



Squiggly Careers

PODBOOK

100
WORKSHEETS

TO SUPPORT YOUR
SELF-AWARENESS AND
HELP YOU TAKE ACTION



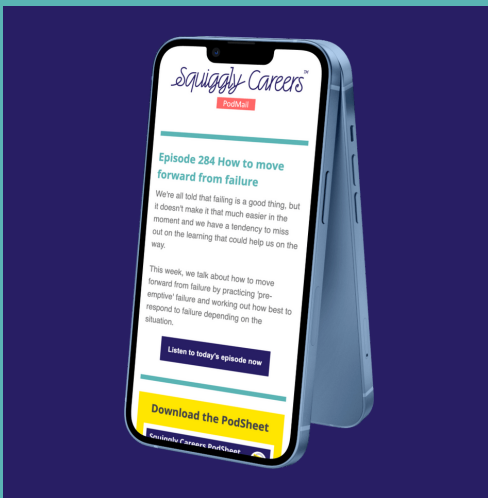
SQUIGGLY CAREERS PODBOOK

Helen Tupper and Sarah Ellis are the founders of Amazing If, a company with a mission to make squiggly careers better for everyone. They are the co-hosts of the UK's no.1 careers podcast, Squiggly Careers, which has had more than 2.5m downloads and 600+ 5-star reviews.

This workbook brings together 100 PodSheets with over 500 ideas for action and tools to try out to support you and your squiggly career.



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Squiggly Careers PodSheet




Discover your values




What are values?


- ✓ Everyone has different values. Your values are personal to you and are the things that are important to you.
- ✓ They help you feel motivated, happy and fulfilled.
- ✓ Understanding your values can help you to evaluate, reflect and make better choices.
- ✓ They are applicable throughout all aspects of life, not just at work.

How can values help you?

-  **Exploring opportunities:** When you're looking at new career possibilities you can use values as a way to understand whether the company culture and the role would be a good fit. For example if 'growth' is one of your values, you could ask at an interview '*what does growth look like for the team over the next 12 months?*'.
-  **Finding fulfilment:** You can find ways to bring your values into your role or outside of work to boost your happiness and motivation. For example, if helping others is one of your values, could you mentor someone at work or coach a sports team?
-  **Being brave:** Knowing your values helps you to make the decisions that are right for you rather than being swayed by other people's opinions and expectations. You can 'run your own race' and have confidence in the career decisions you make.

Ideas for Action

 **What's important to you?**
Think about what's important to you about who, what and where you work. Be as descriptive as possible and in your answers you might spot some consistent clues about what your values might be.

 **Define your values**
Articulating your values helps you to better understand them and share them meaningfully with other people. Write a sentence to describe what each value means to you.

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1** What were your happiest and hardest moments at work over the last month?
- 2** What does this tell you about what's motivating and meaningful for you?

Recommended resources



[The Squiggly Career](#)
Chapter 3: Values



[Build Your life with your values](#)
Simon Sinek, TED, 2015



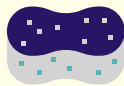
[Your Brilliant Best - Mindset with Ben Williams](#)
Squiggly Careers episode #194

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

Growth Mindset in Action



What is growth mindset?



Growth Mindset is like being a sponge. You absorb new knowledge, are open to feedback and adaptable.

“ Love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort and keep on learning. ” Carol Dweck



Fixed mindset is like being a mountain. Everything feels set in stone. Your thinking is rigid and you resist change.

When do you fall into fixed?

The moments when mindset matters



Starting a new job

Fixed: 'I know it all' a need to prove your knowledge

Growth: 'I don't know that yet, could you please help?'

Seeking feedback from a range of people.



Having a difficult conversation

Fixed: Avoid the conversation, don't listen

Growth: Consider opinions. Seeking to understand not just to be understood.



When you're a manager

Fixed: Defensive about feedback, ego-driven

Growth: Asking for and acknowledging feedback.

Putting the success of your team ahead of your own.



When you're under pressure

Fixed: Blaming, making excuses

Growth: Asking for help. Collaborating. Learning from your mistakes. Taking accountability.

Top tips

Know your mindset triggers to stay in growth mindset mode as much as possible.

Build your curiosity capability. Focus on the questions you ask as much as the answers you give.

Find your growth mindset role models. Observe how they learn, adapt and respond to challenge.

Coach Yourself Questions

1 How can you help others adopt a growth mindset?

2 How could adopting a growth mindset help you achieve your goals?

Recommended resources



Mindset: The new psychology of success

Carol Dweck



The power of believing you can improve

Carol Dweck's TED Talk



Why curiosity is a career superskill

Squiggly Careers podcast #26

Amazing if

Squiggly Careers PodSheets

How to be a Growth Mindset manager



“ **Growth Mindset Managers** are more committed to their employees’ development, and to their own.

They give a great deal more developmental coaching, they notice improvement in employees’ performance, and they welcome critiques from their employees.



Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D

Fixed vs Growth mindsets

We all spend time in fixed and growth mindset.

As a manager, the impact of your fixed mindset not only limits your learning, but will also affect the development of the people in your team.

Growth mindset managers help everyone to achieve more.



Features of a fixed mindset

Having a fixed mindset as a manager means that you are less likely to:

- give and get feedback
- coach your team
- invest in your learning
- experiment and adapt.



4 ideas for action to become a Growth Mindset Manager

1 Develop trust within your teams

Create a high-trust environment where people can make and learn from mistakes.



How many mistakes did you make last month and what did you learn?

2 Create a culture of feedback

Honest, timely & candid feedback can encourage higher levels of resilience in teams.



How can you regularly share feedback to help your team to be at their best?

3 Embed learning into the team

Creating opportunities to reflect and learn increases how engaged people are at work.



How can you help your team to prioritise their learning at work?

4 Take a coaching approach

Coaching helps people think differently. It's a skill of asking questions & actively listening.



How much time do you spend talking vs listening? Solving vs supporting?

Coach Yourself Questions

? Which managers have been most helpful for your growth?

? What did they do that you could adopt / adapt?

Recommended resources

You Can't Be a Great Manager If You're Not a Good Coach



HBR article by Monique Valcour about the importance of having a growth mindset in leadership.

The power of believing that you can improve



Ted talk by psychologist and author of Mindset Carol Dweck.

How to respond to mistakes



Squiggly Careers episode #202

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to coach yourself

What is coaching?

Coaching helps someone to help themselves.

It's not about giving or getting advice or telling someone the 'answer'. It's about asking questions to unlock thinking and to get unstuck.

It's a process that helps you see things differently and takes reflection and thought.



You need a Growth Mindset to coach and to be coached

Are you open to learning?

Are you open to getting better?



4 coaching tools for yourself and others

- 1 Use the GROW framework:**
Using this model will give a structure to your reflection and help to generate actions.

Goal establish the goal

Reality examine your current reality

Options explore your options

Way forward Identify the way forward.

- 3 Press pause and prompt your thinking:**
Ask yourself some coaching questions to generate new thoughts about your impact and intentions.
 - What's the biggest challenge you're experiencing?
 - What does time well-spent look like for you?
 - What do you want to be known for?
 - What are you saying 'yes' to that should be a 'no'?

- 4 Create a coaching circle:**
Spending time with someone who can ask you challenging questions and give you the time to think your answers through (and vice versa) is a great way to develop your coaching skills.

Who could be in your peer coaching community?

- 2 Create clarity by journaling:**
Journaling helps you to reflect on your situation and get distance from emotions that may be clouding your clarity.

Experiment with 5 minutes of free-writing in the morning. Set a timer to write down how you're feeling and what would make the day meaningful and motivating for you.

Coach Yourself Questions

? What career conundrum could you coach yourself on?

? Where is the best place to be when you coach you?

Recommended resources



Coaching Habit

Lots of helpful tools from author Michael Bungay Stanier.



Increase your self-awareness with one simple fix

TedX Talk by Dr. Tasha Eurich



How to accelerate your self-awareness

Squiggly Careers episode #246

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to manage for the first time

Defining leadership - 3 skills

The days of command and control leadership have changed. Leadership today is about how you influence and impact inside and outside of your organisation and relies on 3 core skills:



Coaching:
knowing how to coach yourself and others.

Connections:
having the ability to take a wider view.

Communications:
Being able to communicate clearly.

“

Be you, be yourself, but be the best of you.

”

Levi Roots

10 top tips for leading for the first time

- 1 Why should anyone be led by you?**
Answering this will help you define leadership for yourself. *What are your strengths? What do you want to be known for?*
- 2 There's no such thing as perfect**
Don't set yourself up for impossible tasks in pursuit of perfection. *Celebrate small wins each month to remind you of how far you've come.*
- 3 Start with why**
Think of your role within the organisation and understand your why. *How do you inspire action?*
- 4 Involve people don't tell people**
Don't do it all yourself. Work out your why together as a team. *Involve others to get fresh and new perspectives.*
- 5 What got you here won't get you there**
Know that becoming a great manager is about changing how you spend your time. *How will your responsibilities evolve as you learn to lead?*
- 6 Avoid micromanagement traps**
Micromanaging is demotivating and limits people's ability to do their best work. *Remember to manage expectations and not tasks.*
- 7 Ask for feedback**
Start a positive feedback cycle at work by asking for feedback from others. *Use the [What went well... / Even better if...] framework.*
- 8 Celebrate team successes**
Celebrating successes regularly and in team meetings is a great way to have high impact. *Try 'win of the week' as an activity for sharing successes.*
- 9 Learn from how you've been led**
Reflect on the managers that have been meaningful to you. *What actions and approaches could you adopt?*
- 10 Connect with your peers**
Find some peers in similar situations that you can spend time with. *Who can you talk to and learn from? Could you create / join a peer support network?*

Coach Yourself Questions

- ? How would you like to be described by your team?**
- ? How can you get frequent feedback on your approach?**

Recommended resources



Nimble leadership

A useful HBR article on leadership by Deborah Ancona, Elaine Backman and Kate Isaacs.



How great leaders inspire action

Simon Sinek who explains his powerful model for inspirational leadership.



How to be a Memorable Manager

Squiggly Careers Episode #190

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to have a career conversation



The importance of career conversations

Only 16% of people have ongoing conversations about their careers.

But research shows that 8/10 of us would be more engaged in our work if we were having regular career conversations and that 75% of people would be more likely to stay in their organisation if they received ongoing professional development.



Career conversation outcomes

Tick the outcomes which apply most to you.



Sponsorship

Having someone (usually more senior) who advocates for you and your career development.



Opportunities

Having people (e.g. manager and peers) proactively spotting internal/external opportunities that you can't see yourself.



Impact

Getting feedback on your strengths to assess whether you're having the impact that you intended.

Career conversations are future-facing

vs.

Performance reviews are backward-looking

- where am I going?
- what might I need to learn?
- what can I explore?

- how have I done?
- what progress have I made?
- have I reached objectives?

Creating a distinction between the two gives more space to have an effective career conversation without the pressure of a performance review often linked to promotions / salary.

Top tips to have effective career conversations

- 1 Have career conversations regularly**
You won't solve everything in one chat, think of these as a series of conversations instead.
- 2 Talk about possibilities rather than plans**
Plans limit us to today's reality whereas possibilities encourage us to explore.
- 3 Help your manager to help you**
Scheduling conversations in advance and sharing an agenda can make them more meaningful.
- 4 Make sure you ask for feedback**
Asking for 'even better if' feedback helps make the most of your career conversations.
- 5 Career conversations can be with anyone**
Think about having career conversations with a broad network of people to get different insights.
- 6 Be clear about the what, the why, and the how**
Be intentional about what you want to learn, why, and how the person you are talking to can help.

Coach Yourself Questions

- ? What are the current career possibilities within your organisation that you'd like to explore?**
- ? Who could you have your next career conversation with? (other than your manager)**

Recommended resources



[How to reimagine retention](#)

Our article for Harvard Business Review



[The best career path isn't always a straight line](#) Our Tedx talk which has had over 1.5 million views shows how squiggly careers can be dynamic



[How to create your career criteria](#)

Squiggly Careers Episode #274

Squiggly Careers PodSheets

How to prevent procrastination



“

If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the BIGGEST one first.

Mark Twain

”

What are you putting off and why?

Why do we procrastinate?

Too hard

Scared of response

Lack of clarity

Lack of interest

Perfectionism

Too many distractions

5 Ideas to Prevent Procrastination



What is the **opportunity cost** of not doing it now vs. the positive impact of taking action?



Break up the task into smaller 25 minute intervals, using the **Pomodoro technique**



Get the small things done first to increase productivity. If it takes less than 2 minutes, do it right away e.g. replying to a quick email.



Swallow the frog! Do the things you don't WANT to do but NEED to do, first.



Remove all interruptions and distractions by going into **Monk mode** to allow focus periods to complete a task.

Coach Yourself Questions

1

Which techniques will you use to help you to avoid procrastination in future?

2

How can you and your organisation benefit from tackling the tasks you have been putting off?

Recommended resources



[How to be a Productivity Ninja](#)
Graham Allcott



[Inside the mind of a master procrastinator](#)
Tim Urban, TED Talk



[Digital Minimalism](#)
Cal Newport on the Eat, Sleep, Work, Repeat podcast

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



Job crafting - how to redesign your role

What is Job crafting?

An intentional redesign of our roles, either in a small or significant way to create more positive outcomes such as feeling more motivated and engaged.

“ Make sure that you are shaping your job, not letting your job shape you. ”

How has your role evolved over time?

Benefits for Individuals

- + Prevents you feeling stuck and stagnating.
- + Practical way of taking ownership for your career
- + Proven to increase your performance

Benefits for Managers

- + Leverages strengths of team members
- + Cost effective career development
- + Increases loyalty and retention




Ideas for Action

- 1 Redesign your role around strengths and values.**
This helps you to make the biggest impact through your work.
- 2 Propose phasing the redesign of your role**
Taking a gradual approach is a helpful way of getting buy-in.
- 3 Communicate the benefit of any changes**
Solving people's problems, creates more pull for your proposal

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1** What would like to spend more or less time on at work?
- 2** How could a change in your role benefit the business?

Recommended resources

-  [What is Job Crafting and Why Does It Matter?](#)
Michigan Ross School of Business
-  [Creating Meaning in Your Work](#)
Amy Wrzesniewski & re:Work
-  [How to build a better job](#)
The Hidden Brain podcast

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to design your work life

What does design thinking mean in our careers?

≈ Applying the same innovation process that large corporations use to create new products, to think about and shape our lives.

≈ Start from where you are now and try out different options ('prototypes') to move to where you want to be in your career.

“ **Don't resign. Redesign.** ”

Bill Burnett and Dave Evans - Authors of 'Design your Life' & 'Design your Work Life'.

How can I apply design thinking?

The **Maker's Mix** is a practical tool that reframes the belief that you must choose between money or meaning. Instead we can choose our own unique mix of 3 elements:



MONEY = Financial reward



IMPACT: Emotional reward from helping others



EXPRESSION: Emotional reward from doing something you enjoy

Using The Maker's Mix



On a scale of 1-10 score yourself on:

- A. Where you are today
- B. Where you want to be

Coach Yourself:

1 What could you do this week to move you in the direction you want to go?

2 What is one thing you are curious about and would like to try as a 'prototype'?

Recommended resources



Designing Your Work Life
Bill Burnett and Dave Evans



Career planning & design thinking
Free Coursera course to apply design thinking to your career.



Create a vision for your career
Squiggly Careers podcast episode 57

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to develop career confidence



Career confidence

≈ Belief in your value today and that your career will continue positively in the future.

Confidence transference

≈ When you have confidence in yourself, other people have more confidence in you.

What affects your career confidence?

Why career confidence matters

- + Confidence supports the strengths and speed of your resilience.
- + Confidence helps you to make braver career decisions.
- + Confidence helps you stay true to your values rather than seeking validation.




Ideas for Action

- 1 Share strengths stories**
Specific examples of how your strengths have made a positive impact at work over the last 12 months.
- 2 Develop self-supporting statements**
Positive narratives about you and your abilities that can boost your belief in challenging moments
- 3 Create your confidence community**
People that you spend time with that make you feel more confident. They know you and what matters to you,
- 4 Activate with (small) actions**
Get strengths based feedback, ask for LinkedIn recommendations, have a curious career conversation.

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1** Where do you add the most value at work?
- 2** What are you most proud of over the last 12 months?

Recommended resources

-  **The Confidence Gap**
Business Insider article about reaching peak career confidence,
-  **TED Talk: How to build your confidence**
Brittany Packnett on how to crack the confidence code.
-  **Finding Out Your Strengths**
Squiggly Careers episode 27

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

Exploring and applying for a new job



Many different and desirable versions of our future self are possible.
Learning, not performance is the outcome.



Herminia Ibarra

Reinventing Your Career in the Time of Coronavirus, Harvard Business Review

Exploring your possibilities should be a career constant

Don't save exploring your possibilities for when you are applying for a new job. Staying curious helps you to stay motivated in your career and prepares you for the unexpected.



3 ideas for exploring



Scanning

Go to LinkedIn and find at least 10 jobs you find fascinating. What are the common themes?



Admiration and inspiration

Whose career do you admire and how does their work inspire you?



Possibilities to probabilities

What are your...

- obvious possibilities?
- ambitious possibilities?
- pivoting possibilities?
- dream possibilities?

Now try to put them in priority order.

3 ideas for applying



Get help with your CV

Ask a critical friend to take a look at your CV alongside the job advert. Try helpful tools like [resume.io](https://www.resume.io)



Utilise your connections

Get in touch with contacts to learn more about the company culture and values, and to warm-up your application.



Make sure your impact is consistent

Don't forget that people look you up online. If your CV states that you are creative, make sure that this is echoed on LinkedIn and other social media.

Coach Yourself Questions

1

What is currently holding you back from exploring your possibilities?

2

What do you need to know and who can help you in exploring your possibilities further?

Recommended resources



[A Job to Love](#)
School of Life



[Ted Talk: How to make applying for jobs less painful](#)
Priyanka Jain



[Reinventing work: why you need to understand the 'self other overlap'](#)
Eat, Sleep, Work Repeat podcast

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to make successful career transitions



The difference between change & transition

Change

There is clarity about where you're coming from and where you're going to.

VS.

Transition

The messy middle where there is still lots of uncertainty and unknowns.



Act first, reflect second.



Herminia Ibarra

For over-thinkers, it's easy to get stuck in reflection, without taking any **real action**. This quote is a helpful reminder to get started...even with a small action.

Who can support you during a career transition?

3 ideas for action



Manage your mindset

Expect there to be a period of in-between that feels messy and try not to hold onto the past.

To help with all the uncertainty, make time to look after yourself. Focus on growth mindset and reflect on what you are gaining from the change.



Work your weak ties

Create opportunities by investing in more 'distant' relationships with people you don't work with closely:

1. Reconnecting with colleagues.
2. Attend events connected to your profession or passions
3. Ask people you trust to make an introduction for you.




Start small

Ask yourself: *what's the smallest thing I could do to start this transition?*

Multiple small actions help to build momentum and grow your confidence. Over time they make the transition much less daunting.

Coach Yourself Questions

 Where have you made a successful transition in the past?

 Write down 4 actions you're going to take in the next 4 weeks to support your transition

Recommended resources



[Reinventing your career in the times of coronavirus](#)

Article Professor of Organisational Behaviour Herminia Ibarra



[Identity and transition in professional careers](#)

Learn more insights in this lecture from Herminia Ibarra



[How to explore your progression possibilities](#)

Squiggly Career #220

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to prepare for your end of year review



Why do end of year reviews feel hard?

- ≈ Difficult to find the time to prepare
- ≈ You've not reflected regularly throughout the year
- ≈ Feels like a tick in the box process, not a meaningful conversation
- ≈ Messages might be hard to hear

What action did your last review inspire you to take?

5 areas of focus

- 1 Purpose:** What is the one message you'd like your manager to take from the conversation?
- 2 Personalise:** follow your organisation's process but don't be restricted. Find a way to communicate any additional messages you want to share.
- 3 Pre-empt** Have regular conversations throughout the year to avoid surprises.
- 4 Frame:** Rather than a generic ask for feedback, be specific - what's the one thing you'd like feedback on? Framing a request increases the relevance of the response.
- 5 Fit:** Pair your approach with your company culture. Ask other's what has worked well for them, particularly if you have recently joined a new organisations or team.

Ideas for Action

Look back to move forward

- When have you felt as your best?
- What are you most proud of?
- What have you learnt?

50:50 Flow

Balance the conversation between reflecting on the past vs. future.

Reflect then respond

Split the meeting into 2 parts to increase reflection time:

- Meeting 1 - share insights
- Meeting 2 - discuss actions

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1** What one word would you use to describe last year at work?
- 2** What one word would you like to describe your next year?
- 3** What support do you need and who can help you?

Recommended resources



[Year Compass](#)

Great free tool for reflection



[Review Your Year](#)

Short video to support your reflection with Marie Forleo



[How to coach yourself](#)

Squiggly Careers podcast #84

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to develop your transferable skills

Why are transferable skills important?

They are the core abilities you can take from role to role.

They increase your career resilience and adaptability in an uncertain world of work.

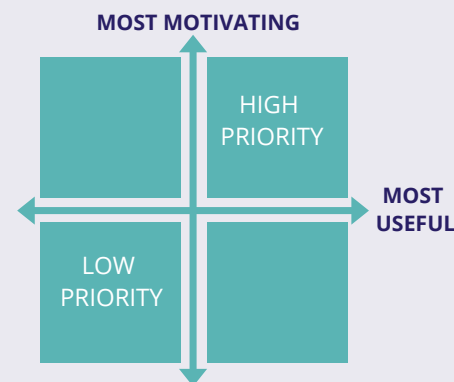
What skills have you used most in your career?

What are the most valuable transferable skills?

There isn't a definitive list as it depends on you and your career. However, these 3 questions will get you closer to clarity:

- 1 What 3 career possibilities are you most interested in?
- 2 Which transferable skills are applicable across all 3 of these career possibilities?
- 3 Which of these skills are you most motivated to invest in?

