

# Choosing a path

The forest shows every possible path. Yours needs choosing — and five principles do most of the choosing for you.

**Clear the roots first.** Hold a tree's roots before entering it. Skipping entry requirements is the surest way to get stuck later — the missing foundation doesn't disappear, it waits for you at the worst moment.

**Follow the chain.** Inside a tree, work bottom-up. The map tells you the order, not just the destination; trust it over the temptation to jump to the shiny skill at the top.

**A few skills at a time — three to five.** Deep progress on a handful beats shallow progress on a dozen. Levels take a month or more to move; spread across twelve skills, nothing moves visibly, and invisible progress is what kills motivation.

**Balance relevant against interesting.** Your rank demands some skills; others you simply *want*. A path made only of duty burns out; a path made only of curiosity wanders. A sustainable path has both — and the map happily holds both.

**Practice, don't just study.** Skills grow through use. Courses and books get you to beginner; only real work carries you further, and *teaching a skill back is what turns confident into expert*. When you pick a focus skill, pick the real task you'll grow it on in the same breath.

That's the loop: choose three to five skills the map says you're ready for, attach real work to each, and let the month do its job. Then read the map again.



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