

PAUL HOLLYWELL

SELF-COACHING: HOW TO LEAD A  
GOODLY LIFE

# ***SELF-COACHING***

*How to Lead a Goodly Life*

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Leading a Goodly Life: Be Strong Through Self-Coaching

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Self-Coaching: How to Lead a Goodly Life

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*To Sue, Claire and Emma  
who have taught me a great deal about life*



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## Preface

*“It is a goodly life that you lead, friend; no doubt the best in the world,  
if only you are strong enough to lead it!”*

*‘The Wind in the Willows’ by Kenneth Grahame*

This book began life as a series of self-coaching guides I wrote based on my experience as a qualified performance and development coach, consultant, and business manager. They were written in simple, plain English and intended to answer frequently-asked questions which had been asked in recent years during coaching and mentoring conversations. Also, some of these guides answered questions that *should* have been asked during some of these conversations.

These self-coaching guides were aimed primarily at providing some essential information to complement coaching and mentoring sessions. They were not intended to replace coaching or mentoring on a key topic as the material they contain often needs to be tailored and contextualised for different people and their various circumstances.

As the number of self-coaching guides increased, it emerged that they answered questions on specific topics grouped under the following bigger questions:

**My Mind** – *What happens in my mind?*

**My Life** – *What direction is my life taking?*

**My Values & Attitudes** – *What’s important in my life and how can I be more resilient?*

**My Skills & Behaviours** – *What’s important for me to do and how can I do better?*

**My Relating to Others** – *What’s important for me to do for others and how can I do better?*

As a result, this book has been divided into the above five parts, with each chapter answering a certain question falling under that broader question. In answering each question, this book only offers a brief understanding of a topic and a summary of any available methods and tools that are relevant. Every attempt has been made to present the latest thinking and evidence-based methods and tools. At the end of each chapter there is ‘More Information’ for those who want to go deeper into a topic. Also, at the end of the book I recommend ‘Further Reading’ for those interested in pursuing more self-coaching and personal growth.

This book is helpful to those who want to understand and develop themselves, and to improve their performance in some important areas. As already stated, self-coaching doesn’t replace coaching or mentoring sessions, but it does help people equip themselves with the understanding, awareness and tools to begin their personal growth journeys.

I never intended to write this book ... but here it is anyway. And I hope it helps you be strong in ***Leading a Goodly Life***.



# Part 1 – MY MIND

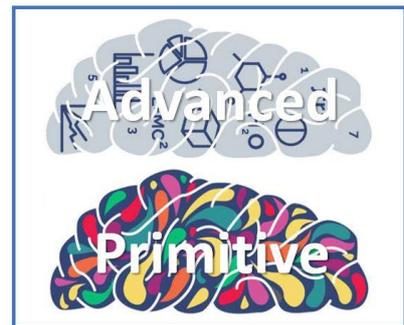
## 1 My Behaviours

### *How to handle my behaviours*

*“You have the ability to choose your reactions.”*

*Steve Maraboli*

A simple model of our brain helps us understand how we think and act. Imagine it comprises two brains: a **Primitive** brain and an **Advanced** brain. Although these two brains try to work together, they often conflict and struggle for control because they make their own decisions that can differ from each other.



The Primitive brain is highly emotional. It has an evolutionary purpose: our survival and perpetuation of the species. In response to our emotions, it activates the fight, flight or freeze behaviours. It's emotional thoughts and feelings are neither good nor bad, they are just what they are. The Primitive brain's thinking is totally independent and not under our control. In contrast, the Advanced brain is responsible for higher cognitive functions, including impulse control, problem solving, and social interaction. Its key role is to manage the Primitive brain so it doesn't hijack control from the Advanced brain, preventing us becoming highly emotional and somewhat irrational. This role *is* under our control. To be happy and successful we need to learn how to live with these two brains. The Advanced brain is who we want to be most of the time, i.e. a 'rational thinker'. The Primitive brain is who we don't want to be some of the time, i.e. an 'emotional thinker'.

The Primitive and Advanced brains work differently when interpreting information from the world around us. The Primitive brain works with feelings and impressions, and uses them as its basis for thinking and acting. If any information is missing, it makes assumptions based on hunches, paranoia, defensive thoughts or catastrophising. This can lead to it interpreting situations wrongly, though sometimes its 'gut feelings' are right. The Advanced brain works with facts and truth, and uses ethics and morals as its basis for thinking and acting. If both brains agree then there's no problem. If they don't agree, the Primitive brain takes control because it's much quicker and stronger than the Advanced brain. If we understand this, we can regain some control and react more rationally. We can treat our feelings and emotions in particular situations merely as 'suggestions' about how we could react and not as orders.

A strategy for handling the Primitive brain so it doesn't take over control is to:

- 1) **Recognise** what's happening when we experience strong feelings, emotions, and undesirable behaviours
- 2) **Realise** we can't change what's happening, but we can manage this by having a response plan
- 3) **Create** a plan to respond to each specific situation. Many different plans exist that you could adopt

A plan based on a short-term solution could be to give yourself:

- **Time** – Do some mindful breathing to slow down your thinking and wait for the emotions to die down. (See Chapter 25 My Thinking for more about this skill.)
- **Space** – Take yourself out of the situation and distance yourself from what is triggering the behaviour
- **Release** – Let your emotions out in a managed way; in the right place, in front of the right people

A longer-term solution could be to explore the underlying issues so as to weaken the behaviour. This involves accepting your thoughts and feelings, and investigating what could be done to replace an undesirable behaviour with a more valued action. Talking with a close friend, or working with a coach or therapist may be needed to help gain an awareness of the issue and the encouragement to take action.

### More Information

Peters, Steve (2012). *The Chimp Paradox: The Mind Management Programme for Confidence, Success and Happiness*.

Steve Peter's [TEDxYouth Talk – Optimising the Performance of the Human Mind](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-KI1D5NPJs)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-KI1D5NPJs>).

## 2 My Thoughts

### *How to handle my thoughts*

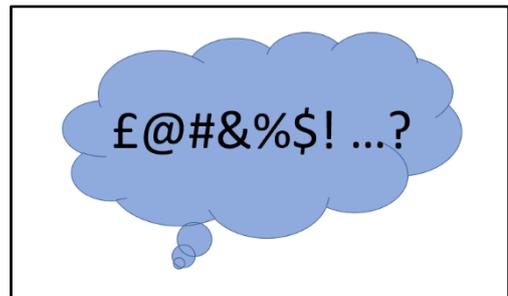
*“The worst bullies you will ever encounter in your life  
are your own thoughts.”*

*Bryant H. McGill*

Our minds are constantly busy thinking. This is really useful when we are working on a problem. When our brain is not engaged, however, it is *still* busy thinking. Everyone’s mind is constantly producing a multitude of happy, sad, scary, and angry thoughts. It’s impossible for us to ever stop thinking.

Our mind and thoughts are *not* who we are. All our mind can do is pull us back into the past to *re-live* events and reprocess the past, *judge* the present, or push us forward into the future to *pre-live* events and worry about the future.

Around 80% of our thoughts are negative and critical. These thoughts are by-products of evolution and in the past they kept us alive. These days such thoughts drain us, causing us to be restless and anxious, giving us a mind full of conflicting thoughts and feelings. Our inner voice – often our worst critic – speaks these negative thoughts. Unfortunately, negative thoughts are quicker, stronger and more likely to be remembered than our other thoughts.



The way our mind works profoundly affects the quality of our lives by causing us to:<sup>1</sup>

- **Live mindlessly.** The mixture of thoughts in our head constantly distracts us and we miss out on living in the present moment. Living *mindfully* – becoming wonderfully absorbed in the present moment – our anxious thoughts subside and we relax into the enjoyable experience of living in the here and now.
- **Live reactively.** Our inner critic constantly tells us about our fears and insecurities and we miss out on living intentionally. We often react unconsciously and do things automatically. Living *proactively* – becoming more conscious of our thinking and in our behaviours – we go beyond these self-imposed limitations and understand who we really are and what we truly want to do with our life.
- **Live pre-judgementally.** Our thoughts and our inner critic, and the feelings they provoke, narrow and prematurely make-up our minds and we miss out on experiencing wonder and curiosity. We narrow down the opportunities or potential of our life, pre-judging situations and second-guessing what others think, especially about us. Living *non-*

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<sup>1</sup> Based on *Soulfulness: Deepening the Mindful Life (Chapter 1)* by Brian Draper (2016).

*judgementally* – suspending judgement, even briefly – we discover new opportunities through asking questions and learning about ourselves and what we can achieve in life.

The above workings of our mind can lead to anxiety, triggering strong feelings and emotions, which in turn reinforce our thoughts and inner voice. And so, this vicious circle reinforces itself.

A good way to start bringing our thoughts under control is for us to accept, regularly:

- 1) Many of our thoughts (particularly the negative ones) are just by-products of evolution
- 2) Everyone on the planet struggles with these types of thoughts
- 3) These thoughts are part of who we are and we have to learn how to manage them
- 4) We are not our thoughts; we are *much* more than them

Meditation and mindfulness exercises provide ways of bringing our thoughts and inner voice under control. Mindful breathing exercises and focusing on something else can make a significant impact. (See Chapter 16 Rewiring for more about meditating and mindfulness exercises and Chapter 25 My Thinking for more about the skill of breathing.)

### **More Information**

Wax, Ruby (2018). *How to be Human: The Manual*.

Ruby Wax's [TEDGlobal Talk – What's So Funny About Mental Illness](https://www.ted.com/talks/ruby_wax_what_s_so_funny_about_mental_illness)

([https://www.ted.com/talks/ruby\\_wax\\_what\\_s\\_so\\_funny\\_about\\_mental\\_illness](https://www.ted.com/talks/ruby_wax_what_s_so_funny_about_mental_illness)).

## 3 My Feelings

### *How to handle my feelings*

*"I don't want to be at the mercy of my emotions. I want to use them, to enjoy them, and to dominate them."*

*Oscar Wilde*

Our actively thinking minds cause us to constantly experience a range of feelings. Like the weather, they are ever present and constantly changing. Extremely strong feelings or emotions are often closely connected to specific thoughts, memories and images, and are part of what makes us human. Some emotions are by-products of evolution and, in the past, our response to them kept us alive by activating the fight, flight or freeze behaviours. Understanding our emotions helps us handle them much better.

Here are some important things ... *we know about the nature of our emotions:*

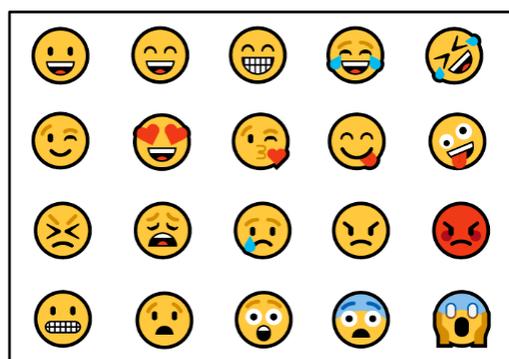
- Emotions are transient and pass away; they don't always need a response
- Emotions don't control our behaviours; we can handle our reactions to them
- Emotions never overwhelm us; no matter how big or scary they seem in the moment, we are bigger
- Emotions alert us to look inside ourselves; they can help us discover what matters to us and to others

Here are some key steps ... *we can take in dealing with strong emotions:*

- 1) Accepting and fully experiencing our emotions, rather than trying to suppress them as this is harmful in the long term
- 2) Naming, voicing and expressing our emotions, doing this carefully and lovingly so as to avoid hurting anyone
- 3) Thinking about what our emotions reveal about our beliefs and purposes, being open to learn from them

Here are some ways ... *we can learn from observing our emotions:*

Recent research claims we have four basic emotions: one positive (happiness) and three negative (anger, fear, sadness). It's been suggested that our life desires and goals are connected to our emotions. This means that an emotion can sometimes reveal to us how we are perceiving these goals and desires. How this could work for the above four basic emotions is described as follows:



- **Happiness**, joy, etc. results from us perceiving a desire or goal as having a successful outcome. Note that this emotion is normally only briefly lived. Sustained happiness is more likely to be experienced when working towards a desire or goal that matches our beliefs and values than actually achieving it.
- **Anger**, frustration, etc. results from us perceiving a desire or goal as having a blocked outcome
- **Fear**, anxiety, etc. results from us perceiving a desire or goal as having an uncertain outcome
- **Sadness**, despair, etc. results from us perceiving a desire or goal as having an unreachable outcome

Our thoughts, behaviours and feelings all influence each other. So, a particular thought can cause us to experience an emotion which, in turn, can lead to a behaviour. By changing our beliefs and thoughts, it's possible for us to alter the way we react in dealing with an emotional issue. Exploring the connections between our thoughts, emotions and behaviours can help us handle our emotions much better. Talking all this through with a trusted friend, or working with a coach or therapist may be needed to help gain a better awareness of the emotional issue and the encouragement to take action.

### More Information

David, Susan (2016). *Emotional Agility: Get unstuck, embrace change, and thrive in work and life*.

Susan David's [TEDWomen's Talk – The Gift and Power of Emotional Courage](https://www.ted.com/talks/susan_david_the_gift_and_power_of_emotional_courage)

([https://www.ted.com/talks/susan\\_david\\_the\\_gift\\_and\\_power\\_of\\_emotional\\_courage#t-16094](https://www.ted.com/talks/susan_david_the_gift_and_power_of_emotional_courage#t-16094)).

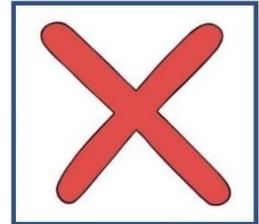
## 4 My Connectedness

### *How to handle my rejections*

*“The most basic human desire is to feel like you belong. Fitting in is important.”*

*Simon Sinek*

Our strong need for belongingness can be understood by extending our simple model of the brain which we imagine comprises two brains – **Primitive** brain and **Advanced** brain. (See Chapter 1 My Behaviours for a description of our simple model.) Imagine it also comprises a third **Social** brain. The Social brain focuses on relationships. It has an evolutionary purpose: maintaining connections with those who keep us safe.



Although these three brains try to work together, they often conflict and we can have rapidly shifting struggles for control because they make their own decisions that can differ from each other. Our Primitive brain creates emotions and behaviours to keep us safe; our Advanced brain thinks things through rationally; and our Social brain creates emotions and behaviours to keep us connected to others. If the Social brain and the Advanced brain struggle to agree, the Social brain takes control because it's much quicker and stronger than the Advanced brain. Understanding this, we can regain control and react more rationally, thus becoming both an independent and an interdependent person in society, as opposed to someone who may develop dependent or co-dependent relationships.

Humans are tribal with friendships, rivalries, alliances and power struggles. We have evolved to live interdependently with others and our need for belongingness gives us our identity and security. Our neurons activate when we feel and do something and when we see others feel and do the same thing. This helps us learn through imitation, enabling us to reflect body language, facial expressions, and emotions, enabling us to be empathetic and understand others' intentions and states of mind. We are all very sensitive to facial expressions and body language. We look for praise, disagreement, disapproval, affirmation, inclusion, or opposition. Quickly we can begin adopting the norms of the tribe.

Connectedness can give us a sense of purpose, satisfaction, and security from feeling part of something bigger. Working with others on an important cause or trying to change things, can make us feel significant and valuable. We can feel great when the team wins and consoled when the team loses.

In contrast, we instinctively dread a lack of connectedness through being left out or shut out of the group. Social rejection produces strong negative emotions (including low self-esteem, depression, fear, and anger) and antisocial behaviour. It can cause us to act in ways

that encourage acceptance and avoid rejection. (See **Rejection First Aid** at the end of this chapter.) Feelings of affection and loyalty can prevent us from discarding unhealthy relationships and keep us connected to those we think we need for our 'safety'. When we don't agree with others in our group it's difficult to speak honestly and openly or discuss new ideas. We find it hard to think freely and differently because thinking is often a group or social activity.

Sometimes belongingness can turn into a sense of 'us versus them'. It can create situations where we view those who are 'not of our tribe' (different ethnicity, education, language, or beliefs) as the enemy and people to be feared rather than us all belonging to the human race.

A strong sense of belongingness can be a powerful experience with both positive and negative aspects. We should be aware of our need for connectedness and try to be objective about our desire for it.

## Rejection First Aid<sup>2</sup>

Neuroscience has shown that the pain we experience from social rejection is just as real in our brains as the pain we experience from physical injury. And just as physical pain can benefit from the application of rapid first aid, so can the pain of rejection.

When we experience rejection, we have a natural tendency to withdraw and protect ourselves from further pain. Also, we try to numb the pain and self sooth through food, alcohol and drugs. Studies have shown that the most effective way to reduce the pain of rejection is to reach out immediately to those around us – family, friends, work colleagues, church, sports and social clubs – and connect with people. Doing this revives our sense of belonging.

When we experience rejection we should apply, rapidly, the following first aid:

- a. We should be kind to ourselves, avoid negative self-talk, and be self-compassionate in order to revive our self-esteem.
- b. We should avoid solitude, but instead seek social connection, reaching out to connect with those around us.
- c. If circumstances don't allow (b), we should surround ourselves with reminders of those we love, e.g. photos, objects.
- d. We should recall all the qualities we know we have and list them. Each day we should choose a quality we have, possibly one related to our rejection, and write down some words about it, stating why that quality makes us valuable.

