

Sophie Rowan

brilliant

**Career
Coach**

How to find and follow
your dream career

Praise for *Brilliant Career Coach*

‘*Brilliant Career Coach*, with its accessible, friendly and honest style, along with a practical, easy to follow framework, had me engaged in just a few pages. Sophie has a genuine desire to help people reach their greatest career potential. It’s what she’s been doing for the last 15 years. In essence, it is like having your own personal career coach sitting by your side, asking all the right questions that really make you think differently. And the question I would have for any potential reader is: Why not read this book? Don’t you want to give yourself the chance to be the best you can?’

Caroline Casey, founder, Kanchi (www.kanchi.org)

‘Once again Sophie has managed to skilfully distil her psychological insight and wisdom into a very readable, relevant and practical coaching guide for career transformation. Readers at all stages of their career journey will surely find positive pointers for success here!’

Johanna Fullerton, Seven, Psychology at Work

‘I was so impressed by Sophie’s first book I ordered huge numbers to give out to clients. *Brilliant Career Coach* makes me just as evangelical. Everyone at any stage of their career should read it. Very readable, accessible and wise advice and guidance from someone who knows her subject inside out. Impressive.’

Barry Phillips, CEO, Legal-Island (twice winner of ‘Best Place to Work’, Irish News)

‘This book will not change your life. It’s the person holding it that will. Sophie Rowan has been brilliant in committing her time and energy to shape this adventure. Now it’s time for you to use her wisdom to be brilliant in shaping your own journey of a lifetime. Good luck.’

Dr Peter Hawkins, author and Director, Windmills



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career coach

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To my son, Michael Fergus, and his grandparents, Kathleen and Fergus Rowan, and Michael and Margaret Kennedy

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About the author



Sophie Rowan has worked with hundreds of individuals and companies over the past 15 years on making work a better place to be. An occupational psychologist by training, she is passionate about helping her clients make confident career decisions. Her ‘coaching for satisfaction and success’ programme helps people set and achieve clear and rewarding goals. She is author of *Happy at Work: Ten Steps to Ultimate Job Satisfaction* (2007, Prentice Hall), which has been translated into three languages.

Sophie and fellow psychologist John Deely run Pinpoint (www.pinpoint.ie), a niche consultancy that helps companies and individuals make the most of their talents.

Sophie lives in Dublin with her husband Alan and son Michael.

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Introduction

It is never too late to be what you might have been.

George Eliot

Do you want to be both successful and satisfied in your work? Do you want your career to be better than it is now? Do you want to thrive rather than simply survive at work?

If the answer to any of those is a resounding ‘Yes!’ then you are not alone: three out of five people would choose a different career if they were starting out again¹ and, rather alarmingly, only 20 per cent of people describe themselves as happy in their jobs².

I help people transform their careers. And whether I’m working with people who are desperately unhappy and clearly in the wrong job or helping high-potential individuals achieve their goals, the ingredients for a successful and satisfactory career, and the means for achieving it, are the same.

The key to a brilliant career – which is available to everyone – is a three-stage process:

- Choose well – choosing the right job, career, employer, environment and colleagues creates the foundation for a flourishing and fulfilling career.
- Manage well – how you manage yourself, your work and your relationships determines not only your success but also your satisfaction.

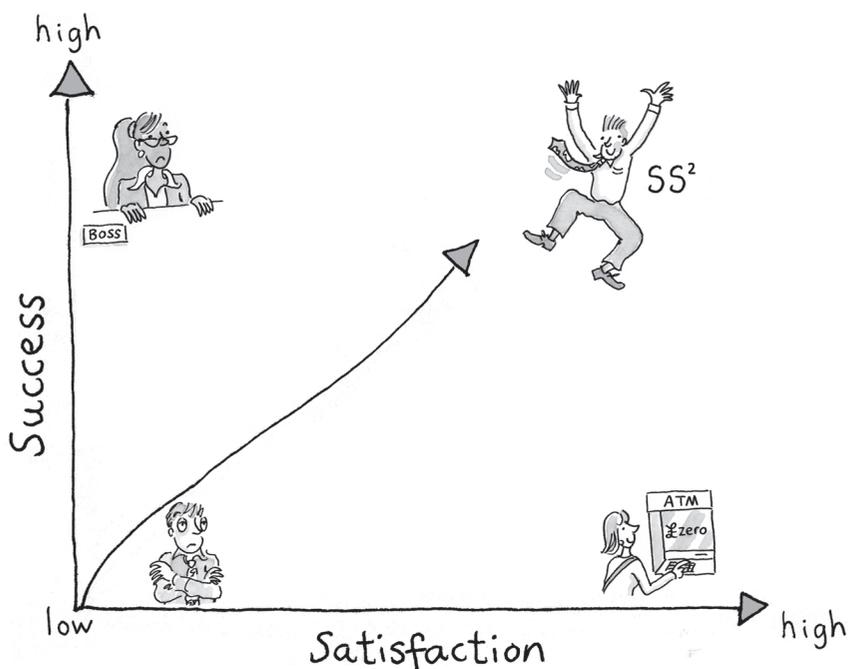
¹ *Dream Job or Career Nightmare?* A research report by OPP, July 2007

² Rath and Harter (2010). *Gallup Wellbeing Research Case Study*

- Work hard – discipline and perseverance are key to any successful career transformation and the ongoing achievement of your goals.

