

Most people enter college with a general idea about what they want to do for a career when they graduate. Perhaps they are interested in medicine or law. Perhaps they want to teach but do not know yet what age or subject. Perhaps they are sure that a business degree will set them on the right path but do not know where the path will lead. For others, entering college is like walking up to a buffet. There are too many choices and too little time. The truth is many people who start school with one idea about what they want to do in their career leave school with a completely different idea.

This is the advantage of college. You are expected to experiment a bit, to find your subject, and run with it once you have found it. But it is important to remember that once you start down your career path, that same open mindedness and willingness to learn are just as vital as they were in college. While you may have found a great place to start, you never know where you might end up.

One of the best ways to advance in your field is to set goals. You want to be specific and realistic about what you want to achieve and how to get there. Create a timeline that lays out how long you want to spend on certain training or how many years of experience you feel you need to move to the next level. But along with this basic plan, you need to have an open mind.

Opportunities come along all the time that are not in our plans. People come into our lives and make major changes in how we do things or how we see ourselves. Without being open to these changes, you might miss an opportunity to grow and to move in a direction that is better for you than the only one you could see previously.

So set your goals, but be willing to listen when someone offers you the chance to stray from the path you set for yourself. To do this, you will need to re-evaluate your goals and your plans to reach your goals on a regular basis. You can either do this each time you receive a review at work or you can set a time less frequently, say once a year, to look over your plans and goals and see what still fits.

You may find that what you wanted two years ago no longer fits with your aspirations and hopes for yourself now. You may have family sooner or later than you anticipate. You may discover a hidden talent that you want to cultivate. You may get a promotion sooner than you thought you would and need to advance your timeline. Re-evaluating your goals will help you to clarify what you want for yourself and how to get it. But if you cannot keep an open mind in the process, you will find it hard to adapt to an every changing world.