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<sup>2</sup> Based on 'The Happiness Lab with Dr. Laurie Santos' podcast, episode '[Full Metal Jacket actor Tim Colceri on Rejection](https://podcasts.apple.com/it/podcast/bonus-full-metal-jacket-actor-tim-colceri-on-rejection/id1474245040?i=1000532714472)' (https://podcasts.apple.com/it/podcast/bonus-full-metal-jacket-actor-tim-colceri-on-rejection/id1474245040?i=1000532714472).

## More Information

Adam Grant's 'WorkLife' podcast episode '[Bouncing Back from Rejection](https://www.podbean.com/ea/dir-v9vcf-5f8f936)'  
(<https://www.podbean.com/ea/dir-v9vcf-5f8f936>).



## Part 2 – MY LIFE

### 5 Purpose

#### *How to find purpose in my life*

*“If you want to find your purpose, discover what matters in your life  
by getting rid of everything that doesn’t.”*

*Unknown*

When we’re struggling to find purpose in our life, it could help if we ask ourselves five questions<sup>3</sup>:

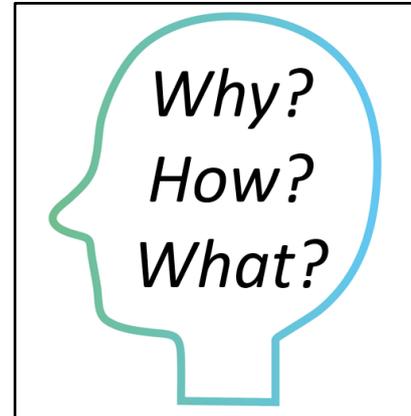
- 1) ***What do I do well?*** This question helps us uncover that unique ***talent*** that sets us apart from others. Perhaps we’re good at public speaking or motivating others. Or maybe we’re good at solving computer problems or supporting our friends through tough times. Whether we have ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ skills, knowing what we do well will start us on our way to using our talent in our purpose.
- 2) ***What do my friends say I do well?*** Unfortunately, it can be hard to recognise our own ***talent***. When something comes naturally, it doesn’t always seem special. To help us, we should ask our family or friends what they think we’re good at. Ask several people, and when we start to hear certain talents over again, we’ve identified an area of strength. (See the end of this chapter for some questions we could ask them.)
- 3) ***If I could do or be anything, what would I do or be?*** This question taps into our ***desires*** and can help us identify our purpose. A good way to answer it is to consider those things we like to do in our free time or the projects at work we volunteer for or seek out. When in the day does time seem to fly? What are we doing when we get lost or immersed in a project? These things should also align with our talent. It’s important not to confuse purpose with passion. Sometimes we can be passionate about something we’re not any good at. In which case, we can make it a hobby rather than a career.
- 4) ***What gives me results when I do something?*** Our purpose will give us a ***return***, and this question helps us identify the things we do that generate results. For example, if our talent is sales, we likely hit our targets every month. Or if we are good at innovative thinking, we might share ideas at work that prompt new projects. Pay attention to the tasks we do that get us praise and recognition.

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<sup>3</sup> Chapter is based on an extract from *The Leader’s Greatest Return: Attracting, Developing, and Multiplying Leaders* by John Maxwell (2020).

5) **How can I get better?** Once we identify our uniqueness, we need to fine-tune and work harder at it to set ourselves apart. While having talent helps make us special, developing it further gives us a **strength**. When we're working to improve our strength, our potential to grow and get better is high.

If we're drifting, we probably haven't identified purpose in our life. Once we discover our purpose, we can do life *on purpose*. Intentionality takes us to a whole new level. No one has ever been successful doing something that they didn't like, and no one has ever been successful doing something they can't do well. Every day, lots of people do something they don't like doing and wonder why they're not a success. Success is knowing purpose in our life and having a plan to grow to help us reach our maximum potential.



### Questions to Ask Those Who Know Me Well

Here are some questions<sup>4</sup> we can ask those who know us the best. We should be sure to ask them to provide examples so we are truly convinced of what they say:

- How would you describe me?
- What are your thoughts on my career to date?
- What do you consider to be my natural talents?
- How would you describe my interpersonal style?
- Is there any career you think I would be suited to? Why?
- What type of work environment do you see me working in most successfully?
- What do you think I should do in my career?
- What would it take for me to fulfil my potential?
- What might hold me back?
- What do I need to be doing more/less of?

### More Information

Rowan, Sophie (2011). *Brilliant Career Coach: How to Find and Follow Your Dream Career*.

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<sup>4</sup> Taken from: *Brilliant Career Coach: How to Find and Follow Your Dream Career* by Sophie Rowan (2011).

## 6 Balance

### *How to bring balance to my life*

*“There is no greater gift you can give or receive  
than to honor your calling. It’s why you were born.  
And how you become most truly alive.”*

*Oprah Winfrey*

According to the Japanese, we all have an **ikigai** (pronounced “eye-ka-guy”) – iki means ‘life’ and gai means ‘value’ or ‘worth’. It translates, roughly, ‘that which makes life worth living’ or *raison d’être*. We can interpret ikigai as finding value in one's life or discovering one's purpose.

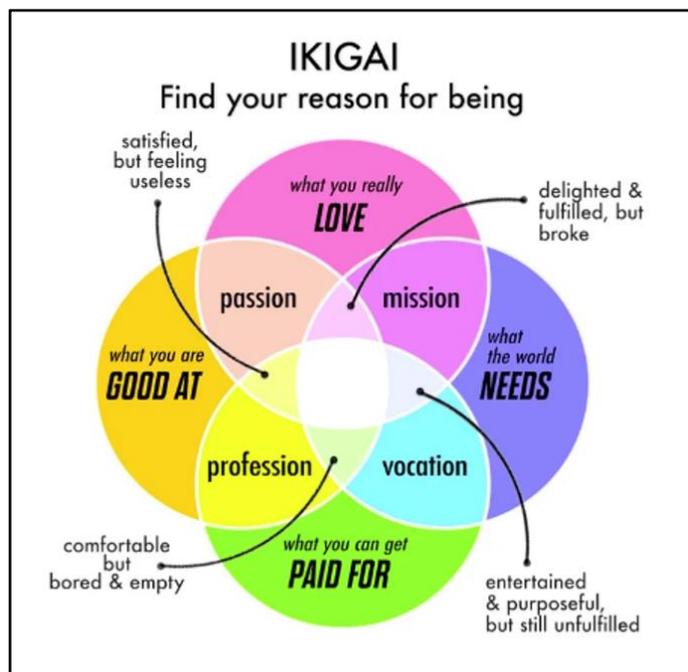
The ancient concept of ikigai is a lifestyle that strives to *balance* the spiritual with the practical. This balance is found at the intersection where our passions and talents converge with the things that the world needs and is willing to pay us for. The diagram<sup>5</sup> illustrates this concept perfectly.

Exploring the concept of ikigai and the questions that come with it, can help us find a purposeful, balanced and contented life. The whole concept, has been boiled down to four questions:

- 1) What do we really love?
- 2) What are we good at?
- 3) What does the world need from us?
- 4) What can we get paid for?

If we're retired or have a secure income, we may not have to worry about what we can be paid for, so ignore number 4 and focus on the remaining three questions.

Sometimes hobbies or volunteering, due to part-time working, can contribute to achieving the necessary balance.



<sup>5</sup> Diagram is taken from: <https://bigthink.com/philip-perry/searching-for-meaning-in-your-life-this-japanese-concept-can-help-you-find-it>.

The idea is not only to find our purpose but the proper balance between all aspects surrounding it, for the current season of our life or for the season of our life we are about to enter.

### **More Information**

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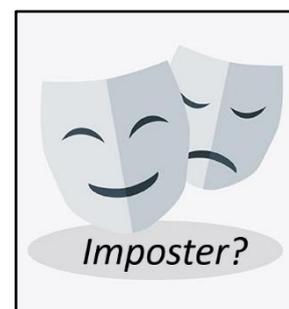
## 7 Imposter Syndrome

### *How to overcome self-doubt in my life*

*“You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem,  
and smarter than you think.”*

A.A. Milne

At certain times in life, we can all feel inadequate, doubt our past accomplishments, or fear being caught out by others as a ‘fraud’ or ‘imposter’. And these feelings can linger despite our various achievements and others affirming our abilities and past successes. Having a persistent feeling of self-doubt is called *Imposter Syndrome* and it is commonly experienced by many high-achieving men and



women. These irrational fears can prevent us pursuing desired opportunities, taking on new challenges, and, in some cases, will cause us anxiety, stress and depression. These effects can have a negative impact on our health, well-being, relationships, work performance and career. Imposter Syndrome takes various forms, depending on our background, personality, and circumstances, and it is sometimes triggered by key events (e.g. taking on a new role or responsibility).

Here are some strategies which, combined, will help us to overcome self-doubt and boost self-confidence:

- 1) **Accept our feelings.** In a recent UK survey, 62% of us have experienced Imposter Syndrome at work in the past 12 months, with 86% of 18-34-year olds<sup>6</sup>. Many highly-successful people have admitted suffering from it. We all have thoughts and feelings of self-doubt. It's been shown that trying to control them doesn't work and even makes them worse. It's better to accept them, knowing everybody gets them.

Writing down our thoughts and feelings helps us start to examine them more rationally. Also, talking to others can make us feel better by (a) receiving encouragement, and (b) hearing how they often can feel the same. Others can help us assess the reality of our situation much more objectively.

- 2) **Assess our reality.** Asking ourselves some insightful questions can help us assess the reality of the situation causing self-doubt. Asking questions in the third person gives us a much more objective perspective, focusing on facts rather than feelings. (See some suggested questions at the end of this chapter.)

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<sup>6</sup> OnePoll survey of 3,000 UK adults on behalf of Access Commercial Finance, between 13/06/2018 and 15/06/2018.

Answering these questions will help us to (a) dispel any unreal concerns, and (b) develop actions to tackle any genuine weaknesses. (See Chapter 8 Life Goals and Chapter 9 First Times.) These actions will better prepare us, resulting in increased confidence.

- 3) **Anticipate the outcomes.** Thinking through all possible outcomes can strengthen our confidence. Asking ourselves, “*What could go wrong?*”, “*How could I prepare for that?*”, and “*In big picture terms, how important is this?*” will encourage us to take some practical steps to reduce our anxiety.

We’ll never feel totally ready to do some things. Occasionally, we will need to ‘*fake it till we feel it*’, since taking action will give feelings of confidence afterwards. Fear shouldn’t prevent us from attempting important things that we value. Doing something ‘afraid’ is a very courageous act. Fear of failure can often feel worse than the failure itself, and facing our fears helps to overcome them.

We should pursue healthy achievement and growth, strive to be our best, but be ready to forgive ourselves should failure occur. Failures sometimes happen, so be ready and willing to learn from them. And remember, real frauds don’t get Imposter Syndrome.

### Some Suggested Assessment Questions

- How qualified is he/she in doing this?
- How experienced is he/she in doing this?
- How successful was he/she in doing this the last time?
- What strengths has he/she got that are important for doing this?
- What weaknesses has he/she got that are important for doing this?
- What can he/she do to improve the likelihood of succeeding for doing this?
- Who can he/she speak to for help, guidance and support for doing this?

### More Information

Brown, Brené (2017). *Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone*.

Brené Brown’s [TEDx Talk – The Power of Vulnerability](https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability?language=en)

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Brené Brown’s [TED Talk – Listening to Shame](https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_listening_to_shame)

([https://www.ted.com/talks/brene\\_brown\\_listening\\_to\\_shame](https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_listening_to_shame)).

## 8 Life Goals

### *How to set achievable goals in my life*

*“A goal properly set is halfway reached.”*

*Zig Ziglar*

Life goals define what we want to achieve in order to be satisfied with our future and who we become. They help to give us a sense of meaning and purpose. Setting life goals allows us to guide the focus and direction of our life and assess whether we are actually being successful.

Setting life goals, whether big or small, comes out of a careful consideration of what we want to accomplish in life. (See Chapter 5 Purpose for more about this topic.)

Setting achievable life goals requires several key elements:



- 1) **Decide on our goal.** First, make sure the goal is important to us personally. That will inspire and motivate us enough to stop us just thinking and start us doing something about it. It must be something we really want to achieve. Something that will result in us accomplishing a successful outcome. Aligning the goal with our strengths and values will increase the likelihood of success.
- 2) **Break up our goal.** If our goal is long term, decide what window of time we should initially focus on. Ask oneself, ‘*What goal should I be setting for this season of my life?*’ The goal should relate to a certain point in the future (e.g. graduation, next job, next two years) rather than looking too far ahead.
- 3) **Break down our goal.** If our goal is big, we should break it down into an *end goal* (which is seldom totally within our own control) with several smaller, more-specific *performance goals* (which are within our control). This makes the goal less daunting and more realisable. Another good reason for doing this is because the brain tends to resist change. Making a goal small and easily achievable, defeats this fear of change. We can then build new habits and weaken our resistance to change. Ask oneself, ‘*What one small step would I be happy to take toward reaching my goal?*’ Then start doing it. Don’t worry this step ‘isn’t big enough’. Small actions rewire our brain enabling larger changes to follow.
- 4) **Plan our goal.** It’s important we plan how we will reach our goal, including any individual steps needed on the way. This is best done by writing an action plan that (a) makes the goal tangible and memorable, and (b) allows us to cross off each step as we complete it. All actions should be **SMART**. (The meaning of the SMART acronym is explained at the end of this chapter.)

- 5) ***Publish and monitor our plan.*** Post our plan in visible places to remind ourselves what we intend to do and tell others about it. Both will remind and encourage us to act upon our plan. Also, track our progress. Seeing the progress we are making towards our goal is very motivating.
- 6) ***Be willing to alter our plan.*** Things will change – us, our circumstances, or our environment. So be ready to revisit our goal or alter our plan. Rethinking things and making adjustments, so they remain relevant to our vision, values and situation, is a strength not a weakness. Stay focused on the next step and be open to opportunities that could arise to make a better plan. And if we sometimes fail to keep to our plan, accept it, remind ourselves it's part of the process, learn from it, and try again.

## SMART Goals

A SMART goal should be:

- **Specific** – make it clear and well-defined.  
*What exactly do you aim to achieve?*
- **Measurable** – include precise amounts, dates, etc.  
*How will you know when you have been successful?*
- **Achievable** – ensure it is within your capabilities.  
*Is it really possible for you to achieve this goal?*
- **Realistic** – ensure any obstacles are taken into account.  
*What could stop you achieving this goal?*
- **Timed** – give it a deadline.  
*Have you given yourself sufficient time to achieve this goal?*

## More Information

Ziglar, Zig (2020). *Goals: How to Get the Most Out of Your Life*.

ZigZiglar's [Talk – How to Set Goals in Life](#)

([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsDrKVhu5\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsDrKVhu5_s)).

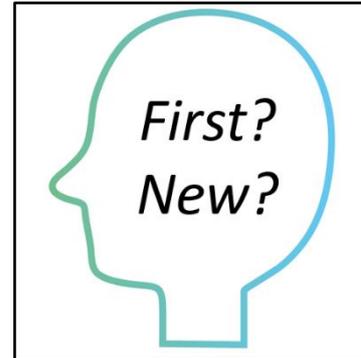
## 9 First Times

### *How to handle new things in my life*

*“Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity and change.”*

*Brené Brown*

None of us like facing a ‘*first time*’ or a ‘*new thing*’ whether it be big or small. A first time or new thing could be anything where we don’t already have some expertise or feel comfortable doing it well. After our initial enthusiasm, the excitement can quickly fade and it can feel uncomfortable and unpleasant. We experience vulnerability (i.e. feelings of uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure). This experience isn’t something we can avoid, so we just need to push right on through it. So, how can we handle first times and new things<sup>7</sup>?



First, we should identify when we are facing a first time and name it. When we ask the question ‘*What’s going on?*’, we should tell ourselves to acknowledge the problem and name it. It’s a myth that acknowledging our problem and naming it gives it power over us; the very opposite is true. Acknowledging our problem and naming it gives us power and we can start to deal with it. “*Power is the ability to achieve purpose. Power is the ability to affect change*” as Martin Luther King, Jr. said.

Second, we should use these three steps to help us:

- 1) **Normalise it.** When we ask ‘*Why am I feeling like this?*’, we should tell ourselves: ‘*This is exactly how new things feel because I don’t know what I am doing, I’ve no experience to draw on, and it feels really scary.*’
- 2) **Put it in perspective.** When we ask ‘*What does this mean?*’, we should tell ourselves: ‘*This feeling isn’t permanent and doesn’t mean I’m a failure at everything. It’s just something new which will come to an end and I’m learning from it.*’
- 3) **Reality check your expectations.** When we ask ‘*Why is this so hard?*’, we should tell ourselves: ‘*This is much tougher than I thought it would be. It’s going to take more time, energy and commitment than expected. Success will be harder than I thought.*’

Being a newbie does, however, bring with it some positives. It’s an opportunity for us to learn and grow, which is a vital part of living. Once we have had the courage to grow in one area of our life, it increases our self-confidence and encourages us to grow in other areas too.

