PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hit a Home Run with a Second Career

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Do You Have What It Takes To Change Careers?
Starting A Second Career
Should You Pursue This Professionally?
Should You Pursue A Second Career In Retirement?

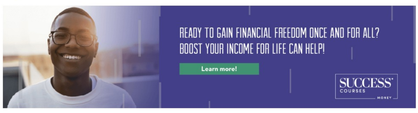




Ken Griffey Jr., 13-time MLB All-Star, retired from the baseball diamond and hit a home run with his second career: photography.

After playing 22 seasons—with teams including the Seattle Mariners, Cincinnati Reds and Chicago White Sox—Griffey began photographing professionally, covering Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer, the NFL, Indy Car and perhaps most notably, the 2025 Masters.

The 55-year-old baseball legend transformed a hobby into a rewarding "second act," and career change consultant Joseph Liu says you can, too.



Do you have what it takes to change careers?

Liu, who hosts the *Career Relaunch* podcast, says Griffey is a good example of showing how someone can marry their past profession with their current interest.

"On the surface, playing baseball and taking photos may seem completely unrelated…" he says. "[But] part of photography is about anticipating and deciding what image you're trying to capture, so in this case, his sports instincts can actually help improve his photography. It just shows how your profession may evolve as your life evolves."

Liu has interviewed more than 100 people who changed course mid-career to pursue a new interest. Whether they were an Army sniper turned children's magician or an investment banker who became a couple's counselor, they generally share three characteristics:

- Clarity: "They take time to get clear on what matters to them, what they feel is missing [and] what they want to have more of," he says. "Even if these people don't know exactly what their second act is going to be, they can define the characteristics of [it]," whether that be flexibility, more autonomy or more meaning.
- Confidence: "They amass both the internal confidence to know they're doing the right thing and also outward confidence to project that to others," he says. This confidence originates from "[defining] their values and [making] decisions that serve those values," he explains.
- Courage: "It often takes a bit of a leap of faith to step off the beaten path and follow a nontraditional career, so having that bravery to follow your instincts, to trust yourself is critical," he says. "Without courage, the changes tend to be too small or too incremental to make a really major difference in a meaningful way."

Starting a second career

Knowing it can be difficult to make that leap, Liu recommends starting with microactions.

"Dip your toe in with no excess pressure… [that] you're going to start making money right away," he says. Start small by taking an evening course or buying that piece of equipment that allows you to explore that hobby of yours.

"Test it out. See how it goes. See how it sits with you… how much you enjoy it [and] how much traction you gain."

Griffey first picked up photography so he could attend his kids' sporting events and not be a distraction. His presence at youth games caused a buzz, as he was still an active baseball player.

"I figured, nobody's messing with the photographer. Let me pick it up; let me try it," he said in an interview on Mornings @ The Masters. "I got a couple photographer friends who sent me a couple of cameras and lenses and said, 'Here you go.'"

Although at that time Griffey likely wasn't considering photography as a second career, his actions introduced him to a new skill, and Liu says talking to people who are currently "doing the things you want to do" is an important step. It's easy to overanalyze a situation and make assumptions, but a conversation with someone who's already working in that space can be encouraging and a shortcut to the information you need to make the change.

"The final [step]… is to err on the side of action," Liu says. "Actions are what open up opportunities… [Don't] feel like you've got to make the perfect move into this new sector, but broadly move yourself toward the direction that you think might be promising."

Should you pursue this professionally?

Learning a new skill or picking up a post-retirement hobby doesn't automatically mean it should be a second career. In fact, Liu cautions people against making that assumption.

"Just because you enjoy doing something on the side doesn't mean you're going to still enjoy it if you're doing it professionally, especially if your livelihood depends on it," he says.

Liu says asking yourself the following questions is a way to overlay practical considerations on a genuine interest or hobby.

1. **How energized do I feel by this?** "It's important, if you're going to pursue a second career, that it really energizes you because it takes a lot of effort to branch off and do something different," he says.
2. **Does a market exist for this?** This is a practical, yet necessary question, which Liu says should be followed up by:
3. **Do I have a way of reaching that market? Can I access the customer base or reach the people I want to work with?**
4. **Can I make enough money doing this?**
5. **Do I have the skills and credentials to be credible in this space?** If not, can I gain those skills and credentials?

If you decide to proceed, Liu says do not dismiss your previous experience and assume it's irrelevant.

"There's a lot of imposter syndrome when people change careers, and they think 'I didn't come from this background, [so] I don't have a right to play in this new space,'" he says. "[But that's] not useful. If you can embrace it and see it as a differentiator, that can actually help you sell a unique story to people that separates you from traditional applicants."

Should you pursue a second career in retirement?

Although the promise of a second career can be exciting, Liu says it's not for everyone and no one should feel compelled to continue working, if they're able and want to retire.

"If you're at the point of retirement and you feel like it's time for you to just kick back and relax, I feel like the choice is yours," he says. "No one should feel pressured to necessarily have a second act or encore career.

"It goes back to the idea that everyone's career path and career journey is quite unique."

Maybe the joy of making homemade bread is in sharing it with friends and family, but perhaps your memoir would resonate with readers around the world. The choice to pursue a second career or turn a hobby into a money-making venture is a decision specific to you and your circumstances. Whatever you decide, being intentional is key, according to Liu.

"Thinking your career is going to just naturally evolve on its own and that one day this is just going to work out…" he says. "That's just not what happens."

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