



CHANGING CAREERS



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:
12KJ-R6CA-GTCG



1 Warm up

Read the information and then answer the questions below in pairs.

According to Dropbox, "one in two employees say they are actively looking for a new job or watching for openings."

1. Does this apply to you or someone you know? Why?
2. If so, what worries do you/they have about making a change in your/their working life?
3. What three pieces of advice would you give to someone who wanted to change careers?

2 Tune in

You are going to watch a TED talk called *How to know if it's time to change careers*. The speaker is Chieh Huang, co-founder and CEO of Boxed.com.

It's helpful if you first watch the beginning of a presentation, to get used to the speaker's accent and speed of delivery. Watch the introduction to the talk (0:00-1:04) to find the answer to these questions:

1. What are some jobs that Huang has done in the last 15 years?
2. What does Huang think you should try to find in life?
3. What is the significance of the figure "tens of thousands of hours"?

Video





3 Listening: for main idea

Listen to the rest of the talk to understand the main content.

Part 1 (1:04-1:52) - Decide if you're ready. Three things to think about:

- 1
- 2
- 3

Part 2 (1:52 - 3:15) - So you've decided - now what? Three things to do immediately:

- 1
- 2
- 3

Part 3 (3:15 - 4:16) - Get ready for the next chapter. Three things you should think about doing right now:

- 1
- 2
- 3

4 Useful expressions - metaphorical language

There are many examples of metaphorical language in this talk. These expressions are not literally true, but they serve to transfer meaning from one situation to another. Metaphors are used frequently in business contexts.

In this TED talk, there were metaphors relating to:

- airplanes
- buildings
- coins
- fire
- the human body
- kitchen items
- shops



Look at the sentences below and match the words in bold to one of the metaphorical areas in the list above. Then use the context to explain what the phrases in bold mean.

1. If you're not even interested in learning anymore, that's a huge **red flag** that there might not be a future for you in that industry.
2. ...career changes are often **gut-driven**.then **trust your gut**. It might be time for that career change.
3. **On the flip side**, one reason to not move on is short-term pain.
4. If you don't like your boss or people at the office **are grating** on you, that's actually not a good reason to...change your career...
5. That passion and that hunger and that ability **to be a sponge** really attracts awesome mentors ...
6. The second thing you need to do immediately is **shore up** your finances. ... when you change your career, you'll either start with a job with a lower title or lower pay or maybe even no pay...
7. ... as I made the transition from being an attorney over to a video game creator, I wanted to have at least six to 12 months of **personal runway** in the bank.
8. ... do not – I repeat – do not **burn bridges**. ... The world is such a small place, especially with all these online platforms, that, believe me, you will see these people again.
9. ... **take stock** of what you've learned in your previous career or careers. Most likely, a lot of those things are really applicable to your new job and your new career...

Do you have any of the same metaphors in your language?

Now choose one or more of the topics below to talk about in pairs:

- a time you **burned your bridges**
- a time that something **grated** on you
- a time there was an obvious **red flag**
- a time you **trusted your gut**
- a time you **took stock** of your situation

5

Dicussion

Discuss these questions in pairs:

1. Compare the advice in the talk with what you said in question 3 in the Warm-up. Did you predict everything that Huang talked about?
2. Do you think Huang gave good advice? Is there anything you disagree with?
3. What specific advice from the talk could apply to you or someone you know?



Transcripts

2. Tune in

Introduction

I was not one of those kids that knew exactly what they wanted to do when they were growing up. In the last 15 years of my career, I've been an English teacher, attorney, video game creator, and now, a toilet paper salesman, selling millions of rolls of toilet paper a year.

Life is about finding the intersection of what you really, really love with what you're really, really good at. As simple as it sounds, it's really not that easy to find.

After a brief stint as an English teacher, I went to law school and ended up becoming an attorney at a big law firm here in New York City. Like most Americans, for the next two, three years, I was holding on to my job for dear life, working really late hours at a job that I thought maybe I was good at but certainly not one that I really loved. I then came upon the epiphany that it takes years if not tens of thousands of hours to get really good at something. I really didn't have a lot of time to waste.