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<sup>7</sup> Chapter is based on Brené Brown’s podcast ‘[Brené on FFTs](#)’ (2020).

This happens, not because new things get any easier or more comfortable but, because we learn we can actually survive these experiences.

Finally, we should keep reminding ourselves we have encountered first times and new things before and come out the other side stronger and wiser. And we will do so again.

### **More Information**

Brown, Brené (2012). *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*.

Brené Brown's [Podcast – Brené on FFTs](#)

(<https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-on-ffts/>).

## 10 Suffering

### *How to handle suffering in my life*

*“It is here that we encounter the central theme of existentialism:  
to live is to suffer, to survive is to find meaning in the suffering.”*

*Viktor E. Frankl*

It is inevitable that we will all face suffering at certain times in our lives. Since challenges and setbacks can't be avoided, the only thing we can control is how we respond to them. Failing to accept that we are facing a serious crisis has been shown to have a detrimental effect on our mental health. Going into denial and suppressing our negative emotions (e.g. sadness, fear, stress, anxiety, loneliness) actually makes us feel worse. So, if accepting our feelings and facing suffering is a better option for our wellbeing, how can we approach doing this in healthy and helpful way?



A positive mindset can help us cope with a crisis. Some positivity may encourage us to take a step back, re-evaluate our life, get things into perspective, appreciate what we have, and be grateful for it. However, not accepting our feelings and being unrelentingly optimistic – known as *'toxic positivity'* – is unrealistic and doesn't make our negative emotions go away. The reality is that toxic positivity just makes us think that having negative emotions is a weakness and we are a failure, leaving us feeling guilty and shameful about our real feelings. It is important to recognise that it's OK to experience negative emotions; everyone has these types of feelings from time to time.

By contrast, a more authentic mindset is *'tragic optimism'*. This approach promotes the philosophy that there is hope and meaning to be found in life while also acknowledging the existence of loss, pain and suffering. Tragic optimism suggests there is room to experience both the good and the bad, and that we can grow from each. It offers a perspective on suffering that helps us handle crises with more resilience and grow as a result of them.

To be tragically optimistic is to accept there is a middle ground between a crisis crushing our spirit, and suffering and setbacks giving us an opportunity to learn something new. This could include reframing an event so that something stressful becomes a challenge rather than a threat. Or, it could involve a situation prompting us to think about something we had been overlooking or avoiding in our life. Additionally, tragic optimism has the potential to prepare us better for what comes post crisis.

Some people who suffer a trauma can have difficulty coping with the situation and may develop *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)*. This can be the case for many people who rely on toxic positivity. Encouraging people to be optimistic and grateful when going through

suffering doesn't encourage growth afterwards. In contrast, some people find that trauma gives them a new perspective on life; this is known as *Post-Traumatic Growth* (PTG). Tragic optimism helps facilitate PTG. Research has shown that PTG can occur after a traumatic event in five possible ways: relating to others, new possibilities, personal strength, spiritual change, and appreciation of life.

Embracing tragic optimism helps our personal development by accepting the negative feelings and making the effort to feel comfortable with them. We may even learn some new things about ourselves: what we truly value, how we want to live, or who we really want to be after the suffering ends.

### **More Information**

Viktor Frankl (1946). *Man's Search for Meaning*.

Megan Devine (2017). *It's Ok That You're Not Ok: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand*.

## Part 3 – MY VALUES & ATTITUDES

### 11 Wellbeing

#### *How to understand my wellbeing*

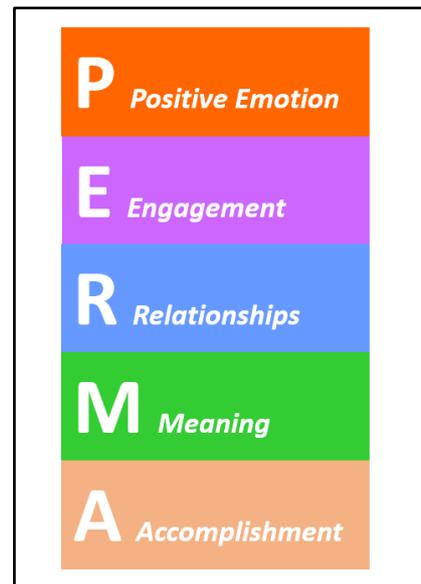
*“Wellbeing is attained by little and little,  
and nevertheless is no little thing itself.”*

*Zeno of Citium*

*Wellbeing* is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.” It will vary between us significantly as we’re all different, e.g. personalities, values and ambitions. It’s a much broader concept than moment-to-moment happiness and includes how satisfied we are with our life as a whole, our sense of purpose, and how in control we feel.

Martin Seligman has developed his theory of wellbeing, **PERMA**, that goes beyond the goal of happiness and life satisfaction, and aims to increase the amount of flourishing in a person’s life and in the world. PERMA has five, equally-important, measurable elements, and each element contributes to our wellbeing:

- 1) **Positive emotion:** Range of positive emotions, includes optimism, pleasure and enjoyment. (See Chapter 12 Positive Emotion.)
- 2) **Engagement:** Fulfilling work/hobbies, that absorb us and create ‘flow’, and working to our strengths. (See Chapter 13 Engagement).
- 3) **Relationships:** Authentic social connections, love, intimacy, emotional and physical interaction. (See Chapter 14 Relationships.)
- 4) **Meaning:** Purpose and meaning that give us a sense of direction in life. (See Chapter 5 Purpose.)
- 5) **Accomplishment:** Realistic goals/ambitions, achievements/pride that give us a sense of success. (See Chapter 15 Accomplishment.)



The PERMA model helps us to understand what we need in life to improve our wellbeing. It’s been shown that small improvements in wellbeing help to decrease some mental health problems and help us to flourish.

There can be, however, some barriers to our wellbeing:

- **Negativity bias** – *Giving more attention to negative emotions, experiences and information than positive ones.*  
It's much healthier for us to make a conscious effort to notice and focus on the good things in our life.
- **Duration neglect** – *Evaluating our experiences based on (a) the intensity of the peak emotions, and (b) how they end.*  
It's much healthier for us to try to ensure that negative events and experiences end on a high note.
- **Social comparison** – *Making comparisons with our friends and neighbours.*  
It's much healthier for us to deliberately remember those who are much worse off than us, appreciate what we do have, and be grateful.
- **Hedonic treadmill** – *Expecting 'things' to make us feel better in the long term.*  
It's much healthier for us to expect the novelty from 'things' to wear off quickly and look for more sustainable ways to improve our wellbeing.
- **Lack of self-control** – *Giving in to our natural desires.*  
It's much healthier for us to find ways to increase our self-control; like a muscle, it improves with practice. Developing self-control in one life area, strengthens other areas.

Understanding some of the barriers which can have an extremely unhealthy effect on our wellbeing, and using the strategies to help us overcome those barriers, can greatly benefit our wellbeing.

### More Information

Seligman, Martin (2011). *Flourish: A New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being and How to Achieve Them.*

Martin Seligman's [Talk – PERMA](#)

([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iK6K\\_N2qe9Y&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iK6K_N2qe9Y&feature=youtu.be)).

## 12 Positive Emotion

### *How to feel more positive*

*“Positive emotions enhance your life.  
Negative emotions sabotage your life.”*

*Dr T.P. Chia*

**PERMA** states that **Positive Emotion** contributes to our wellbeing. (See Chapter 11 Wellbeing for more about PERMA.) Positive emotions include feelings of pleasure, enjoyment, optimism, satisfaction, fulfilment, gratitude, love, peace, hope, curiosity and inspiration. Although these positive emotions make us feel happy, expecting ourselves to feel happy all the time is unrealistic.



Negative emotions narrow our focus so we can deal with an immediate problem, e.g. activate the fight, flight or freeze behaviours. They close us down and turn us inwards. In contrast, positive emotion makes us feel happy, improves our wellbeing, and causes us to thrive. When in a positive emotional state, we're more likely to see problems/solutions more broadly and be more creative and flexible. As a result, this enhances our personal resources over time which affect four main aspects of our life:

- **Physical** – Improved strength, cardiovascular health, and ability to cope with illness
- **Psychological** – Improved mental health, resilience, and optimism
- **Cognitive** – Improved performance, persistence, problem-solving, and decision-making
- **Social** – Better and more friendships, other relationships, and social connections

To gain the many benefits from experiencing positive emotions, we should connect with:

- **Friends** – Spend time with someone we can rely on to help us look at things more positively
- **Nature** – Go for short walks, look and listen to nature, and experience some sunshine
- **Music** – Listen to some energising music, and even sing and dance around the room to it
- **Memories** – Look at our favourite photos displayed on a wall or as a computer screensaver slideshow. Create a portfolio of objects and mementos that remind us of particular positive emotions
- **Others** – Perform random acts of kindness for others through our day, no matter how small
- **Ourselves** – Treat ourself to a special (half) day (out or in) which is purposeful as well as enjoyable

- **Humour** – Write down three funny things that happened during the day before going to sleep (similar to us keeping a **Daily Gratitude Diary**). Revisit these entries when we feel in need of a lift

Also, we could create a list of all the activities that we have enjoyed doing in the past. This list should then be kept handy (e.g. next to any task list we may keep) and each day we should make sure we engage in some of these fun activities.

Obviously, it's better to experience more positive emotions than negative ones. Positive emotions are usually short-lived; negative ones often live longer. Therefore, the frequency of our positive experiences is more important than their strength, so we should aim to experience regular small pleasures rather than a few big ones.

### **More Information**

Grenville-Cleave, Bridget (2012). *Positive Psychology: A Toolkit for Happiness, Purpose and Well-being*.

# 13 Engagement

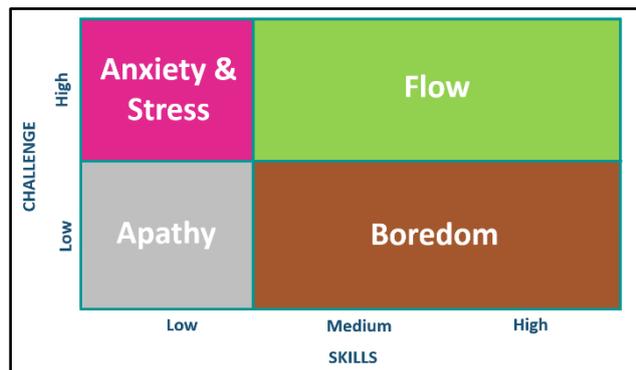
## How to be more engaged

*“The happiest people spend much time in a state of flow – the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it.”*

*Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi*

**PERMA** states that **Engagement** contributes to our wellbeing and brings us happiness. (See Chapter 11 Wellbeing for more about PERMA.) Engagement is often referred to as being ‘in the flow’. The distinct and varied characteristics of experiencing flow, when in a situation, task, or project, are: it’s challenging but achievable, the goals are clear, feedback is immediate, it’s completely absorbing, intrinsically rewarding, we feel in control and unselfconscious, and it causes us to lose track of time. The activities which cause flow are personal to us, e.g. sport, music, reading, gardening, other hobbies. Experiencing flow produces positive emotions and leads to our personal growth.

To experience flow, an activity needs to have the correct balance of challenge to skill. If an activity is too challenging for our current level of skill, then this can cause us anxiety and stress (i.e. overchallenged). If an activity is not challenging enough then this can cause us to be apathetic and bored (i.e. over skilled). To experience flow, we need to have sufficient challenge for our current level of skill. This is summarised in the above diagram.



If we are overchallenged, we can experience flow by reducing the level of challenge and/or increasing our current level of skill. The level of challenge could be reduced by breaking the activity down into more achievable parts. We could increase our current level of skill through training and practice. Also, we could discover what other skills and strengths we have in another area of our life and apply them to this activity. (See Chapter 17 Strengths.)

If we are over skilled, we can experience flow by making the activity more challenging, thus requiring an increased level of skill. With some creativity, it’s possible to make the most boring activity more interesting and challenging by changing the activity somehow. Some examples are:

- **Time** – do it more quickly, against the clock, before a specific event occurs
- **Order** – do it in a different order or work pattern, with or without breaks

- **Participation** – do it just by oneself or as part of a team
- **Competition** – do it challenging oneself or others
- **Gamification** – turn it into a game and play it by oneself or with others

Any activity, even domestic chores, can be made challenging and fun, so we get more flow in our life.

Remember, often it's only after experiencing flow that we feel the benefit, and we realise how much happiness a particular activity has brought us.

### **More Information**

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly (2008). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's [TED Talk - Flow, The Secret to Happiness](https://www.ted.com/talks/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_flow_the_secret_to_happiness)

([https://www.ted.com/talks/mihaly\\_csikszentmihalyi\\_flow\\_the\\_secret\\_to\\_happiness](https://www.ted.com/talks/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_flow_the_secret_to_happiness)).

# 14 Relationships

## How to build and maintain strong relationships

*“Communication to a relationship is like oxygen to life.  
Without it ... it dies.”*

Tony Gaskins

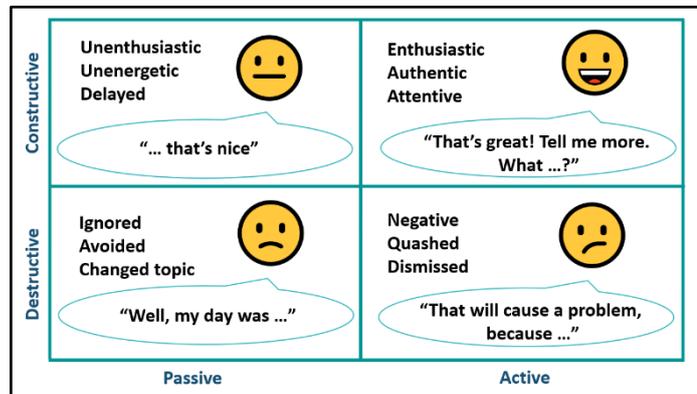
**PERMA** states that **Relationships** contribute to our wellbeing and bring us happiness. (See Chapter 11 Wellbeing for more about PERMA.) People who have meaningful, positive relationships and active social lives are much happier than those who don't. Also, they have better physical health and psychological wellbeing.

As ‘social beings’ we all have a natural desire to connect with others and be part of a group. This is why we have relationships with family, friends, and work colleagues; these groups give us emotional support when times are tough.

It's widely accepted that communication is really important in building and maintaining a good relationship. Our ability to keep talking constructively whilst managing negatives emotions is crucial. Behaviours such as criticism, contempt, defensiveness and obstructing can be extremely destructive.

Research suggests that our ability to respond enthusiastically to good news in a relationship is more important than how we communicate during the bad times. There are four main ways we can respond:

- 1) **Passive constructive**: we respond unenthusiastically, or delay our response
- 2) **Passive destructive**: we don't respond, or just talk about ourselves
- 3) **Active destructive**: we respond negatively, actively quashing the good news
- 4) **Active constructive**: we respond with genuine enthusiasm, giving full attention, and asking more about the good news



Active constructive is the only way we should respond to someone's good news which will help them feel even better about it. In doing this, we're supporting them and enabling our relationship to thrive.

For a healthy relationship there needs to be both positive and negative emotions. For it to flourish, there should be many (say, five times) more positive interactions happening than negative ones.

Building and maintaining a strong relationship requires us to invest time and effort on an ongoing basis, irrespective of whether we have known someone for a short or long time. It's important for us to keep in touch with them and ask significant questions, so we understand their thoughts, desires and needs.

### **More Information**

Video that demonstrates how to apply [Active Constructive Responding](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kr7bT-VzbJQ&feature=youtu.be). It is taken from the US Army's Comprehensive Soldier & Family Fitness, Resilience Training Programme and was produced by the University of Pennsylvania (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kr7bT-VzbJQ&feature=youtu.be>).

# 15 Accomplishment

## How to be more accomplished

*“There are basically two types of people. People who accomplish things, and people who claim to have accomplished things.*

*The first group is less crowded.”*

*Mark Twain*

**PERMA** states that **Accomplishment** contributes to our wellbeing and brings us happiness. (See Chapter 11 Wellbeing for more about PERMA.) Accomplishing something gives us a sense of pride and strengthens our self-esteem, confidence and self-worth. These feelings encourage us to attempt more, achieve more, and cause us to grow and flourish.



PERMA distinguishes between *achievement* (i.e. being about performance and achieving success) and *accomplishment* (i.e. being about development and accomplishing something). According to PERMA, accomplishment encompasses achievement, performance, success, progressing goals/ambitions, and competence (through developing skills, receiving feedback, and putting in time and effort).

We often strive to better ourselves in some way, whether it’s learning a skill, achieving a goal, or winning a competition. To become more accomplished, we need to take the following actions:

- 1) **Setting ourselves motivating goals/ambitions:** We should be aware that achievements and accomplishments have different types of goal/ambition and motivation:

**For Achievements → Extrinsic Goals/Ambitions**

- What we do for others
- External reward (e.g. money, status, approval)
- Over-focus leads to negative impact on our wellbeing and happiness

**For Accomplishments → Intrinsic Goals/Ambitions**

- What we do for ourselves
- Internal reward (e.g. purpose, meaning, pride, fulfilment)
- Focus leads to improved internal motivation and possibility of goal success

- 2) **Setting ourselves realistic goals/ambitions:** We should first consider what we want to accomplish and then set ourselves realistic goals/ambitions. (See Chapter 8 Life Goals.)
- 3) **Learning and developing our skills:** We should aim to increase our skill levels, as the quicker we learn a skill and the more skill and knowledge we acquire, the less time we need to consciously think about a task and the faster we will work. This gives us more time to plan, check and be creative; all essential factors leading to improved task

performance. Improving our skills may require specific skills training or watching an expert and copying their techniques.

