

**BRAVE  
STARTS**



**E:BOOK**  
**MAKING YOUR**  
**LATTER WORK YEARS**  
**YOUR BEST YET**

[www.bravestarts.com](http://www.bravestarts.com)





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# WHY?



## Context:

Our life expectancy has risen dramatically. In the 5000 years leading up to 1900, life expectancy rose 25 years. In 100 years, life expectancy has risen by 30 years. We are now at a time where 4, 5 or 6 generations will be alive at the same time.

## What does this mean?

Our entire evolution has taken place where the age of death - if we were lucky- was mid 40's. The change over the past century has been game changing. We've never before had the certainty and luxury of growing old. We are still 'new' at this. The speed of change means society and culture have not fully adapted to assimilate, know or understand the needs of people as they age to help them live a fuller, longer and happier life. You are part of a generation that will live longer than any in previous history. What you do and how you live will be lessons for us all.

## What do we know?

Your entire evolutionary history existed in a time of toil. Life was hard. We have not evolved for a life of leisure. Doing work and having a role and part to play are part of your genetic legacy. In our own study of over 4000 people over 50, the key thing people are looking for now in their work is something that gives them a sense of 'purpose'.

We know part of ageing well is linked with having a sense of purpose. There is strong evidence that those who live longest and who are happiest remain engaged in the world of work. In this sense, work is perhaps not our conventional view of an office, being paid and having a salary. It's about being part of a structure, where you have a role and where you are helping others.

The world of work is evolving and rapidly changing. There is no more job for life. The rise of technology: wifi speeds and connectivity mean working from anywhere is more realistic option than it ever was previously. The rise of social media and internet access mean routes to market are far more democratic and open to all. People are responding in kind: no longer is income generated from one employer over a lifetime. People can work part time, whilst renting out a room in their property, whilst selling products on ebay, whilst also generating freelance income from selling their skills as a copywriter and editor. The pandemic has accelerated this change.

## Over to you...

No one can know or predict your future but what is so wonderful about this stage of your life, is you've done the hard work already. You have a far greater sense of what you like and don't like compared to your younger self. You have a clearer idea of what you are good at and probably have some ideas about what your interests are. The foundations you have built, the amount of time you have to explore them and the fact that opportunities exist for you now like they never did before means this has the potential to be the most exciting and rewarding part of your working life.



## ABOUT YOU

You've got some amazing skills and probably some fantastic experience. Traditionally, as people get older, many start planning their retirement but with the longer lives we're now lucky enough to live, working for longer isn't just something many have to do, it's something many want to do provided it meets the needs you have - which as you age will have changed. Unfortunately, career development and training structures haven't kept up to date with you: opportunities for jobs, grants, training and development tend to be focused on the 'young'. It's likely you'll have experienced some anxiety about 'what to do next'. You have a great idea of what you no longer want to do - and even though your appetite to learn is strong, you probably haven't got real clarity on what you want to do next.

You're probably reading this because you work for an organisation that acknowledges and recognises you still have huge value to offer them and the rest of the world. We're here to help you take control, understand what you want out of your next 10-20 years and put you on the right path to getting there. By the end of this e-book, you'll be more aware of the steps to take.

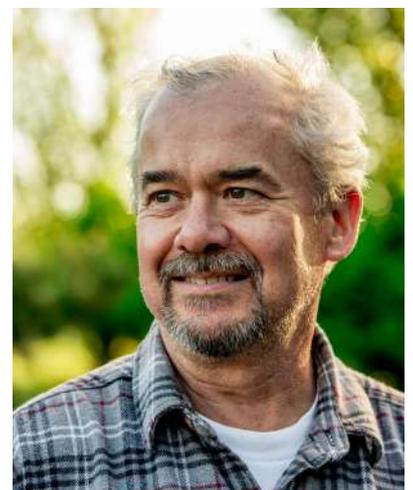
## ABOUT US

We are a not for profit supporting organisations who want to do the best for their employees. We have strong values about science and evidence. We take seriously the fact that we are sharing insight that relates to fundamental aspects of how you live your life. A lot of content out there (whilst full of good intention) is actually misguided and poorly evidenced. Well meaning is not good enough for us. What we share with you we can always back up. We welcome your challenges and questions. If at any time you disagree or would like clarity on something we've raised, just ask.

