

Meet the woman doing 40 jobs at 40

With her 40th birthday approaching, Bec Fisher was contemplating a career change. The Brisbane mum had been working in contract teaching roles since her children were born 11 years ago, and she wasn't sure if she wanted to dive back into the work she'd always done.

"Do I return to study? And if so, study what?" she was asking herself. "Do I look into starting a small business? Should I update my skills, regain some confidence and return to teaching my own class? Or try something new completely?"

"Prior to starting this adventure, I was worrying more about what I couldn't do – especially in relation to my computer skills – rather than focusing on what I could." But once she started, she soon realised just how many transferable skills she already had from teaching and raising a family.

Whatever she did, Bec wanted to be sure she chose the right career. But, she wondered, how do you know what that is unless you really know what's out there? It occurred to her that the best way to discover her next career would be by doing work experience – lots of it. So, she came up with the [40 40 Experience](#) – trying 40 jobs during the year she turned 40.

Using existing skills in new environments

Like many people who embark on a big career change, Bec was nervous. "Prior to starting this adventure, I was worrying more about what I couldn't do – especially in relation to my computer skills – rather than focusing on what I could." But once she started, she soon realised just how many transferable skills she already had from teaching and raising a family.

So far Bec has trailed almost 30 jobs, ranging from graphic designer to camel farmer, during which she's been finding her communication skills invaluable for dealing with many different people from all walks of life. She's often pushed out of her comfort zone

with all of the different types of work, so her ability to remain calm – honed during years of leading loud classrooms – is also proving very useful.

Getting excited about the possibilities

Bec says, “It’s the times I’ve been pushed the furthest out of my comfort zone to try something new that I’m the proudest of.” Ultimately, doing work experience has prompted her to reflect on her strengths, and she says, “It’s given me a chance to get excited about the possibilities for my career moving forward.”

Contemplating a career change? Try work experience!

If you’re considering a career change and not sure which next step to take, the best thing you can do is try something new by volunteering or doing work experience. “It offers such valuable insight into other people’s jobs that you can’t gain any other way,” Bec says. “Even one day of work experience can be enough to know whether it’s a job you can see yourself doing or not. Did it ignite a spark? Was it more stressful than you thought? Does the thought of going back to do it all again excite you? Finding the answers to these questions can make your decision about whether to commit to a career change or not so much clearer.”

If the job you’re interested in isn’t compatible with doing work experience (for example counselling or midwifery), Bec suggests finding someone who’s doing the job and asking them questions to get an idea of what it’s like. “I’ve learned that many people are willing to share their stories or offer advice if you take the time to ask,” Bec says. But of course, nothing beats hands-on experience, so if you can, go for it!

Three top benefits of volunteering and doing work experience

- **Learn more about yourself and what you’re capable of**
“Doing work experience has given me the opportunity to understand my strengths and weaknesses in a way I could never have realised otherwise,” Bec says.
- **Gain confidence**
“I’ve learned that I’m much braver than I thought I was,” Bec says. “There’s no better feeling than doing something you previously didn’t think you could do.”
- **Meet new people**
Bec says, “Everyone I’ve met has inspired me in some way. Making connections, building a network of people, and even making new friends has been a highlight of this adventure for me.”

Take time to reflect on what you want

Bec is nearly finished with the 40 40 Experience, and afterwards, she's going to take some much-needed time to look back on what she's achieved. Reflection is one of the most important parts of the process when you're planning your next career move.

While she still isn't sure if she'll return to teaching full-time, Bec plans to go back to the classroom for the short-term "to put some money in the bank". She's also going to take time to reflect on her amazing adventure. "I'm really excited about taking steps to kick-start my next career, and I have a lot more confidence that whichever direction I decide to take next will be the right one."

If reading about Bec's story has you itching to try something new for yourself, take a look at [SEEK Volunteer](#) today!