

# Squiggly Careers Calendar



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# January Growth goals



# January Growth goals

**Setting growth goals creates direction for your career and stops daily distractions getting in the way of your development.**

**Growth goals could include:**

- 🌀 A strength you want to stretch
- 🌀 A subject you want to learn
- 🌀 An area you want to improve in
- 🌀 A relationship you want to build
- 🌀 A gremlin you want to cage.

## Coach Yourself

### Questions

*What does good career growth look like for me in the next 12 months?*

*What will keep me motivated to go after my growth goals?*

*Whose career growth do I admire and what can I learn from their approach?*

*What one thing can I do now to prioritise my growth?*

## Idea for action

### Find your format

Growth goals could be written on a post-it, saved on your phone or turned into images and used as your laptop background. The most important thing is to find a format that feels right for you and is somewhere you will see it often.

### Goal check-in

Think about what rhythm feels right for you to review your progress. Create a review meeting in your diary to reflect and ask yourself:

- 🌀 *"What progress am I proud of?"*
- 🌀 *"What do I need to focus on to move my goal forward?"*
- 🌀 *"Whose help do I need to make it happen?"*

### Add in accountability

Sharing your growth goals with someone can help create accountability. It's important to share what goal you are going after and why. This creates an emotional connection to the outcome that is harder to let go of and means we are more likely to stick to what we start.

# January Growth goals

**“Begin with  
the end  
in mind.”**

Stephen  
Covey



Listen

The image is a 'Podsheet' for the 'Squiggly Careers' podcast. It is titled 'How to develop the 5 skills to succeed in a squiggly career'. It lists five skills: 1. Strengths, 2. Values, 3. Confidence, 4. Network, and 5. Possibilities. Each skill has a brief definition and a 'Key Takeaway' section. At the bottom, there are 'Coach yourself questions', 'Recommended resources', and social media links for the podcast. The background is dark blue with white and yellow text.

Learn

**February**  
Learning  
fast & slow



# February

## Learning fast & slow

Varying your learning rhythm helps to **increase your attention and retention of knowledge.**

### Fast learning looks like:

A short-term learning goal that can be achieved with quick and repeatable actions.

🔗 e.g. learning basic French using daily Duolingo lessons.

### Slow learning looks like:

A longer-term commitment to increasing experience or expertise in a specific area.

🔗 e.g. delivering leadership skills.

## Coach Yourself

### Questions

Whose **expertise** do I admire?

What **abilities** would help increase impact in my current role?

What **motivates** me to learn?

Who else shares similar **learning goals** to me?

## Idea for action

### Fast: One Week Sprint

With your fast learning goal in mind, create a daily 30-minute meeting to spend time on your focus area. During that time, give learning your full attention. No interruptions allowed!

At the end of the time, write down 1 insight and 1 idea for action. Share this summary with your team or a colleague who would benefit from your new knowledge.

🔗 What could you learn fast to spark new thinking in your team?

### Slow: Learn Forward

Search for 2-3 job descriptions of roles you're not ready for yet but would be interested in exploring in the future. Look at the knowledge they need that you don't have today and create a slow learning plan that can help you dive deeper.

🔗 Who are the experts and are you following their work?

🔗 What are the most recommended resources to read, watch and listen to?

# February

## Learning fast & slow

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

Cal Newport

**Squiggly Careers**

Diverse Thinking  
Matthew Syed

Listen

**Podsheet**

How to change your pace and perspective

**Why it matters**

Squiggly careers are full of change, challenge, and uncertainty. These factors take a toll on our energy levels and can often feel out of our control.

If you can consciously manage your pace and perspective, you're more able to work in a more sustainable way.

**Assess your pace and perspective**

On the scales below, mark where you feel you are today and where you would like to be.

Too slow ————— Too fast      Deep in detail ————— Far in future

**Coach yourself questions**

When was I at my best in the first few years of my career?

What 3 words do I want to use to describe my career in 3 years time?

**Recommended resources**

**Idea for action: Pace setting**

**To speed up < Deadline Dashboards**  
Create a visual summary of your main deadlines and give them a red/amber/green status. Reassess and update this daily/weekly to create momentum.

**To slow down < Slow Flow**  
Start your day with an activity that requires your focus and can't be rushed. e.g. Read a chapter of a book / meditate / make a 'slow' breakfast from scratch.

**To zoom out > Go Beyond**  
Read or listen to something that takes you into another world than your work e.g. Read the Economist / Listen to New Scientist Podcast / Watch TED Talks