Transferable Skills Matrix



Idea for action: Break it down

Being specific about skills we want to develop can help them stand out.

- Identify a skill you'd like to develop e.g. Communication
- Write down the 'sub skills' and identify which you want to work on

Communication

Listening Storytelling Writing Speaking

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1 What could you do in your role today to develop the transferable skills that will support you in the future?
- 2 How can you keep learning and working on these skills outside of work?

Recommended resources



[Future Skills Report](#)
Pearson



[Delivering the reskilling revolution](#)
World Economic Forum



[A Reskilling Revolution](#)
Squiggly Careers Podcast

Squiggly Careers PodSheets

How to cope with overwhelm at work



We feel overwhelmed when the complexity of modern life surpasses the complexity of mind.



Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey, Harvard Professors and authors of 'Immunity to Change'

What are the first steps to take?

≈ **Spot your triggers:** Can't say no to additional requests?
≈ Are you lacking support? Are your expectations too high?

≈ **Understand the impact:** e.g. you can't sleep, you go into 'robot mode', make mistakes, feel confused or forgetful

10 actions to take back control and overcome overwhelm at work

1 Know the difference between good enough and great
Start your week by identifying tasks that need to be great. *Accept that not everything has to be perfect.*

2 Is it significant enough to sink the ship?
Prioritise where your energy goes. ask yourself if any of this is going to sink the ship. *If it is, put your energy and time into that.*

3 Say 'no' or 'not now'
if you find it hard to say no, practice the art of saying 'not now'. *Help others to understand what is time-critical and what is not.*

4 Get yourself a 'done' -list
What progress are you making on your to-do list? *Get motivated by putting a post-it on the wall when you have completed something to show progress.*

5 Release the tap on your stress bucket
if your 'stress bucket' is getting full, take the time to rest and reset. *This will feel challenging, but it's key for your resilience and just 5 minutes can help.*

6 Beware of doing it all yourself
People like helping people and we get better when we receive the help we need. *'If something can be completed 80% as well by someone else, delegate!' Jon Maxwell*

7 Adopt Can/If thinking
'I can do this / If I do that thinking' can help you prioritise and find creative solutions to your problems. *What solutions can you come up with?*

8 Get some perspective
Get somebody else's perspective on how they would manage your overwhelm. *Or try reading about something bigger than you to regain your perspective.*

9 Read / watch / listen to something new
Switching off momentarily is another way to take back control when feeling overwhelmed. *What inspiring things have you read / watched or listened to recently?*

10 Take action and declutter
Rediscover the focus you need to do your best work. *Whether its a new notebook, a tidy desk, or meditation for a clear mind.*

Coach Yourself Questions

? **What makes you feel overwhelmed at work and what impact does it have on you?**

? **What are your triggers for feeling overwhelmed and what action can you take once you spot these?**

Recommended resources



[How to Deal with Constantly Feeling Overwhelmed](#)

A useful HBR article by executive coach Rebecca Zucker on the topic of overwhelm



[The stress-bucket explained](#)

A useful explanation about the stress bucket analogy to help manage overwhelm



[How to manage your monkeys](#)

Squiggly Careers Episode #258

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to increase your energy at work

Why is energy important?

Energy gives us stamina and increases our capacity to get things done. It is important to understand the times when we feel energised and what helps us feel that way.

“ **Manage your energy, not your time** ”

Tony Schwartz and Catherine McCarthy

What is giving you the most energy at work and why?

Ideas to increase your energy at work



Write a 7 minute story:

Set your phone timer for 7 minutes and write a story about something positive that has happened this year



Radiator Relationships:

Reflect on **who** gives you energy and find ways to spend more time with them in person/virtually



Thursday Thank You's:

Every Thursday, say thank you to someone and let them know how they've had a positive impact on you



Take a phone break

Instead of habitually picking up your phone, find more active ways to take a break that will enable your brain to recharge. Going for a short walk, box breathing or stretching are all healthy ways to give your brain a break and re-energise.



WWH:

Increase your energy and motivation levels by thinking about:

WHY is this work important for the job I do?
WHY is it important for me?
HOW is this helping others?

Coach Yourself Questions

1 How could increasing your energy help you to achieve your goals?

2 Who do you know who has good energy levels and what could you learn from them?

Recommended resources



Manage Your Energy, Not Your Time

Harvard Business Review article



Why Sitting Down Destroys You

TED talk with Roger Frampton



Work Fuel Podcast

Hosted by Colette Heneghan and Graham Allcott

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to learn at work

Taking ownership for your learning can give you more control. It can act as an anchor for you in a squiggly career.

“ The more skilled you become, the more opportunities you’ll begin to notice for high-impact work. ”

- Cal Newport

What is 1 thing you want to:


...learn this year?

...unlearn this year?

...relearn this year?


Learning through...Experience

Be specific about where you want to take your knowledge from today, to where you want it to be in the future.

 Get buy-in from your manager by communicating the business benefit of your learning activity.


Learning through...Exposure

Know how you learn best and align the people you learn with and places/spaces you learn in to that.

 Reflect on your best learning experiences to date and use that to shape your future learning plan.


Learning through...Experiments

Plan something you can 'play' with in a low pressure way to support your learning. This could include trying out a new tool or testing a new technology solution.

 Thinking about experimenting with 'what' and 'how' you learn might create new ideas for action.

Learning through...Education

Curate your own curriculum by exploring things you can read, watch and listen to. Crowdsource your curriculum by asking other people to contribute their thoughts.

 Create a learning shortcut by having a go-to list of your trusted learning sources.

Coach Yourself Questions

1 Who can you learn from and with this year?

2 What could you do to make your learning stick?

Recommended resources



Learning by doing

Article: The Hyper Island Way



How to accelerate learning

Tim Ferris shares his thoughts at The Next Web Conference



The Knowledge Project Podcast

Hosted by Shane Parish (Farnham Street)

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to respond to mistakes

“ We are all going to make mistakes. Once you accept that, you can look failure in the face and build up emotional resilience. ”

Elizabeth Day, author 'How to Fail'

How does it feel when you make a mistake?

Focus on your inner coach, don't feed your inner critic



Everyone makes mistakes. They are unintended and unanticipated events that make us feel uncomfortable, but it is important to react to them in a positive way.



Adopting a growth mindset for mistakes sounds like: *'what have I learnt?'*. It helps us build resilience and move forward with confidence.

Ideas for Action

1

Say sorry - the right way

Take accountability and acknowledge your mistake but don't over-explain or over-apologise. Talk about what you'll do differently next time and show empathy/self-awareness.

2

Use a learning lens to relook at your mistakes

Think of 3 mistakes you have made:

- Is there a common theme that contributed to the mistakes being made?
- How did you respond?
- What could you do differently in future?

3

Respond vs. React Using the LEARN framework:

L - Listen to a friend or colleague's perspective
E - Explore solutions and ideas
A - Ask for help
R - Rebuild relationships/confidence
N - Next time - what would you do?

4

Share your mistake

Creating a culture of where people feel safe discussing mistakes reduces fear and helps other people to learn.

Coach Yourself Questions

1

Reflecting on a mistake you have recently made, how would you react differently in future?

2

How can you help someone else learn from a mistake you have made?

Recommended resources



How to Fail - Elizabeth Day

Inspiring stories about how to respond to failure



Mistakes & Original Ideas

Sir Ken Robinson talking about the link between mistakes and creativity.



How to respond when work goes wrong

Squiggly Careers episode #113

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to build your Personal Board

What is a Personal Board?

“ The chief distinction between finding ‘a mentor’ and creating ‘a mentor board of directors’ is that there is less pressure to find one person who represents your ideal future self. You can diversify your search criteria and learn from a variety of people.

”

Dorie Clark
(Author: *Your Career Needs Many Mentors, Not Just One*)

How could your career benefit from building your board?

The principles of a good Personal Board

DIFFERENCE

People with a range of experiences, styles and perspectives

DISTANCE

A mixture of close and weak ties

DONATING GENEROUSLY

Relationships built how what you can give, not just what you want to get.

What role are you missing?

Inspirer

Empathiser

Connector

Questioner

Challenger

Ideator

Supporter

Ideas for Action

1 Be specific about your gaps

2 Spot people who can support you

3 Be brave enough to ask for help

Coach Yourself Questions

1 What is the role you need most right now?

2 What role do you play for other people in their personal board?

Recommended resources



my.personalboard.com
A free tool to help you manage your personal board over time



[Building Your Advisory Board](#)
Lewis Howes shares his advice for building your 'dream team' (YouTube)



[Building Brilliant Relationships](#)
Squiggly Careers episode 174

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to fix feedback

Our definition



Feedback is information about your impact that helps you to improve.

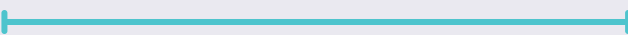


What are your biggest feedback challenges?

What gets in your way?

To get more constructive feedback....

Ask people to score your skills.

1  10

"On a scale of 1-10 how well do you think I present"
"What would it take for me to get 1-2 points better?"

This helps people to be more specific and objective in their observations and insights.

To get better quality feedback....

Frame your feedback request.

"I want to develop my skills in Could you share one thing you think I do well and one thing that I could improve on?"

This provides a focus for feedback, making it easier for people to share and more useful for you to hear.




To give feedback to your manager...

Use COIN to structure your thoughts.

- C** **CONTEXT** - what's the bigger picture?
- O** **OBSERVATIONS** - what are you seeing/ experiencing?
- I** **IMPACT** - how is it making you feel?
- N** **NEXT STEPS** - what ideas do you have to move forward?

To give feedback virtually...

Find everyday ways to increase feedback frequency

-  Win of the week over Slack/Teams
-  Share lessons learnt as a team using a virtual tool like Miro or Mural
-  Create a feedback 'buddy' system, where people spot strengths and growth areas for each other

The action I'm going to take is....

Recommended resources



[Thanks for the Feedback](#)
Douglas Stone & Sheila Heen



[How to master the art of feedback](#)
Squiggly Careers Episode #19

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to improve your emotional agility

Emotional agility

Being aware of our emotions and then choosing how to respond in a way that helps you.

Emotional rigidity

Being attached to thoughts and responses that hinder rather than help you.

How do your emotions help and hinder you at work today?

Things that affect emotional agility

Stories

Reflect on the stories you tell yourself. Are you naturally curious or critical?

Hooks

Do you blame your actions on your thoughts (*I thought she was busy so I didn't ask*) or let outgrown ideas inform your future?

Defaults

Are you more of a bottler or a brooder?

3 ways to improve your emotional agility

1

Dial up your inner coach

Increase your curiosity by asking yourself open questions. *What triggered me to feel like this? When has this happened before?*

2

Name the feeling

Labelling our feelings can help us to be more objective about our response.

3

Align your response with your values

What's most important to you? Do your thoughts and feelings reflect that?

Coach Yourself Questions

1

Who could you learn from that has a different emotional response than you?

2

What actions could you take to increase your emotional agility?

Recommended resources



[Emotional Agility: Get Unstuck, Embrace Change and Thrive in Work and Life](#)

Susan David



[Assess your emotional agility](#)

Free survey to understand your current levels of agility.



[TED Talk: The gift and power of emotional courage](#)

Insightful TED Talk from Susan David



[Managing emotions at work](#)

Squiggly Careers episode 67

Squiggly Careers PodSheets

How to have conversations that matter



“ Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply. ”

Stephen R. Covey
(Author: 7 Habits of Highly Effective People)

“ Don't leave a conversation until you have learnt something. ”

Celeste Headlee
(Author: We Need To Talk)

How has bad or good communication played a role in your work relationships?

Active listening is a process and a lifelong practice



Evaluative Listening
when you respond with judgement



Interpretive Listening
understanding only to the extent that you want to give feedback



Transformative Listening
openly engaging in an exchange of ideas, even with those different to yours.

Building Empathy

Move from a "Shift Response"



where we shift attention back to ourselves.

...to a "Support Response"



where we support statements others make in conversation.

3 ideas for better conversations

- 1 Listen first, speak second**
What we hear is more transformative than what we say.
- 2 Be present in conversation**
Making an effort is a key for quality and meaningful conversations.
- 3 Take responsibility**
Critical for building great relationships.

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1 How can you better approach conversations with curiosity?**
- 2 Which self-affirmations can you use to help you get through difficult conversations?**

Recommended resources



The Pursuit of Attention
Sociologist Charles Derber on how to increase capacity for attention-giving



Ted Talk: 10 ways to have a better conversation
Find out Celeste Headlee's best ingredients for a great conversation



How to be a brilliant listener
Squiggly Careers Episode 134

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to explore your potential

“ Fulfillment doesn't come from clearing hurdles others set for you; it comes from clearing those you set for yourself. ”

Robert Steven Kaplan
(Reaching Your Potential, published on Harvard Business Review)




How are you stretching your strengths in different situations? (see diagram below)

3 ways to stretch your strengths and uncover your potential

- 1 Develop in different directions**
Actively work at growing what you are already good at by using your strengths in different situations and making them great.
- 2 Teach others your strengths**
Knowledge-sharing makes learning last and challenges you to effectively explain what you know.
- 3 Learn from the best**
How can you actively learn from those at the top of their game? Adopt a growth mindset.






How to develop your risk-readiness when exploring your potential

-  **Recognise the risk**
Does it feel exciting?
How will it benefit you?
-  **Be realistic**
Think about the impact of the risk.
What's the worst that could happen?
-  **Have a Risk Recovery Plan**
How can you get feedback on the action you plan to take?

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1** What is it you want to explore your potential in?
- 2** What would you add to your "curiosity" curriculum?

Recommended resources

-  **The Startup of You: Adapt to the Future, Invest in Yourself, and Transform Your Career**
Reid Hoffman and Ben Casnocha
-  **Ted Talk: Why you should define your fears instead of your goals**
Tim Ferriss on fear-setting
-  **40 minute Mentor**
Be inspired by guests on this podcast.

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to make work happier

The Happiness Equation

Your happiness is equal to or greater than the difference between the events of your life and your expectations of how life should be.

“ Is there anything ever under our total control? Yes, two things are: Your actions and your attitude. ”

Mo Gawdat

(Solve for Happy: Engineer Your Path to Joy)

What are your happy habits?

Ladder-like expectations in a squiggly career can lead to unhappiness at work.

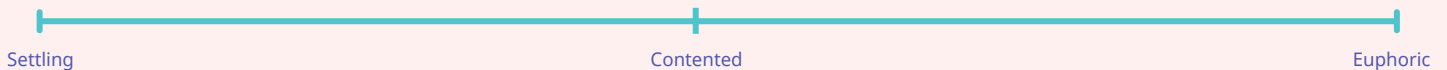
- Fixating on promotions can limit your opportunities. Explore your possibilities to find unexpected development opportunities.
- Define your own version of success. Don't be led by other people's expectations or experiences.

How to help others be happy

Put your oxygen mask on first - It's hard to help others be happy, if you are not happy yourself.

Turn empathy into compassion - Help people identify actions and support them in getting started.

On the career happiness scale below, where are you at the moment?



How to solve for happy

- 1** Understand that happiness is the absence of unhappiness
- 2** Cleanse your life of things that make you unhappy
- 3** Make happiness a daily exercise

What does future career happiness look like to you?

Recommended resources



Solve for Happy

Mo Gawdat makes global happiness his personal mission.



Ted Talk: The happy secret to better work

Shawn Achor on the relationship between success and happiness.



How knowing your values unlocks career happiness

Squiggly Careers Episode 42

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to be a meaningful mentor

“ The only metrics that will truly matter to my life are the individuals whom I have been able to help, one by one, to become better people. ”

Clay Christensen, Harvard Business School Professor

What could you offer as a mentor?

Mentoring Mindset

- ✓ **Anyone can be a mentor:** A mentor is someone you can learn from and we can all from others.
- ✓ **You don't need to know all the answers** or have the exact same career experience to be a meaningful mentor
- ✓ **You don't need to be more senior to mentor:** you can mentor anyone at any level and this can be 121 or in a group
- ✓ **A meaningful mentor can be a one-off conversation**

Do the basics

- ≈ **Safe environment:** let the mentee know the conversation will be confidential
- ≈ **Agree ways of working:** how often will you meet?
- ≈ **How can you be most helpful?** Ask the mentee to let you know in advance what topics they'd like to discuss

Mentoring Conversations

- 1 Get to know each other:** take it in turns to answer the same questions e.g. what are you most proud of? Or chat through the '4 H's' - History, Heartbreaks, Heroes, Hopes
- 2 Offer advice, not answers:** position advice as options and ideas rather than answers and ask the mentee which one works for them
- 3 Connect the dots:** outside your mentoring sessions, connect your mentee with other people, places or opportunities that could help them
- 4 Summarise:** wrap up the mentoring session by summarising the key points you have heard and confirm any actions you are committing to take to support your mentee
- 5 Reverse mentoring:** Ask your mentee to help you too! As you get to know each other you'll identify areas you can learn from them.
- 6 Option to opt out:** Ask the mentee to reflect and let you know if they would like to talk again. This makes it easier to continue or conclude the relationship rather than it fizzling out.

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1 What mentoring has meant the most to you? Who/what/why/when?**
- 2 How could you use these insights to shape your own mentoring?**

Recommended resources



Mentors: How to help and be helped
Russell Brand



How mentors change your life
Doug Stewart, TEDxRaleigh



Mentoring vs. Sponsorship
Squiggly Careers episode #115

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



Feedback and the skill of radical candor

Radical Candor

The act of challenging directly and caring personally, carried out at the same time.

“ Make sure that you are seeing each person on your team with fresh eyes every day. People evolve, and so your relationships must evolve with them. ”

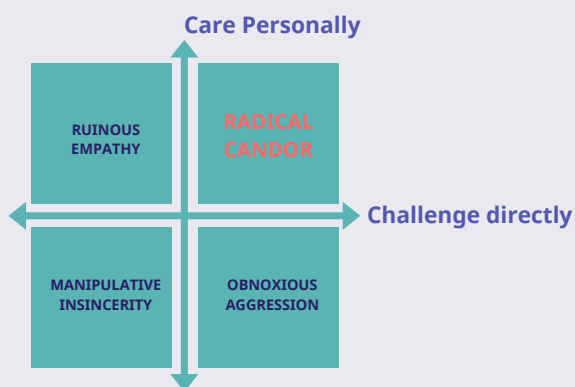
Kim Scott (Radical Candor)

How are you giving feedback at work?

How are you receiving feedback at work?

The Radical Candor Framework

Use like a compass to guide conversations to a better place.




3 ways to be radically candid with feedback

- 1 Solicit feedback first**
Lead by example by showing others the usefulness of feedback in the workplace.
- 2 Show vulnerability**
Don't dread but embrace all conversations, even the difficult ones.
- 3 Action any feedback**
And be sure to circle back.

Apply the Radical Candor approach at work

 **Locate the exit nearest to you**
Understanding your career possibilities and being bold can help you to challenge directly.

 **Being empathetic is the catalyst for change**
Asking questions from a place of learning rather than ego can help you to care personally.

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1** What does 'caring personally' look like for you?
- 2** What might 'caring personally' look like for others on your team?

Recommended resources



[Just Work, Get it done Fast and Fair](#)

Kim Scott



[Ted Talk: The Secret to giving great feedback](#)

Pointers from cognitive psychologist LeeAnn Renninger



[How to fix feedback](#)

[Squiggly Careers Episode 205](#)

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to rediscover your inspiration




“ You have to collect the dots in order to connect the dots. ”

Marlies Butterworth, Spark Unlimited

“ In a culture obsessed with measuring talent and ability, we often overlook the important role of inspiration. ”

Scott Barry Kaufman



What happens when you get more inspired

-  Your levels of creativity increase
-  You experience improved self-esteem
-  You feel more energised and optimistic




4 ideas to prime your mind for inspiration

-  **Immersive Inspiration**
Read, watch or listen to something new and different for short bursts each day. Pick a time that you can protect during the week.
 Borrow ideas from others to get new sources of inspiration.
-  **Collective Curiosity**
Broaden your perspective and make it easier to come up with ideas by getting inspired together as a team.
 Create a Slack/Teams channel as a place to share inspiration with others on your team.
-  **Instant Inspiration**
Intentionally surround yourself with sources of instant inspiration that take you away from your day-to-day norms.
 Follow inspirational pages [@vexking](#) [@newhappyco](#)
Listen to positive playlists, exercise or get doodling!
-  **Stay open, say yes!**
Say yes to things that have the potential to provide you with inspiration. Stay receptive to outside influences and ideas.
 Get involved in virtual and real-life challenges, even those that may scare you at first!

Coach Yourself Questions

-  What could you read, watch or listen to that could provide new inspiration?
-  What time of day could you commit to some intentional inspiration?

Recommended resources

-  **[There's a name for the blah you're feeling: It's called "Languishing"](#)** NY Times Article by Adam Grant
-  **[5x15 talks on YouTube](#)**
Be inspired by this varied playlist of short talks and stories
-  **[How to get inspired at work](#)**
Squiggly Careers Episode 76

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



Finding your purpose at work

Purpose

≈ A direction that you find motivating.

“ When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves. ”

Viktor Frankl
Man's Search for Meaning

3 P's to ponder in your pursuit of purpose

Process

How you can bring in tasks that will generate energy and enhance your work process?

People

How can you focus and invest more time in the relationships that inspire you and your work?

Purpose

How can you create a 'purpose story' that feels personal and meaningful for you?

Consider crafting your role

Job crafting is a bottom-up approach to finding your purpose at work

It's an opportunity to make your work, work better for you.

It's a shift from your organisation saying what your job is to you taking charge and personalising your work.



Practical actions to help you discover your purpose at work

+ 'My Best Possible Life' exercise

Spend 20 mins writing what your life would look like 10 years from now if everything went to plan. Use this to craft yourself a new 'purpose story'.

Refer back to your story regularly and identify small actions you can take to progress towards your purpose.

+ Craft your role

Reflect on the work you do that uses the strengths you want to be known for and inspires you.

