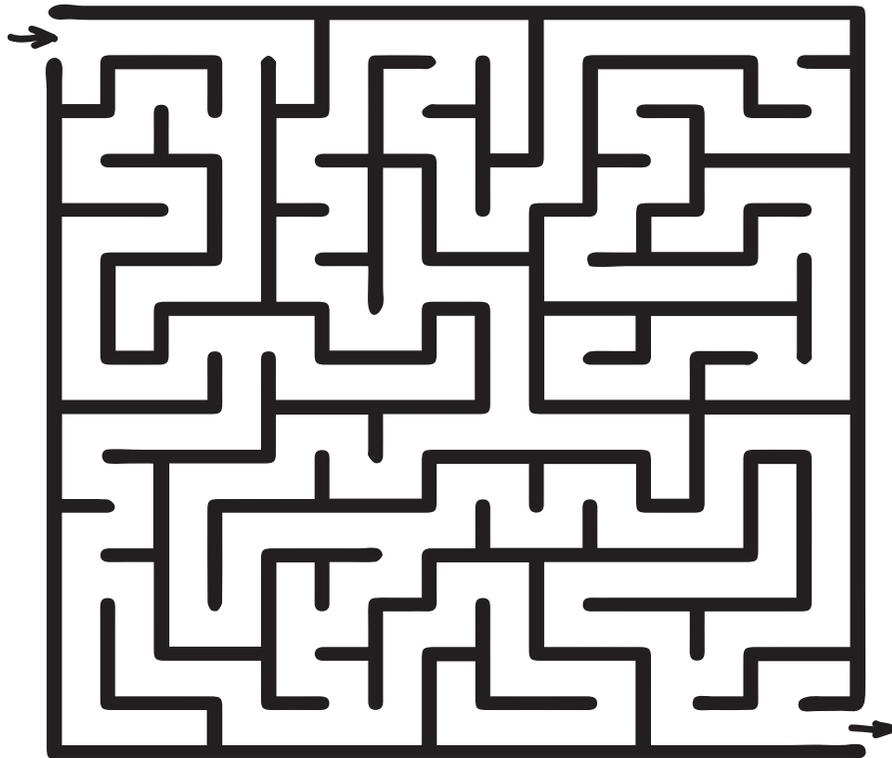




**Sometimes deciding what development you need is confusing and it can feel like working through a complex maze full of wrong turns and blocked pathways.**

This playbook is designed to help you play to your strengths within the context of planning your career - whatever that looks like for you.

There is no set way to work through the booklet - some of the activities will appeal more than others so just dip in and out wherever takes your fancy.



### **Studies have found that people who use their strengths more at work:**

- **Are happier** - they report lower levels of depression, higher levels of vitality, and good mental health.
- **Experience less stress** - they report higher levels of positivity; and in particular the character strengths of Kindness, Social Intelligence, Self-regulation, and Perspective appear to create a buffer against the negative effects of stress and trauma.
- **Feel healthier and have more energy** - greater endorsement of character strengths is associated with a number of healthy behaviours including leading an active life, pursuing enjoyable activities, and eating well.
- **Feel more satisfied with their lives** - individuals who are satisfied with life are good problems-solvers, show better work performance, tend to be more resistant to stress and experience better physical health.
- **Are more confident** - both strengths knowledge and strengths-use are significantly associated with self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-acceptance, and self-confidence.
- **Experience faster growth and development** - positive self-monitoring and strengths building are particularly suited to circumstances when you're learning something new, something difficult, or something perceived as difficult.
- **Are more creative and agile at work** - the feelings of authenticity, vitality and concentration created by developing strengths help people to better adapt to change, engage in more creative and proactive behaviours, pay more attention to detail, and work harder.
- **Feel more satisfied and experience more meaning in their work** - people who use four or more of their top character strengths at work are more likely to experience job satisfaction, pleasure, engagement, and meaning in their work.
- **Are more engaged in their work** - employees who have the opportunity to regularly use their strengths at work each day are up to six times more engaged in what they're doing.

**So exploring your strengths and motivators can help you be really clear about your next move and ensure you are both happy and fully contributing.**

# Activity 1: The development game

**When you say 'development' it has different meanings for different people. This short introductory multi – choice quiz will help you understand what it means in the context of these activities.**

To understand what development planning is all about answer the following questions - the answers are on the bottom of the page

## 1 Career planning is about

- A. Taking a well-established career route
- B. Doing what you think you should be doing
- C. Taking control for what you want and playing to your strengths

## 2 The purpose of development is to

- A. Get roles that offer more money
- B. Assess your skills & strengths, consider your aims in life and set goals to help you maximise your potential
- C. Climbing the career ladder to get a senior role

## 3 Who is in control of your development?

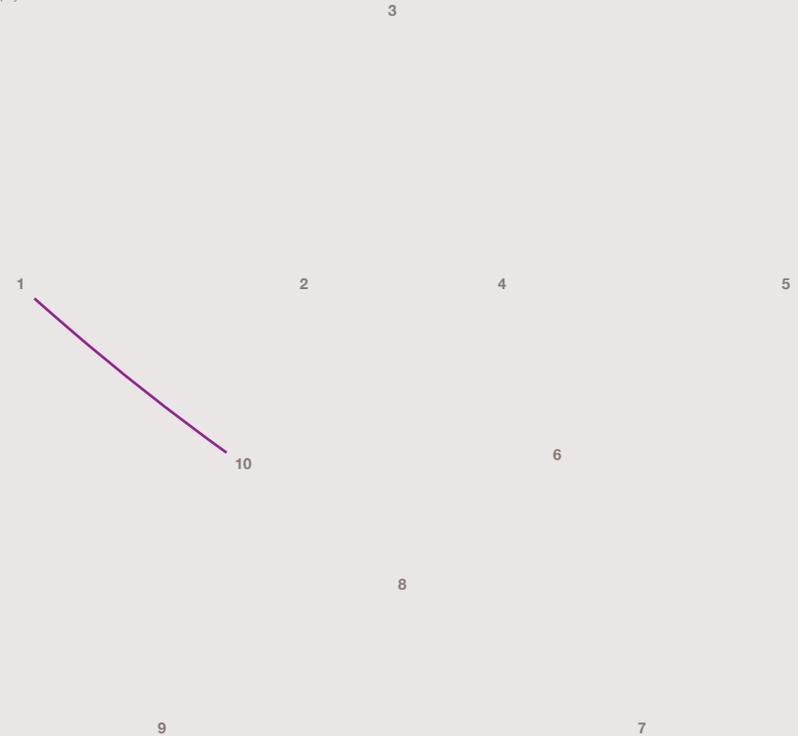
- A. You
- B. Your manager
- C. Human Resources

Answers: 1. C 2. B 3. A

## 'Follow your own star'

Dante

Join your dots to see what you find. At each point write down something that you really desire in your career. You will end up with five critical factors that you can refer back to as you develop your ideas.



## Activity 2: My Strengths & experience

### Stage one - The facts

- Complete the table on your right. Write all the experience you have had in each of these areas
  - **Jobs** - e.g. Sales Assistant, Contact Centre Manager
  - **Hobbies** - e.g. captain of the netball team, school PTA, paper round office assistant
  - **Life roles** - e.g. mother, carer for an elderly relative.
  - **Other** - whatever else you do that doesn't fit the above!

### Stage two - Pulling the information together

**Now on the next page use this information to build up a picture of the skills and experience you have developed in your life by drawing a mind map**

- Start in the centre with 'My experience'
- Then create a branch for one of the headings from stage one e.g. jobs
- Next add in a job...
- Then add in the skills and qualities you needed for that role
- Now take a look - what do you notice?