Brilliant Career Coach takes you by the hand and leads you on a step-by-step self-coaching programme through this process, while teaching you the smarter skill set and mindset essential to today's workplace.

The double S squared (SS^2) philosophy – the combination of success and satisfaction – is the cornerstone of *Brilliant Career Coach*. And once you follow the step-by-step coaching programme, a career full of success and satisfaction awaits.



I meet lots of people who are great at being ‘successful’ in terms of position or money, but they remain deeply unfulfilled by what they do. Conversely, I also meet many people who love what they do but can’t ever seem to quite reach the level of success they aspire to.

Both types often believe this is the deal – fulfilment without the trappings of success, or material success at the cost of your sense of satisfaction. Well that’s simply not true! Of course you can have it all – and *Brilliant Career Coach* will show you how.

All of the advice contained in *Brilliant Career Coach* is based on research from the fields of positive psychology, coaching psychology and human resources. I give you this advice with confidence and assurance because not only does the research tell me that these strategies work, but also I see these strategies in action through the work I do with my clients *every day*. There are lots of different exercises throughout *Brilliant Career Coach*. I would urge you to complete all of them even if you can't initially see the benefit. Some of your greatest learning happens when you least expect it.

What is coaching?

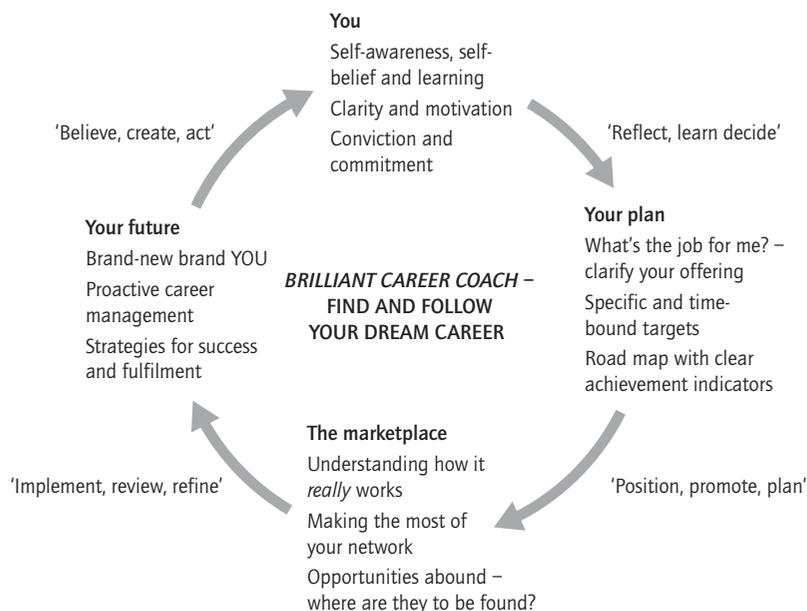
Psychologists and coaching experts Grant and Cavanagh have defined coaching as 'a goal-directed process that results in changes that help enhance performance and learning', and crucially, 'coaching moves people from awareness to responsibility and into commitment, action and results'. A recent CIPD study indicated that 90 per cent of companies reported that coaching was taking place in their organisations. Why? Because, quite simply, it works!

If coaching is about change, then *Brilliant Career Coach* is about transformation. There are two transformations that will take place in the adventure you are about to embark upon. The first is *you*. The second is *your career*.

It's time to get going, but before you do, here's a whistle-stop tour of what *Brilliant Career Coach* has in store for you.

Part 1, which encompasses Chapters 1, 2 and 3, is all about *you* and gets you ready for that all-important question: '*What do you want to do with your life?*'. The book is divided into four parts, or 'pillars', as illustrated in the figure overleaf.

The first and most important step in transforming your career is to articulate clearly where you are now, and to determine where you'd like to be. For some of you, trapped in the wrong career, a totally new direction may be the right answer, while those of you who are happy with your career choice may be unhappy with the way it is going, or the way you handle certain aspects of it. Many of you may not even know what's wrong with your career but just know it could and should be better.



The four pillars of finding your dream job and pursuing your ideal career

Whatever your situation, *Brilliant Career Coach* is here to coax, guide and support you along the way. It will also challenge you, where necessary. In particular, we will work hard to create your career story, which is a key part of your career transformation armoury, and something you will use throughout the book.