Write down one way you could benefit the business by spending more time on this work. 'Sell' in your ideas to your manager.

Coach Yourself Questions

1 What motivates and lights you up at work?

2 How can you use your work as a learning platform?

Recommended resources



Turn your boring job into a job you love

Dan Cable on job crafting.



Ted Talk: Why some of us don't have one true calling

Emilie Wapnick describes how you can job craft and career craft too.



How to find meaning at work
Squiggly Careers Episode 152

Squiggly Careers PodSheets

How to redefine success in a squiggly career



“ In squiggly careers, there's no one size fits all version of success. Success is as individual as you are. ”

Helen Tupper & Sarah Ellis
Ted Talk

“ Success is liking yourself, liking what you do, and liking how you do it. ”

Maya Angelou

What did success mean at the start of your career?

What does success mean to you now?

Success; Ladders vs. Squiggles

- Success in a squiggly career is more nuanced and personal.
- Success can change over time. It can look and feel very different at different points of your career.
- You can develop in different directions. Understanding your squiggly career success statement can help to overcome career comparison.

Own your successes

Move your thinking

from... "I'll be successful when.."

to... "I've succeeded today by..."

We miss the successes we achieve in the moment when we fix our success to the future.

3 Ideas for Action



Reframe how you think about success

Move from black and white thinking to exploring the shades of grey in your career.



Create a squiggly career success vision board

Use this as a starting point.



Increase your 'circumference' of success

We find more meaning if we think about success collectively. Who can you help?

Success Self-Reflection

Are you currently living out your values?

Does your life feel purposeful right now?

Does time at work feel like time well spent?

Do you feel like you're making a positive difference?

What could you do differently to succeed in your squiggly career?

Recommended resources



The Long Win: The search for a better way to succeed

Cath Bishop on adopting a new broader approach to winning.



Ted Talk: Squiggly careers and the end of the traditional path

Watch our TedTalk encouraging you to radically rethink your career.



Discover your values

Squiggly Careers Episode 42

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to find a career sponsor



Mentorship

≈ is a gift from an experienced person who has a supportive interest in your career progression.

Sponsorship

≈ is an investment and an exchange of value with a senior person who can open doors for you at work.

What doors could a sponsor open for you?

How to find a sponsor

- 1 Identify a key person who can unlock opportunities for you.
- 2 Create the first connection by asking them to mentor you.
- 3 Turn mentors into sponsors by asking; What can I do for you?

Set Yourself Up For Sponsorship Success



Be clear about your strengths

How have your strengths made a positive impact at work over the last 12 months?



Be confident about your value

How can you uniquely use your strengths to benefit your sponsor and build the relationship?

Beware of Barriers

- ✗ Confidence Gremlins
- ✗ Lack of long-term goals
- ✗ Not being trustworthy
- ✗ Inauthenticity

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1 Who could be a potential sponsor for you?
- 2 How could your strengths help them?

Recommended resources



The Sponsor Effect

Sylvia Ann Hewlett's book on the benefits of being a sponsor.



TED Talk: How to find the person who can help you get ahead at work

Wall Street veteran Carla Harris on finding your sponsor.



How to be a meaningful mentor

Squiggly Careers episode 210

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to ask better questions at work



What stops us from asking good questions:

- Fearing that you should already know the answer
- Fearing that your question will be a hindrance or will come across as awkward

Reframe these fears into positive prompts:

- "Asking a question shows that I'm interested in learning"*
- "Asking questions leads to better outcomes"*

Why questioning is a skill worth investing in

- It helps uncover new insights.** People around you are a great source of learning. Asking questions is a way to relationship-build whilst learning.
- It demonstrates vulnerability and curiosity.** Asking questions is a practical way to increase the trust that people have in us.
- It improves our emotional intelligence.** It's a virtuous cycle that helps you develop empathy and build better connections.

What stops you asking questions?

4 Ideas for Action

- 1 Increase the quantity and quality of your questions**
What's your question tally in a conversation?
What are the quality of your open questions?
- 2 Try out these different styles of questions below:**
 - Mirroring questions** - This is where you mirror a question asked to you. It helps to build rapport in a conversation.
 - Adjoining questions** - These "What else/Who else?" types of questions help you think broadly and explore connections.
 - Elevating questions** - These questions help you take a step back and re-group. "What is the problem we are trying to solve?"
 - Deep-diving questions** - These questions help you to better understand any details. "Can you give me an example?"
 - Curious-style questions** - This is where you ask questions to shift thinking. "How might we do things differently?"
- 3 Have the confidence to ask one question at a time.**
When we ask all of our questions at once, we stop someone being able to fully think through their response. When we ask a single question and pause, we increase the attention given to each query, increasing the quality of the conversation.
- 4 Watch, listen and learn from others.**
Reflect on what you might be able to watch (e.g. Prime Minister's Questions) or listen to (Emma Barnett interviewing on Women's Hour or Elizabeth Day on the How to Fail podcast), to create a great learning environment. What can you learn from other people's approaches and styles of asking questions?

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1 What types of questions do you hear the most at work?**
- 2 Which questioning techniques do you want to try out?**

Recommended resources

- Quiet by Susan Cain**
Provides tools for introverts to take full advantage of their strengths.
- The art of asking the right questions** Video from Big Think, uploaded on YouTube
- How to Fail Podcast**
Every week, a new guest is interviewed by host Elizabeth Day

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

Progression at work



The Glass Ceiling and The Glass Cliff



The Glass Ceiling is a barrier to advancement in a profession, especially affecting women, people of colour and underrepresented groups.



The Glass Cliff goes further and is the experience of underrepresented groups taking on leadership roles only to find that chances of success have been limited before even starting.

In a squiggly career, what does progression look like for you?

Barriers to progression at work

- + The equality of information made available to people at work. *Does your organisation transparently communicate opportunities?*
- + Fear of failure and the pressure of how you might be perceived. *How does fear get in your way of seeing opportunities?*
- + Lack of active internal sponsorship. *Can you be proactively in supporting a sponsor to build a relationship?*

Ideas for Action for Individuals

- Count yourself in** - put yourself forward and don't discount yourself from opportunities to develop your progression potential.
- Be proactive** - build relationships with potential sponsors.
- Shine alongside your support system** - The 'Shine Theory' is a practice of mutual investment in each other. Find your community and collaborate to create more progression possibilities.

Best piece of career advice

“ Be brave. If you feel like you are almost ready. Put yourself forward. Don't count yourself out.

Sophie Williams ”

Ideas for Action for Organisations

- Understand that not all barriers to progress are made equal** - examine unconscious bias.
- Make support available to everyone.**
- Representation is important** - not as a quota but as a watch-out. Develop processes to review career possibilities for underrepresented groups.

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1 How could develop in a different direction at work?
- 2 How could you support someone else with their progression?

Recommended resources

- Millennial Black by Sophie Williams**
A motivational guide to success for black women at work
- The rigged test of leadership**
Sophie William's Tedx Talk about the challenges of the glass cliff
- How to find a career sponsor**
Squiggly Career Ask the Expert Podcast episode 215

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to create rituals at work



What is the difference between routines and rituals and why do they matter?



Routines are actions that need to get done quickly and efficiently. They keep us grounded and provide a rhythm to our day-to-day.



Rituals are more meaningful than routines and have a real sense of purpose, keeping us focused on the experience of the task. They help us to be more mindful.



While routine aims to make the chaos of everyday life more containable and controllable, ritual aims to imbue the mundane with an element of the magical.



**Maria Popova,
Founder of Brain Pickings**

Rituals can be individual or collective

≈ **Something you do for you** ≈ **Something you do as a team**

- Taking time for breakfast
- Taking a walking break
- Reading before bed.

- Mindful moments in meetings
- Sharing wins of the week
- The way you welcome new people

What is a ritual you have today?

5 Ideas for Action

Ritual reflection

Think about the rituals that already exist for yourself or within your organisation.

Why do they matter?

Put your feelings first

You can have rituals that energise or rituals that help you to recover. Putting your feelings first can help you find the right ritual for you.

What would you like to feel more of?

Redefine existing routines

Think about what you already do as a routine and how you could add more meaning to turn it into a ritual.

What are your 5 most repeated routines?

Consider remote rituals

Recognise that in-person rituals may not be possible right now. Reclaim what rituals might look like for you and your team in a virtual space.

How can your team intentionally make time for rituals?

Coach Yourself Questions

1 What one 'feeling' would you like more of?

2 How could you create more moments of meaning in your day?

Recommended resources



The Little Book of Daily Rituals
Vicki Vrint



The routines, rituals and boundaries we need in stressful times A TED conversation with Esther Perel on YouTube



Ask The Expert: Habits with James Clear
Squiggly Careers podcast #180

Squiggly Careers PodSheets

How to find role models at work



“

You can't be what you can't see.

”

Marian Wright Edelman

What might you be missing in your career that you need to be role modelled?

3 ways role models can help you in your career



Role models can help you see the art of the possible.



Role models can be a source of inspiration to boost your belief.



Role models can help you activate your ambition.

Types of role models



Personal role models: these include people you know intimately.



Situational role models: people connected to your career or life context.



Aspirational role models: aspirational people whose stories might help you reach your future desired state.

5 Ideas for Action to find the best role model for you

1

Work out what you're missing: starting with the inspiration you need can help you to focus on the role models you might need most right now.

2

Be open to who and where your role models might be: spending time with new people in new places can help you find a range of role models.

3

Find your resilience role models: these are role models who have found their way through a situation you relate to. Their experience can increase your grit and confidence.

4

Know you are your anti-role models?: being clear of what behaviours you don't aspire to can be as helpful as finding the people you admire. Anti-role model insights can give you a greater sense of identity of what you want to be known for.

5

Avoid role model reliance: try to have multiple role models across the types rather than relying on a single role model in your career. Think about who these role models are and what you admire about them. Collate your insights into a role model mood board.

Coach Yourself Questions

1

Who could you add to your role model moodboard?

2

What do you admire most about these role models? What can you learn from them?

Recommended resources



Mirror Thinking: How Role models make us human

Fiona Murden



Who inspires you? Why heroes, role models, and mentors matter Dyan deNapoli, TedX



Don't tell me the score Podcast

A podcast that uses sport to explore life's bigger questions. This episode provides lots of role model moments for Sarah.

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to explore your progression possibilities



Key principles of progression

- ≈ Progression doesn't just mean promotion
- ≈ Everyone can develop in different directions
- ≈ People progress at their own pace
- ≈ There is no 'blueprint' for a successful career

Why is progression important to you?

4-stage process to help you explore your progression possibilities

stage
1

Develop a mind map of your possibilities

Brainstorm all the ways you might be able to progress in your career. Take off the career constraints and think about what your progression possibilities might look like.



Could you embark on a career pivot? Could you look outside your organisation?

stage
2

Prioritise your possibilities

Don't progress for progression's sake. Instead, reflect on why progression is motivating for you. Connect your values to a vision for your future that feels meaningful.



Use your values as a reflection point. How can you grow and stretch in a new direction?

stage
3

Prototype your progression priorities

Explore the ideas generated from your mind map. Which do you get most excited or energised about and which feel more relevant and realistic for you right now?



Rank your top 3 progression possibilities.

stage
4

Signal the support you need

Remember that others can support and influence your progression possibilities. Showing your commitment to your career growth creates commitment from others.



Involve others you trust in your thinking. Who could you learn more about your priority possibilities?

How to respond when your progression doesn't go to plan



Acknowledge your emotions but focus on the actions that will help you to make positive progress.



Start small and specific. Think about what's in your control and start there.



Don't be afraid to reach out and spend time with people who will inspire you.

Coach Yourself Questions

1

Whose career progression are you inspired by?

2

What can you learn from their journey?

Recommended resources



[The Long win: The search for a better way to succeed](#)

Cath Bishop



[The Secret Leaders Podcast on YouTube](#)

Hear founders' stories about the realities of being an entrepreneur today



[How knowing your values unlocks career happiness](#)




Squiggly Careers Episode 42

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to reimagine your role



Invest in 3 different relationships:

-  **Reactive Relationships.** These often develop following short-term networking opportunities which are often in the moment. They can create career momentum.
-  **Reciprocal relationships.** These mutually beneficial relationships are likely to last over the long term and are built on common interests and understanding of each others aims and aspirations.
-  **Random relationships.** Spending time with new people in new places can spark new ideas and create unexpected opportunities.

How could you better cultivate relationships in your career?




Get involved with your Alumni network (university / past employers)

Volunteer for internal projects / communities of interest

Self-organise an event outside of work around an area of passion

Other

Barriers to reshaping your role or career

-  Not having the right mindset.
How can you adopt a growth mindset to reimagine your role?
-  Lack of self-motivation and not seizing opportunities.
How can you be more intentionally curious in your career?
-  Not being open to the process of learning.
What are you learning for the first time this year?

“

Reinvention is almost never a one time, fix-it-and-you're-done job. Instead, it's a way of life and a habit we can build.

”

Dorie Clark

Ideas for Action



Visualise your career without constraints. What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? Create a vision board of images, quotes and pictures that reflect your dream career.



Devote 20% of your time to experimental projects. Find the win/win for your company of spending time on new projects that increase your impact and accelerate your learning.

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1** Who do you know who has reimaged their career?
- 2** What can you learn from their approach?

Recommended resources



Reinventing You: Define Your Brand, Imagine Your Future
Dorie Clark



How to future-proof your career Dorie Clark's Tedx Talk about the benefits of a portfolio career in an uncertain world.



A re-skilling revolution?
Squiggly Career Ask the Expert Podcast episode 183

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to manage ego at work



It's the sense of superiority and certainty that exceeds the bounds of confidence and talent.



Ryan Holiday

When have you experienced ego at work?

Understanding your ego

Which of the following statements feel familiar to you?

1. You get defensive when someone disagrees with you
2. More people feed your ego than give you feedback
3. You rarely change your mind
4. You need other people to give you praise
5. You view your career in comparison to others
6. You're more likely to think you're right than you're wrong

Your ego is most likely to show up when...

3 ideas for action to manage your ego

1

Listen:Talk Ratio

Make sure you're spending more time listening to what other people are saying than sharing your own views.

2

Cultivate Critical Friends

Seek out people who give you radically candid feedback and improve your self-awareness.

3

Learn to let go

Identify the assumptions you make about what you need to do and by when. What really happens when you do something different?

3 ideas for action to manage someone else's ego

1

Crowd-sourcing perspectives

Create 'challenge and build' meetings and introduce 'pre-mortems' to proactively include other people's thoughts and insights and prevent one person dominating the discussion.

2

We vs. I

Spend time agreeing collective outcomes and celebrate shared successes. Encourage a 'rush and point' mentality.

3

Manage your mindset

Don't internalise someone else's ego. Reinforce your boundaries by giving them space and gravitating towards people who operate with humility.

Recommended resources



Ego is the Enemy

Bestselling book by Ryan Holiday



Abby Wambach & Brene Brown

Explaining the principle of 'rush and point'



How to be a brilliant listener

Squiggly Careers podcast #134

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

Kickstart your career



Career development doesn't have to be time consuming. There are lots of small and simple actions you can take to invest in yourself and give you a greater feeling of ownership.

We believe there are 5 core career skills that can help everyone and we've shared some insights and ideas for action to support you with these skills.

Strengths



The things that energise you and that you want to be known for.



Ask 3 people to share when they see you at your best.

Stretch a strength by using in a new way or with new people.

Values



The things that make you, you and matter most in your work and life.



Collect images that visualise the things that matter to you.

Use the common themes to reflect on your work today.

Confidence



The self- belief that guides your growth and builds your bravery at work.



Create a pride postcard to focus on what's gone well.

Write down one daily success each day for a week.

Network



The community you create to support your career development.



Grow your giving by doing a daily '5 minute favour'

Be an advocate of someone's work and share their impact.

Future



The ability to explore possibilities and define your own version of success.



Think what you want to be true at work in 6 months time?

Have a curious conversation about someone's career.

Coach Yourself Questions

1 Which of the 5 skills needs the most attention right now?

2 How can you stay committed to your career development?

Recommended resources



[Squiggly Career Knowledge Navigator](#)

Free resources to help you grow



[Build better relationships](#)

Helen & Sarah share insights



[DIY Career Development](#)

Squiggly Careers #69

Squiggly Careers PodSheet


How to negotiate for what you need




"If knowledge is power, then information is influence"


Chris Voss, *Never Split the Difference*

How emotions impact negotiation


 Negative emotions reduce our clarity. Fear, frustration and anger can reduce your influence.

To reduce negative emotions:


 Take a break. Stand up to get a drink or go to bathroom. Create a moment to breathe.

 Positive emotions lead to smarter negotiations. They broaden your mind and increase creative thinking.


To increase positive emotions:

 Think about the benefit of what you can learn not just what you want to 'win'.

Coach Yourself Questions


 How does the thought of negotiating make you feel?

4 negotiation tactics to try out

 **Call out the elephant in the room**
Show 'tactical empathy' by proactively discussing things that are difficult for the person you are negotiating with.




Find the dead ends
Certainty trumps uncertainty. Finding out what's not possible can help you get clearer on what is.


 **Work your words**
Manage your tone, volume and pace to influence the other person's response.




Summarise their argument first
By presenting their perspective, you can take control of the conversation.


Coach Yourself Questions

 How could you increase your value to the person you are trying to influence?

 How could focusing a negotiation on learning, rather than losing, change your approach?

Recommended resources

 [How positive emotions help](#)
HBR article on the link between positivity and creative thinking

 [Masterclass with Chris Voss](#)
Free 1 hour discussion

 [How to negotiate with impact](#)
Squiggly Careers episode 92

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to be a better problem solver



The problem with problems....



Problems often feel unfamiliar or unexpected. In a squiggly career, they can create:

Ambiguity

Complexity

Knotty moments

The more tactics you have to solve problems, the more quickly you can respond to hurdles that might hold you back.

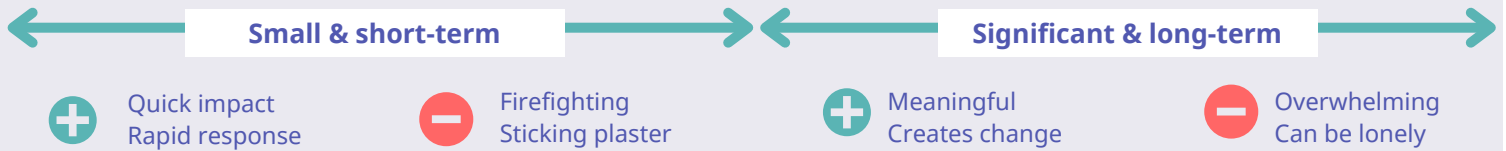
“

You can never solve a problem on the level on which it was created.

”

Albert Einstein

What problems do you spend most time solving?



Ideas for Action - pick an approach that is appropriate for your problem

- Practice Curious Questions**
Your goal is to improve your ideas. Probe solutions that you've already thought of by asking questions, inviting challenges and generating new options.
- Aim for imperfection**
Embrace the ambiguity and uncertainty that comes with it. You can acknowledge the unknowns and still move a solution forward. Seeking perfection hinders progress.
- Be a fly on the wall**
Generating a different perspective on your problem by creating distance can unlock your thinking. Ask yourself; how would someone else on your team approach it?
- Treat is as trial and error**
Get into a "beta-testing" mode by testing different solutions and collecting data on what works and what doesn't. See problems as work-in-progress.
- Seek cognitive diversity**
Different perspectives on problems can create innovative solutions. Think about who could invite to contribute new thinking to your problem.
- Get fast feedback**
The sooner you put your solution in front of someone, the quicker you get feedback and buy-in. *"If a picture is worth a thousand words, a prototype is worth a thousand meetings."* - IDEO

Coach Yourself Questions

- ?** Which of the above actions come naturally to you?
- ?** What could you do differently next time you're faced with a problem?

Recommended resources

- Rebel Ideas: The Power of Diverse Thinking**
Matthew Syed
- Creative problem solving in the face of extreme limits**
An inspiring TED talk from innovation strategist Navi Radjou
- Unlocking creativity at work**
Squiggly Careers #51

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to approach hybrid working

Finding freedom within a framework

Hybrid working gives people freedom and flexibility over where their work is done. It shouldn't matter where you are, for how your work is evaluated.

However, there are questions about how to make hybrid work fairly for everyone and more insight is needed into the longer-term impacts on organisational culture and belonging at work.



? What could hybrid look like for you?

The role of the manager has evolved.

Today's manager...



Creates a culture of psychological safety



Personalises approach to individuals in their teams



Continually adapts to the changing world of work

“ In order to do it right, you need to remove the privilege or “brownie points” associated with presenteeism, and focus less on style and more on substance. ”

Dr. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic

Ideas for Action for those implementing new modes of work

1 Create flexible, not fixed frameworks
There is unlikely to be a 'perfect' solution. Approach hybrid working with an open-mind. Experiment, learn and adapt.

2 Personalise hybrid working
Start by asking how people would prefer to work and give people options and ownership over what they can personalise e.g. number of days in the office.

3 Introduce structure by co-creating with teams
Some structure is still needed, whatever that looks like for your teams. Co-create a new code of work to give clarity and consistency to how the team works.

4 Relook at rewards
Impact and outcomes are more important than hours worked and number of outputs achieved. Make sure performance metrics measure what matters.

Coach Yourself Questions

? What could hold hybrid working back for you?

? How could your team or organisation approach a test and learn approach to hybrid working?

Recommended resources



Thriving in the age of hybrid work
Dr. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic



Teaming: How Organizations Learn, Innovate, and Compete in the Knowledge Economy
Amy C. Edmondson



Why do so many incompetent men become leaders? Provocative talk by psychologist Dr. Tomas



Psychological Safety with Amy C. Edmondson Squiggly Careers Ask the Expert #151

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to find your work/life fit

Achieving Balance vs. Finding Fit



Achieving the perfect balance implies reaching a level of perfection that doesn't exist. It creates pressure and leads to comparison "if they can do it all, then why can't I?"