Jobs	Hobbies
Life Roles	Other

#### TIP

Many people, when asked about their strengths, simply can't reply. It's just not something that we focus on. But when you think about the benefits to you (mentioned in the introduction) this is not something that you can afford to ignore.

If you are clear about your strengths not only are you likely to be happier at work but it will also give you a competitive advantage in your career.



My  
experience



## Activity 3: My Highs and Lows

'Cheshire – Puss' she began, rather timidly, as she did not at all know whether it would like the name; however, it only grinned a little wider.

'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'

'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to', said the Cat

'I don't care where...' said Alice

'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat

'.. So long as I get somewhere,' Alice added an explanation.

'Oh you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, 'if you only walk long enough.'

From Alice in Wonderland  
by Lewis Carroll

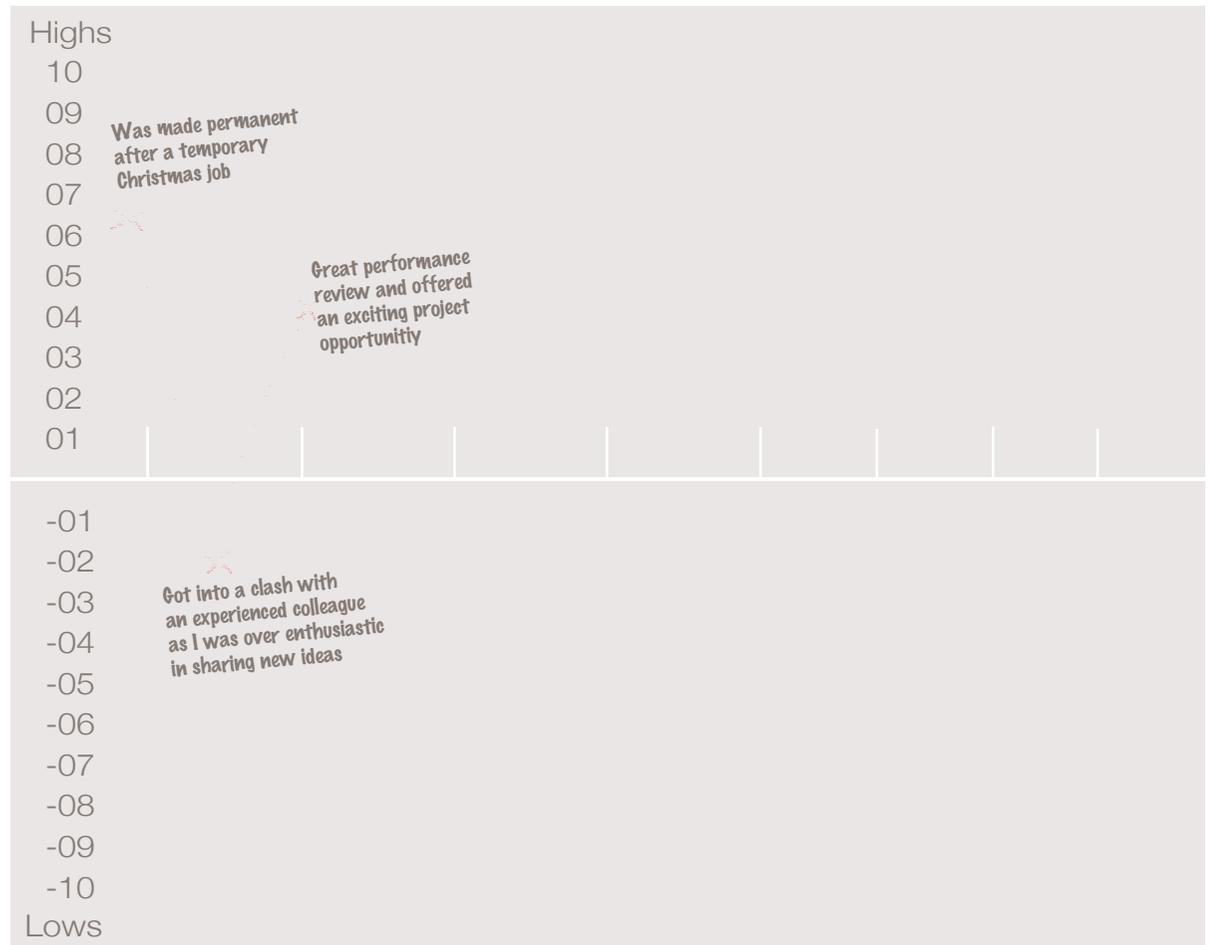
**When you are planning your career, it's important to know what you want and how you're going to get there. To help us we can learn valuable lessons from our past career experiences and choices that we can use in the present to create compelling opportunities in the future.**

**On the next page you will find a career path which will help you to:**

- Look back at past experiences to see what you have learnt
- Assess how you are going to use those lessons to better understand what you want now
- Think about what you are going to do in the future and how you are going to get there

### Highs and lows timeline – sample

Using this example as a starting point, think about your life to date – your highs and lows and draw up your own confidential timeline.



Highs

10

09

08

07

06

05

04

03

02

01

-01

-02

-03

-04

-05

-06

-07

-08

-09

-10

Lows



## Activity 4: You've got talent

**Each of you has your own natural talents and so the way you get your job done will be different. Knowing more about your own talents will help you to develop true strengths and overcome weaknesses.**

### Know your strengths

In 'Strengths Finder' by Tom Rath, he describes strength as being "the ability to consistently provide near-perfect performance". And then he highlights two important ingredients that make up a strength:

**Talent:** (a natural way of thinking, feeling, or behaving).

**Investment:** (time spent practising, developing your skills, and building your knowledge base).

And if you multiply these then you get a real strength.

### TALENT X INVESTMENT = STRENGTH

Talent	Characterised by	My talents
Achiever	Drives to achieve something tangible everyday.	
Activator	Turns thoughts into action. Often impatient. Listens to others ideas, picks out the best, energises others. Lots of enthusiasm around projects.	
Adaptability	Lives in the moment, flexible. Good/comfortable working when work pulls in different directions.	
Analytical	"Prove it!" Likes data. Searches for patterns and connections.	
Arranger	Conductor. Enjoy managing variables, juggling priorities. Flexible, on the look out for better ways that can change plans.	
Belief	Guided by values, spiritual. Family orientated. Consistent.	
Command	Takes charge. Aligns others with your goals. Gives direction. Has a sense of presence.	
Competition	Needs to compare, compete and win. Doesn't compete for fun. Can avoid contests over time where winning is unlikely.	
Connectedness	Believes things happen for a reason and that we are part of something bigger.	
Consistency	Balance is important. Treats people the same no matter what.	
Context	Looks to the past to understand the future. Helps others understand how and why their colleagues came to be.	

This can be illustrated by how quickly the Beatles became famous following real focus and practice, by Usain Bolt's sprinting or Serena Williams's domination of tennis. Now it's time for you to play 'You've Got Talent' where you get to explore your natural talents, how you can develop these into real strengths and then how you can find opportunities to use them.

This wonderful talent list is taken from 'Strength Finder'. Read through the 34 talents and put a tick next to the ones that you consider to be your talents.