- 4) **Seeking feedback on our performance:** We should ensure we get regular positive and constructive feedback on our task performance. The quicker we receive feedback on a task, the more this benefits our ability to improve our task performance. To obtain valuable feedback, it may require us working with an expert coach or mentor.
- 5) **Investing our time and effort:** We should devote our time and the sustained effort necessary to deliberately practice the things we want to improve. To become an expert, we will need considerable effort, self-motivation and self-discipline. So, practice (and lots of practice) is essential.

### **More Information**

Grenville-Cleave, Bridget (2012). *Positive Psychology: A Toolkit for Happiness, Purpose and Well-being*.

## 16 Rewiring

### *How to improve my wellbeing*

*“After all is said and done, more is said than done.”*

*Aesop*

Understanding our wellbeing and some of the barriers which can affect it is valuable. (See Chapter 11 Wellbeing for more about PERMA.) However, the best way to really understand our wellbeing is by doing something to improve it.

Yale University has shown there are at least 8 proven ways we can practically improve our wellbeing through changing our behaviours and rewiring our bad habits<sup>8</sup>.



Each rewirement can help us to improve our wellbeing. In choosing our preferred rewirement, we should select the one we find the most attractive and easiest to fit into our schedule. Starting small and building up the time we spend on the rewirement will increase the positive impact it will have on our mood. Also, we should remember that choosing to do more than one rewirement will give us more benefit because their impacts will be additive.

We can improve our wellbeing by choosing to practise one of these 8 ‘rewirings’:

- 1) **Using our strengths.** Use our top strength in a new way at least once a day. (See Chapter 17 Strengths about how to use this rewirement.)
- 2) **Savouring our experiences.** Step outside of an experience to appreciate it. Pick one experience to truly savour each day. For example, a delicious meal, a great walk outside, or something else we really enjoy. Enhance the savouring by sharing the experience with another person, thinking how lucky we are for that amazing moment, keeping a souvenir or photo of that activity, and making sure we stay in the moment the entire time. Each day, we should note down what we savoured, making sure to remember it fully.
- 3) **Expressing our gratitude.** Be grateful for the people and things in our life. Keep a Daily Gratitude Diary. Each day we should write down 5 things we are grateful for and notice how they make us feel. Or, we could write a Gratitude Letter to someone who has impacted our life but we have never properly thanked. We should deliver the letter, telling them we want to talk to them without explaining why. Then we should read the letter to them over the phone or Skype/Zoom, or meet up and read the letter aloud.
- 4) **Being kind to others.** Perform random acts of kindness. Perform an act of kindness, beyond what we normally do, each day; something that really helps or impacts another person. For example, we could help a colleague, make a charitable donation, write a

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<sup>8</sup> Chapter is based on ‘*The Science of Well-Being*’ course from Yale University, developed by Dr Laurie Santos.

thankyou note, say something kind to a stranger. Each day, we should note down our random acts of kindness, making sure to notice how they make us feel.

- 5) **Connecting to others.** Make connections with others and schedule time for the people in our life. We should make one new social connection each day. For example, we could talk to a stranger, ask a colleague about their day, or chat in a shop. Also, we should seek out more meaningful social connections. Each week we should genuinely connect with someone we care about. For example, a friend or family member we haven't spoken to for a while. Each day, we should note down our social connections, making sure to notice how they make us feel.
- 6) **Exercising more.** Increase our physical activity. Each day, we should get our bodies moving, more than we normally do. For example, we could go to the gym, do an online yoga class, or dance around your room to your favourite music. Each day, we should note down our activity and notice how much better it makes us feel.
- 7) **Sleeping more.** Get enough sleep. We should choose 4 nights (at least) next week when we intend to get 7 or more hours of sleep. Also, we should practice good sleep hygiene: no devices or stressful activities before bed, and try to avoid caffeine and alcohol on the days we plan to get our sleep. Each morning, we should note down the hours we sleep and monitor our progress over the week.
- 8) **Meditating & mindfulness.** Each day, we should meditate in a place where we won't be disturbed. If we're a beginner we could start meditating for 5-10 minutes or increase our time if we already meditate regularly. We could use the guided meditations on [SoundCloud](#) or an app, such as [Calm](#), [Headspace](#), or [10% Happier](#). Each day, we should note down the hours we meditate and monitor our progress over the week.

## More Information

Lyubomirsky, Sonja (2008). *The How of Happiness: A New Approach to Getting the Life You Want*.

Sonja Lyubomirsky's [Talk – The How of Happiness](#)  
([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7JDbP\\_x8So](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7JDbP_x8So)).

Hedy Kober's [TEDx Talk - How can mindfulness help us](#)  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hKfXyZGeJY>).

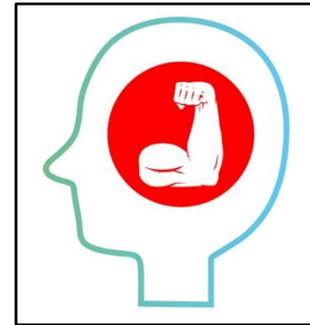
## 17 Strengths

### *How to play to my strengths*

*“Strength reveals itself through character.”*

*Henry Rollins*

Strengths are the characteristic ways we tend to behave, think or feel. Each of our strengths reflects who we really are and enables us to: (a) be our best self, (b) use our innate abilities, (c) be true to our values, and (d) be energised. Our strengths are not the same as our competencies, talents or skills. Just because we may be good at doing something doesn't necessarily mean it's our strength.



Playing to our strengths daily helps us improve our life and flourish due to the following benefits:

- **Increased performance** – more engaged and likely to achieve our goals and grow the most
- **Increased vitality** – more energised and likely to have enhanced health, wellbeing and happiness
- **Increased confidence and self-esteem** – more belief in our abilities and improved relationships
- **Increased resilience** – better able to protect against, manage, and overcome our problems

We all possess character strengths in different degrees, giving us a unique profile. (The classification of 24 character strengths from the VIA Institute on Character is given at the end of this chapter.)

#### **How can we play to our strengths?**

First, we need to discover our personal character strengths profile. We can do this by taking the VIA Survey. (Details of this free online survey are given at the end of this chapter.) The highest character strengths in our profile are our signature strengths. Knowing and applying these strengths is crucial to us being our best self and flourishing. When applying our signature strengths, it will feel like they are: (a) essential to us as a person, (b) natural and effortless, and (c) energising. We will have a sense of engagement.

Once we know our signature strengths, we can think about whether we are using them to our best advantage. Do we ignore or play them down? Are they serving us as well as they could? Also, we can use our signature strengths to help us overcome challenges or resolve issues. To do this, we should write down our problem succinctly; list our signature strengths; think how we could use each strength to help us tackle the problem; then write these thoughts down as actions and commit to implementing them.

The lowest character strengths in our profile are those we don't use much because we don't display the characteristics linked with these strengths, and we don't need them to do what we currently do. These are weaknesses only if they prevent us from achieving what we *want* to achieve. A weakness can be developed into a strength over time through training, practice, and the support of those people around us who may have this strength, or by working with a coach/mentor.

We need to be aware that the underuse or overuse of a particular signature strength can turn it into a weakness. For example, 'Perseverance' can be underused (lazy, helpless, giving up), overused (stubborn, struggles to let go), or optimally used (task completer, persistent). We should use common sense when deciding how and when to play to our strengths to get the balance right. Our signature strengths need to be applied in the right combination, to the right degree, and in the right situation. (A chart showing the optimal use of the 24 character strengths from the VIA Institute is given at the end of this chapter.)

## **VIA Institute on Character Classification of Character Strengths**

The 24 character strengths, based on those developed by the VIA Institute and grouped into 6 virtues, are listed below:

### ***Wisdom & Knowledge***

- Creativity – Original, adaptive, ingenuity
- Curiosity – Interest, novelty-seeking, exploration, openness to experience
- Judgment – Critical thinking, thinking things through, open-minded
- Love of Learning – Mastering new skills and topics, systematically adding to knowledge
- Perspective – Wisdom, providing wise counsel, taking the big picture view

### ***Courage***

- Bravery – Valour, not shrinking from fear, speaking up for what's right
- Perseverance – Persistence, industry, finishing what one starts
- Integrity – Authenticity, honesty
- Enthusiasm – Vitality, zest, vigour, energy, feeling alive and activated

### ***Love (or Humanity)***

- Intimacy – Both loving and being loved, valuing close relations with others
- Kindness – Generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruism, 'niceness'
- Social Intelligence – Aware of the motives/feelings of oneself and others

### ***Justice***

- Teamwork – Citizenship, social responsibility, loyalty
- Fairness – Just, not letting feelings bias decisions about others
- Leadership – Organizing group activities, encouraging a group to get things done

### ***Temperance***

- Forgiveness – Mercy, accepting others' shortcomings, giving people a second chance
- Humility – Modesty, letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves

- Caution – Careful, prudence, not taking undue risks
- Self-control – Self- regulation, disciplined, managing impulses and emotions

### ***Transcendence***

- Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence – Awe, wonder, elevation
- Gratitude – Thankful for the good, expressing thanks, feeling blessed
- Optimism – Hope, future-mindedness, future orientation
- Humour – Playfulness, bringing smiles to others, light-hearted
- Spirituality – Religiousness, faith, purpose, meaning

### **More Information**

The VIA Institute free online survey to obtain your personal character strengths profile can be found at – [VIA Survey](https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register)  
(<https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register>).

The VIA Institute chart showing the optimal use of the 24 character strengths can be found at – [Via GoldenMean](https://www.viacharacter.org/pdf/GoldenMean.pdf)  
(<https://www.viacharacter.org/pdf/GoldenMean.pdf>).



## 18 Growth Mindset

### How to continue my growth

*“Failure is so important. We speak about success all the time.  
But it is the ability to resist or use failure  
that often leads to greater success.”*

*J.K. Rowling*

How much we grow and can achieve is determined by our mindset. If we hold a **fixed mindset**, we believe that our intelligence and our ability to learn doesn't change. If we hold a **growth mindset**, we believe that these personal qualities and abilities can change over time. Having a growth mindset motivates us to invest our time and effort into making ourselves smarter and achieving more.



Our mindset can have a significant influence on how we think and behave, as shown below:

<b>Fixed Mindset → Intelligence is static</b>	<b>Growth Mindset → Intelligence can increase</b>
Leads to a desire to look smart and a tendency to:	Leads to a desire to learn and a tendency to:
<b>Choosing goals</b>	
Select 'performance goals' where ability is easily measured against a target; it's all about winning or losing, passing or failing	Select 'learning goals' where the focus is on gaining competence and then mastering a skill; it's all about learning and growing
<b>Facing challenges and failures</b>	
Avoid challenges and failures. Or, repeat the same behaviours and, if these don't work, give up and decide not to try again	Embrace challenges and failures. Use them as opportunities to learn more and try something new, possibly leading to greater success
<b>Overcoming obstacles</b>	
Get defensive or give up easily	Persist in the face of difficulties and setbacks
<b>Making the effort</b>	
See effort as useless or think it reflects a lower level of intelligence	See effort as the path to mastering a skill and practice as leading to greater success
<b>Criticism from others</b>	
Ignore useful negative feedback	Learn from constructive feedback
<b>Success of others</b>	
Feel threatened by the success of others	Learn and be inspired by the success of others
<b>Result of holding the mindset</b>	
Not to achieve their full potential	Reach ever-higher levels of achievement

Neuroscience has shown us that the brain is malleable and can change and grow the connections between neurons through our actions, practice and experience. (This is called brain plasticity.) The more we learn and practice new things, the more we increase our neural capacity. We should therefore think of the brain as a muscle which needs to be exercised; the more it practices these exercises, the stronger it becomes. The exercises need to be frequent, regular and sufficiently challenging, e.g. learn a new skill, begin a new hobby, meet different people, go to different places, seek learning opportunities.

To maintain a growth mindset, we need to ask ourselves “*What are the opportunities for my learning and growth today?*” Once we identify them, we should make a plan, take action, and gain the benefit.

### **More Information**

Dweck, Carol (2017). *Mindset: Changing the Way You Think to Fulfil Your Potential*.

Carol Dweck's [TED Talk – The Power of Believing That You Can Improve](https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve)

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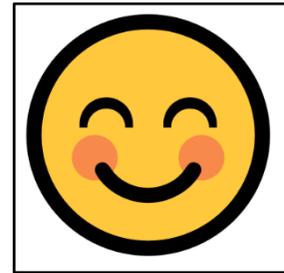
## 19 Joy

### *How to be more joyful*

*“The ultimate source of happiness is within us.”*

*Dalai Lama*

Joy is a by-product of a life well lived and is different from happiness. Joy is more consistent and cultivated internally, resulting from accepting ‘*who, why, and how*’ you are. Happiness is more transient and tends to depend on external circumstances: other people, things, places, and events. Cultivating joyfulness is more beneficial than seeking happiness.



The Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu’s ‘*The Eight Pillars of Joy*’ help us to experience joyfulness<sup>9</sup>. The first four pillars are qualities of the *mind*; the second four pillars are qualities of the *heart*.

- 1) **Perspective.** Changing the way we see the world changes the way we feel and act, which in turn changes the world itself. Taking a wider and larger perspective enables us to see the bigger picture and our connections to all others; we can look beyond our narrow-minded and self-centred points of view.
- 2) **Humility.** Considering everyone we meet as human, just like us, helps us to deal with our pride. Reminding oneself that they have the same potential for positive and negative emotions, and the same desire for a happy life and the right to achieve it. Also, recognising we can’t solve everything or control all aspects of life, and that we may sometimes be in need, encourages us to seek support from others.
- 3) **Humour.** Laughing, joking and not taking ourselves too seriously relaxes us and those around us. It breaks down barriers, brings people together, helps people communicate more honestly and compassionately, and defuses tense situations. Humour reminds us all of our shared humanity.
- 4) **Acceptance.** Accepting the reality of everything that happens to us helps us to fully engage with life, rather than protesting that life isn’t as we would wish. We can only succeed by accepting what exists; it’s the only place where change can begin. When we’re able to accept the reality of life, we’re able to ease the suffering we cause ourselves from our reactions to the people, places, things, and circumstances in life.
- 5) **Forgiveness.** Choosing to heal ourselves and free ourselves from the past, so we can focus on and appreciate the present. It doesn’t mean forgetting, not responding appropriately, or not seeking justice. However, without forgiveness we remain tied to the person who

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<sup>9</sup> Chapter is based on *The Book of Joy* by Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu & Douglas Abrams (2016).

harmed us; they will control our happiness until we can forgive them. When we forgive, we take back control of our life and our feelings.

- 6) **Gratitude.** Shifting our perspective towards all we have been given and all that we have; towards an abundance and away from a sense of scarcity. It helps us appreciate each moment we experience, the opportunities we have and a desire not to waste them, and encourages our compassion and generosity.
- 7) **Compassion.** Having a sense of concern when we are confronted with another's suffering and feeling motivated to see that suffering relieved. Being concerned for others' wellbeing connects our feelings of empathy to acts of kindness, generosity and other selfless behaviours. Being kind to others brings us joy and also encourages others to be compassionate too.
- 8) **Generosity.** Giving to others brings us more happiness than just giving to ourselves. Sharing our time, money, gifts, knowledge etc. brings joy to others which in turn brings us joy. Having a generous spirit makes us easy and fun for others to be with.

### More Information

Dalai Lama, Tutu, Desmond & Abrams, Douglas (2016). *The Book of Joy*.

Thubten Nyima's [Talk – The Eight Pillars of Joy](#)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAWmZLF3wqs>).

## 20 Resilience

### *How to deal with tough times*

*“Resilience is all about being able to overcome the unexpected.  
Sustainability is about survival. The goal of resilience is to thrive.”  
Jamais Cascio*

It's inevitable all of us will encounter tough times in life. Being unrealistic about the possibility of life's unexpected obstacles, challenging events, and adverse circumstances can make our struggles even worse. Also, trying to shield ourselves from such times can result in a boring life. It's better to accept that tough times are a natural part of being human, so we can enjoy and be grateful for the good times.

We can feel overwhelmed when tough times present us with challenges greater than our capacity to deal with them. Resilience is the ability to deal with these tough times and recover (or bounce back) from them. It involves us working to reduce the (perceived) challenges and increase our capacity. Resilience, like any other skill, is something we can develop through preparation, training, and practice.