This talk isn't for those looking to quit their job because they don't like their boss or they had a long day at work. This is for those that are ready to make the completely scary leap into a brand-new career. So as you think about making a career change, here are a few tips I hope you consider and a few things I've picked up along the way.

Three things to think about

First, there's three things to think about before you're ready to move on. Number one: professional life is about learning. If you're not even interested in learning anymore, that's a huge red flag that there might not be a future for you in that industry.

Number two: career changes are often gut-driven. If you constantly have sleepless nights where you're wide awake staring at the ceiling thinking, "Oh, man. I can't live with myself if I never try to make this change or if I don't even actually investigate it," then trust your gut. It might be time for that career change.

On the flip side, one reason to not move on is short-term pain. If you don't like your boss or people at the office are grating on you, that's actually not a good reason to absolutely change your career, because when you do change a career, you generally have to start from the bottom, and you'll probably feel a lot of short-term pain, whether it's through a lack of salary or lack of a title. Pain at any job is inevitable.



Three things to do immediately

So now you're convinced that it's time to change your career. Then there's three things to do immediately. First: network, network, network. No one ever builds a career without a good mentor or a good support network. What I mean by networking is getting all the great advice that you can possibly get. Technology has made it so simple to reach out to new people to say, "Hey, I'm thinking about making a career change. Do you have just five minutes to chat with me?" That passion and that hunger and that ability to be a sponge really attracts awesome mentors and people willing to give you their time to give you some good advice. So go out there and meet new people.

The second thing you need to do immediately is shore up your finances. The reality is, when you change your career, you'll either start with a job with a lower title or lower pay or maybe even no pay, especially if you're starting your own business. So going out there and making sure your finances are in order to make the transition less painful is really, really important. For me personally, as I made the transition from being an attorney over to a video game creator, I wanted to have at least six to 12 months of personal runway in the bank. Six to 12 months might not be the right number for you, but be honest with yourself on what that number should be.

Number three, if you're not ready to make the full jump right at this moment, then get your side hustle on. Side hustles could be anything from volunteering with an organization that's in the new industry you want to go into, could be starting your business part-time on the weekends. It's a free way to get a taste to see if you really love something.

Three things you should think about doing right now

So you're ready to make the move or maybe you already made the move. Here are three things you should think about doing, right now. One: do not – I repeat – do not burn bridges. You spent years building those bridges, why burn them now? The world is such a small place, especially with all these online platforms, that, believe me, you will see these people again and probably in the most inopportune times.

Number two: take stock of what you've learned in your previous career or careers. Most likely, a lot of those things are really applicable to your new job and your new career, whether it's interacting with people, playing on a team or dealing with jerks and assholes. All those things are really universally applicable. You'll find jerks no matter what industry you're in; no one's immune to it, everyone's got to figure it out, and you probably know how to do it already.

Lastly, when you start your new job, you're going to be nervous. But don't worry, take a deep breath, because this is what I want to tell you: you're part of a new team now, and everyone around you is rooting for your success, because your success is their success. So welcome to your new career.



Key

1. Warm up

10 mins. Go over the information in the box and then set students up to speak in pairs. Questions 1 and 2 are about personal experiences and students can choose to talk about "someone they know" if they prefer not to speak about themselves. Question 3 is more general - after students have discussed this, make a record of their ideas to refer to again at the end of the lesson. You might just ask each pair to record their 3 pieces of advice in their notes, or you could conduct some feedback with the whole class and choose 3-5 pieces of advice from the group to record on the board or a piece of paper. Note that "career" can be a false friend in many languages, so make sure that your students know the meaning relates to the jobs or types of jobs you do in your working life.

2. Tune in

5 mins. The purpose of this stage is to allow students to adjust to the speaker's voice and pacing. Set the task first and then watch the video clip. It's best if students focus on watching rather than trying to make notes at the same time. It's short, so if students need to listen again, they can. Go over the answers with the whole class and encourage students to respond in their own words.

