

The Paths We Choose

Anna and Ben, two friends from university, started their careers in the same big city firm, but soon their journeys took very different turns.

Anna quickly grew tired of her role. She spent her days doing **menial** tasks and found the work **dull**¹. She decided she needed a change. After much thought, she made a brave *choice*: she decided to **hand in her notice**. She moved to the countryside and began working for a charity that helped protect local forests.

At first, she **struggled to cope** with the new lifestyle and duties at work. The work was complex, and she had to get two weeks of **on-the-job-training** from her new, *energetic* boss, Mara.

"You'll **get the hang of** it in no time²," Mara promised. The job required Anna to **stretch herself** in new ways. She had to **delegate** responsibility to volunteers and *carry out an extensive study* of the local wildlife. She enjoyed *a great variety of scenery* during her fieldwork, documenting the *physical characteristics* of different plants and animals. She found the challenging work to be **stimulating** and 8) found it very **rewarding** to see the positive **impact**³ she made.

However, it wasn't easy. Some days, dealing with difficult situations made her find it quite **emotionally draining**. She also discovered she *had a*

tendency to exaggerate how easy her old life was when talking to friends. She sometimes missed the city and would *suffer from loneliness* in her small village.

Meanwhile, back in the city, Ben faced an *unexpected* event. His company restructured, and he was **made redundant**. This shock forced him to reconsider his path. After sending out *countless* applications, he got a new job in a different field. He was **thrilled**⁴ to **get a pay rise**, but the real prize was the *valuable* experience he gained. He learned that every challenge taught him something important.

Years later, the two friends met. They laughed about their different paths. Anna, now **thriving**⁵ in her role, understood that Ben's secure city job would have made her unhappy. Ben **admired**⁶ Anna's **courage**⁷ and realized his redundancy was the push he needed. They both agreed that their careers, with all the struggles and rewards, were **defined**⁸ by the risks they took and the work they found meaningful.