## AGEING VALUES

What drives us in our 20's it not what drives us as we get older. Humans have the unique ability to recognise the passing of time. As we sense there is less time available, we focus and hone in on what we perceive as being more important. Everyone is an individual, but thanks to work by [Carstensen, L.](#) there are broad generalisations we can make. Doing a job with a greater sense of purpose becomes more important. We worry less about status and money and more about legacy. Rather than serving our own needs we care more about serving others. We are less tolerant of bad behaviour and we stand up more for a sense of justice. We want to focus more on strengthening relationships that will sustain us as we age - more time caring for others is not only a necessity, but it's good for our long term health and wellbeing. Learning new things and an unyielding sense of curiosity enable this this to happen. Stimulation is critical.

What a wonderful base on which to build!





## STEP 1: UNHELPFUL EXPECTATIONS

As people approach their latter working years, many start to explore what options might be available. It is a period of opportunity and uncertainty - which can be fertile ground for exploration, but also for exploitation. There is a lot of unregulated, well intentioned but ultimately poor 'advice' out there. We want to start by setting the record straight.



### The Happiness, 'Job Love' and Passion Myths

Ever noticed how freely people advise you life is too short - that you have to follow your passion and do something you love? It sounds simple - but life is rarely this easy. Most people have no idea what they are passionate about.

Statements like this undermine the reality you face. With 34,000+ continually evolving jobs you've never tried, it's extremely hard to simply 'follow' or 'find' your passion. Not only are the options almost infinite, as we've indicated, your values change throughout your life. Your personality will be suited more to one job than another. The market ultimately will dictate what roles are available and 'loving' a role when you get one will depend on the team, your relationship with your line manager, the brand and reputation of the organisation - oh and roughly another 300+ factors. Quotes like this raise the 'expectation' bar to a level which is unhelpful and can make you feel inadequate for not knowing your 'passion'. A more helpful expectation is be open minded to what might be next and be prepared for hard work. It won't all fall into your lap.



### The Belief and the 'Power of Attraction' Myth

Books like 'The Secret' have been hugely popular (35+ million sold). The premise is if you send out the right vibes and **believe** hard enough, you'll get back what you send out. If you want more money, the cosmic cash register will open with the power of your thinking. Too good to be true? Of course it is. Conveniently, if you question the authority of the advice given, the response is never that the advice is wrong - it's only ever that the client (you) didn't **believe** in it enough / want it enough / commit enough etc..you get the idea.

Not only is the lack of any credible evidence worrying, we find it distasteful to give people hope and misguided advice on what is essentially high stake emotional work. Whilst luck does play a huge role in any form of career development, we do not rely upon it. Neither should you.





## STEP 2: BUILDING GOOD FOUNDATIONS

### So what can you rely on?

In the largest analysis of all studies asking how people felt about their careers, those who were the most satisfied were those with an 'internal locus of control'. What does that mean? For the sake of simplicity and to help makes things clearer, we can polarise people into two categories:

- people who believe they are in control (internal locus of control)
- people who believe they aren't in control (external locus of control)



In this example a Sales Executive with an internal versus external locus of control might think:

- **Internal:** 'I took my eye off the ball', 'I was distracted', 'When I wasn't sure about something, I should have asked, I was interviewing elsewhere and didn't fully engage with my work ' (etc..)
- **External:** 'My manager is really unsupportive, if s/he had given me more time I'd have understood the product better', 'the market was really bad this quarter', 'my team mates undermined me'. Etc..

There are times (Covid19 is a great example) when things truly are out of your hands - but how you react; what you choose to think and believe; the friends you choose to spend time with; the news you choose to listen to - is largely driven by you. No one is as invested in your future as you are. You are in the driving seat. Where are you on the scale? Here is a [free test](#) you can use to self evaluate.

### The good news...

How you choose to think about things is an attitude. It can be changed. Unlike your skin colour or foot size, you aren't 'born' with an internal set of beliefs.