Think of Part 1 as your *destination decider* – in it you'll find the answer to a number of key questions:

- What do you want to do?
- What are you best suited to?
- What defines success for you?
- Which job or career will make you happiest?
- What kind of company should you be working for?
- What can you do – here and now – to start growing your career success and satisfaction?

Having answered these questions, and having decided where it is you're going, you're ready to get going.

Part 2 is your *working itinerary*, which covers your plan. This has been devised to get you thinking about, and preparing for, how you're going to get where you want to be. Chapters 4 and 5 guide you through the maze of committing to your career decision and then mapping out your route. A goal-setting exercise moves you to the next stage of your career transformation.

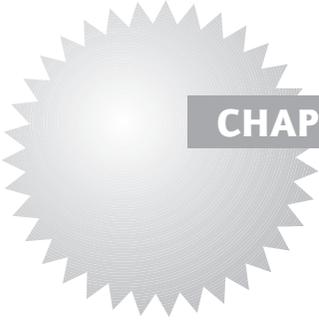
Chapters 6 and 7 make up Part 3 and the goal here is to get you fighting fit and ready for action. These chapters are the *maps and guidebooks* to help you along the journey to your transformed career. How you sell and promote yourself is key to your success so we'll look at how to formally create a compelling and convincing career narrative, whatever your background. CV and interview preparation are also covered in this section, as is making the most of the various networking opportunities.

In Part 4 we *focus on the future*, looking at longer-term ways of making and keeping your career the best it can be. By now, you will have arrived at your desired destination, so what do you need to know and do to keep things on track? Understanding the importance of career-enhancing conversations and learning how to have the best ones is key to your ongoing success and satisfaction. You'll also learn how being more optimistic is good for your career, as well as a whole host of career management techniques to keep your work a happy and healthy place to be.

Chapter 10 completes your career transformation journey with stories from a number of world-class careers experts. Nine renowned contributors have each written a short piece focusing on the single most important message they have for you. These nuggets of wisdom add another layer of knowledge and assurance to fuel your career efforts. This chapter also includes first-hand experience of eight diverse case studies, each outlining their top tips for career success and satisfaction. As well as comprising invaluable advice, these stories make for fascinating reading about people who are doing, and have done, what you want to do.

Brilliant Career Coach will take you on a career-changing, life-enhancing journey towards a thriving and fulfilling future.

Go well and enjoy the adventure.



CHAPTER 3

Here is the secret of your success

'Knowing yourself is the beginning of
all wisdom'

Aristotle, Greek philosopher

This chapter brings us to the end of Part 1 of *Brilliant Career Coach* – the part that focuses on *you*. So far, you have completed a range of exercises designed to raise your self-awareness and focus clearly on the brilliant career that lies ahead for you.

In Chapters 1 and 2, the emphasis was on finding the right career and making sure there was a strong fit between you and your career choice. But many of you reading *Brilliant Career Coach* may not want to change career. You may be perfectly happy with what you're doing, but you want to improve how you do it, or learn to enjoy it more. And that's what Chapter 3 is about – getting more from your day-to-day work. The focus is on success; more specifically, your vision of success and how you can achieve it.

As well as a full exploration of what defines success for you, we'll look at why a biannual career MOT is great for your career happiness and success. Looking at whether a career change is the right answer for you is also part of this discussion, so if you're not sure if now is the right time for change, read on. And for some immediate intervention on growing your job satisfaction, there's the 'Happiness Challenge', which is all about developing practical and positive work habits.

We'll use a similar approach to Chapter 2. After all, all career transformations, radical or subtle, are based on the same set of principles: enhanced self-awareness and thinking, leading to enhanced decisions and actions.

What does success mean for you?

When I asked a random sample of clients and associates what success meant to them, their responses were many and varied:



The secret of your success

Have you ever thought of what success looks like for you? What does it feel like for you? And how do you achieve it? Success is a purely personal and subjective notion and one that can be hard to pin down or define. But pin it down you must, as it provides for you the purpose of your career choices, decisions and endeavours.

Success is often tied to an accomplishment or an achievement of some kind. But really it's much bigger and broader than that – as evidenced by the breadth of the feedback shown above. The way I like to think about it, and the way that my clients engage most readily with the concept of

success, is by thinking about a time when we have exceeded expectations (our own or other people's). For some, success is tied to money, status or power; for others, it's linked to the expression of creativity or to altruism; and for others still, it's all about relationships.

In this chapter, we want to make sure that you are pursuing the right career goals for you. The exercises you have completed in Chapters 1 and 2 will contribute to the overall picture of your preferences and priorities. And the exercises that you complete in this section will clarify the final piece of the self-awareness jigsaw.

After that, it's all systems go and you can start planning your brilliant career with confidence.



brilliant example

High-flying in the wrong direction

Simon, a coaching client, was an accomplished business analyst with a strong track record of success and achievement in his field. He was promoted regularly and had set himself a clear 5-year plan to get to the top of his organisation. His level and pace of progression were on track; however, when he came to see me, he had been feeling discouraged and underfulfilled.

