

How to respond when you make a wrong move

When you feel like you've made a wrong career move it can leave you feeling drained and deflated about your development.

As hard as they are to experience, these moments can also be pivotal for our learning.

Reflecting on your wrongs can help you to realise what you need from your work. It can also help you to take control and redirect your career towards roles that are a better fit for your future.

5 ideas for action when feeling stuck

1. Expectation/reality mismatch

When you make a wrong career move, it's often because of a gap between what you expected and the reality of the role.

Reflecting on these mismatches helps you move from feelings to facts, making it easier to see and know what to do about the gaps.

Mismatches sound like:

- 🔗 Expectation: *My skills are a good match for the role.*
- 🔗 Reality: *I feel out of my depth.*

2. Test the mismatch

Test any expectation : reality mismatch with people you trust to see whether they have also spotted the challenges you're experiencing.

Ask others:

- 🔗 *How do you see my contributions to the team so far?*
- 🔗 *Are there any areas where I can improve?*
- 🔗 *Do you think this role is a good fit for my skills and strengths?*

3. Take control of what you can

Focus on areas where you can make a difference, even if they're small. Look for opportunities to:

- 🔗 build relationships
- 🔗 invest in learning
- 🔗 volunteer for new projects
- 🔗 share your skills and experiences.

Side projects or new learning opportunities can give you a boost and help you stay motivated while you work through any challenges in the role.

4. Find a friend

When a job feels challenging, it can help to find a friend, either in your company or outside of it.

This person can provide support, improve your sense of belonging and reduce any feelings of isolation.

Friends don't need to solve your problems but can offer a listening ear, empathy, and a distraction.

Having someone to connect with can provide you moments of light relief!

Coach yourself questions

What am I working on? *Is my role enjoyable? Am I using my skills?*



Who am I working with? *Are my relationships with others positive?*



Where am I working? *Does the company align with my values?*



How am I working? *Is my work-life fit & flexibility meeting my needs?*



5. Okay options

When your role feels wrong and you know you need to make a change, focus on finding an okay next option rather than the perfect one.

Set yourself a time frame to see if anything improves. During this time, find something that is okay for now, giving you the stability and space to eventually go for a better fit.

This could be:

- 🔗 returning to a previous role
- 🔗 exploring freelance opportunities
- 🔗 moving to another industry.

Recommended resources



How to make hard choices
TED talk by philosopher Ruth Chang



Helen and Sarah discuss how to derisk your career decisions on [#330](#) of Squiggly Careers.



Helen and Sarah share 6 questions to help you consider squiggly opportunities on [#409](#) of Squiggly Careers.