'work/life fit' focuses on finding out what is most important for you right now and fitting together the pieces of your work and life in the best way for you.



How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your work/life fit?

“ There is a vital difference between managing time and managing work: work is infinite, time is finite. ”

Jim Collins, *Beyond Entrepreneurship 2.0*

3 Ideas for action to find your fit

1 Fix and flex your fit: Don't get too rigid or fixed on rules as it can create resistance and stress in a squiggly career.
Reflect on what you can fix and how you can be flexible with it.

2 Identify your mis-fit flags: Work out the signals which help you know when your work/life fit isn't working.
Share these mis-fit flags with someone you trust to notice it.

3 Name the work/life conflicts that are out of your control: Identify what is creating any challenge in achieving your desired work/life fit. Ask yourself these questions:

- ? *What would a good / better / best outcome look like for me?*
- ? *Who could I learn from that has experienced the same?*
- ? *What compromises would I be willing to make to move forward?*

More Coach Yourself Questions

- ? **What might your work/life fit look like for you this week?**
- ? **Who are the people around you that could support or sponsor your work/life fit this week?**

3 mindset principles



1. Accepting that your work/life fit might be a work in progress.



2. Knowing that finding your fit will mean making choices and trade-offs.



3. Understanding your work/life fit is personal to you and not falling into the comparison trap.

Tactics to improve your fit



Helen says: Look at times when you can multi-task to double the value of your time (e.g. commute + podcast).



Sarah says: When a situation is out of your control, try to "let it go". This creates a mental shift that helps you see any alternatives / options.

Recommended resources



Invisible Work

John Howkins on how to find your fit in a new world of work



TED Talk: How to gain control of your free time

Laura Vanderkam on how to best manage your 168 hours a week.



How to manage boundaries

Squiggly Careers episode #121

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to be a changemaker

Channeling your inner changemaker

A changemaker is anyone who has an ambition or who is already making change happen where they are, big or small.

Everyone has the potential to become a changemaker, it isn't an aspiration that is out of reach for anyone.

“

You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.




”

C.S. Lewis

Framework for change

Projection	Personal	Progress	People	Positive Impact
				
Set your own vision of success.	Commit to a change you care about	Be intentional about your action.	Seek out sponsors and supporters.	Recognise your impact.
				
What is the change you want to see?	What is your biggest motivation?	What's your next best action?	Who believes in you and what you do?	What metrics are meaningful?

Coach Yourself Questions

-  What is the change you're inspired to make?
-  Which of the 5 areas are key for you to consider?
-  How can you stay committed to the change?

Recommended resources



Change framework

A free resource with prompts for the 5 Ps for change and coach yourself questions



How to be an upstander instead of a bystander

Business leader Angélique Parisot-Potter shares insights



How to increase your social impact

Squiggly Careers episode #89

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to collaborate at work



Cracking the code of collaboration

“ When most organisations strive to increase collaboration, they approach it too narrowly: as a value to cultivate—not a skill to teach ”

Francesca Gino, Behavioral Scientist

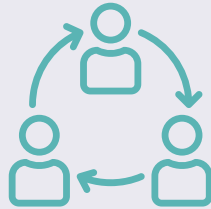
Rank your collaboration skillset

from 1- highest to 6- lowest

Listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowing when to lead & follow	<input type="checkbox"/>
Empathy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communicating with clarity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	Looking for win-win objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>

6 skills that contribute to high, positive and useful collaboration in teams

- ✓ Listening
- ✓ Empathy
- ✓ Feedback
- ✓ Leading and following
- ✓ Communicating with clarity
- ✓ Looking for win-win objectives and outcomes



The 3 principles of collaboration

- Be intentional about your collaboration**
Teams that are intentional are 3x more likely to achieve high innovation.
What one action can you take in the next month?
- Reinvent the why and not the wheel**
Focus on why you are coming together, use tech, tools and templates to make it easier
What tools can you use? (Mural, Miro...)
- Seek frequent feedback**
Regularly reflect on how you are collaborating
How can you experiment and stay open to ideas?

3 ideas for action

- 1 Assess your skills (above)**
How skilful are you and where can you improve?
- 2 Gather feedback**
Get feedback from your team and compare results
- 3 Take ownership**
What can you do differently?

Coach Yourself Questions

- How does your team currently collaborate?
- What are the biggest improvements that could be made?

Recommended resources

- [Cracking the Code of Sustained Collaboration](#) HBR article on tools for helping people work together better by Francesca Gino
- [The new power of collaboration](#) Great tips in this Ted Talk from Howard Rheingold
- [Ask The Expert: Psychological Safety with Amy Edmondson](#) Squiggly Careers Episode #151

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to know when to lead and when to follow



Leadership is....

“ ...making others better as a result of your presence and making sure that impact lasts in your absence.

Sheryl Sandberg

Followership is....

“ ...committing to support a purpose, principle, or person outside of yourself.

Amazing If

Flexing your leader and follower mode

We increase everyone's impact when we are able to effectively switch between the modes of leader and follower in a team.



Flexing modes help you to collaborate better

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."
- Helen Keller



Flexing modes helps you to scale and sustain impact

"He who cannot be a good follower cannot be a good leader"
- Aristotle



What would you find challenging about flexing your mode?

3 ideas for action for effective leader mode

1

Set direction together

Reflect on how you can have positive impact and how you can measure success.

Involve don't solve

2

Give space and support

Understand when it's effective to land, take-off and 'hover' when leading.

Ask yourself, how involved do you want to be?

3

Communicate with clarity

Increase follower focus by being clear and consistent in your communications.

What's the 1 thing you want people to remember?

3 ideas for action for effective follower mode

1

Manage yourself well

You can still take initiative, act with autonomy and respond proactively as a follower.

Anticipate and respond to blockers that may get in the way.

2

Build your competence and credibility

Followers increase their impact when they bring unique skills and expertise.

How can you fill a gap that your leader has got?

3

Communicate with honesty

Don't be afraid to give feedback to improve outcomes.

Use IF/THEN to frame your feedback- IF our objective was [xxxxx], THEN I think [xxxx] is counter to that outcome.

Recommended resources



Stanford Social Innovation

Review How followership can help form strong partnerships



A guide to collaborative

leadership Business leader Lorna Davis on why we need "radical interdependence" to make real change happen.



How to re-discover your

beginners mindset
Squiggly Careers podcast #185

Amazing if

www.amazingif.com

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to tackle uncertainty



The science behind uncertainty...



Our brains want to keep us safe and often view uncertainty as a threat.

A fear response can trigger anxiety and stop us taking positive action.



We can retrain our brain to see uncertainty as an opportunity.

Uncertainty can increase empathy, enhance decision-making and increase problem-solving abilities.

Reflect on your response to uncertainty



How do you feel about risk?



How comfortable are you with ambiguity?



How often do you engage situations that feel uncertain?

What does this tell you about your uncertainty tolerance?



Uncertainty creates high arousal in our brains, which improves our ability to gather information and increases our opportunity for learning.

Ideas for action



Collaborate with people who work and think differently to you

Counter-intuitive modelling occurs when we spend time with people who challenge our views, beliefs and assumptions. It feels much more comfortable to work with people who think like us, however spending time with people who test your thinking is a great way to increase your tolerance for uncertainty.



Trust your gut

Combining feelings and knowledge gives human-beings a unique decision making ability. Next time you face an uncertain situation ask yourself - *what do I **think** are my options and how do I **feel** about those choices?*

Coach Yourself Questions



What opportunities could you create for your career if you increased your tolerance to uncertainty?



Who could you spend time with that works/thinks very differently to you?

Recommended resources



[Uncertainty Experts: Lockdown lessons from life inside](#)

An exploratory essay by Uncertainty Expert Sam Conniff



[Leading and leaving the London gang world](#)

Be inspired by Uncertainty Expert Karl Lokko's TedX talk



[How to cope with career change and uncertainty](#)

Squiggly Careers podcast #150

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



Time and how to use it

Redefining our relationship with time

We live in a world of infinite inputs but we are finite individuals.

Our relationship with time can often feel like a game of tug of war. Something has got to give and tough choices have to be made for us to use our time more efficiently.



"Kondo" your To-Do List



“ Letting go is even more important than adding. ”

Marie Kondo

Ideas for action



Stick with projects to make better progress

Identify 1 major goal to complete in each area of your work, up to a maximum of 5.



Resist the urge to multi-task major goals.



Limit your work-in-progress

Create an open and closed to-do lists. Open lists have unlimited entries. Closed lists have a maximum of 5 to focus attention.



Only move tasks into your closed to-do list when a slot is free.



Consider how you could evolve your relationship with time:



PAST *What productivity problems have I had?*

PRESENT *How do I spend my time today?*

FUTURE *What can I do to better maximise my time?*

Best piece of career advice



If there is something you want to do with your life, you should probably do it.

Realise that the people you think you're going to disappoint will not be or maybe their disappointment is a price worth paying.



Oliver Burkeman

Coach Yourself Questions



What are the 5 most important tasks on your to-do list?



What does 'time well spent' mean to you?

Recommended resources



Four thousand weeks

Exploration of our relationship with time from journalist and author Oliver Burkeman



The Psychology of Time

Psychologist Philip Zimbardo on recalibrating our outlook on time to improve our lives



How to get practical with your productivity

Squiggly Careers Podcast #176

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



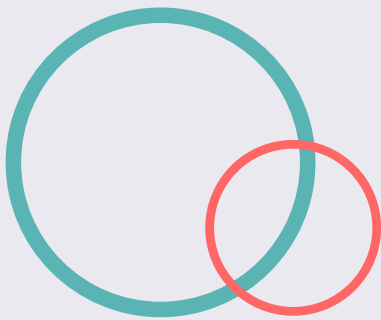
How to think, feel and act with influence

“ You can influence, direct and control your own environment. You can make your life what you want it to be.

Napoleon Hill

? How could increasing your influence help you?

Consider your circles of concern and influence



Your circle of concern: is everything you worry about, often things beyond your control.

Your circle of influence: is often smaller and contains the things that you can control.

When you act on your Circle of Influence you are able to reduce stress because you can initiate and influence change.

The power of influence

Our level of influence gets filtered through:

- ≈ **what we say and how we say it.** The words we use to share what we are thinking and the tone we use.
- ≈ **what others see:** everything that isn't words, our non-verbal communication, eye contact, our physical appearance

3 Ideas for Action to increase your influence

1 Watch a video of yourself
Ask yourself, "What am I trying to improve?" and focus on how you can get better. *Get perspective by gaining feedback from other people too .*

2 Use pauses when talking
Use silence strategically by getting rid of distracting filler words during conversations or presentations. *Replace filler words with silence.*

3 Test influence vs. impatience
Practice your influencing skills with someone you know who is impatient. How do you get, hold and lose their attention? *Reflect and experiment with different approaches.*

Coach Yourself Questions

? What's in your circle of influence?

? Who could be a good feedback friend to help you understand the impact of your influence?

Recommended resources



Making your voice heard: How to own your space, access your inner power and become influential Connon Chou Locke



Your body language may shape who you are Amy Cuddy's influential Ted Talk on the benefits of power posing.



How to be influential Squiggly Careers Podcast #68

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to lead with authenticity



What leadership looks like now....

Leadership is how you energise your people towards your vision - it has emotional intelligence at its core.

Today's leaders demonstrate kindness, care, and humanity - they are not afraid to be vulnerable, honest or transparent and they own up to their mistakes.


Leadership is not about levels - we can all develop the skills to be effective leaders.

? What does leadership mean to you?

3 ideas for action

1 Create an environment where others can flourish.

Authentic leadership isn't about your position on an organisational chart it's about how you energise and bring people together to achieve a shared outcome.

 *How can you adapt the way you work to energise others?*

2 Share your mistakes and what you learnt

Creating an environment where people feel safe to fail increases team performance. Be prepared to be vulnerable and be open in sharing your mistakes.

 *How can you create space for more honest conversations?*

3 Build your leadership around your strengths

There is no one-sits-suit-all style of leadership. Focus on finding a style that feels authentic to you

 *How can your strengths help others to succeed?*

Best piece of career advice

“ Become a leader by being authentically you. Be the best version of you that you can possibly be. ”

René Carayol

A leader is someone...

- ✓ ...you can trust
- ✓ ...you believe in
- ✓ ...whose vision you want to belong to.



Coach Yourself Questions

? What 3 words would you like people to use to describe your impact at a leader?

? How could you develop your leadership skills in the next 12 months?

Recommended resources



[Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More Than IQ](#)

A groundbreaking book by Daniel Goleman



[The crisis of leadership - and a new way forward](#)

Insightful conversation between change catalyst Halla Tómasdóttir and Ted Talk curator Bryn Freedman



[How to use emotional intelligence at work](#)

Squiggly Careers Podcast #148

Squiggly Careers PodSheets

How to develop your storytelling skills



We are all hardwired to tell and listen to stories. Storytelling at work creates connection and strengthens relationships.

Storytelling is a skill to learn and practice, no matter our level of experience or role.



? Sharing your story

What's one thing your work colleagues don't know about you?



Be willing to be daring, to go into the unknown.



- Bobette Buster

Limiting beliefs about storytelling

- "I don't have any stories to tell"
- "The stories I have aren't interesting"
- "People aren't going to care about my story"

Dare to share your personal experience

Everyone has a story to tell. Knowing your story helps break down barriers. The more stories we tell, the more we reach common ground.



Reflect on your story and act on any impulses to share your story with others.

Turn storytelling into a shared experience

Taking time to listen to others and then letting the other person listen to you in turn, helps create a feeling of community and connection.



Create space for stories everyone can tell. Start with a proudest moment and a failure story.

Tell stories authentically

Authentic stories help you and the other person relate to each other on a human level. Authenticity trumps a perfectly crafted story every time.



Think about how the feelings your story create come across in your words, tone and expressions.

Coach Yourself Questions

- How can you find more moments for storytelling at work?**
- What could you do to improve your storytelling skills?**

Recommended resources



[How to tell your story so the world listens](#)

An insightful read from story consultant, lecturer and screenwriter Bobette Buster



[The radical act of storytelling](#)

Bobette Buster's Tedx talk suggesting useful storytelling tools



[How to use storytelling at work](#)

Squiggly Careers Episode #112

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to define your own success



“ Success is a journey, not a destination.
The doing is often more important
than the outcome.

Arthur Ashe

Reflect on what success means to you...

- ? What is the work you love to do?
- ? Who do you love to work with?
- ? What does having a positive impact through your work mean to you?
- ? What rewards feel meaningful and motivating for you?
- ? How do you feel about the work you are doing at the moment?
- ? What could you do to reflect more regularly on your successes?

Ideas for action

1 Make your dreams tangible
If you were to visualise success, what would it look like? Find an image that brings it to life and generate ideas for how you could make it a more tangible reality.



Could you go and see the dream house?
Shadow someone in the dream role?
The closer it seems, the less it feels just like a dream.

2 Focus on every day actions
Even if your dreams feel big, make sure your goals are specific and simple.



To identify actions, think about obstacles that might hold you back and what help you need from others.

3 Prioritise learning
Not every action you take will result in success. Failure can help you move forward too.



Keep a 'learn as you grow' log to reflect on how far you've come and give you to confidence to keep going (and growing).

“ Failure is a signal. Not a full stop. ”
Amazing If

Recommended resources



The Business Survival Kit: Your No-BS Guide to Success

Bestseller by Bianca Miller Cole and Byron Cole.



Success is a continuous journey

Ted talk from marketer Richard St. John reminds us that success is not a one-way street.



How to redefine success in a squiggly career

Squiggly Careers Episode #214

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to be a learn-it-all



Learn-it-all vs. know-it-all

The ability to be a learn-it-all is crucial to our success in squiggly careers. It allows us to be adaptable to the inevitable changes in the world of work. Today's leaders are seeking individuals that can **learn, unlearn and relearn**.



The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn



Alvin Toffler

An Infinite Learning Curve

Learn



Make learning part of your everyday development.

Learning is never 'done'

- 1 Carry out regular learning experiments. What could you test and learn from? Can you enlist other people in trying things out for the first time?
- 2 If time is a barrier for learning, try creating collective learning moments. TED x Talk is a great way to learn together in team meetings (watch a TED talk and discuss your thoughts together).

Unlearn



"What got you here, won't get you there"
- Marshall Goldsmith

Challenge what you know

- 1 Connect with people who have opposite experiences to you. This will enable you to see differently.
- 2 Ask yourself propelling questions:
 - *Imagine it's 2030, what 3 significant changes have happened in your industry?*
 - *Which of your strengths would be most useful if your organisation doubled in size?*

Relearn



We need to relook at what we know so it's still relevant as we grow.

Relearning increases relevance

- 1 Look for opportunities to stretch your strengths outside of your day-to-day role.
- 2 Get some fresh-eyes feedback. Ask people what they think you do well and how they feel you could be 'even better if...'

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1 What is your biggest learning opportunity?
- 2 How can you overcome your biggest learning blocker?

Recommended resources



How to be a learn-it-all

Helen and Sarah's Harvard Business Review article is full of practical tips



The power of believing that you can improve

Carol Dweck's Ted Talk on the idea that we can grow our brain's capacity to learn & solve problems



How to learn at work

Squiggly Careers episode #201

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to work your 'weak' ties

The strength of 'weak' ties

If strong ties are people that know you well and support or sponsor you in some way, 'weak' ties are casual contacts that you are connected to you by a common interest.



'Weak' ties are invaluable for learning, growing and creating new career possibilities.

How have you developed your 'weak' ties in the past?

3 ways 'weak' ties can help you in your career

- Weak' ties can help build bridges to new networks and opportunities.
- 'Weak' ties are great go-tos for career pivot guidance
- 'Weak' ties accelerate your learning

“ When it comes to finding out about new jobs - or, for that matter, new information, or new ideas - "weak ties" are always more important than strong ties.”

Mark Granovetter

5 Ideas for Action to help you work your 'weak' ties

- 1 Find communities that are connected by curiosity:** Finding communities that exist already makes it easier for you to connect. Follow your curiosity.
- 2 Reconnect with a past relationship:** Think of people with whom you've had a good connection. Reach out for a chat even if you haven't been in touch for a while.
- 3 Move from your strong ties to new 'weak' ties:** Leverage your network of strong ties to introduce you to new 'weak' ties. Let them know what you'd like to learn about and if they 'know anyone who...'
- 4 Say yes when you normally might say no:** Connecting with weak ties requires intentional effort and it can feel awkward to talk to people for the first time. The more you say 'yes' to opportunities to meet new people in new places, the easier starting a conversation from scratch will become.
- 5 Use social media to warm up a 'weak' tie:** If there are areas that you are curious about or connections you are conscious about making, start engaging with these groups/people online through likes, comments, and shares. This idea works well on social platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter.

Coach Yourself Questions

- ? What could you do this month to work your weak ties?
- ? Who does this well and what can you learn from them?

Recommended resources

-  [How to Build the Social Ties You Need at Work](#)
Amy Gallo's HBR article on how relationships at work matter.
-  [The secret to great opportunities](#)
Ted talk by organisational psychologist Tanya Menon on how we can be more intentional about expanding our social universes.
-  [Building brilliant relationships](#)
Squiggly Careers episode #174

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to flex your thinker vs. doer mode



Are you a doer or a thinker?

Spotting your preference and being able to switch between modes has two big benefits for your development:

- increases your adaptability in the workplace
- improves your self-awareness and stops you from getting in your own way.

Which mode is your natural preference?

- Thinker
- Doer
- A bit of both



Thinker: Pros & Pitfalls



You explore ideas from different angles and you understand nuances. This builds up your empathy.



You can miss out on opportunities to make progress quickly and get 'stuck' on a problem.

Doer: Pros & Pitfalls



You are open to experimenting quickly to move things forward. You make things happen.



You can get lost in the pace of productivity without thinking about the why behind the work.

Thinker: Ideas for action

1. Use Action-its: When you are overwhelmed or stuck use post-its to nudge you into action. Put one action per post-it and cluster post-its together to form your actionable to-do list. Every time you complete an action, move a post-it to a done pile.

2. Sizing x Thinking: Stop to think about how big the activity or problem is and use that thinking to determine how long to stay in thinker mode. Divide decisions by great vs good enough and then by time (today/this week/this month), do this collectively in a team.

Doer: Ideas for action

1. 10-minute thinking challenge: Find a space in your day to turn off every distraction and start a ten-minute timer. Don't take any action but allow yourself to think. Go for a walk if you prefer as walking gets our brains thinking too.

2. Find someone to slow down with: This could be an individual or a community who has a different pace or energy to how they think and do. Spend time with them to be more adaptable and flex your mode.

Coach Yourself Questions



How could flexing your mode help you at work?



What could you do this week to be more of a thinker/doer?

Recommended resources



[The War of Art](#) by Steven Pressfield (for thinkers)



[The Idler Academy](#) (for doers)



[The surprising habits of original thinkers](#) Ted talk by Adam Grant



[Taking growth mindset from theory to action](#)
Squiggly Careers podcast #48

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to accelerate your self-awareness

What is self-awareness?

Self-awareness is how clearly we see ourselves and understand how others see us too. The more self-aware we become, the better we are at work. It's a skill you can learn and grow.



“ Follow effective action with quiet reflection. From the quiet reflection will come even more effective action. ”

Peter Drucker

“ Self-awareness is the meta-skill of the twenty-first century. ”

Dr. Tasha Eurich

Internal vs. External self-awareness

Internal- when we know ourselves, our strengths, values and passions.

External- knowing how other people see us and what they think our strengths are.



Six ways to accelerate your self-awareness

1 Ask yourself one 'what' question at the end of each day to increase your reflection

- *What did I do today that made a positive impact?*
- *What did I get frustrated by during my day?*
- *In what situations did I do my best work today?*

2 Spend time every month with a feedback friend

Getting feedback from 'critics who care' helps you gain external self-awareness. These are the people that care personally about you and can challenge directly.