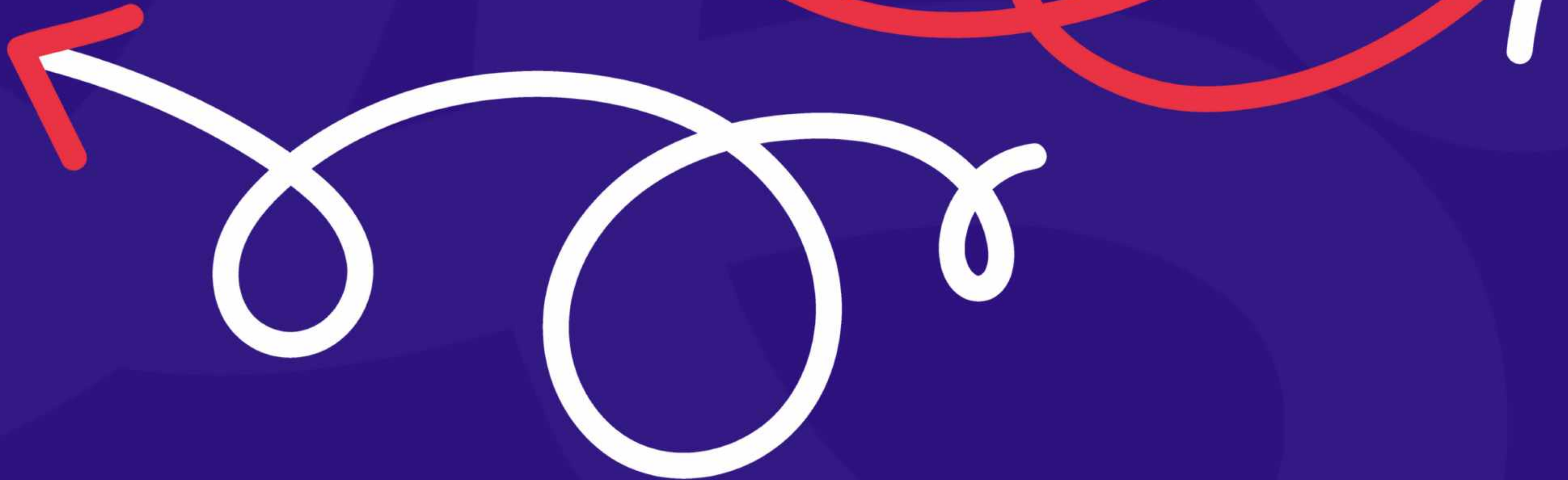
**To zoom in > Detail Your Day**  
Play back how you spent your time. Describe who you were with, what you enjoyed, who you spent time with and how they made you feel.

Episode 304      amazingif.com

Learn



**March**  
Give & gain



# March

## Give & gain

The best relationships are built when **both people benefit.**

However people often struggle with confidence and clarity over:

- ☞ What they can give
- ☞ And what they want to gain.

Overcoming these obstacles creates more **opportunities** to contribute to your career community and **accelerates** your development.

### Coach Yourself

#### Questions

What is more likely to stop me from **building better relationships** at work?  
(Lack of confidence?  
Lack of clarity?)

What experiences have I had that **other people** could learn from?

What am I passionate about that **could create a connection** with other people?

### Idea for action

#### Give more: **Who x How**

Identify 5 people **who** you'd like to build a better relationship with at work.

For each person, think about **how** your expertise (what you know), your experience (what you've done) or your energy (what you enjoy) could be useful to support them.

Use your **who x how** insights to proactively get in touch with people and offer to help.

- ☞ Even better if...you spot a problem someone is trying to solve and use your 'how' to help them.

#### Gain more: **What x When**

Get clarity on what you'd like to gain from your career community by writing down what you want to learn and when you'd like to learn it by.

#### Gain more: **Ask Accelerator**

Use your current strong relationships to connect you to new people who have the knowledge and insights you need.

- ☞ Do you know anyone who...
- ☞ Who would you speak to for...
- ☞ Where could I find someone that...

# March Give & gain

*“We need to get better at **building relationships** beyond the ones we need right now.”*

Margaret Heffernan

**Squiggly Careers**

Networking  
Sharmadean Reid

Listen

**Podsheet**  
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.

**3 benefits of adopting a giving mindset**

1. As you help others you also help yourself
2. You can experience a 'helper's high'
3. You increase your career capital.

**Ideas for action**

- 1. Have some karma career 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?  
Put out an offer openly - e.g. LinkedIn / to a WhatsApp network or directly e.g. to a manager or mentor.  
This might sound like: "I'm looking for opportunities to practice XXX, have you got any suggestions about how I could make that happen?"
- 3. Proactively share what you've got to give**  
Put out an offer openly - e.g. LinkedIn / to a WhatsApp network or directly e.g. to a manager or mentor.  
This might sound like: "I'm looking for 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 fast favour**  
Focus on fast favours to make giving a part of your everyday actions e.g.  
- Share a useful link to look / podcast / talk  
- Send an email 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.

**Coach yourself questions**

Who are some of the best 'givers' you know?

Who are some of the best 'givers' you know?

**Recommended resources**

- GIVE and TAKE: A Revolutionary Approach to Success** - Adam Grant
- How to work your weak side** - We share practical ways to meet in your career community and accelerate your growth on #224 of Squiggly Careers.

Episode 298 | amazingif.com

Learn

# April Ideas & inspiration



# April

## Ideas & inspiration

**We bring value to our connections and in our conversations when we share new ideas and inspire people to think differently.**

Sparking **curiosity** and helping people to see problems from different perspectives can help people get unstuck.

Being known as a **source of inspiration** will also attract new people into your career community.

### Idea for action

#### Outside In

Spend time with people outside of your function or company to understand more about their work, industry, and priorities.

- 🔗 Create a unique format to regularly share your insights with your team or community (e.g. a monthly insights and ideas email)

#### Build it better

You don't always have to start from scratch. Look and learn from what you admire from other people or companies and think about what you can adapt and adopt in your work.

#### Idea prompts

Use curious questions and prompts to open up conversations and invite new thinking:

- 🔗 *How might we...?*
- 🔗 *Yes and...?*
- 🔗 *What if...?*

#### Collect and connect

Save insights and images that inspire you somewhere you can keep coming back to (e.g. a mindmap, Miro, Pinterest or digital notebook). Scanning through what you've collected can help generate new ideas and be a source of stimulus.

#### Opposite effect

When you're trying to solve problems, look at it from the opposite perspective to spark new thinking e.g. instead of trying to fix it, how could we make it worse? Forcing constraints can lead to more creativity.

