

are you in a rut?

Can you make a plan? Can you confront your fears? Well, you can banish Mondayitis too.

By **Nicola Conville.**

If you're unhappy at work and finding it hard to stay motivated, don't fret – you're not alone. In fact, studies in the US show that up to 70 per cent of the workforce is unhappy with their job at any given time.

We all feel dissatisfied at times, and completely frustrated with our jobs, but everyone has good and bad days. So how do you know whether or not it's time for a career change?

"There are a few key signs which point towards the need for change," says Vashti Whitfield, a personal and executive life coach based in Sydney. "You may be feeling limited in your current position, or sense that you're not being acknowledged for the work you're doing. Or you may have found yourself in a career that doesn't align with your core values."

Although the temptation may be to plunge head first into an exciting new career, try to resist a big leap. The first thing you need to do is look at your current role and how you got there.

"We often choose a particular career path because our parents or teachers encouraged us to go in that direction, or because it's considered a successful occupation, or is financially rewarding," Whitfield explains.

The next step is to understand what's important to you, not just in your career, but in your life overall.

"Imagine you are 70 years old, looking back on your life. Consider how you would like it to have been and what you want your legacy to be," says Whitfield.

Once you've established that you're ready for a change and if you're sure it's what you really want, you can start looking at what you would like to do. Assess your skills and then consider your individual strengths and weaknesses.

Don't just look at academic achievements – take all of your positive qualities into account. Are you a good listener, for example? Do you have a creative hobby that you enjoy? You will soon begin to see a link between what it is that you value and are good at in your life, and how you could feasibly turn that into a new career.

time for a change

Nathan Ruff, 29, had been working in the technology sector when he decided he needed a change.

"I felt stressed out from spending all day, every day in a corporate environment," he explains.

He gave in to his entrepreneurial yearnings and, along with girlfriend Nicole, co-founded After8 Games, a company that

work and has the freedom to do things for himself – like taking an afternoon off to go surfing.

When choosing a new career, it's important to look at the big picture, too.

"Think about what you really want from life, then identify areas or companies you think you would love to work for," advises Claudia Huertas, Executive Consultant at Drake Australia in Sydney.

Once you've clarified what it is you would like to do, research your new career thoroughly. Make sure you understand everything it involves, from the day-to-day work to the financial implications. You may also need to do some training or take an entry-level role to gain experience.

One way to go about starting a new career is to switch to part-time work in your current job while you train for a new role. Try not to feel resentful towards the job you're currently in and look for the positive in everything you do.

"You can also consider moving into a similar job to the one you're already in, but within your desired industry," says Huertas. "For example, if you're an accountant and you want to become a journalist, try finding an accountancy role within a publishing company. You'll have the exposure to that type of environment and new opportunities there."

don't worry be happy

It's natural to feel apprehensive about starting a new career, but these days it's usual for people to make two or three career changes within their lives.

"It's often hard to change, too, because others around you may not be supportive initially," says Huertas. "Women can find it especially difficult because they feel the pressure to keep the family environment stable. They may feel guilty about making a change if it means they will have less time to spend time with their children. That's why as a society we need to embrace change and support loved ones through it."

Marie Farrugia, from East Doncaster in Victoria, made the transition from working as a part-time telemarketer to creating her own home-based business, Mira Personal Development.

The 40-year-old mum loves her work, can choose her own hours, and gets to spend plenty of time with her son, Damon.

Whitfield says the most important thing is not to remain in a situation which makes you miserable. "If you are unhappy at work it's time to seek help," she says. "Remember, the only thing really holding you back is fear. Try to overcome this by being