

<https://www.radiantwholenesshealing.com/letting-go-of-your-old-stories/>

<https://medium.com/personal-growth/the-teflon-mind-how-to-let-go-of-the-past-575078ec6e42>

4. Start with all of the things you love to do and that make you happy.

Another step toward designing your What's Next is to create a list of all the things and experiences in your life that you love and that make you happy. It can be a lot more fun than making a list of what you do well or updating your resume.

The best predictor of what will inspire and energize you in the future is what it does for you now or has done in the past. Sometimes, depending on work and life circumstances, it is hard to remember a time when we felt inspired and energized. Invest some time wandering down memory lane to identify those moments – at work or in life. Pay attention to the details – what contributed to making you feel so good? Was it the situation, the people, the activities, what you contributed? Look for the commonalities across the different happy experiences.

Fulfillment and satisfaction are enlivening and energizing. Becoming more conscious of what triggers those feelings in you can help shape how you design your next career chapter --- the one that you will love!

<https://happiermindjournal.com/blogs/news/3-ways-to-gain-more-self-awareness-and-happiness-1>

<https://www.lifehack.org/629038/self-awareness-is-underrated-why-the-conscious-mind-leads-to-happiness>

5. Activate your passions.

Many of us feel stuck designing our What's Next because we don't know our passion. Some of us fear that we don't actually have any passions and are thereby forced to stay in jobs and life situations that are unsatisfying and fulfilling. This worry is premised on believing that our passions exist outside of us and that somehow we have to find them, as if they are misplaced or lost.



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In truth, passion is energy. It is the commitment, enthusiasm, persistence and interest that we bring to topics, experiences, people and things that intrigue us. We each have the power and ability to create new passions for ourselves by simply following our curiosities and taking action to learn more, do more and connect to other people who share the same interest.

What topic or interest have you recently lost track of time exploring on Google? Does it peak your curiosity? Can you learn more from a video, from an online course, from a Meet-Up group, in a more traditional educational setting? Take a small step and watch how your actions open new doors, create new energy and build new connections that can result in new opportunities.

<https://phoenixwarriors.thinkific.com/courses/activate-your-passion>

<https://www.amazon.com/Passion-energy-focusing-excites-Winfrey/dp/1727680766>

6. Brainstorm a large list of different possibilities.

Jump start designing your What's Next with a brainstorming session. Your goal is to create a large list that includes many new ideas and ideas that feel impossible at the moment. There is always time for evaluation and analysis – save it for after you create an extensive list of possibilities.

Gather a group of friends, colleagues and people you respect and let them help you collect all kinds of ideas for what to do next. Start with looking at the intersection of what makes you happy with your skills and experience and your interests (business and personal). Remember the rules of brainstorming:

- Every idea is collected
 - There are no dumb ideas
 - Don't criticize any ideas
- Build on each other's ideas with the word "and" – don't evaluate, just build
- Ask for clarity – make sure you know what someone has in mind
- Encourage other people to share what they love and want to do – perhaps they have thought of something that excites you too.
- Focus on quantity before quality

If it is easier, imagine that all of these ideas are for someone else so that you don't start evaluating or eliminating based on your own fears and stories. Have some fun – it is your time to dream and create what is meaningful to you.

<https://www.isixsigma.com/tools-templates/brainstorming/brainstorming-rules/>

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/the-most-fun-way-to-discover-your-passion-today>

7. Prioritize the possibilities that make you feel most inspired and energized.

Faced with a large list of potential What's Next, many people default to what feels doable and familiar to prioritize the list and choose the lead options to explore and evaluate. This strategy takes



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you right back to what you already know is not creating feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment. New career directions require change and pushing past what feels comfortable and familiar.

Consider prioritizing your list by how it feels when you imagine doing each of the options. Sit with each idea and imagine doing it. What do you feel in your body? Recognize that feeling anxious and excited can experience the same body sensations: tingling, heart pumping, high alert. Which ones inspire and energize you just imagining them? Which ones feel heavy and dark? Know that your mind will try hard to reason with you about which ones are too hard or not possible. Often those are the ones that should be at the top of your list.

