

## WORLD OF WORK

### CAREER DOCTOR



Paul Mullan

**Q** I have problems with career progression at the moment. I trained as a general nurse and took a job in a hospital in acute medicine but found it too stressful and not what I thought it was going to be. I then took a job in a large nursing home but found I had the opposite problem — the job was too routine. At the moment I'm on a career break and am working as a fitness instructor and lifeguard but I want to remain in nursing in the long run. Please advise me on my options.

**A** The situation you have described will be familiar to many. Jobseekers often take roles that don't work out for various reasons without asking why or taking stock, and then they ramble from one job to another without any clarity or focus. The important point is you have acknowledged all is not right and decided to take action. Everyone can make career mistakes, so don't worry — they are behind you. The important thing is to learn from these experiences.

On a positive note, you are working and, although not ideal, this will reduce the financial pressure that can often lead to bad decisions. Your job will allow you to catch a breath and give you the luxury of time for important reflection and analysis.

If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there' is applicable to your situation. You must develop a better understanding of yourself before choosing your next job. To do this you need to look at what interests you, what motivates you, your personality and how you prefer to behave at work. Look at your past roles — identify when you were fulfilled and at your most satisfied. All this information is invaluable when exploring potential roles.

If you are set on staying in the nursing sector, there are unlimited opportunities, both office-based and with travel. People working in the area are a great source of advice. When you understand yourself better you will know what questions to ask these individuals to ensure the role is what you want. There are those who apply the trial-and-error approach to finding the ideal job, but as your experiences have taught you, this can be fruitless. So research thoroughly before you make any choices.

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