**Move away from this thinking:**

- My boss is a moron, they make no effort to 'get' or help me.
- I've been rejected from another job. The job market is awful. this is pointless.
- No one ever tells me why I keep getting rejected
- I can't believe they promoted her and not me, I have no idea why
- My manager doesn't care about my career



**To more of this:**

- My boss really doesn't get things - but why am I being passive? I can make things better for myself if I help them 'get' how to manage me.
- I've been rejected from another job. Who do I trust to give me an honest review of my application? The job market is awful, so I'm going to find out which sectors are hiring
- I get most people are too scared of saying something and getting sued. I'll lead the conversation - acknowledge their concerns and tell them it really is for my own benefit.
- I know why they promoted her and not me. I don't agree with it. I've asked for a meeting to discuss my concerns
- My manager can't read my mind, possibly hasn't been trained on how to do this so I'll ask for the support I want



## STEP 3: WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

### So what should you look for from work? What are good criteria to meet?

What makes people enjoy and report feeling they love their work falls down to these criteria: if you focus on ticking boxes in these areas, you'll give yourself the greatest chance of feeling satisfied and happy with the next few years.

- 1. Work that is engaging** – where the level of challenge, novelty and complexity keeps interest high. Most people are curious and the chance to learn and feel a sense of progression and development is rewarding. The average length of time in a role is between 4-8 years (longer the more complex it is). There is a relationship between tenure and happiness ([link to study abstract here](#)). If you are no longer learning anything, you will be feeling bored. It's not the employers fault or yours: there aren't infinite layers of progression within every organisation. As we age, we may have to accept our need to learn new things may have to lie not 'up' but in lateral moves or through doing things 'on the side'.
- 2. Work that helps others** - in March 2020 at the first announcement of a lockdown, 750,000 signed up to volunteer with no knowledge of what they might be doing. The desire to help others is its own reward. When someone says 'thank you' and we feel we've made a difference, we are happier and more content. People volunteer, not for money but for the impact they can have and the profile of volunteers does tend to reflect an older demographic, reflecting perhaps both our own finding that as people age, money is a less important driver than purpose, but also perhaps the need as we age to feel we are giving back.
- 3. Work you are good at** - Being known for a skill or having a specific expertise. It takes time to get to know the way a place works, who you can call on, where you can add most value and so on. As you develop into a role, you add more value which feels great, but it rarely happens 'overnight'. Any shift and change takes time as you learn and hone your skills around specific needs.
- 4. Work with people you like** - Your team and who you work with can be hugely motivating. We spend the majority of the quality hours in a day with our work colleagues. If you enjoy their company, you're more likely to love/enjoy your work. Conversely, if you've tried everything you can to improve the relationship you have with people in your current role and it's not worked, this may be one of those situations where you accept changing others is outside of your control and it's time you changed the context.
- 5. Work that meets your needs** - This is a bit of a catch-all to cover pay, time constraints, an adequate and comfortable working environment etc.. The conditions of work are rarely a motivator. You'll not often find someone flipping back a duvet at the excitement of earning £200 today. They will throw back the duvet for that meeting they've really been looking forward to for which you feel well prepared.



### The truth about time

You'll see it takes **time** to get good at a job. It takes **time** to build relationships with colleagues. It takes **time** to become trusted (thereby getting more leeway around flexibility or a getting a pay rise)

If you focus less on what a job can give you to start off with and more of what you think you can craft and develop the job into with **time**, you'll get to a place of enjoying your work faster as you'll be more realistic about what an employer can actually offer you.



## STEP 4: SELF ANALYSIS

The preference for most organisations is to keep you vs losing you, but it's genuinely hard for them to predict and adapt to what you might need or your changing circumstances. We encourage people when they are exploring what next to consider the following:

### Curiosity?

What are you curious about? When you walk past a bookshop what titles grab you? What conversations are you drawn to at a party? What podcasts do you listen to and what TV do you choose to watch?

