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Prioritizing Growth Over Finding a Dream Job

Don't cave to the pressure of chasing a dream job.

That question you were asked as a kid (and perhaps loved to answer with your latest interest), "What do you want to be when you grow up?" has now evolved into, "What's your dream job?"

Under an onslaught of career mantras like "Follow your dreams!", "Do what you love!", "Hustle to chase your passion!" it's easy to panic if you don't have a vision board of your dream job somewhere in your home.

But guess what-it's okay if you don't have a dream job. It doesn't mean that you're unmotivated or that you're unambitious or can't think big. What it does mean is that you're open to your interests evolving, and you can find contentment in a variety of careers. Researchers call this the *Develop Theory*.

Fit vs. Develop Theory

Fit Theory says there is one perfect job for you that will align exactly with your passion and your skills and if you can find it, you'll have never-ending career happiness. This can be true for some people, especially if they have fixed passions in life and strongly identify with a set field of work. But for many others-probably most of us-the *Develop Theory* fits better.

The researchers who identified *Develop Theory* as an alternative to *Fit Theory* propose that you don't have to love a job right away or believe it to be the ultimate job for you in order to find happiness or fulfillment at work.

Development Theory says passion for a job can be developed over time, and being open to growth, new experiences, and new interests can see you just as happy and satisfied at work than those chasing a perfect fit-perhaps even more happy in the long-run.

Pros of not having a set "dream job"

There are quite a few plus sides to not having one position that's the end-all-be-all of your career tunnel.

1. Not having the perpetual pressure to reach a goal dream job allows you to find satisfaction and fulfillment in your current role.
2. You skip the risk of setting yourself up for disappointment. It's a real risk of those who set their career hopes on one job that once they reach it, they'll be unhappy-it won't live up to their fantasy. Or, equally tragic, they spend an entire lifetime reaching for a position they never reach and look back at 40+ of unhappiness in the workforce.
3. By keeping your career and yourself open to growth and change in passions, you're staying flexible to take advantage of new opportunities. You could pursue several different jobs or careers that each fit with your different passions throughout life.
4. You are less likely to forget that you are more than your career. You are not a failure if you never reach a dream job and your life hasn't been wasted.

In the end

Adopting a growth or development mentality when it comes to your career can be healthier than a dream job mentality. You'll acknowledge your ability to learn new interests and not feel like you're lacking ambition just because you can find happiness in your current position.

You'll be resilient through change and, hopefully, less likely to regret an entire career in pursuit of one, limited goal.

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