

Squiggly
Career
Stages

Continuers

How to relook at
retirement and develop
career longevity

Continuers

The assumption that everyone's career should end at the same age is being challenged.

For personal and practical reasons, ending your career at a pre-determined date no longer feels right for many people. However, age-related bias and a lack of proactive support are holding many people back.

We need to relook at later stage careers and question what's possible, helping people to explore different opportunities and continue to contribute in the way that feels right for them.

This guide is designed to help you approach this career stage with confidence and curiosity. It supports our podcast episode [Squiggly Career Continuers](#) and brings together practical advice, expert insights, and useful tools.

In this guide you'll find:

- 🔗 [Insights](#) from the Squiggly Careers Continuers podcast episode.
- 🔗 [Coach yourself questions](#) to reflect on your experiences and gain insight.
- 🔗 A [tool to try out](#), reflect and reimagine your career possibilities.
- 🔗 [Expert advice](#) on how to make the most of this squiggly career stage.
- 🔗 [Recommended resources](#) to read, watch, listen and learn from.

Episode insights



In this episode, Helen and Sarah are joined by gender and generational diversity expert Avivah Wittenburg-Cox and OECD economist Andrew Aitken.

Together they talk about how working later in life is becoming the norm, what this means for businesses, and how everyone can enjoy long, evolving, squiggly careers.

Listen and learn how to:

- ↳ Shift your career mindset from sprint to marathon
- ↳ Increase job satisfaction with lifelong learning
- ↳ Make career choices that boost longevity
- ↳ Challenge ageist narratives
- ↳ Embrace multi-generational teams

Coach yourself questions

'Coach yourself questions' are designed to create clarity. They help you to press pause and think things through so you can make more informed choices about where and what you spend your time on. Here are 3 questions to help you reflect on retirement and develop career longevity.

Fast forward 10 years... describe your ideal day at work.



Where do you need to invest your time now to create your ideal future career?



What conversations are you avoiding (and why)?



*“In the end,
we only regret
the chances we
didn’t take.”*

Lewis Carroll

Tool to try out

Possibility AI prompt builder

Possibility prompts help you to explore your career opportunities by considering your strengths, growth goals, people impact, work-life fit and financial needs. They're useful in later-life careers when you have lots of insight to draw on but need help to identify and evaluate possibilities.

1. Personal career profile	2. Prioritise	3. Build your AI possibility prompt
Reflect on your career so far and note down...	Order from 1 (your top priority) to 5	"I am XX years into my career and exploring future possibilities.
Strengths What you want to be known for	 My key strengths are (e.g. leadership, coaching, problem solving)   	Attached are my strengths, ideal growth areas, desired people impact, work-life fit goals and financial needs, in order of priority. <i>(Upload your profile table here)</i>
Growth Where you want to develop	 I'd like to explore and grow in the following areas...   	Based on the attached, suggest 4 career possibilities and score them with a % match using the following criteria:  Strengths alignment <i>Does this career option use my key skills and expertise?</i>
People impact Who you want to help	 I want my work to impact people positively by (e.g. building teams, mentoring, coaching, consulting, community support)	 Growth & sustainability <i>Will this career path stay relevant in the future?</i>  People impact <i>Does this role allow me to contribute in a meaningful way?</i>
Work-life fit How you want your ideal week to look	 My ideal work-life fit is (e.g. remote, hybrid, part-time, flexible, project-based)	 Work-life fit <i>Does it match my ideal work style, location, and flexibility needs?</i>
Financial needs What you want to earn	 I need to earn at least XXX per month (consider elements such as dependent support, loan repayments, lifestyle must haves)	 Financial viability <i>Will it meet my income needs per month?</i> Provide insights on each possibility, including pros, cons and trade-offs."



Expert advice

Lyndsey Simpson

Founder & CEO at 55Redefined Group

Embrace it

We are living for longer! The average age of retirement is 64. Yet this century, 30 extra healthy years were added to life expectancy. In tandem, global birth rates have halved over the last 70 years. 50+ workers can help employers to solve an acute and intensifying global skills crisis. Understanding these facts helps people to have more agency and self-confidence in their value, which can help them to add years to careers and redefine their lives.

Keep learning

50+ talent has seen so much change – many saw the first man walk on the moon and all witnessed the birth of the internet. This is a resilient generation who will adapt with the times and upskill for whatever the next chapter of work is. With the advent of AI, organisations are seeking 'soft skills' like people management and the ability to lead with empathy.

We also need people with experience to train the machines! Midlife workers already possess these skills and they are more in demand than ever. Finally, ask yourself what did you want to be when you were younger. It's never too late to retrain and take on a job you truly love as purpose often becomes more critical to us the older we get.

Bust myths

Be prepared to bust some myths by going armed with the facts. A lot of people think over 50s employees will take more sick days as they age. But midlife workers are 200% less likely to take a day off work sick than a colleague under 30. If we look at mental health absenteeism in 2024, 1 in 3 workers aged 16 to 24 have taken at least 1 day off for mental health absences in the last 12 months. That number is less than 1 in 10 for over 55s.

Recommended resources



Watch

TED Talk - How workplace ageism hurts everyone
presented by *Samantha Dzabic*



Read

OECD report
Promoting Better Career Choices
for Longer Working Lives



Listen

Squiggly Careers #465
How to relook at retirement
& develop career longevity



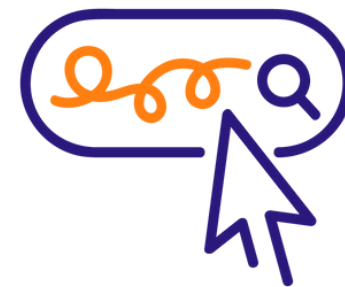
Join

Brave Starts
Evidence-based advice and
workshops for +45 year olds



Follow

Avivah Wittenberg-Cox
Thought-leader on gender and
generational diversity



Try

Self Awareness Assessment
Increase your awareness to
take more effective action

Thank you

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We hope you've
found this Squiggly
Career Continuers
guide helpful.

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