### Your past

Draw a timeline of all the jobs you've done, starting from school days through to where you are now, and reflect on times you've enjoyed and times you've disliked your work. Separate these into themes - what are the commonalities to when you've liked your work? What are the commonalities to indicate when you've disliked work?

### What are you great at?

What do people come to you for? Is it just a specific skill or are there interpersonal qualities that make them come and speak to you about an issue or problem? If you do want to ask friends or family for thoughts, be careful - they can be hugely biased towards an identity you have and some have a vested interest in doing better than you.

### Job roles:

Spend time (two half days) going through different job adverts and descriptions. Choose 5 you like the sound of and examine if there are any common themes that have drawn you towards them

## STEP 5: PULL IT TOGETHER

Capture all the themes in one place:

What are you curious about?

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What are you great or good at?

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What does your past work history say about what you like about work/an organisation

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What themes are there around what jobs interest you?

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## STEP 6: IDEA DEVELOPMENT & NETWORKING

At Brave Starts we have programmes and coaches to help pull this all together. In your own organisation work with friends, colleagues or your manager to go through your list. If you describe the themes, these may describe roles internally or externally that you've not thought about or considered.

Keep an open mind and make a list of all the ideas that come out. Try not to dismiss any immediately. Go back over and select 2-3 you will investigate more fully. Some options may be internal, but many will be external. We know people who've made businesses out of taking photos of symmetrical breakfasts... or embroidering political slogans onto doilies! The point is you may need to look beyond your current organisation to explore some of your ideas.

Where your own network can't help, we might be able to. We pride ourselves on being able to connect you to experts doing the jobs you would like to learn more about. In your own organisation, we encourage you initiate conversations with people from other parts of the business to learn more about the roles and how these might correspond to your themes/needs, Ask questions around the state of the market for that role, the level of competition you are up against in terms of applicants, the key tasks people do and the proportion of time they spend doing them as well as what income levels can be expected. Use the data you get to eliminate some options.

## STEP 7: BRANDING



### Exercise: What comes to mind when you think of Donald Trump?

Time how long it takes you to come up with a list of 4 items. We're willing to bet two things:

1. You've never met him.
2. It was easy to come up with a list!

What does that tell you?

People will and do make assumptions about you - in many cases without even knowing you themselves. In a career change situation - and remembering you have a lot of **control**, you need to tailor and help people see you the way you want them to see you.

There isn't scope here to cover the huge range of jobs or the specific brand you'd like to build, but suffice to say you need to be:

- **Consistent:** If someone sees your Instagram does the brand follow through from your website? If you say you are detail focused and you've put a spelling mistake in your cover letter, that doesn't add up.
- **Thorough:** Go through everything from your photo you use on social media, your social media channels (yes any future employer or customer will look at them) as well as things like what you say in an application form or CV. It's expected now you will have a LinkedIn profile so make sure it's up to date. (There are 30 million LinkedIn users in the UK - the working population is only just over 32 million). Don't think 'no presence' is a better option. Have you ever bought an expensive product you know nothing about? Staff are (for most organisations) their most expensive cost, so they do like to check you out.
- **Proactive:** Look at others in the sector you are aiming for and look at the standard and level. Think of what you can do to fill the gap. Part of your branding is also what others say about you. Request recommendations and 'testimonials'. It's sometimes easier to let someone else talk positively about you.



## STEP 8: TEST

Ideas often don't match reality. People see what they want to see and hear what they want to hear. It is called 'confirmation bias'. The best way to see if a change of direction might be right is to try it out. Most organisations would rather keep you than lose you and if you are tempted to learn more about a different part of the business, asking to shadow for a couple of days. It is invaluable - it costs nothing, you build you network, you get a better appreciation the reality of the job, you prove you are proactive - and worst case scenario is you learn more about how the business functions as a whole which is still a positive.

The majority of our members are looking to develop skills on the side. Most like the idea of more variety: keeping their role, but dropping to part time in order to give time to volunteering a day a week, doing a course or building a business. The good news is, after Covid19, the tide is very significantly on the turn in that flexible working is very likely to become a permanent feature and if you are reading this now, then you know your organisation is willing to give you some latitude.