Table continued on next page

Talent	Characterised by	My talents
Deliberative	Plans ahead to anticipate what could go wrong. Careful, vigilant. Selects friends carefully. Private person.	
Developer	Sees potential in others. Looks for signs of growth. Challenges and stretches themselves and others.	
Discipline	Needs to be ordered and planned. Sets up routines. Doesn't like surprises.	
Empathy	Feels what others feel. Doesn't necessarily agree with them, but understands them.	
Focus	Needs clear destination otherwise frustrated. Keeps others on track.	
Futuristic	Dreamer. Sees detail in what the future may hold.	
Harmony	Looks for areas of agreement. "All in the same boat mentality", helps pull everyone together.	
Ideation	Fascinated by ideas. Gives new perspectives on familiar challenges.	
Includer	Makes people feel part of a group. Accepting of others.	
Individualisation	Intrigued by unique qualities of others. Has lots of innovative ways of doing things.	
Input	Inquisitive. Collects things in case they come in handy. A mind of information.	
Intellection	Likes to think. Enjoys time alone for reflection. Introspective. Exercises the brain muscles.	
Learner	The process of learning is often more significant than what they have actually learnt.	
Maximiser	Drives for excellence. Must be the best, not content with average.	
Positivity	Contagious enthusiasm, friendly, talkative with strangers. Sees the good things in life. Has amusing anecdotes. Expresses gratitude often.	
Relator	Pulled towards people they already know. Likes making close friends and getting a deeper understand of people's fears, goals and dreams.	
Responsibility	Takes psychological ownership of anything they commit to. Emotionally bound to completion. Volunteers to take stuff on.	
Self-assurance	This is similar to self confidence but with more emphasis on being confident in their abilities and judgements. Knows what is right, not easily swayed.	
Significance	Wanting to stand out, be admired as credible, successful and professional. Pulled towards being exceptional.	
Strategic	Creates alternative ways to proceed. Disregards information after reading if it's unrelated, focuses on importance. Draws links between facts, events, people, problems and solutions. Out of the box thinking, challenges others to abandon convention.	
Woo	Winning others over. Enjoys meeting new people and getting them to like them. No strangers in the world, just lots of friends!	

## My talents

Now that you have highlighted your talents it's time to narrow these down to just five and put these five in order from one being your Top Talent through to five.

## Developing your strengths bootcamp

Let's think of the definition of a true strength for a minute. One way to think of it could be:

An act that makes you feel strong.

So what are the characteristics of a true strength?

Here are three things for you to ponder over:

- You look forward to getting involved in the activity – volunteer
- Naturally inquisitive about this activity – focussed, concentrated on, time flies by, want to keep learning and researching
- When completed you feel uplifted and fulfilled – want to carry out again and again to get this feeling. Can feel tired when completed, but not drained.

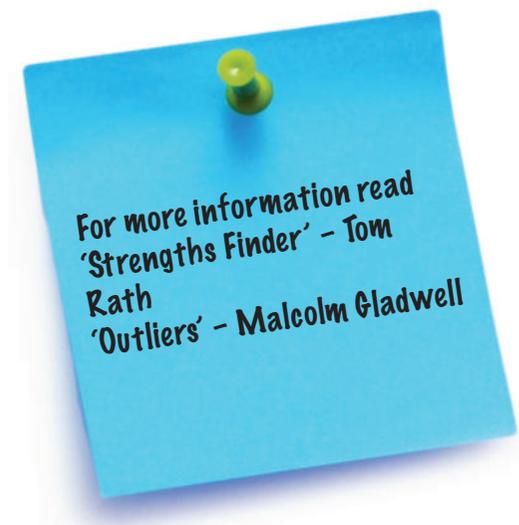
## Some things to also keep in mind

You may be completing a task which makes you feel strong, however you still have lots of room to grow.

Many people are very good at something, but it leaves them feeling very empty. This would be deemed to be a weakness for you as it drains you and makes you feel weak.

Over the coming days, weeks, months, why not keep a log of what:

- A. Drains you and makes you feel weak
- B. What makes you feel uplifted, fulfilled



## Activity 5: My ideal role

**Having clarified what makes a true strength we can now relate this to what you could do every day at work and identify how you can utilise your natural talents in your ideal role.**

**Step 1 – Painting the picture. You have a choice where you start. You can either:**

**A**

Start with your current reality and create a picture of your current career situation, again using words, symbols, pictures etc

**OR**

**B**

Start with the end in mind, by creating a picture of your ideal career. Use words, symbols, pictures etc whatever works best for you. Think about what you will see, hear, think and feel

My current role	My ideal role
<div data-bbox="719 834 1451 1177" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 327px; height: 215px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	

### **Step 2 – What do you see?**

Now stand back and look at the two pictures from a distance. What elements can you see in your current role that will be in your ideal career? Jot your thoughts in the box in the middle.

### **Step 3- Non negotiables**

Again looking at both pictures, highlight elements in your ideal career that are must haves – star them, use highlighter – anything that will tell you these are non negotiables.

**Step 4 - Playing to your strengths**

Now you're ready to begin playing to your strengths where you will combine the elements of your ideal role with your true strengths. Fill in the table like the one below. Along the top write your five true strengths or talents (from earlier) in ranked order. Down the side write in your ideal role elements. e.g.

	Positivity 1	Individualisation 2	Communication 3	Strategic 4	Activator 5
Speaking in public	✓	✓	✓		
Short term deadlines				✓	✓
Engaging with people	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Freedom ...				✓	✓

**Now work across each ideal career element and tick off where you can definitely use your five talents.**


**Step 5 – What's available here**

Look at the elements of your ideal career and where your talents can be applied. Now consider the roles that would value these. E.g. if you have “empathy” as a talent you will have a lot of opportunity to use this as a coach. And coach doesn't have to be in your job title, it could be part of your role as a manager, or in a co-ordinator position. Use this grid to chat to a career development coach or mentor to show how you can really shine.

## Activity 6: Reflections

- As of today, when you think of your career, what number from -10 (depressing) to +10 (elated) would you mark it at? Why is that?
- When you look at your timeline, what challenges have you had to face?
- Is there a connection between your highs and working to your strengths?
- What have you learned about yourself and your needs based on these challenges?
- How did you 'bounce' back when things didn't go your way?
- What are the successes that you are most proud of?
- What thoughts about your career has this activity provoked?

**Your thoughts:**

# Summing Up

Question	My Answers
What do you enjoy most at work?	
When do you feel most motivated during your working day?	
Apart from the salary what attracts you to your job?	
What is most important to you regarding your career?	
What are you most proud of?	
What has been your greatest professional achievement so far?	
What are you doing when you are being your best 'you' at work?	
Describe your dream job.	
What do you stand for? What will you never do?	
Having identified your strengths how can you use them more in your current job?	

## Activity 7: Life Wheel

When life is busy, or all your energy is focused on a special project, it's all too easy to find yourself off balance, not paying enough attention to important areas of your life. While you need to have drive and focus if you're going to get things done, taking this too far can lead to frustration and intense stress.

That's when it's time to take a "helicopter view" of your life, so that you can bring things back into balance.