- *Who is your feedback friend?*

3 Try self-awareness scenario planning

Use mental models (imagining what is not yet true) and hypothetical questions to explore your thoughts and beliefs

- *If you had no limits on your life, what would you do?*
- *If your job changed overnight, what would you miss the most?*

4 Become a 'Mistake Monitor'

Treat mistakes as data for your development. Collect facts and explore your feelings, but don't let your inner critic take control.

- *What might I do differently next time round?*

5 Spot your thinking traps

Tune into the thoughts that hold you back e.g. *I don't have enough experience to make a difference* and reframe them into positive prompts e.g. *how could my fresh perspective be helpful?*

6 You at your best vs You at your worst

Compare your thoughts about when you're at your best vs. your worst with feedback from trusted colleagues to assess internal vs. external awareness

- *How similar are the responses?-*

Coach Yourself Questions

? What could you do to support your self-awareness?

? How could increasing self-awareness help you in your career?

Recommended resources



[You Coach You: How to Overcome Challenges and Take Control of Your Career](#)

Helen Tupper & Sarah Ellis



[Increase your self-awareness with one simple fix](#)

TedX Talk by Dr. Tasha Eurich



[How to improve your emotional agility at work](#)

Squiggly Careers Episode 206

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to make the most of your 121

Useful questions to think about regarding 121s with your manager

Frame your 121s. Is it about your tasks or is it about your development? Choosing either or will focus your conversation as both would need different approaches.



≈ Consider

The why: *what is the specific purpose of your 121?*

The who: *how can your manager be most helpful to you?*

The when: *what meeting frequency works best for you? Agree this with your manager*

≈ Consider

The what: Use the Discuss, Decide and Do framework below

1. *What are the things you want to discuss? Avoid giving updates.*

2. *What needs to be decided in the meeting? Go in with clarity.*

3. *How do you want to conclude the conversation? Leave with what you need.*

? Reflect on some of the 121s you've had in the past. Which of the below ideas for action might help you better prepare for your next 121?



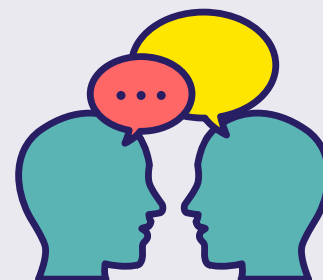
Go into your 121s with clarity and you'll come out of it with what you need.

Amazing If



3 Ideas for Action to help you during your 121

- 1 Model your manager:** It's important to take ownership of your 121s but be adaptable enough to reflect on how to work best with your manager. Consider what works best for your manager when working together.
- 2 Know your need:** What exactly do you need from your manager? Go with that in mind and confidently ask. Knowing your need gives you control in a conversation.
- 3 Start with a win and a why:** Start your 121s by sharing a win and telling your manager why it's relevant to your conversation. Sharing your proud moments is a way to remind your manager and could give them something to learn from.



6 Useful questions for managers to ask during 121s

1. How can I help?
2. What is the biggest barrier getting in your way?
3. What's most important for you in the next week and the next month?
4. How are you feeling about how you are spending your time?
5. What's one relationship you would want to invest in or improve at the moment?
6. What does positive progress look like for you this week?

? What other useful questions could you ask?

Recommended resources



We need to talk: How to have conversations that matter

by author and radio host Celeste Headlee



10 ways to have a better conversation TedX talk by Celeste Headlee who through her work on radio knows the ingredients of a great conversation.



Building brilliant relationships Squiggly Careers episode #174

Squiggly Careers PodSheets

How to stay inspired and energised at work



“You need to learn how to select your thoughts just the same way you select your clothes every day. This is a power you can cultivate. If you want to control things in your life so bad, work on the mind. That’s the only thing you should be trying to control.”

Elizabeth Gilbert

Ideas for Action: Energy

- 1 Find an alternative to escapism**
When work feels hard, escapism can feel like a quick fix. Any activity that makes you feel good in the short-term but bad soon after isn't good for your energy levels over the long term.
- 2 Be both the sculpture & the sculptor**
Your thoughts inform your actions. Regularly saying affirming statements to yourself to build your self-belief can help to increase your positive energy.
- 3 Have a clear desk/mind personal policy**
Clear environments increase mindfulness and mean that our minds are much calmer. Set an intention to clear your space before you shut down for the day, to help you restart with success.



We all have a choice about how we spend our time. Tune into your energy 'drains' and 'gains'. Take action to protect your energy.

Ideas for Action: Inspiration

- 1 Reach out to your role models**
The people you admire can be a brilliant source of inspiration. By following, commenting and connecting with your roles models you can find ways to bring them closer to your work.
- 2 Follow the good 'coffee' (or anything else)**
Following your passion can lead to curious conversations and unexpected outcomes. Try to spend some time connected to your passion each week.
- 3 Make laughter a priority**
Research shows that listening to laughter has positive impacts for our mental wellbeing. Create a laughter log to make you more intentional about how much laughter is part of your day-to-day.







Reflect regularly on who and what inspires you. Design your days around these people, projects and places.

Coach Yourself Questions

- ? What has the biggest impact on your energy levels at work?**
- ? How could you get closer to the people that inspire you?**

Recommended resources

-  **[Energize: Find Your Spark, Achieve More and Live Better.](#)**
by Simon Alexander Ong
-  **[365 Ways to Have a Good Day: A Day-by-day Guide to Living Your Best Life.](#)**
by Ian Sanders
-  **[How to stop languishing and start finding flow](#)** Ted Talk by organisational psychologist Adam Grant
-  **[How to increase your energy at work](#)** Squiggly Careers Podcast #200

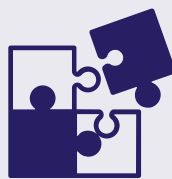
Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to stimulate your creativity

Creativity is practical problem-solving

You can spark a creative mindset by identifying a problem and then exploring it further.



We are natural-born problem-solvers and we all have the ability to improve the world around us.

How can you encourage more creative thinking in your work?

Barriers to your creativity

- ≈ Labelling ourselves in unhelpful ways can limit our creative capacity. *eg. I am not creative because I can't draw.*
- ≈ Rigidity and rules can limit creative freedom. Thinking about how you can *Learn / Unlearn / Relearn* creativity skills can help you unlock new thinking.

“

Everyone is creative and everyone can use design to change the world around them.

”

Sarah Stein Greenberg


5 ideas for action to help unlock your creativity


- 1 Identify your creative mode:** Are you better at generating ideas or at selecting / narrowing a list of ideas?
- 2 Play solutions tic tac toe:** Don't be tied down to your very first idea. Defer judgement and try to add to and stretch your ideas further.
- 3 Be playful:** Informal, high-trust environments are important for creativity at work. Games like rock, paper, scissors can be a quick way to create a fun context for creativity.
- 4 Practice the test of silence:** Share your work without explaining your idea or trying to influence people's first reactions. It will feel hard, but you'll get a truer view of impact.
- 5 Question your critic:** If you hear yourself saying "I can't share this because people will think it's a bad idea/ silly suggestion" try practicing curiosity instead. Think about where your inner critic is coming from, what its purpose is, and how it might be holding you back.

Coach Yourself Questions

- ? What conditions help you to feel creative?
- ? What stops you from feeling free to share ideas?

Recommended resources

 [Creative Acts for Curious People: How to Think, Create, and Lead in Unconventional Ways](#) by Sarah Stein Greenberg

 [Your elusive creative genius](#)
Ted talk by author Elizabeth Gilbert how to live more creatively.

 [Unlocking creativity at work](#)
Squiggly Careers episode #51

Squiggly Careers PodSheets

Curious questions for end of year reflections



Describe your year in a word:



? What's the memory that will last the longest from the last year?

? What has surprised you about the last year?

? What have you found the hardest from the last year?

? What's a mistake you've made this year and what have you learnt from it?

? What have you experimented with for the first time this year?

? How have you grown over the past year?

? What are you most looking forward to next year?

Sarah's Recommended resources



[Manifesto](#) by Bernadine Evaristo



[The anti-CEO playbook](#) Ted Talk by Hamdi Ulukaya



[Life lessons with Simon Mundi](#): Lewis Moody

Helen's Recommended resources



[Emotional Agility](#) by Susan David



[The secret to living longer may be your social life](#) Ted Talk by Susan Pinker



[How to fail with Elizabeth Day](#): Meg Mason

Squiggly Careers PodSheets

10 actions to accelerate your career development



“

Learning and development doesn't happen by accident, we have to be really intentional about making it happen.

”

Amazing If

10 actions to accelerate your career development

- 1 Start with your strengths**
Ask a variety of 3 people: *When do you think I am at my best?*
- 2 Reframe a limiting to a limitless belief**
Start with the words that hold you back. Reframe these into positive statements to help you move forward.
- 3 Have regular curious career conversations**
Set up a virtual meeting with someone you haven't met before and explore their world of work. *What does a 'day in their work life' look like?*
- 4 Figure out your mindset magnets**
In order to stay in growth mindset mode, know the triggers that pull you towards a fixed mindset. *Who or what stops you making progress?*
- 5 Record your very small successes**
Increase your optimism by recognising all the wins you achieve along the way. Make it a habit to write down 1 thing that has gone well each day.
- 6 Choose active rest**
Make time for activities you enjoy that positively absorb your energy and attention. This 'active rest' helps to increase our resilience.
- 7 'Even better-if' your work week**
Activate a 'work-in-progress' intention by ending each day reflecting on how work could be 'even better if' tomorrow. Focus on the factors that are in your control.
- 8 Overcome your fears**
Acknowledging your fears helps you to move forward with your development. *What are the worries getting in your way?*
- 9 Share a 'career development playlist'**
What inspiring things have you read / watched or listened to recently? Share this with your team to contribute new sources of self-development others could learn from.
- 10 Co-design your team development**
Agree on shared learning goals as a team and create a learning agenda that addresses your collective what/when/why and how.

Coach Yourself Questions

- ? What would help you to prioritise your development?**
- ? Who could be a brilliant accountability partner for you?**

Recommended resource

Download our Squiggly Career Calendar, a practical tool to help you stay on track.



[Download calendar here](#)

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

You Coach You: Investing in Your Resilience



“ If you are to be at your best in a demanding job, if you are going to be effective and energised, you have to invest some time in taking care of you. If you neglect you, everything else will drop away”



Dr. Bill Mitchell

Why it's important to coach yourself on resilience

Squiggly careers are full of change and challenge

No matter what industry we work in, what level we reach or how much experience we have, we all experience adversity during our careers.

We need to create resilience reserves so it's there for us when we need it.

We don't need to wait for the tough times to build our resilience. We can proactively develop the skills that will help us to respond to different types of adversity, from everyday moments of stress to the unexpected challenges that come our way.

Ideas for Action



Create your system

Resilience results from a set of interconnected activities.

Understand what actions contribute to your resilience system (e.g. sleep, exercise, relationships).

Reflect on how you make these activities personal priorities.



Understand the issue

Being overloaded is different to feeling overwhelmed.

Overload = having too much to do but still feeling in control. The best response is to reprioritise your work.

Overwhelm = feeling a loss of control and reacting emotionally. The best response is to reflect on your reactions and what you could do differently.



Support others

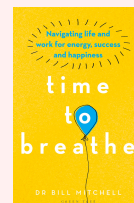
You can help other people with their resilience by:

- proactively checking-in (*ask how they are coping*)
- making it safe to talk about how they feel (*practice active listening*)
- increasing their control (*create clarity and reduce doubt*)

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1 What are your resilience non-negotiables?
- 2 What are the signals that your resilience is slipping?

Recommended resources



Time to Breathe - Dr. Bill Mitchell

Navigating Life and Work for Energy, Success and Happiness

You Coach You

Our book, written to help you overcome challenges and take control of your career.



Squiggly Careers PodSheet

You Coach You: Time & Distraction Downfalls



“

The opposite of distraction is traction.
Traction is any action that pulls you towards anything you want to do.
Anything can be a distraction if it's not what you plan to do.

”

Nir Eyal

Why it's important to coach yourself on time

Moving beyond busy

When we find ourselves 'busy being busy' it can get in the way of making sure we use our time to optimise our impact. Coaching yourself will help you to move beyond busy and increase the quality of the work that you do.

Time well-spent vs. wasted

The average person spends 90,000 hours of their life at work but 2/3s of people say they waste 50% of their time on things that don't help to get their job done or don't help them feel good about their efforts. Coaching yourself on how you spend your time gives you back the clarity and control of what time well-spent looks like for you.

Ideas for Action

10

10 Minute Rule

Give in to your distraction... but not right away. Set a 10 minute timer to create a distraction delay. Over time you can increase how long you can resist the pull of distractions.



Trigger Tracker

Understanding your distraction triggers can help you take preventative action. Every time you are distracted, note whether it's internal (because of how you feel) or external (because of something in your environment).



Schedule Syncing

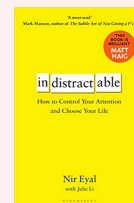
When other people are your downfall, show them your calendar and share how you are choosing to spend your time. Show them the work you can't fit in and jointly agree prioritisation.

Coach Yourself Questions

1 What does time well-spent mean to you?

2 What are your distraction downfalls?

Recommended resources



Indistractable - Nir Eyal

Great book to manage your attention and reduce the attraction of distractions.

You Coach You

Our book, written to help you overcome challenges and take control of your career.



Squiggly Careers PodSheet

You Coach You: Building up your self-belief



“

Our ability to silently use language to reflect on our lives is an amazing tool. It's a 'swiss army knife' that gets us through lots of different things.

”

Ethan Kross

Why it's important to coach yourself on self-belief

Build the beliefs that help you succeed

Everyone experiences self-doubt. It can often lead to a sense of not being 'enough' in some way at work. Avoiding or denying these doubts doesn't help us, it only amplifies them further. Instead, understanding our doubts can help us to better respond to negative emotions and stop a lack of self-belief from holding us back.

Self-belief is a skill

We are continually coping with change and uncertainty can feel uncomfortable. While we cannot control what happens around us, we can learn new skills to take control and build the positive beliefs that help us navigate through the knotty moments in a squiggly career.

Ideas for Action



Mental Time Travel

Reminding ourselves that difficult situations are only temporary by visualising how you might feel about it a day / a week or a year from now. Mental time travel is a powerful tonic to battle negative beliefs.



Distanced self-talk

Using your own name when thinking through a problem can help you shift perspectives. Linguistic tools like these put your inner voice in charge and helps dial down the volume of any chatter.



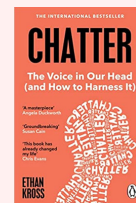
Organising your clutter

...is a great way to manage your chatter. We can reclaim a sense of control by creating order around us. Organising our environments can often, even momentarily, help to compensate our feelings of not being in control.

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1 What negative beliefs hold you back at work?
- 2 What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail?

Recommended resources



Chatter - Ethan Kross

This book is all about turning your inner voice from critic mode to coach mode.

You Coach You

Our book, written to help you overcome challenges and take control of your career.



Squiggly Careers PodSheet

You Coach You: Building relationships at work



“

It's all about adaptation. People are different. You need to consider the different behavioral types within you and within the individuals that you lead.

”

Thomas Erikson

Why it's important to coach yourself on relationships

Building meaningful connections

Our job satisfaction, learning, and success rely on the relationships we build. It's the quality and not the quantity of our connections that impacts how much we learn and the energy we have at work. Quality connections are based on continual investment and focusing on what we can give as well as what we can gain.

Repairing relationships

Difficult work relationships have the potential to dominate our days and drain our energy. By coaching ourselves, we can better understand the role we play in conflict and repair the relationships we need in our careers.

Ideas for Action



Start with support

People are different but one way to find common ground is to understand what outcomes are important to each person and explore ways you can support each other to achieve these outcomes.



Keep connections active

Invest in people who support and empathise with you (strong ties) and people who know things you don't (weak ties). Give five-minute favours such as sending an article you think someone will like, without expecting anything in return.



Spot the difference

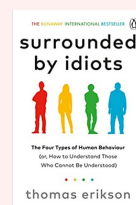
Spending time with people who have differing points of view from you may shift your perspective on a problem. You don't need to agree with someone 100% to have a positive relationship with them.

Coach Yourself Questions

1 What relationships do you find difficult at work?

2 How could you spend time with people who have different skills, perspectives and experiences to you?

Recommended resources



Surrounded by Idiots - Thomas Erikson

A book that will help you understand yourself and others better by assessing different personality types.

You Coach You

Our book, written to help you overcome challenges and take control of your career.



Squiggly Careers PodSheet

You Coach You: Overcoming constraints



“ We need to evolve to a more transformative way of thinking about constraints as something that could be a positive for us, as an opportunity or even a gift, that leads us to find a way of progressing in our careers. ”

Adam Morgan

Why it's important to coach yourself on progression

Proactive Progression

Being proactive about our progression gives us options and makes our careers more change-proof. Career progression is about much more than promotion; it's about how we continually move forward in our careers. When we make progress in our careers, we increase our options, adaptability and opportunities.

Owning your career

By taking ownership of our progression, we increase the control we have over our careers. It gives you control over how you grow and where you go. This makes our development less dependent on other people as you can create your own opportunities.

Ideas for Action



Adopt Can / If thinking

eg 'I **can** (do this) / **If I** (do that)'
Reframing your problems can shift your mindset and unlock new thinking. It also helps keep optimism and curiosity alive and makes it easier to find solutions instead of focusing on problems.



Be proactively adaptive

Succeeding in a squiggly career is all about being productively uncomfortable and having a stubbornly adaptive mindset. Combining a big ambition with a significant constraint forces you to focus on how you can respond and adapt.



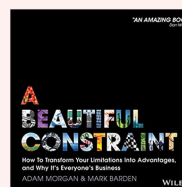
Involve don't solve

Involve the people you need support from in the process so that they are also engaged in your progression. It's helpful to get feedback from different perspectives including both strong ties and weak ties.

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1 What are your biggest career constraints?
- 2 How could you use them to become an advantage?

Recommended resources



A Beautiful Constraint - Adam Morgan & Mark Barden

A book about transforming your limitations in business

You Coach You

Our book, written to help you overcome challenges and take control of your career.



Squiggly Careers PodSheet

You Coach You: Making purpose practical



“ To think of purpose in practical ways is to think of it as grit, a stubbornness that keeps you going. It's the fuel for the journey. ”

David Heatt

Why it's important to coach yourself on purpose

Finding purpose from our work

Finding purpose in our work increases the long-term sense of satisfaction we feel in our lives. The positive impact of purposeful work shows up in the day-to-day experience of doing our jobs. Coaching yourself to find your purpose at work can improve how engaged and effective you are.

A sense of direction in your journey

Purpose is a direction and not a destination. It is a work-in-progress and not the pursuit of perfection. In the twists and turns of a squiggly career our purpose gives us a sense of direction and something meaningful to make progress towards in our careers.

Ideas for Action



People <=> purpose

Finding the connection between people and purpose can help you tune into why work is meaningful for you.

Think about how the work you do can make a difference to others.



One small success

When day-to-day challenges feel consuming, we can lose focus on a purpose which might feel further away.

Write down one very small success at the end of each day to reconnect with purposeful work in the present.



1% = progress

Progressing towards your purpose is a test of endurance, rather than speed and will always feel more like a work in progress.

Think about what 1% closer looks like and set yourself a weekly goal to aim for.

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1 What do I find most meaningful about my work?
- 2 I'm 90, what would I liked to have changed about the world?

Recommended resources

DO/
PURPOSE/
Why brands
with a purpose
do better and
matter more.
David Heatt

Do Purpose - David Heatt

David Heatt offers insights on how to build a purpose-driven company.

You Coach You

Our book, written to help you overcome challenges and take control of your career.



Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to manage your monkeys

“ All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us. ”

J. R. R. Tolkien

“ Productivity is more about what you say no to than what you say yes to. ”

Graham Allcott

What is monkey management?

A monkey is a job to be done or an action you need to take.
In our day-to-day work, we're carrying around a lot of monkeys. Managing other people's monkeys in addition to our own is where managing our time becomes more of a challenge.

Best conditions for monkey management

High trust teams - where we feel safe to share how we feel and seek support without judgement
Personal productivity - giving people the space to use initiative, problem-solve and experiment.



3 ideas for action for better monkey management

1 Help people help themselves

Avoid unhelpful dependencies by providing feedback, comments and recommendations rather than by taking on someone else's task. Helping someone in this way encourages a growth mindset.



How can I help others to help themselves?

2 Develop your 'no-cabulary'

Saying no or not yet to other people's monkeys could allow you to spend more energy and effort on your own monkeys in the role that you do.



Do this by using If/Then statements and challenging 'urgent' tasks

3 Level up

Increasing your initiative can help avoid monkey adoption. Think about what you want to work on, how you want to manage your time and what impact you want to have.



How could you start your week with your answers in mind?

Coach Yourself Questions

? What directions are your monkeys coming from?

? What does managing other people's monkeys look like for you?

? What is stopping you from saying no to a monkey?

Map your monkeys



Are you a monkey-taker?

You are naturally inclined to help but often end up hoarding tasks and feeling overwhelmed.

Or a monkey-giver?

You default to delegating your monkeys to other people rather than taking the task on yourself.

Recommended resources



Management time: Who's got the monkey? One of HBR's most popular articles by William Oncken and Donald Wass



Four thousand weeks 5x15 talk by time management expert Oliver Burkeman



How to be a productivity ninja Squiggly Careers Episode 74

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to coach yourself



What is self-coaching?

“ Self-coaching is the **skill** of asking yourself questions to improve **self-awareness** and prompt **positive action**. ”

You Coach You



Your ability to coach yourself isn't determined by the level you've reached in your career, or how many years of experience you have. What matters is the time and effort you dedicate to continually improving your coaching skills.

Coach yourself through 6 common career challenges

Resilience



How you respond when things don't go according to plan

“ See every step you take to recover as a small win in your journey ”

- Lee Chambers



What have I learnt from overcoming tough times in the past that could help me in the present?

Time



How you take control of your time and increase your quality of work

“ Reclaim some of your time before you give all of that time, energy, focus to everything and everyone else ”

- Adrienne Herbert



What does a week well spent look like for me?