When we explored what had happened over that time period and what had immediately preceded it, two events stood out. The first was a change of boss 6 months previously. On the face of it they got on fine, but he had reservations about his new boss's values and his way of managing more junior members of staff, which did not sit well with Simon. Coupled with that, he found that, as he got nearer the top spot, the focus of his role became more about management than about using his technical skills.

When we looked at how this direction suited his overall sense of career purpose, and his picture of what success meant to him, it became clear where his unhappiness stemmed from – a mismatch between his current reality and his aspirations. In answering the 'career purpose' questions listed on page 54, we discovered that his core purpose and the driver of his vision of success had two components: first, the quality of his working relationships was a clear indicator of success (this had been ►

compromised by his new boss); and secondly, he wanted to be seen as an outstanding technical expert (which had been diluted by his ever-growing management remit).

It took only a few sessions to work out how to steer his ship back on course, while maintaining his overall ambition of rising to the top. The solution? Revert his efforts back into a senior technical role and pursue promotion in that direction (a 3-year plan). As head of a core technical function, he could build a tightly knit, well-supported and highly regarded team of specialists around him, which he could start now and within 3 years have the support of strong relationships to sustain his career efforts.

Is your mental image of your career picture perfect?

The following exercise is invaluable for exploring what type of work environment most appeals to you, as well as how and where you see yourself in your dream career. In other words, it captures exactly what success means to you and why, and, crucially, what success looks like. And if you start to develop a clear picture of this now, it gives you something to work towards. It's a creative exercise which involves drawing. So, for example, one person will draw an office setting with lots of people, while someone else will draw themselves boarding a plane or working outdoors, and some of you may represent a specific scene in your career – standing up to a tough boss, giving a company presentation or winning an award at an industry event – or finding contentment in the everyday of what you do, being yourself at work.

Whatever you create holds important information about what success means to *you*.



brilliant exercise

It's really easy to do – all you have to do is raid your child's/niece's/nephew's art box to include some or all of the following: colourful paper, paper glue, scissors, colouring pens/pencils/stencils/stickers/glitter/play dough, paper clips, and any other bits and pieces you can think of. Then, simply spend half an hour creating a masterpiece that represents your career dreams and aspirations.

Note that if you don't see yourself as the creative type, it may take a few minutes to immerse yourself fully in this exercise. Don't throw the towel in – persevere. It's well

worth it. And while the exercise on its own won't solve all your career dilemmas, I guarantee it will help you make a breakthrough regarding something important, as it did for me (see below). Your best learning can take place doing a task you're not used to.

I did the exercise above many years ago when I moved back to Dublin from London in my late 20s. I had left a great job as head of career development at Career Psychology Ltd, a company I loved, to relocate to my home town. Not long after I moved back, while I was enjoying a few weeks off to think about my next move, I was invited on a leadership and personal development course with a well-known American coach. I jumped at the chance to attend. I was at a critical point in my career and was looking forward to hearing what this expert had to say.

My options were either to continue my career in an organisational setting where the job opportunities were plentiful, or to embark on a much less predictable journey and join my friend John Deely at Pinpoint – a company specialising in career coaching – which he had just founded.

And so I found myself in a room with lots of high-flyers from big companies. We started the day with this creativity exercise. So with six of us sitting around each table, packed with every imaginable kind of artistic prop, we were asked to create our dream job on paper, using the various colourful and sticky materials available to us. There was very little instruction, so it was really up to us to decide how we wanted to do this. Half an hour later, I had glued a large red love heart that took over most of the page. This was accompanied by a blue sunny sky and a small group of people. I had also included a very badly drawn acrobat to represent flexibility. One of the course facilitators was doing a tour of our table and stopped at mine and said, 'Ah, you're looking for love!?' 'Yes', I replied, 'a job I love'. And, I realised, one that allowed me to be flexible (I have never enjoyed the 9-to-5 drill) and to work with a small group of talented people. The picture I created allowed me to fully articulate these very important things I wanted in my career and clearly led me towards the right career choice.

When I looked around at all the other offerings, I saw many different pictures – lots of ladders with people hovering precariously at the top! Many high buildings with a matchstick person sitting at a desk in the corner office on the top floor, and various other indicators of corporate success made with coloured paper and glue. Even though I had been ruminating for a few weeks about my next move, my choice was instantly clarified for me through this exercise. And while I already had a sense of what was important to me – that which defined ‘success’ for me – the visual representation provided the breakthrough I needed to commit to action.

I rang John straight after the course to arrange our next meeting and officially joined him on our fledging Pinpoint adventure. We recently celebrated our 10-year anniversary. It has been a fantastic decade, and of course we have hit a few road bumps along the way, but it has unquestionably been the best career choice for both of us.

Have a go and see what the creativity exercise on page 50 can add to your sense of clarity and forward momentum. As well as highlighting what’s important to you in your next career move, it can act as a timely reminder of what you already have, sometimes without realising and appreciating it. The following fable communicates this important message succinctly and well.