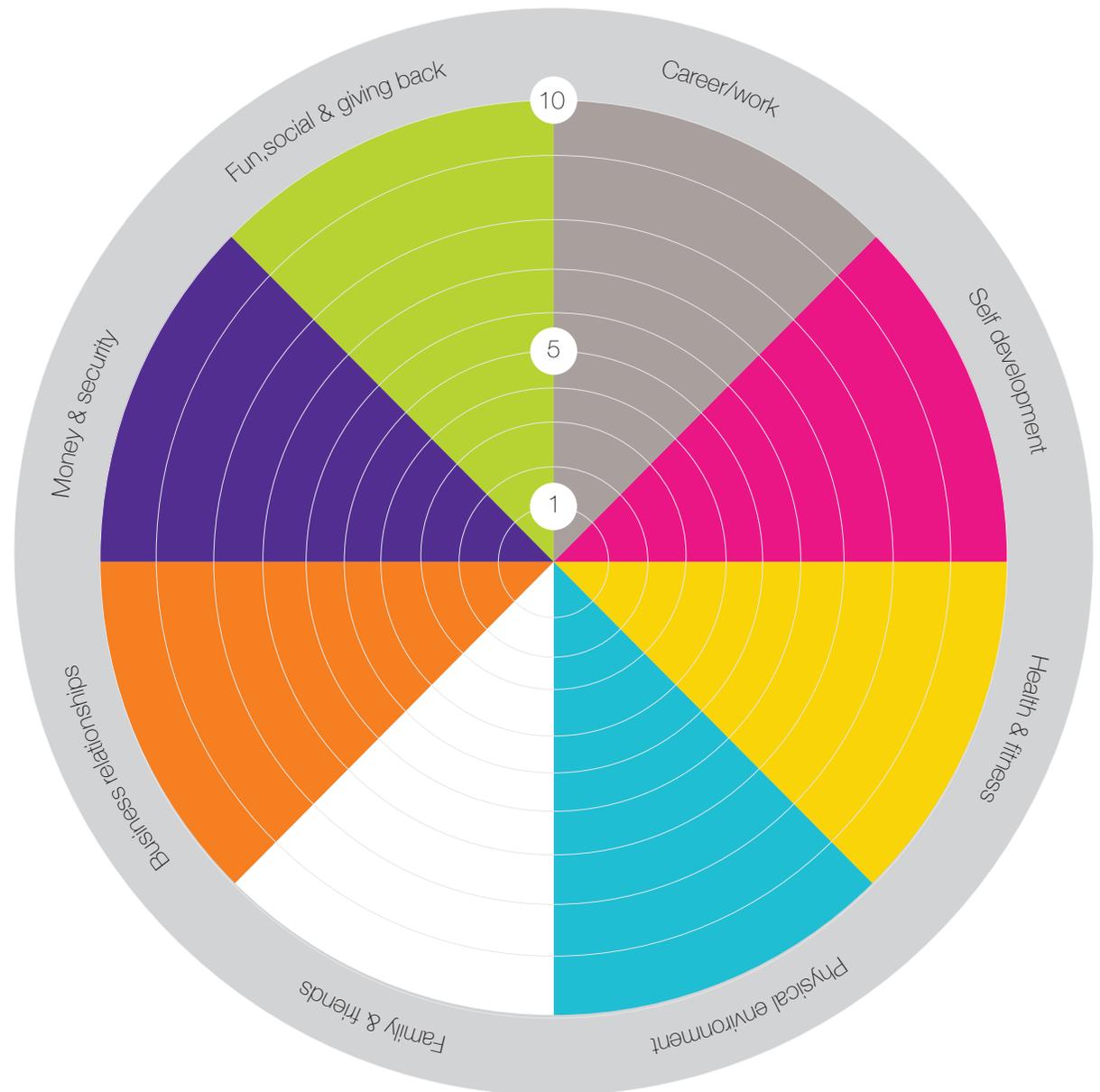
This is where the Life Wheel can help. It helps you consider each area of your life in turn and assess what's off balance. As such, it helps you to identify areas that need more attention.

### Action

Simply rate your level of satisfaction in eight areas of your life. Zero means not satisfied and 10 means highly satisfied. Then connect your marks.

Remember, this is not about getting 10s ! It's about a smoother ride. "If this wheel were a tyre on your car, how bumpy would the ride be?"

Which areas of your life are you ready to make a change on now?



# Activity 8: What does your Personal Brand say about you?

## The way you look and the way you act shouts volumes about who you are and what you stand for.

### But do you really know what others think about you?

As Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, once said: "Your brand is what people say about you when you are not in the room". Most people, however, have not managed their brands until now.

If you think about it there is so much that others take in and if you don't ask you will not know the impression that you leave with them. So to help you take control of the Brand you portray take the first steps in understanding.

### Action

#### Step one

1 - Think back to some of the key conversations you had last week. When you reflect on these what 3 words do you think people would use to describe the way you operated? Are these consistent with how you want people to describe you

2 - Ask 3 of your colleagues what 3 words they would use to describe you at work. Are these consistent with the way you want them to describe you? Remember sometimes what they don't say is just as important as what they do say. Ask them, if necessary, to help you understand why they describe you the way they do. If they are people you trust ask them what 3 words they would like to use to describe you.

3 - Think about the way you look. Is your appearance consistent with the Brand you want to project? For example, if you want to be seen as someone who has attention to detail and can be trusted to see the small things that make a difference – is your appearance immaculate with little details/ accessories that support you e.g. a notebook with dividers, structured clearly and simply referenced. Or maybe you want to be seen as creative in which case does the grey pinstriped suit support that, or not?

#### Step two

Use this information to guide you and identify your Personal Brand by doing the following:

##### 1 - Identify your spark

What are you great at? What are your talents? How can you use these to better project who you are and what you stand for? By doing this you can focus on what you are naturally good at and love doing.

### 2 - Identify what drives you

What are your values – what you believe is important. If being open and honest is important to you, do you show this in everything you do? What about achievement – do you openly acknowledge your successes and help others celebrate that with you or do you really hide your light under a bushel?

### 3 - Identify your purpose

Now it is time to identify your purpose.

- What difference do you want to make in your professional life?
- Why is this important to you?

Getting clear about this will enable you to build a very strong brand. This will help you to discover what really inspires you.

### 4 - Identify your main archetype

This will help people to understand who you are and what you do within seconds of meeting, reading or hearing about you. The twelve archetypes used in personal branding are:

- The caregiver
- The creator
- The explorer
- The hero
- The innocent
- The jester
- The lover
- The magician
- The ordinary guy
- The outlaw
- The ruler
- The sage.

Once you identify your main archetype, your task is to evoke it through the way you speak, write, dress and behave. If you evoke your main archetype consistently, people will understand immediately how you work.

The more you get to know yourself, the more aware you will be of what people are likely to say about you when you are not in the room. You will also attract people who want what you do in the way that you do it.

For more information have a look at [www.kayeputnam.com/brandality-quiz/](http://www.kayeputnam.com/brandality-quiz/)

## Activity 9: Goal setting 101

Barak Obama does it, so does Oprah Winfrey, Jack Canfield and Thomas Edison. Even the BBC has a how to guide on their website.

It's all around us, people talk about it, there are apps about it. So why is it that people all around the globe are still getting sucked into their day to day hustle and bustle and missing out on this miraculous opportunity to direct their lives by setting motivating and clear goals?

There are many different ways to do it and we want to share our thoughts about what works. As Oprah Winfrey puts it "There is no lucky break without preparation and goal setting is the place to start."

Goal setting is used by top-level athletes, successful business-people and achievers in all fields. Setting goals gives you long-term vision and short-term motivation. It focuses your resourcefulness and time so that you can make the very most of your life. In essence by setting goals you can high five yourself at each milestone and the pleasure of seeing yourself make progress will spur you on.

**Don't make  
EXCUSES.  
Make changes!**  
Tony Gaskins

Start by thinking about your long term aspiration.

### • What do you want in your life in 5 or 10 years time?

Take a little time to mull this over. Be brave. Many people feel they shouldn't expect a life of abundance but why not? Be prepared to jot down anything that pops into your mind.

Think about...