### Coach Yourself Questions

- 🔗 *Where could your ideas add the most value at work?*

# April Ideas & inspiration

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

Scott Barry Kaufman



Listen



Learn

# May Ambition



# May Ambition

**Ambition** pulls us out of our comfort zone towards the **opportunities** that we are attracted to.

Without ambition, we risk feeling frustrated by the sameness of our days and stalling in our careers.

Ambition doesn't have to look the same for everyone. In squiggly careers, success isn't one size fits all.

Understanding what ambition means to you is important for motivation.

## Ron Carucci identifies 3 types of ambition:

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>1. Performance ambition</b><br>Getting great results for you and your team. | <b>2. Growth ambition</b><br>Developing new skills and stretching your strengths. | <b>3. Achievement ambition</b><br>Unlocking meaningful rewards and recognition. |
|--|---|---|

## Coach Yourself Questions

? Which type of ambition feels most relevant for you right now?

## Idea for action

***If Performance ambition is your focus then...***

- ☞ Involve your team in defining goals
- ☞ Make these goals visible for everyone involved
- ☞ Review them regularly.

***If Growth ambition is your focus then...***

- ☞ Pick a topic and a time to learn
- ☞ Find a learning partner
- ☞ Share and apply your insights to your work.

***If Achievement ambition is your focus then...***

- ☞ Speak what you seek
- ☞ Gain insight from people who have achieved what you want to
- ☞ Focus on your weekly wins.



**“Be unapologetically ambitious. We all have the right to be ambitious and we don't have to apologise for it.”**


Shellye Archambeau



**Squiggly  
Careers**

Ambition  
Shellye Archambeau

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**Podsheet**  
How to grow your role

Squiggly  
Careers

Progression doesn't only mean promotion or changing roles. In reality, we can progress in different directions starting right where we are. Progression thinking opens up more opportunities for growth.

Which strengths would you like to use more in the role that you do today?

**Ideas for action**

**Spot a problem**  
Involve others with your ideas  
Rushing to solve a problem limits your opportunity to build new relationships and equipment in your role.  
Sounds like: I've got some thoughts on how we can sort xxx. Can I get your perspective on them?  
Give an outside example  
Using outside insights can introduce new options for how you could approach your work.  
Sounds like: Company xxx have tried xxx. One thing we could adapt from their approach is xxx.

**Grow together**  
Collaborating with someone who wants to grow their role in a similar way or who has complementary strengths, can accelerate your development.  
Fair up on a shared passion and set-up an internal network to increase your impact.  
Consider what you could both bring to each others projects.  
Make introductions across each other's internal networks so you can both grow your community.

**Mutual work win**  
Consider how your bigger role could create a benefit for someone else in the business.  
Shadow someone who has influence over your role to better understand their priorities.  
Mind-map how your abilities could support their achievement.  
Pitch your idea to develop your role, leading with how it could help them. Sounds like: If I led the monthly meeting, it would give you more time to spend on xxx.

**Coach yourself questions**

What could I try for the first time?  
Who could I talk to who does the same role as me but in a different company?  
What would be an ambitious goal to achieve in my role?  
What are my company's priorities and problems where my skills would be useful?

**Recommended resources**

What's Holding Back Your Career Development? Our HR article discusses how career development is important for resilience in the face of uncertainty and change.

Marcus Buckingham shares how we can understand what we're best at and how we can use that insight to manage our careers on episode 216 of Squiggly Careers.

Episode 380

amazingif.com

Learn

# June

## Growing your grit



# June

## Growing your grit

Grit is having **passion** and **perseverance** for long-term meaningful goals.

When we grow our grit, we can achieve more of what matters to us in our careers.

*"The big secret in life is that **there is no big secret**. Whatever your goal, you can get there if you're **willing to work**."*

— Oprah Winfrey

Designing grit into your goals sets you up for success.

### Idea for action

## The Grit Equation

Grit = Purpose + Progress + Positivity + People

### Purpose

**Ask yourself:**  
*"What do I want to achieve and why do I care?"*

### Progress

**Ask yourself:**  
*"What milestones will I set towards my goal?"*

### Positivity

**Ask yourself:**  
*"How will I recognise and celebrate my milestones?"*

### People

**Ask yourself:**  
*"Who are the 5 people that will help me to achieve my goals?"*

### Coach Yourself Questions

? *How can I regularly revisit my gritty goal reflections to help me stay on track?*

# June

## Growing your grit

*"Grit is having stamina. Grit is sticking with your future, day in, day out, not just for the week, not just for the month, but for years, and working really hard to make that future a reality."*

Angela Duckworth



Listen

This is a content card for 'Squiggly Skills Sprint Day 18: Grit'. It has a dark blue background with yellow text and icons. The card is divided into several sections: 'Podsheet' at the top right, 'What is this squiggly skill?' with a quote from Angela Duckworth, 'Ask the expert' featuring a video thumbnail of Angela Duckworth, 'Ideas for Action' with two bullet points and lightbulb icons, and 'Recommended Listen' featuring a thumbnail for 'Squiggly Careers #36'. At the bottom, it says 'Episode 35?' and 'amazingif.com' with social media icons.

Learn

# July Decision making



# July

## Decision making

In squiggly careers, we have more **choices** and more **change** which means career decisions can be harder to make.

We might find ourselves confused, overly influenced by other people's opinions, or distracted by decisions that look shiny on the surface.

If we learn to make better decisions about our development, we are more likely to be happy in our careers over the long term.

### Idea for action

**Do, don't delay**

**Ask yourself:**  
*"What is the risk of doing, not doing or delaying?"*

This helps you consider whether it's the right decision for right now before you rush into something.

**Knowns & Unknowns**

Create 2 columns. Write down what you know to be true about your decision on one side and everything you don't know on the other.

If your known unknowns are on the longer list, gain more insight to reduce the risk of making a bad decision.