When you test, you learn and when you learn, you have the basis for insight, development and clarity. This stage takes time - on average it takes people 2 years to prepare for a shift and to set themselves up with a network, clients and to have had the insight from testing the market to understand what works.

### SHOULD PEOPLE GIVE YOU TIME FOR FREE?



**FREE**

#### Imagine this:

You've spent more than 10 years building up a business which is now ticking along. You employ 4 people and have an impressive following.

Customers are regular and steady. Someone you have never met or heard of emails you out of the blue asking to 'pick your brains' in return for some coffee. How do you feel? Whilst possibly being flattered, now imagine you get 3 of these requests a week...

Most experts in any field get proactive approaches from people wanting to understand 'how to break in', 'how they made it', 'how to get started', etc..

However much people may want to help, time away from their work is a huge distraction, but it is also a cost: if you take up 2 hours of time from a personal trainer, the opportunity cost to them is between £80 - 160.

Everyone wants - and is willing to learn. How can you stand out and be more compelling? If you approach people and get ignored/someone replies with a 'I'm too busy' email, please don't see this as a personal slight. You might need to consider buying their time so that it doesn't COST them to help you.

### CASE STUDY



#### Meet Antonio

Antonio is passionate about wine. He'd invested time and energy thinking of a concept for a wine bar business.

He had a chef, idea for location but wasn't sure if he was ready to commit and take the plunge. We arranged for him to spend a day with our wine bar owner (before Covid!) Standing on his feet all day; seeing how busy things got; experiencing how customers might treat him; having his business plan checked gave him invaluable decision making data. The day cost Antonio £300. In the end, he decided not to open a wine bar. Imagine what it would have cost him to invest in a lease, stock, staff, equipment, branding, marketing (and more) and to realise too late it wasn't the right step? Not everyone can afford our service, but if you can obtain opportunities to learn in exchange for your free time and energy, we would suggest that is a fair exchange. There is a fine line between being exploited and genuinely acquiring useful knowledge. We urge caution, but for the career changer, if you can't afford to buy more than a coffee, think of what else you can offer to make your request for time and insight more appealing.



## STEP 9: RESILIENCE

Career development when you are over 50 is hard. In 2004 according to the Department of Work and Pensions, the proportion of the workforce over 50 was 5.7 million. In 2020 it was 10.7. A more than doubling of the population in such a short space of time, means many organisations haven't adapted to this shift.

There are lots of 'graduate' schemes but few 'career changer' schemes. Many people experience overt age discrimination and there isn't the well trodden path of 'what to do next' to guide you. Make no mistake, adapting your work needs to suit your ageing needs is a challenging task and it takes resilience. Resilience is a skill and an attitude. The core underpinnings are this:

1. Having realistic expectations to begin with (we've covered this)
2. Being able to control your own impulses - the same event seen through two different ways can completely alter the outcome. (Remember the internal locus of control - it's relevant here too).  
Recognising you can't always control an outcome, but you can control your reaction to it, is grounds not only for a more constructive outcome for it is linked with higher levels of people reporting themselves as contented in life and having higher levels of well being.
3. Being positive and flexible with your thinking - the above point aims to show you, you do have some control over how you view an outcome. This point is to encourage you to make the lens you apply a positive one. See opportunities where you can and take responsibility to learn and make changes.

See failure not as a weakness but as a strength because it means you've got a better idea of what doesn't work and therefore how to move forward. Disappointment is in your future, but so is growth, opportunity and change. It can be an exciting time - if you choose to see it like that.

## REMEMBER

1. Get rid of unhelpful expectations. **Employers and customers are not there to make your life easy.** You are there to help them. If you are moving into a new area, you are not yet an asset. You need to earn trust and prove your worth before you'll be able to craft and tailor a job or service to something that generates you the value you need. You have to **give** before you can expect to take.

2. In relation to the above point, you will have to consider offering time for free; a lower salary; volunteering; a lower status position... in essence, you will need to look at this as **starting over**.

3. Understand it is not a straight path. You will search, **test, iterate and learn**. You'll repeat until you find something that fits

4. When you do find something, it is important to give it **time** to feel right. The enjoyment and pride you will **eventually** feel is equivalent to the time and energy you put in.