### 1. BIG PICTURE (YOUR CONTEXT)

Take some time out to dream a little – and ponder what do you want your life to be like in 10 or 5 years time. This provides overall clarity to help you define if your goals are on purpose or not for you. Some people like to write it down, others do affirmations and yet others do a vision board. All are great if they work for you – as visual people we like a vision board. Think about the following areas of your life:

**Career** – What level do you want to reach in your career, or what do you want to achieve?

**Financial** – How much do you want to earn, by what stage? How is this related to your career goals?

**Education** – Is there any knowledge you want to acquire in particular? What information and skills will you need to have in order to achieve other goals?

**Family** – Do you want to be a parent? If so, how are you going to be a good parent? How do you want to be seen by a partner or by members of your extended family?

**Creative** – Do you want to achieve any creative goals?

**Attitude** – Is any part of your mindset holding you back? Is there any part of the way that you behave that upsets you? (If so, set a goal to improve your behaviour or find a solution to the problem.)

**Health & Fitness** – Are there any fitness goals that you want to achieve, or do you want good health deep into old age? What steps are you going to take to achieve this?

**Pleasure** – How do you want to enjoy yourself? (You should ensure that some of your life is for you!)

**Public Service** – Do you want to make the world a better place? If so, how?

### 2. FOCUS

Once you can see where you are heading it is easier to break this down into more manageable chunks. As they say "If you want to eat an elephant do it one chunk at a time" so start to order your long term goals - what will you have to do in year 1, year 2 etc. to help you move forward?

#### What do I need to do now?

Your challenge now is to get really specific and break this down into a clear structure that works for you. A friend, who is very methodical writes copious lists. She has a vision written at the opening of her diary and then the summary goals written alongside. From there, she builds her week by week goals because she can see the progress as she goes and prefers it in linear format. Some of us on the other hand, are much more visual with mind maps and lots of colour. Do whatever works for you; just do it.

## Top tips

Whatever method you use to record your goals, follow this 5 point plan to get them as sharp and empowering as possible.

You have probably heard of "SMART goals" already. But do you always apply the rule?

The simple fact is that for goals to be powerful, they should be designed to be SMART. There are many variations of what SMART stands for, but the essence is this – goals should be:

- Specific.
- Measurable.
- Attainable.
- Relevant.
- Time Bound.

### 1. SET SPECIFIC GOALS

Your goal must be clear and well defined. Vague or generalised goals are unhelpful because they don't provide sufficient direction. Goals show you the way, you need clear direction to travel so clarity is key.

### 2. SET MEASURABLE GOALS

Include precise amounts, dates, and so on in your goals so you can measure your degree of success. If your goal is simply defined as "To reduce expenses" how will you know when you have been successful? Without a way to measure your success you miss out on the celebration that comes with knowing you have actually achieved something.

### 3. SET ATTAINABLE GOALS

Make sure that it's possible to achieve the goals you set. If you set a goal that you have no hope of achieving, you will only demoralise you and zap your confidence.

However, resist the urge to set goals that are too easy. By setting realistic yet challenging goals, you hit the balance you need. These are the types of goals that require you to "raise the bar" and they bring the greatest personal satisfaction.

### 4. SET RELEVANT GOALS

Goals should be relevant to the direction you want your life and career to take. By keeping goals aligned with this, you'll develop the focus you need to get ahead and do what you want. Set widely scattered and inconsistent goals, and you'll fritter your time – and your life – away.

### 5. SET TIME-BOUND GOALS

You goals must have a deadline. This gives you focus and helps you prioritise.

Have your goals in obvious places so you can look at them frequently - your wallet, your desk, your desktop, your mirror so you can look whilst cleaning your teeth etc.

Get juiced when you write them, build emotion - it is emotion that moves us.

Think about how you would describe your goals to a friend or colleague - would they understand them?

How motivating for you are they? If they are filled with corporate speak they won't be.

Make an action plan so you can see which goals you are focusing on at a particular time - you can't do them all at once! This will help you develop new habits that support the new you!

Always frame goals in the positive - it's just more motivating e.g. "I will stop smoking" although clear and direct it makes your mind think about what you are giving up. Instead, try framing it positively and think about it as getting fit and healthy, having whiter teeth, being able to run a mile... whatever focuses your mind positively on the gain you will have as a result of quitting.

# Activity 10: Your role model angel

## Role Modelling isn't new; we've been doing it all through our lives unconsciously.

We actually learnt to walk and talk by Role Modelling and much of what we think and do on a daily basis has come from Role Modelling.

### So what actually is Role Modelling and how can being consciously aware of its components help you in your professional and personal lives?

Simply put, Role Modelling is copying, or 'borrowing' what someone else does that makes a positive difference and using it in your own way in your particular situation. It is extremely valuable as it gives you additional choices in how you can think and act in order to get a winning result.

### So how do we consciously Role Model?

It's really easy.

- First think about the winning result you want.
- Then think of someone you admire and respect who has the level of confidence that you want (this could be anyone from a friend, work colleague through to somebody famous, or even a fictional character!)
- Then consider the questions in the table below

### EXAMPLE: Role Modelling Think, Feel, Do

**Winning Result I want:** To come across as confident & relaxed so that I encourage people to explore ideas more openly

**Role Model:** Michelle Obama

### What do you think they believe to be true about their self?

I'm warm, empathetic, knowledgeable and strong

### What might they be saying to their self?

I have an opportunity to influence a generation, to create more connections, to help others feel good about themselves and be more confident

### How do they feel as a result?

Satisfied, excited, enthusiastic, grateful

**What do they do?** (Describe how they sit/stand/move? What is the expression on their face?)

Do: Stands tall, leans in, gets involved, encourages others, challenges unfairness. Face: Lots of smiles and genuine interest. Gives eye contact

So now it's your turn! Have some fun with this and share your thoughts and ideas with each other. Then have a go at trying out what you've borrowed and see how you get on.

### Winning Result I want:

### Role Model:

### What do you think they believe to be true about their self?

### What might they be saying to their self?

### How do they feel as a result?

### Thinking about your Role Model...

- What would they think, feel and do in your situation?
- What strategies can you 'borrow' from them to help you increase your confidence and help you get that winning result?
- What other people do you respect and admire?
- What do they think, feel, do? What other strategies can you 'borrow'?

# Activity 11: Behaviour Barometer

## Sometimes what we say and do gets us a great outcome.

Other times, getting a great outcome feels like pushing water uphill! Most of us have heard of the term “Behaviour Breeds Behaviour”, but what does it actually mean? Let’s take a few moments to explore...

### Reflect

Take the Behaviour Barometer challenge

1. In the columns below, circle the characteristics you identify in yourself (be honest!)

Vague	Demanding	Judgemental	Use I
Subservient	Uncompromising	Manipulative	Direct
Inhibited	Arrogant	Deceitful	Honest
Self-pitying	Blaming (directly)	Blaming (indirectly)	Accept responsibility
Avoidance	Refuse to listen	Half listen	Listen attentively
Put self down	Put others down (to their face)	Put others down (behind their backs)	Respect self & others
Waiting	Pressurising	Reacting	Initiating
Loser	Hurtful	Vengeful	Forgiving
Ineffectual	Pushy	Pressurising	Effective
Cowardly	Loud	Emotional blackmail	Spontaneous
Victim	Winner	Martyr	Realist
Powerless	Power over	Powerless	Power within
“I don’t mind”	Disempowering	‘I don’t care’	Empowering

2. Look opposite to discover what these behaviours mean

- Words in the first column describe **Submissive** behaviour – you often lose out and whilst this avoids conflict, it can lead to simmering resentment building up. The second column describes **Aggressive** behaviour – it may get you what you want in the short term but beware because it will come back to haunt you. Remember the words of Maya Angelou **“People will never forget how you made them feel.”** The third is **Passive Aggressive** behaviour – a little more subtle than Aggressive behaviour but has similar consequences long term. The fourth is **Assertive** behaviour – this is respecting that we all have rights and is linked to win-win outcomes.
- So, are you mainly one behaviour type, or are you a mixture? What is the mix?