**Worst case contingency**

Imagine you make the worst decision... How would you recover from it?

Being clear on your contingency before you take action can increase your confidence and help you overcome any issues.

### Coach Yourself Questions

? *Who can help me understand the implications of my decisions?*

# July

## Decision making

*“When we’re faced with difficult and complex **decisions**, we typically experience difficult and complex **emotions**.”*

Cheryl Strauss Einhorn

**Squiggly  
Careers**

Problem Solving  
Cheryl Strauss Einhorn

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**Podsheet**  
How to improve your judgement

**Squiggly  
Careers**

**'Good' judgement is using smart thinking to get to sensible solutions.**

**Coach yourself questions**

What is an example of your good judgement?

What is an example of your bad judgement?

What factors affected the quality of your judgement?

**What are you making judgements about in your day-to-day role?**

**Pace** – speed up, slow down or stop

**Priorities** – what's most important now?

**Problems** – what are we solving?

**People** – what do others care about?

**Purpose** – what's the why behind the work?

**Possibilities** – what should be explored?

**Founds** – what funding do we need?

**Ideas for action**

- 1. Ask yourself accelerators**  
When you have a decision to make reflect on judgement accelerator questions to improve the quality of your discussions and recommendations:
  - What have I learnt from a similar situation before?
  - What is the number 1 priority right now?
  - What don't I know?
- 2. Do a speedy sense check**  
Running your thinking by someone can help you to quickly stress test your judgement.
  - Pick someone you trust who will understand the context.
- 3. Play it out**  
Don't risk the quality of your judgement by only seeing it in the current moment. Thinking forward helps you to consider all of the factors which can impact the quality of your judgement over the long-term. Ask yourself:
  - How will this play out in 10 days, 10 weeks, 10 months?
- 4. Share what you don't know**  
When you're making a decision or sharing a recommendation based on your judgement, be clear about what you don't know as well as what you do.
  - Write down your 'known unknowns' and communicate them with confidence.
- 5. Have a 'bad judgement' override**  
The quicker you spot if your judgement has created a problem, the quicker you recover the situation. Being proactive and accountable helps to retain trust and reduce the negative impact.
  - Work out your 'bad judgement' red flags.

**Recommended resources**

Talks to watch when you have a big decision to make  
Playlist or decision-making from TED

The Elements of Good Judgement  
Harvard Business Review article by Dr. Anita Johnson about improving your judgement.

How to be great at decision-making  
Heidi and Sarah share their top 5 tips for making decisions of work on Squiggly Careers #50

