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## How to make 2007 the year to take the plunge

### Changing careers in midstream is rare but need not be so daunting

**By Eve Tahmincioglu**  
 MSNBC contributor  
 Updated: 2:36 p.m. CT Jan 2, 2007

For many of you unhappy working stiffs your New Year's resolutions are probably filled with proclamations to try something new, pursue your dream job or break out of a long-time profession.

But what is it that makes one person go for it, and another just keep daydreaming?

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Duane Hoffmann / MSNBC

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Kerrie Hodges is an office assistant for the city of Mobile, Ala., but she's had a lifelong dream of someday becoming a singer and actress. At age 50, she says, she doesn't know if she'll ever be able to make her dream come true.

Even though she sings at her church and has done some acting with local guilds, she has never tried to pursue it as a career. Why? "The fear of rejection," she says. "The fear of trying it and not making it."

Not to mention money, she explains. But, she admits, her husband is encouraging her to pursue her dream and has even agreed to work an extra job if need be.

On the flip side is Stacy Shimabukuro. Four years ago she decided she wanted to pursue her dream of becoming a yoga instructor.

She was 33 and decided to give up her high-stress, high-pay job as a corporate director for a health and fitness company. She admits it took her a while to make the leap. "I allowed the security of a decent income to keep me

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there for a long time.”

Despite her reluctance, she finally took the plunge. Why? “I just did it,” she says. “I had the support of my significant other and I knew that he would be there for me if needed. I realized that I had to take action or I would be in that miserable job forever.”

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unclear how often people change careers in their lifetimes. The U.S. Department of Labor does not track people who actually change professions. While the agency does track how many jobs people hold during their work lives, about 10 on average, there are few if any statistics on how often people go into something totally new. Recruiter and career coach Brian Drum says based on his 30 years in the field and after having interviewed 30,000 people, only about 3 to 5 percent of individuals make such a drastic change.

That percentage may eventually climb. Baby boomers want more than any other generation to try new things. “A number of them are retiring or heading for retirement and they’re thinking about doing something different in order to keep them active and engaged,” says Caroline Nahas, senior client partner for recruiting company Korn Ferry.

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So how do you become one of the few that wake up and say, “I’m going to turn my career on its ear?”

Work/life balance consultant Mark Sincevich offers these strategies:

- **Stash the cash.** It's critical to save your money to cover the ramp-up to a new field.
- **Daily action.** Start writing your plan on what you want to achieve.
- **Simplify.** Have less 'stuff' around and reduce the clutter. It's much easier to change careers when you have fewer distractions that drain energy.
- **Visualize.** Keep imagining how it will be in your new field.
- **Hang out with the can-do's.** Surround yourself with people who want to support you in your new endeavor, and drown out the naysayers.

Alas, the highest hurdle may be your own negativity.

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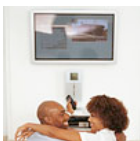
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that will get them further on the path to a dream career.

Here's a possible weekly plan of action: Update your resume, remind yourself of all the skills you really have by making a list, meet with someone in the field, read a book or Web sites about the profession or business, hire a career coach and peruse the job boards for what your dream job pays and the work involved.

There is hope for all you dreamers out there.

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Take Kerrie Hodges who has long wanted to make it big in show biz. She's even got a plan for the new year.

She recently attended a show at the Saenger Theatre, a performing arts center in Mobile, and found out afterwards the producer was local. She contacted the producer and plans on auditioning for her this year. Even though Kerrie's voice quivers slightly when she talks about the tryout, she says, "I will be able to act and sing. I always wanted to do it. I'm going to give it a try."

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