Self-belief



How you build the beliefs that help you to succeed

“ Why not give it a go, and if it doesn't work, then what's the worst that can happen? ”

- James Routledge



How have my self-doubts influenced the actions I've taken in my career?

Relationships



How you create the connections that you need for your career

“ Building your own network is really powerful, and if you don't have one go out and find those people ”

- Adrienne Herbert



What has helped me to build relationships in my career so far?

Progression



How you can be proactive and move forward with momentum

“ Track your performance over time but remember that success is not linear ”

- Drew Povey



How can my constraints be used to my advantage?

Purpose



How you develop a sense of direction and do meaningful work

“ Uncover purpose little by little. Chisel away. You'll gradually get a vision of what's underneath. ”

- Lee Chambers



What do I find most meaningful about my work?

Coach Yourself Questions

1 Which common career challenge do I need to explore?

2 What action am I going to take now?

Recommended resources



You Coach You Our book written to help you take control of your career



Mental Health at work from Sanctus founder James Routledge



Dyslexia is a Superpower
A tale of resilience from leadership expert Drew Povey



Power Hour a motivational podcast series hosted by author and speaker Adrienne Herbert.

Squiggly Careers PodSheets





Dealing with disappointment


Disappointment \approx **Expectation**
—
Reality 

“ It's when you feel unhappy because someone or something was not as good as you hoped or expected. ”
Better Up

Types of disappointment you can feel

 **Own**
You are disappointed about your own behaviour

 **Other**
You feel disappointed about someone else's behaviour

 **Outcome**
You feel disappointed that you didn't get what you hoped for.

Mind the gap

EXPECTATIONS  REALITY

The size of the gap between our hopes and expectations relates to how disappointed we feel. Developing the skills to bridge the gap helps us to deal with the disappointment.

What's your default disappointment response?

Our default coping mechanism might not be the best solution.

- Passive** (you stay in denial, you sulk, you give up)
- Aggressive** (your spikes get spikier, you blame, plot revenge)
- Assertive** (you seek learning and ask for feedback)

3 ideas for action

1 **Name the feelings. I am disappointed AND...**
Disappointment is the start but usually there are other feelings below the surface. Naming these feelings and acknowledging them will help you accept and move on.

Who do you trust to talk about your feelings with?



2 **Get data on your disappointment**
To feel unstuck, move from rumination to reflection by refocusing on what you have learnt.

- what do I need to let go of?
- what have I learnt about myself?
- what have I learnt about others?


3 **Stop the spiral**
"One of the best protections against disappointment is to have a lot going on"
- Alain de Botton


What do you enjoy doing that could act as a positive distraction from the disappointment?


Coach Yourself Questions

-  What are your expectations for your career this year?
-  What will your first response be if things don't go to plan?

Recommended resources

 **[How to brace yourself for disappointment](#)**
An article by contributing editor of HBR and author Amy Gallo

 **[Why we all need to practice emotional first aid](#)**
TEDx talk by psychologist and author Guy Winch

 **[How to prevent pessimism and practice optimism at work](#)**
Squiggly Careers Episode #157

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to find your focus

Why is focus so important in squiggly careers?

Being **intentional** about our focus results in better work.

When we don't find our focus we are less likely to achieve the things that matter to us.

Take a distraction deep dive

What are your distraction downfalls? Name the things that get in the way of your focus.

Why are these a distraction for you? Understand if it's something in your external environment, an internal avoidance issue or the result of poor planning.

How disruptive are your downfalls? Rank how disruptive your distraction downfalls are and deal with one at a time.

How can you find friction? How can you make your distraction less appealing and immediate?

? When do you feel present, immersed and absorbed in your work?

“ All we have to decide is what we do with the time that is given us

J. R. R. Tolkien

3 Ideas for Action to help you find your focus

- 1 Find a focus friend:** A focus friend knows what you are working on, why it matters and when you need to move things forward. They encourage you and increase your accountability. Try [focusmate.com](https://www.focusmate.com) to be matched to a virtual coworker and stay distraction-free.
- 2 Ask yourself, can it wait? :** We often create a false sense of urgency on tasks that make us less efficient. Remember someone else's urgent isn't always yours.
- 3 Opportunity cost:** Loss aversion can be a powerful motivator to find your focus. Ask yourself, what is the negative cost or consequence of you being distracted? Missing out can motivate you to make a change.



Coach yourself questions

- 1 What's my most pressing work priority?**
- 2 What would be the biggest benefit of increasing my focus over the next month?**

Recommended resources



LoveWork: The seven steps to thrive at work Ben Renshaw and Sophie Devonshire on how to make the time you spend at work more rewarding and enjoyable.



How to stay human in an online world 5x15 talk by Emma Gannon where she shares insights from her new book Disconnect.



Why we can't pay attention anymore Johann Hari featured on Vox Conversations podcast

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to build your reputation at work



What do we mean by 'reputation'?

→ What people say about you when you're not in the room. → What you are known for.

Understanding Your Reputation - Say/Do Matrix



Say = how clear and confident you are in talking about what you want to be known for.

Do = how much consistency and credibility you have in the things you want to be known for.

Your view: Where do you think you are on the matrix?

Others' view: Ask 3 people who work with you in different ways how clearly you communicate what you want to be known for and how consistently the work you do aligns with that intent.

If you're....

Low Do / Low Say you need to **Explore Unknown**

? What do I want to be someone's 'go to' person for?

💡 Reputation Inspiration - look at someone whose reputation you admire and think about how what they do well could work for you.

Low Do / High Say you need to **Reduce Inconsistency**

? How much of your week are you spending on work that doesn't help to build your reputation?

💡 Realign Time - explore job crafting or put yourself forward for projects that help your strengths to stand out and align with what you want to be known for

Low Say / High Do you need to **Speak Up**

? What scares you about speaking up?

💡 Speak Up Statement - write a 1, 3 and 5 sentence summary of what you want to be known for and start sharing it in career conversations and anywhere you have a profile (e.g. LinkedIn)

High Say / High Do you need to **Increase Advocacy**

? Who would be your dream advocate?

💡 Givers Get More - spot someone showing sponsorship behaviours and think about how you can support them.

Coach Yourself Questions

? Who could you ask to understand your current reputation?

? How could what you want to be known for support your career opportunities?

Recommended resources



The Reputation Game

Book by David Waller and how to change how people see you



Surviving a loss of reputation

School of Life video on how to respond when your reputation goes wrong



How to build your brand

Squiggly Careers conversation with Bianca Miller Cole

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to stop being a people-pleaser at work

What is a people-pleaser?

People-pleasing is when you put other people's needs ahead of your own.

This usually shows up as seeking approval from others and happens at the cost of your own resilience.

Constantly prioritising other people's needs before ours can have an adverse impact.



“ Daring to set boundaries is about having the courage to love ourselves, even when we risk disappointing others. ”



Brené Brown

In high-trust teams where team members practice psychological safety, people-pleasing tendencies may be less likely to show up.



Low psychological safety  More people-pleasing

8 ways that people-pleasing shows up at work (and how you can limit it!)


Tick a **Red** / **Amber** / **Green** status below to identify where you need the most support

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1 You say yes when you mean no
Prioritise pausing. <i>Pausing helps you to reflect and be conscious about what you say 'yes' or 'no' to.</i> |  | 5 You don't maintain boundaries
Say "I don't" rather than "I can't". <i>Plan and practice your 'I don't' statements to make it easier to say in the moment.</i> |  |
| 2 You say 'sorry' even when it's not your fault
Use clear and confident language. <i>Watch out for words that cloud your clarity.</i> |  | 6 You take on more than you can manage rather than asking for help
Find someone to support you. <i>Think about how bringing in someone else's skills could make the outcome even better.</i> |  |
| 3 You don't share thoughts and feelings as it might hurt someone
Use COIN to structure feedback.
<i>C - Context, O - Observations
I - Impact, N - Needs & next steps</i> |  | 7 You change your personality to fit in with those around you
Identify your values. <i>Spend time with people who have similar values.</i> |  |
| 4 You avoid conflict and criticism
Create an environment where you proactively invite critique. <i>Ask 'what is working well and would be even better if?'</i> |  | 8 You base your sense of worth on other people's validation
Create your own "pride postcard". <i>What task are you most proud of today / this week / this month?</i> |  |

Coach Yourself Questions

-  How does people-pleasing show-up for you at work?
-  What are the benefits to you of stopping people-pleasing?

Recommended resources

 [Professional Trouble-maker: The Fear-fighting manual](#)

Luvvie Ajayi-Jones' Ted talk on how to get comfortable with being uncomfortable inspires this book.



[How to stop being a people-pleaser](#)

School of Life video on how to limit people-pleasing behaviour



[How to discover your values](#)
Squiggly Careers Episode #42

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to have a high trust team

High trust teams...

..are high-performing teams where there is trust and respect and where people feel comfortable to be themselves.

“ When a work environment has reasonably high psychological safety, good things happen: mistakes are reported quickly so that prompt corrective action can be taken. ”

Amy C. Edmondson

What high trust is

- a team that has high care and high challenge
- a team that speaks up, shares risks, and asks for help
- a team that is open about and learns from mistakes



What high trust isn't

- a team that is always comfortable and harmonious
- a team that hides the truth
- a team that doesn't ask questions

The Trust Equation

credibility + **reliability** + **intimacy**
do people have confidence in your ability? *do people believe that you keep commitments?* *do people feel they connect with you personally?*

self-orientation

how often do you put your needs before the team?

≈ TRUST


5 ideas for action for high trust teams


- 1 Discuss the balance of practical and emotional trust in the team (aim is 50:50):**
practical = delivering on the day job, emotional = feeling heard and supported
- 2 Make time for 'mistake moments':** Sharing mistakes is a way you can learn and get support. *Create time in team meetings/a virtual place to share mistakes and learnings regularly*
- 3 Have a 'Red Table Talk':** Talking about 'tough stuff' contributes to trust. *Curate topics from the team and have an open discussion with diverse points of view.*
- 4 Explore the difference between execution and experimentation:** In a high trust team, there is an openness to taking managed risk. *Agree on the learning experiments you're going to support each other with.*
- 5 Ask curious questions:** To have high trust in your teams you need to invite conversation and different perspectives. Avoid 'why' questions and instead ask:
 - *What might be missing?*
 - *What would make this project fail?*
 - *What other ideas could we consider?*
 - *Who has a different perspective?*


Coach Yourself Questions

- ? What does trust look like today in your team?
- ? How could you contribute to a high-trust team culture?

Recommended resources

 **Foster psychological safety**
helpful tools from Google's ReWork website

 **Radical Candour**
Radical Candor author Kim Scott breaks down the principles of Radical Candor in six minutes

 **Psychological safety with Amy Edmondson**
Squiggly Careers episode #151

Squiggly Careers PodSheets

How to create (not wait) for challenge



Why should we create more challenge at work?

When we work hard at tasks that stretch us, it can feel uncomfortable but it's often where we find motivation and meaning in our work.

Challenge can take you to a state of flow.

Stimulating cognitive tasks that feel difficult helps to:



Grow your brain by exploring new potential.



Create true impact by allowing you to feel motivated at work.

5 Ideas for Action to make work more challenging

- 1 Stretch your strengths in new directions:** Your strengths give you energy. The more you use your strengths in different situations, the stronger they'll get. *Where else can you use your strengths at work?*
- 2 Increase challenge by experimenting:** Experiments are an important part of learning at work. The idea of experiments is to actively learn and give yourself permission to fail. *What could you try out for the first time?*
- 3 Find a challenger:** As well as cheerleaders and champions, you also need challengers in a squiggly career. Finding the people who ask hard questions could be a catalyst to doing your best work. *How often do you spend time with people that challenge you?*
- 4 Re-design your defaults:** We all have default ways of learning. Often, the comfortable and familiar can hold us back at work. Re-designing this allows us to find challenges. *What do you do on default? How can you redesign this?*
- 5 Go after a goal:** Set yourself a target to achieve something difficult and doable in the next 30 days. Make the goal visible and think of ways to progress and prioritise this goal. *Who could hold you to account?*

3 Useful Coach Yourself questions

1. On a scale of 1 - 10, how challenging is your work at the moment?
2. What does challenge look like for you, at work?
3. What is a new challenge that you're excited by?

? How have constraints have been an advantage for you in your career?

“ Challenges are what make life interesting; overcoming them is what makes life meaningful. ”
Joshua J. Marine


Working hard vs Creating challenge

Don't make your development dependent on others.




The more we create rather than wait for challenge the more we take control of our career and reduce our dependency on others.

Recommended resources

 **LoveWork: The seven steps to thrive at work** Ben Renshaw and Sophie Devonshire on how to make the time you spend at work more rewarding and enjoyable.

 **Try something new for 30 days** 4-minute Ted talk by technologist Matt Cutts about how to set and achieve goals.

 **Comfort vs. Courage zones and why they both matter** Squiggly Careers episode #136

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to make manifestation work for you

Manifesting is about taking ownership of your future

It can be both a self-empowerment tool and a self-action tool.

It can help you:

- think about where you want to be in the future
- take action in the present to get you closer to it.



The Manifestation Equation

aspiration

what energises and motivates you?

+ **action**

what steps can you take to make aspiration real?

adaptability

how fixed are you on your future and what it could look like?

Don't let the language get in your way

The language of manifesting can feel uncomfortable. Reframing the words to ones that work for you can be helpful to stay open minded.

manifesting
law of attraction
vibrational energy



imagining
optimism
motivation

“

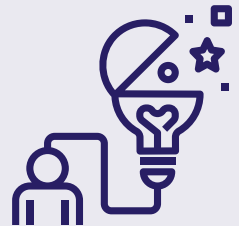
Manifesting is not a massive spiritual undertaking, it's a little shift in perspective and energy expenditure.

”

Jordanna Levin, Author of Make it Happen

Successful imagining / manifesting requires...




- 1** **...clear intent:** An intention is active. It's not just a 'want' or a 'wish'. It's something you can be or have.
How can you articulate an aspiration with intention?
Use 'I am / I have / I feel' sentences
- 2** **...positive thought:** What we think, we become. Stop negative self-talk getting in your way and invest in healthy habits to build your self-belief. *Practice gratitude and reflect on daily successes. 'I feel grateful for....' 'I am proud of...'*
- 3** **...emotion:** Thinking about how your intentions make you feel creates the energy you need for action.
Emotion = energy in motion
Intention: I am taking ownership of my career
Emotion: It makes me feel confident and in control
- 4** **...action:** Manifesting without action is just wishful thinking. We need action to move forward.
What small action could you take this week to get you closer to your intentions and feeling?
- 5** **...flexibility:** Don't force your future. Focus on what feels motivating and meaningful for you but stay flexible about how you get there.
How fixed are you on your future?



Coach Yourself Questions

- ?** What are you motivated to manifest?
- ?** What are five feelings that come to mind when you think about the thing you are motivated to manifest?

Recommended resources

-  **Make it happen** a practical book on manifesting by Jordanna Levin
-  **How to shape your future with confidence** A playlist curated by Ted featuring talks to inspire and empower.
-  **How to build your self-belief** Squiggly Careers episode #187

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to create your career criteria

The what...

A career criteria is a list of things that are important to you about the work that you do. This can include the what, when, where, how and why of your work.

...and the why

Having a career criteria helps you to look beyond job titles and explore possibilities that are a better fit for you.

They can also help you explain to other people what's important to you so they can better support you and your career.

What career decisions do you need to think about?

What are your work wants?

Getting clear about what you want from work can help you make better decisions about the direction you develop your career in.



Reflect on a career high and a career low and identify your **must haves** and **must nots** at work.

What's getting in your way?

Don't ignore your career constraints. Thinking about them can help you be more specific about the support you need.

I want....

Because....

But....



Generate insight by thinking about **why** your 'want' matters to you and **what** is holding you back.

What help do you need?

Your commitment to action creates commitment to act from other people. Summarise what you've already done before seeking support.

Intros & Inputs



Ask for introductions 'Do you know anyone who...?'
Ask for input 'What do you think I might be missing?'

Coach Yourself Questions

1 What opportunities could you create if your career wasn't constrained?

2 Who do you most need to be introduced to now?

Recommended resources



How to write an insight

Useful article by Tash Walker, founder of The Mix



PodPlus: Progression

Watch back our PodPlus session on how to explore your progression possibilities



Career conversations

Listen to Squiggly Careers #104 on how to have a career conversation.

Squiggly Careers PodSheets

How to build and be part of a career community



Creating communities around our careers

Communities are connected by a stronger sense of belonging than the people you might know in your network.



They are the **social glue** that binds us together for the greater good.



We are social animals who cannot function effectively without a social system that is larger than ourselves.



Henry Mintzberg

What happens when you're part of a career community

- 1 You increase your impact
- 2 You build your personal brand
- 3 You accelerate your learning

7 top tips to help you build a career community

- 1 **Be clear about your purpose:** Start with a passion that you care about & connect people to it. *What is a passion you want to scale?*
- 2 **Curate, don't constrain the conversation:** Bring people together and let them find flow. *How can you stay in listen mode?*
- 3 **Use technology tightly:** To sustain community, use the platforms that work best. *How can you keep people connected?*
- 4 **Focus on your friendlies:** Start small and with the most supportive people around you. *Who could you build with?*
- 5 **Try out different approaches:** Communities evolve and change and can be iterative. *How could your community be even better if..?*
- 6 **Seek regular feedback, updates & learning:** Success is personal to you, what you stand for and what you set out to do.
- 7 **Be proactive as part of other communities:** Be in learn-it-all mode within communities. *What best practice could you try out?*

Top tips to engage with & learn in a community

- ≈ **Engage.** What you give is as important as what you gain.
- ≈ **Support others.** Connect, like, share, message & subscribe.
- ≈ **Stay in touch.** Be proactive - stay close to community members
- ≈ **Follow your passion.** Think about what you like and follow those communities.




Coach Yourself Questions

- ? What are 3 words to describe your ideal community?
- ? If you could create any community, what would its purpose be?

Recommended resources

 [Rebuilding companies as communities](#) by academic Henry Mintzberg as published in HBR

 [Squiggly Careers Poem](#)
Spoken word poetry on navigating your squiggly career by Pritesh Raj Chauhan

 [How to be a learn-it-all](#)
Squiggly Careers episode #243

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to be more assertive at work



What is assertiveness?

Assertiveness is the ability to stand-up for what you believe while staying calm, positive and respecting the rights of others.

Why should it be a priority for our development?

- ◆ Personalise your progression - *assertiveness will help you to communicate clearly how you want to grow in your career and why.*
- ◆ Protect your boundaries - *assertiveness will help you to push back on people and situations that blur your boundaries.*
- ◆ Make your work work for you - *assertiveness will help you to discuss what's important to you about what you're working on, where and when.*

Understanding who is 'ok'

	You're ok	You're not ok	
I'm ok	Assertive	Aggressive	Assertiveness = balance. You are clear about what you want, but open to hear and consider other people's perspectives.
I'm not ok	Passive	Passive-Aggressive	Aggressive = battle. You want to win regardless of the rights, needs or feelings of others. Passive = boundary-less. You put other people's needs and wants before your own. Passive-Aggressive = bottling. You're not honest about how you're feeling and express it through indirect negative behaviours.

Source: Thomas Anthony Harris

Ideas for Action

1 Focus on the 3Cs

Communicate with Clarity, Confidence and Control to remain assertive in conversations.

2 If / Then alternatives

IF you get *aggressive* **THEN** focus on questions and understanding.

IF you get *passive* **THEN** write down 3 points to concentrate on in the conversation.

IF you get *passive-aggressive* **THEN** think about the why behind the work to increase the meaning in the moment.

3 Prepare your point of view

Research obstacles and opportunities in your industry/profession. Write down your thoughts on the advantages and issues. *Be prepared to share your thoughts with other people and explore their perspective.*

Coach Yourself Questions

- ⊕ When do you feel most assertive?
- ⊖ When do you feel least assertive?
- ❓ What drives the difference?

Recommended resources

[How to be assertive \(without losing yourself\)](#)

Practical article on authentic assertiveness by Amy Gallo

[How to be assertive without being aggressive](#)

Esther Perel shares advice on the impact of gender on assertiveness

[How to manage your boundaries](#) Squiggly Careers episode #121

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to use experiments at work

Experiments are...

“ a test done in order to learn something or to discover whether something works or is true.

Cambridge English Dictionary

how we prototype the future that we want to create.

Margaret Heffernan



How experiments accelerate your career development

- ≈ they help you to get unstuck
- ≈ they reduce perfection pressure
- ≈ they help you find fit before you commit.


8 top tips to help you practically experiment at work


- 1 Always have a hypothesis:** Think about what you are trying to prove/disprove. *What is the problem you are trying to solve?*
- 2 Explore execution vs experimentation:** Not all projects make appropriate experiments - some things just need to be executed. *Which of your projects are prime for experimentation?*
- 3 Label your experiment and let people know:** Letting people know you are experimenting helps them understand your actions. *Who do you need to get buy-in and support from?*
- 4 Find your experiment energisers:** Think of people who could contribute new ideas and approaches for your experiments. *Who could help you build it better?*
- 5 Collect feedback fast:** If you miss the moment you miss an opportunity to learn. *What feedback do you need to understand your impact?*
- 6 Aim low:** Running lots of small, fast experiments helps you work out what you want to invest more effort and energy in. *What is a small experiment you can run this week?*
- 7 Measure what matters to you:** Design your experiments around what you need to know. *What meaningful metrics can you measure?*
- 8 Celebrate successful experiments, not successful outcomes:** What matters most is what you learn, not whether you succeed or fail. *How can you share your outcomes to help other people learn?*

Coach Yourself Questions

- ? What experiment could you work on as a team?
- ? What experiments could help you use your strengths in new ways (e.g. side projects / volunteering)?

Recommended resources

 [Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos and Luck - Why Some Thrive Despite Them All](#)
by Jim Collins

 [Play! Experiment! Discover!](#)
Ted Talk by Biochemist Kary Mullis on the benefits of experimentation

 [Experimentation with David Epstein](#)
Squiggly Careers episode #173

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to be a good manager

What makes a good manager?

