**6 Career Lessons from John Adler**

No two career paths will ever look exactly the same especially in the restaurant industry. Restaurant professionals are defined less by the positions they have held and more by the specific kitchens and dining rooms where they have worked. In other words, there is a lot riding on every move you make. But you shouldn’t let that pressure prevent you from making the choices that feel right for you. Nobody knows this better than John Adler, who is currently the Culinary Manager at Blue Apron.

While John Adler’s career trajectory is uniquely his, the lessons he learned through every major transition in his life prove valuable to any ambitious professional.

1. **Don’t be afraid to change course**

John graduated from college with a degree in International Politics. He managed to land a job with the World Policy Council but had a five-month period to kill before he started. During that time, he convinced a chef in a local Pleasantville, New York restaurant to let him cook three days a week. Six weeks into his stint in the kitchen, the sous chef offered to teach him how to butcher a strip loin. John realized that he was so excited to learn this new skill that he immediately called his future employers at the World Policy Council to tell them that he could no longer take the job.

1. **If you love it, go all-in**

John worked for free five days a week, fifteen hours a day at Blue Hill at Stone Barns. On his days off, he would trail at whatever restaurants Michael Anthony or Dan Barber would send him to. He immersed himself in everything the restaurant could teach him.

1. **Find a mentor that supports your growth**

When Michael Anthony left Blue Hill at Stone Barns, John began to feel antsy. He spoke to Dan Barber who told him that he would help him go to Europe to trail at new restaurants. The one caveat was that John would have to come back for two weeks and show Dan everything that he had learned.

1. **Make them remember your name**

John took off to San Sebastian, Spain to stage at Arzak, one of the world’s most acclaimed restaurants. There, he worked in a 38-person kitchen—five of whom were paid and 33 who were working for free simply for the opportunity to learn. One day, John overhead Chef Juan Mari Arzak and his daughter, Chef Elena Arzak, talking about how they had run out of the black sea salt they needed. John recognized his chance to get noticed and said that he could get the spice from a shop in his hometown of Chicago. He convinced his mom to send over 25 pounds of black sea salt to Spain.

1. **Don’t let ego get in the way of happiness**

Following his return to the states, John landed his dream job as a line cook at Per Se. After about a year and a half, he began to feel like he had to convince himself every day that this was what he wanted to be doing. It wasn’t instinctive. So he decided to make another transition and become a chef at his favorite neighborhood restaurant—Franny’s. John could have let his ego prevent him from moving from fine dining to a more casual restaurant but he decided instead to apply the lessons of excellence he had learned at Per Se to his new role.

1. **Seize opportunities to make a difference**

After eight years as the chef at Franny’s, John began to think about how he could scale the restaurant to have a greater impact. Then came an opportunity with Blue Apron to impact the world of food in a very different way. Blue Apron sends out millions of meals to families all over the country. They are focused on scalability in sustainability. John recognized the ripple effect of the difference he could be making in the world and jumped at the chance.

Like so many professionals in the restaurant industry, John worked exceptionally hard to reach every milestone in his career. He went after what he wanted and did not shy away when what he wanted changed. John shows us that if you’re passionate about what you do, it can lead to making far greater changes in the world.