Fishing for your future

A tourist boat docked in a tiny picturesque village in Mexico. The harbour was a hive of activity with fishermen taking in their catch from their day on the open sea. One of the tourists, an American, got chatting to a local fisherman and complimented him on the quality of his fish. He asked him how long it took him to catch them.

‘Not very long,’ answered the fisherman.

‘But then, why didn’t you stay out longer and catch more?’ asked the tourist.

The fisherman explained that his small catch was sufficient to meet his needs and those of his family.

The tourist asked, 'But what do you do with the rest of your time?'

'I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children and take a siesta with my wife. In the evenings, I go into the village to see my friends, have a few drinks, play the guitar and sing a few songs ... I have a full life.'

The tourist interrupted: 'I have an MBA from Harvard and I can help you! You should start by fishing longer every day. You can then sell the extra fish you catch. With the extra revenue, you can buy a bigger boat.'

'And after that?' said the fisherman.

'With the extra money the larger boat will bring, you can buy a second one and a third one and so on until you have an entire fleet of trawlers. Instead of selling your fish to a middle man, you can then negotiate directly with the processing plants and maybe even open your own plant. You can then leave this little village and move to Mexico City, Los Angeles, or even New York City! From there you can direct your new global enterprise, importing and exporting fish and other produce.'

'How long would that take?' asked the fisherman.

'Twenty, perhaps 25 years,' replied the tourist.

'And after that?' the fisherman asked.

'Afterwards? That's when it gets really interesting,' answered the American, laughing. 'When your business gets really big, you can start selling stocks and make millions!'

'Millions? Really? And what then?'

'After that you'll be able to retire, live in a tiny village near the coast, sleep late, play with your children, catch a few fish, take a siesta with your wife and spend your evenings drinking and enjoying your friends.'

Know where you're going in life ... you may already be there.

Know what's important to you in life, you may already have it.



brilliant questions

Career purpose

- Is your career vision clear (or becoming clearer)?
 - What is your career purpose?
 - What defines success and satisfaction for you?
 - Are your current career efforts leading you in the right direction?
-

Career health check

As we discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, self-awareness is the cornerstone of any good career decision. It is also the cornerstone of your well-being at work. Research has shown that executives and managers with a high level of self-awareness make more satisfying career choices and experience greater career success.

So if you're already in the right job or the right company, what should you do to carry out regular career maintenance?



brilliant exercise

My colleague John Deely designed this brilliant one-page exercise to help you keep an eye on your career health. Even if you're in the right job, it's good to be aware of what's going well for you so you can enjoy it more – and of course what's not going well so you can take steps to remedy it. The career health check focuses on your job satisfaction: how you're feeling about work; and your progress: how you're doing at work. These are the two key indicators of a healthy (or unhealthy) career.

Take the career health check

Every 6 months, take yourself out for a sandwich. Bring a pen and sheet of paper. Ask yourself the following questions:

Am I enjoying my role as much as I did 6 months ago?

If yes ...

Progress	What have I learned? How have I developed?
Satisfaction and strengths	What was the high point? What challenges did I overcome? What is my key talent in my job/role/organisation? What am I most admired for?
People	What relationships have I developed? Who have I learned from? Who have I inspired?

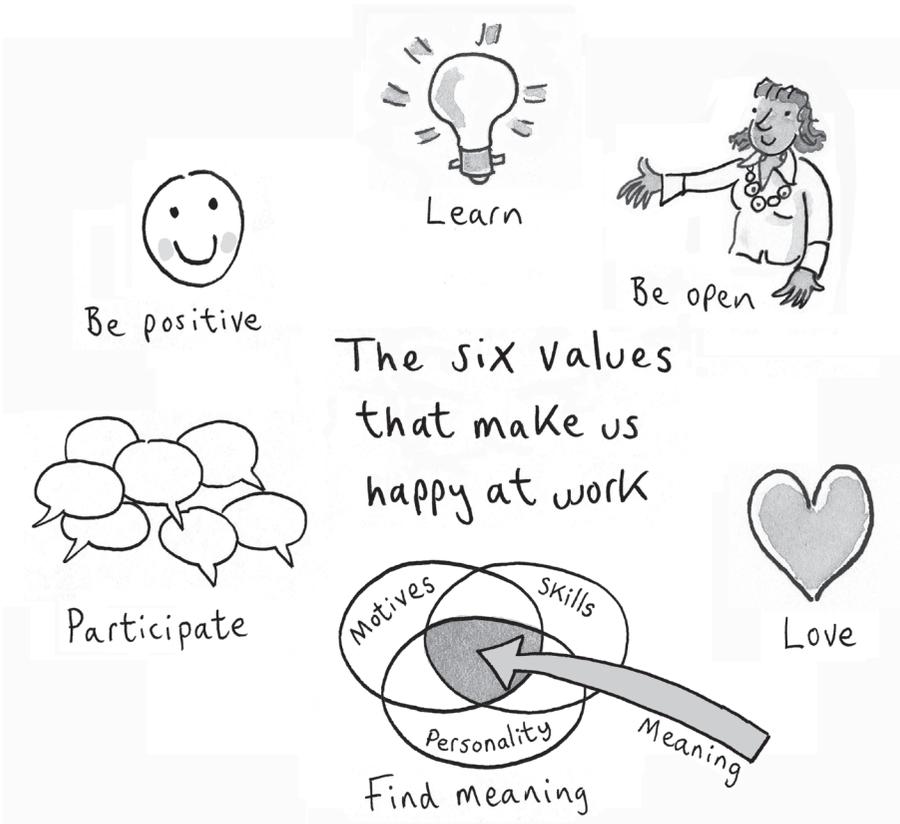
If no, why not?