5. What behavioural characteristics are you pleased you have?

### Action

- What behavioural characteristics have you identified that you would like to change?
- Choose one behavioural characteristic to change (maybe this is the one that will have the biggest impact) and make a commitment to work on that everyday for the next month.

## Activity 12: Rights replenisher

A crucial element to being confident and assertive means getting to grips with the rights we have as individuals.

As we go through life, some of these rights can get eroded, distorted and damaged. This in turn can knock our confidence in certain situations and throw us off balance, leading us to be less effective.

### Reflection

So now is the time to give our confidence levels an overhaul by replenishing our rights.

Read the statements about “rights” and...

- Mark those that you allow yourself, but deny others with ~~X~~
- Mark those that you allow others, but deny yourself with ~~X~~

### THE RIGHT TO YOUR OWN FEELINGS, NEEDS AND OPINIONS AND TO HAVE THEM RESPECTED BY OTHERS

Everyone sees things differently and it is important to get away from the idea that if one party is right, everyone else is wrong.

### THE RIGHT TO CONSIDER YOUR OWN NEEDS

This does not mean you can absolve yourself from all responsibility to others; rather that you should consider your needs and the extent to which they are met. This will enable you to recognise when you are putting others’ needs before yours and decide whether you wish to do something about it.

### THE RIGHT TO ASK (NOT TO DEMAND)

A clear request is much fairer to the other person and yet it can feel blunt or awkward to the “asker”. Resorting to hints, or very subtle comments can lead us to feel frustrated when they are ignored.

### THE RIGHT TO REFUSE

Taking your needs into consideration you may wish to refuse the request of another. It is better for both parties to do so clearly and politely rather than to let them think all is well and then find an excuse later. If you have contractual obligations that limit you exercising this right, you do retain the right to explain the difficulties it will cause and/or any problems you can foresee. Although you may be overruled, at least you have ‘covered’ yourself.

### THE RIGHT TO NOT UNDERSTAND

Everyone communicates differently and there is no shame in having to ask for clarification.

### THE RIGHT TO BE SUCCESSFUL

Success can be measured in many different ways. Whether you are successful in a challenging job or at another level (e.g. losing weight, making a difficult phone call) you should acknowledge your achievement and not play it down.

### THE RIGHT TO MAKE A MISTAKE

Accept that no one is perfect. Mistakes are great learning opportunities. Some experts believe that if you aren’t making mistakes then you aren’t trying hard enough! One act of ineffective behaviour does not make us incompetent. It is important to keep our mistakes in proportion and not to dwell on them, compounding a negative self-image.

### THE RIGHT TO CHANGE YOUR MIND

Circumstances change, more information becomes available or a snap decision seems wrong with the passing of time. You should not have to defend your decision to change your mind to anyone who thinks it a weakness.

### THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE NOT TO ASSERT YOURSELF

There is no rule to say that you must assert yourself at all times. You are free to choose to act non-assertively and not stand up for your rights. It is important however that you have the confidence to assert yourself when you want to or you will find that the little chips to your self-esteem can wear away altogether.

### THE RIGHT TO BE YOUR OWN SELF

This involves choosing your own destiny; whom you marry (or not!), where you live, work, hobbies and interests etc.

Turn over to find out more....



## **Responsibilities with Rights**

To prevent aggressive behaviour, it is vital to balance these rights with the responsibility that goes with them. There are dual responsibilities in terms of assertiveness:

### **TO RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS**

It is possible to become so concerned with your own rights that you lose sight of the rights of others and act aggressively. The rights you take for yourself you should give to others (to prevent aggression) and the rights you give to others you should take for yourself (to prevent non-assertion).

### **TO ASSERT YOUR RIGHTS IN A REASONABLE AND RESPONSIBLE MANNER**

It can be counter-productive to be rigid in defending your rights at all times and you may choose not to assert yourself on various minor issues. The important thing is that your non-assertion is a conscious decision rather than the inability to assert yourself.

For Example: You have the right to make mistakes. This is balanced with the responsibility to admit your mistakes (either to yourself or to others depending on the situation), to correct them and to be clear about what went wrong so that you do not repeat them. There is also the responsibility to allow others to make mistakes without humiliating them].

### **Call to Action**

Over the coming weeks, notice your confidence levels in operation. If you feel less confident, ask yourself: Which right am I denying myself here? Then give yourself the 'gift' of that right.

## Activity 13: Think, feel, do

### What we think impacts our emotions and how we feel.

This in turn affects our actions (in other words, what we do) and ultimately the results we get! So putting it simply, how we think has a big part to play in the results that we get.

**For example,** as a local league badminton player I never looked forward to playing mixed doubles, instead I preferred to play ladies doubles or singles. I only played mixed doubles as a last resort if there were no other ladies to play.

**I used to think...** how much I hated mixed doubles ('hate' is a very strong word). I know I even used to say to myself: "I bet we'll lose!" This led me to feel...self conscious, fed up and not confident in my game as I imagined us losing. So what I used to do was...go on court with my head down, not stand in an alert pose (ready to get the shots), not keep on my toes (ready to move quickly) And at club nights I just avoided playing mixed games so I never really got to practise and get better And then, as a result I would... miss easy shots, make stupid errors, put my partner under pressure and ultimately we didn't win many matches. (Surprise, surprise!) And people were reluctant to partner me. All this reinforced my belief that I was a pants mixed doubles player.

And the vicious cycle continued until...

**I changed my thinking** ("We could win this. That'll surprise the opposition!!"), which affected how I felt (excited, cheeky, playful as I imagined what it would be like to win) and this altered what I did (kept on my toes so I moved quicker & I actually play with a smile on my face), so that now I get more winning results and keep practising so that I can get better.

### YOU REALLY CAN CHANGE A RESULT BY STARTING TO CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT IT!

So now think about an area of your work that you are least confident about and use this to help you complete the small challenge opposite.

Area of work I'm least confident in: .....

1. In the left hand column describe what you currently Think, Feel & Do in this situation. Then...
2. In the right hand column describe what will be more helpful for you to Think, Feel & Do so that you stand the best chance of getting a winning result (Tip: Remember what you Think, Feel & Do in situations when you feel confident and in control!)

Current Think, Feel, Do	Changed Think, Feel, Do
What do you think?	What would be more helpful for you to think?
How do you feel?	Now imagine you are achieving a winning result...Describe how you will feel knowing you have done a great job?
What do you do? (how do you sit/stand, what is the expression on your face? What do you say out loud?)	What will you be doing? (Describe how you will be sitting/standing, what will the expression on your face be like? What will you be saying out loud?)

Share your thoughts and ideas with a trusted colleague or friend and most importantly ...try it out & keep practising.

## Activity 14: What a difference a yet makes!

### Consider these well used list of phrases:

- I can't speak in front of people
- I'm not a runner
- I can't cook
- I can't speak French
- I'm no singer
- I'm not good at writing

And there are many more..

**Reflect** If we say these phrases (or phrases like these) often enough, what do you think the impact will be?

It's very easy to dismiss something that is challenging to us with an "I can't", "I'm not..." or "I'm no..." phrase.