6. Know that if you **try** and fail at something, you will at least learn from it. **If you never try, you will never know...**

7. Join our **community** and tell us about your story!





## Your Membership

It is sometimes more engaging and motivating to get together with others. We hold 4 x monthly events where you can meet and engage with others all looking to make some changes to their working lives over the next decade. In addition we hold once a quarter our 'meet the financial advisor' and 'Meet our HR expert' if you have specific questions about things like pensions, investments, flexible working, questions on a contract etc..

Our costs are up front, honest and priced at the not for profit level. Any support you offer helps contribute towards our costs. Our £195 level should be available soon. We'll keep you up to date via our monthly member updates/briefings.

	Free	£25/year	£195/year
E-Book	✓	✓	✓
E-Career Support Group	✓	✓	✓
Monthly Newsletter	✓	✓	✓
Members Directory	✗	✓	✓
Monthly Networking Events	✗	✓	✓
Meet the Expert Events	✗	✓	✓
Group Career Coaching	✗	✓	✓
Financial Advisor Sessions	✗	✓	✓
One on One Career Coaching	✗	✗	✓
Expert Finder Access	✗	✗	✓
Exclusive Online Course	✗	✗	✓

If you want to upgrade to our professional members club (£25 a year) you can do so [here](#) and after you've signed up, you can attend any of our events [here](#).



## FINALLY...

Additional thoughts/resources:

Q: Should you hire a career coach? What should you pay?

A: This [article](#) is thorough, gives you a price range and gives tips on what to check for if you are going to hire a coach.

Q: Is there a psychometric test out there that will helpfully tell you what job to do?

A: No. We doubt there ever will be. Imagine - 34,000+ jobs that change and evolve. Humans with different traits, changing values, restrictions, needs, different personalities and skills. Nothing can successfully capture and predict all of these moving parts. Saying that, we've done a review of 20 free career tests available online. Whilst we urge caution about how you interpret any results, we don't see any real 'harm' in doing them. They can be fun, they help you reflect on what is important to you and they might help steer you in a new direction or be a catalyst for new thinking about a sector. Read our review and recommendations of the best tests to take [here](#).

Q: Which employers are friendly and focused on supporting people over 50?

A: Here are some links to articles/overviews of the more enlightened companies:

<https://www.glassdoor.co.uk/blog/age-friendly-employers/>

<https://www.renegadegeneration.com/agefriendly-employers>

<https://restless.co.uk/jobs/age-diverse-employers/>

Q What jobs will be most in demand in the future?

A: For those of you who like a more academic read, [this article](#) from Frey and Osborne (2013) from Oxford University assesses all jobs against the threat of automation.

In our own newsletters, this article attracted a lot of clicks: [Top 10 in-demand jobs for the future | Future career | Monster.co.uk](#)

Q: If I want to explore starting my own business, where are the best places to start?

A: We partner with [Enterprise Nation](#) as we feel their network, resources and support are the most comprehensive.

In your own part of the UK, have a look at your local enterprise partnership. There are 38 local growth hubs across the UK, there to help support and guide small business owners. You can find training, grant updates and more. This website is essentially the gateway to 38 completely different websites (all run independently, the idea being each area has different needs) Therefore, you need to do some of the legwork here by researching the hub relevant to you. They are government funded, so much of the support is either freely available or provided at not for profit pricing levels: [The LEP Network | Supporting all 38 LEPs across England](#)

Q: What else?

A: As this ebook can't update itself once downloaded, we accompany your membership with a monthly research update: employers announcing career changer schemes, interesting courses, events, training opportunities and more. Additionally, we seek out the best, most relevant content ensuring you do not to miss out on anything. If in your own musings, you come across content you think the community would appreciate, please share. Bear in mind however, we will never share content overtly trying to sell or push products. If you are a career coach, please also note we don't share any of your details or services. We accept no advertising fees and remain neutral and always in the interest of our members. If you know others who'd appreciate our service, please share and encourage them to sign up. The more members we have, the more power we have to serve you.