Managers have a big impact on our day-to-day, on our motivation to do our best work, and on how successful we are in our own squiggly careers.

Good managers:

1. Motivate people to take action
2. Drive outcomes and overcome adversity
3. Create a culture of accountability
4. Build relationships based on trust
5. Make decisions based on what's best for the business.



A good manager finds satisfaction in helping others to be productive, not being the most productive person in the room.

Paul Glen



What behaviours did your best manager demonstrate?

3 ideas for action



Align the contributor to the contribution

Creating a connection between the person doing the work and the work that needs to get done sparks buy-in from your team and helps you find ways to increase accountability. *Reflect on how you can co-create this with your team through OKRs, KPIs etc.*



Say what they don't see

Vulnerability increases trust and builds stronger relationships. As a manager, role-modelling vulnerability creates a space where other people feel safe to do the same. *Be proactive in talking about failures, asking for help and sharing your confidence gremlins.*



Show your working

Helping people understand the decisions you are making will increase buy in from your team. A lack of clarity can create confusion and lead to disengagement. *Think about the anchors that inform your decisions (e.g. budget, impact) and share with your team to increase transparency.*

Coach Yourself Questions

Which of the above 5 'good manager' traits do you do well?

Which is the one trait that you think you could improve on?

Recommended resources



[Why great managers are so rare](#) Article published on Gallup which shares insightful statistics about managers



[How to break bad management habits](#) Ted talk from leadership development expert Elizabeth Lyle



[How to be a memorable manager](#) Squiggly Career #190

Squiggly Careers PodSheets

Ideas to invest in your learning



The benefits of prioritising learning



Career resilience

Learning keeps your skills and strengths relevant.



Staying curious

Learning keeps you open to new ideas and insights.



Building relationships

Learning with others creates new points of connection.

Common barriers we need to overcome



Lack of time

Make learning a habit not another thing on your list.



Limited budget

Use constraints to get creative and DIY your development



Closed Learning Company

Focus on people you can learn from (in and outside).

? How would you learn at work if you felt like you had no time to spare?

Sarah: Look at your working week and identify opportunities to experiment and learn.

Helen: Feedback acts as data for your development. Ask What worked well? What could be even better if?

? How would you learn at work if money wasn't available to you?

Sarah: Adopt a stubbornly adaptive mindset and create alternative opportunities whilst waiting to find funds.

Helen: Get a mentor. Think about what you want to learn and who can help you learn it.

? What would you learn at work if you had £50?

Sarah: Buy a book! Or access to online events from [How to Academy](#), [Do Lectures](#), [5x15](#) and from us!

Helen: Purchase tickets for in-person events from [RSA](#), [Tortoise Media](#), [Idler Academy](#).

? What would you learn at work if you had £500?

Sarah: Do something that feels far from your everyday. [Unschool](#), [Happy Start-up school](#), [FT events](#), [School of life](#).

Helen: Invest in 121 sessions with a coach and sustain your development by investing in [self-coaching too](#).

? How would you learn at work if you didn't want to work alone?

Sarah: Investigate learning designed with communities in mind, such as [The Stackworld](#), [Upfront](#).

Helen: Start a series of squiggly skill swaps. Who do you know that has a skill to swap? What could you teach?

Recommended resources



A beautiful constraint: How to Transform Your Limitations Into Advantages by Adam Morgan and Mark Barden inspired Sarah's stubbornly adaptive mindset



The life-long learner a Ted talk by Bernie Dunlap on the many benefits of learning



How to be a learn-it-all
Squiggly Careers Episode #243

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to find friendships at work

“ Friendship is a relationship with **no strings attached** except the ones you choose to tie, one that's just about being there, as best as you can.

”

Julie Beck
[The Friendship Files - The Atlantic](#)

Why we need friendships at work

As well as increasing your engagement and a sense of belonging in the workplace, friendships formed at work can predict performance and help you:

- achieve a better work/life fit
- share information and generate ideas
- feel less stressed and take more positive action.

The Friendship Scale



Not all friendships are equal in terms of their impact and the most valuable friendships take time to form. Reflect on how your friendships form today. *How quickly do you move up the scale and where do you stall?*

How to respond when friendship feels like its failing...



If remote working is leading to disconnection...

...find deep fun - create meaningful experiences that bring people together on high energy, high interaction business projects e.g. *Hackathons, office design projects, project kick-off events*



If you're managing/being managed by a friend...

...fix friction fast - don't leave the new dynamic undiscussed. Acknowledge the change and agree principles and boundaries early on to reframe a work relationship and protect an out of work friendship.



If friendship is feeling competitive...

...work with the 'why' - by taking time to understand the 'why' behind people's work you can connect rather than compete. Use your own 'why' to refocus your energy on running your own race.

Friendships form with....



Proximity - physical and emotional closeness helps create strong foundations for friendship



Priority - making time for friendship matters. Avoid deprioritising it because of day-to-day demands



Patience - the strongest friendships take time and trust to form.

Coach Yourself Questions



What friendships do you need most right now?



What is getting in the way of you forming new friendships?

Recommended resources



[How friendships change in adulthood](#) writer Julie Beck on why friendship matters.



[Making and cultivating and keeping close friends](#) LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman on the importance of friendships.



[Building brilliant relationships](#) Squiggly Careers Podcast #174

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to work with different people



Strength lies in differences, not in similarities



Stephen Covey

Understanding the difference

To work effectively with different people, you need to first understand your own ways of working. Reflect on which of these profiles feels most familiar to you (particularly when you are put under pressure):

Heated Hexagon



You're great at driving decisions but sometimes rush people before they feel ready and can create friction and uncomfortable debate.

Data-based Diamond



You're brilliant at finding insights that help people to get to better answers, but sometimes you come across as too rigid and inflexible.

Talkative Triangle



Your energy is amazing for engaging and motivating people, but it can feel overwhelming for people who value time to reflect and think.

Consensus-seeking Circle



You are invaluable for ensuring people feel heard and included, but your need for alignment can sometimes get in the way of progress.

Now think about a colleague who works differently to you. What profile feels like a fit for them?

Reflecting on the impact of difference

The shape I identify with the most is:



Our difference brings us benefits because:

I think my colleague is most like:



At times, our difference feels challenging because:

Managing from the point of difference

IF they are more like a:

Heated Hexagon

THEN try to:

...involve early and update often. Keep communications simple and specific.

Talkative Triangle

...bring them in when it's feeling flat and ring-fence their role in meetings.

Data-based Diamond

...help connect the dots between the data and the decision that is needed.

Consensus-seeking Circle

...use 1-10 scales to help them differentiate progress vs perfection.

Recommended resources



Why we should disagree more

Article from conflict expert Amy Gallo



Work/Life Conversation

Adam Grant and Esther Perel talk about relationships at work



Building Relationships at Work

Squiggly Careers #235 with Thomas Erikson and Megan Reitz

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to know whether to switch or stay in your role


The challenge of choice and change


The pandemic has prompted people to reevaluate the role of work in their life and the work that they do on a day-to-day basis.

This creates an opportunity for people to stimulate their career development and find a better fit for their strengths and values.

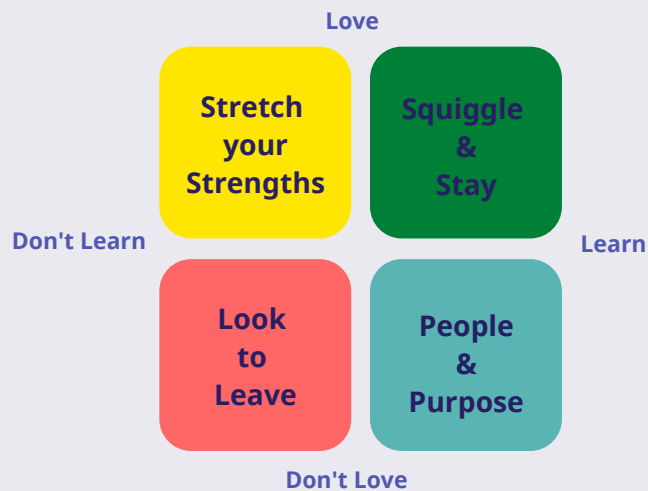
However, many people look to leave by default and don't explore their alternative opportunities. For 3/4 people this results in a career development disconnect when their new role doesn't meet their hopes and expectations (*source: The Muse*)

Ideas for Action

1 Go on a Squiggly Career Safari 
Increase your awareness of opportunities by job scanning. Give yourself permission to explore what's available, understand skills you need to develop and which talents you could most easily transfer.

2 Squiggly scenario planning 
Create decision-making clarity by fast-forwarding 12 months. Consider the best case / mid /worse case of staying where you are vs. switching roles or companies. Challenge and build your insights with a colleague you trust.

The Love / Learn Matrix



If you love where you work BUT don't feel like you're learning...

Explore ways you can stretch your strengths by working on different projects and initiatives.

If you love where you work AND feel like you're learning...

Prioritise exploring opportunities to develop in different directions in the organisation.

If you don't love where you work BUT do feel like you're learning...

Focus on building your internal relationships or connecting with purpose-led projects.

If you don't love where you work AND don't feel like you're learning...

Consider leaving (but avoid leaping!)

Coach Yourself Questions

? What is your career development priority over the next 12 months?

? What is getting in the way of exploring your career possibilities?

Recommended resources



LoveWork: The seven steps to thrive at work Ben Renshaw and Sophie Devonshire on how to make the time you spend at work more rewarding and enjoyable.



When to leave your job
Watch Helen talk through our "Love/Learn" matrix



How to create your career criteria
Squiggly Careers episode #274

Amazing if

www.amazingif.com

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to stop self-sabotage

What is self-sabotage?

Saboteurs are the voices in our heads that generate stress and negative emotions in the way we handle work and life's challenges.



They sabotage our potential for both happiness and performance.

What is your source of self-sabotage?

Neuropsychologist [Judy Ho](#) splits self-sabotage into 4 different LIFE categories - *which feels familiar for you?*

- Lower self-esteem (thinking you don't deserve good things)
- Internalised beliefs (and finding it hard to shake them)
- Fear of the unknown (and self protection)
- Excessive need for control (preferring that to anything else)

How does your saboteur show up?

[Shirzad Chamine](#) identified the most common saboteur profiles. Scan and select the profile below that feels most like you and take the free saboteur survey at [positiveintelligence.com](https://www.positiveintelligence.com) to compare results.

- Avoider** - avoids difficult and unpleasant tasks and conversations
- Controller** - anxiety based, needs to take charge and control situations
- Hyper-Achiever** - dependent on constant performance and achievement for self-respect and validation
- Hyper-Rational** - intense focus on rational processing of everything, including relationships
- Hyper-Vigilant** - continuous anxiety about the risk of things going wrong
- Pleaser** - seeks acceptance by helping or flattering others often at the expense of their own needs
- Restless** - constantly in search of greater excitement and non-stop busyness
- Victim** - extreme focus on internal feelings and uses emotion to gain attention and affection.
- Stickler** - driven by perfectionism, process and order.

Ideas for Action

1 Put self-sabotage under the spotlight

Understanding your self-sabotage and the excuses you make to justify it increases awareness and encourages you to be accountable.

Ask yourself

What's the self-sabotage activity I do?

What's my excuse for it?

What's the consequence of this behaviour?

2 Break the cycle

Pick an unhelpful cycle you want to break. Imagine someone you care about about was stuck in that cycle. Write down, in no more than 5 steps, what instructions you would give them to stop self-sabotage.

3 Reward yourself

Pick something that feels meaningful and motivating for you to work towards to encourage commitment to stopping your saboteur.

When I Then I....

Coach Yourself Questions

How has self-sabotage held you back at work?

What actions will you take to stop your saboteur?

Recommended resources



[Sabotage: How to silence your inner critic and get out of your own way](#)

A short read by Emma Gannon



[Self-sabotage](#)

The School of Life's interesting take on sabotage.



[How to develop career confidence](#)

Squiggly Careers episode #169

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to move forward from failure

“ If we are able to remove both **fear** and **ego** when we encounter crisis, we will see failure more clearly for what it is: not as something that defines us, but as a missing piece of knowledge that helps us come closer to completing the jigsaw puzzle of who we truly are.

Elizabeth Day, Author of [How to Fail](#)

Why learning from failure feels hard

Fail = Fault

Leaping to blame ourselves or someone else for failure is part of how we try to make sense of why a failure happened, but **fault-finding gets in the way of learning**.

Fail = Fixed

When we fail, we can see ourselves as a 'failure'. An incident can become our identity and **we lose perspective** on the other areas in our life that we are making positive progress in.

Fail = Frequent

Our brains find it hard to learn from failure, which means that unless we are very conscious about learning, **we are likely to repeat the same failures** at work.



Idea for Action: Pre-empt failure

Try a '**pre-mortem**' to critique all the potential ways a project or process could fail. This can help you to proactively learn how to do things differently.

Ask your **critical friends** to find your potential points of failure. They will often be able to spot things that your positive filter might have missed!



Idea for Action: Find the right response

Reflect on whether your failures are '**foolish**', '**fixable**' or because of '**future uncertainty**'

If foolish then think about who/what would make a good safety net.

If fixable then think about what skills you might need and who could support you with them.

If it's because of future uncertainty then spend time scenario planning and thinking through your rescue plan.

Coach Yourself Questions

? Which factors have contributed to your failures?

? When have you learnt the most from your failure?

Recommended resources



[Strategies for Learning from Failure](#) by Professor of Leadership at Harvard Business School Amy C. Edmondson.



[The unexpected benefit of celebrating failure](#) Ted talk by entrepreneur and inventor Astro Teller on experimentation and failure.



[How to fail podcast](#) by author, journalist and broadcaster Elizabeth Day.

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

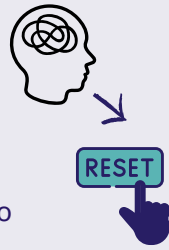
How to re-energise yourself and your work



Our energy requires our attention

Continual change, pressure, and busyness at work drain our energy reserves. Without consciously refueling, we risk burning out.

Re-energising yourself outside of work, helps you to achieve more inside of work.



? What drains your energy?

5 ways to re-energise

1. Deliberate Rest



Giving all your attention to an activity allows you to switch-off the noise of work.

Beware the barrenness of a busy life.

- **Socrates**

Deliberate rest helps you recover and improves long-term thinking.



What activity feels like deliberate rest for you?

[Blog on active rest](#)

2. Goal-setting



Setting goals outside of work helps to keep work in perspective.

Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible.

- **Tony Robbins**

Setting goals increases our energy to help us put more effort in all areas.



What goals are meaningful and motivating for you?

[Article on goal-setting](#)

3. Relationships



Spending time with radiators, restores your energy reserves.

Build relationships beyond the ones that we need right now.

- **Margaret Heffernan**

Building new relationships generates ideas that lead to better performance.



Which energising communities could you connect with?

[Cognitive diversity](#)

4. Volunteering



Helping others allows us to step back from day-to-day work issues.

You have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.

- **Audrey Hepburn**

Volunteering creates a 'helpers high' which boosts your mental health.



What causes are you personally passionate about?

[Benefits of volunteering](#)

5. Curiosity



Curiosity fuels learning and growth in all areas of our life.

Curiosity is the engine of achievement.

- **Sir Ken Robinson**

Consciously investing in curiosity prevents falling into a fixed mindset.



What new sources of curiosity could you spend time with?

[The case for curiosity](#)

Coach Yourself Questions

? Which area will you prioritise this week?

? Who could help keep you accountable?

Recommended resources



Energize book by [Simon Alexander Ong](#) that includes lots of ideas to learn how to manage your energy.



How to stop languishing and start finding flow Ted talk by psychologist [Adam Grant](#) about a feeling affecting many people.



Setting yourself up for success Squiggly Careers Episode #164

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

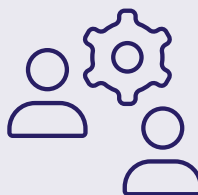


How to help people squiggle and stay

Why we need to refocus on retention

Organisations that aren't adapting fast enough for squiggly careers are experiencing big challenges in retaining people. **People are reconsidering work and looking outside first.**

For many, it has become easier to leave and grow than squiggle (i.e change roles and develop in different directions) and stay.



- 65% of employees are reconsidering the role of work in their lives
- Only one-third open to internal opportunities providing part of the solution
- Pace of employee turnover is forecast to be 50-75% higher

[Read HBR article Why people quit their jobs](#)

Why it is often easier for people to leave



Awareness

lack of visibility of what's available in the company



Access

too many processes and performance hurdles



Support

managers too territorial about talent or unsure how to help

3 principles



Focus career conversations on progression, not promotion

Managers and mentors need to help people move conversations away from steps and titles to skills and talents.

3 ideas for action



Cultivate curiosity

Encourage people to be explorative by asking 'nudging' questions:

1. *What motivates you about your work?*
2. *What do you want to be known for?*
3. *What possibilities would you like to learn more about?*



Measure managers on people potential, not team performance

Managers should be rewarded for focusing on the development of organization-wide people potential.

Develop mobility metrics

Measure the effectiveness of squiggly career support by regularly reviewing:

1. *Number of completed career experiments*
2. *Percentage of roles filled internally.*
3. *Employee-rated quality of career conversations.*



Make career experiments easy to adopt and adapt

People need flexibility and choice to learn how they can transfer their talents and 'try on' different roles.

Squiggly career experiments

Make it easy for people to experiment with a 'mobility menu' of options such as:

1. *Squiggly Safari: a 1-2 week 'tour' of the organisation*
2. *Borrowed brilliance: Short-term projects with skills sourced from the broader business.*



Coach Yourself Questions



What internal opportunity are you most excited about?



How could you help others to squiggle and stay?

Recommended resources



[How to reimagine retention](#)

Our latest article for Harvard Business Review



[The best career path isn't always a straight line](#) Our Tedx talk which has had over 1.5 million views shows how squiggly careers can be dynamic



[How to have a high trust team](#)

Squiggly Careers Episode #271

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to increase your freedom at work

Find more freedom in your work

Ladder-like, command and control methods of managing take freedom away from individuals at work.



Research shows that people are much more engaged in companies with high levels of freedom.

Freedom at work = autonomy

having the space that you need



+

accountability

having ownership of outcomes

? What does freedom at work mean to you?

Tick as many that apply

Authenticity

Trust

Flexibility

Choice

Empowerment

5 Freedom red flags that can get in your way at work



Process



Pressure



Changing Priorities



Micro-management



Workload

3 ideas for action

TIME



ISSUE: Putting other people's priorities before your own.

IDEA: Increase time transparency. *Change the conversation from hours to outcomes.*

Discuss deliverables and deadlines and where and how you work best to achieve them. Agree on communication needs so people are clear on progress and priorities.

TRUST



ISSUE: Working in a way that works for other people but not for you.

IDEA: Prototype your approach. *Lead the conversation to increase your sense of control.*

Create a 'project on a page' that outlines your approach and can be iterated with others. Ask:
1. What might be I be missing?
2. What might get in our way?

TASK



ISSUE: Working on someone else's to do list.

IDEA: Re-find your focus. *Start your day with your wants and needs. Minimise time on want-nots.*

Get tactical about your to-do list and prioritise your time:
1. Wants = work you want to do
2. Needs = work that has to be done
3. Want-nots = work getting in the way.

Coach Yourself Questions

? What are your freedom red flags at work?

? Give each freedom factor a red / green / amber rating

TIME

TRUST

TASK

Recommended resources



[Give your team the freedom to do the work they think matters most](#) Must-read HBR article if you're a manager



[Four Thousand Weeks: Time and how to use it](#) Author Oliver Burkeman realigns our relationship with time during this talk at Google



[How to approach hybrid working with Dr. Tomas Chamorro Premuzic](#) Squiggly Careers Episode #226

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to avoid a holiday hangover

Reboot, reflect and reset



Taking time off gives your brain a break and improves your capacity to learn.



When your brain is completely relaxed, it consolidates knowledge and brainpower. 'Aha' moments come when you're in a relaxed state of mind.



Brigid Schulte

5 ideas for pre-holiday prep

1. Plan your first day back



Clear your diary as much as possible and avoid meetings if you can.

? *Is as much as possible moved in your diary for your first day back?*

2. Build your 'I'm on a break' boundary



Decide whether you are switching-off or staying slightly connected

? *Have you shared if / when / how you'll be checking in?*

3. Decide on your digital distractions



Pause notifications that will bring your brain back into work mode

? *Could this be an experiment to see what notifications you need?*

4. Own your Out of Office



What FAQs come your way? Use your OOTO to answer in your absence.

? *Who do you need to let know in advance that you're going away?*

5. Find a heads-up helper



Who can fill you in on what's happened before you get back?

? *Who do you trust to get in touch and keep you up-to-date?*

3 tips for finding post-holiday flow

1. Focus on your quick wins

Create a sense of achievement in your first week back by progressing something small that could boost to your energy.

Quick wins to consider...



- Clearing your inbox.
- Scheduling a curious career conversation.
- Investing in learning a new skill.

2. Reset your goals

Identify 3 goals you want to achieve in the next 3 months to give you direction and reduce the risk of back-to-work boredom.

Goals to go after...



- **People:** *Who could you help and how?*
- **Projects:** *What could you deliver that would make a difference?*
- **Process:** *How could you improve the way that something works?*

3. Recharge your relationships

Reconnecting with colleagues that are important to your career provides you with post-holiday meaning and motivation.

Relationships to invest in...



- **Supporters:** *who can you talk about your goals and gremlins with?*
- **Sponsors:** *who can open doors for your development?*

Coach Yourself Questions

? **How do I want to feel after my holiday?**

? **What can I do now to give me that break that I need?**

Recommended resources



Overwhelmed: Work, Love and Play When No One Has the Time
Brigid Schulte



The Power of Time-off
TED talk by Stefan Sagmeister about the importance of taking time off.



