

Before You Search, Decide What You're Searching For

Many job searches start with the listings, before the person has decided what they're actually looking for. That makes it easy to chase roles that fit on paper and not in practice. Two questions come first, and the answers become your filter.

WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT YOURSELF

Include unpaid work, volunteering, caregiving, and things you've run at home where they show a real strength, responsibility, or pattern.

Work I've done that I genuinely enjoyed paid or not

What I'm proud of, even if it sounds unglamorous

What people come to me for

What absorbs me enough that I stop checking the clock

Work I'd rather not do again

Work I'd try if fear, credentials, and logistics weren't deciding keep it in the career lane

WHAT YOUR LIFE REQUIRES

Answer for the life you have now, not the one you had before or hope for later.

Hours a week, realistically

Minimum pay I need / target I want salary or hourly; note if benefits change the floor

Where remote, hybrid, on-site, commute limit

Schedule set hours, flexible, school-day shaped

Benefits or supports that materially affect my decision

Company size, pace, and level of structure that suit me

THE THREADS

Read both columns and look for what repeats. Patterns like: organizing appears several times; the work you loved involved other people; what you're proud of matches what people seek you out for. No obvious pattern is also useful. Some people prefer variety, and some roles genuinely reward range.

SORT IT BEFORE YOU LOOK

This is the filter you search with, not the checklist you judge a specific offer against. Being honest here helps you stop spending time on roles you'd probably resent.

Non-negotiable

Flexible, for the right role

Genuinely doesn't matter

SO WHAT AM I LOOKING FOR

ROLES WORTH EXPLORING

WORDS I'D ACTUALLY SEARCH

TWO PEOPLE TO ASK ABOUT THIS

ONE ASSUMPTION TO TEST
e.g. do I need fully remote, or two office days with the right manager?

You don't need the perfect title yet.
You need a filter strong enough to stop chasing the wrong ones.