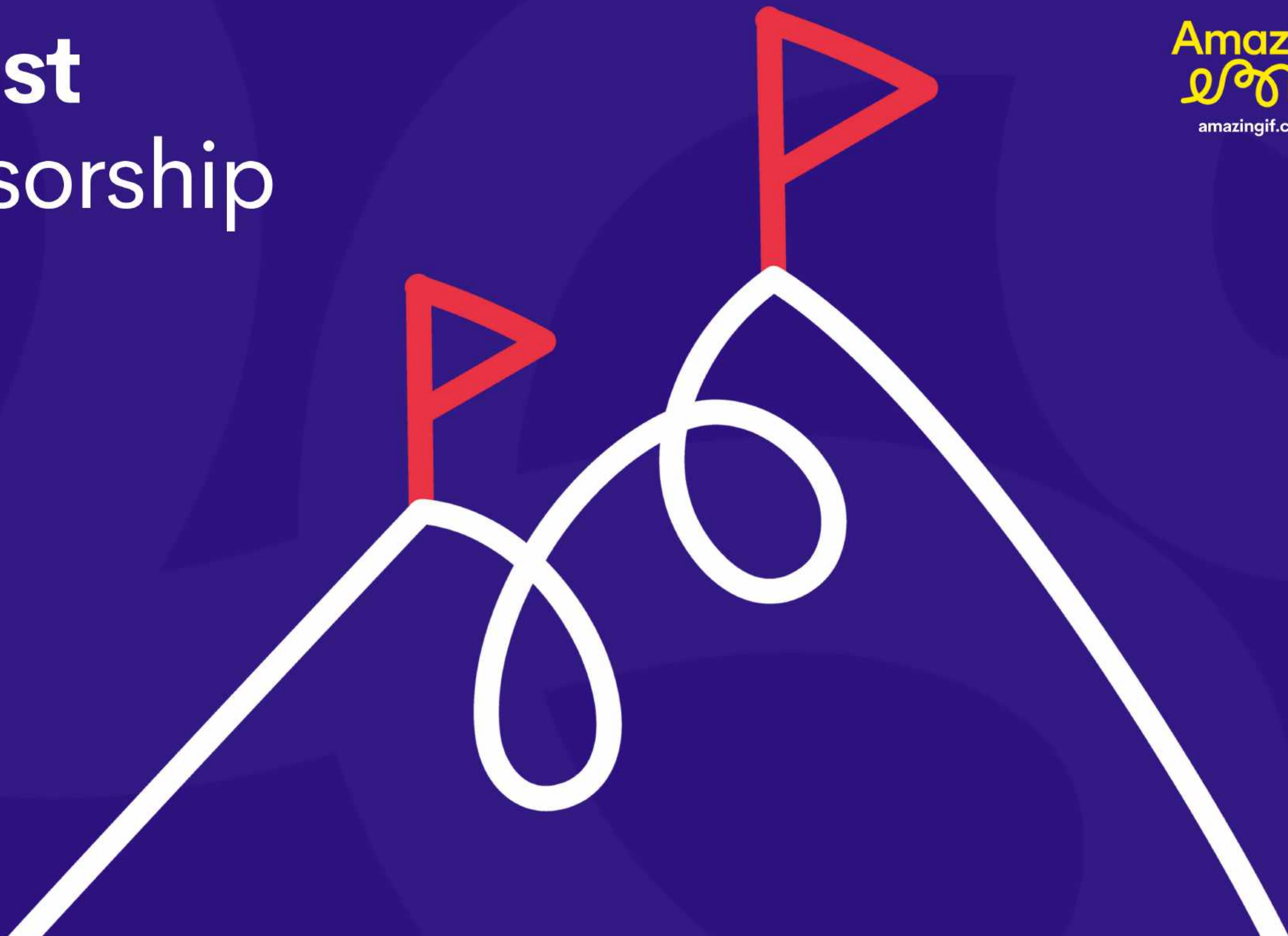
Episode 364

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Learn

# August Sponsorship

Amazing  
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# August Sponsorship

**Sponsors are people who have access and influence over an area you're interested in.**

They can open doors for your development that you can't easily do yourself.

**Sponsorship is earned rather than asked for.**

You can increase your chance of sponsorship success by spotting a sponsor and then supporting them with your strengths so they can see you at your best.

## Idea for action: Use our sponsorship cycle

### 1. Spot sponsors

Scan your organisation for people who are proactively advocating for others. This could be in meetings, presentations or in meetings. These people are more likely to use their influence to help other people progress.

### 2. Align ambitions

Understanding what a sponsor is motivated by and how that can connect with your career ambitions is important to develop a strong relationship.

### 4. Be a sponsor

Now you have created a strong foundation for sponsorship, it's a great time to shift to your own sponsor skills. Look out for people you can help and advocate for. You'll gain greater insight into what sponsors need as well as creating opportunities for other people to succeed.

### 3. Support a sponsor

Think about how your experiences, expertise, or energy can be of value. Offer to help them with one of their top priority projects that could benefit from what you can bring.

## Coach Yourself Questions

? *What doors could a sponsor open for you?*

# August Sponsorship

*“While mentorship is crucial, **sponsorship is the key** to moving up. Sponsors are those who **advocate** for you, **fight** for you, and **place their reputation on the line** to open doors for you.”*

Sylvia Ann Hewlett



Listen

**Podsheet**  
How to get a sponsor  
Squiggly Careers

Sponsor = someone with access and influence over an area you are interested in who is prepared to advocate for you.

**How sponsorship helps**

- Increases your opportunities
- Unlocks doors for your development
- Creates new connections.

A mentor gives you friendly advice. A sponsor is senior in your organisation or world and has the power to get you that next job.  
Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Author

**Coach yourself questions**

Who has access and influence in an area you are interested in?

What are their priorities over the next 12 months?

How could you use your strengths to support them?

**Ideas for action**

**1. Spot a sponsor**  
Look out for sponsor-like behaviours to increase the likelihood of someone advocating for you.

- Can you spot evidence that they have recognised other people for their contribution?
- Do they recommend other people for their abilities (scanning their LinkedIn profile is a quick way to check)?

**2. Support a sponsor**  
Sponsorship is earned not asked for. Work out how you can be most helpful.

- Can you make a connection to someone that could be useful to them?
- What experience or expertise do you have that could be valuable?

**3. Get sponsored**  
Give your sponsor something to share.

- Summarise your successes
- Present data which demonstrates your development
- Make a confident ask for what help you need.

**4. Sponsor other people**  
When you sponsor others, it helps you to get closer to what sponsors need to be able to advocate for other people. You can use this insight to improve your approach.

**Recommended resources**

Harvard Business Review  
Career Sponsorship is a Two-Way Street  
1001 articles from Rachel Simmons and Henricia Stern

