

## CAREER GROWTH FOR A LIFETIME

BY GRETA DAVIS

Our careers are a journey, not a destination. Seasons in a career can reflect growth and development, emerging opportunities, setbacks and adversity, unexpected changes, and transitions. These passages help shed light on the reality that career planning is not a one-and-done activity related to choosing a major, obtaining a degree, and that first move to the world of work. In fact, professional life is an ongoing, lifelong process. Spring is an ideal time to prepare, prune, and plant to help advance your career.

### PREPARING

Springtime brings thoughts of new growth and career renewal. Just as trees and plants need ideal conditions to grow, careers require tending and nurturing. Take time to think about what's going well in your career and work. Clarify your strengths, values, and skills on the job. It's also important to consider what is lacking and demotivating. In connecting with sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, you can understand your key motivators at work. Some people engage in reflection easily, but most of us need to schedule time for it. But formal and informal assessments of your values, interests, personality, and skills and how these things fit into your work life are an important part of the journey in growing a career.

### PRUNING

Cutting and removing dead or overgrown branches is essential for gardeners. Professionals also need to cut out what's less useful and focus on new growth and opportunity. "Career pruning" often involves knowing when to say "no" in order to spend time and energy more wisely.



### PLANTING

Understanding the landscape of your career means paying attention to trends in your industry by reading relevant articles, listening to podcasts, and connecting with other professionals. These sources of information are key in helping you grasp your career options. An understanding of self and insight into future opportunities can help identify

gaps in your technical and leadership skills. What are you missing that you need to "plant" in your growth plan? Once they're identified, focusing your efforts to close skill gaps through relevant training and development can help you ready yourself for the next opportunity.



Author and career thought leader John Krumboltz stresses that "luck is no accident," and he describes "lucky" people as those who actively engage in activities that set the stage for their own career growth and success. Taking action to prepare for growth, pruning out what's not working by setting priorities, and taking actions to "plant" opportunities can help yield a bountiful career harvest.



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