There are many resilience-building strategies which, when applied and combined, help us to develop our resilience and make us stronger, benefiting us both physically and psychologically. Here are some:

- **Selfcare.** Resilient people are mindful of their wellbeing which better prepares them for tough times. Wellbeing includes diet, exercise, sleep, relationships. (See Chapter 16 Rewiring.)
- **Perspective.** Resilient people look at negative situations realistically, explore small ways they can improve the situations, and make changes that will help. Thinking about challenges in a more positive and optimistic way, instead of getting stuck with negative emotions, can create ways to grow and develop new coping skills. Considering the *worst-case*, *best-case* and *most likely* outcomes helps to reduce catastrophising a situation and be more optimistic. (See the **Realistic Optimism Exercise** at the end of this chapter.)
- **Action.** Resilient people focus on the things they *can* control, instead of becoming overwhelmed by the things they *cannot* control and wishing they could change them. (See **The Serenity Prayer** at the end of this chapter.) Even in the worst situations there is often something that can be done to improve matters. Resilient people take realistic steps, no matter how small, to improve the situation and their sense of control.

- **Strengths.** Resilient people play to their strengths which increases their capacity to handle tough times by making the best use of their innate abilities. (See Chapter 17 Strengths.)
- **Support.** Resilient people seek support from others, like family and close friends. They recognise that talking with others about situations doesn't make them go away, but sharing them helps to process the emotions. Also, others can provide fresh insights and perspectives on a situation that could help to manage a tough situation better. Working with a coach or therapist may be needed to help someone gain a healthier perspective on the situation and encourage them to take the appropriate action.

Resilience is an important skill that can help us all face life's challenges. By practicing some resilience-building skills daily we can get better at it with time. Also, surviving tough times, and learning and growing from these experiences, enables us, in turn, to support those who may go through similar situations in the future. Offering this type of support will benefit both us and them.

### Realistic Optimism Exercise

To help to reduce catastrophising a situation and be more optimistic, consider the *worst-case*, *best-case* and *most-likely* outcomes by answering the following questions:

- What's the worst that can happen here?
- What's the best that can happen here?
- What's most likely to happen here?

These three questions rebalance our perspective and improve our resilience by helping us make the *best-case* more likely and the *worst-case* less so.

### The Serenity Prayer

*'God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.'*

This version of The Serenity Prayer (first written by the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr in 1932) has been adopted by [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) as part of their 12-step recovery programme.

### More Information

Brown, Brené (2015). *Rising Strong: The Reckoning, the Rumble, the Revolution*.

## Part 4 – MY SKILLS & BEHAVIOURS

### 21 My Career

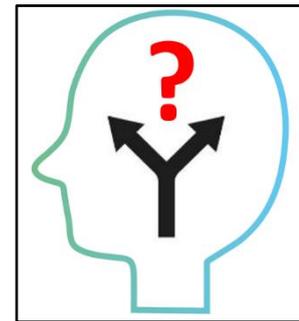
#### *How to plan my career*

*"Do not be too timid and squeamish about your actions.*

*All life is an experiment."*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

We often want our careers all planned out; to make the right choices in the right order to get on the right path. This is challenging and stressful because (a) we don't always know what gives us a fulfilling career or the opportunities available to us, and (b) it makes us extremely anxious about making 'a big mistake'. An approach is needed, therefore, that more realistically reflects most people's experience of their professional life.



**Planned happenstance** is a deliberate approach that uses a growth mindset (i.e. willingness to learn and change) and open mindedness to opportunities that may be attractive and fulfilling. (See Chapter 0 Growth Mindset for more about this topic.) It suggests that even if we don't know exactly what the outcome of our actions will be, just by taking action and doing the right sort of things, great things can and will happen. This approach has two main elements:

- 1) **Exploration** – which generates opportunities: for example, research, reading books and journals, networking, listening to experts, internships, shadowing.
- 2) **Attitudes and skills** – which prepares people to seize opportunities:
  - **Be curious.** Explore new career opportunities. Career paths rarely travel straight. It is highly likely that we will change our job or career quite a few times during our professional life. By being curious, each opportunity will teach us what we like about a job and what we don't like, and this will guide us towards a fulfilling career. Career planning is a life-long learning process and some of our learning experiences may surprise us.
  - **Be optimistic.** View new opportunities as possible and achievable. Many jobs and career paths will be suitable for us, not just the 'perfect one'. We probably have the skills, personality, ambitions, values and strengths that fit well with many careers leading to an extremely fulfilling one. Accepting that there is no 'perfect one' job or

career for us releases us from the pressure and paralysis of having to make the 'best choice'. In fact, there will be many 'best choices', so we should enjoy the journey.

- **Be persistent.** Keep going despite setbacks. Career paths don't need to be fully worked out early in our professional life. Developing our career plan is a gradual process which continues throughout our professional life and often into retirement. Our career path won't always go smoothly so following it will require determination, action and effort, especially when we face inevitable challenges and setbacks.
- **Be flexible.** Embrace changing attitudes and circumstances. Once we have started a job or embarked on a particular career path we are not 'locked in'. Making a change is much easier than we may think. As we learn more about ourselves and the world of work, we should confidently adapt our career path to reflect changes in our vision and values, personal circumstances, new technology, the economy etc. We should be openminded. Careers are flexible and any decisions we make will be informative.
- **Be risky.** Take actions in the face of uncertain outcomes. We won't always have a clear vision of our career path. It takes time, curiosity, persistence, optimism, flexibility, and trial and error to learn to make better job and career choices. Some opportunities may come from chance encounters; others through hard work. Whatever opportunities arise, all will involve some level of risk. But 'nothing ventured, nothing gained'. How will we ever know what could have been if we don't follow up these opportunities?

This 'planned happenstance' approach to our career plan will be much less demanding and, hopefully, a lot more enjoyable.

### More Information

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Tupper, Helen & Ellis, Sarah (2020). *The Squiggly Career: Ditch the Ladder, Discover Opportunity, Design Your Career*.

## 22 My Time

### *How to manage my time*

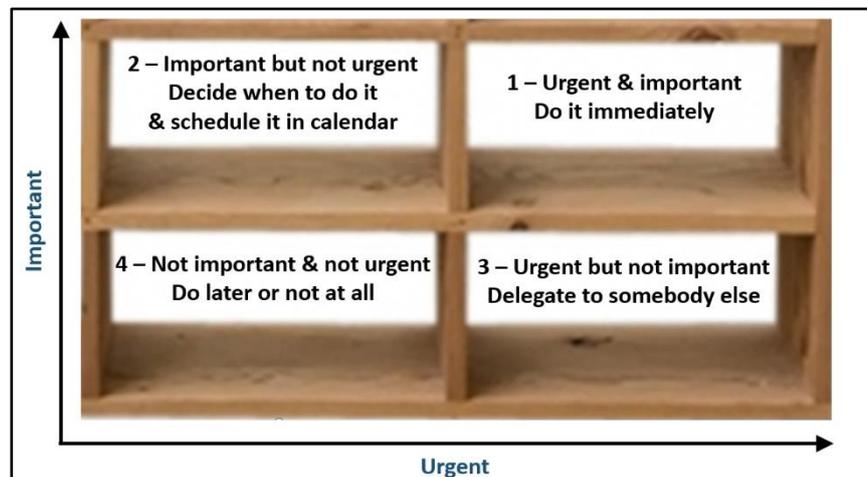
*“Until we can manage time, we can manage nothing else.”*

*Peter F. Drucker*

Time is a precious gift so we should use it wisely. Since we all have the same time available, the wisest thing we can do is use it in the most efficient way. The reason why some people seem to get more done is because they adopt good time management. And most time management can be reduced to three key principles: (a) prioritise your tasks, (b) avoid multi-tasking, and (c) do a task once only.

a) **Prioritise our tasks.**

Prioritise our tasks by deciding which tasks are **urgent** and which are **important**. In our mind, ‘pigeonhole’ each task using the strategy illustrated opposite. (If we like using lists, we could use the **Example**



**Action List** given at the end of this chapter.)

These four pigeonholes (PHs) are:

- **PH 1 – Urgent and important tasks** often include responses to crises, meeting deadlines, and priority requests. Having too many of these tasks will cause us to spend too much time responding to immediate problems which can lead to high stress and burnout. We should try to reduce these tasks by asking ourselves ‘*When is the task deadline?*’ If we don’t need to do a task immediately, we should move it to PH 2.
- **PH 2 – Important but not urgent tasks.** Putting tasks in this pigeonhole enables us to plan ahead and gain more control over our time. We shouldn’t forget these tasks, so we should schedule them in our calendar.
- **PH 3 – Urgent but not important tasks** often include requests from others. Having too many of these tasks will prevent us from achieving our personal and organisational goals. Wherever possible, we should delegate these tasks to somebody else.
- **PH 4 – Not important and not urgent tasks** mostly consist of ‘just-looking-busy’ tasks! We should therefore do them later or remove them from our schedule completely.

We should devote most of our time to tasks in PH 2 as this will bring out the best in us and those around us.

- b) **Avoid Multi-tasking.** Neuroscience has clearly shown that multitasking – the ability to do several things at once, efficiently and well – is a myth<sup>10</sup>. Our brain cannot work like that. There’s a cost in quickly swapping between tasks so we don’t perform any of these tasks well. When we force ourselves to multitask, even when it feels efficient, we cause ourselves to perform less efficiently in the long run. Our brain needs to focus and respond to one thing at a time. So, wherever possible, to achieve the greatest efficiency and performance, we should schedule our tasks so we do them one at a time.
- c) **Do a task once only.** Once we have begun a task, we should complete it. It’s extremely inefficient starting something and then deciding to complete it later. This incurs a penalty of having to refamiliarize ourselves with the task.

### Example Action List

1. Urgent & important – Do it	2. Important but not urgent – Diary it
3. Urgent but not important – Delegate it	4. Not important & not urgent – Dump it!

### More Information

Covey, Stephen (1989). *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*.

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<sup>10</sup> Macknik, S.L., Martinez-Conde, S & Blakeslee, S. (2011). *Sleights of Mind: What the Neuroscience of Magic Reveals About Our Brains* (pp. 87-88).

## 23 My Calendar

### *How to manage my calendar*

*“If you don't plan your time, someone else will help you waste it.”*

*Zig Ziglar*

Our time is a precious gift so we should use it wisely. Ensuring we manage our work calendars to get the most from our working week is important. Realising that aim will require us to adopt some healthy principles, such as:

- Putting something on a calendar makes it more likely to happen (including rest/lunch breaks and time for focused work), rather than just hoping it will happen.
- Scheduling appointments and free time for ourselves (just like we would with other people) makes it more likely we will get this time and it won't be taken by others for other things.
- Challenging the need for us to attend some meetings, rescheduling a meeting to a more suitable time, or just giving ourselves permission to say 'no' to some meetings is acceptable.
- Giving ourselves time to breathe and recover between meetings is really necessary.

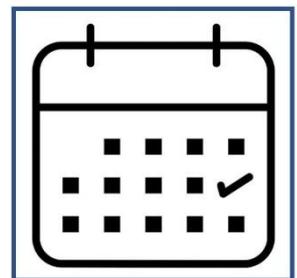
Managing our calendars will need us to set boundaries on our time, schedule meetings responsibly, and work with others productively. Here are some suggestions for doing that:

#### ***Setting boundaries***

- Set your working hours in your calendar (i.e. start and end times)
- Schedule and protect your lunch breaks
- Schedule your leave so you can take long rest breaks when you want them
- Schedule focus times in your calendar when you want to work
- Be agile with your working hours, but keep to your contracted hours and resist the urge to multitask

#### ***Scheduling meetings***

- Schedule meetings during people's working hours when everyone is available
- Respect people's lunch breaks and avoid scheduling meetings during that time
- Schedule meetings in 15 or 30-minute increments, if possible, rather than 1-hour increments
- Schedule meetings for 25 or 50 minutes to create short rest breaks between meetings
- Include time for comfort breaks if a meeting has to be over 1 hour
- Encourage people to move and stretch during meetings, if possible, and between meetings



- Space out meetings to avoid back-to-back meetings for you and other people

### ***Working with others***

- Respond to meeting invites as quickly as possible to help meeting organisers
- Group similar activities together to reduce you shifting between meetings and focused work
- Propose alternative days/times to meeting invites if they clash with rest breaks or focus times
- Consider whether you need to be at some meetings and discuss this with meeting organisers
- As a team, agree a policy to have half/full days free of meetings so you can all focus on work (and possibly also adopt some of the above suggestions)

Regularly review your calendar and ask: 'Does it accurately reflect how I want to use my time?' and 'Does it seem balanced between meetings, rest breaks, and focused work?' If 'no', then you need to remind yourself of the above healthy principles / suggestions and change your calendar to regain a balance.

### **More Information**

7 Essential Calendar Management Skills (Save Hours of Work Every Day!) from [Bookafy](https://www.bookafy.com/calendar-management-skills/). (<https://www.bookafy.com/calendar-management-skills/>).

## 24 My Money

### *How to manage my personal finances*

*"You must gain control over your money  
or the lack of it will forever control you."*

*Dave Ramsey*

How we manage our personal finances affects all aspects of our life. Money problems significantly affect our relationships, work, wellbeing, mental health, and much more. Good money management, therefore, benefits us in many important ways.

Here is a reminder of some basic, healthy guidance on how to manage our personal finances:



- 1) **Spending.** Spending can be divided into 'our needs' and 'our wants'. Our needs are our absolute necessities (e.g. food, housing, utility bills) – our essentials. Our wants are the things we like to buy if we have the money (e.g. entertainment, social life, holidays) – our non-essentials. The difference between the two comes down to our personal choices, preferences and priorities. Spending on our needs should take priority over our wants. We should spend money only when we are able to do so. Major purchases (e.g. car, house) may involve borrowing. Big investments are costly to replace so we should protect them (plus any other liabilities) through insurance (e.g. motor, home buildings/contents, health, holidays, pets). Beware of insurance with cheap premiums, inadequate cover, and big excesses.
- 2) **Budgeting.** Having a budget is the best way to plan our personal finances so we achieve what we want to achieve with our money, especially avoiding not spending what we don't have. It helps us to manage the balance between our income (earnings, savings, gifts, etc.) and our outgoings (our essentials, non-essentials, savings, gifts, etc.) Also, it tells us if there is room to save some money on a regular basis, possibly through reducing some areas of our spending. All items of our personal finance should be included in our budget and we should be realistic and cautious in producing the estimates.
- 3) **Saving.** Saving is setting aside some of our money for future use. This could be for specific purchases (e.g. phone, car, holiday) or for contingencies – unexpected outgoings (e.g. car breakdown, sick pet) and unexpected events (e.g. equipment breakdown, illness, unemployment). We should try to save 10% of our income or as much as we can afford. One way to do this is when we get a salary rise, we could use part of it as a regular saving. This lessens the impact saving has on our finances. Also, we should make the most use of

tax-advantageous savings accounts (e.g. ISAs). Saving up to buy something saves us money long term because paying by cash is normally cheaper than paying by credit.

- 4) **Borrowing.** Borrowing is receiving money from someone else and agreeing to pay it back later with interest. Our ability to borrow includes: having an adequate deposit, getting a good interest rate (depends on size of deposit), and leaving some contingency. The higher the interest rate and the longer the loan, the more the loan costs. We should always pay off credit card bills in full every month. Paying off loans should be our priority over saving because it costs us more to borrow than to save. Pay off loans with any savings but leave some contingency if possible (e.g. several months' income). We should always be realistic about our ability to repay a loan before borrowing money.

Finally, our emotions should never determine our financial decisions. We should always remember our budget, keep to it strictly, and justify all our financial decisions using the numbers. And when matters get complicated or debt could be a problem, we should seek help (sources of free financial advice are given at the end of this chapter).

It's easy to forget how easy it is to get into serious financial difficulties. So, if we are financially secure, we should consider giving what we can to help others for whom things have gone wrong. Giving to others has been shown to benefit not only the recipient's but also the giver's health and happiness, and it strengthens entire communities.

## Sources of Free Financial Support

Although the reminder of some basic, healthy guidance given above is helpful, it is extremely limited and only covers general situations. Managing our personal finances can get complicated, especially when it involves getting out of debt. We should always seek expert advice as soon as possible. For investment and pensions advice, we may need to speak to an Independent Financial Advisor (IFA).

Here are some sources of free financial advice:

- [Citizens Advice Bureaux](#)
- [CAP](#)
- [MoneySavingExpert](#) (founded by Martin Lewis OBE)
- [List of Independent Financial Advisors \(IFAs\)](#)

## More Information

Young Money (2021). [Your Money Matters: A Financial Education Textbook](#) (for 14-16 year olds).

(<https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/resources/your-money-matters-financial-education-textbook/>).

Michael Norton's [TEDx Talk - How to buy happiness.](#)

([https://www.ted.com/talks/michael\\_norton\\_how\\_to\\_buy\\_happiness#t-637226](https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_norton_how_to_buy_happiness#t-637226)).

## 25 My Thinking

### *How to improve my thinking*

*“If you can rhythmically slow down your breath to four breaths a minute, you can indirectly control your mind and slow it down from its obnoxious behavior.”*

*Harbhajan Singh Yogi*

Our thoughts are intricately linked to our feelings and behaviours. So, particular thoughts and emotions can influence each other which, in turn, can lead to certain behaviours. (See Chapter 1 My Behaviours, Chapter 2 My Thoughts & Chapter 3 My Feelings for more about these relationships.)