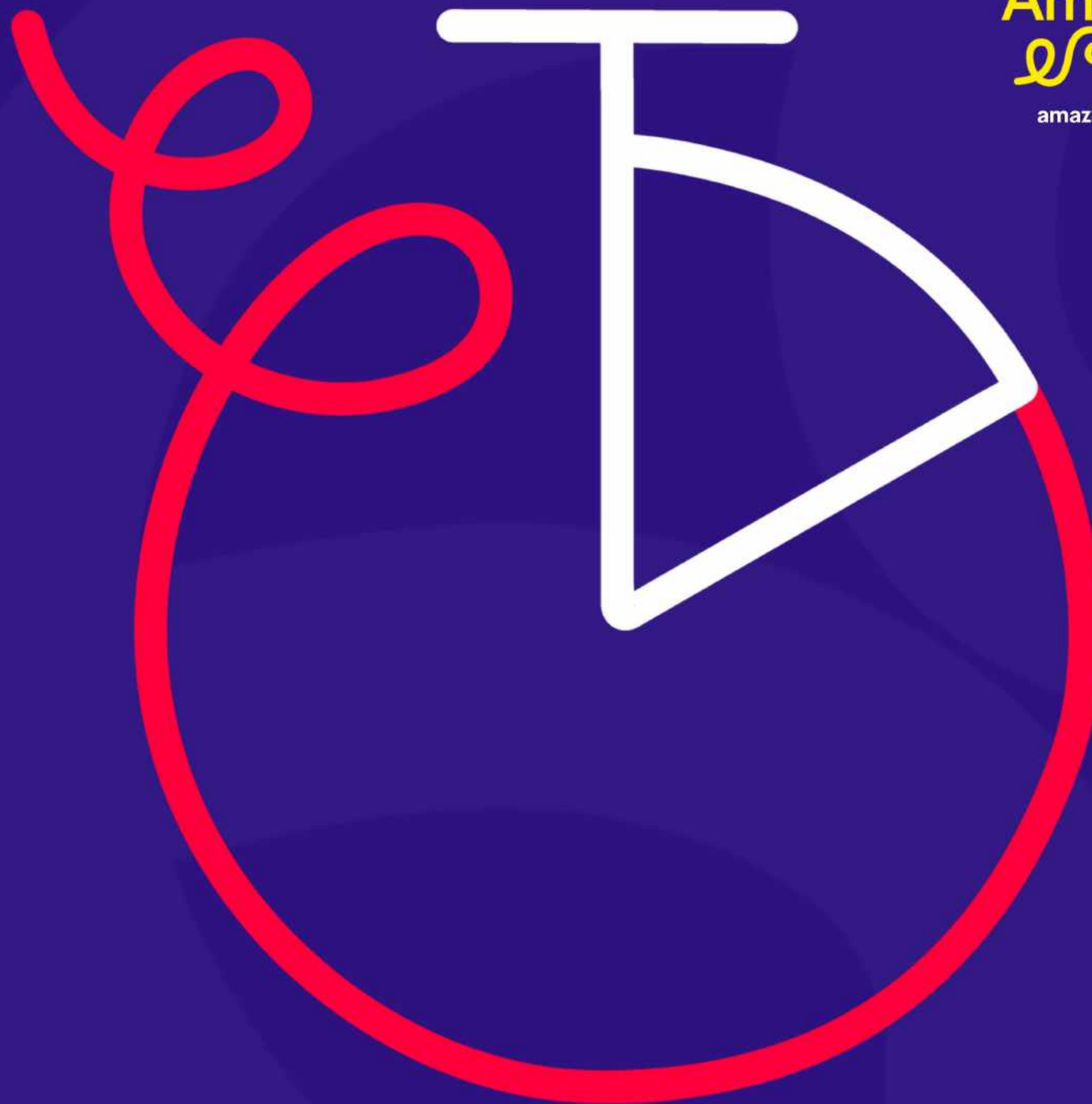
Sylvia Ann Hewlett shares her wisdom on sponsorship on the Squiggly Careers podcast episode 212

Episode 401  
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Learn

September  
Find more flow

Amazing  
gif  
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# September

## Find more flow

**With so many tasks to do and distractions in our day, we often feel frustrated and work without any flow.**

Finding flow means doing challenging work that you enjoy and feeling rewarded by your efforts. When we're in flow we get to use our strengths and stretch them at the same time.

### Coach Yourself

#### Questions

*What activities or tasks at work leave me feeling **energised** and **motivated**?*

*When during the day am I most **focused** and **productive**?*

*How can I **connect** more of my work to my **values** to boost flow?*

### Idea for action

#### Find your flowmo

Reflect on when you have felt most engaged in the work that you were doing.

Write down the strengths that you were using and any other factors that contributed to your flow.

🌀 *Flow strengths = collaboration & drive.*

🌀 *Flow factors = time pressure and profile of project.*

#### Share your flow state

Start looking for opportunities to share with your manager and colleagues when you're at your best.

**This sounds like:**

*"I'm at my best when I'm using my **collaboration skills and drive**\* to deliver **key business priorities**\*"*

*\*insert your own flow strengths & flow factors.*

# September

## Find more flow

*"A strength is an activity that before you're doing it you look forward to doing it; while you're doing it, time goes by quickly and you can concentrate; after you've done it, it seems to fulfill a need of yours."*

Marcus Buckingham

Episode 159

## How to find your flow at work

*if* Careers

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**Podsheet**  
Ask the Expert  
Getting things done

**Getting things done**  
At work, we all recognise the feeling of not making progress on the actions and projects that matter most to us.

David Allen's Getting Things Done methodology is designed to support us to do less with focus.

There are 5 steps:

- 1) **Capture**: collect what has your attention
- 2) **Clarify**: process what it means
- 3) **Organise**: put it where it belongs
- 4) **Reflect**: review frequently
- 5) **Engage**: simply do.

"Your head is for having ideas not for holding them." - David Allen

**Move from open loops to making progress**  
Open loops are ideas, actions, or thoughts that are "hanging in limbo" in your mind. A thought pops into your head that might sound like:

*I must remember to reply to that e-mail, I still haven't chatted to my colleague about xxx.*

These open loops create ambient anxiety and drain our energy. It's useful to remind ourselves we can only hold around 4 things in our mind at any one time.

**Project list**  
David Allen defines a project as anything that can't be completed in one action. Very few people have a current or complete project list.

"You can only feel good about what you're not doing, when you know what you're not doing" - David Allen.

**How to get things done**

- 2-minute rule**  
If you have a task that takes less than 2-minutes to do then do it immediately.  
Don't postpone it.  
Or add it to your to-do list.
- Define done**  
Everything you're working on should have a clear stopping point.  
A point where you know you're done.  
Without this, it's difficult to make progress.
- Weekly review**  
At the end of every week it's useful to have a moment to 'catch up' with yourself.  
Review your calendar and notice what you've missed. See what's coming up that might need action now.
- Next action?**  
Try ending meetings and conversations with clarity by asking:  
"What's the next action?"

**Small things done consistently, in strategic places, create major impact.**  
David Allen

**What stops you from getting things done?**

**Recommended resources**

- Getting in control and creating space**  
TED Talk from David Allen author of Getting Things Done. The art of stress-free productivity.
- Squiggly Careers Skills Series: Prioritising**  
We share more practical tips about how to prioritise in episode #255 of Squiggly Careers.

Episode 399 [in](#) [o](#) [amazingif.com](#)

Learn

# October Career conversations



# October

## Career conversations

**Career conversations are important to gain insight into opportunities and identify areas of development to work on.**

However, the quality of career conversations is often limited by an over-reliance on managers, an assumption that 'once a year' is enough, and a lack of focus on the desired outcomes.

