

NEXT CHAPTER CRITERIA

Turn vague career preferences into criteria you can actually use.

Define what matters now, before a job description defines it for you.

01 WHAT MATTERS NOW

02 MAKE IT SPECIFIC

03 USE IT AS A FILTER

01 START WITH POSSIBILITIES

Use these as prompts. Check anything that matters, then add your own.

☐ **Compensation**

Pay level, total compensation, financial stability

☐ **Flexibility**

Location, schedule, autonomy over time

☐ **Customer interaction**

How often and how directly you work with customers

☐ **Strategic problem solving**

Depth, ambiguity, and scope of problems

☐ **Technical depth**

How hands on or technical you want the work to be

☐ **Leadership path**

A realistic path toward broader influence or leadership

☐ **Learning**

What you want to learn and how much learning the role demands

☐ **Stability**

Predictability of role, team, company, or workload

☐ **Mission**

Whether the work connects to something you care about

☐ **Travel**

How much travel fits your life

☐ **Management**

Whether you want direct people leadership

☐ **Impact**

The type and scale of outcomes you want to influence

Your criteria can be different.

This list is a prompt, not a menu you must choose from. Add anything that matters to your actual life and next chapter.

CHOOSE YOUR PRIORITIES

Pick the criteria that matter most now. Five to eight is usually enough to force useful tradeoffs without turning every preference into a requirement.

1. _____

5. _____

2. _____

6. _____

3. _____

7. _____

4. _____

8. _____

Vague → Useful

Broad preferences are a good starting point. The goal is to make them specific enough that you can look at a real opportunity and decide whether it actually fits.

VAGUE	USEFUL
Growth	A clear path toward broader responsibility and leadership.
Flexibility	Enough control over my schedule to handle important responsibilities outside work.
Work life balance	Predictable working hours with limited evening and weekend work.

02 NOW MAKE YOURS SPECIFIC

Choose one preference you care about and finish this sentence:

For me, this would mean...

MAKE VAGUE WORDS CONCRETE

Write what each criterion means to you. "Growth" is vague. "A clear path toward broader scope and leadership responsibility" is something you can investigate.

Vague word or phrase

What I actually mean

What evidence would show me this is present

03 SET YOUR FILTER

Use these distinctions when you compare real opportunities.

My non-negotiables

My strong preferences

Tradeoffs I would consider

Use this filter before you start comparing specific roles. It gives you something concrete to test against the opportunities you find.