ANSWERS: 1 Huang has been an English teacher, attorney (US English; UK English - lawyer/solicitor), video game creator, and toilet paper salesman. 2 He thinks you should try to find a job which combines what you love with what you're good at (but it's hard to find!). 3 It takes tens of thousands of hours, or years, to get really good at doing something, so you shouldn't waste time in your life working at a job you don't enjoy.

3. Listening: for main idea

15 mins. Students now watch the rest of the talk. It's highly structured so in that sense the notes will be easy to complete, but it's also short and fast, so you may want to break it down into sections. Students can watch each section without making notes, and then you can pause the video for them to complete notes with key words only and discuss their answers (maybe in pairs initially, if your class is large). Each section is short, so if students need to listen to a section again, they can. Check answers at the end of each section, focusing on the main ideas. Students will have an opportunity to explore some of the more unusual expressions from the talk later in the lesson, so avoid getting bogged down in vocabulary questions at this stage.

ANSWERS: sample answers - Part 1 Decide if you're ready - 1 Have you stopped learning or wanting to learn in your current career; 2 Can you live with yourself if you stay in your current career? 3 Don't move for a trivial reason. Part 2 So you've decided - now what? - 1 Network - talk to as many people as possible about the new career so you can learn more. 2 Make sure you have enough money to live on during the transition - you may have to take a pay cut at first. 3 Consider starting your new career by doing it on the side in your free time, while staying in your old job. Part 3 Three things you should think about doing right now - 1 Don't make people at your old job angry because you may see them again, probably online (note: the metaphor "burning bridges" is covered in the next stage of the lesson). 2 Think about what you've learned in your old job that can apply to your new career, including how to get along with difficult people. 3 Don't be nervous, enjoy your new career and the relationships it brings.

4. Useful expressions - metaphorical language

20 mins. Go over the definition and significance of metaphorical language in business contexts with the students; they may already have noticed some examples in the talk. Set the double task of matching the metaphorical area



from the list to each example, and then using the context to explain the meaning of the metaphor. You might want to demonstrate with the first one before students continue in pairs. There are only 7 metaphorical areas and 9 sentences, so some are repeated. After checking the answers as a class, encourage students to reflect on whether their language has the same or similar metaphors and remind them to translate ideas, not word for word, when using metaphors. Finally, in pairs, students can tell one or more short anecdotes about their own experiences to activate the language. Monitor students while they do this and finish with some feedback or error correction. VARIATION: students choose one of the topics to talk about but they do not include the metaphorical expression in their speaking. After they finish speaking, their partner must guess which metaphor applies to the situation. You could demonstrate this with an example of your own to begin with.

ANSWERS: 1 a red flag = a sign of danger (a red flag sometimes gives warning of wildfires); 2 trusting your gut = making a decision based on a strong inner feeling rather than over-analyzing it (the gut is part of the human body - the stomach and other digestive organs); 3 on the flip side = on the other hand (you flip a coin to show heads or tails); 4 are grating on you = are annoying you (as if you were a piece of cheese in a grater - kitchen item); 5 be a sponge = drink in new information (as if you were a sponge absorbing water - kitchen item); 6 shore up = reinforce something to make it stronger and resistant to collapse (you shore up buildings if they are about to collapse); 7 a personal runway = enough money to support you after you leave your old job and while you are starting your new career (like an airplane uses a runway to build up speed before it takes off and flies); 8 burn bridges = leave no option for going back to an earlier position, here meaning resuming good relations with people in your old workplace (fire metaphor); 9 take stock = make a list of what you have or know (shop metaphor).

5. Discussion

10 mins. In this stage, students can respond to the content of the talk. For question 1, refer back to the advice they formulated in the warm-up stage, whether they wrote it in their notes or you recorded it as a class. Students should discuss similarities and differences between their own advice and Huang's. They then go on to evaluate Huang's advice, before applying it to their own (or someone they know's) situation. Conduct class feedback at the end and encourage students to use some of the metaphors from the lesson.