### Idea for action

#### Put learning first

**Ask yourself:**

*"What roles, opportunities and areas of work do I want to learn more about and who has got the knowledge I need?"*

Schedule a monthly curious conversation to increase your career clarity.

#### Speak what you seek (and ask for support)

It's hard for people to help if they don't know what you want to do.

**Practice saying:**

*"One of the things I'd like to get involved in is xxxx. What advice do you have?"*

#### Summarise (and sense check)

After a career conversation, summarise what you have heard and share any actions that we're suggested.

This increases accountability from both parties.

### Coach Yourself Questions

? *What are the current career possibilities within my organisation that I'd like to explore?*

# October Career conversations

*“Most people think they lack motivation when they really lack clarity.”*

James Clear

Episode 109

## How to have a career conversation

*if* Careers

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**Podsheet**  
How to increase your clarity

**Increasing clarity doesn't mean reducing complexity.**  
It means we are better able to navigate uncertainty and ambiguity without creating confusion.

*“Most people think they lack motivation when they really lack clarity.”*  
- James Clear, Atomic Habits

**Where do you need to increase clarity in your day-to-day role?**

- Clarity of why you're here - your purpose
- Clarity of what you do - objectives, roles/responsibilities
- Clarity of how you get it done - processes/systems

**Coach yourself questions**

What are your confusion creators? (places / processes / people)

When do you leave conversations confused?

**Creating clarity techniques**

- Mirror** - play back words, phrases, or statements that someone else has said more than once
- Summarise** - your version of the key / most important points
- Use clarifying questions**
  - What is everyone's first action after this meeting?
  - What's our most important priority next week?
  - What help do we need to get there?
- Repeat** - over-communicate key points you want people to remember e.g. “There are 3 things I'm going to tell you”, then tell everyone the 3 things and then remind everyone what you've said.
- Less is more when it comes to clarity** - What's the 100-word version? What are the 3 bullet points?

**Creating clarity tactics**

- Work with the why**  
Going back to your company mission, values or shared objectives is a useful filter for clarity.
- Beginning, middle, end your meetings**  
At the start of your meeting state what the desired outcomes are. In the middle, check in on progress. At the end, summarise conclusions and next steps.
- Practice presenting the full picture**  
If you see the whole, you have to make sure you really understand and make sense of it, to be able to communicate it to others.
- Have a clarity co-pilot**  
Ask someone to give you regular feedback on how effectively you create clarity.
  - When do I create clarity?
  - When do my actions create confusion?
- Use visuals or prototypes to create clarity**  
“If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a prototype is worth a thousand meetings.” - (IDEO)

**Recommended resources**

- HR Refresh: The Quest to Rediscover Microsoft's Soul by Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella
- Clear Thinking: Turning Ordinary Moments into Extraordinary Results by Shane Parrish
- How to ask better questions: Helen and Sarah explore different techniques to get the insights you need | Squiggly Careers #218

Episode 371 | [amazingif.com](https://amazingif.com)

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# November

## Manage your boundaries



# November

## Manage your boundaries

**Boundaries help us to protect our time and ensure we focus on the tasks that are most important. However demands and distractions can make work boundaries hard to maintain.**

Learning to say 'no' in a way that works for you helps you to stick to your priorities.

Experiment with a 'no-cabulary' to gain confidence in responding to other people's asks that might get in the way of your achievements.

### Idea for action

**Use the:**  
**'Not me' No**

**This sounds like:**  
*"I don't think I'm the best person to lead that piece of work. I can suggest a couple of other people who might be a better fit."*

**Use the:**  
**'Not now' No**

**This sounds like:**  
*"I won't get to that this week as I'm focusing on project X but I will have some space next week. How does that sound?"*

**Use the:**  
**'Not that way' No**

**This sounds like:**  
*"I can't have a meeting because I'm working on a new initiative and it's a big focus for the business. How about I leave you a voice note with a few thoughts as an alternative."*

**Use the:**  
**'Not right' No**

**This sounds like:**  
*"Saying yes to this would mean I need to re-prioritise project X. From my perspective that doesn't feel like the right decision, but shall we have a chat to discuss?"*

### Coach Yourself Questions

? *What are my most important priorities, and how can I establish boundaries that protect them?*

# November

## Manage your boundaries

*“Work is the relationship we spend the most time in, and yet it's also the place where we have the hardest time setting limits.”*

Nedra Glover Tawwab

Episode 121

## How to manage your boundaries

*if* Careers

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Podsheet

### Why your diary doesn't lie

Squiggly *if* Careers

**Diving into your diary**  
Regardless of how you feel about work, your diary reflects the reality of what you spend time on, who you work with and how you are managing your impact.

If we leave our diaries to chance, or if they feel out of our control, we risk repeating unhelpful patterns. Looking at your diary differently can reveal useful insights for your development and help you make better decisions about your work.

**Coach yourself question**  
Looking at your diary for the next week, what are 3 things that you notice?

**Ideas for action**

- 1. Relook at your priorities**  
Write down your top 3 work priorities.

Priorities	% time

Look at last week and next week and use the data in your diary to document what % of time are you spending on each of your priorities.

  - What could you stop, delegate or delay to create more space for your priorities?

- 2. Reflect on your people**  
Look at your diary over the last month and make a note of:
  - What % of time is spent with people beyond your day job?
  - What % of time is spent with internal vs. external people?
  - What % of time is spent on your own?Use data from your diary to reflect on whether you have the right balance for right now.