And it's easier said than done for someone to remind you, "No such thing as can't!" and for this to automatically make a difference, because we are human after all.

Now consider the impact of adding a simple 3 letter word: "I can't speak in front of people...yet", "I'm not a runner...yet" "I can't cook...yet" Much more empowering right? Injects possibility?

**Action** The next time you hear yourself say "I can't..." Try adding...'yet' to it and notice how it feels. You may be pleasantly surprised with what may transpire!

What are the things you say you can't do? Think about what is holding you back: Is the fear real or do you just need support? Who can help you overcome your blockage? Now add your 'yet' and make it happen.

## Activity 15: Your communication network

**Our communication network is the group of people we communicate with internally or externally in our daily roles.**

By looking at our current network we can begin to digest the strength of our relationships and importance to us and our performance. Think about the people you communicate with – there will be people you communicate with daily (e.g. your manager or colleagues), weekly (e.g. colleagues in other departments) and those you talk to more infrequently (e.g. external customers, suppliers).

### Action

**Step 1** - The first step in understanding our communication network is exploring who is in it, so take the network opposite and in the relevant circles fill in as many people you can think of that you communicate with either daily, weekly or infrequently.

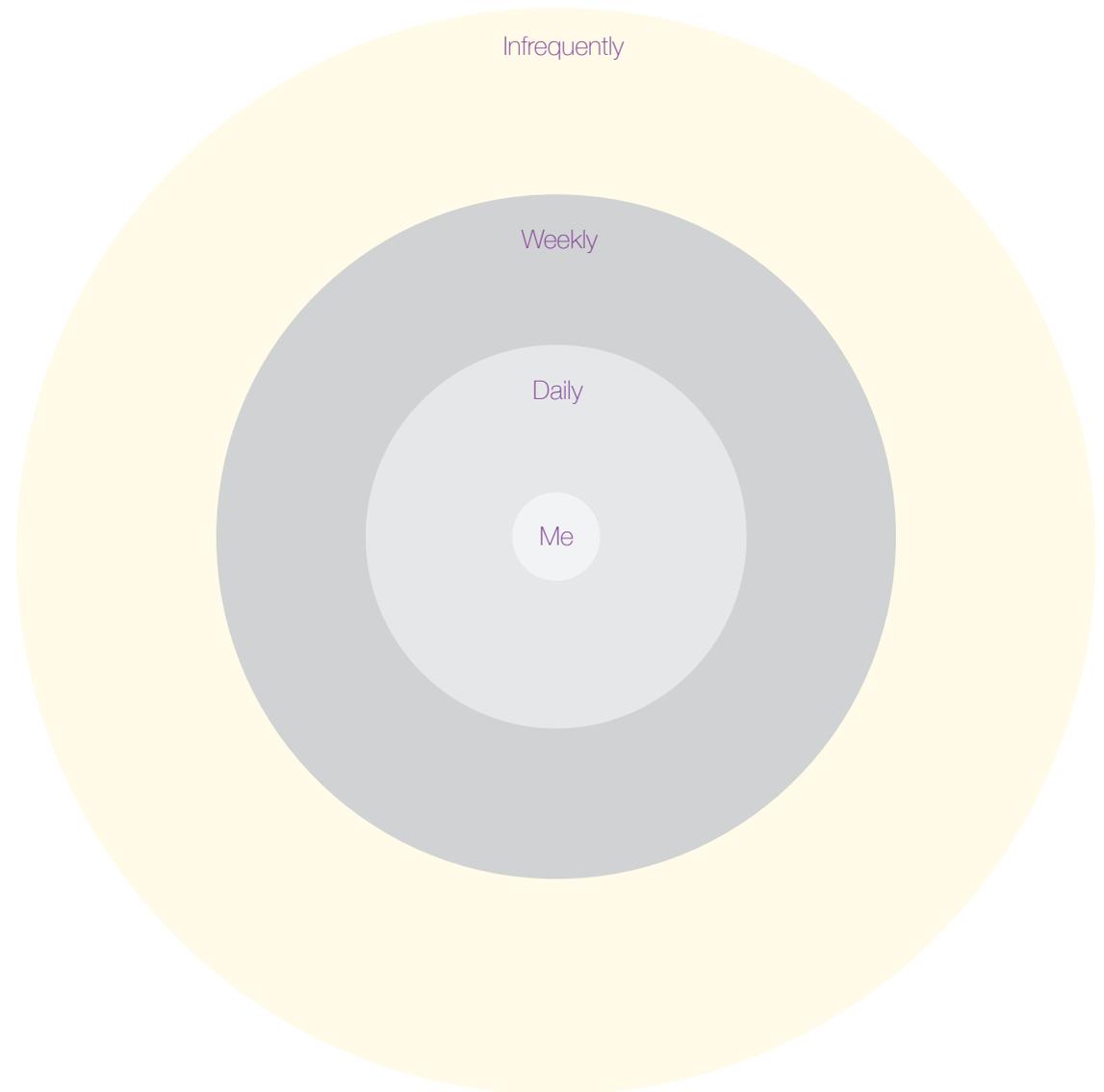
**Step 2** – Now for each relationship you can either:

- Score it from 1-5 based on how strong you feel that relationship is (1 being very weak, 5 being very strong) OR
- Draw a smiley face for very strong, indifferent face for neither strong nor weak or a sad face for weak relationship.

**Step 3** – The stronger your internal relationships are, the stronger relationships you can build with your clients, making sure you are absolutely enhancing the connection in every interaction. So your final step is to consider the small actions you will take to strengthen each relationship. Consider and jot down your ideas for the following:

- What small things can you do to turn your weaker relationships into strong relationships?
- How can you ensure your strong relationships maintain their strength?

**Step 4** – Think now about who can help you in your new job search. Highlight how you want them to help you and how you can ask for help. Most people will be willing to help if you ask them in the right way!



# Tips for improving relationships

**Learn to wait – 24 hours or more.** If you tend to be an impulsive person and respond right away when you observe behaviour you don't like, try sitting with your thoughts before you address it. If at the end of that time you still want to address it, you will be more calm and likely more balanced in your approach.

**Give up on fixing others.** The adage "When you point one finger at another person, four more are pointing at you" is very true. You may be great at seeing others' flaws and mistakes, and you may be tempted to offer unsolicited advice. Resist the urge. Instead, focus on yourself and let them make their own mistakes.

**Define success.** It's typical to set goals in our business, career, or work relationships. But what we forget to do is to define what success looks like. Take the time to paint the picture of what you want. What kind of culture? What kind of relationships? What do you want to be known for in your workplace? Be clear about where you are going.

**Practice being the Interested Observer.** One of the best ways to improve your workplace relationships is by watching others' reactions to things you and others say. Think of it as stepping out of the theatre. We all tend to fall into rote responses. Step back to watch what's going on. You'll observe "helpful" people, "I feel sorry for myself" people, and "giving" people, to name a few types. Be sure to watch your own approaches and reactions. Do you also react as a "type" instead as an objective listener?

**Watch your triggers.** Who sets you off? Perhaps it's the co-worker who dumps his work and problems in your lap, which puts you in the martyr/rescuer role. Reflect on why this "trigger" keeps popping up, and what role you're playing in perpetuating the pattern.

**Be cautiously open.** This one may depend on your culture – learn what is acceptable and what is not before you reveal too much. But in order to build relationships, it is give and take. Give others the opportunity to understand who you really are. Longer term, this is how you create trust, loyalty, and respect, and feel more comfortable in your "work skin."