Neuroscience has shown that to improve the quality of our thinking, and therefore our behaviour, we need to address the physiological responses that come from our various biological systems and their impact on our feelings<sup>11</sup>. We can best achieve this by reducing the variability of our heart rate through regulating our breathing. Generating a rhythmic breathing pattern increases the power output of our heart and causes the other biological systems to synchronise with it, stabilising our physiology. The conscious control of breathing has been taught in many disciplines over many years, including sport, yoga, and meditation.

The three most important factors that influence heart rate variability have been shown to be:

- 1) **Rhythm** – a fixed ratio of in-to-out breathing
- 2) **Smoothness** – even flow rate of in and out breathing
- 3) **Location of attention** – a particular focus on our heart area when breathing

The benefits of stabilising our physiology include:

- Being more self-controlled in emotionally-charged situations, and being less reactive
- Enabling us to think more clearly and perceptively, and being less impulsive
- Increasing our ability to actually change how we feel, and being less driven by our emotions

**B**reathe  
**R**hythmically  
**E**venly  
**A**nd  
**T**hrough the  
**H**earth  
**E**very day

Although the **BREATHE** technique (see box) is simple and easy to use, it does require some practice. Practising for a few minutes each day alone with our eyes closed and then working

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<sup>11</sup> Chapter is based on an extract from *4D Leadership: Competitive Advantage Through Vertical Leadership Development* (Chapter 3) by Alan Watkins (2016).

up to more challenging situations is an effective approach. Using a phone app like [Breathe \(by Jatra\)](#) is very helpful in guiding our breathing into a steady rhythm.

Using the BREATHE technique for only a few minutes enables us to be less reactive, have more energy, and brings our thoughts, feelings and behaviours under our control.

### **More Information**

TEDxPortsmouth – [Dr. Alan Watkins - Being Brilliant Every Single Day \(Part 1\)](#)  
(<https://youtu.be/q06YIWCR2Js>).

TEDxPortsmouth – [Dr. Alan Watkins - Being Brilliant Every Single Day \(Part 2\)](#)  
([https://youtu.be/Q\\_fFattg8N0](https://youtu.be/Q_fFattg8N0)).

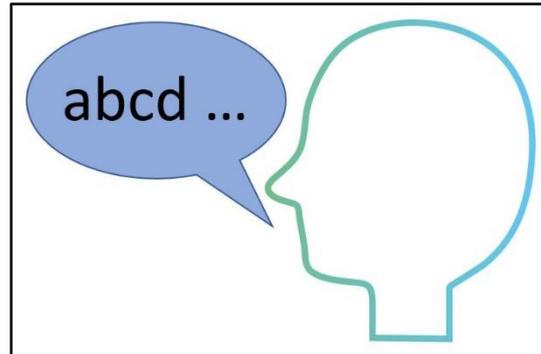
## 26 My Conversations

### *How to improve my conversations*

*“Perhaps the best conversationalist in the world is the [person] who helps others to talk.”*

*John Steinbeck*

Most people find talking to others a challenge, particularly if we don't know them. This can cause us to have anxiety at work and socially. To achieve our life and career goals we need to be able to talk to others meaningfully. Improving our conversation skills is a lifetime endeavour which can benefit significantly our life and career. Research into conversation has led to the development of the **TALK** framework<sup>12</sup> which describes four key practices to help us improve our conversation skills:



1) **Topic selection.** Good conversationalists proactively manage the content and flow of the discussion through preparation, flexibility, awareness, and empowered topic switching.

***This can be hard because:***

- We don't always know what others want to talk about
- We tend to talk about obvious and immediate topics, e.g. weather, family, work, sport
- We're overly hesitate to switch topics due to politeness and could go on with topics too long
- We're bad at coming up with new topics in the moment

***We can become better by:***

- Preparing a list of topics before our conversations; these might be different for different types of people
- Being willing to switch topics more readily when there's a lull in the conversation

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<sup>12</sup> TALK framework has been developed by Alison Wood Brooks, the O'Brien Associate Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School.

2) **Asking questions.** Good conversationalists use questions to lower people's defences, build trust and empathy, improve information exchange, increase their likability, and create a good impression.

*This can be hard because:*

- 
- We are self-centred and we forget to ask questions
  - We don't want to appear overly intrusive, insensitive, rude, or even incompetent
  - We believe making statements is better than asking questions
  - We worry it could reveal our ignorance or something about ourselves, e.g. not listening properly

*We can become better by:*

- 
- Asking more and better questions as this improves communication
  - Asking more follow-up questions as this shows we are not only listening but also interested, helping the conversation to go deeper rather than on to the next topic
  - Avoiding asking a question just to create an opportunity to bring the conversation back to oneself after the response
  - Focusing on just learning more about the other person instead of trying to impress them
- 

3) **Levity.** Good conversationalists use humour which makes them look more confident and competent.

Attempting to inject jokes is liked by others as they appreciate our courage in trying. If our joke is seen as appropriate and others laugh, it can make people regard us better. We can become better by:

- Having a good sense of humour; being serious without being solemn
- Being ready to include humour and laugh at others' humour
- Avoiding using humour at someone else's expense and unintentionally insulting or undermining someone else's confidence, e.g. giving a backhanded compliment

4) **Kindness.** Good conversationalists understand the importance of:

- **Reflection.** Thinking about people when they are apart so they can help them when they get together
- **Receptiveness.** Accepting opposing viewpoints, disagreeing, and still wanting to discuss them
- **Responsiveness.** Showing they're listening and having genuine curiosity about what others are thinking and feeling in the moment, not just through nonverbal cues like nodding and smiling, but through meaningful verbal cues like paraphrasing and asking follow-up questions

Performing the four key practices of the **TALK** framework only comes from regular practice, observation and reflection. (See **Conversation Practice** exercise at the end of this chapter).

Also, here is what research seems to be saying about introverts and extroverts:

- Although introverts may struggle with conversation in groups, they are often more confident in one-to-one situations where they can perform well
- Although extroverts may seem to be good conversationalists, they can often be less responsive regarding how others are thinking and feeling in the moment

## Conversation Practice Exercise

Performing the four key practices of the **TALK** framework only comes from regular practice, observation and reflection, as follows:

- **Practice** by picking one thing we should do *more of* and possibly also one thing we should do *less of*. Then in our next conversation put those ideas into action. Afterwards ask oneself: “*What went well?*” “*How could it have gone better?*” Take every opportunity to practice our conversation skills.
- **Observe** how others interact by selecting someone who’s conversation skills we admire; this could be at work or on TV. Ask oneself: “*What makes these interviewers good at posing questions?*” “*How do some of them use humour effectively?*”
- **Reflect** on how well our conversation skills are improving at work and in our personal life. Ask oneself: “*What is working well and what is working less well?*” “*What can I do to build on my successes and avoid failures?*” Our actions could include keeping a diary, talking to a wider variety of people, or working with a friend or colleague so we can support and encourage others and share feedback.

## More Information

Alison Wood Brooks’ [ForbesBooks Radio Podcast – Part One: A Conversation with Alison Wood Brooks](https://forbesbooksradio.com/episodes/episode-03-part-one-a-conversation-with-alison-wood-brooks/)

(<https://forbesbooksradio.com/episodes/episode-03-part-one-a-conversation-with-alison-wood-brooks/>).

Alison Wood Brooks’ [ForbesBooks Radio Podcast – Part Two: A Conversation with Alison Wood Brooks](https://forbesbooksradio.com/episodes/episode-03-part-two-a-conversation-with-alison-wood-brooks/)

(<https://forbesbooksradio.com/episodes/episode-03-part-two-a-conversation-with-alison-wood-brooks/>).

Celeste Headlee’s [TEDx Talk – 10 Ways to Have a Better Conversation](https://www.ted.com/talks/celeste_headlee_10_ways_to_have_a_better_conversation)

([https://www.ted.com/talks/celeste\\_headlee\\_10\\_ways\\_to\\_have\\_a\\_better\\_conversation?utm\\_source=linkedin.com&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=social&utm\\_content=2020-12-22](https://www.ted.com/talks/celeste_headlee_10_ways_to_have_a_better_conversation?utm_source=linkedin.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=social&utm_content=2020-12-22)).



## 27 My Changes

### *How to handle my changes*

*“Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.”*

*John Maxwell*

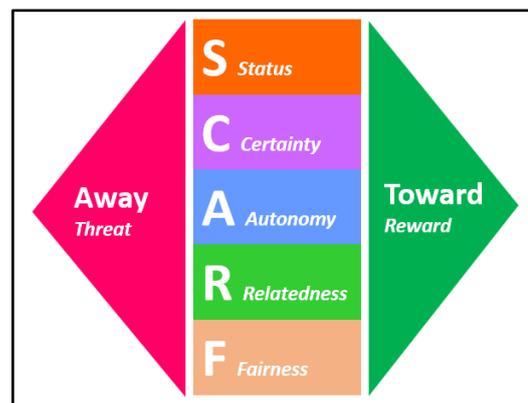
Most of us don't like 'change' or having to change some aspect of our life. However, as change is inevitable, rather than just react to change, we need to learn how to consciously handle it appropriately.

Neuroscience has revealed that, in social situations, there are several 'social domains' that activate the same threat and reward responses in our brain that we rely on for physical survival. And these responses influence our behaviour in social situations. This explains why sometimes we can have strong, emotional reactions to some situations, and why it's often hard for us to control them. These reactions are instinctive and 'hardwired in' and, unfortunately, we can't just 'switch them off'.

When we feel threatened (physically or socially) our brain releases cortisol (the 'stress hormone') which affects our creativity and productivity. We literally can't think straight, this increases our feeling of being threatened, and we 'move away' from the change – resisting it. However, when we feel rewarded (e.g. when we are praised) our brain releases dopamine (the 'happy hormone') which causes us to want more. So, we look for ways to be rewarded again and we 'move towards' the change – embracing it.

The **SCARF** model suggests there are five social domains that activate the brain (as shown in the diagram opposite):

- 1) **Status** – *our relative importance to others.*  
Our sense of status goes up (or down) when we feel 'better than' (or 'worse than') someone else.
- 2) **Certainty** – *our ability to predict the future.* We constantly try to predict the future and seek certainty by looking for patterns and relationships.
- 3) **Autonomy** – *our sense of control over events/environments.* We feel happier when we have a choice, and unhappy and helpless when choice is taken away from us.
- 4) **Relatedness** – *our sense of how safe we feel with others.* We feel better (or worse) when believe we are 'in' (or 'out') of a particular social group (i.e. friends or foes).
- 5) **Fairness** – *our sense of fairness in the exchanges between people.* We feel better when we believe we are treated the same as other people and not disadvantaged.



Understanding how the brain behaves helps us to (a) notice how we are reacting to a change and the trigger(s) involved, and (b) consciously choose the most appropriate behaviour(s) in response to the change (e.g. having open and honest conversations, gaining fresh perspectives on the situation).

Also, understanding the brain can help us try to reduce perceived threats and increase feelings of reward when collaborating with others, thus we can help others handle times of change much better.

### **More Information**

Rock, David (2008). *SCARF: a brain-based model for collaborating with and influencing others*.

Beyond Performance's [Animation of David Rock's SCARF Model](#)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMejNf0dL2g&t=44s>).

## 28 My Motivation

### *How to improve my motivation*

*“If you find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn’t lead anywhere.”*

*Frank A. Clark*

We all lack motivation at times, even very successful people. We know what to do to improve life but don’t have the energy to do it. What can we do to increase our motivation and achieve our goals?

Wish Outcome Obstacle Plan (**WOOP**) is an approach designed to increase our motivation and change our behaviour<sup>13</sup>. 20 years of research has shown the things that can stop us from fulfilling our goals can actually help us to realise them. Through *mental contrasting* (i.e. imagining our dreams and facing the obstacles that stand in their way) and *implementation intentions* (i.e. making definite plans for how we can reach a certain goal), WOOP can give us the direction and energy to take action to fulfil our wishes.

#### **WOOP’s Fours Steps**

Before we start, we should make sure we feel calm, comfortable, and our mind is clear of any distractions.

- 1) **Wish.** We should think about the next 24 hours / week / month / year. What’s the one, most important wish we would like to fulfil, and think we could fulfil, during your chosen timeframe? The wish should be challenging for us, but we should feel that it is possible for us. Summarise it in 3 to 6 words.
- 2) **Outcome.** What’s the best thing; the best outcome, about fulfilling our wish? How would this best outcome make us feel? We should summarise it in 3 to 6 words. Now, we should imagine this best outcome as vividly as possible. We should close our eyes, if that helps us imagine, and feel it as fully as we can.
- 3) **Obstacle.** What’s holding us back from fulfilling our wish? What’s the one, main inner obstacle that stops us? Digging deeply, what behaviour (emotion, belief or habit) of ours hinders us? We should summarise it in 3 to 6 words. Now, we should imagine that inner obstacle occurring as vividly as possible. Again, we should close our eyes, if that helps us imagine, and feel it as fully as we can.
- 4) **Plan.** What can we do to overcome our inner obstacle? We should identify one effective action we can take, or one effective thought we can think, to overcome our obstacle. We should summarise it in 3 to 6 words. Then we should make an ‘if-then plan’ – “If ...

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<sup>13</sup> Chapter is based on *Rethinking Positive Thinking: Inside the New Science of Motivation* by Oettingen, Gabriele (2014).

(obstacle) ... *then I will* ... (action or thought to overcome your obstacle)". We should slowly repeat and imagine this *if-then plan* several times.

(A summary of WOOP's four steps and a WOOP Card are given at the end of this chapter).

WOOP can be used for many areas of behaviour change: helping adults to become healthier (lose weight, drink less alcohol, quit smoking) and to improve their social behaviour (sustain healthier relationships); and supporting children and adolescents to improve their academic performance (improve school attendance as well as effort and achievement, get better grades).

Learning to apply WOOP takes time, so we should be patient with ourselves and practice it as often as we can, possibly daily. We should experiment with WOOP. It will help us become more motivated and skilled to connect with others, engage with the world, and take action.

### WOOP's Four Steps

- W** – First you name a **wish** that is challenging, but feasible
- O** – Then you find the very best **outcome** and imagine this outcome
- O** – Then you find your main **obstacle** and imagine this obstacle
- P** – Finally, you make a plan, **an if-then plan** of how to overcome the obstacle

### WOOP Card

**WISH** \_\_\_\_\_

**OUTCOME** \_\_\_\_\_

**OBSTACLE** \_\_\_\_\_

**PLAN**      **IF** \_\_\_\_\_ **(obstacle)** **then I will** \_\_\_\_\_ **(action)**

### More Information

Oettingen, Gabriele (2014). *Rethinking Positive Thinking: Inside the New Science of Motivation*.

More details about applying WOOP is given on the [WOOP My Life](#) website. Also, a WOOP app is available (Android and iOS).

## Part 5 – MY RELATING TO OTHERS

### 29 Leader

#### *How to be a good leader*

*" The best leaders don't know just one style of leadership – they're skilled at several, and have the flexibility to switch between styles as the circumstances dictate."*

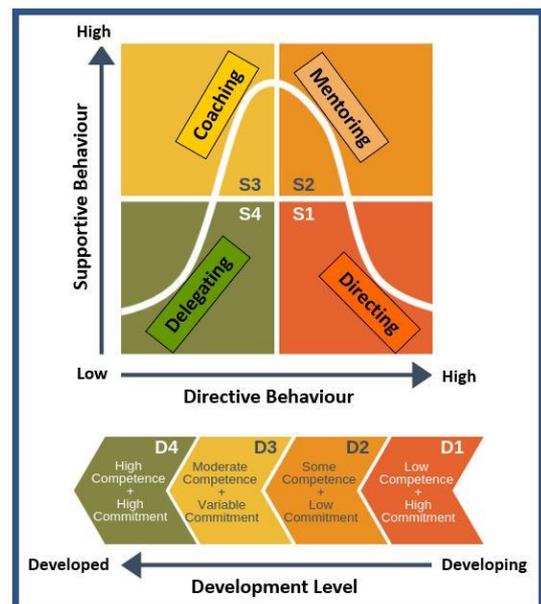
*Daniel Goleman*

Good leaders recognise that, to be effective, they have to be flexible and able to use different leadership styles which are matched to the situations and people involved<sup>14</sup>. The four basic leadership styles are:

- 1) **Directing** – Leader provides solutions, specific instructions, and close supervision
- 2) **Mentoring** – As per Directing, but Leader also supports progress by providing explanations and asking for suggestions
- 3) **Coaching** – Leader supports progress but now asks questions about problem-solving and shares decision-making responsibility. (See Chapter 36 Coaching for more about this skill.)
- 4) **Delegating** – Leader no longer provides support and hands over all problem-solving and decision-making responsibility. (See Chapter 32 Delegator for more about this skill.)

The diagram opposite shows how these four basic leadership styles relate to the levels of *Directive Behaviour* and *Supportive Behaviour*, as a person progresses through their stages of development.

Directive behaviour is high in structure, control and supervision, i.e. a Leader tells a person exactly what to do, how to do it, and then closely supervises their performance. Supportive Behaviour is high in encouragement, listening and assistance, i.e. a Leader listens to a person, supports and encourages them, and gets them solving problems and making decisions.



<sup>14</sup> Chapter is adapted from *Leadership and the One Minute Manager* by Kenneth Blanchard, Patricia Zigarmi & Drea Zigarmi (1994).