To make a change, consider:

  - Getting a new mentor = insight beyond day job
  - Extend an invite = new reason to connect
  - Meeting for you = more solo time for focused work

- 3. Recreate your boundaries**  
Write down the work/life boundaries that matter most to you.

Look at your diary to learn how often your boundaries get broken and why.

Name your boundaries and block them out in your diary.

Top tips to make them stick:

  - Colour coding can help to make them stand out and make you more conscious of compromising them.
  - Discuss your boundaries with the people who are most likely to create a conflict.
  - Explain the importance of your boundaries and ask for support in protecting them.

**Recommended resources**

Designing Your Work Life: How to thrive and change and find happiness at work by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans

THE DANGERS OF BEING OUTFIT

Short video on making decisions vs. acting on duty from School of Life

How to manage your boundaries

Helen and Sarah sleep like into boundaries in episode 121 of the Squiggly Careers podcast

Episode 395

amazingif.com

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**December**  
Power up  
your profile



# December

## Power up your profile

### When you have a strong personal brand you pull possibilities towards you.

Being clear about what you want to be known for and making sure your strengths stand out is how you'll make that happen.

Your brand is built by what people see and what you say.

Investing in both of these areas is how you can power up your profile.

#### Coach Yourself

#### Questions

*What 2 things do I want to be known for?*

*How do my actions and words reflect my personal brand?*

*What can I do today to strengthen my brand?*

#### Idea for action

##### What people see

Focus on 2 talents that you want people to associate you with.

Think about how you can make them stand out more:

- ☞ In your day-to-day work (experiment with job crafting)
- ☞ During cross-functional projects (try volunteering for internal initiatives or events)
- ☞ In the activities you get involved in outside of work (explore professional communities that you could contribute to).

##### What you say

Your LinkedIn profile and career conversations are priority places to talk about your talents.

On LinkedIn, make sure what you want to be known for features in the first paragraph. In your career conversations, start with your strengths statement.

##### This sounds like:

*"One thing that gives me energy is [insert your talent]. Today I use it in [talk about where/when]. I would love to talk to you about how I could use it more. One idea i've had is [share something the start the conversation]."*

# December

## Power up your profile

*"Personal branding isn't just about personal gain; it's a way to create **lasting impact** and build confidence in your professional identity, all while contributing **value** to your current role."*

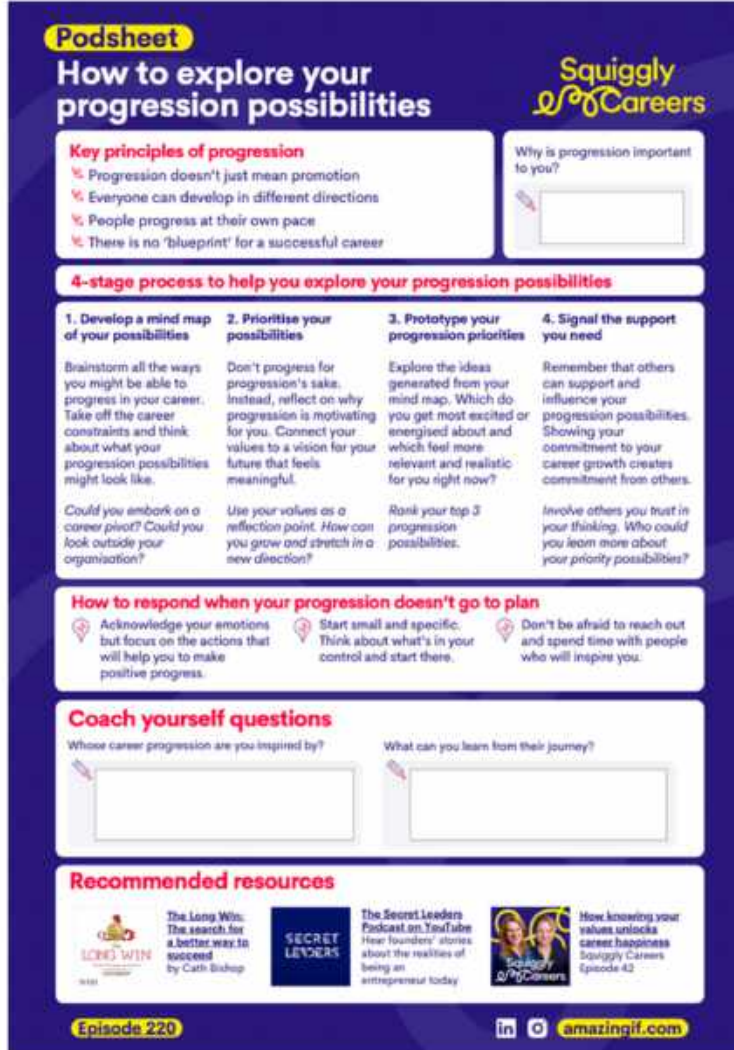
Dorie Clark



**Squiggly  
Careers**

Building Your Brand  
Bianca Miller-Cole

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**Podsheet**  
How to explore your progression possibilities  
Squiggly Careers

**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**

1. Develop a mind map of your possibilities	2. Prioritise your possibilities	3. Prototype your progression priorities	4. Signal the support you need
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.	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.	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?	Remember that others can support and influence your progression possibilities. Showing your commitment to your career growth creates commitment from others.
Could you embark on a career pivot? Could you look outside your organisation?	Use your values as a reflection point. How can you grow and stretch in a new direction?	Rank your top 3 progression possibilities.	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**

Whose career progression are you inspired by? What can you learn from their journey?

**Recommended resources**

- The Long Win: The search for a better way to succeed by Cath Bishop
- SECRET LEADERS
- 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

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# Amazing Gif

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