Explore	Why not? Is it my role or some of the people I work with? Has something changed about my role or organisation in the last 6 months to affect my job satisfaction? What specifically am I <i>not</i> looking forward to in the next 6 months? Have I taken time off recently or enough time off in general?
Actions for me	What can I do about it? Is it fixable? How can I get back to doing what I love? How can I get back to doing what I'm good at? How can I work with people I admire and trust?
Engaging help	Who can I learn from? Who can or should I talk to about this? Is there something in my repertoire or skill set that I need to develop that will make a difference?

This simple exercise will keep you focused on what you love about your job and what you want from it. It also allows you to detect and diagnose ebbing satisfaction early so that you can act fast and prevent a minor issue becoming a major one.

Are you living the six values?

We looked at your motives in the previous chapter, and now we want to look at values, the things that create a sense of belonging for you in your work. The six values below¹ paint a picture of a truly joyful work environment and capture core values that resonate with most people. Are these values evident in your work, and do you contribute positively to them in your role? The presence of these values will boost your probability of success.



¹ Adapted from 'The Six Actions That Make Us Happy At Work' by Alexander Kjerulf (www.positivesharing.com).

Learning

Your career is a journey. Along the way it's really important for your motivation and career prospects that you are constantly learning, keeping up with new developments, gaining new skills and feeling like you are always improving and staying ahead of the crowd.

Openness

The best environment to work in is one where people can discuss their ideas and aspirations openly, where communication is honest and transparent, and where people are recognised for their contribution and receive feedback.

Love

I'm not talking about romantic love here (although we all know that it can happen at work). What I mean by love in this context is work love – creating an environment where people thrive because they love what they do. The way to create this environment is by finding the best people to do the job and then letting them get on with it.

Meaning

A continuation of the concept of 'fit' between a person and their job. Is your job simply a means of paying the bills, a way of passing the time? Or does it enhance you as a worker and as a person? The wider context is a connection between the employee and their organisation. Do you know how your job fits in with what the organisation is trying to achieve?

Participation

The majority of people prefer to work with people. Person for person, high-performing teams outperform lone workers by 30 per cent, and work relationships are a key driver of job satisfaction. This is because of the sharing, collaboration and support that are part of the traditional team ethos. Added to that, the best way to become better at what you do is by learning from others, and learning is key to satisfaction and success. See the example overleaf for a good demonstration of this.

Positivity

I want to focus on this point here because it's important for the exercise you'll do on page 61. Optimists are more successful, are emotionally healthier and live longer than pessimists. And they have higher levels of job satisfaction. Personally I think that everyone can benefit from coaching in this area. Why? Because in the face of adversity, we need to be resilient, positive and optimistic. Transforming your career takes will, skill and effort, but approaching this change with an optimistic mindset makes it more achievable and enjoyable.



Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you're right.

Henry Ford, American industrialist



brilliant example

You'll hear all about architect Angela Brady's career in Chapter 10, but to illustrate one of the points from the six values, here she talks about the importance of team and participation. She says, 'Having a good team in the office is important because we work well together and we do a better job when we share skills and responsibility.' Her staff are encouraged not to work more than 40 hours a week. Angela says, 'They all have a life outside the office and their own families too.'

Angela is heavily involved in promoting sustainable architecture in the public domain as well as increasing the representation of women in the profession. She is keen to get as many people as possible to participate in her causes, saying, 'In order to motivate and encourage participation on committees, where people are giving up a lot of their free time, you have to recognise and communicate the idea that together we can add strength to whatever we set out to achieve.'

Should I stay or should I go?

When something significant goes wrong in your work life, it has a disastrous effect on your well-being and sense of job satisfaction. But, like many things in life, when things are tough, that's the perfect time to learn the most about how to manage your career. So, before you go full

throttle for a new job or even a new career, you need to ask yourself two things.

General or specific?

First, is your dissatisfaction caused by a specific event (e.g. a poor working relationship) or a more general unease about the overall orientation of your career?

Flee or fix?

