

Zero Distance: getting closer to yourself, your team and customers

Zero Distance is the idea of getting closer to the people you want to understand and support, so you can learn and respond to what matters most.

In a Squiggly Career, it can help you strengthen your self-awareness, build better team relationships and stay connected to the people you want to be useful for.

Track your distance, then try close the gap

Grab a pen, paper or Post-Its and draw a maximum to zero-distance scale for each area that matters to you. Mark where you are right now, then use the ideas to try close the gap.

Zero distance from yourself

Using and stretching your strengths

Maximum distance: Doing work that comes your way and waiting for others to tell you what you're good at.

Zero distance: You spot what gives you energy, connect it to your strengths, and look for ways to stretch them.

Close the gap: Track one energising task each day this week and identify the strength behind it.

Learning from feedback

Maximum distance: You never ask for feedback, or only when something goes wrong.

Zero distance: Building regular opportunities for feedback into the way you work and learn.

Close the gap: Try asking "What worked well, and what would be even better if?" to make feedback part of how you learn.

Zero distance from other people

Knowing what matters to your team

Maximum distance: Only understanding colleagues' priorities when problems arise.

Zero distance: Knowing the priorities, pressures and motivations of the people you work with.

Close the gap: Try asking - "What's most important to you right now?" "What's on your worry list?"

Learning from the people you help

Maximum distance: Making assumptions about what people need.

Zero distance: Learning directly from the people you want to be useful for and using their insights to inform your decisions.

Close the gap: Ask one person you want to be useful for: "What's one thing that would make the biggest difference to you?"