Applying 'situational leadership' requires a Leader to learn how and when to apply these three skills:

- 1) **Flexibility** – Employ all the different leadership styles to different situations and people, flexibly.
- 2) **Diagnosis** – Recognise the leadership style a person needs, as different people are at different stages of development. Note that for the same person, this could be different depending on the situation and tasks/goals involved.
- 3) **Contracting** – Agree the leadership style a person needs for a situation or task/goal with them and how this will work in practice.

The diagram above shows the most appropriate leadership style for each stage of development in terms of a person's current levels of *competence* and *commitment*. Competence relates to their skills and experience; commitment relates to their confidence and motivation. If a person does not respond appropriately to a particular leadership style, the leader should go back to the previous development stage and use that appropriate leadership style.

### More Information

Marquet, L. David (2015). *Turn The Ship Around! A True Story of Turning Followers into Leaders*.

[David Marquet, Former-Captain, US Navy Seals: Turn the Ship Around!](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivwKQqf4ixA)

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivwKQqf4ixA>).

## 30 Manager

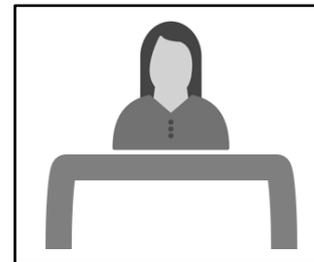
### *How to be a good manager*

*"The conventional definition of management is getting work done through people, but real management is developing people through work."*

*Agha Hasan Abedi*

The most effective managers use six core leadership styles<sup>15</sup>: **coercive** (demands immediate compliance), **pacesetting** (sets high standards for performance), **authoritative** (mobilises people towards a vision), **affiliative** (creates harmony and builds emotional bonds), **democratic** (forges consensus through participation), and **coaching** (develops people for the future).

Good managers recognise when to use each leadership style, particularly the last 4 styles listed above – in just the right amount, at just the right time. These managers create the best work environment and business performance. *Coaching style* is often the leadership style least used despite being a very powerful tool.



Google investigated what makes a good manager and found their behaviours to be<sup>16</sup>:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Is a good coach  | 2. Empowers the team and does not micromanage            |
| 3. Creates an inclusive team environment, showing concern for success and wellbeing | 4. Is productive and results-orientated                  |
| 5. Is a good communicator, listening and sharing information                        | 6. Supports career development and discusses performance |
| 7. Has a clear vision/strategy for the team   | 8. Has key technical skills to help advise the team      |

One of the most important behaviours was that they were an effective coach; a manager who focuses on each team member's individual needs. Sometimes this requires more mentoring (passing on expertise and advice to achieve something) than coaching (asking questions and listening instead of giving answers). Here are some tips on how we can be a good manager across the range of the coaching style:

- Have regular one-to-ones with our team members and be fully present and focused on them. (See Chapter 35 One-To-Ones for more about this skill.)
- Be aware of our own mindset/attitude and that of the team members

<sup>15</sup> Goleman, Daniel (2000). *Leadership That Gets Results*. Harvard Business Review, March-April.

<sup>16</sup> re:Work Google Research. [Manager Behaviors](https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/managers-coach-managers-to-coach/steps/introduction/). (https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/managers-coach-managers-to-coach/steps/introduction/).

- Practice active listening and ask open-ended questions to facilitate the team members' own insights. (See Chapter 38 Questioning for more about this skill.)
- Provide specific and timely feedback to our team members. (See Chapter 39 Feeding Back for more about this skill.)
- Balance positive (motivational) and negative (constructive) feedback, and understand the unique strengths and development areas of each team member

To be a good manager we should demonstrate the above behaviours, employ a coaching style, and invest time and energy with each of our team members to create a healthy work environment and deliver a healthy business performance.

### **More Information**

Blanchard, Kenneth & Johnson, Spencer (2015). *The New One Minute Manager*.

## 31 Team Leader

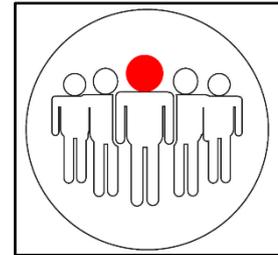
### *How to be a good team leader*

*“Become the kind of leader that people would follow voluntarily;  
even if you had not title or position.”*

*Brian Tracy*

A team leader can adopt one of two contrasting leadership styles: *Dominance* or *Prestige*.<sup>17</sup>

Dominance occurs when a decision has been made and the team leader needs to encourage the team to complete a task. This is needed because dissent and varied opinions are distracting and undermine achieving the end goal. Prestige, however, is crucial when evaluating options or creating new ideas. People need to speak up and offer alternative ideas, safe from any retaliation from a team leader who could interpret such contributions as a threat.



Dominant team leaders are, by definition, punitive. This is how they win and sustain power. They are also less empathetic. They don't feel they need other people, so don't tend to take their perspectives or read their emotions. Prestige-oriented team leaders, on the other hand, recognise that wise decisions depend on group input, and so are highly attuned to what others are thinking and saying. This team leadership style strengthens trust.

Good team leaders recognise when to be '*dominant*' and when to be '*prestige-oriented*' in their leadership style. They also know what it takes to create high-performing teams.

Google investigated why some of their teams performed better than others<sup>18</sup>. They discovered that who is on a team mattered less than how the team members interacted, structured their work, and viewed their contributions. Five key dynamics set successful teams apart from other teams at Google:

- 1) **Psychological Safety** – Team members feel safe to take risks and be vulnerable in front of each other
- 2) **Dependability** – Team members get things done on time and do excellent work
- 3) **Structure & Clarity** – Team members have clear roles, plans and goals
- 4) **Meaning** – Work is personally important to team members
- 5) **Impact** – Team members think their work matters and creates change

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<sup>17</sup> Syed, Matthew (2019). *Rebel Ideas: The Power of Diverse Thinking*. Chapter 3.

<sup>18</sup> re:Work Google Research. [The five keys to a successful Google team](https://rework.withgoogle.com/blog/five-keys-to-a-successful-google-team/).  
(<https://rework.withgoogle.com/blog/five-keys-to-a-successful-google-team/>).

'Psychological safety' was, by far, the most important dynamic and underpinned the other four. It involves providing a 'safe space' where team members can be their true selves. A place where team members:

- Feel accepted and respected
- Are encouraged to take risks, innovate, and contribute ideas
- Feel secure and not embarrassed
- Don't fear recriminations or negative consequences
- Are positive about the team and want to remain on it

To be a good team leader, and to create a high-performing team, we should promote, encourage and, most importantly, demonstrate the above behaviours.

### **More Information**

Maxwell, John (2002). *The Essential 17 Qualities of a Team Player: Becoming the Kind of Person Every Team Wants*.

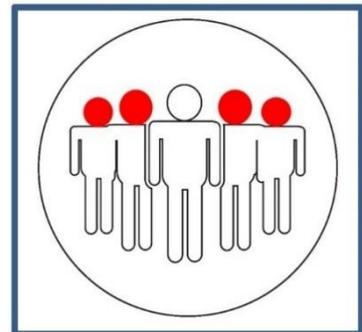
## 32 Delegator

### *How to be a good delegator*

*“Delegation requires the willingness to pay for short term failures in order to gain long term competency.”*

*Dave Ramsey*

If we are good at getting things done, we may be given a team leadership or management role. We then face the challenge of delegating tasks that we would have previously undertaken ourselves. To become good at delegating we often need to change our beliefs and motivations, and develop new and effective skills in delegation and giving feedback. (See Chapter 39 Feeding Back for more on this skill.) This will include struggling with giving up control over tasks and trusting others



to do the job. Effective delegating requires our conscious effort. However, its major benefit is that it enables us to work more efficiently and offers opportunities for others to grow.

Holding inappropriate beliefs can be self-defeating and undermine our willingness to delegate tasks. Also, they are unhelpful to others. To improve matters, we need to be totally honest about our motivations. Here are some key beliefs that can hinder us, and some questions we should ask ourselves:

- **Expectation: ‘I should be delegating’** ‘Should I be delegating this particular task?’
- **Status: ‘I should be seen delegating’** ‘Should I be worrying about my image?’
- **Competence: ‘I could do it better’** ‘Could I tell/show someone how it’s done and grow their skills?’
- **Time: ‘I could do it quicker’** ‘Could I allow more time for this task, including time to check?’
- **Standard: ‘They won’t do it right’** ‘Could I help someone do it to the right standard?’
- **Workload: ‘They are too busy to do it’** ‘Could I check with someone how busy they actually are?’

To become good at delegating, we need to challenge how we delegate tasks by asking ourselves:

- *Which belief(s) is affecting the way I delegate in a negative way?*
- *What if I didn’t accept that belief(s)? How might that improve my delegating?*
- *What if I changed how I delegate and give feedback? How might the outcome be better?*

In planning to delegate a task it's essential for us to stay involved, at the appropriate level, and with the agreed-upon mix of support and accountability. To avoid micromanaging or leaving someone struggling, we should simply ask the person what do they believe is the right level of support for them.

Typically, there are four levels of support and involvement with the person doing the task:

- 1 *Instructing*: they are told/shown exactly what to do and how, making all expectations clear
- 2 *Investigating & proposing*: they gather information, provide options, and propose their best option(s)
- 3 *Acting & reporting*: they have ownership of the task to take appropriate action and report progress
- 4 *Handing over*: they have ownership of the task to make all decisions with no need to report progress

As your trust in the person doing the task increases, so you can move to the next level of delegation.

### **More Information**

Sostrin, Jesse (2017). [To Be a Great Leader, You Have to Learn How to Delegate Well](https://hbr.org/2017/10/to-be-a-great-leader-you-have-to-learn-how-to-delegate-well). Harvard Business Review.  
(<https://hbr.org/2017/10/to-be-a-great-leader-you-have-to-learn-how-to-delegate-well>)

## 33 Meetings

### *How to have productive meetings*

*“The least productive people are usually the ones who are most in favour of holding meetings.” Thomas Sowell*

Holding a meeting can be an efficient and effective way for a group of people or team to communicate with each other about a common topic. Group communication covers sharing information, consulting, making decisions, and being creative. Productive meetings can achieve a great deal in a short period of time. Unproductive meetings can waste precious time, resources, and sometimes leave people feeling frustrated, demotivated, and uncooperative. The productivity of most meetings can be improved greatly by following some simple guidelines on their preparation, execution, and follow up. (Also see Chapter 34 Video Meetings on holding productive meetings.)



#### **Meeting Preparation**

- Make sure it has a clear purpose and intended outcomes. (If it's recurring, assess if it's still needed.)
- Determine if it's needed or whether its purpose could be achieved better some other way (e.g. by short phone call or email).
- Ensure the agenda is not too long/ambitious for one meeting and the time allocated is appropriate.
- Allow time for comfort breaks if the meeting is over one hour.
- Schedule meetings in 15-minute increments rather than in one-hour increments.
- Keep the list of attendees short by inviting only the people who are really needed for its purpose.
- Issue meeting papers in advance so attendees have adequate time to read and reflect. Tell everyone to read the material before the meeting and have their thoughts and questions ready.

#### **Meeting Execution**

- Start and finish the meeting on time, irrespective of who is late (including senior members of staff).
- Allow a short time at the start of the meeting for chit-chat and banter, to build up some rapport.
- Check everyone understands the purpose and intended outcome(s) of the meeting.

- Appoint a chairperson to keep it to the agenda; control the talkative (who may dominate the contributions) and draw out the silent (who may have important contributions to make).
- Appoint a note taker to record the decisions, actions, who is actioned, and timescale for completion.
- Appoint a time keeper to ensure the meeting keeps to time.
- Agree the date, time and place of the next meeting (if it's a recurring meeting).

### ***Meeting Follow Up***

- Send out the notes from the meeting to all attendees and any other interested parties.
- Send out the invitations for the next meeting (if it's a recurring meeting).
- Get feedback from the attendees on how they felt the meeting went and how it could be improved.

### **More Information**

Kline, Nancy (1999). *Time to Think: Listening to Ignite the Human Mind*.

## 34 Video Meetings

### *How to have good video meetings*

*“The longer the meeting, the less is accomplished.”*

*Tim Cook*

These days many of our meetings are held via virtual platforms apps (e.g. Zoom, Google Meet, MS Teams). Many people, however, find these types of meetings draining and regularly complain of ‘Zoom fatigue’. Understanding what makes video meetings different from in-person meetings can help us reduce what makes video meetings exhausting. Academic researchers are now beginning to discover that what makes video meetings tiring has a lot to do with how we process our conversations.

During in-person meetings, we quickly and effortlessly pick up nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language. This helps to guide our conversation in very subtle and complex ways. Video meetings provide few nonverbal cues, which is stressful. Also, there is a very slight delay when speaking to someone, and therefore our brain works hard at filling in the details that we would normally get from speaking



face to face. Using these different skills, and the extra workload from needing to handle the constant uncertainty about what is going on, is very tiring.

In face-to-face meetings, we look around (at our notes, out of the window) and typically move around. We know who is looking at us and can choose who we look at; usually the person we are speaking to. In video meetings, everyone is sat in front of a fixed camera, looking at everyone else all of the time, unable to move very much. This is unnatural. It makes it hard for us to concentrate as we tend to either look away, or tense up our bodies as we try not to look away so as not to appear distracted or uninterested. Not being able to move around naturally, turn our gaze to avoid the continuous eye contact, or focus on one person at a time, is really challenging for us; it is highly stressful and very tiring. And on top of all that, there is the influence of seeing oneself on screen all the time, which is also unnatural, and can cause us to self-evaluate and experience negative emotions.

So, how can we tackle the above issues and attempt to reduce ‘Zoom fatigue’? (Also see Chapter 33 Meetings and Chapter 23 My Calendar.)

- **Reduce your stress and workload** by limiting the number of video meetings you attend each week. Use ‘audio only’ meetings more often or take ‘audio only’ breaks in a meeting.

- **Reduce the time spent in video meetings** by staying only to discuss your topic and then leaving. Be creative and suggest ways to get information from meetings without having to attend (including meeting notes, or recording the meeting and listening to it later).
- **Reduce your constrained physical mobility** by remembering to move around, and relieve the tension that could be building up in your body. Listen to your body and if you notice that you are tense in your back, shoulders, or digestive systems, take a break, get up, and stretch.
- **Reduce the amount of continuous, direct eye contact from faces seen close up by** shrinking the app window and distancing yourself from the screen. This relieves the discomfort you have from not maintaining enough interpersonal distance from people you are not intimate with.
- **Reduce the self-evaluation from seeing yourself on the screen** by hiding the 'self-view' video window. Turn your camera off when a meeting is not particularly important or when you won't be required to speak much. This takes down the mirror that is being held up constantly in front of you.

### More Information

Bailenson, Jeremy (2021). [Nonverbal Overload: A Theoretical Argument for the Causes of Zoom Fatigue](https://tmb.apaopen.org/pub/nonverbal-overload/release/2). *Technology, Mind, and Behavior*, 2(1).

(<https://tmb.apaopen.org/pub/nonverbal-overload/release/2>).

## 35 One-To-Ones

### *How to have good conversations*

*“The ability to hold a good conversation  
has almost become a lost art form.”*

*Unknown*

Having good one-to-one conversations (OTOs) with our colleagues is an important part of building and maintaining effective working relationships. It’s an opportunity for us to become aware of any issues that could interfere with work and any emerging problems that could grow to be significant. Also, it’s an opportunity to plan and agree ways of working. Although, our OTOs may normally focus on work performance-related matters, it’s important not to neglect any personal and developmental topics.



We should ensure there is a clear purpose to the OTO, which may include meeting some of these objectives:

- 1) Create an opportunity for open and honest, two-way communication
- 2) Care and support staff with work tasks, challenges, relationships, and possibly any home-life issues
- 3) Offer colleagues some control and influence over their work and allow them to be ‘part of the solution’
- 4) Appreciate colleagues’ contributions, frequently saying ‘thank you’ for their inputs
- 5) Explore colleagues’ opportunities for learning, personal growth, and career development

Also, we should hold the OTO in a ‘positive’ environment, which should include these healthy behaviours:

- 1) Spend most of the time on the individual, not just focused on tasks, projects and business performance
- 2) Allow colleagues to raise topics for discussion, rather than covering our own agenda items
- 3) Both parties should respect their openness and honesty, and hold confidences to maintain trust
- 4) Choose a conducive environment, one that is private and without the possibility of being disturbed
- 5) Schedule the OTO suitably so enough time is allocated, people come relaxed, and it won’t be rushed

We should use these *four* essential coaching skills to make the most of our OTO conversations:

- 1) **Contracting.** We should agree the nature and purpose of the OTO. People can come with different, and possibly undeclared, expectations, preoccupations, and willingness to share. Failing to agree how the OTO works could seriously undermine its effectiveness and the working relationship. It is important to avoid making any assumptions. If we don't know, or suspect something's wrong, we should always ask.
- 2) **Structuring.** We should give structure and focus to our OTO to increase the likelihood of a positive outcome. (See Chapter 36 Coaching for more about this skill.)
- 3) **Listening & hearing.** We should listen with the aim of hearing what is actually said (and not said) and gaining an understanding, rather than just listening ready to respond. (See Chapter 37 Listening for more about this skill.)
- 4) **Questioning.** We should ask insightful questions that take the conversation forward rather than disguised statements that can usually be answered with a *yes* or *no*. (See Chapter 38 Questioning for more about this skill.)