Secondly, can you fix the issue? Clearly, specific events are much more fixable than general events. If you can resist the urge to flee, however, it really is worth putting in the effort to fix whatever it is that is upsetting you. In Chapter 8, we troubleshoot a range of everyday issues and problems that can blight your work life. And there is step-by-step coaching in how to prevent, manage and rectify these situations by simply having direct and open conversations with others.

Many of my clients come to me having fled a specific problem (more often than not a relationship issue) only to find that the issue simply recurs in a new environment. My previous book, *Happy at Work* (2007, Prentice Hall), devotes an entire section to fixing common problems such as growing strong and supportive work relationships, being more assertive and optimistic, and managing your world of work more effectively.



If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading.

Lao Tzu, Chinese philosopher and founder of Taoism

How to manage your mind during this process

Tackling any aspect of your career development is a significant undertaking and you need to feel prepared for the challenge and ready to invest a substantial amount of energy in improving your situation. Think about what you have going on in your life at the moment. Are any other major life events current or imminent? Births, deaths, marriages, break-ups, health issues, house moves and so on. Implementing any career strategy takes a minimum of 3 months and often 6–12 months, so look at your year ahead and think about the timing. Is now the right time for you?

Note that the converse of this argument is also valid – there will always be ‘other stuff’ going on in your life, so if your career is constantly being pushed to the bottom of the list, there may be some avoidance going on. I’ll trust you to make the right judgement about your own situation.

The big picture

In boom times, people prioritise job satisfaction over job security. Opportunities abound, so job mobility increases accordingly. And the opposite is true in recessions – job security is of primary concern to us all. People stay in jobs because they feel lucky to have them. Liking your job is seen as a welcome bonus rather than the prerequisite it should be. Maybe you want to embark on a new direction but now simply isn’t the time.

When is a career change *not* the answer?

Are there opportunities staring you in the face that you’re not seeing?

Right job, wrong place

Some people are in the right job but in the wrong company or industry. If that’s you then maybe it’s time to explore other sectors (see the ‘Which work environment fits you best’ chart in Chapter 5).

Wrong job, wrong time

Sometimes it is just simply bad timing. Other commitments could stand in the way of a career change in the short term – the arrival of a new baby, a new financial commitment, a change in personal circumstances, etc. All these things can bar the way for career change.

If a job or career change is beyond your scope for now, there are still plenty of ways to improve your existing situation. The following Happiness Challenge outlines 10 tangible things you can do, starting today, that are proven to make your work day better, and you happier. Do 3 out of the 10 activities every day for 3 weeks and watch your job satisfaction soar.

Do you want to improve your job satisfaction by up to 40 per cent? Take the Happiness Challenge – it's easy!

<p>Get physical: exercise for half an hour three times a week</p>	<p>Introduce a walking club at work and take lunchtime walks.</p> <p>Join a gym near work with one of your colleagues and motivate each other to go twice a week.</p> <p>Sign up for yoga, pilates, aerobics or a spinning class with one of your colleagues.</p> <p>Organise a sports tournament at work – great for fitness, team-building and morale boosting.</p> <p>Cycle to work – it's eco-friendly and saves a fortune. Or take public transport to work so that you can walk to and from the train or bus station – and there are tax incentives available to your company too.</p>
<p>Count your blessings: at the end of each day, reflect on at least five things you're grateful for</p>	<p>This is very effective. Even on a not-so-good day, challenge yourself to come up with three good things that happened to you. Doing this reminds you to highlight the positive and not get sucked into a purely negative frame of mind. Even small things like meeting a daily deadline, having a nice lunch, beating the rush-hour traffic or catching up with an old workmate can put a positive spin on your day. Psychologists call this 'savouring'.</p>
<p>Talk time</p>	<p>The two most important relationships for creating a happy work environment are with your closest colleague and your boss. Nurture your work relationships by organising weekly catch-ups, monthly reviews, midweek lunches or after-work activities. It's easy to chat to your best work buddy, but make time to talk to your boss or someone outside your team at least once a day.</p>
<p>Plant something: even if it's a window box or pot plant. Keep it alive!</p>	<p>Keep a plant on your desk and look after it! If you don't have plants in the office or the common areas, suggest to your boss that your office goes green. Not only do plants improve the quality of the air you breathe but research has shown that your physical work environment impacts significantly on your well-being at work too.</p>
<p>Cut your TV viewing by half</p>	<p>Cut your internet surfing by half. Workers spend on average 20 per cent of their work day surfing the net and much of this is spent fuelling your consumer instincts via exposure to advertising and online shopping. Bhutan's top spot on the Global Happiness Index is widely attributed to a national ban on advertising. Think about it ...</p>
<p>Smile at or say hello to a stranger at least once each day</p>	<p>Do you look at your feet when you get into the lift? Do you ignore a fellow employee at the bus stop because you only know them by sight? Do you greet the person you buy your daily coffee/scone/newspaper from? Smile and say hello. You don't even need to have a chat – but it's common courtesy to acknowledge people you come across on a daily basis, and heart-warming for you as well as them.</p>