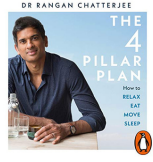
Understanding the power of rest.
with Alex Soojung-Kim Pang
Squiggly Careers Episode #164

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to improve your health to increase your impact



2 recommended resources



The 4 Pillar Plan: *How to Relax, Eat, Move and Sleep Your Way to a Longer, Healthier Life* by **Dr. Rangan Chatterjee**

DO/WALK/
Simple steps to change your life.
Libby DeLana

Do Walk: *Navigate Earth, Mind and Body. Step by Step* by **Libby DeLana**

Quotes to inspire

We're all familiar with the idea that lifestyle can be the cause of disease. What's not common knowledge is that a change in lifestyle can also be the treatment and prevent us from getting sick in the first place.

- **Dr. Rangan Chatterjee**

If you are in a bad mood go for a walk. If you are still in a bad mood go for another walk.

- **Hippocrates**

Insights to improve your health

1 Stress isn't always bad over a short period



But stress could be a bigger problem to our health if it is sustained and unmanaged.

If you're experiencing stress, check in with how long it has gone on for.

4 Walking helps us to think differently



Walking is proven to improve creativity by 60% and helps to support learning.

Plot a new walking route this week to spark your thinking.

2 Understand and balance your nervous system

Stress triggers our sympathetic nervous system. Relaxation engages our parasympathetic nervous system (calm mode).

Reflect on your level of balance.

5 You can be mindful and meditate when walking

There is a strong link between intentional walking and wellbeing.

Reflect on walk 'wants'. Do you need clarity, creativity, calm?

3 Regularly check-in with the four pillars

Scoring yourself against relax, eat, move and sleep will help you to spot gaps to focus on.

Don't aim for perfect scores. Take lots of small actions for positive progress.

6 The most important time to walk is when you don't want to

You may get the most benefit from a walk on your busiest days when it feels hard to fit in.

Create a habit of stopping for a stroll whenever you feel stressed.

Coach Yourself Questions

? Which pillar (relax, eat, move, sleep) is a priority for you right now?

? How can you create more space in your working week for walking?

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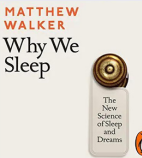


How understanding the science of sleep can improve your work

2 recommended resources



Life Time: *The New Science of the Body Clock, and How It Can Revolutionize Your Sleep and Health*
by **Dr. Russell Foster**



Why we sleep: *The new science of sleep and dreams*
by **Matthew Walker**

Quotes to inspire


Rapid stress is a bit like putting a car engine into first gear, it gives you an immediate and helpful acceleration but if you leave the engine in first gear for too long, you may destroy it.

- **Dr. Russell Foster**, watch his [Ted Talk on Sleep](#)

It is a common experience that a problem difficult at night is resolved in the morning after the committee of sleep has worked on it


- **John Steinbeck**

Insights to improve your sleep

- 1 Get clarity on your chronotype**


Match your work to your chronotype (early bird / night owl / bit of both) as much as you can for better performance. [Take the survey.](#)
- 2 Understand the impact of social jet lag**

Consider the mismatch between when you naturally want to wake up and when you actually do. *How could you close the gap?*
- 3 Take sleep and light into account**

Avoiding light at night and getting morning light helps reset our body clock. *How soon can you get morning light after you wake up?*
- 4 Sleep is the save button in your brain**


Sleep helps us consolidate what we learn in the day into a long-term secure vault (your prefrontal cortex) *What learning are you losing by not sleeping well to 'save'?*
- 5 'Sleeping on it' is scientifically proven**

Sleeping helps the brain fuse together knowledge to problem-solve in a new way. *Prioritise sleep the next time you need to problem-solve.*
- 6 Beware of the afternoon dip in energy**

Although sleep rhythms are personal to all of us, we are all hardwired to experience a PM dip. *How could you design your day around the dip?*

The SATED test	?	Rarely / Never (0)	Sometimes (1)	Usually / Always (2)
<u>S</u> atisfaction	Are you satisfied with your sleep?			
<u>A</u> lertness	Do you stay awake all day without dozing?			
<u>T</u> iming	Are you asleep (or trying to sleep) between 2am and 4am?			
<u>E</u> fficiency	Do you spend less than 30mins awake at night? <i>(incl awakenings and time it takes to fall asleep)</i>			
<u>D</u> uration	Do you sleep between 6 and 8 hours a day?			

Total for all item ranges from 0 - 10

0 = Poor Sleep Health

10 = Good Sleep Health

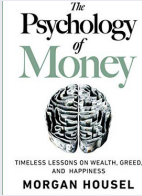
Amazing if
www.amazingif.com

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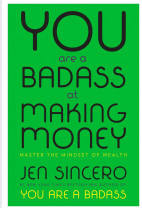
How your money mindset influences your career success



2 recommended resources



The Psychology of Money:
Timeless lessons on wealth, greed and happiness
by Morgan Housel



You are a Badass at Making Money:
Master the mindset of wealth
by Jen Sincero

Quotes to inspire



Financial success is not a hard science, it's a soft skill where how you behave is more important than what you know.

- Morgan Housel

Because we are creatures of habit, who tend to have our words on repeat they become like a chisel that forms grooves in our minds. Playing the same stories, over and over, anchoring in our thoughts and beliefs and defining our reality.

- Jen Sincero

Insights to improve your money mindset

1 Know the difference between rich vs. wealthy



Rich = current income spent visibly
Wealth = income not spent and investments not seen

Are you more motivated by being rich or being wealthy?

4 Rebuild your beliefs about money



Your thoughts feed your emotions which inform your actions and create your reality.

What beliefs about money are holding you back?

2 Understand the psychology behind your spending

Savings are the gap between your ego and your income. You will save more if you care less about what others think.

How much does other people's opinion influence your spending?

5 Prepare for a more positive association with money

Writing down the positive words you associate with money can help you be less fearful about the topic.

What does money make you grateful for?

3 Be clear about the choice that money buys you

Flexibility and control over your time is an often unseen return on wealth. You can create freedom from wealth.

How could more savings lead to your time being better spent?

6 Be watchful to avoid being wasteful

Unconscious spending reduces control of your finances. Auditing 6 months of outgoings will increase your awareness.

What small changes could stop wasteful spending?

Ideas for action



Describe a dream day in your life.
How could a better money mindset help?



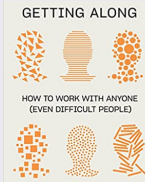
Where are you on the scale? Watchful ←————→ Wasteful
Write down a wasteful spending habit you could watch

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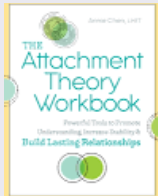
How to rethink about your relationships



2 recommended resources



Getting Along: *How to work with anyone (even difficult people)*
by [Amy Gallo](#)



The Attachment Theory Workbook: *Powerful Tools to Promote Understanding, Increase Stability, and Build Lasting Relationships*
by [Annie Chen](#)

Quotes to inspire

Even one negative relationship can cast a shadow over your life but if you look, you can often find like-minded people who are interested in positive interactions, rather than allowing toxic relationships to dominate.

- [Amy Gallo](#)

Remember [attachment style] behaviours were learned. None of them are your fault, but the consequences of these behaviours are your business. Being open and curious is the best way to learn about yourself and fuel your motivation to change behaviours that don't serve you.

- [Annie Chen](#)

Insights to improve your relationships

1 Reflect on your outside / inside impact

The quality of your relationships outside of work impacts your relationship resilience inside of work.



What impact are your personal relationships having on your professional relationships today?

2 Understand how biases can affect your relationships

Affinity bias - gravitating towards people with similar appearances / beliefs / backgrounds

Confirmation bias - looking for evidence that reinforces what you already think about someone.

Which bias holds you back?

3 Suppressing your emotion can stall your relationships

Bottling-up feelings can result in 'emotional leakage' where you risk defaulting to sarcasm, stress or outbursts for release.

How can you find a constructive emotional release (e.g. journaling / sharing feelings with a friend)?

4 Knowing your attachment style helps you understand how you relate to others

There are three main styles: secure, anxious and avoidant.



Which is your primary style of attachment? [Take Annie Chen's free attachment quiz.](#)

5 We all have a window of tolerance in relationships

Your window is the ideal zone to effectively process, respond and relate to people.

What happens when you feel outside of your window of tolerance? Fight or flight?

6 Understanding your relationship super strengths helps form closer bonds

Knowing each other's strengths in a close relationship provides a buffer for stress and room to grow towards your goals.

Which strengths do others bring to your relationships?

Ideas for action

Communicate your needs assertively

Use 'I' statements to share something about yourself and your needs rather than 'you' which feels like blame and can cause friction.



Write it out

Writing down your feelings and emotions about your relationships can help you gain clarity and increase your sense of control.



Squiggly Careers PodSheets

How to redefine your relationship with work



What is 'quiet quitting'?

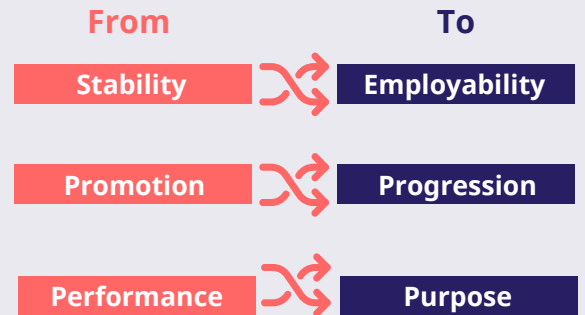
“ You're not outright quitting your job, but you're quitting the idea of going above and beyond. You're still performing your duties, but you're no longer subscribing to the hustle culture mentality that work has to be your life – the reality is, it's not. ”

taken from [Metro.co.uk](https://www.metro.co.uk)

How the unwritten rules of work have changed

Your relationship with work is made up of formal contract (*that you sign*) and an informal contract (*a set of unwritten rules and expectations*).

Over time, the 'rules of work' have changed. 'Quiet quitting' is a passive approach to a problem with your work life. Understanding your unique relationship with work helps you to actively redefine your relationship with work, so that it works for you.



4 ideas for action to actively redefine (or define) your relationship with work

- 1 For support with **employability**:**
Design your own development plan
Ask for input and investment where needed.
 If investment isn't available, *ask what are the constraints?* Use If/Then to understand how you could overcome the constraints.
- 2 For support with **freedom & flexibility**:**
Be clear and confident about what you need
Find the right fit for the business too.
Complete these statements: *I work at my best when ... / The change I'd like to explore with you is ... / It means I'm able to bring more value to the team because ...*
- 3 For more **progression possibilities**:**
Be open and adopt an exploring mindset
Squiggly careers are fluid and not fixed. Reflect on these two coach yourself questions.
What does progression look like to you?
How could you 'pilot' your progression?
- 4 For more **pride in your company purpose**:**
Make connections between what you care about and what you could create
The stronger the connection, the more potential for pride. *List 5 things that you care about at work then list 5 things your company stands for / is known for. Join the dots.*

Coach Yourself Questions

- If your work was a person, how would you like to describe that relationship?**
- What is the biggest change you could make to improve your relationship with work?**

Recommended resources

- [State of the Global workplace report 2022](#)**
Gallup's annual report post pandemic features employee data and workplace trends.
- [The cure for burnout](#)**
Authors Emily & Amelia Nagoski talk about 3 telltale signs of burnout
- [How to find your work/life fit](#)**
Squiggly Careers episode #227

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to take control of your career

What we mean when we say control

Control doesn't mean: *pre-empting* or *predicting* everything that will come.

Control does mean: being *prepared* and *proactive* about your development.

When we are in control of our career we can better adapt to the inevitable change and challenge.

“ A sense of control over our own destinies ensures a sense of self-esteem and a feeling of empowerment. ”

Bruce Daisley, author of Fortitude

? Does your career, today, feel more like...

You're a passenger on the rollercoaster



You're driving the rollercoaster



You're designing your own rollercoaster



Ideas for action

1. Create an Amazing If mind-map

Part 1: Do a 5-minute mind map to end this sentence '*wouldn't my career be amazing if.....*'

Part 2: Answer these two coach yourself questions:

- What knowledge do I need to GROW?
- What strengths do I need to SHOW?

2. Think about your possibility people

Using your mind map for inspiration, write down 3 career possibilities you're interested in exploring over the next 12 months.

Then ask yourself:

- Who has **INSIGHT** about each area?
- Who has **INFLUENCE** in each area?
- Who can make an **INTRODUCTION** to someone in each area?

3. Create some skills scenarios

Write down 3 career scenarios over the next 12 months.

Then:

- Identify the skills that would most help you to respond to those scenarios.
- Prioritise the skills you could invest in now. Look out for whether any super skills that go across all scenarios.

4. Identify your reputation readiness

What do you want to be known for? Create 3 bios to believe it:

- One for today
- One for 12 months
- One for 24 months' time

Ask yourself:

What could you create or communicate to build the belief in your bio?

Coach Yourself Questions

? What factors do you feel you are in control of at work right now?

What factors do you feel you are **not** in control of at work right now?

? Who could you approach to challenge your assumptions about your control factors?

Recommended resources



Your Career Needs a Little Luck.

Here's How to Cultivate It. An article discussing how progressing with our careers might not work as we think.



Join PodPlus on Thursdays, 9 - 9.30am

Join Helen & Sarah virtually at PodPlus every Thursday morning, to dive deeper into the Squiggly Careers podcast topic of the week.



How to tackle uncertainty

Squiggly Careers Episode #237

Squiggly Careers PodSheet



How to make difficult career decisions

Difficult decisions help us to develop

When a career decision feels hard, it means you care about the outcome. It creates a moment for you to reflect on what matters and make a choice about the direction of your development.

It might feel challenging, but these decisions help you to design a career as individual as you are.

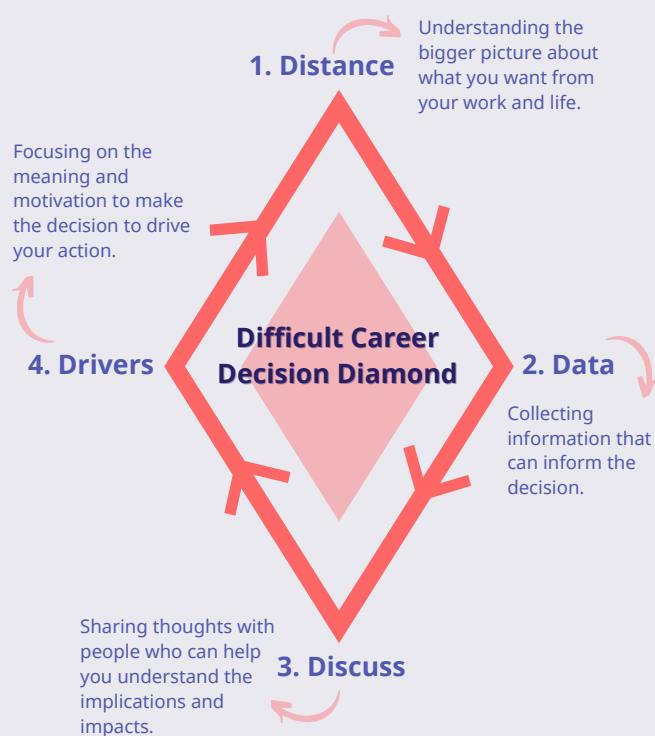
“ When we’re faced with difficult and complex decisions, we typically experience difficult and complex emotions.

Cheryl Strauss Einhorn

Response beats regret over the long-term

Despite a decision feeling difficult, research shows we’re more likely to regret not taking action than making a choice and moving it forward.

Use the 4 points of this **diamond** to get decision clarity and confidence



Ideas for Action

1 Get **distance** from your decision



Do a decision dress rehearsal

Imagine having made a decision in one direction:

- *What would be true that isn't true today?*
- *How would you like to look back on that year and describe what has happened to a friend?*
- *What's the worst case scenario & how do you feel about that happening?*

2 Collect **data** on your decision



Think about Facts vs. Feelings

This can help you understand what is influencing your decision.

Day 1 - Set yourself a 5 minute timer to write down only facts about your decision. Then 5 minutes to write down feelings.

Day 2 - Do a 5 minute review. Go back and look at everything you've written down. Do you have anything to add/edit?

3 **Discuss** your decision to move it forward



Use others to expand on your experience

Write down 3 specific experiences that would be useful for you to learn from. For example, if you're considering a career change, consider:

1. *Someone who has made a career change recently across any industry*
2. *Someone who has made the career change you're considering*
3. *Someone already in the area you're exploring*

4 **Define your decision drivers**



Carry out a 'why watch'

Write down your top 3 'whys' for making your decision. This gives you grit and keeps you going when things get hard.

- *Write or store it somewhere, where it is easily accessible.*

Coach Yourself Questions

? Which 'D' do you do well in the decision making diamond?

? What career decision could you apply the diamond to?

Recommended resources



Emotions Aren't the Enemy of Good Decision-Making

An insightful read by professor Cheryl Strauss Einhorn



When your inner voice lies to you

Cheryl Strauss Einhorn's Tedx talk brings decision-making principles to life



How to flex your thinker vs doer mode

Squiggly Careers Episode #245

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to create career karma

What do we mean by career karma

Career karma happens when you develop relationships based on what you can **give**....not what you want to **get**.



Giving (without keeping score) results in you getting more back over the long run.

The benefits of adopting a giving mindset



As you help others you also help yourself



You can experience a 'helpers high'



You increase your career capital



[The Do Lectures 2022](#)

Ideas for action

- 1 Career karma questions:** When you meet people, adopt a giving mindset and keep some helpful questions top of mind.
 - *What support do you need most at the moment?*
 - *Who would be useful for me to introduce you to?*
- 2 Figure out what you've got to give:** Use the 3E's to proactively support someone else (experience, expertise, and energy)...*which E could you give?*
- 3 Proactively share what you've got to give:** Put out an offer openly – e.g. *LinkedIn / to a Whats App network* or directly e.g. *to a manager or mentor*. This might sound like *'I'm looking for more opportunities to practice XXX, have you got any suggestions about how I could make that happen?'*
- 4 Reflect on how you can give as a group:** Create a career karma circle for give/gain matching. *Could you create a community where you all have something in common with the purpose of helping each other?*
- 5 Do a 5-minute favour:** Focus on fast favours to make giving a part of your everyday actions eg:
 - *Share a useful link to book / podcast / talk*
 - *Send an email / voicenote of encouragement, support*
 - *Take a photo of someone at an event!*

Watch-out for...

- **People-pleasing**
You still need boundaries otherwise you may burnout
- **Vague feedback**
Be specific about the *what* and *who* or what you give might not be valued.

The Career Karma Scale

Where are you on the scale today?



Coach Yourself Questions

- ?** Who are some of the best 'givers' you know?
- ?** What could be your 5-minute favour this week?

Recommended resources



[Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success](#) by Adam Grant



[Are you a giver or a taker?](#) Ted Talk by Adam Grant about the power of giving



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Join Helen & Sarah virtually at PodPlus to dive deeper into the Squiggly Careers podcast topic of the week.

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to talk about values in teams

A recap on what values are

-  Values are the things that motivate and drive us
-  Everyone has values and there are no right and wrong values
-  There are no work and home values – just your values.

Benefits of talking about values in teams

- Increased levels of empathy for each other and better understanding of behaviour**
- You can spot points of connection and potential sources of conflict**
- You can support opportunities to increase how much we can live our values at work.**



“ Living into our values means that we do more than profess our values, we practice them. We walk our talk.

Brené Brown




4 ideas for action

- 1 Ask, answer and appreciate**
Asking people to reflect and share their answers to some curious questions can help everyone get to know each other better and appreciate each others differences.
 - 5 words that describe me
 - I work best when...
 - Come to me if you need help with...
 - I'm at my worse when...
- 2 High-low learning**
Sharing a high and low of your week can help people understand the things that motivate and drive you. *Doing this in pairs increases trust, understanding and empathy.*
- 3 Quarterly compass review**
Use a scale to talk about how fulfilled your values feel this week and to spot where you may need support.
eg. Sarah's values rated this week:
-Achievement 8/10 - Ideas 6/10
-Learning 7/10 - Variety 9/10
- 4 Filter your future**
Ask someone to 'hold up' your values as a filter so that you can think things through when you're making career development decisions. *They can help you by prompting and provoking your thinking.*

Coach Yourself Questions

-  What would be the benefit of talking about values in your team?
-  How could you start the conversation about values in your team?

Recommended resources

-  **More About me**
A tool to share with your team
-  **Increase your self-awareness with one simple fix**
TedX Talk by Dr. Tasha Eurich
-  **Discover your values**
Squiggly Careers episode #42

Squiggly Careers PodSheets



How to take a coaching approach

Why it's helpful



Taking a coaching approach can help someone navigate through knotty moments and increases their commitment to action.

? Who is the best listener you know?

? Who asks you questions that make you think?

A coaching approach is:

Increasing self-awareness & action

Supporting not solving a situation

Listening not leading the conversation

Ideas for action on how to take a coaching approach

1 Manage the mindset:



Adapt your approach by working out someone's preference for thinking (= reflective and considered) or doing (= action and speed).

- For 'thinkers', use what / when questions to help them be more specific.
- For 'doers', use who/why questions to help them think more deeply about their decisions.

2 Demonstrate key coaching skills:



Questioning:

- Ask one open question at a time and focus on action they can own.
- Sounds like; "What can you learn from this experience?"

Listen:

- Listen to their body language, pace and pitch to hear what someone might not say.
- Playback your understanding to increase clarity
- Reflect on your talk:listen ratio afterwards

3 Structure the conversation with COACH:



CLARITY: "What would be most helpful to talk about today?"

OPTIONS: "What options could you explore?"

ACTION: "What option would be most effective now?"

CONFIDENCE: "What do you need to feel confident taking action?"

HELP: "What support do you need?"

Coach Yourself Questions

? How could you practice using COACH?

? What gets in the way of your 'active' listening?

Recommended resources



You Coach You Learn more coaching skills in our second book



Effective coaching starts with **increased self-awareness**, Ted Talk by Tasha Eurich



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