Your goal is to identify the top 5-8 ideas that light you up, enliven your feelings and thinking and feel like a stretch. You will learn the most and move closer to what you love by stretching yourself to follow what feels exciting.

<https://www.careershifters.org/expert-advice/how-to-change-career-when-you-have-no-idea-what-youre-doing>

<https://www.recruiter.com/i/9-ways-to-find-your-career-path-when-youre-feeling-lost/>

<https://www.nextavenue.org/women-career-change-after-50/>

8. Explore each lead possibility to discover new pathways.

Having identified your lead What's Next options, begin to investigate each option in greater depth, finding all the ways they might offer you new, career and life directions that meet your criteria. This is not about "Vetting" the ideas (yet). This is about discovering how each lead option has the potential to offer you a more satisfying, fulfilling possibility for change. Specific questions to ask for each option include the following:

- What types of organizations or opportunities are available in this direction? Where are they located (somewhere you want to live)? What are their missions and values?
- What are the different roles and job types in this lead direction?
- What types of people work and/or live in this space (i.e., backgrounds, experience, skills, etc.)? Do these seem like people with whom you want to work and spend time?
- What are the change paths available?

Your purpose is to discover the ways you are most interested in pursuing possibilities within each lead option and to discover potential pathways (networks, topics, requirements, etc.) to creating specific new destinations.

<https://www.pragmaticmarketing.com/resources/articles/Evaluating-Career-Opportunities-Its-Not-Just-About-the-Numbers>

<https://www.theladders.com/career-advice/how-to-find-the-answer-to-what-career-is-right-for-me>

9. Prototype and try them on to create new opportunities.



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Now you are ready to start trying-on specific opportunities. One of the challenges with moving past the familiar and creating new What's Next is determining if the reality of each opportunity aligns with your expectations and dreams. The fastest, most effective way to check it out is to try it on! Similar to shopping for shoes and dresses, sampling is the best predictor of how you will feel in your lead new directions.

Look for opportunities to be "in situ" for at least a little bit of time to see how it really feels. Here are a few examples of how to make this happen:

- Volunteer at a relevant organization or vendor to an organization to spend time with the people and see what they actually do
- Shadow someone who works in the industry for the day or lives the new lifestyle so you can experience it directly
- Take a relevant course or attend an industry conference. Check out the people, the topics, the questions and how you feel afterwards, i.e., are you energized or overwhelmed or bored?
- Network to talk to people in your situations of interest. Ask them about their "why", the realities of their every day and their hopes and dreams.

Fast prototyping is a component of Lean Start-Up approaches to quickly vet whether an idea has legs. Determine ways you can fast prototype your lead ideas and quickly get to the 1 or 2 that make you feel most inspired and satisfied. Often, these hands-on approaches to learning more also connect you to the right people and new opportunities most effectively. As well, trying them on, checking them out moves them from being unfamiliar to being more familiar, which will ultimately make changing your direction and situation easier and faster.

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/5-ways-to-testdrive-a-new-career>

<https://blog.movingworlds.org/use-the-lean-startup-method-to-find-and-get-your-dream-job/>

10. Ask for help.

Most importantly of all, ask for help at every step of the process. By definition, you are walking into new places, new spaces and new dynamics. You wouldn't travel to a new place without checking out online resources, talking to friends and travel agents, conducting your own due diligence on the best ways to have the experience you want. Redirecting your career and life should be no different.

This is not a time to try to do it all by yourself. There is no way to uncover all of the potential new possibilities without talking to other people, networking with new groups and connecting with new resources. Let go of any feelings of pride or shame or confusion or shyness and ASK! You will quickly discover that asking is the fastest way to find your best path forward and to create the new support systems and networks that will increase your success once you get there.