<p>Phone a friend/colleague</p>	<p>Has a work colleague moved department, or moved company? Keep in touch every now and again by phone or by email. It's life-affirming for people to know that they haven't been forgotten about the moment they're out of your line of vision, so this works for you and for them (it's also a useful networking skill). Companies that hold annual lunches for retired staff members anecdotally report increased morale amongst current staff members who attend those lunches.</p>
<p>Have a good laugh at least once a day</p>	<p>All work and no play make Jack and Jill dull. Surround yourself with fun people. Especially if you work in a high-stress area, take some time out for some light-hearted banter – it's an important part of bonding with colleagues. Smiling and laughing are great de-stressors and using humour cements work relationships. Seeing the funny side of difficult situations can also be a good way to keep people engaged and motivated, instead of feeling defeated or deflated. High-stress workers such as those involved in the emergency services often use humour as a useful stress-buster.</p>
<p>Every day make sure you give yourself a treat. Take time to really enjoy this</p>	<p>A cappuccino or some chocolate (or even better a herbal tea!) to beat the 3pm slump, a fancy lunch with colleagues every now and then, a nice walk at lunchtime, a taxi home from work on a Friday ... reward yourself with a treat every day as a reminder of your unique skills and talents.</p>
<p>Daily kindness: do an extra good turn for someone each day</p>	<p>Much of the happiness research points to the role of kindness in making you happier. Think about how you can practise kindness in your workplace. Try this out by helping a colleague meet a deadline, offering someone from the office a lift home, making an extra effort to help a new colleague settle in, or including people who are on the outskirts – you'll find that making life more pleasant for the people around you has a positive impact on you too.</p>

(From *Happy at Work: Ten Steps to Ultimate Job Satisfaction* by Sophie Rowan.)

Call to action



It isn't sufficient just to want – you've got to ask yourself what you are going to do to get the things you want.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

We are approaching the end of Chapter 3, which coincides with the end of Part 1.

The core focus of Part 1 was on you. But before we recap on where you're at, it's time to make an important commitment to yourself.

I've referred a number of times to the fact that structure and discipline are integral parts of finding and following your dream career. So what does that mean for you? It means that you need to put aside time *every week* to work on your brilliant career.

How much time?

Well, that depends on a lot of things: for example, if you're trying to change tack in your career, hold down a full-time job, plus manage a range of personal commitments, then you haven't got much spare time. However, you need to find at least 2 hours a week, and that's the bare minimum. For those with a bit more disposable time (maybe those of you who work part-time or who have a more flexible routine working from home), I would recommend 6–8 hours a week divided into two or three dedicated sessions. And for those who may have been made redundant or who are unemployed, I recommend 2 hours a day. When I see career-change clients at Pinpoint, I am very clear with them about the level of commitment necessary.

You need to maintain a steady and consistent input into your career efforts in order to see the right results in a reasonable amount of time.

What does it entail?

What you will be doing in this time will be clearly outlined with more detail provided in the coming chapters and includes the following:

- Spending time on reflection and building your self-awareness.
- Talking to people involved in your preferred job or career to get a first-hand view of what the day-to-day drill entails.
- Registering with networking groups and attending networking events.
- Using the internet to research job descriptions and entry requirements into different fields.
- Reading career books and articles. All the national papers have dedicated careers and recruitment sections.

- Creating a top-of-the-range CV that clearly relates your skills and experience to your target job or industry.
- Signing up with a small number of reputable recruitment agents and headhunters and arranging to meet them in person where possible.
- Becoming familiar with recruitment advertising forums and uploading your CV to a select number of job search sites.
- Enhancing and updating your professional profile on LinkedIn and related forums.
- Being active on social networking sites.
- Registering with career self-help groups – online activity or attending talks and workshops.
- Preparing for interview by scripting interview questions and responses and practising with a friend or family member.



brilliant recap

- Chapter 3 focused on how to make your work life better without changing career. So if you want to stay put – what next?
- The 'Career Health Check' exercise shines the spotlight on where you are currently at in your career, what's going well for you and what's not.
- Exploring what success means to you is key to any career decision you will make and any career action you will take – so work it out now.
- Is your mental image of your career picture perfect? The creative exercise helps you to form a clear picture of what your ideal career or career situation looks like. And it's much easier to pursue it if you have a picture as well as information.
- Take the Happiness Challenge, which will result in your story being clearer and more positive than when you started reading this chapter.

Part 1 Recap

In Part 1, the focus was on deciding what it is you'd like to do with your career. Once this is clear, it makes the actual 'doing part' much easier. By working through your career to date and working out what you enjoy most and what's important to you in your career, you may well have a clear career goal in mind. Don't worry if you don't, though, as Part 2 provides plenty more food for thought, as well as some active decision-making and goal-setting to get you well on your way to your dream career.

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