**Leave labels off.** Think about the process that goes on inside our heads. We look out at reality, we filter it, and then we label it. We don't like staff members who are "like that." We see someone who are and make a judgment about who they are. We watch someone in a meeting and judge their contribution. Stop labelling. Turn your opinions into factual observations wherever you can.

**Learn the art of focus.** When another person is talking, focus completely on what he is saying and how he is saying it. Don't let your mind wander to your own judgments or assessments. Use your energy to really listen and seek understanding. The best listeners are usually considered to be really good communicators overall.

**Don't unload.** Do you unload your problems, ideas, or experiences on someone else without really looking for an interaction? Next time, be clear about what you want from the other person. Advice? Direction? A shoulder to cry on? Don't vent without a clearly identified goal.

**Don't assume they know what you mean.** We assume too much in communication. In fact, in certain industries we love our jargon, but we don't always agree on what the jargon means! Practice coming to every interaction with the goal of learning about the other person. Ask "why?" to get at what's underneath their comments. Don't guess – ask.

**Let them finish.** An easy way to improve all your interactions is to simply let the other person finish her thought completely. This means not interrupting, adding commentary, or giving feedback until she is completely through talking or asking. Try to refrain from thinking about what you will say next, too.

# Activity 16: Presenting with pizzazz

## Whatever role you have you are likely to need to present information at some point.

The thought of public speaking fills many people with dread so let's reframe it. The fear of public speaking is irrational. After all it doesn't threaten life or limb but there are 3 key reasons people fear. Let's tackle each one before exploring top tips for easy preparation.

**Stage one** - What, if anything concerns you about doing presentations? List them here. If there's nothing then brilliant rock on to stage two.

Here are the 3 key fears - do you relate to any of them?

### "IT'S ALL ABOUT ME"

Many people tell us they shun the spotlight because they feel self-conscious. They assume that when all eyes are upon them, they are being judged and made subject to disapproval.

**Reframe** - If you think it's all about you, then you are approaching it from the wrong end of things. It isn't all about you at all. It's all about your audience and the message you give them. They aren't there to judge you. They are there to get the message, and they really don't care who delivers it. They are there because they want to be informed, taught, inspired or entertained. Stop thinking about yourself and start thinking about them. Start thinking like someone who has something worthwhile to say to people who want to hear it. When you start focusing on the needs of the audience, and get your mind off yourself, your nervousness will calm down.

### "PAST DISASTERS RUIN PRESENT PERFORMANCE"

Maybe you've experienced a past humiliation or embarrassment - something that occurred in front of others - often in childhood, but sometimes even in adulthood. And that event, created a phobic response to the thought of being the centre of attention.

**Reframe** - First, no one plans to fail and you cannot always control circumstances. Second, you survived and therefore you have another opportunity to meet the challenge. Third, that event is over and in the past. It has already happened and therefore, that same exact event can never happen again. So where you go from here is up to you. If you focus on what you did or what happened to you that was horrible, it will make you lose sight of all the times when you have excelled at something. Give yourself credit for having learned something from experience, good and bad, and for the ability to use that information to do better next time. Failure is no reason to quit.

Every failure we encounter gives us valuable information for future improvement. It is only when you focus on your strengths and your achievements that you will have the courage to face the challenge.

### "I CAN'T STAND THE THOUGHT OF MAKING A MISTAKE IN FRONT OF OTHERS"

Your fear of making mistakes is one side of a two-sided coin. The other side of that coin is a strong desire to excel and make a good impression. However, nervousness and fear do not make a good impression. One key to a polished presentation is to practice. Practice reduces mistakes. Another key is to get feedback from others.

**Reframe** - To reconcile with the fear of making mistakes, it's best to accept the fact that mistakes happen, even to the most skilled speakers. It's what you do with mistakes that matters to others, not whether you make them. The more you cringe and fidget over a mistake, the more your audience becomes aware of your discomfort. The way to recover from a mistake is to observe your mistake dispassionately, take whatever corrective action is necessary, regain your composure, focus on what to say next and go on. Leave the mistake behind and move forward through your material. Audiences can be forgiving. Many listeners will admire the way you continue on so easily, or may even be relieved to know you are human. The secret to superb speaking is to give yourself permission to make mistakes and learn to recover from them quickly.

### Stage two: Avoid common mistakes and myths

Below are the most common mistakes that people make. Each time you prepare for a presentation look at this list before you start.

#### Too small gestures.

Many people are afraid to use their space. This comes across as apologetic. Get expansive.

#### Low energy

You come across as uninvolved and uncommitted to your subject. Crank it up.

#### Unprepared and lack of practice

People spend too much time focusing on developing material and slides without drafting and practice. Practice it out loud and ask for feedback.

#### Take yourself too seriously

Many people see presentations as formal and become stiff and rigid. Be natural and authentic to be believable.

## Stage two: Avoid common mistakes and myths, continued.

### **Don't show vulnerability**

You won't be perfect. Showing vulnerability shows authenticity which enables you to build credibility over what you do know.

### **Play it safe**

When your presentation content is safe is it usually boring! Gain attention and take a few risks.

### **Rushing**

Rushing through material shows lack of poise and lack of preparation. Slow down to build your gravitas and make information powerful.

### **Data intensive**

Too much data can't be remembered. Your research is essential to build your credibility but you don't need to share it all. Make your story human.

### **Too much material**

Too much information means you rush or take too much time. Inexcusable! Focus on key messages.

Have a think about these... do you suffer from any of them or are you worried about any?

**LISTED BELOW ARE SOME GREAT RESOURCES TO HELP YOU PREPARE YOURSELF AND YOUR MATERIALS. JUST CLICK ON THE LINK**

- 10 ways to be a better presenter
- 5 things great presenters know
- Giving presentations worth listening to
- Good presenters v. bad presenters
- And of course watch a few openers from great presenters at Ted.com
- Powerful presentation skills
- 5 presentation tips
- How to start your presentation

## CONGRATULATIONS

### You've done a lot of work to get this far.

It shows how important this is to you to really plan your next move. You've developed your thinking and probably done your own research along the way. So what do you do next?

It's time for **ACTION!**

Many people have ideas, dreams and ambitions that they never pursue. For some fear of failure holds them back, for others it's the fear of the unknown. You might be one of those people who seek perfection. But if you've made it this far you owe it to yourself to take that action. Good luck with your next move!

## Enjoy your success

### Remember success doesn't just happen because you want it.

It is all about your drive and determination.

Here are a few tips to help you.

- 1 Focus on commitment**  
When the going gets tough, motivation alone will not get you through. Think about how important this is to you and why it's so important. Really clarify your goals and why you want to do this. Shape goals that will help you appreciate the steps you are taking.
- 2 Enjoy the discovery**  
If you focus only on the end result, your enthusiasm will wane quickly. After each application take time to reflect and consider what you have learnt that you can take into your next application. Each step of the way you will hone your skills and ability to communicate your thoughts.
- 3 Manage your state**  
You know your actions are influenced by your thoughts and emotions. Reflect on your internal dialogue and reframe the message, if you need, to avoid it holding you back. Concentrate on your picture of success to maintain your drive to succeed.
- 4 Prepare well**  
The more you prepare the better the execution. Really plan how to present yourself and your ideas positively in the eyes of any new employer. Remember no communication is neutral - make every conversation count.

**PLEASE DO PASS THIS ON TO  
ANYONE YOU THINK MIGHT  
ENJOY AND BENEFIT  
FROM THIS PLAYBOOK.**

**GOOD LUCK!**



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