To have good OTO conversations with colleagues we should ensure there is a clear purpose to the OTO and it is held in a 'positive' environment. Also, we should use our coaching skills to make the most this opportunity.

### **More Information**

App, Judy (2019). *The Art of Communication: How to be Authentic, Lead Others and Create Strong Connections*.

## 36 Coaching

### *How to have structured conversations*

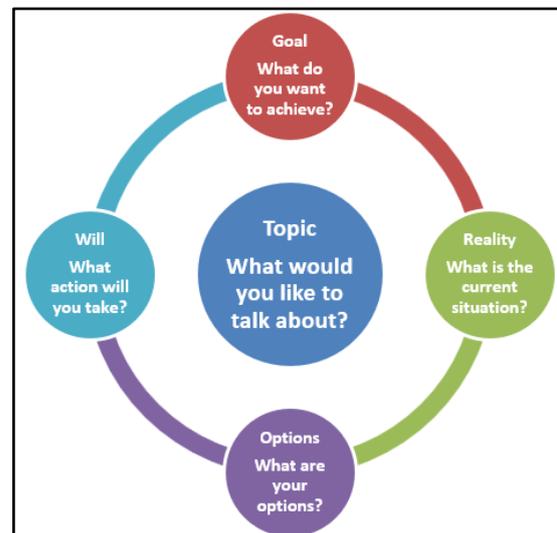
*“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself.  
When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.”  
Jack Welch*

The **T-GROW** model gives focus and structure to conversations to make them more purposeful and to result in positive outcomes<sup>19</sup>. It guides us in selecting the right type of question at the most appropriate stage of the conversation. Although T-GROW is described as a sequence of questioning stages, in reality we will often find ourselves moving around these stages as required by the needs of the conversation.

The T-GROW sequence of questioning is shown in the diagram and comprises five stages:

- 1) Agree the topic for this conversation
- 2) Ask what they want from this conversation
- 3) Understand fully the current situation
- 4) Explore a range of possible options and agree one
- 5) Agree what you (both) will do as a result of this conversation, i.e. develop an action plan

Note that this sequence may require iteration or another goal may be identified as a result of the action plan which may be the subject of a further conversation.



Using the T-GROW model can help us to guide our conversation to ensure it is focused and structured. Each stage of the T-GROW model is summarised below:

- 1) **Topic.** We should agree the topic the person wants to talk about in this particular conversation.
- 2) **Goal.** From that broad topic, we should ask the person to be really clear about what they want from this conversation, e.g. ‘*What’s the specific outcome you want today? How will we know we have succeeded?*’
- 3) **Reality.** We should ask the person to explain the key facts until the current situation is fully known and understood, e.g. ‘*What facts do we need to be aware of? What else is relevant? Who else is involved?*’

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<sup>19</sup> Chapter is based on an extract from *The Financial Times Guide to Business Coaching* (Chapter 5) by Anne Scouler (2011).

- 4) **Options.** We should explore what potential options are available and then narrow them down by evaluating the upsides and downsides of each, e.g. *'What if ...? What else? Which options seems best?'*
- 5) **Will.** We should ask what they (and you) will do as a result of this conversation and check their motivation to do it, e.g. *'What will you do? How? When? What might get in the way? What support do you need to pursue this, and where can you get it from? How committed are you to actually doing this?'*

We can have structured conversations with positive outcomes by using the T-GROW model to guide our conversations and prompt us to ask the appropriate questions that ensures the conversation progresses productively.

### Some T-GROW Questions

Here are some more typical questions for each stage of the T-GROW model:

#### **Topic**

- What is your reason for this conversation?
- What would you like to talk about?
- What else?

#### **Goal**

- What would you like to achieve from this conversation?
- What would you like to change as a result of this conversation?
- What would make you feel this time has been well spent?

#### **Reality**

- What is the background to and the current state of this goal?
- What is working well (and not so well) for you right now?
- What could get in the way of you achieving your goal?

#### **Options**

- What are your possible options?
- What have you already considered doing?
- What are the pros and cons of your options?

#### **Will**

- Which options do you prefer?
- What actions will you now take?
- When are you going to start these actions?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how committed are you to taking these actions?

### More Information

Whitmore, John (2015). *Coaching for Performance: GROWing Human Potential and Purpose.*

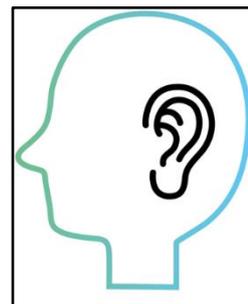
## 37 Listening

### *How to be a good listener*

*“When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know.  
But if you listen, you may learn something new.”*

*Dalai Lama*

Improving our verbal communication makes us more creative, innovative, and efficient<sup>20</sup>. It also enhances our wellbeing. Listening to others better is a vital part of good communication. Good listening isn't taught or modelled very often, so it's easy not to realise how poor we are at it. Sadly, the regular bombardment of messages we receive via our devices makes true listening more challenging.



There are some common types of behaviour we can adopt when listening. Awareness of these behaviour types is half the battle to improving our listening skills. We can notice when we've adopted a type and return our focus on to the other person. Here are some types of behaviour we often adopt when listening:

- **Juggler.** We mentally juggle our thoughts as we try to listen, and get distracted with our own agenda.
- **Hurry-Upper.** We are impatient and want to hurry people on to get to the point of what they are saying.
- **Rehearser.** We rehearse what we are going to say next, waiting to jump in with our own story.
- **Fixer.** We try to fix someone's problem, and start thinking about possible solutions for the person.
- **Interrupter.** We look for opportunities to interrupt the person with our own agenda, story or solution.
- **Pretender.** We go into pretend-mode, and try to look as if we are interested when really we're not.

And as much as we try to hide the above types of listening, we will inevitably give off non-verbal cues that will be picked up by the person we are listening to. And what will they feel when this happens? Not really listened to at all. The loss of our attention will make them feel unimportant to us. Most of the time, people tell us something in order simply to be heard, not to have their problems solved. Note that interrupting others can be received as a brutal verbal assault which leaves a person feeling painfully wounded.

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<sup>20</sup> Chapter is based on an extract from *Soulfulness: Deepening the Mindful Life (Chapter 6)* by Brian Draper (2016).

Quality listening is important. So, let's consider *three levels of listening* at which we can 'tune in' to other people:

- 1) **Conversational listening**, which oils the wheels of a relationship but may not go down too deep.
- 2) **Active listening**, when we listen specifically to get information or to tune in more intentionally. Active listening requires that we tune out other 'noises' and distractions and focus harder, more attentively.
- 3) **Deep listening**, when we shut out everything else and give a person our total focused attention. It's as if there's no one but us and that person in the whole world. And we don't just listen actively, we listen beyond words – noticing tone, facial expressions, body language, etc. This deepest form of listening takes great effort and skill, so it's often only used when appropriate, for short periods of time.

To be a good listener we need to become aware of the behaviours we often adopt when listening and should practice 'tuning in' to other people through '*active listening*'.

### **More Information**

Kline, Nancy (1999). *Time to Think: Listening to Ignite the Human Mind*.

## 38 Questioning

### *How to ask good questions*

*“Successful people ask better questions,  
and as a result, they get better answers.”*

*Tony Robbins*

Asking effective questions takes conversations forward and elicits valuable information<sup>21</sup>. Often these powerful questions are simple, short, and **open** (i.e. beginning with *what, where, when, and how*). Closed questions, by contrast, may be disguised statements that can normally be answered *yes* or *no*. These types of questions don't normally advance conversations forward or reveal much.



Also, being **non-directive** (i.e. asking a person about what they should do) is much more effective than being directive (i.e. telling a person what they should do). This is because most people don't like being told what to do. Although they may ask for advice, they will often ignore it. A person tends to get more excited by the plans they've worked through for themselves and therefore be more likely to action them. Additionally, if we tell a person what to do, they will return to us for more advice which is time consuming. If, however, we ask a person about their thoughts and ideas on a subject, over time they will develop a capability to solve their own problems, which frees up our time.

Telling or asking closed questions causes people not to think deeply. Asking open questions causes them to think for themselves. Different types of open question can produce different desired results:

- **Focus attention:** Questions that bring a person back to the task in hand, if they have strayed off topic, and gets to the point, e.g. *'What do you want from this conversation? What would success look like?'*
- **Follow interest:** Questions that follow a person's interest and not your interest, e.g. *'What would you like to discuss? Can you tell me some more about that? What else can you tell me?'*
- **Raise awareness:** Questions that help a person discover something new through raising their awareness, often by using something they have said and encouraging them to think deeper, e.g. *'What did you mean by ...? How did others react when ...? What did you see/hear that made you think ...?'*

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<sup>21</sup> Chapter is based on an extract from *The Financial Times Guide to Business Coaching (Chapter 5)* by Anne Scouler (2011).

- **Generate responsibility:** Questions that generate responsibility within a person, e.g. *'What have you learned from our conversation? What could you do? What will you do as a result of our conversation?'*
- **Create insight:** Questions that challenge an assumption which limits a person's thinking or actions, and replaces it with a better assumption to help them think afresh and gain insight, e.g. *'If you were to ... how would you do it? If you knew that ... how would you think about it? If you did that ... what would happen?'*

By using the most appropriate type of open question during a conversation we can have a significant impact on how the conversation progresses, what we both gain from it, and the quality and sustainability of the outcome or actions resulting from it.

### More Information

Wood Brooks, Alison & John, Leslie (2018). [\*The Surprising Power of Questions: It Goes Far Beyond Exchanging Information.\*](#) Harvard Business Review, May-June.

(<https://www.dropbox.com/s/anqtl4ka0c384vc/The%20Surprising%20Power%20of%20Questions.pdf?dl=0>).

## 39 Feeding Back

### *How to give good feedback*

*“Giving honest and well-intended feedback is often confused with being mean. It's not mean; it's nice.”*

*Robert Kiyosaki*

The aim of giving feedback should be to have a positive impact on the person receiving it, to help them improve their situation or performance. It should never be about making the giver of feedback feel better. Therefore, before giving feedback, it's important for the giver to explore their motives and reasons for giving it. The bigger the challenge the person giving feedback intends to make, the more important it is for them to do this. (The 'I know I'm ready to give feedback when ...' Checklist at the end of this chapter provides a helpful self-check.)



Here is some useful guidance on **giving feedback**:

- **Motivation:** Be clear and honest about why you are giving the feedback. For example, “I want to help you improve”, “I have high standards which you can meet”, and “I know you can learn from this”.
- **Personal:** Give feedback that is only from you and your own direct experience. Do not use other people's comments or allow them to influence your opinion.
- **Positive:** Give more positive feedback than negative feedback so as not to demoralise someone and prevent them from listening. First say what is going well, and then say what there could be more of.
- **Specific:** Give clear and objective feedback. Avoid vague, subjective, and general statements. State the facts, relevant behaviours, and give real examples. Never get personal or seek to apportion blame.
- **Timely:** Give feedback as soon after the event as possible. If the situation is emotionally-charged then it's best to wait for the emotions to cool down first so as to avoid worsening the situation.
- **Regular:** Give informal and simple feedback on a regular basis, depending on the situation. This ensures that anything said during formal feedback sessions is expected and doesn't surprise someone.
- **Private:** Give feedback in a private safe place, where you won't be interrupted or overheard, so as to avoid embarrassing someone. An exception can be when you want to praise someone publicly.

It is often difficult for a person to receive feedback, but it's something they need to be willing to accept if they are to grow in their career and in life. Here is some useful guidance on **receiving feedback**:

- **Receive it:** Feedback can help you grow in your career and as a person if you learn from it. This only happens if you are willing to hear it and be open to what others say about your performance.
- **Act upon it:** Feedback can help you grow if you make it a focus for improvement. Changing your behaviour due to feedback shows a proactive attitude towards work which is appreciated by managers.
- **Don't take it personally:** Feedback (if given correctly) is not meant as a personal attack. Someone has taken the time, effort, and courage to give it because they care enough about you to want you to grow.

Note that it is always important that feedback is given within a relationship of acceptance and respect.

### **The 'I know I'm ready to give feedback when ...' Checklist**

This checklist helps someone examine their motives and reasons for giving feedback. If they can honestly agree with all these statements, they know they are ready to give the feedback.

- I'm ready to sit next to the person rather than across from them
- I'm willing to put the problem in front of us rather than between us
- I'm ready to listen, ask questions, and accept that I may not fully understand the issue
- I want to acknowledge what they do well instead of picking apart their mistakes
- I recognise their strengths and how they can use them to address their challenges
- I can hold them accountable without shaming or blaming them
- I'm willing to own my part
- I can genuinely thank them for their efforts rather than criticise them for their failings
- I can talk about how resolving these challenges will lead to their growth and opportunity
- I can model the vulnerability and openness that I expect to see from them

This checklist is based on the one given in Brené Brown's book 'Daring Greatly'. The original version of the checklist can be found at: <https://brenebrown.com/downloads/>.

### **More Information**

Adam Grant's 'WorkLife' podcast episode '[How to Love Criticism](#)'

([https://www.ted.com/talks/worklife\\_with\\_adam\\_grant\\_how\\_to\\_love\\_criticism?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/worklife_with_adam_grant_how_to_love_criticism?language=en)).

[6 Mistakes to Avoid When Giving & Receiving Feedback](#) by the Startup Institute (<https://www.startupinstitute.com/blog/6-mistakes-to-avoid-when-giving-and-receiving-feedback>).





## Further Resources

Here is some recommended further reading not referenced in the main text:

Bell, Rob (2016). *How to Be Here: A Guide to Creating a Life Worth Living*.

Dolan, Paul (2014). *Happiness by Design: Finding Pleasure and Purpose in Everyday Life*.

Harris, Dan (2014). *10% Happier*.

Harris, Russ (2008). *The Happiness Trap*.

King, Vanessa (2016). *10 Keys to Happier Living: A Practical Handbook for Happiness*.

Lemon, Averil & McMahon, Gladeana (2009). *Positive Psychology for Dummies*.

Maurer, Robert (2014). *One Small Step Can Change Your Life: The Kaizen Way*.

Purdie, Jeni (2012). *Life Coaching for Dummies*.

Rubin, Gretchin (2011). *The Happiness Project*.

Wiking, Meik (2017). *The Key to Happiness: How to Find Purpose by Unlocking the Secrets of the World's Happiest People*.

Plus, some useful Apps:

**Action for Happiness:** Based on the themes and actions from their popular monthly calendars, it aims to give users a couple of friendly "nudges" each day.

(<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/smartphone-app>)

**Healthy Minds:** Uses neuroscience, contemplative traditions, and skill-based learning methods to help you develop the skills for a healthy mind.

(<https://hminnovations.org/meditation-app>)

**Woebot:** Helps you develop skills to challenge your thinking and build healthy habits.

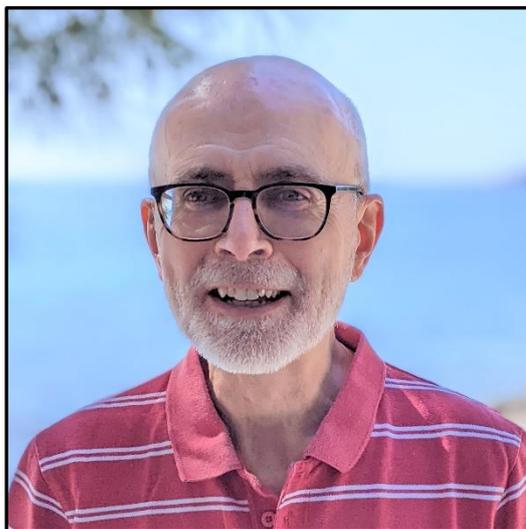
(<https://woebothealth.com>)



## About the Author

**PAUL HOLLYWELL** has extensive experience as a qualified performance and development coach, consultant, and business manager.

He has a passion to help people overcome obstacles and develop the skills and confidence needed to live life to its full potential. “As someone who has tried to work things out for myself and being unwilling to accept help, I learned the hard way how to think differently; and thinking differently has had a transformative effect on my life. Coaching provides a safe space to think while being guided, supported and encouraged through to successful plans, actions and outcomes.”



Paul is also a Chartered Engineer with 40 years of professional experience. For 30 years he has been a consultant, helping people and teams in a range of industries, working at all organisational levels to solve problems related to safety, system complexity, and human behaviour. For over 10 years Paul managed a large team of consultants. He has authored numerous technical papers and articles, spoken at conferences, and led training courses and workshops. For several years, Paul was also an Honorary Lecturer in the Department of Psychology UCL on their post-graduate Ergonomics course.

Paul is married to Sue, has two adult daughters, and lives in Horsham, West Sussex.

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## Index of Approaches & Techniques

Here is an index of approaches and techniques mentioned in this book. including those from positive psychology and neuroscience.

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GROW Model	<b><i>Chapter 36</i></b>
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SMART Goals	<b><i>Chapter 8</i></b>
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